

SEEING CONNECTIONS:

Documentary as an Intervention in the Social World

Andrew Chesher

Thesis submitted for a PhD awarded by University of the Arts, London

January 2007

Abstract

This thesis examines the nature of the relationship between documentary and social practices. In particular it seeks to develop and theorise a mode of documentary practice in which social practices in general are dialogised rather than represented.

I characterise social practices as consisting of a largely tacit consensus in ways of acting and understanding. This consensus is, I argue however, inherently open to re-evaluation and re-articulation in practice itself; and it is as part of—rather than as a representation of—such processes that dialogical documentary operates.

In the written thesis, which discusses a number of specific documentaries in relation to their overall approach to practices, I argue for a mode of documentary based not in representational strategies of external observation and objective overview, but rather in the dialogising of moments of practice. An act that has been dialogised is revealed as involving a degree of ambiguity or heterogeneity—and hence the possibility of a re-evaluation, i.e., re-negotiation of practices themselves.

For dialogical documentary objective representation is neither means nor goal; on the contrary tendential intervention becomes a legitimate and central method—both in the local situation, where the filmmaking process provokes behaviour and reflection rather than merely recording it; and on the level of public discourse, to which the documentary raises particular instances of practice by enunciating them, or allowing them to be enunciated, within a discursive field.

These concerns are directly reflected in the main practice element of the thesis—a documentary project exploring the rehearsal of a piece of music by Christian Wolff called *Changing the System* (1973). This exploration is based around the score of the piece, which, offering different possibilities for its realisation, both on the macro and micro level, requires explicit dialogical interaction between the players.

Acknowledgements:

I owe a debt of thanks to Neil Cummings and Brendan Prendeville for their patient and insightful supervision, and to the various staff at the Chelsea Research Office over the years who have always been ready and happy to help.

I thank also the members of 'the reading group', who created a stimulating climate of debate for me during the last couple of years I worked on my research: Isobel Bowditch, Hana Sukuma, Lawrence Sullivan, Cath Ferguson, Jenny Lu and Wayne Clements.

Lastly, thanks to Silke Panse, with whom I shared many thoughts and experiences over the years working on this thesis.

Contents

0. Introduction: Context

- 0.1 Documentary
- 0.2 Art and Reflexivity
- 0.3 Dialogue and Dialogism
- 0.4 Act and Action
- 0.5 Overview of the Thesis in Outline

Evidence of Work: A. Observational Footage (DVD 1)

- A1. *Rehearsals for Changing the System*, September-October 2004
- A2. Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad, March 2005

1. The Limits of Representation

- 1.1 Representation and Dialogic
- 1.2 Observation and the Physical Encounter
- 1.3 The Acculturated Body
- 1.4 The Shape of Behaviour
- 1.5 The Intentionality of Practice
- 1.6 'Shaped Vision'
- 1.7 Beyond Representation

Evidence of Work: B. *Seeing in the Dark* (DVD 2)

- B. *Seeing in the Dark* (long edit) 2006

2. Dialogical Practice

- 2.1 Ambiguity
- 2.2 A Dialogical Conception of Meaning
- 2.3 At the Boundary with the Other
- 2.4 Duplicity
- 2.5 The Enunciated Gesture

2.6 Documentary as Complex of Enunciation

2.7 The Space of the Other

2.8 The Documentary Subject as 'Witness'

Evidence of Work: C. *Changing the System* (DVD 1)

C. Changing the System (part 1) 2007

3. Documentary as Intervention

3.1 Towards a Theory of the Dialogical Approach

3.2 The Dialogised Act

3.3 The Enunciated Act

3.4 The Reach of the Act

Evidence of Work: D. *Changing the System* (DVD 1)

D. *Changing the System* (part 2) 2007

4. Conclusion: Theory and Practice

4.1 Structure

4.2 Situation

4.3 Scenario of Perception

4.4 Observation

References

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Repeat Performance (conference paper, July 2003)

Appendix 2: Practice Documentation (DVD3)

0. Introduction

0.1 Documentary

The use of the term 'documentary' to denote a particular genre of filmmaking is a coinage generally attributed to John Grierson, who first employed it in his review of Robert Flaherty's film *Moana* (1925) in 1926. There has been much variation in what it has been thought a documentary film could or should be since Grierson set up his film unit at the Empire Marketing Board in 1928 and its heyday at the General Post Office in the thirties, but what he was naming when he referred to the 'documentary value' of Flaherty's film remains a key component of the concept to the present day. Sixty-five years after Grierson's adoption of the word, which previously had related primarily to the authority imbuing written documents with the status of legal and commercial evidence, Bill Nichols catches Grierson's sense of the term in his survey of documentary filmmaking when he describes the practice as being 'guided by a fundamental preoccupation with the representation of the historical world' (1991: 16).¹ A

¹ An extensive etymological account of the word 'documentary' is given in Philip Rosen's essay 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts' (Rosen, 1993); for reference to Grierson being the first person to use it in its current filmic sense see Rosen, 1993: 66 and Winston, 1995: 8. It appears once in Grierson's article on *Moana*, which originally appeared in *The New York Sun* anonymously on February 8th 1926. On the one hand, however, as he does not use the word as a substantive but rather as an adjective, talking of the 'documentary value' *Moana* has, he does not entirely divorce it from its previous usage. On the other hand, even this 'documentary value' the film has, he describes as 'secondary to its value as a soft breath from a sunlit island' (Grierson, 1979: 25). Nonetheless, he does already here in 1926 emphasise what will, as his arguments for documentary progress, remain of equal importance to his aesthetic considerations, and which in fact becomes more or less identified as the source of the aesthetic he espouses, namely the film's reference to the 'real'. This is simply identified in the *Moana* review as the reason for the film 'induc[ing] a philosophic attitude on the part of the spectator' (1979: 26), but will in a later assessment of Flaherty (first published in 1932) become aligned more fully with what would now be recognised as the indexical quality of the photographic image: 'Our capital [on which to build English cinema] comes from those whose only interest is in the actual. The medium itself insists on the actual.' (Grierson, 1966: 140).

particular conception and practice of documentary has formed the thread of my research, running from its beginnings to the films I analyse in the dissertation, and through the performance-based practice I was engaged in its early stages up to the videos I have shot over the past couple of years; and though not much is said yet in Nichols' description, as he himself is aware, in naming 'representation', the 'historical world' and their interrelation as documentary's preoccupation, it nonetheless provides a point from which to start describing the conception of 'dialogical documentary' I have sought to develop.

What though is the 'historical world'? The examples of documentary film that have preoccupied me, such as Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960), are representations that relate to their object in a distinctive way, and it is this particular mode of relation to reality that I have sought to isolate, to analyse and to develop in my own practice. What I have attempted to work out an understanding of, is how such a documentary practice as Rouch's investigates the historical world, not only without denying or obscuring the fact that it itself exists in that world too, *but using that fact on some or other level to facilitate its engagement with social reality*. One of the fundamental questions with which my dissertation engages, therefore, is *what sort of conception of the historical world is implied by this particular relation between documentary and its object*. The best way to introduce this conception, however, would seem to be to distinguish it first from other conceptions that can be discerned in the broader field of the practices that answer to the name 'documentary'.

In *Representing Reality* Nichols established an influential typology of documentary practices, identifying four different modes, namely the 'expository', the 'observational', the 'interactive' and the 'reflexive', to which he added a fifth, the 'performative', three years later in his essay 'Performing Documentary' (Nichols, 1994). His analysis aims fundamentally to produce an 'archaeological' description in the Foucauldian sense, i.e. he attempts to describe the shifting 'discursive formation' of documentary practices and its corresponding 'rules of formation' (Foucault, 2002: 41-42 and *passim*). One of the tenets of Foucault's archaeological method is that a discursive formation, being a field of statements which construct their own object and do so in various ways, cannot be identified on the basis of a common and independent object—what Foucault glosses as an 'horizon of inexhaustible ideality' (35). For example, the discourses that concern Foucault, which might broadly be termed the human sciences, include psychopathology, in relation to which he writes that 'the unity of the object of

madness does not enable one to individualise a group of statements and to establish between them a relation that is both constant and describable' (35). There are two reasons for this. Firstly, 'madness' does not precede but is constituted by the statements that name it. Secondly, the way it is constituted varies in different areas of psychopathology and changes over time. Foucault's precept is therefore that the object, which it is the preoccupation of a discourse to represent, whether that object be mental illness or the historical world, is itself an historical construct with no fixed identity. So, just as Foucault claimed different areas of psychopathological discourse did, so each mode of documentary might well be viewed as having 'constituted its object and worked on it to the point of transforming it altogether':

'So that the problem arises of knowing whether the unity of a discourse is based not so much on the permanence and uniqueness of an object as on the space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed.' (Foucault, 2002: 36).

It follows that Nichols, inasmuch as his account is modelled on archaeological method, cannot settle for a definition of documentary based on the historical world it represents; to describe its discursive formation, on the contrary, 'would be to define the dispersion of [its] objects, to grasp all the interstices that separate them, to measure the distances that reign between them' (Foucault, 2002: 36, cited in Nichols, 1991: 17).²

Nichols' enumeration of documentary modes—modes he sees as related to one another within a dialectical development in which 'new forms arise from the limitations and constraints of previous forms' (1991: 32)—is an attempt to describe such a dispersion. The first of the modes in this dialectical chain is the *expository*, into whose mould the documentaries made under Grierson's patronage largely fit, as does much television documentary in Britain to this day. Even when the commentary in the latter is delivered not by the classic 'voice of God' but by a commentator who appears on camera, these remain expository, as it is in this authorial discourse alone that the object is constituted and simultaneously explained, and 'images serve as illustration or counterpoint' (34) to that discourse. In contrast to the expository mode, which is presented as the most naïve, the *reflexive* mode Nichols offers as 'the most self-aware', the most

² Nichols quotes from the 1972 edition of the book, in which this quote appears on pp. 32-33.

sophisticated in its relation to the representation of its object. Whereas the historical world is projected in the expository mode as an object to which its representation is transparent, the reflexive mode is described as being concerned with representation itself: its object is no longer the historical world as such, but is transformed into *the representation of* the historical world. Among his examples Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1927) and Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1982) stand out, the first for the way it 'bares' the 'device' of filmic representation and for its extraordinary development of montage techniques, the second for its ideological deconstruction of representation. Nonetheless, what limits the reflexive mode in Nichols' eyes seems, perhaps paradoxically, to be symmetrical with the limitations of the expository mode: as it draws attention to the textuality of the documentary, and hence emphasises either its own construction of the image (Vertov), or the way in which subjects become signifiers presented to, and projected on by, the viewer (Trinh), reflexive documentary runs the risk of becoming 'a textual voice overwhelming the discrete voices of social actors with a message of its own about the problematics of representation' (Nichols, 1991: 58).³ Neither the

³ In his essay 'The Artist as Ethnographer', Hal Foster passes the following judgement on the adoption of ethnographic methods by artists since the mid-sixties, which could also apply at certain points to an anthropologist like Trinh who has in turn adopted art's formal reflexivity: 'the deconstructive-ethnographic approach can become a gambit, an insider game that renders the institution not more open and public but more hermetic and narcissitic, a place for initiates only where a contemptuous criticality is rehearsed' (1996: 196). However, although her *Reassemblage* seems to me indeed to suffer these problems arising from its, dare I say, zealous reflexivity, and although her more recent work has moved towards a poetic version of Nichols' performative mode described next, a film like *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (1989), which still lays significant emphasis on the reflexive—the film shifts halfway from presenting a series of women who apparently live humble lives in Vietnam to revealing that these are characters being portrayed by 'Westernised' and successful Vietnamese émigrés—has more in common with Nichols' interactive mode, under which rubric he indeed does list *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam*. Although it still espouses a certain mode of reflexive practice, Trinh's essay 'Documentary Is/Not a Name' (1990), written around the time of making this film, suggests it is possible to redirect the documentary towards reality on the condition that it, as it were, constructs the latter as what always escapes representation: 'Although every film is in itself a form of ordering and closing, each closure can defy its own

expository nor reflexive mode *uses the fact of the documentary's contiguity with the practices it represents as a basis for its engagement with them*: the expository because it ignores its implication in the reality it represents, the reflexive because it tends to insist too exclusively on this fact, concentrating on its own artefactuality to the exclusion of engaging with the wider processes of social reality.

In contrast to the reflexive mode, which thematises and potentially critiques representation, Nichols' *performative* mode devalues access to the representational referent *per se* and instead

'gives priority to the affective dimensions struck up between ourselves and the text. It proposes a way of being-in-the-world as this world is itself brought into being through the very act of comprehension, "abducted from fragments".' (Nichols, 1994: 102).

The world that the documentary is otherwise thought to index is replaced by iconic images in which 'qualities of duration, texture and experience' are stressed (94). One of the long list of films Nichols associates with this mode is Robert Gardner's *Forest of Bliss* (1985). Excluding voice-over exposition—though not necessarily an expository point of view—as well as both reflexivity and interaction with its subjects, *Forest* offers a distinct example of a documentary taking as its object a world constructed observationally and performatively (in Nichols' sense). For this reason Gardner's film forms the focus of my discussion in Part 1 of this dissertation.

Although doubtless many of Gardner's images take on the affective quality Nichols speaks of, the footage as a whole, much of which is composed of intense observation of particular individuals or rituals, does not thereby entirely slough off its indexical quality. My discussion of *Forest* in Part 1 questions the relation between the indexical value of observation clearly tangible in Gardner's images, and the iconic or connotative value these images attain in the edit, both of which the director emphasised in his comments about the film. In both these aspects Gardner excels as a filmmaker: observational camerawork and associative montage. However, I will concentrate on the conflation of index and

closure, opening onto other closures, thereby emphasizing the interval between apertures and creating a space in which meaning remains fascinated by what escapes and exceeds it.' (Trinh, 1990: 96).

icon in *Forest*, resulting I will suggest, from muddled ideas about the nature social or cultural meaning. So, though I believe there is much to commend in and learn from Gardner's practice, I will subordinate my appreciation to the larger argument I am trying to build here, as the object of my discussion is to develop the conception of an approach to documentary that in crucial respects *Forest* excludes. Essentially, I read *Forest* as a film in which the connotative level that Nichols says the performative mode foregrounds, serves to suggest a particular interpretation of the indexical content of its images, thereby 'naturalising' its own cultural evaluation of the Hindu rituals and life it observes. The bare bones of this reading are that, firstly, the images in the film are clearly the result of intense observation, and so alongside their iconic value attained in the edit, they retain the referential value of indices; and secondly, even without verbal commentary, the film's intricate and selective montage of images from the Indian city of Benares, where it was shot, suggests an interpretation of the place equivalent to, though doubtlessly less direct and unambiguous than, that which might be found in an expository representation.

Nichols' observational mode, which is exemplified by the work of Richard Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker among other proponents of 1960s 'direct cinema', 'stresses the non-intervention of the filmmaker' in the scene being shot, interviews and re-enactments being therefore firmly off limits, just as are editorial interventions such as voice-over, music and intertitles (Nichols, 1991: 38). Despite its intensely observational camerawork and the fact that it fulfils all the above criteria as faithfully as Albert and David Maysles' *Salesman* (1968) or Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1968), *Forest* could nonetheless not be assimilated with the observational mode. What, then, is it that distinguishes Gardner's film from observational documentaries such as those of the Maysles and Wiseman? It is in its use of montage. As Nichols' observational mode of documentary lays emphasis on the indexical quality of the image above all else, it, in contrast to Gardner's filmmaking, reduces montage to a minimum so as 'to enhance the impression of lived or real time'. So whereas the world is a *potential* to be construed from subjective impressions in the performative mode, in the observational mode it is an *actuality*, an ongoing event, physically registered on film. In the case of the performative documentary, however, the representation and its object (the world) threaten to collapse into one another. The world is reduced in its socially objective existence and becomes overwhelmingly an aesthetic phenomenon, an evocation of purely subjective

experience. In the case of the observational documentary, on the other hand, the viewing subject has a similar impression of being independent of social reality, only this time it is the increased distance, rather than the lack of distance, between the world and the viewer that causes it. For all their other merits, neither Nichols' performative nor his observational mode, therefore, would *allow the documentary to acknowledge its existence along other social practices*, nor, subsequently, would they *facilitate its engagement with those practices*.

0.2 Art and Reflexivity

The one mode remaining from Nichols' typology is the most important for my own project, but I will defer my discussion of the *interactive* mode and its relation to the historical world for the moment, because I first want to reference another field in which documentary has significance and which formed part of the broader context of my research, namely art. When at the outset of my research I was looking for precedents and models for the practice I thought could be developed on a certain understanding of documentary, I was looking at Marcel Broodthaers and his *Musée d'Art Modern* in the various guises it took between its first manifestation in 1968 in his Brussels apartment and its last at Documenta V in Kassel during the Summer of 1972. Perhaps the most important incarnation of Broodthaers' museum was *The Museum of Modern Art, Section of Figures (The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present)*, which took place at the Städtische Kusthalle, Düsseldorf in 1972. This was a display of over 300 items borrowed from 48 museums, each involving reference of some kind or other to the eagle of the title. The exhibits included ranged from fossils and eggs from Natural History collections to paintings and *objets d'art* from Art museums, from comic book representations and heraldic crests to an Eagle brand typewriter. Next to the naturalist's specimens and the connoisseur's works of art, ethnographic objects were exhibited alongside wine bottles and other commercial products whose logos happened to include a reference to the eagle in some shape or form, all of which appeared listed one after the other in the accompanying catalogue and were displayed with a numbered label reading: 'This is not a Work of Art'. Whilst echoing, and no doubt satirising, Joseph Kosuth's phrase 'art as art as idea', Broodthaers' statement that 'the concept of the exhibition is based on the identity of the eagle as an idea with art as an idea' (quoted in Crimp, 1998: 86), suggests the work's shrewd critique of the art

institution. Firstly it suggests a relation between art and power, which the eagle symbolises: this was made palpable in the exhibition by the fact that although each item it contained was 'not a work of art', the institution nonetheless remained. Secondly it suggests a strategy of displacement: art is reassessed from the vantage of the eagle, which had been introduced from outside the institution of art and its set of objects.

So, at this early stage of my research, what I found in a number of art practices, which Broodthaers' museum exemplifies but whose more recent exponents included in particular work by Pierre Bismuth and Maria Eichhorn,⁴ was an implied mapping of a set of practices, which sought in the main to make the institution of art its object. In essence this work was reflexive, it displaced the art object and aligned itself instead with the institutional frame so as to draw attention to the latter. In my own practice at the time I sought to develop similarly reflexive strategies in relation to the contexts of my professional and research activities, i.e. lectures I gave in my capacity of tutor at the art school and seminars I attended as a research student. My aim was to uncover the various practices⁵ or *habitus* implicit in a particular context through something akin to an

⁴ Specifically Eichhorn's *Maria Eichhorn Aktiengesellschaft* (2002) made for Documenta 11, and Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress* (1995), (see note 7 below).

⁵ Throughout this thesis I will be using the word 'practice' in two senses that are distinct from each other on one level, but related on another. In my introduction up to this point, the word has been used to denote what a filmmaker (or artist, theorist etc.) does and, more significantly, how they do it. With this meaning the word is used in constructions such as 'documentary practice' and 'dialogical practice'. In the first and second Parts of the dissertation a core concern is to contrast two distinct approaches to documentary practice. These will be distinguished from one another not only on the basis of the methods they employ, but the philosophical understanding of meaning implicit in those methods: once the 'representational approach' to documentary practice has been described, along with its limitations, in Part 1, the dialogical alternative will be laid out in Part 2. I will also, however, be using the word 'practice', as I do at this point for the first time, in its sociological sense, i.e. to denote areas of socially organised behaviour. A social practice does not exist apart from an interpersonal pattern of behaviour, and the conventions and institutions that support and constrain it. It is this implication of the word that is meant in the title of Pierre Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice* (1990): he presents a practice as something, the mastery of whose logic 'is only possible for someone who is

ethnographic or sociological investigation. Taking my cue from sociologist Erving Goffman's analysis of everyday situations into 'front' and 'back regions' (Goffman, 1971; 2002), I proceeded to investigate how the seminar and the lecture are characterised by the reciprocal practices of speaker and audience. In *Backstage* (2003) I introduced a video of a supervision meeting into a presentation for a PhD student seminar, making the 'back region' practices that take place between student and supervisor in a relatively informal setting the object of the formal, 'front region' performance, which was being discussed and prepared for in that supervision. Preparation for *A Lecture* (2004) consisted of an exploration of the space of the lecture theatre focused on the different practices that went on it, and on how the less obvious and less visible ones engaged in by the audience manifested themselves. My performance itself began in a conventional manner as a lecture delivered from the podium on the

completely mastered by it, who possesses it, but so much so that he is totally possessed by it, in other words depossessed'; a practice reproduces and is guided by the 'schemes of perception, appreciation and action' that make up our social background, and that can only be learnt when they are 'excluded from the universe of objects of thought' (Bourdieu, 1990, hereafter LP: 13-14). The other sense of the term is closer to its use in the title of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), where what is implied is a *praxis*, action on the part of an individual or group that is more or less consciously and intentionally pursued (in contrast to the essentially unconscious nature of social practices). It is important to keep this distinction in mind, as the word will be used to denote consecutively a 'dialogical practice', for example, and the 'social practices' it 'dialogises'. The lack of lexical differentiation between the two meanings (which are nonetheless differentiated by the contexts in which they are used, I hope) is not merely the result of a lack of imagination, but is indicative of the relatedness of the two concepts: any individual or reflective practice would seem to rely on the existence of background social practices against which it may emerge and of which it would seem to be a special instance. What makes it possible for it to emerge is a question that lies outside the compass of this dissertation: division II of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962, hereafter BT) offers an 'existential' approach to the question in its references to 'the call of conscience'; Hannah Arendt's discussion of 'action' (the political act) in *The Human Condition* (1998) offers a 'political' alternative, of which Derrida's various discussions of 'undecidability' as taken up by Ernesto Laclau in *Emancipations*, particularly in the essay 'The Time is Out of Joint' (Laclau, 1996: 66-83), offer a more recent version.

subject of the 'space of the exhibition'. In this first half of the performance I started by describing how the activity of the audience could be considered to form the effective context of an exhibition, but moved swiftly from talking about art and exhibitions generally to talking specifically about the lecture situation. The slides of exhibitions elsewhere, with which I was illustrating my talk, gave way at this point to my 'ethnographic' study of the graffiti inscribed on the benches in the very lecture theatre in which the audience sat, the focus of the talk turning to what an audience did in *this* space, to the notion that here they, as it were, wrote back on top of the lecture, and left a visible trace of their activity. Halfway through the event I stepped off the podium and went to stand in the middle of the auditorium, the lecture now giving way first to anecdotes about performers who cross the boundary between stage and auditorium and audiences who cross it in the other direction, so highlighting the boundary itself and the part it plays in constituting the situation, before then the anecdotes in turn gave way to an open discussion with the audience. All of this second half, moreover, was being filmed by a video camera from the front of the auditorium and projected live on screen, more or less placing the image of the audience with the lecturer in their midst on the podium.⁶

These performance works indeed sought to investigate an historical world with which they were continuous, but in concentrating on precisely the practices and contexts in which their status as 'lectures' or 'seminar presentations' was delimited, they were characterised by reflexivity to a degree that outweighed the specific documentary aspect I sought. On the one hand, although they allowed dialogue and interaction to become a central component of the work, the very identity of the work with the moment of encounter between performer and audience meant my authorship surreptitiously subsumed the dialogue the work initiated. There seemed to be a sleight of hand going on, a trick played on the audience, without whose presence and investment in the conventions I sought to expose there would have been no work; and in this regard Nichols' misgivings about documentary reflexivity proved to be well founded, as my voice was in danger of 'overwhelming the discrete voices of social actors with a message of its own'. Although the reflexive element was counterproductive, there were

⁶ Documentation of both these works can be found under Appendix 2: Practice Documentation which is located on DVD 3.

nevertheless other aspects of the work that contributed to the documentary practice I have gone on to develop. Firstly these were thematic: the focus of these performance works on the different sets of practices relating to the same situation or object had been foreshadowed in my exploration of the relation between the production of a sound and its perception as a musical performance in a conference paper given shortly previous to them,⁷ and it was carried forward as the starting point for the investigation of the process of musical rehearsal that would become the major practical element of this thesis, *Changing the System*. Secondly it became clear that these themes had methodological implications: the relation between different 'regions' of a practice, such as that between musical rehearsal and performance, was not a merely contingent subject matter for a documentary project, but on the contrary was already in its selection integral to the core of what I had been calling a *dialogical practice*.

For the documentary project *Changing the System*, edits of which are interspersed here between the written chapters of the dissertation (see DVD1: A1; C; D), I was given permission to film the rehearsals for a series of concerts celebrating the seventieth birthday of the composer Christian Wolff. I had sought the opportunity because it seemed to me that within the rehearsal process the musical statement would not yet be 'definitive', rehearsal being a 'back region' in which the formal conventions of performance that frame the physical production of sounds as musical acts would not yet apply. Firstly, I expected to find dialogue between musicians about the right way to interpret a score, in which the relation between the physical action that produces sound and the criteria on which it was to be judged as an act fulfilling the score would also explicitly be referred to. Secondly, I anticipated that in following the lengthy process and at least partially contingent course of rehearsal, with the trial and selection of various ways of playing a particular notation that would interrupt it from within on

⁷ This paper, entitled 'Repeat Performance: The Enunciative Relation and Pierre Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress*', was presented at the Leeds University CATH conference in 2003 and is reproduced here as Appendix 1. In essence, in Bismuth's piece a kind of 'back region' process (the artist attempting to remember and pick out on a piano keyboard a tune by Thelonius Monk) was represented as a fully developed performance (Bismuth's fumbblings having been turned into a score and handed to a professional pianist).

the one hand, and the concrete realities and acts that would impinge on it from without on the other, the situation would become visible in which music is made, and which I assumed to involve different viewpoints and interests that nonetheless seem for the most part to disappear in the formal context of the concert hall. It transpired that the score of a large scale composition by Wolff that was being rehearsed itself involved an attempt to draw some of these contingent features into its own performance, and consequently it was this piece that I focused on.

0.3 Dialogue and Dialogism

Dialogue was the keystone of the philosophical view developed by the Russian literary and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin and his colleague V.N. Volosinov.⁸

⁸ I will refer to Volosinov as the author of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, although there is some dispute about the book's origins. Volosinov, a 'senior research worker at the State Institute for Speech Culture' (Morris, 1994: 2), belonged to the intellectual circle that formed around Bakhtin in the provisional Russian town of Nevel where Bakhtin was then teaching between 1918 and 1920. When, over the next few years, Bakhtin moved, first to Vitebsk and then to Petrograd, Volosinov remained part of his circle; in 1929 this association came to an end as Bakhtin was sent into exile in Kazakhstan (probably for his orthodox Christian views). 1929 was coincidentally the year Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* was published. It has been alleged that the book was actually composed by Bakhtin, Volosinov being 'responsible for some minor interpolations' and modifications (V.V. Ivanov, 1973, cited in Todorov, 1984: 6). Having died of tuberculosis in 1936, Volosinov could not respond. Bakhtin, however, survived until 1975 and was still alive and relatively active when the allegations were made. Presumably he could have put the record straight. Unfortunately, publicly he was neither to confirm nor deny that he was the author of Volosinov's book (or indeed of the several other texts published in Volosinov's name or in that of P.N. Medvedev, another member of Bakhtin's circle in the 1920s, which, at the time it was suggested, also came from his hand). It has to be admitted, on the one hand, that there is an undeniable connection between the underlying thought in this book and the writings unequivocally attributed to Bakhtin; so, as Bakhtin, from beginning to last, was the clearest source of this philosophical orientation (i.e. dialogism), I will occasionally conflate the two authors and talk of 'Bakhtin's' or 'Bakhtinian' ideas. On the other hand, this does not mean that the authorship of the book should effectively be ascribed to Bakhtin. However much influence Bakhtin exercised over Volosinov, *Marxism and the*

The fundamental aspect of language, they argued, is neither the expressive intention of the speaker, nor the supra-personal rules of the language system, but rather dialogic interaction:

‘In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener.’ (MPL: 102).

What the dimension of dialogue emphasises about language is, firstly, the speech act or utterance, and secondly the fact that this is an act addressed to a listener by a speaker (or a reader by a writer, etc.). Utterances are defined as acts by the difference between interlocutors and by the relations between each utterance and the acts that both precede them and will succeed them (see § 2.3). Consequently, focusing on the addressed, or ‘enunciated’ act as I will refer to it, suggests a relation to the Other as necessary to the existence and function of language.⁹ I seek in this dissertation, firstly, to ground ‘dialogic’ in philosophical discussions that emphasise practice and acculturation or socialisation as meaning’s basis, in particular those of Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962, hereafter BT) and Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1958, PI). Secondly my use of the concept extends its application from the specific arena of language and literature to that of social practices and acts generally. In fact, an extension of ‘dialogism’ to encompass social and cultural life whether linguistically expressed or not, could easily be justified with reference to the texts of Bakhtin and Volosinov, because although these thinkers primarily and predominantly used the term ‘dialogism’ to refer to

Philosophy of Language is a distinct work: Volosinov’s tone is certainly more ‘dogmatic’ and overtly Marxist, (see Todorov, 1984: 8-9), and he is much more concerned with sociology and ideology, whereas Bakhtin is concerned with philosophical and literary issues. Therefore, following the translators of the book, Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik, and Pam Morris, editor of *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Volosinov*, I speak of Volosinov as the author of the concepts within it. (See Todorov, 1984: 3-13; Morris, 1994: 1-5; and Matejka and Titunik’s ‘Translator’s Preface’ in Volosinov, 1986, hereafter MPL: vii-xi).

⁹ For background on the concept of enunciation referred to here, see § 2.5, n.10.

linguistic practice, they viewed language itself as essentially a particular mode of social practice.¹⁰

In the sense in which I use the term, therefore, dialogism pertains to social practices and the acts or interactions that constitute them; it refers to a particular manner of theoretically accounting for the phenomenon of meaning in human existence (elaborated in §§ 2.2 and 2.3); and it relates the global contexts of heterogeneous discourses and social meanings to the formation of the utterance or the meaningful act on the local level. Essentially dialogism is a theory of the 'historical world', or at least can be framed as one. This is the world lived in by human beings and at the same time formed by them; it is not the world of the natural or physical sciences which has no history in this sense, but that formed of human practices, of human acts—in their commission as much as in their omission—and of their results. A dialogical view of the world, that is to say, pertains to *the world's social existence*, its existence as a series of 'facts' and environmental events that are *always already socially interpreted* (or 'evaluated', to use Volosinov's term). In relation to this view of the world, Bakhtin and Volosinov represent the central strand interwoven with related philosophical discourses to build the theoretical thread of the dissertation: the early Heidegger and the late Wittgenstein describe human understanding and experience as fundamentally rooted in social existence; Foucauldian archaeology concentrates

¹⁰ Bakhtin does not treat literature, or the linguistic practices it refers to, as mere 'ideology', though this might be what someone coming across a title like *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* for the first time would expect of dialogism. Volosinov does begin this book by distinguishing between sign and use object (MPL: 9-15), just as orthodox Marxism distinguished between ideology and production—ideology being no more than the expression, or distortion, of economic relations. Indeed the relation between language and social reality is often expressed in such Marxist terms in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, as when Volosinov writes that 'once [consciousness] passes through all the stages of social objectification and enters into the power system of science, art, ethics, or law, it becomes a real force, capable even of exerting in turn an influence on the economic bases of social life' (MPL: 90). Nonetheless, the overall treatment of language and culture in his work, and even more so that of Bakhtin, makes little if anything of the distinction between 'base' and 'superstructure'. As in post-Marxist cultural theory where culture takes centre stage, Bakhtin saw language as being in interplay, or rather *dialogue*, with other social practices and forces.

on the historically contingent discourses or discursive formations within which certain interpretations or representations arise; Bourdieu's sociological 'logic of practice' focuses on the organisation of social life within fields of practice which human acts reproduce, and the forms of capital pursued in them.¹¹ These, the theoretical and philosophical viewpoints I draw on in what follows, are certainly not compatible with one another in every respect; but all do posit meaning as rooted in social practices, just as Bakhtin roots linguistic meaning in a word's social use. Their difference to dialogism lies in the emphasis that the latter gives to the idea that practices consist of and are constituted in *social interactions*.

Here the relevance of dialogism to documentary can be directly stated, as it is precisely social interaction that distinguishes the mode of documentary practice I discuss in Part 2 and aim at in *Changing the System* from expository, reflexive, performative or observational modes. *Chronicle of a Summer*, for example, concentrates on a series of encounters—between two of its subjects and the people in the street they interview at the beginning of the film; between the subjects and the film-makers who interview them; between the subjects themselves when they are brought together by the film-makers to discuss various topics; and between the two film-makers, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin,

¹¹ The attitudes towards meaning that can be attributed to Wittgenstein and Heidegger respectively are, as one would expect, more complicated than this suggests, although the emphasis on a social basis is, I think, clear and strong. In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein is systematically deconstructing various theories of meaning so that in the end all that he can say is that meaning is the use of a certain sign in a certain way, which is simply a 'custom' or 'practice' we observe. Whether that constitutes an espousal of a positive sociological theory of meaning is the subject of dispute among Wittgenstein scholars—see in particular Kripke (1982), who thinks it doesn't, and Bloor (1997), who thinks it does. As for Heidegger, whilst division I of *Being and Time* concentrates on the social human being (*das Man*) whose inauthentic existence (inauthentic, *uneigentlich*, because socially mediated and not its own, *sein eigenes*) is described as the basis of authentic experience (one has to be socialised before taking over one's life authentically), he also referred to the 'care structure' of human existence (human beings are fundamentally characterised by the fact that their own existence and that of their world matters to them, it is their 'care', *Sorge*) and a 'transcendence of world', especially in division II, both of which suggest a more fundamental ground for meaning and action than the social.

who discuss what they might have achieved in the film at its close. So, rather than the film's message being established by an expository voice or by the reflexive discourse of the author, it arises from the film's subjects, who talk from within a concrete situation and who address an Other at least implicit in the image (see §§ 2.5 to 2.8). It is for these sorts of qualities that Nichols categorises *Chronicle* as an example of his *interactive* mode. This he characterises as stressing 'images of testimony or verbal exchange', including 'images that demonstrate the validity, or possibly, the doubtfulness, of what witnesses state' (Nichols, 1991: 44). It thus shifts the documentary's emphasis 'from an author-centred voice of authority to a witness-centred voice of testimony' (48), and makes the viewer 'witness to the historical world as represented by one who inhabits it and who makes that process of habitation a distinct dimension of the text' (56). The dimensions attended to by Bakhtin and Volosionv—namely enunciation, situated utterance, context and, above all, dialogue—apply to the phenomena that the interactive documentary focuses on, too, i.e. the acts of subjects 'who are themselves historically situated' (56). Whereas in a linguistic context, however, these dimensions are discernible in the word as it passes between speaker and listener, in *Chronicle* it is not only in speech passing back and forth between identifiable speakers that these become tangible, but also in acts and gestures registered and responded to by others—a dimension perhaps more evident in particular sequences I analyse from the other documentary I focus on in Part 2: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) (see §§ 2.4ff).

Although the documentary, as Nichols in his Foucauldian approach suggests, constitutes the object it represents, a documentary nevertheless is but one act in the dialogical chain of acts and responses and their shifting contexts that constitutes the historical world in all its dimensions. It is social acts in general that constitute the world in this sense, and it is the continual process of determination they are part of that concerns the dialogical documentary. Foregrounding social interactions is therefore significant in a dialogical mode of documentary, because it is in them that the historically lived world arises, sustains itself and changes. Where the film as an act is foregrounded in dialogical practices, it is for the simple reason that this is expedient for its exploration of social acts generally.

It is this preoccupation with the constitutive role of acts and social interaction that is the nub of the various points of distinction between my identification and

theorising of the dialogical documentary and Nichols' account of interactive documentary. The first of these distinctions lies in the dialogical documentary's primary focus on the social encounter *per se*, as opposed to the encounter between the film and its subject that Nichols emphasises (Nichols, 1991: 48-49). Stella Bruzzi's definition of documentaries as 'performative acts' (Bruzzi, 2000: 7) has points of similarity with the dialogical conception I will be putting forward; nonetheless, although these similarities are different from those existing with the interactive mode, Bruzzi's performative documentary is still distinct from the dialogical approach because of the emphasis it, like Nichols' interactive mode, lays on the filmic encounter. Perhaps its clearest affinity with my argument lies in the fact that Bruzzi distinguishes documentary from representation on the basis of its performativity, just as I will articulate dialogical practice by first contrasting it to representational approaches in Part 1 of the dissertation. She articulates her definition of documentary—and the very fact that it is a *definition* of documentary as such, rather than a mode of practice, puts distance between my project and hers—against definitions of documentary which she critiques for taking it to be representational.¹² In contrast to representational conceptions that present documentary as concerned with an 'authentic way to represent reality' (2), and having (or else, as is the case with Nichols' reflexive mode, *having to deny*) 'a direct, ontological claim to the 'real'' (Renov, 1993: 7, cited in Bruzzi, 2000: 3), Bruzzi proposes that 'documentaries are performative acts whose *truth* comes into being *at the moment of filming*' (7, emphasis added). That is to say that truth is not represented in the documentary, it is rather produced by the filmic encounter. Hence the concept of performativity she attaches with documentary practice, which is taken from Judith Butler (making it very different to Nichols' use of the same word to denote one of his modes). Performativity in

¹² The definitions she targets include Nichols' account alongside those of a host of other documentary theorists, including Eric Barnouw, Michael Renov and Brian Winston. It is not clear to me, however, despite his description of documentary being preoccupied with 'the representation of the historical world', that Nichols is guilty as charged. For example, the following picture of the dialectical chain of documentary modes seems not dissimilar from Bruzzi's definition of documentary as a 'negotiation' between image and reality (4): 'what works at a given moment and what counts as a realistic representation of the historical world is not simply a matter of progress towards a final form of truth but of struggles for power and authority within the historical world itself' (Nichols, 1991: 33).

Butler's sense refers to the bringing about of a particular phenomenon or act (such as a promise) by its enunciation or enactment (saying 'I promise' constituting the promise itself); so, like the dialogical approach, it recognises the phenomenon of the historical world (truth) as constituted by social acts. In spite of this, dialogical documentary is distinct from both Bruzzi's documentary as performative act and Nichols' interactive mode in the primacy it affords to the social over the filmic encounter; moreover it differs from both not only in this regard, but also in three further points.

The next distinction follows from the first: the dialogical documentary focuses on social interactions because its primary concern is with its object's, or rather its milieu's, mode of existence, the historical world. By contrast the interactive mode and the explicitly performative documentary Bruzzi describes (Bruzzi, 2000: 153-180) are focused on the filmic encounter because the centre of their concern tends toward their own mode of existence. Though the work of Nick Broomfield and Molly Dineen, who exemplify the performative documentary for Bruzzi, is not uninterested in the world, Bruzzi's definitions always gravitate to the documentary's reality, as when she suggests that documentaries are fundamentally 'performative because they *acknowledge the construction and artificiality* of even the non-fiction film and propose, as *the underpinning truth, the truth that emerges through the encounter between the filmmakers, subjects and spectators*' (8, emphasis added). For the dialogical documentary the filmic encounter is neither their focus nor their 'truth' or message, it is a means to an end: it aligns the film with the social processes it examines and intervenes within.

The third difference lies in the specificity of the dialogical documentary's attention to the social world. While any social interaction implicitly plays a part in constituting the historical world, it is only in acts whose dialogical nature has been highlighted that this world itself can be made fully apparent. Here introducing another crucial Bakhtinian concept will be helpful, another cognate of the word 'dialogue': a sign is said by Bakhtin to be 'dialogised' when the different, if not disparate, social view points that structure the context in which it appears are made apparent in its use. In Part 2 of the dissertation I will describe at length particular instances of dialogised acts, and in section 3.2 I will explore the extension of the concept from its original literary context to the documentary context. Suffice it to say for the moment, however, that the sort of interaction that a dialogical approach focuses on is more precise than both that focused on

in Bruzzi's notion of documentary as performative act, and that of Nichols' looser sense of interaction, which includes mere physical presence (Nichols, 1991: 56). Part 1 of my dissertation concentrates on the inadequacy of this sort of 'physical encounter' as a basis of access to social meaning; Part 2 analyses the specifically 'dialogical encounter'.

The last distinction lies in my description of the relation between an act produced immediately in the social world, the documentary act in which it is reiterated, and the discourses of the social world. The acts recorded in any documentary, as soon as the film appears in a public forum, are effectively *re-enunciated*. What distinguishes documentary as a dialogical practice from other modes is that this re-enunciation of an act on a discursive level is a prominent and integral feature. Every documentary film in which acts are recorded, is an act like those represented within its images, with the difference that it appears as an act in the public context of its screening, broadcast and/or other forms of distribution. What I will suggest is that in the dialogical documentary—which is a sobriquet that could be extended to works, like *Chronicle*, that can of course be felicitously described on the basis of other criteria without necessarily there being a danger of contradiction—everyday acts are 'raised to the level of discourse' (see Part 3) by being integrated within the complex act constituting the documentary itself as an enunciation (see § 2.6). In Part 3 I characterise the dialogical documentary as an 'intervention in the social world', precisely on the basis of the way it raises acts to the level of discourse. Such a conception is neither ruled out nor denied as a possibility by either Nichols or Bruzzi, but the fact remains that their emphasis is on the *intervention within the situation being filmed* as opposed to mine, which is on an *intervention within the wider public discourses* that frame such practices. I don't deny significance of the filmic encounter, I simply see it as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

0.4 Acts and Action

In Wittgenstein's *Culture and Value*, a posthumous collection of notes culled from his manuscripts, 'which do not belong directly with his philosophical works',¹³ the following remark appears:

¹³ Georg H. von Wright writes this in his forward to *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, to give the collection its perhaps more apt German title (Wittgenstein, 1998: ix).

‘Architecture is a *gesture*. Not every purposive movement of the human body is a gesture. Just as little as every functional building is architecture.’ (Wittgenstein, 1998: 49).

Asking what precisely a gesture is, why certain movements of the human body and not others constitute gestures, and in what contexts they do so would be a particularly Wittgensteinian philosophical enquiry. It has been necessary for my discussion of the workings of dialogism in documentary to pose similar questions about acts in general, and these questions form a thread running through each of this dissertation’s three parts. To paraphrase Wittgenstein: however purposive it appears, not everything a human being does is an act. In Part 1 I distinguish the social or human act that the dialogical documentary needs to attend to, from the merely physical act, which is to say a movement of the human body that is not socially constituted and socially effective. In Part 2 a recognition of the contextual nature of acts underpins my exploration of how they may be integrated within the documentary as part of the complex act it comprises. My concern in Part 3 is then to speculate on how the act thus integrated within the film’s enunciation becomes an intervention in the social world.

The fact that implicit in a speech act or utterance are firstly other people whom it is addressed to, and secondly the proliferating network of such acts within which it can be located, is, as I described at the beginning of the last section, the cornerstone of Bakhtin and Volosinov’s dialogical theory linguistic practice. The question of whether these criteria can be extended to every human action worthy of the name ‘act’, and in what degree, I raise in Part 3. There is, however, an equally fundamental and distinctive characteristic of the act that is assumed in these criteria and that I can more confidently say applies to all acts. Acts are, on the one hand, mere events in the physical universe, and are no different in this respect to a clap of thunder, a rainstorm, a ladder rung breaking, etc., so they can likewise be described in the terms of the physical sciences; although described in these terms, on the other hand, they cannot be recognised as the acts they are. So, the fundamental discrimination to be made would seem to be that between *mere action*, whose context is relations of cause and effect, and *acts*, whose context is quite different. This difference of context is, I believe, not trivial. An act’s relation to its context, or a series of such contexts, is what constitutes it as an act; although what precisely this sort of context consists in is more difficult to pinpoint, and hence not so swiftly

described as it is posited. In Part 1, I will explore two aspects in this description: the idea that an act is firstly oriented to a cultural 'world', in which the physical environment appears as already and pre-reflexively 'evaluated', as being good for various purposes; and secondly, that an act is a reproduction of this 'world' (see in particular § 1.3).¹⁴

This distinction between a mere action and an act draws a threshold beyond which an animal behaving in response to its environment becomes one acting in a cultural world; however, while this distinction serves to define the extent of human action there are further significant differences between the acts thus defined. Firstly, acts can be explicitly addressed to the Other or not. It is the explicitly addressed acts, or those whose enunciation becomes explicit, that interest the dialogical practitioner most (see § 2.5). Whilst all acts must bear a reference to social practices, and consequently the acts of others that make up these practices are implicit within them, only in those that are enunciated can this become explicit (see § 3.3). The reasons for this are introduced in Part 2 and analysed in Part 3. Secondly, not all enunciated acts are equal. The enunciation of some, such as the waving of the Salvation Army collection box at the passers-by on the street, occurs as part of an everyday context; but that of others, such as an exhortation to acts of charity in a religious institution's code, occurs in the context of a 'discourse'. I base this concept of discourse on Foucault (2002), who defines the term as follows:

'discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence' (2002: 121).

¹⁴ A further word on terminology is warranted here: at times I use the term 'human act' to indicate that it is a socially constituted being that 'acts'. I don't intend by the term to imply that animals cannot act and can only 'behave'. Whether non-human animals, such as chimpanzees, bonobos and baboons, not only lead a socially sophisticated existence, as they evidently do, but can be said to act in relation to one another, is not a question I am concerned with. There is some evidence that primates do live not only in societies but cultures, i.e. groups whose behaviour is to some degree learnt and evolves socially as opposed to biologically (Tomasello, 1999: 26ff). If this is so, then it is to be expected that to an equal degree these primates will also act.

So, when I refer to a 'discursive act' I am referring not to something said in the course of everyday speech or verbal exchanges, which the word 'discourse' can also evoke, nor to an argument made in a speech or treatise, but rather to the repetition or articulation of a 'statement'. Statements are glossed by Dreyfus and Rabinow as 'those types of speech acts which are divorced from the local situation of assertion and from the shared everyday background so as to constitute a relatively autonomous realm' (1983: 47-8). The rattling of the collection box is not a statement, although of course the value enshrined in the Christian promotion of charity, which is one, is referred to within that act; when the virtue of charity is preached to a congregation in church, however, it is a religious statement that is being repeated, i.e. restated. A discursive act such as this is defined by its appearance within the 'autonomous realm' of a 'discursive context'. Whereas Foucault talks of 'discourses' in the plural, each with its own 'system of formation', referring to 'clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse' etc. (2002: 120), I will talk of discourse in the singular, using the word to refer to the series of statements, interpretations and images that circulate in the context of the public discourses generally.

So, discursive acts follow in a series that begins with the distinction between mere action and human acts, and develops from the everyday act through contexts of enunciation and of discourse. In principle it would seem unwise to try to draw hard and fast lines between terms of the series, because it is context that establishes the station within it at which an act can be located, and if context is never entirely determined as Derrida (1982) claims, the position in the series taken up by each act would never be entirely certain either. The distinction between discursive acts on the one hand and enunciated or everyday acts on the other is nonetheless important to maintain in practice, if I am to be able to describe the sense in which an everyday act can be said to intervene in the social world by becoming part of a documentary act. Clearly such acts are already interventions within situations that are socially constituted: the woman in the Salvation Army uniform holding out her collection box in front of me is making an intervention in the everyday situation that contains the two of us, and her gesture is explicitly addressed to me, i.e. it is enunciated. By integrating such acts within its complex of enunciation, however, the dialogical documentary transforms them into discursive acts, making them interventions within discourse. If a documentary is able to do this it is because it is a

discursive act—it appears in a ‘relatively autonomous realm’ insulated from everyday situations. What distinguishes the dialogical documentary from other approaches is that it interpolates the situated and everyday act within the rarefied atmosphere of a discursive context rather than assimilating the act to discursive statements. It seems to me that the act thus raised to the level of discourse cannot be a plain repetition of an already existing discursive statement; on the contrary, it is translated to the last term of the series: the ‘articulatory act’.

‘Articulation’ is possible because the social is characterised by a fundamental lack of determination. In fact, not only is it possible, but, according to Ernesto Laclau whose work is one source for this concept,¹⁵ it is also necessary, because, as he writes: ‘We live in a plural world, having to make decisions within incomplete systems of rules’ (1996: 79). The cultural world that the act appears in and reproduces, consists of a series of ever shifting and changing contexts, which the act must negotiate. For the most part the vague guidance offered by precedence suffices, but various alternative courses of action are always possible. An articulatory act, as it reconfigures these possibilities, can be defined as ‘a kind of social practice that establishes “a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result”’ (Howarth, 2004: 267).¹⁶ Finally, as this rearticulation of discursive possibilities is the basis of politics, the intervention that the dialogical documentary represents within the social world could also be termed a ‘political act’.

0.5 Overview of the Thesis in Outline

The dissertation attempts to develop terms in which a dialogical approach to documentary can be conceptualised. This I do by starting from an immanent critical assessment of specific examples of documentary practice. As powerful as any of the documentaries explored here are in their own right, it is the approach to social existence, meaning and practices that they exemplify, which is my ultimate concern. What I set out to do, therefore, is to layout a

¹⁵ The other being Dreyfus et al (1997), who use the term in a very similar sense, though seemingly without reference to Laclau’s work.

¹⁶ Howarth cites here from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London: Verso, 1985: 105.

philosophical understanding of the relation between documentary and social practices as implied in the work of the filmmakers I explore. As the methodology of a documentary is rarely made explicit, and indeed need not be, often this has entailed inferring philosophical assumptions directly from the methods used in the work.

My reading of these films, concentrating—even when it dwells on specific sequences, scenes or overall structure—on the implicit conception of and explicit engagement with the social phenomena they take as their subject, is of course guided by particular theoretical insights about social meaning. I have not set out to establish at the outset a theoretical system only to measure different documentaries against it, but have preferred to find what is alternately promising or inadequate within a particular example of practice and to derive methodological insights on the basis of this. The philosophical approach, though clearly prefigured in the aim of the project to develop a dialogical practice, derives its relevance then from this. It is for this reason that the theoretical discussion advances in parallel with the analysis of practice and presentation of examples of my own practice: its purpose is to deepen an understanding of the potential of a dialogical approach as is discernible in and applicable to documentary practice.

The dissertation falls into three parts, dealing with the representational approach, the dialogical approach, and the underlying philosophical import of the dialogical approach respectively:

Part 1: The Limits of Representation does two things: it firstly suggests that the relation between subject and object in representation is a limited basis on which to develop an understanding of practice; secondly, in pointing to the limitations of representational documentary, it develops by contrast the notion of understanding as immanent to practice. It is this understanding which calls for a different approach in documentary method. Here the conception of practices making available a familiar and intelligible ‘world’ to be found in Division 1 of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is my main theoretical reference, read in conjunction with Bourdieu and Wittgenstein’s accounts of practice and meaning.

In *Part 2: Dialogical Practice*, which is the core of the dissertation, I explore Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* (1985) and Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin’s *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960) as two examples of the dialogical approach. The underlying concern is with the nature of meaning, both as a dialogical reality and

as the condition of a dialogising practice. Wittgenstein and Bakhtin are my central references here, and between Wittgenstein's emphasis on common forms of life and Bakhtin's emphasis on dialogical relations with the Other I elaborate a conception of meaning, that I suggest is missed in representational approaches, but implicit in the dialogical documentary.

In *Part 3: Documentary as Intervention* I address two questions. I suggest that the purpose the dialogical documentary serves, as it ceases to make practice understood as the representational documentary tries to do, is to *intervene* in practices, exposing their contingency and opening them to re-evaluation. The questions dealt with pertain to this suggestion: what is the nature of this intervention? And what makes it possible? Here Bakhtin is again the central theoretical resource, but this time read in connection with Heidegger.

Finally, the *Conclusion: Theory and Practice* explores and reviews the major practical element of the thesis, my documentary project *Changing the System*, in light of the theoretical considerations that precede it.

1. The Limits of Representation

1.1 Representation and Dialogic

For the sociologist or anthropologist who is trying to account for practices, to describe and theorise them, objectification is a necessary moment in their procedure. The reason for this is that practices are suffused by self-evident and unquestioned beliefs on the one hand, and investment in and commitment to those beliefs on the other—what Pierre Bourdieu called *doxa* and *illusio* respectively (LP: 66). Questioning beliefs taken for granted, whether they be in the questioner's own culture or in another, means breaking with *doxa* and *illusio*. Such an 'epistemological break' with the familiar world brought about by objectification is, for Bourdieu, a first, but nonetheless crucial step towards an adequate observation of the social and the cultural, and towards producing knowledge and formulating theories about them. The next step is reflexive; it brings the objectifying view to the observer themselves—to their social milieu and beliefs, and to their position in relation to the culture or Other they objectify. How, though, is a social or cultural practice objectified? It is represented. It is observed and surveyed. And it is, as Bourdieu was well aware, precisely by *not* participating in it that the observer makes a practice the survey-able object of a representation.

Dialogical practice cannot replace objectification—even reflexive objectification—as a sociological or anthropological method; and this is because it does not produce 'knowledge' comparable to that produced by objectification, which is the sort of knowledge that a social science by and large aspires to. Rather than representing the social—and by representation in this context I mean a process whereby a practice, act or cultural milieu is projected as a survey-able object—dialogical documentary 'dialogises' instances of social practice. Whether a sign or gesture that has been 'dialogised' can be said to have been 'objectified' is a moot point. Certainly, as will become clear in Part 2 of this dissertation, there is a loss of self-evidence when a sign becomes 'double-voiced', but it does not thereby become the object of a representation; rather it remains entangled in the contexts and imperatives of the social.¹ So, although it may be integrated as part

¹ The 'dialogised' or 'double-voiced' sign, as Bakhtin terms it, is one in which its different meanings—or rather various and heterogeneous social uses the sign has been and is put to and their corresponding evaluations—are made to resonate within it in a particular

of a representational method, I do not advance dialogical practice as contributing to the production of knowledge, sociological or otherwise. Unlike the representational approach, the dialogical approach I seek to characterise does not seek to step outside the social as such so as to objectify and represent it.

While recognising the relational value of each instance of social practice, which can be assessed insofar as the system within which it attains that value can be objectified along with it, Bourdieu also recognised that, firstly, such systems continually evolve, and that secondly, they are shot-through with ambiguity and contradiction; and so not only is there a limit to objectification, but also each social act itself depends as much on the ambiguity and polyvalence of relations in a social system for it to be an effective negotiation of social space, as it does on the apparent objectivity of the matrix of those relations for the formation of its identity within it. In *The Logic of Practice* he writes that his researches into marriage amongst the Kabyle in Algeria led him to conceive of this ritual, and by extension social practice in general,

‘no longer simply as a set of ritual acts signifying by their difference in a system of differences (which it is also) but as a social strategy defined by its position in a system of strategies oriented towards the maximising of material and symbolic profit’ (LP: 16).

As soon as this strategic dimension opens up it becomes clear that codes or the cultural types they refer to can be, even *must be*, manipulated and not simply followed, within the very process of social practice itself. Bourdieu sees practice—now viewed as ‘a dimension of a strategy which takes on its meaning

use simultaneously. Importantly, however, these meanings are not simply part of sign’s polysemy: between meanings of a polysemic sign there need be no relationship or tension, nor are they overtly social in origin. Part 2 of the dissertation will develop a conception of the heterogeneous determinations of a sign implicit in a dialogical understanding of meaning, and of how a documentary dialogises them; and in section 3.2 The Dialogised Act, a fuller discussion of the concept of the dialogised sign will be given. It is worth mentioning at this point, however, that in using Bakhtin’s term ‘dialogise’ in relation to gestures and acts within a documentary I am applying it outside the literary and linguistic sphere it was conceived within. I don’t believe this to be too controversial, though; firstly because Bakhtin treats the utterance as a social act coextensive with other social acts, and secondly because Bakhtin’s view of language and meaning has been probably as influential outside literary studies and linguistics, in areas such as Cultural Studies, as it has within them—see for example the anthology *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Hirschkop and Shepherd, 1989).

within the space of possible strategies', and in relation to past practice and local circumstances—as 'the product of a more or less conscious pursuit of the accumulation of symbolic capital' (LP: 15; 16). The ultimate goal for social practice—social and symbolic capital, power—might remain unconscious, but its pursuit is no longer necessarily so. Objectification commensurate with the 'epistemological break' remains the preserve of the social scientist, but—and this is a conclusion Bourdieu does not countenance—it would seem no longer to be entirely absent from practice itself: the potential for at least a degree of reflexivity seems to arise *within* practice once it is seen as a 'space of possible strategies', because if a cultural type can be manipulated, if a social agent can *decide* to apply it in this or that way, then they have a grasp on it which it is not entirely submersed in *doxic* experience. Of course, if Bourdieu hopes to turn objectification back on the objectifying observer, which is to say, if he hopes to objectify reflexively the strategies and goals of the cultural and social position he himself occupies, then *illusio* cannot be all-consuming or else he, being himself immersed in it, would not be able to question it.

Strategies, as Foucault suggested in his late work, don't automatically imply a strategist (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983: 187), and indeed Bourdieu's turn to them does not imply any return of the autonomous subject. But inasmuch as a space of possible strategies can be discerned, and a reflexivity about not only social signs but the uses to which they are put presents itself as an inherent possibility, so does doing or thinking otherwise than orthodox behaviour or reason. That this reflexivity is not found primarily in the sphere of the theorist, but rather that of the 'practitioner', the culturally-situated subject, is what I want to say. The social scientist is clearly unable to manipulate cultural types or codes, or engage strategies in a social space she has objectified and to which her relation is that of detached observer: it is only as a participant alive to the exigencies and contingent possibilities of the situation and context that practice is possible. Another way of expressing this is to say that the theoretical representations of the sociologist are acts articulated within a different field than that of the practices they represent. The 'space of possible strategies' suggests that these practices, though characterised by *doxic* experience, which is inevitable and

irreducible in the factically lived situation, possess a reflexivity not continuously submersed within its self-evidence.²

Dialogical practice, unlike theoretical representation, would be a development of this reflexivity born of practice itself, which it realised in the dialogising of co-existing but contradictory cultural types, social codes and goals as they arose in practice. Bakhtin spoke of how the novel—the paradigmatic form of dialogical practice for him—transformed the diversity of social languages and their Otherness to one another (what he called ‘heteroglossia’) from being ‘heteroglossia-in-itself’ to being ‘heteroglossia-for-itself’, ‘so that languages are dialogically implicated *in* each other and begin to exist *for* each other (similar to exchanges in a dialogue)’ (DN: 400). The dialogical documentary, I hope to show, does the same for social practices generally, making explicit their otherwise implicit interdependence and openness to re-evaluation.

In this first part of the dissertation, however, I explore a representational approach to cultural practice in documentary as exemplified by Robert Gardner’s *Forest of Bliss* (1985). The film’s two main methods involve two levels of representation: its use of observational camerawork represents the environmental world and human behaviour as physically and perceptually encountered; and its use of associative, non-linear montage, in establishing relationships between objects and acts physically encountered, offers an

² This is not a denial that theoretical models and observation affect practices. The theorist’s description of social practices may come to impact on those same practices, as when the State regulates what we do by passing laws based on academic studies of this or that social phenomenon; and on a more local level the fieldworker’s presence will also impact on the practitioners she observes, as being conscious of being observed, especially by an outsider, is bound to lead to some self-censorship. My concern here is to distinguish a theoretically reflective from a practically engaged awareness of contingency; the former arises precisely on condition that the observer does not participate and hence perceives practices ‘stripped of everything that defines them distinctively as practices’, namely their ‘uncertainty and “fuzziness”’ (LP: 12); the latter, by contrast, arises only when it is these qualities of practice that are responded to, and responded to precisely by a ‘participant’, i.e. someone who has something at stake in manipulating the codes and types which structure a practice, because their Being is tied into the social milieu within which that practice takes place (which is part of their ‘facticity’ in Heidegger’s terminology). I will take this issue up again in section 2.2 when I distinguish *logical ambiguity*, which would be characteristic of a theoretical representation, and *dialogical ambiguity*, characteristic of practice.

overview of a cultural world. As attention to social acts and practices in their actuality, rather than offering explanations of them, is a characteristic of a dialogical practice of documentary, *Forest* should by rights be of interest. In the final analysis, however, the film treats only the physical encounter with things and their intelligibility as types of phenomena, and not the dialogical encounter in or between cultural worlds. By contrast, the films of Jean Rouch and Claude Lanzmann that I will turn to later locate themselves, in a sense, within the social act and within the process of dialogical interaction immanent to it. For this reason, it is instructive that *Forest's* acute observation and wordless interrogation of social and ritual acts remains a representation of them, failing as it does to dialogise them.

Although the film has been as thoroughly critiqued for being allegedly ethnographically unsound as it has been feted for its powers of observation and evocation, my concern is principally with it as an example of a representational approach to practice. Though I will allude to the failings in its representational strategies—and occasionally some of its strengths—I will not ultimately be assessing whether or not it makes ethnographically adequate statements, as anthropologists such as Jay Ruby (2000) demand. Rather I will be seeking to articulate the implicit philosophical assumptions that underpin such a representational approach, and to clarify what it is in social practice and cultural experience that does not yield itself up to representation, whether it be to visual observation or an objective theoretical overview of practices.

What, though, are my assumptions? Firstly, that from the physically or purely perceptually encountered world the phenomenologically encounterable world is not to be derived. It is rather the former that is derived from the latter, which in turn is made available by a socially constituted orientation towards the environmental world. Here Heidegger's *Being and Time* is my main point of reference. Secondly, that although phenomenological experience—what Bourdieu called 'the primary relation of familiarity with the familiar environment' (LP: 25)—is indeed, as Bourdieu says, based in the objective structures of cultural practice internalised by individuals, these practices themselves have as an integral part of their Being a dialogical encounter or relation with the Other.³

³ The phrase 'phenomenological experience' might strike some as being pleonastic, if not tautological. I use the adjective 'phenomenological', however, more or less in the sense Bourdieu gives it here, which is to say, switching now to Heidegger's terminology,

Here I draw out the implications in Bakhtin's view of language as a social practice and apply them to a Wittgensteinian conception of meaning. So in addressing the physical and phenomenological encounters implied in Gardner's film, I am preparing the ground for exploration of an alternative to representational practice: dialogic.

In contrast to representational approaches, the documentary practices I will come to characterise as dialogical do not, at least not primarily, represent or create knowledge of the social; rather they intervene in practices, both on the level of the filmmaking process and that of the discursive act which the film constitutes. Practices are not the passive objects of a representation, but become explicitly enacted and enunciated for the camera. Raised to the level of discourse in this way, the act has the potential of becoming a new articulation of the practical field rather than quietly contributing to its reproduction, i.e. it shifts us from our *doxic* adherence to dominant and seemingly self-evident meanings and practices, toward an appreciation of their margins and contradictions. On the one hand, analogous to Wittgenstein's grammatical investigations, the articulatory act produces 'just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions'' (PI: §122); in other words it confronts us with otherwise inconspicuous or overseen connections rather than explaining or theorising them. On the other hand, analogous to the novel in Bakhtin's account of it, it produces a 'dialogic contrast of languages', which 'delineates the boundaries of languages, creates the feeling for these boundaries, compels one to sense physically the plastic form of different languages' (DN: 364). Of course representation is still involved, but no longer as a goal and mode of organisation. The boundaries of practices delineated in the contrast of practical schemes and strategies, or the applications of cultural types, are not represented in dialogical practice: they are dialogised.

in relation to the familiar 'world' that has already been disclosed by the practices that we are socialised within. I also refer to the 'phenomenological experience' and 'phenomenological encounter' to distinguish these from the 'dialogical experience' and 'encounter' which are, I will suggest, their necessary counterpart and condition of possibility.

1.2 Observation and the Physical Encounter

Robert Gardner's plan for the Film Studies Center at Harvard University, of which he was director (1957-1997), was for it 'to produce films about cultures that represent basic ecological adaptations' (Ruby, 2000: 97). Among his own films made under the auspices of the centre is the documentary I will examine here: *Forest of Bliss* (1985), a film that creates a representation of a culture based in an observational 'exploration of the space [individuals] occupied', as Gardner has characterised his approach (Gardner, 1996: 176). *Forest* presents Hindu rituals and practices unfolding on the banks of the Ganges in the northern Indian city of Benares (Varanasi), but it does so without voice-over commentary or translation of the deictic dialogue. One commentator on Gardner's film, David MacDougall, himself a noted ethnographic filmmaker, points out that Gardner dispenses with explanation as it 'can easily displace other modes of understanding' (MacDougall, 2001: 79), and indeed its absence underlines the film's reliance on visual observation. Gardner's observational camera and its 'almost prehensile vision' (MacDougall, 2001: 81) conveys powerfully the sense of being immersed in the same physical milieu as its subjects. It waits in alleys and watches on as cows and funeral corteges pass; it seeks out details on the move, darting away while following a man along an alley to show a child's kite trodden underfoot. In such moments the camera—in adapting to the physical situation by which its movement and viewpoint is constrained, and recording only what the filmmaker's contingent location amongst events as they unfold allows—can be called what MacDougall, in an article published three years before *Forest* was released, termed 'unprivileged' (MacDougall, 1982). Indeed, in what would seem to be a reference to MacDougall's use of the term, Gardner himself wrote that '[u]sing the camera to follow the action is not what I would call "privileged". It can be part of the action but it is not permitted to interrupt or intervene' (Gardner, 1996: 177).⁴

⁴ Things are not this simple, however. On the one hand Gardner holds to an ideal of objectivity (which in fact does not seem to be entirely what MacDougall argues for, or at least it is not what follows as the consequence of his argument), and yet, on the other hand, in Gardner's conception the camera is 'not used for passive observation' (1996: 175) either, as it selects precisely certain individuals and motifs within the flux and melee of social life. I turn to the relation between observation and montage, and between objectivity and subjectivism in *Forest* in section 1.6 below.



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, Mithai Lal bathing in the Ganges

At the beginning of *Forest of Bliss* the camera follows a healer called Mithai Lal at dawn down steps leading through the narrow alleyways of the city to the river in which he ritually bathes. In this lengthy sequence the camera shadows Mithai Lal through each phase of his routine; its lingering attention to the journey, to the bathing ritual, and to the libations he offers at shrines as he ascends the steps again, brings out the specificity of his actions and his physicality. Watching these events it becomes clear that the very physicality of Mithai Lal's body and the rhythm of its journey down the steps, for example, is integrated into the form of the ritual itself. At each step the effort of descending the stairway draws a grunt from the man, which he pronounces as 'ma' on the way down to the river; on his return, as he offers libations to statues and lingams, his out-breath is formed into the utterance 'baba'. Rituals and practices generally, as it becomes apparent in this particular instance, are embodied. The relation between the movement of the frame and that of Mithai Lal within it draws attention to the fact that the body of the cameraman and that of the subject are present in the same space and time, and move across the same contingent ground. Gardner's camera trails Mithai Lal, remaining just behind or beside him all the way; his body, its movements, its moments of inertia, and the way they are woven into the ritual, are echoed in the responsive movements of the camera and the body which carries it. Far from 'interrupting or intervening', or telling him 'to stop or to go or to sit down or repeat anything', the filmmaker says that Mithai Lal 'just kept going down these steps to a place I had never even been' (MFB: 30). This and similar sequences in *Forest* certainly reflect the fact of a physical encounter in

their observational camerawork. MacDougall writes, however, that the unprivileged camera style is a response to a belief that 'the appearance of [an ethnographic] film should be an artefact of the *social and physical* encounter between the film-maker and the subject' (1982: 9 emphasis added). How much, then, can be learnt from the physical encounter when the social encounter, in which the filmmaker would no longer be an ostensibly passive observer 'not permitted to interrupt or intervene', is absent?



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, carpenter



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, carpenter

About a third of the way into the film there is a sequence in which a carpenter is seen making some sort of object from bamboo. Neither the previous footage nor the current images make clear what this object might be, but the edit

nonetheless clearly delineates the stages of the process: first equally spaced holes are chiselled along a length of bamboo pole; both ends of a number of shorter lengths are whittled to fit the holes and then a second pole is slotted on top making a ladder-like structure; finally this is bound together with twine. Whilst the edit follows the articulations of the process, the camera frames for the gestures of the worker, its point of view altering so as to reveal the man's use of the tool and his manipulation of the material. Perhaps my description already indicates by and large the extent of what I can understand from the image: I can see that this is a job of work, and the dexterity of the carpenter and the pile of bamboo poles in the background imply that it has been and will be repeated many times; I understand what the process of manual work is like, that if it applies tried and tested methods as this one does it has clear stages and a rhythm; bamboo is not unfamiliar to me, and equally I understand the tools used and the sorts of techniques for using them. So, overall, the observation of the Other in their physical embodiment tells me that this is a purposive act. Am I able, however, from the evidence of observation alone, to understand anything more about an act, about its place in a culture and its significance?

1.3 The Acculturated Body

Watching Gardner's images of Mithai lal or the carpenter, I understand the physical capacities and limits of these bodies in relation to those of my own body; to some degree this must come down to the sheer fact that both they and I are embodied beings. I may 'know' that their bodies are subjectively experienced only by analogy with my own subjective experience, but I feel it is so without reflection. If I see someone bang his head as he passes through a low doorway, for example, my body instinctively recoils as if with some instinctually based empathy—and this reaction can as easily be summoned up in me by an image of a man on a screen as it can in real life. I can also feel—though in a perhaps less vivid way—the motions of Mithai lal and the carpenter's bodies in my own as I watch them. When I reflect on their gestures and movements I start to appreciate the ways in which a body adapts itself to practices—how it shapes itself to the task, becoming an integral part of techniques, as when the hand grips the hammer and the body hunkers over the object being constructed, or when words are shaped from the air expelled by the lungs. This is to say that the images of Mithai lal and the carpenter tell me things that I instinctually know, and they tell me about a practice as physically manifest

in the body and in the spatial world. What I relate to in and via instinctual behaviour, however, is rudimentary; even if practices are followed instinctively, i.e. unreflectively, they are not instinctual, but rather learnt.

The body learns gestures and techniques; it learns how to use a hammer or how to offer a prayer. These practices disclose it as being able to manipulate materials, or to be attentive, diligent or reverential; other practices would disclose different capacities. As it must accommodate itself to various practices within a culture—according to the particular position the person occupies in it—the body is shaped differently by different cultures. Bourdieu describes, for example, how in the Kabyle (Berber) society of Algeria, which he studied firsthand in the late 1950s, a pervasive symbolic system divides the world along gender lines. For the Kabyle the environmental world is divided roughly into the masculine public and the feminine domestic worlds. This system of binary oppositions, ‘within the house itself, assigns regions of space, objects and activities either to the male universe of the dry, fire, the high, the cooked, the day, or the female universe of the moist, water, the low, the raw, the night.’ (LP: 76). It is further reflected in what Bourdieu termed the ‘bodily *hexis*’ (LP: 69ff) of men and women, the former whose posture is ideally upright and attention directed outward into public space, whereas the latter’s posture is ideally oriented modestly towards the ground (LP: 70; Jenkins, 1992: 75). Thus the world of objects *culturally understood and classified* is related to the *culturally disclosed* body in ‘an endless circle of metaphors that mirror each other *ad infinitum*’ (LP: 77).

Learnt behaviour is more than a supplement to instinctual behaviour: it integrates the physical body into a cultural world, on the basis of which that body is not just experienced, but understood by the subject and others in her culture. An outside observer who has only the physical poses of the body to go by and no more cannot penetrate far into this experience, but the distance she does travel will be by analogy with her own cultural embodiment. Even though to a certain degree Bourdieu’s account of Kayble culture is based on the structuralist methodology with which he originally approached his material, though later rejected—a methodology which is antithetical both to the Wittgensteinian view of practice Bourdieu builds his own later theory on, as well as to a Heideggerian view as I will develop it here—this account nonetheless has the virtue of elaborating the structure of the cultural world and its practices that disclose the

body, the spatial environment it exists in and the objects that surround it, as intelligible phenomena.

Some of the sense of purposiveness in a human body's movements can be attributed to instinct, perhaps, but that of most suggests a cultural context in which they are oriented and which constitutes them as acts and not merely actions. It is clear to me, for example, that Mithai Lal's gestures as he descends the steps or during his bobbing dance in the river have a purpose and significance—however tenuous—within a practice, even if I cannot tell what it might be; and equally clear is the fact that outside the context of that practice they would be meaningless. Practices are not synonymous with, and therefore are irreducible to, the series of physically present actions in which they are actualised: firstly they contain what Heidegger calls a 'pre-ontological understanding', and secondly this understanding opens what he calls a 'world'.⁵ In Heidegger's sense of the word, a 'world' is not a mere collection of objects, like the bamboo poles and tools the carpenter could locate as being present in his vicinity; it is a context in which things such as bamboo and hammers are encountered as intelligible in the first place. This context extends beyond the carpenter's workplace to the broader culture in which there is a use for the objects he produces, and in which he finds his own significance as a carpenter: it is, as Heidegger puts it, 'that *'wherein'* a factual Dasein as such can be said to 'live' (BT: 93). That is to say, a 'world' is a cultural space of possibility and constraint, in which an actual existing, historically situated human being (a 'factual Dasein') exists—an historical era, a collective form of life, a cultural understanding etc..

⁵ To make clear when I am using 'world' in its Heideggerian sense I will place it in inverted commas. In quotes from *Being and Time* generally, I will retain the typography of Macquarrie and Robinson's translation (BT). It is also worth mentioning here that 'practice' is not a concept Heidegger uses. He translates the Greek term *praxis* as 'concernful dealings' (*besorgender Umgang*), and *pragmata* as 'equipment' (*das Zeug*), because 'ontologically, the specifically 'pragmatic' character of the *pragmata* is just what the Greeks left in obscurity; they thought of these 'proximally' as 'mere Things' (BT: 97). He was also wary of the opposition between 'theory' and 'practice', because: "Theory and 'practice' are possibilities of Being for an entity whose Being must be defined as 'care'" (BT: 238), i.e., at a level more fundamental than that of activity or cognition.

The Heideggerian 'world' is always there in the things we commonly use or do,⁶ but it is so not in the sense of being present as a physical object is present in space. A human act is a curious two-sided phenomenon: apart from being an event in the physical world—which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for an act's existence—it is both something produced and perceived on the basis of a cultural world and, simultaneously, that within which that world is reproduced. The 'world' constitutes the understanding 'wherein' human beings live, in which they act and encounter other acts, encounter familiar things and other human beings, as well as, to a great extent, even themselves; and it is in this sense that the 'world' is there in objects and acts—as a prior understanding of them and a context in which they become what they are. The carpenter understands the bamboo that he cuts, whittles and binds in his very cutting, whittling and binding of it; he understands it, that is, not in terms of concepts and representations, but in terms of acts and manipulations, which in turn refer to the context of purposes they as skills are put to, the objects they are used to make and uses those objects are put to, and so on.

The body in the physical world, therefore, is discovered on the basis of the practices of a cultural world, not practices and the cultural world on the basis of the physical body. Firstly, Heidegger says, space is disclosed by our involvement in practices, our Being-in-the-world:

'Space is not in the subject, nor is the world in space. Space is rather 'in' the world in so far as space has been disclosed by that Being-in-the-world which is constitutive for Dasein.' (BT: 146).

Physical space is something a human being encounters as space, i.e. as an intelligible phenomenon, only because she *already* exists in a 'world'. Of course if space is phenomenal only in the context of a 'world', then the same applies to the body in space: a human being exists as her body—or the body exists as hers—on the basis of her involvement in practices:

'Dasein itself has a 'Being-in-space' of its own; but this in turn is possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world in general.' (BT: 82)

'Only', Heidegger says: *only* inasmuch as space and the body have been disclosed within a 'world' in which they are made sense of, does a human being understand herself as being a body that exists in relation to objects like the

⁶ As Heidegger succinct formula has it: 'Whenever we encounter anything, the world has already been previously discovered' (BT: 114).

carpenter's does as he handles the bamboo, and as a body that can move through space like Mithai Lal's does as he goes down to the river for his morning ritual. Bourdieu's account of embodiment in Kabyle culture lends credence to Heidegger's not uncontentious suggestion that the spatial and sensuous body is discoverable on the basis of a 'world' disclosed in practices. The intimate relation between the body and the bodily *hexis*—where the fact of physicality and cultural facticity seem intertwined, as *Forest's* footage of Mithai Lal intimates—casts some doubt on the seeming definitive priority that the 'only' in Heidegger's formulation suggests. Indeed Hubert Dreyfus in his commentary on *Being and Time* finds Heidegger's ontological demotion of the body 'unsatisfactory' (Dreyfus, 1991: 137). Yet it is the 'only' that gives pause—the idea that our bodies and therefore their actions are culturally disclosed or appropriated does not: inasmuch as a 'world' is disclosed by practices, the purposiveness legible in the merely physical act is clearly a limited clue as to the nature of a practice.

1.4 The Shape of Behaviour



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, the boat being adorned with marigolds garlands before its launch

Posture and gesture; acts, whether they are physical manipulations or 'speech acts' etc.—all ultimately are generated by the body in its disposition to act in certain ways in conformity more or less with a social field; such cultural dispositions absorbed by a person and sedimented in their body and behaviour Bourdieu called *habitus*. In some sense, then, culture is indeed manifest in and

through the body, its movements and poses, and so it might be thought that observing the body would unravel how practices disclose a 'world', or *habitus* fits with a social field. *Forest of Bliss*, in its close attention to what Gardner called 'the original shape of behavior' (MFB: 88), starts from this premise. Speaking about a sequence in the film that shows 'the ritual at the "rebirth" of [a] boat', for example, he lays emphasis on the importance of attending to the 'shape' of such practices, with the implication that their very physical form is inherently meaningful. Indeed the shape of this ritual in the film is 'pretty complete', even 'very complete' (MFB: 87; 88). First one man is seen to make a circumambulation of the boat creating a line of yellow hand prints around its hull as he goes. He next makes five handprints on the carpentry tools laid on top of the boat and places a red fingerprint in the palm of each, and then repeats this procedure on the ground in front of the boat. A second man makes a further two turns around the boat, the first with a jug of water which he pours in a ring around it, the second with a hammer with which he strikes the hull as he goes round. Gardner films and retains in the edit each revolution around the boat (though not in its entirety), and each handprint on the tools and the ground, because he believes that 'the original shape of the behavior', and 'the internal rhythms of things', are in themselves significant 'ethnographically speaking' (MFB: 87-8).

In the conversation recorded two years after the release of *Forest* from which Gardner's remarks above are taken, the filmmaker discusses the project in great detail with Ákos Östör, an anthropologist with specialist knowledge of the local culture who collaborated with Gardner on the research and production of the film. Often in this close examination that runs through the film almost shot-by-shot, Gardner expresses doubt as to whether viewers will comprehend what they are shown. Mostly this doubt relates to the ideas he has tried to intimate in his editing—his concern is how, or indeed whether, connections between various images will be understood. Will, for example, the viewer understand, from its connection with an image of a corpse floating face down in the river and birds turning in the sky overhead, that the wood piled on barges travelling along the river is to be seen as connected with death? Will they understand, from the fact that an image of a boy running along the river shore to raise a kite into the sky is followed by an image of the sun rising out of the morning mist above the river, that the kites in the film are a metaphor for life? On the other hand, it is rare for this doubt to apply to an act or exchange between people shown in an

image. Gardner does not suppose that the 'shape of behavior' represented in his film will automatically communicate its significance to the viewer, but this seems to be to his mind more a fault of their ability to attend to it in the right way, rather than any opacity of cultural significance to an objective gaze.

The sort of close attention to the physical found in *Forest* is not in itself an inherent flaw—depending on its use, it may even be a virtue; but the idea that cultural meaning is somehow immanent to an act in its 'original shape' or its 'internal rhythm' is problematic. Jay Ruby quotes an admittedly very young Gardner writing in 1957 (when he would have been around 22 years old), that the camera collects evidence 'of a direct and unambiguous kind, being reality instantaneously captured and suffering no distortion due to faults of sight, memory, or semantic interpretation.' (Gardner, cited in Ruby, 2000: 97).⁷ By the time Gardner was making this film in the 1980s, both belief in photography's objectivity generally and in the ethnographer's objectivity specifically had been submitted to widespread and decisive critique. Indeed Gardner expresses a desire to go 'beyond mere observation' (MFB: 56), although the route he took in *Forest* involved structuring the film around a set of symbolic and metaphoric relations, which introduces further problems that I will come to later. Going beyond observation did not mean for Gardner jettisoning the idea of occupying the position of a passive outsider; if anything it meant stepping even further back from social interaction, to underline in the edit of the film a subjective vision of an objectified world. He acknowledges that *Forest* is a 'personal film' (Ruby, 2000: 110)—in the discussion with Östör he refers repeatedly to his 'vision' of Benares and his effort to communicate this in the work (MFB: 19 and *passim*)—and nonetheless this 'vision', he claims, 'is grounded in the world as it is'. Talking about a sequence in which wood is split and weighed out on a giant balance for funeral pyres, the filmmaker says:

⁷ Gardner's belief in the camera's objectivity echoes Grierson's assessment that the camera's 'magic' 'lies also in the manner of its observation, in the strange innocence with which, in a mind-tangled world, it sees things for what they are' (Grierson, 1966: 141). Gardner says, regarding the 'Grierson movement', that he found 'most of it a trifle bleak and earnest', though he found Grierson's vision of documentary inspiring and cites Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon* (1934) as an early influence (Gardner, 1996: 171-2). In fact it seems likely that Gardner was in part, and however distantly, alluding here to a Griersonian conception of documentary with its emphasis on recording 'actuality', which it nonetheless, as Gardner would do in *Forest* (see section 1.6), treats 'creatively'.

'There is the interesting question still of how things get into an image, how the world is interrogated and then apprehended by a camera. What we are looking at here seems to me to be very much the world the way it is—but strained or, better, filtered through the sensibilities of the operator/observer. So it can be, though it doesn't have to be, a very shaped vision. Nevertheless, the vision is grounded in the world as it is. To the extent that what one sees is the world as it is, one is also being presented with certain inescapable and widely shared meanings. To the extent that what one sees is a highly shaped vision of the same world, one is being offered more private meanings.' (MFB: 73-4).

So, being attentive to the 'shape' of cultural phenomena, as well as the world in general, which is what presumably is done in 'mere observation', exposes 'certain inescapable and widely shared meanings'. Although at another point Gardner does say that 'knowing about [people and culture] is not as easy as just sitting down and watching them' (MFB: 56), both here and in the film what does not seem to be given due consideration is the question of whether the filmmaker, in shaping what is observed, is, rather than drawing out its latent meaning, projecting an understanding on practices which is not at all implicit within them. Meaning, even cultural meaning, it would seem, can be deduced from the physical manifestations of culture alone. Even quite late in his career Gardner writes of the observational filming of actuality as requiring the filmmaker to 'maintain a kind of vigilance' in which she will be able to 'see the connectedness of events not only as elements in the physical space they occupy but in their significance as phenomena linked by meaning.' (Gardner, 1996: 179-80).

This last statement is, I grant you, not an explicit pronouncement of ethnographic theory. In part it is a description of the filmmaker's 'elevated readiness' as Gardner experiences it—being behind the camera and responding with 'sensitivity to the ways things unfold in actuality' (MFB: 37), catching coincidental events and juxtapositions. It also, however, functions as a response to critics such as Jay Ruby, who believe that 'minimum methodological standards must be met if one is to call a film ethnographic', and that visual observation alone is insufficient as 'a means of generating statements about the human condition' and therefore cannot constitute a film as anthropological (Ruby: 2000: 106; 111). So, when Gardner speaks of the filmmaker's 'vigilance' as an 'elevated readiness in which one's eyes are open to all the relationships possible between visual entities' (Gardner, 1996: 180) there is implied here a

defence of observation as a methodologically sound means for discerning and presenting the cultural significance of objects and acts.

1.5 The Intentionality of Practice

The vigilance of the camera-operator consists not only in a readiness to respond to events, it is, according to Gardner, 'a state of mind, resembling a sort of trance' (Gardner, 1996: 180). It would be interesting to contrast this idea with Jean Rouch's concept of the *ciné-transe*: for Gardner the filmmaker is perceptually vigilant but socially detached; for Rouch on the other hand the trance, such as that featured in his famous *Les maîtres fous* (1955), is shared by the film-maker and the subject. Like Gardner's idea, Rouch's concept of the *ciné-transe* also developed from the experience of filming, specifically his recording of possession rituals among the Songhay-Zarma people of West Africa. What he discovered was that 'the filmmaker-observer, while recording these phenomena, both consciously modifies them and is himself changed by them', and that 'when he returns [to the people he filmed] and plays back the images, a strange dialogue takes place in which the film's "truth" rejoins its mythic representation' (Rouch, 2003: 87-8). In this conception of social encounter there is undoubtedly a danger of naïvely presuming that cultural horizons can be merged, something that later films Rouch made, such as *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960) which I will discuss in Part 2, are careful to avoid. This notwithstanding, the importance of Rouch's concept of *ciné-transe* is that here filmmaking is conceived of as fundamentally participatory, a form of social encounter, where in Gardner it remains a distanced observation. The detached observer can contemplate the world as something present-at-hand: it is! Rather than participating in the world, they survey it and ponder its existence. *Forest* is in fact a stunning example of a contemplative approach to physical existence. Everything is given equal attention: carrion and corpses, temples and faeces, natural phenomena and cultural acts. This contemplation, however, is not at all equivalent to the understanding of this environment contained in the cultural and social practices of those who live in it; it engages practice for the most part only obliquely.

According to Heidegger human beings do not primarily encounter the things around them as purely physical presences, as objects to contemplate or scrutinise disinterestedly, but rather as things of use and things related to their 'concerns', i.e., things they have to do with or take their bearings from. For the

carpenter in the midst of his work the hammer comes to hand sooner than it comes to mind; the people passing the workshop are not physical bodies but potential customers; the sun's rising and setting is not a metaphor for life but the limits of the working day. The physical encounter in which the documentary image is made will undoubtedly be more prominent than in other circumstances, not only because the filmmaker or film-team will be more often than not strangers to the people they film, but also for the simple reason that the presence of the camera makes substantial social interaction less likely.⁸ When he recommends that a film should reflect this physical encounter, MacDougall is principally suggesting that it should not be denied or disguised, not, I think, that the physical encounter is in and of itself meaningful. For MacDougall the imperative of acknowledging it in the making of the film flows from the desire to situate the observer and viewer in relation to, and on the same level as, the subject. The production of a film image can easily be denied within the image itself; most conventional modes of film language create an illusion in which the physical relation of the observer to the observed is dissolved: images shot from different points of view and at different times are edited together so that the observer seems to be everywhere and yet nowhere. But even within the sequence-shot that MacDougall champions, where the camera, as it sometimes does in *Forest*, follows the action in uninterrupted real time creating a sense of physical continuum between the camera-operator and subject, this largely physical and perceptual link is distinct from the phenomenological relation the subject has to his or her environment.

The phenomenologically encountered environment is apprehended not by contemplation of present things, but rather, as Heidegger put it, 'circumspectively'. Like the term in the original German, *Umsicht*, which contains within it the word *Sicht* (sight), circumspection refers, via its root in the Latin *spectare* (to look), to a way of seeing: practice 'has its own kind of sight' (BT: 98), in which things are apprehended in the round, so to speak. What Heidegger

⁸ This all the more so when the physical intrusion of the filmmaker and their camera is not made the subject of an overt social encounter. In this regard it is interesting that Östör alludes to a certain avoidance of engaging in a social encounter, when he emphasises the importance of being officially admitted to film the rites they wanted to: 'It meant that we were included despite our alien looks and habits. When we were challenged—and this did happen because photography was prohibited there—we could say that we were a part of the proceedings, even if only temporarily.' (MFB: 96).

is getting at is the way in which, when the carpenter reaches for the hammer or the twine, when he binds the bamboo construction together, though he may not consciously look at, examine or even think about any of the separate elements and tools that he is manipulating, he nonetheless apprehends them through his very use of them. They have a 'shape', but not one he discovers by examining them, rather one that is, as Wittgenstein puts it, 'marked out in advance':

'The shape that I see—I want to say—is not simply a shape; it is one of the shapes I know; it is a shape marked out in advance.' (Wittgenstein, 1981: §209).

Where are shapes 'pre-figured' in this way?—In practices, in the 'world'. It may well be that while he works the carpenter is thinking about something else, maybe his breakfast, as Östör suggests (MFB: 56); or, conversely, at breakfast he may be thinking about his work. If he were to stop and scrutinize either the hammer in the workshop or the plate he eats off at breakfast, if he wonders whether the hammer is of the sort that will last or the plate is of this or that alloy, these objects would become present against the circumspective background of the roles they play in his 'world' and among his 'concerns'. As Heidegger puts it:

'The context of equipment is lit up, not as something never seen before, but as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection.' (BT: 105).

Neither the shape of things circumspectively apprehended, nor the 'world' itself is present-at-hand:

'No matter how sharply we just *look* at the 'outward appearance' of Things in whatever form this takes, we cannot discover anything ready-to-hand.' (BT: 98).

The phenomenological shape of things, that is to say, is not equivalent to the 'outward appearance' of what is present-at-hand. Rather it is synonymous with the thing's place within a 'world' where it is circumspectively encountered.

People are indeed 'making meaning whenever they are doing something', as Gardner remarks in relation to the carpenter, 'even when they are chopping bamboo into pieces' (MFB: 56). However, this is *not*, as both Gardner and Östör seem to think it is, because the activity has 'symbolic significance', even if this significance is thought of as being constituted by the fact that 'the action and the position of the action in culture exist for everyone else', as Östör suggests (MFB: 57). The meaning made in practice, as opposed to that which is simply read into it, is what constitutes things as intelligible, i.e. what 'marks them out in advance'. It is this that Heidegger calls 'pre-ontological understanding' (BT: 32 and *passim*). What I understand the thing to be pre-ontologically, i.e.

unreflectively within practice, is not an *interpretation* of that thing. When I do come to formulate an ontological interpretation of anything, on the other hand, such as when I say ‘the hammer is a technical implement’, this interpretation is based in what I in some manner already understand the Being of that entity to be. Symbols are of this sort: they are *interpretations of* phenomena; but phenomena by their nature are already ‘meaningful’, and it is this meaning that people ‘make’, or ‘reproduce’, what have you, ‘whenever they are doing something’.⁹ The contemplative view of the world contained in *Forest*—which is an ideological interpretation of phenomena and so could be described as a ‘myth’ in Roland Barthes’ sense (1983)—is a consequence, it would seem, of Gardner’s conception of meaning.

Whether people are thinking about what they are doing or not—and certainly whether they are thinking *symbolically* or not—their acts are meaningful. This is because practices themselves have intentionality independently of whether, or what, individuals mentally intend. In Husserlian phenomenology intentionality describes the directedness of thoughts towards phenomena: it is a property of the mind. For Heidegger on the other hand, who says that ‘circumspection is always directed towards entities’ (BT: 105), intentionality arises not in the mind, but in circumspective practices. The ‘world’ in which the carpenter dwells, with its intricate weave of various practices or practical schemes and its layering of contexts, is where things have already been ‘discovered’ and where their meaning and shape have been ‘disclosed’.

1.6 Shaped Vision

Even if the shape of an act is presumed inherently meaningful, clearly Gardner was aware that *his* meaning is by no means automatically apparent to the film’s viewer. The filmmaker may observe practices in all their physical intricacy, but how is it possible for them to demonstrate their lived meaning? It is here that

⁹ Symbols (and communicative signs generally) articulate certain aspects of phenomena in the sense that they draw our attention to them. This is different to fundamentally disclosing phenomena, i.e. making entities available as intelligible things, however. Symbols are conventional signs: the association between the sign (signifier) and its object (the signified) is one of convention. The crucial point, as far as a dialogical understanding of meaning goes, is that it is the symbol that is based in the convention of use, not the convention that is based on the symbol.

Gardner's second method enters, that of shaping the visual record, as he attempts to provide an overview of practice.

Juxtaposed with the ceremony accompanying the launch of the boat in *Forest* is another ritual, shown in parallel montage. At several points during the sequence of discrete acts constituting the boat ritual Gardner inserts acts from this second set of rites: first, between the handprints being applied to the boat's hull and then to the boat-builder's tools, he inserts a shot of a cortege processing through the narrow passageways above the ghats and arriving at the river bearing a corpse; then, after orange garlands are hung on the prow of the boat, a body swathed in orange fabric is seen being laid on a pyre; next water taken directly from the river in cupped hands is dispensed on a corpse's head after the boat has been shown being turned around towards the river and a libation of Ganges water has been administered to its prow; and, finally, as the boat is rowed away the corpse on its litter is shown immersed in the shallows of the river. Gardner's intention is clear: as he says himself, it is 'to make a comparison by intercutting the launching of a "newborn" boat with the offering to the Ganges of a "newdead" person' (MFB: 87). The association of the two, between which the homology is distinctly indicated in the editing, makes the one an interpretation of the other: it seems the boat is being treated as a 'person', which the film communicates by associating it with the treatment of an actual person; and the 'newdead' person, correspondingly, is understood as being sent on a journey.¹⁰ In part the shortcoming of observation requiring the filmmaker go beyond it is that, as Gardner points out, film 'is so literal and specific in the way it points to things. It is hard [...] to generalise or achieve abstractions' (MFB: 89). Here in this sequence, however, not only has Gardner underlined the general form shared by these two rituals, he has, in yoking them together, suggested both the dimension of animism and the idea of life and death being connected in a cycle—general and abstract ideas without doubt.¹¹ Montage, by which the film

¹⁰ The anthropologist Alfred Gell in *Art and Agency* (1998) discusses the conflation between art objects and people: Gell suggests that essentially art objects (and by extension ritual artefacts), both in pre-modern cultures and in modern societies, are treated as 'the equivalent of persons, or more precisely, social agents' (1998: 7).

¹¹ As an aside it bears mentioning that animism—the belief that objects, otherwise considered 'inanimate', have 'souls'—is not confined to a religion-based cultural understanding but persists in the heart of modernity. This is evidenced in our attitudes to

achieves generalisation and abstraction, is thus the second of *Forest's* central representational methods. It augments the first, observation—which apprehends ‘the world as it is’ visually—by shaping, or interpreting, the observational image.



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, libation of the boat



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, libation of the corpse

Montage is, of course, one of the mainstays of film language. What is significant about Gardner's approach to it, however, is that in *Forest* he has created a film text eschewing narrative-based montage with its cause-and-effect logic, in

the machines we directly ‘control’, such as our cars and computers, to which, as Gell suggests, when they breakdown or crash, we tend to attribute human vulnerability or wilfulness (Gell, 1998: 18-19).

favour of a structure of non-causal associations created from similarities and differences among objects, actions and situations. Dziga Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), a distant precedent for Gardner's technique of montage, uses the pretext of a cameraman filming the city from various perspectives to frame the formal montage of images which constitutes the fabric of the film. Likewise *Forest* gives the appearance of easily recognisable cohesion to its intricate montage by framing it with a readily assimilated concept, which in its case is the idea that the events it juxtaposes happen within the course of a day. Ultimately, however, the film is constructed around a set of repeated motifs, and it is by dint of their recurrence in differing contexts and relationships through the course of the film that each of these motifs is, as Gardner puts it, 'layered as to the significance or meaning of its content' (MFB: 73). The sound of timber being felled that begins the film, for example, is the first instance of a leitmotif threaded through the film. It continues in the images of labourer's loading timber onto barges or carrying it to the burning grounds, where one corpse's weight of wood is apportioned using a giant balance before it is deposited unceremoniously at the site where the pyre will be built. Finally the motif reappears with the wood reduced to smouldering ashes after a funeral, picked through by the odd low-caste woman and dogs. Likewise marigolds recur throughout the film in different states and relationships; they adorn shrines, boats and bodies, both alive and dead; a worker plucks them in the field and basket-loads are delivered to women who thread them into garlands; monkeys and cows are seen to eat them. The selection of these and other motifs—which include dogs, boats and children's kites—already stretches the observational credo of non-intervention, as these are elements actively sought out and isolated. Gardner recalls, for example, that he spent a great deal of time trying to catch a cow eating a marigold garland, even going to the trouble of carrying one around with him to feed to a cow (though he doesn't say whether the image of this event that appears in the film was the result of an intervention on his part or not) (MFB: 70). It is in the montage, too, that the behaviour of Gardner's subjects is 'layered' with meaning. The various revolutions made by the boat-builders described above echo the actions of pall-bearers seen five minutes earlier in the edit, who circle a corpse laid out on the mortuary floor before hoisting the stretcher on which the body has been fastened onto their shoulders and heading off for the burning ghat. Thus the images of the boat ritual become 'layered' with connotations of death and rebirth.

It is such reliance on montage to re-contextualise objects and acts, and to imbue them in the process with meaning (though apparently meaningful in themselves), that is in sharp contrast to the approach of the dialogical documentary. Whereas in the latter people's acts and words are seen in relation to one another and are thus shown to be in themselves crossed by heterogeneous imperatives and evaluations, the representational documentary creates an external viewpoint from which ambiguities and contradictions are resolved or accounted for. At the beginning of Gardner's film, for example, the viewer is confronted with a series of mysterious images: the silhouette of a boat swathed in mist drifts across the screen; a boy runs along the shore pulling a kite behind him while a deep orange sun rises through the mist; dogs are climbing the steep steps rising from the river, or running and fighting on a sand shore. As the film continues, Mithai Lal and another holy man appear carrying out their morning rituals, followed by the marigold harvesters, wood porters and eventually the carpenter, who are all shown at work. Thus far the objects and actions the viewer witnesses remain largely without context—apart, that is, from that minimal one which has tentatively been built by their juxtaposition; at this stage they are unfamiliar phenomena to those uninitiated in Hindu ways of life, but with each new instance their intelligibility as types belonging to a specific context thickens: the marigolds accruing connotation as they, around halfway through the film, are integrated, like the wood brought from the forest, within the context of funeral rites; likewise the kites as they are seen buoyed by the heat rising from the embers of pyres above which children fly them; the dogs, too, as it comes clear that some of what they scavenge from the river may be human flesh; and the work of the carpenter as the object he was making is revealed in the mortuary scene to be a litter for carrying a corpse. Some of these things, such as use of the marigolds and bamboo stretchers, are directly connected with the rituals surrounding death in the locality; others, such as the kites, are little more than incidentally connected; and in the case of yet other images in the film—particularly the boat heaped metres high with sand, punted improbably by a lone individual along the river, and then the labourers unloading its cargo at the shore—it is the contiguity created by the film in which they are juxtaposed with funeral rites that layers them with the connotations of mortality; this and the fact that in the mythology of Ancient Greek culture, whose basic tropes the majority of European-originating cultures can be assumed to be distantly familiar with, it is a boat that ferries souls to the underworld across the river Styx, just as it is a dog, Cerberus, that guards the entrance to Hades.



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, marigolds being plucked



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, wood porter

When preparing for the film, Gardner, who had visited Benares four or five times before filming there, was struck by the idea that the city 'had a living and a dead side to its river', and this led him, after 'looking into Greek mythology and reading again about the Styx and Cerberus', to believe that 'there really is some reason for seeing a parallel here between a Greek and a Hindu, or Asian idea'. 'What it did for me', Gardner says, referring to the idea of viewing Benares from the perspective of Greece, 'was to begin to organise the place' (MFB: 17). The selective combination of Hindu and Ancient Greek symbols which forms the matrix of the film, suggests a not unrealistic simulation of how an outsider observing another culture's rites and practices without socially engaging in them, might experience that culture. Would she not see some aspects in terms of what she already knew, while others would perplex her? Would she not hypothesise about how they all hung together, what rationale there was in people's behaviour, and do so probably by looking for the sort of cohesion that could be summed up in a set of tropes or a narrative? And isn't it likely then that this narrative or overview would be translated from what she is already familiar with? But the outside observer is neither the subject of the film, nor indeed acknowledged in the film. It is true that the camerawork acknowledges the bodily presence of an observer, nonetheless the edit erases it again by transforming

the objects and events physically encountered into symbols intelligible from the point of view of a detached and disembodied observer. The disappearance of the observer from *Forest* recalls MacDougall's comments about the lack of 'acknowledged observer' that characterises the privileged camera of a fiction film, because Gardner's film similarly posits 'an invisible observer with special powers which merge the consciousness of the author and the audience' (MacDougall, 1982: 8). All significant relationships in the film are established outside the encounter with the acts and objects they are drawn between. In other words, the network of associations the film builds in its montage would seem to be unavailable to the people who populate the milieu it represents and independent of their acts; it is constructed from a privileged and objectifying viewpoint, which the camera in the physical encounter apparently doesn't allow itself, but which the selection and montage of images, at the latest, reinstates.¹²



Fig. *Forest of Bliss*, carpenter smoking

¹² In the final analysis Gardner's observational camera, as attentive and physically responsive as it is, is itself 'privileged', paradoxically because situations are not overtly set up for it. Firstly it is strange indeed that no one is seen to acknowledge the camera in *Forest*—as Chris Marker's alter ego, Sandor Krasna, is reported to say in Marker's *Sans Soleil* (1983): 'Frankly, have you ever heard of something stupider than to say to people, as they teach in film schools, not to look into the camera.' Secondly, without acknowledgement of the camera on some level, the scene presented to the viewer becomes the pliant object of their projection, a privileged relation that Gardner unwittingly reproduces in the very way he chooses to shot his subjects.

At the end of the sequence in the carpenter's workshop, he is seen at rest squatting against a wall and smoking. It is a brief shot, but because Gardner amplifies the sound as the man exhales the smoke, a seemingly insignificant event is highlighted for the viewer, who is moved to connect it not only with the rasping of the old man Mithai Lal's breath throughout the film, but also the smoke that later will rise from the embers at the burning ghat. This is a skilful bit of editing, but what relation does the carpenter's expiration bear to the Hindu 'world'? In their conversation, Östör comments to Gardner that anyone passing the carpenter's workshop could pause and reflect on what the bamboo stretchers 'mean', saying to themselves 'this is the way we all go, this is the way I'll be taken to the burning ground'. I do not deny that such reflection is possible, but Östör makes this suggestion in relation to the idea that 'the action [of the carpenter] and the position of that action in the culture exist for everyone else' (MFB: 57). As I've argued before, in essence, it is not reflection on a phenomenon that gives it its (cultural) meaning but rather the phenomenon's place in the practices of a culture, otherwise its meaning would correspond to any arbitrary thought that might occur to you, me or any other individual. So whilst it is indeed possible for a passer-by to reflect on such phenomena in the way the film encourages the viewer to, their reflection is not a reliable indication of the position that phenomenon occupies in Hindu practices and the 'world' in which the residents of Benares exist. This applies no less to the carpenter's exhalation, which is similarly divorced from the context of local practices through its isolation and the emphasis it receives in the edit. The carpenter's body, his very breath, becomes in this way a metaphor in Gardner's text, which as a whole presents what is through and through a (powerful but) subjective reflection on death, rather than an exploration of the cultural understanding embodied in Hindu practice. In fact Gardner's reflective 'vision', based as it is in what seems to be contemplation of straightforwardly concrete appearances, is itself part of another cultural world: with its ambivalence towards modernity and a fascination for mortality and transcendence, *Forest* is of a piece with Romanticism.¹³

¹³ Roderick Coover's (2001) account of *Forest* gives a more sympathetic assessment of its metaphorical montage. The open, non-dialectical structure he finds in *Forest* I largely concur with, but he premises his defence of the film on a theory of cultural understanding as a cognitive process derived from Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), so that 'the process for the viewer [of *Forest*] is one of building a

1.8 Beyond Representation

In examining *Forest* my aim has been to assess the limitations of a representational approach to culture and practice in documentary. Presuming, however, that Gardner's intention was to give an account of Hindu funeral practices is perhaps not entirely fair to him, because it is not clear that this was his unequivocal intention. Although he emphasises many representational criteria in what he has to say about the film, he also says that he was 'not at all interested in making a film about abstractions like society, culture, and personality, or about items on somebody's ethnographic laundry list' (Gardner, 1996: 176). Clearly, attempting to secure objectivity by remaining faithful to the actual shape of actions and declining to intervene in the situation are not identical with the goal of representing society or culture, but the rationale for such criteria lies within the conceptual framework of the social sciences which seek to objectify such abstract ideas; and although Gardner rejects the abstractions on the 'ethnographic laundry list' because he is interested in individuals and embodiment, this interest itself is underwritten by a particular anthropological viewpoint, namely a certain belief in humanist universalism. His film is clearly about abstract ideas, and, as its methods rest on the ethnographically informed close observation of cultural practices, the representation of these practices becomes an integral part of the evocation of the ideas. The fact that his take on human behaviour has an accultural inspiration does not undo the fact that *Forest* presents practices within a representational framework. It is thus with reference to his specific methods that I have attempted to indicate how the general philosophical assumptions about practice they imply are misconceived. Far from being a fault peculiar to Gardner, however, the problem affects every representational and observational approach to practice. As Bourdieu says:

'the truth of the relationship that every observer has with the action that he states and analyses, *namely the insurmountable break with action and the world* [...] is presupposed in the very intention of talking about practice and especially of understanding it and seeking to make it understood other than by producing and reproducing it' (LP: 33, emphasis added).

viable world out of referents' (Coover, 2001: 422). The problem with Coover's account, from my point of view, is that he conceives of a world as basically reducible to 'an interconnected fabric of referents' (431), which, though in constant flux, he believes can be pictured, represented.

It is time to turn to the alternative: the dialogical documentary. In downplaying the social encounter, *Forest* misses the process by which meaning is produced and reproduced as well as the ambiguity and heterogeneity of cultural types implicit within this process. These are the aspects of practice that the dialogical approach focuses on; but if Bourdieu's admonition applies to one, then it applies to all attempts to make practice understood from outside. So, if dialogicism is to offer an alternative to representation, it will be necessary to ask how documentary can foreground the social encounter and the production of social meaning; why in doing so, and to what extent, it would cease to be representationally structured; and, if it must necessarily stop seeking to make practice understood, what role it would play.

Evidence of Work: B. *Seeing in the Dark* (DVD 2)

B. *Seeing in the Dark* (long edit), c.50mins



The account in this edit of the footage shot during the Seeing in the Dark project is constructed primarily from the words and actions of the participants themselves—from their views and responses, from the events they were part of and the situation those events occurred in. It follows the process, from the moment the new group started to put their experiences into words, to visitors being guided through their installation in complete darkness. The participants found themselves involved in two processes, however: the creation of the installation and its documentation. The most powerful and far-reaching integration of the two processes occurred during the filming of the drama they devised. This evolved from early role-plays, which were improvised on and brought together as one story, acted out by the participants and recorded for playback within the installation. I've attempted to make the development of the story and its recording the central elements in the video, because it was at this point especially that the participants were able to address themselves to the camera in a form they had devised for themselves.

The video was commissioned by the London-based development agency Healthlink Worldwide.

Apart from the participants and staff at the Blind Peoples Association in Ahmedabad, thanks is also due to David Curtis, who commissioned the film, and the facilitators of the project, Simon Allen and Mayeen Akmed.

Please view Seeing in the Dark on DVD 2 before reading the next part.

2. Dialogical Practice

2.1 Ambiguity

Before Gardner shows the corpse being laid out on the bamboo litter and then circled by the pallbearers in his film (see § 1.6), the mortuary in which this takes place is revealed to be located in the same building as a hospice for the dying. Ten or so minutes before the laying out of the corpse occurs, four men are seen processing through the mortuary and up the stairs to the first floor. One beats a small gong, another blows what looks like a conch shell, and a third rings a hand bell. Upstairs one of the men waves the flame of a simple oil lamp over a bed where an old woman lies, the cover tucked up to her chin so that apart from her face only her hands are visible held out beside it. The man continues with the ritual, pouring Ganges water into her mouth which has to be held open for her, and then calling out a phrase to her several times over, which weakly she repeats. In the first moments of the sequence, however, the woman makes a slight waving gesture with her hands. This gesture, Gardner says, he took to be an unambiguous sign of the woman's acceptance of the rites about to be administered to her, whereas his colleague Östör, on the other hand, describes it as 'somewhat ambiguous' and points out that some viewers of the film have thought that it was 'an attempt to prevent the ritual from happening' (MFB: 62-3).

To some degree both Östör and even more so Gardner, who unlike his colleague cannot call on the familiarity won through years of firsthand ethnographic study, are outsiders in this context. Consequently, the variance of their interpretations of the gesture might be attributable to the fact that its 'position in the game' is simply unknown to them. This would suggest, though, that once the observer had mastered the game the ambiguity it points to would be resolved. Yet ambiguity is not confined to those cases where it arises due to a lack of familiarity with cultural context; on the contrary, a cultural type can be generally familiar and clear to someone while a particular instance in which it is applied remains opaque to them. Far from this being a rare event, is it not possible that we don't notice it only because, in subtle ways, this sort of ambiguity occurs so frequently in the course of everyday interaction, that it becomes part of the rich on unconscious fabric of our daily lives? Can I be sure, for example, that when someone waves their hand at me in a new situation it will remain an instance of the same sign and type that I took it to be in the past?

However minor the mismatch between the present application of a type and those that precede it, every fresh instance of practice or social interaction involves new uses of the cultural types—words, gestures, expressions etc.—we take for granted as part of our ‘world’, new uses in which the type itself is potentially taking on new determination. If this is so, what is it that allows me nonetheless to continue confident that this new application will conform with the past—that a gesture will remain one of assent, or that a rite will maintain its solemnity etc.?

The social agents involved in the interactions that Gardner records, such as those administering rites in the hospice and the woman receiving them, are, I assume, as fully familiar with the significant acts and objects in their milieu as anyone can reasonably be supposed to be. I assume too, that although some of the acts and objects they encounter will be ambiguous in certain situations, for the most part this ambiguity will be trivial enough not to be noticed and what is meant or required will seem distinct regardless of the occasional moments in which it arises. And yet there are other objects or acts, which on the contrary will be distinctly ambiguous—as perhaps the gesture of the old lady was even for the men offering her the rites that were part of their common ‘world’—and whose occurrence is of particular interest to the dialogical practitioner. This sort of ambiguity, though it may be ignored or arbitrarily resolved, cannot be reduced to nought for the reason that it arises from the necessarily incomplete determination of cultural types. It would seem potentially to affect not only the many bodily gestures that are culturally specific (gestures of greeting, refusal, assent etc.), not to mention its affecting verbal utterances, but ultimately, as soon as they enter a cultural context, even those rudimentary gestures of the body, such as the grimace or the smile that might be suspected of having a degree of biological universality, are not necessarily unambiguously understood.

Ambiguity is used to great effect in *Forest of Bliss*, but it is of a particular sort. Firstly it is the ambiguity arising from unfamiliarity. The viewer is presented with the acts of practices that she or he, for lack of context, cannot recognise: I see an object made of bamboo, but what *sort* of object it is I cannot tell; I hear an old man uttering an incantation, but its significance is opaque to me. Gradually this initial ambiguity is reduced as each motif is increasingly determined in the contexts supplied by the film: the bamboo object turns out to be a litter, on which a corpse will be removed to the river; the incantation the utterance of a shaman, who deifies the same river. Practices as determinations of types and meanings

seem to be coming into view, but rather than lingering on the social encounter in which types receive their determination, Gardner treats it as if it were epiphenomenal compared to the timeless mythical significance of death and the cycles of nature his film evokes. Here the under-determination of the motifs he has selected from Benares serve him well; in their broad generality as types they allow the film to suggest meanings that are not specific, possibly alien even, to Hindu culture.

The ambiguity Gardner utilizes is therefore actually a textual ambiguity, one of symbols and their interrelation within and across texts. This ambiguity is the result of 'textualisation', that is to say the way *Forest* treats acts and interactions as texts, or signs, to be removed from their immediate contexts and interpreted independently of them.¹ If a documentary is to focus on the social production and reproduction of meaning, however, it cannot rely on this, because the only relation possible between the meaning of such a metaphorical film text and the social world is representational: the viewer perceives the observed milieu through the organising frame of the representation, and so ultimately the sense made *of* acts and practices from without, from the observer's external point of view, eclipses the sense made *by* those acts and practices. That is to say, the representational approach to practices involves a projection of meaning into them; as Wittgenstein writes: 'One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing's nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing the frame through which we look at it.' (PI: §114). If it is possible for the dialogical practitioner to get beyond such projections it may be by mining the ambiguity inherent within practices themselves, in which case the documentary then would need to focus on the concrete processes of interaction and communication.

¹ For a discussion of anthropology's use of this hermeneutical mode of investigation and the attendant problems of 'textualisation' see Clifford, 1988: 38-41. In fact, *Forest* suggests a mixture of, on the one hand, the first-hand, experiential authority based in the participant observer's "'feel" for the foreign context', and on the other, the analytical authority based in the recontextualisation of 'a potentially meaningful ensemble separated out from an immediate discursive or performative context' used as evidence of 'an englobing context, a "cultural" reality' (38-39). While dialogism implies the *recontextualisation* of acts by subsequent acts, and *iterability* (see ftns. 2 and 4 below) is a constitutive part of the act, *Forest's* textualisation replaces the open-ended dialogical context with what amounts to a determinate, monological context.

2.2 A Dialogical Conception of Meaning

My purpose in this second Part of the dissertation is to ask how the dialogical approach transforms documentary from a representation of a pro-filmic event or object into an explicitly dialogical act. In subsequent sections I will be discussing the distinctive features of the dialogical approach to documentary, in particular how a dialogical encounter is evoked by a film through foregrounding the ambiguity in a sign's use or the response to it, but before I embark on discussion of specific films and their methods I want to pursue further the issue of ambiguity and develop an understanding of its sources in signs, acts and practices. What is the ambiguity that characterises the sign-in-use? If it is not merely an epiphenomenal effect but rather an inherent aspect of the social processes of production and reproduction of meaning, how is this to be described? Just as representational approaches have implicit within them one particular conception of meaning, dialogical approaches imply another; and it is in relation to this dialogical conception of meaning, which I will sketch out in the next two sections, that the ambiguity to be found in signs as they are used within social encounters can be analysed.

The rudiments of this conception of meaning are, on the one hand, the common *form of life*, as Wittgenstein termed it, which I share with others, and on the other, the projection of cultural types familiar from my form of life into each new situation and social encounter. Together these are the two 'facts' that describe the *dialogical condition of meaning*. The first, a form of life, which I have assimilated from childhood on through imitation and *ad hoc* instruction in the cultural milieu in which I have been immersed, lends objectivity to my thoughts and actions precisely because it represents a consensus of practice against which my actions can be measured. In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein found that the idea of meaning being vouchsafed either by subjective intentions or intuitions of essences did not stand up to scrutiny: neither a subjective state nor a set of essential rules can confer objectivity on our performances and inferences of meaning, which are, on the contrary, context-dependent. So, if nothing outside practices secures the meaning within them, it is instead precisely practice itself that is the sole guarantor of objectivity—the agreement, not in what we think or profess, but in our ways of acting, using and responding to signs etc.: the signpost points me in this direction and not that; these gestures and words count as a greeting, those as a leave-taking; a word signifies this and a symbol that, etc., because that is the

part it plays in the practice, or 'language-game', into which it is integrated in the form of life I share with others.

This objectivity obtained in the context of shared practices is, however, only ever relative: meaning is conferred on my acts only if others do *in fact* agree with me in their actions, just as it is only conferred on each of their acts on the same condition. This then is the second 'fact' of meaning, complementary to the first: each and every meaningful act, however seemingly inconsequential, is made in anticipation of a response, because ultimately it is *only the response of the Other to my act that can establish its meaning*. A form of life is only ever an apparent consensus; one we take for granted and which forms the matrix for future performances and inferences of meaning, yes, but which neither pre-determines these acts, nor itself consists of anything but their general agreement with one another, from which future acts might diverge at any point. So, *consensus* or the relation with others, on the one hand, and *alterity* or the encounter with the Other, on the other—the concrete meaning sought in the dialogical documentary is formed in the dynamic relation of these two 'facts'.

What is it that turns a certain movement of a hand, for example, into an act of acceptance or of rejection? When a particular physical movement made by the human body is understood as a human act it is because it appears as something familiar and intelligible. It is recognised as the iteration of a familiar type of act, as an act that agrees with similar acts from the past. The same goes for the sounds produced by the human larynx, which understood as speech appear as the utterance of familiar words with an intelligible sense. It may be that we don't understand the content of the speech, yet the sounds can still be understood as part of a form of life and hence as a human act. 'Even in cases where the speech is indistinct or a foreign language,' as Heidegger says, 'what we hear proximally is *unintelligible* words, and not a multiplicity of tone-data' (BT: 207). Sounds produced by someone hitting the keys of a piano, too, in as much as they are understood as music, are so because they are recognised as a type of musical phrase of some form or other. When Wittgenstein asked himself what hearing a musical phrase or theme with understanding consisted in, he decided it was being able to hear in it a familiar type of human act:

'If I say e.g.: it's as if here a conclusion were being drawn, or, as if here something were being confirmed, or as if this were a reply to what came earlier,—then the way I understand it clearly presupposes familiarity with conclusions, confirmations, replies etc.' (Wittgenstein, 1998: 59).

The sounds produced by the pianist are familiar and intelligible as music to anyone who has learnt, from others, to listen in a certain way, and who now agrees more or less in his or her responses with those of others. 'Conclusions, confirmations, replies etc.' are the sort of familiar types of act that I have learnt as part of my form of life, and the pianist's performance is an iteration of such types. So, what makes an act out of a mere action is, firstly, the way it is understandable in relation to other acts of the same or a related type.

An act's being context-dependent means that understanding the gesture made by the old lady in *Forest* as acceptance or rejection of a ritual, for example, is based in familiarity with accepting and rejecting as types of act, just as, taken globally, the gestures and phrases used by the men administering the rites to the woman are based in familiarity with benediction as a type of ritual. Clearly, the latter is a rite dependent on the context of a religious practice, and whilst acceptance and rejection may seem less specific, they are nonetheless customs, practices, which take various forms in different contexts or different forms of life. So, it is in the context of Hindu practices, and only in this context, that the gesturing with a lamp over a person or the repetition of a particular phrase will have the meaning it presumably does here. Take the gesture or words out of this context and they would mean something quite different. Isolated from a coronation, to take another example, the act with which 'the crown is being placed on the head of the king in his coronation robes', as Wittgenstein says, loses its meaning. And if it appeared in a different context, the crown would no longer be part of what should be 'the picture of pomp and dignity' but rather 'a parody of a respectable hat' (PI: §584). Not only, then, does an action become an act by dint of being understood in the context of related acts, but it is vulnerable to shifts in context. Whereas Gardner ignores or perhaps simply overlooks this, the dialogical documentary is characterised precisely by an examination of the fissures that open within a single and seemingly simple gesture or act as it is repeated against differing contexts or situations.²

² The terms in which the relation between consensus and alterity is presented in this section are basically Wittgensteinian, but they have a Derridian subtext that continues through the next three sections. Wittgenstein's emphasis on forms of life and the consensus (in our use of signs) they represent, which I will contrast with Bakhtin's emphasis on dialogical alterity (the difference between uses of a sign or type) in section 2.6, can also be contrasted with the dimension of alterity that Derrida stresses. By no

In its dependency on contexts and its vulnerability to their transformation, the act is characterised by an ambiguity that is more than merely logical. *Logical ambiguity* is attributable to the *generality* of a type and the *vagueness* of its application. That is to say, a type is general in as much as it must apply in more than one instance. For example, we don't need an exact definition detailing the size, shape and spacing of speckles to be able to recognise a patterned surface as a 'speckled' surface; the type 'speckled' applies 'to a variety of distinct states of affairs so is implicitly general' (Hookway, 1985: 35). It is this generality that allows our physical environment to appear as a meaningful and conceptually manipulable 'world'; but it also entails that any application of a type is more or less vague. Consider another example: 'big' may be used by someone to describe a circus tent to me that I had not seen for myself. What, I might want to ask, counts as 'big' in this case? The word is necessarily ambiguous, as it can be as readily applied to planets as it can to ants; however, this is of course an

means, however, does Wittgenstein deny alterity: his *Philosophical Investigations* continually draw relations between 'meaning-scepticism' and forms of life, and the book is one of the most sustained and patient analyses of the issues that I know of. *On one side* there is what Saul Kripke (1982) has called Wittgenstein's 'skeptical paradox', which boils down to saying that though we *seem* always to be following and applying rules, there is no fact to assure us what the rules are that we are following; I *think* I know, for example, what I mean to say or be doing, but I cannot demonstrate, even to myself, that what I'm actually saying or doing is what I take it to be. The way in which Wittgenstein demonstrates this is to show how if the context in which a sign is used or an experience occurs is changed, its meaning changes too (see e.g. the so-called 'private language argument', PI: §243ff); and precisely this vulnerability to recontextualisation, which I highlight in the current and subsequent sections, is a key aspect of Derrida's concept of *iterability* (Derrida, 1982). In fact, Wittgenstein's dismantling of arguments that identify intentional states as supplying 'facts of meaning' has much in common with the critique Derrida directs at Husserl's similar argument for 'expression' in *Speech and Phenomena* (1973). *On the other side*, however, the difference to Derrida is that, although Wittgenstein is sceptical about all attempts to produce a 'fact' that would ground meaning in an intention, disposition or rule beyond a sign's contextual use, he does reach for that context of use, i.e. custom or practice, to stand in for one, this being what Kripke calls his 'skeptical solution'—an acceptance of the paradox that claims nonetheless that 'our ordinary practice of belief is justified because... it need not require the justification the sceptic has shown to be untenable' (Kripke, 1982: 66).

ambiguity that I am not entirely without the means to dispel, so long as my form of life involves a familiarity with tents, circuses and circus tents etc..

Logical ambiguity would apply to a concept regardless of whether it were considered transcendental or cultural, a universal or the product of social consensus. The human act, it would seem, has no universal form however; its only identity comes from its position in our historical practices. Even if it has its roots in our 'natural history', as Wittgenstein sometimes suggested,³ the specific form and meaning of the human act is determined socially and historically not biologically. If there is a specifically *dialogical ambiguity* therefore, it cannot simply be defined in terms of generality and vagueness but must correspond to a type's position in an open-ended process of determination. When ambiguity is considered in the light of this process, a twofold phenomenon presents itself: firstly we find that the determination of types is *incomplete*; secondly that it is *heterogeneous*. Incompletion refers to the fact that what counts as an example of a particular type is not pre-determined; it is no more than limited by a practice in which we appear to agree in our response to a certain movement of a hand, say, under certain circumstances. As Stanley Cavell says:

'We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections.' (Cavell, 1976: 52).

If other people *don't* make the same projections I do, then it cannot anymore be said that we are using the same type. The meaning of a certain movement of the hand only holds so long as we all respond to it in the same or similar ways. The point being that divergences are always possible, nothing rules them out; there is no rule independent of what we do and the *ad hoc* measure it supplies that determines 'right' projections from 'wrong'; no fact that constitutes a gesture as meaning 'acceptance' rather than 'rejection', apart, that is, from 'the brute fact that we generally agree' (Kripke, 1982: 97). A type cannot be removed from the

³ See PI: §25; §415 (where Wittgenstein writes: 'What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings'); and PI; §206 (where he writes: 'The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language.'). See also Norman Malcolm's essay 'Wittgenstein: The Relation of Language to Instinctive Behavior' (Malcolm, 1995), in which he discusses Wittgenstein's remarks in *On Certainty* (1974).

social process; only repeated performances and inferences of meaning that do *in fact* agree with one another keep it afloat, and therefore, contingent as it is on the brute existence of historical practices—their continuation or otherwise—it is always incomplete in principle.⁴ It is for this reason that there is always some ambiguity as to what counts as an act of benediction—because an act of benediction is, as is an act of any cultural type, indeterminate to some degree.

2.3 At the Boundary with the Other

The indeterminacy of a sign's meaning arises because, as Wittgenstein tells us, signs only have meaning in use: 'Conversation flows on, the application and interpretation of words, and only in its course do words have meaning.' (Wittgenstein, 1981: §135).⁵ He also tells us that usage is something that is not only highly diverse and complex (i.e. heterogeneous) but is also undergoing constant change (incomplete):

There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for

⁴ The concept of an *in principle* incompleteness is not a Wittgensteinian idea; Wittgenstein sees his procedure as purely descriptive, he does not seek to formulate principles—neither of what I am calling 'incompleteness' nor indeed 'consensus'. Derrida, on the other hand, whose concept of iterability posits the incomplete determination of every context, does seem to be outlining a principle of incompleteness *of sorts*, as when, for example, he talks of iterability as the 'ideal limit of all idealization': 'the concept of iterability itself, like all the concepts that form or deform themselves in its wake, is an ideal concept, to be sure, but also the concept that marks the essential and ideal limit of all idealization' (Derrida, 1988: 119).

⁵ Cf. PI: §43, where although Wittgenstein writes that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language', he qualifies this by saying that 'meaning' can be 'defined' in this way, '[f]or a *large* class of cases—though not all—in which we employ the word'. His point seems to be that there are *some* cases where meaning would not be *defined* by reference to use, but for example, as might be the case for proper names, ostensibly by pointing at what they denote. This may suggest that the word 'meaning' should be considered in relation to the language games in which it is used, which admittedly I do not do; but on the other hand, it does not sanction the assumption of universal types determined other than by use—ostensive definition is dismissed from this role in these early sections of *Philosophical Investigations*—and nor does it suggest that the argument made here that meaning is socially determined is incompatible with Wittgenstein's examination of meaning.

all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (PI: §23).

Wittgenstein, however, doesn't offer much in the way of resources for thinking about either the formation of actual social consensus or the mechanism of social change. This is not surprising when it is considered that his efforts (in the later work) were directed toward debunking the idea that the meaning of our acts is established by either intentional states or following rules. The only bolthole this left for meaning was the relativism of custom and convention, but Wittgenstein gave no analysis of their historical existence. An account of how practices change will find more support in Bakhtin's work, because whereas Wittgenstein asks how we can continue to mean the same thing when we project types into a new situation, and what continuing to mean the same thing consists in, Bakhtin concentrates on the socially stratified heterogeneity of usage on the one hand, and the novelty of each instance of a type's use on the other.

Not unlike Wittgenstein, Bakhtin considered neither its internal syntax nor the intention with which it was made to be constitutive features of an act, but rather its response to previous acts and anticipation of future acts—what he termed its 'addressivity' (Bakhtin, 1986: 95). 'From the very beginning', Bakhtin wrote,

'the speaker expects a response from [others], an active responsive understanding. The entire utterance is constructed, as it were, in anticipation of encountering this response' (Bakhtin, 1986: 94).

This does not mean that the way in which dialogical interaction develops and utterances are formulated within it is unconstrained, they are rather guided by the 'possible routes and directions' laid out in what Volosinov called 'behavioural ideology' (MPL: 91) and by the 'relatively stable types' of act organised by 'speech genres' (Bakhtin, 1986: 60). In its dismissal of a coherent, synchronic system of signs or types as an abstraction (MPL: 66) based on the secondary phenomenon of utterances or texts artificially isolated from the dialogical context (MPL: 71), the Bakhtinian view of the act has much in common with Bourdieu's account of practice. Whereas in Bourdieu the emphasis, however, is firmly on the conformity of the act to a field of practice that it thereby reproduces, in Bakhtin it is not the place in the game, but the state of play, as it were, that is emphasised. The Bakhtinian act must indeed reproduce something of the past—as soon as it arises an act is already a response to a situation articulated by others in prior acts and practices, which are implicit within it—but a relation with others, consisting in the practices that are apparently shared with them, is only

half the equation: the relation with others (consensus) requires responses to and from them (alterity). It is this aspect of alterity that Bakhtin shows particular appreciation for when describing the primary nature of language as residing in the relations between alternating lines of dialogue. The utterances that constitute the different lines of a dialogue are divided by a change of speaker (see Bakhtin, 1986: 71), and if the act is likewise dialogically constituted, then it too is defined, not—at least not primarily—by its assimilation to others, but by the break between it and the acts of the Other. According to the Bakhtinian perspective, not only language and by implication social practices generally, but also thought, the psyche of the individual, is dialogical: thoughts, gestures and utterances don't augment one another to compose a seamless, self-contained monologue, but rather respond to past utterances, gestures and thoughts and entail further such acts in a process of open-ended semiosis.

Though they are thinkers of quite different styles and backgrounds, the Bakhtinian critique of formalist and expressive theories of language parallels Wittgenstein's critique of rule-based and intentional theories of meaning. On the one hand there is Bakhtin who argues against the conception of language as a closed system, and on the other Wittgenstein who dismantles the conception that it is based on a coherent logical substructure. In contrast with such views, language appears in Bakhtin's account as a chain of responses produced in the atmosphere of intersecting 'social languages', and in Wittgenstein as a matrix of 'language-games'; both of these imply the reliance of linguistic practices on their position among general human activities and practices. When Bakhtin writes that '[social] languages do not exclude each other, but rather intersect each other in many different ways' (DN: 291), it is striking the similarity this view bears to what Wittgenstein has to say about language-games appearing to be related to one another in 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing' (PI: §66). Bakhtin goes on to wonder whether 'the very word "language" loses all meaning in this process—for apparently there is no single plane on which all these "languages" might be juxtaposed with one another' (DN: 291). Here, too, there is an echo in Wittgenstein, who notes that: 'We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of a our language makes everything alike.' (PI: 224).

Nonetheless, the conceptions of meaning in Bakhtin and Wittgenstein don't reproduce one another; they augment one another: the Bakhtinian emphasis on

the 'addressivity' of the act is a corollary to the Wittgensteinian argument against the possibility of a private language. What the latter contends is that what I say or do cannot mean anything *in isolation* from others; the former adds that, nonetheless, meaning arises *between* the self and the Other. Wittgenstein showed why meaning could only be found in the use of a sign, and that using it with understanding and understanding its use consists in responding to it in an appropriate way. He also showed that what constitutes an appropriate response is based in nothing other than what has counted as one in the past; and yet, although he recognised it as such, he did not draw out the implications of the fact that such agreement is never complete. What struck Wittgenstein was that it is necessary that people do agree in their responses, because it is the responses of others that constitute the basis of a common context; so, unlike Bakhtin, he laid the emphasis on consensus. My waving good-bye might have a familiar shape, but its meaning comes not from its shape, which is no more than a placeholder; it comes from the place it has in the context of the practices of a form of life—it rests on consensus. The dialogical view draws attention to the complementary insight: this context itself is dependent on the responses of others, who I expect to wave back, and who expect that I will now leave. Dialogism, in its affirmation of the diachronic constitution of the act, suggests that this response to and from the Other is a fundamental aspect of human practices, but it is only when 'addressivity' is linked to a Wittgensteinian 'form of life' that it becomes clear why.

When I encounter anything I do so against the background of expectations structured by the form of life that I am integrated within. These expectations correspond to what I find familiar, which in turn suggests an array of iterable types allowing me to expect objects to appear and people to act in predictable ways. Such expectation and familiarity are characteristic of *phenomenological experience*; the concept of a 'type', and even more so a 'system of types', are inferred from such experience. What structures expectations, at least in part, is the fact that the majority of the members of a community observe this or that practice—a wave of the hand when taking leave, say; and it is enough that acts be repeated and practices continued in a community for it to appear that the types they apply have a stable identity independent of this process. Yet, although we use and respond to signs and objects in comparable ways most of the time, we cannot be sure to be in agreement all the time. The on-going determination of the types and practices in terms of which we encounter the

world, means that at any one point of time a form of life is composed of *heterogeneous* practices and *heterogeneously determined* types. It is such an open-ended process of determination that Bakhtin's view of language implies when, for example, he describes it as 'a process of heteroglot development, a process teeming with future and former languages' (DN: 356-7).

Here, on the question of the consistency of a form of life, Bakhtinian and Wittgensteinian accounts of meaning part company. There is in fact an important difference between 'language-games' and 'social languages' that I have so far passed over: Wittgenstein is talking about the *diversity* of practices within a single form of life; Bakhtin, on the other hand, is concerned with the *heterogeneity* of practices within which a plurality of forms of life are implicit. In this respect Wittgenstein is a 'single-world antiessentialist' (Dreyfus and Spinoza, 1996: 756), which is to say he held that we apprehend our environment in terms of types that belong ultimately to a single overall context or 'world', though this context derives not from any essence but rather simply from our habituation to a form of life. Bakhtin, on the other hand, would fit Dreyfus and Spinoza's definition of a 'plural-world antiessentialist', which is to say that he was aware that there are a variety of contexts in terms of which we apprehend our environment, some of which disclosing it under aspects wholly absent from others without necessitating exclusive adherence. For Wittgenstein any significant heterogeneity in our practices would seem to threaten the very existence of our form of life:

'If there were not complete agreement, then neither would human beings be learning the techniques we learn. It would be more or less different from ours up to the point of unrecognizability.' (PI: 226)⁶

Of course, there are points at which the 'techniques' we employ for apprehending the world are incompatible with one another, but this does not mean that we cannot switch between them strategically as occasion or context demands. This is especially so in the modern world where people often live out their lives moving between one framework and another—from a local religious culture to a global media context, from a professional culture to a personal

⁶ Wittgenstein's talk of the learning of a 'technique' here, is a reference to the way we learn the understanding of a type (which is a kind of 'technique') from others as we learn any other technique: 'To understand a language means to be master of a technique.' (PI: §199).

context, etc.. As Dreyfus and Spinoza write, 'the possibility of cross-dwelling [...] is experienced as an *internal* part of any identity produced wherever there have been historical changes in style' (Dreyfus and Spinoza, 1996: 757). It is this heterogeneity of practices and forms of life that the dialogical documentary explores.

2.4 Duplicity



Fig. *Shoah*, Train arrives at Treblinka

As incompleteness and heterogeneity are not directly discernible as attributes of *this* sign or *that* act *per se*, but are rather indirectly discernible in the process of a type's becoming determined—a process both *limited* by the historically existing practices and *re-opened* by each actual production of a sign or application of a type—it is necessary for the dialogical documentary to attend to acts not in isolation, but in their relations to one another and to the practices that form the background against which they arise. It is from this necessity that what is perhaps the decisive difference between a representational and a dialogical approach to practices generally derives, namely their differing treatments of the signs people make, interpret or otherwise respond to. Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), for example, his nine and half hour film on the Holocaust, can be distinguished from Gardner's *Forest of Bliss*, not only on the basis that the

events alluded to in it are clearly very different to those depicted in *Forest*, but more pertinently because the director concentrates exclusively on witnesses' descriptions of events and acts. In fact, in this regard it could hardly be more dissimilar from Gardner's film, which concentrates on direct observation of events and acts to the exclusion of any response from the subjects involved in them. So where the actual production of signs is a contingent fact in *Forest*, in *Shoah* their production and reception are made the central concern. In fact one particular sign is treated at great length, becoming, as Lanzmann says, 'a pillar of the film' (SCL: 88).

The key shot in relation to this sign shows a steam locomotive pulling up at a platform. The camera is positioned at the back of the engine, filming the driver leaning out the cab as the sign saying 'Treblinka' comes into view and the train comes to a stop. The driver cranes his head around to look back beyond the camera to where the carriages would have been over thirty years previously when this man drove trains to and from the camp, and in this moment he makes what Lanzmann describes as a gesture 'of cutting the throat, with the finger across the throat' (SCL: 83). The gesture returns several times, repeated by various interviewees, over the next 45 or so minutes of the film, which are concerned with the arrival of the *Sondertransporte*, the special transports, at the extermination camp of Treblinka. First a survivor of one of these transports, Richard Glazer, describes the train turning off the mainline near Treblinka and moving slowly through the countryside—where it was going the people aboard of course did not know. One of the occupants of Glazer's carriage saw a boy in a field gesturing to them. The gesture that Glazer now makes for the camera is recognisable for the viewer as being the same as that made by the locomotive driver in the earlier shot.⁷ Then, slightly later in the edit, the Polish farmers who worked the land around the camp and witnessed the trains arriving are seen to repeat the gesture. When they demonstrate it to Lanzmann they say it was made to warn the occupants of the trains what was going to happen to them.

⁷ Actually the gesture made by Glazer looks more like strangulation or hanging, but nonetheless it reads as an *iteration* of 'the sign of death'—both in the simply sense of a repetition of the same gesture, but also in the Derridian sense of being repeated outside of its original context with a meaning that differs from that it had within it. It is important that Lanzmann establishes the continuity of the gesture through its different uses, but equally the difference between those uses presents with him an extraordinarily rich set of meanings, including the *articulatory* use Gawkowski makes of it.

Lanzmann says in his seminar, however, that he is convinced that the gesture was not one of warning (SCL: 86), implying that these interviewees were being, at the least, disingenuous when they claimed that it was. What is distinctive of *Shoah* however, and crucial to its power of testimony, is *how* he explores, within the film, the sincerity of these statements.

It is as an 'open sign' (SCL: 87) that the gesture is treated by Lanzmann; a sign in which, once interrogated, a series of truths and lies are made concrete. 'Nobody meets anyone in *Shoah*', Lanzmann says, and nonetheless the film pivots on encounters. On the one hand these encounters takes place in the edit: a survivor of the transports describes as incomprehensible the gesture seen from the train; then later in the edit a Pole, who possibly had thirty or so years previously made the very same gesture the survivor talks of, says that their signs weren't understood by the Jews on the trains. On the other hand, although the people giving these two perspectives on events don't confront one another on camera, they are, as Lanzmann says, brought together in the film: 'I make them meet. They don't meet actually, but the film is a place of meeting.' (SCL: 84).

Talking about the seemingly 'trivial detail' of whether the locomotive that Gawkowski drove pulled or pushed the wagons to the ramp where the people were disembarked, Lanzmann says, 'There was more truth for me in this trivial confirmation, in this small detail, than in any kind of generalisation about the question of evil.' (SCL: 91). Why should this be? It is such detail that makes the actuality of the events tangible: it induces witnesses to recall what happened, and it takes viewers beyond simply knowing about what happened to acknowledging the fact of its happening. The consequence of Lanzmann's insistent pursuit of details is that, for example, the condition on a train is described and the time its occupants waited before being unloaded, as well as the spaces around the tracks and the camp where the farmers worked, and continue to. The detail here takes on meaning because of the different perspectives that encounter one another in the remembered gesture: the perspective of those who were about to die, not knowing that was what was about to happen; and that of those who witnessed their waiting, knowing what awaited them. These perspectives and the details gathered up in them are articulated through the 'open sign'.



Fig. *Shoah*, Simon Srebnik in front of church at Chelmno

Lanzmann asks the Poles living and working on land surrounding the camp at Treblinka if they noticed what was happening, whether they tried to do anything to help the Jews. He interviews the residents of the nearby village of Chelmno in the doorways of their houses, asking them if they recall the names of their former Jewish owners, and do they miss them now? One scene takes place in front of the church in Chelmno, where the local Jewish population had been gathered before being taken away in gas vans. A man stands impassive, nodding benignly in the middle of a crowd mainly of women who are waiting for a religious procession to leave the church. The man's name is Simon Srebnik. A teenage boy at the time, he is one of only two Jews from the village who survived the Holocaust. At first the women readily acknowledge having witnessed this event, but Srebnik's presence seems to have precipitated an ambivalence. They are happy to see him, are even solicitous towards him. At the end of the sequence, however, the benevolent surface erupts. The same woman, who has just before said she asked the SS guards to let Srebnik return to his parents when she saw him with them, now angrily tells Lanzmann that it was the Jews who persuaded Pilate to release Barabas and crucify Jesus. In this way the duplicity of the apparent warning sign comes clear: on the one hand the people of Chelmno show concern for what was done to the Jews, on the other they still harbour what are often petty resentments against them—the Jews were rich, they lived in the better houses, the women were pretty because they didn't have to do manual work.

2.5 The Enunciated Gesture

The suspicion arises, as Lanzmann draws his interviewees out on the subject, that the sign made to the trains by the Poles is a double gesture, a sign in which one meaning obscured the other: it is presented as a warning, but something else lies behind this. The two heterogeneous acts that co-exist in the sign—one a reinterpretation in the context of the outside world, the other an expression of contempt of some form—are made clear in the train driver Henrik Gawkowski's use of the gesture. How this is possible largely depends on the situation engineered by Lanzmann, in which Gawkowski makes the gesture.



Fig. *Shoah*, Srebnik on the boat

At several points in the film, Lanzmann places his witnesses in situations that will induce them to recall their particular experience of the Holocaust. At the beginning of the film, for example, there is a sequence in which a man with thick curly white hair and a youthful face but vacant expression sits in a boat slowly moving down a river in the countryside near Chelmno. Lanzmann has brought Simon Srebnik back to the river where as a boy the SS guards had taken him with them on trips so that he could sing for them. It is clear that the driver of the Treblinka train, Gawkowski, had been enlisted by Lanzmann for a similar re-enactment:

“We will shoot an arrival in Treblinka. I have rented the locomotive. It is the same locomotive as in 1942.” I told him, “OK, you drive your locomotive?” (SCL: 87).

‘I told him, “You do whatever you want. We are shooting your arrival in Treblinka in the winter of 1942. You have behind you a train of fifty of sixty wagons loaded with Jews who will be killed right away, or in the two or three following hours.”’ (SCL: 88).

Gawkowski's use of the gesture, like all the other instances of the gesture in the film, is a remembered gesture, produced for the camera—distinguishing it markedly from all the gestures in Gardner's film. When Gawkowski makes this sign from the locomotive's cab Lanzmann speaks of him 'inventing' it (SCL: 88). The difference in his use is that he is involved at that moment in recalling for Lanzmann the arrival of a train at the extermination camp; it is a moment of explicit re-enactment. The train stops. It is the 'end of the line'. It is clear—in large part from Gawkowski's testimony—that once the train arrived, there was no escape for its occupants. He looks back as if at the carriages (which are in actuality not there as the locomotive Lanzmann hired was not connected to any) and he then draws his finger across his throat. The meaning is clear because there is no question of warning. Lanzmann said that Gawkowski 'took the responsibility on his shoulders to revive the scene completely' (SCL: 88), and it is obvious that he respected the man for this.

By contrast, in *Forest of Bliss* the old lady's gesture seems itself to be of peripheral interest to Gardner: the possible ambiguity surrounding its actual production and reception is overlooked as the ritual filmed in the hospice is woven into the web of associations he creates between his selected motifs. Gardner is aware that significance pervades not only our environment, but our very moods and movements too, and yet his assumption that the old lady's gesture is unambiguously a sign of assent suggests that he considers the acts in which an understanding of the world is manifest to be a mere supplement to a preordained meaning and hence to be without any generative capacity in themselves. Indeed he has been criticised for representing rituals and practices as timeless, unchanging essences (see Kapur, 1997; Ruby, 2000)—in effect mythologizing them—as if the actual performance of the ritual were incidental to its ideal form and significance. To consider the old lady's gesture to be marginal is to some extent right, though, because whether individually we do or do not assent to the broader cultural practices of our society makes little difference to their existence. This does not mean, however, that the form of practices and the meaning they disclose somehow exist independently of individual acts. On the contrary, practices are not only manifest in the acts that constitute them, the only real existence they have is through such acts.

The old lady's gesture in *Forest* is an example of a cultural sign, and like any cultural sign it can be viewed from two sides. On the one hand it can be considered under the aspect of the cultural code it implies, and on the other

under the aspect of its actual production. In the first case what is being emphasised is its identity in relation to a virtual system of signification, in the second its use in a concrete situation. The problem with the former is that code, though a useful heuristic and analytical tool, is an abstraction. In this connection Volosinov said that as 'language presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming', then if one attempts to see it in overview, 'there is no real moment in time when a synchronic system of language [i.e. code] could be constructed' (MPL: 66). In other words, the code perspective on signs misses *the determination of signs* (as apparently 'self-identical forms', MPL: 56) *within their patterns of actual use*.⁸ If the concrete acts are ignored which constitute either the 'language-games' spoken of by Wittgenstein or the 'speech genres' spoken of by Bakhtin, and in which signs are produced and enunciated and come into contact with social reality, then all that is left of the sign is an ahistorical abstraction. It is in this historical dimension of the sign that *Forest* fails to register: in it the gesture is seen from the point of view of an ideal code; in *Shoah*, by contrast, the particular situation in which the gesture is produced is made the main focus.⁹

⁸ Derrida, too, described code as a concept 'which does not appear certain' (Derrida, 1982: 318). His concept of iterability accounts for the 'unity of the signifying form' without recourse to the determinate system that code suggests, referring instead to 'the possibility of [a sign's] being repeated in the absence not only of its referent [...] but of a determined signified' (1982: 318).

⁹ To focus on the production of a sign in a particular situation is not to treat the act as meaningful outside the possibility of its repetition, but to see that its concrete meaning is forged as much by the unique situation of its use as by its iterability across contexts and situations. In one of Bakhtin's earliest surviving manuscripts (from the early 1920s), the broader philosophical context in which both he and Volosinov were to reassess language is already laid out in approximately these terms. Bakhtin ruminates at length in *Towards and Philosophy of the Act* on the idea that 'an act of our activity, of our actual experiencing, is like a two-faced Janus. It looks in two opposite directions: it looks at the objective unity of a domain of culture and at the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life.' (1993: 2). The distinction he draws in this early work between the particularity of an act's situated production and its contextual significance is the embryo of the distinction he and Volosinov will emphasise from the late 1920s onward. This distinction, it should be noted however, is not the same as that between code and speech in structuralist theories, which are concerned with how the code makes possible the signification in the units used in speech. Rather it is concerned, I believe, with the

Such contextually specific production of a sign—its enunciation or utterance—is an irreducible part of what shapes its meaning.¹⁰ In the absence of an examination of this dimension, the meaning of a sign is reduced to a generic signification; and from whatever could be said on this level about the gesture of the finger being drawn across the throat there would be no way of accounting for, or anticipating, its centrality in Lanzmann's film. The enunciative dimension, which is all but erased in *Forest*, becomes doubly important here, as not only are the people Lanzmann interviews talking about the contexts and situations in which this sign was produced in the past, but they acknowledge, in the way they address themselves to the filmmaker and hence to the camera, that when they now reproduce the gesture they do so in the enunciative context of the film. Both these aspects are significant for the dialogical documentary, for as well as being characterised by attention to the processes in which meaning is produced and reproduced, it aims to intervene in the discourses which surround and ultimately are part of these processes. Discussion of how this intervention might work, however, I leave for the final part of the dissertation, as the current examination of the dialogical condition of meaning and the development of an understanding of how attention to enunciation allows the documentary to focus on it, are the basis on which any speculations I'll venture there will rest.

interrelation and interdependence of something very like what I am talking of under the terms consensus and alterity.

¹⁰ This is the dimension that Bakhtin (DN; 1986) and Volosinov (1986) bring to the fore in their semiotic theory, where they are at pains to distinguish between a grammatical unit such as the sentence on the one hand, which is merely part of the language system, and the utterance on the other, which is 'a unit of speech communication' (Bakhtin, 1986: 73). Foucault (2002) makes a similar distinction between the sentence and the statement (*énoncé*), only here the term 'statement' no longer applies to everyday utterances, but is part of a serious discourse—what Bakhtin would have called a 'secondary speech genre' (Bakhtin, 1986: 62). In the case of language an act that applies a type, which is termed a 'speech act' by Austin (1975) and subsequent speech-act theorists, is called by Bakhtin an 'utterance'; following Foucault (2002) and De Certeau (1984), however, I will generally refer to such acts as 'enunciations', because this term is more readily applicable to all sorts of human act: Foucault suggests that it can be applied beyond linguistic practices, and De Certeau, in applying it to everyday practices actually does so, as does De Duve (1995), who picking up the concept from Foucault applies it to art.

2.6 Documentary as Complex of Enunciation

Firstly, then, it is its focus on *the enunciative dimension of the act* that differentiates the dialogical from the representational approach to documentary, but secondly, this means that *the act's enunciation within the film* takes on equal weight. The former is missed if the latter is ignored. If the documentary is to relate to the act in its dialogical existence—i.e. its response to the situation and context revealed in past acts and its anticipation of further responses—it is not enough to observe its outward form; rather it is necessary to stand in an active dialogical relation to it. Simply filming events and actions unfolding independently of the filmmaking process as observational documentary does, or commenting on them from without as expository documentary does, ultimately presents a world in which the dialogical dimension has been respectively made a reified reality and flattened out into a 'monological' representation. How a dialogical documentary, on the contrary, uses the fact that it exists side by side with other practices to investigate them in their dialogical existence, is apparent when Gawkowski *re-enacts for the film* the arrival at Treblinka. Here attention to the act's enunciation within the film becomes as prominent as that given to the social world and dialogical reality the documentary takes as its 'object'. In fact, in Gawkowski's gesture the enunciative dimension of the act and that of the film more or less coincide. True, the wider situation the gesture was made in cannot be adequately represented: the 'once-occurrent' situation, as Bakhtin calls it (1993), because it is the momentary use of the sign, not prefigured within it, but in which it takes on meaning; the context, too, such as 'the history of Jewish-Polish relations', is only determined in an open-ended dialogical process, and is thus 'never absolutely determinable' (Derrida, 1982: 310). The dialogical approach should be largely unaffected by contexts' unrepresentability, however, as it involves exploring enunciations and the chains they are woven into, by, more or less explicitly, *becoming part of them*: ultimately the dialogical documentary is realised as a *complex of enunciation*—a web of relations between those who make it, those who appear in it as well as, more distantly, others who are alluded to within it. Whilst the enunciative complex is at work in Lanzmann's film, it is more overtly so in *Chronicle of a Summer*, Rouch and Morin's investigation of the views of a diverse group of Parisians, where not only do the documentary subjects acknowledge the camera, but the enunciation of the film itself is drawn into the explicit web of relations.



Figs. *Chronicle*, shots from opening sequence

Chronicle begins and ends with scenes in which the enunciation of the film and of the stories, opinions and performances within it, is made explicit. Firstly, Rouch and Morin's documentary opens and closes with statements from its authors. The film starts with the sound of a factory's siren signalling the beginning of the working day as the camera tracks past industrial chimneys silhouetted against the dawn sky. Over the subsequent images of this opening sequence, which show commuters on their way to work, Rouch's voice describes *Chronicle* as a film 'not played by actors, but lived by men and women who have given a few moments of their lives to a new experiment in *cinéma vérité*' (Rouch, 2003: 274). Then at the other end of the film, in its final scene, Rouch and Morin pace the hall of the *Musée de l'Homme* discussing whether the subjects of the film had acted for the camera or not, whether they would be any less authentic for 'acting' rather than simply 'being' themselves, and whether the one can be told from the other with any certainty. These seem to be moments existing outside the film proper, reflections on what is enunciated in the film; only, of course, they are integral to this complex of enunciation they comment on.



Fig. *Chronicle*, Morin at the screening

Secondly, these opening and closing scenes which establish the voice of the authorial enunciators of the film, enclose scenes that establish the film's subjects as enunciators in their own right. Directly preceding the *Musée de l'Homme* 'debrief' between the two filmmakers is a scene shot in a screening room. Clearly having just viewed the film as a group for the first time, *Chronicle*'s participants fill the auditorium with Morin at the front conducting a discussion in the course of which they comment on both their own and other people's appearance in the film. This event is recognisably part of Rouch's 'participatory

camera' method of filmmaking: 'the presentation of the rough cut, from head to tail, for the people who were filmed', which he described as 'a supplementary stage' between filming and the final edit, but one that to him 'appears indispensable' (Rouch, 2003: 40). Back at the front end of the film, in the scene that follows Rouch's opening voice-over, both Rouch and Morin appear on camera with their first interviewee, Marceline. Before they launch into the interview itself they wonder whether their interviewees will be able to relax and talk naturally while being filmed. This gives Marceline the chance to say that she is daunted by the prospect of being interviewed on camera, and Rouch the chance to assure her that anything she is not happy with can be cut. Presumably similar discussions had taken place before Marceline found herself sitting in front of a camera flanked by these two men; but the point is not that this is the first or original moment in which she agrees to participate and gives her assent to being filmed, it is rather the enactment of this giving of assent, its enunciation along with the doubts that surround it within the context of the film.



Fig. *Chronicle*, the first interview with Marceline

While *Chronicle* was in production, Rouch was also editing *La pyramide humaine* (1959, released 1961), a film he had shot the previous year on the Ivory Coast. The opening discussion with Marceline in *Chronicle* echoes similar scenes at the beginning of this earlier film, in which Rouch is seen to explain to two groups of *lycée* students—one white, the other black—the idea for the film which they are about to involve themselves, namely that they will take part in an experiment exploring race relations. Both Marceline and the *lycée* students, therefore, first appear in their respective films in an explicit encounter with the camera and the filmmaking situation, as if at a moment 'before' their involvement in the film begins. Only after this do the films' subjects appear as

the participants start to play at being 'themselves' for the camera: the actual *lycée* students play at being young white and black students regarding one another with suspicion and contempt, or interest and respect, *for the sake of the camera*; and Marceline takes on her participative role, just as the other characters in *Chronicle* take on theirs, within Rouch and Morin's 'experiment in *cinéma vérité*'.

2.7 The Space of the Other

In 1946 Rouch's teachers, the anthropologists Marcel Griaule and Marcel Mauss, suggested he take a camera with him on an African fieldtrip he was planning; consequently, thirteen years before making *Chronicle* with Morin, Rouch's first experience of ethnographic filmmaking was made using a Bell and Howell 16mm ciné-camera bought at Parisian flea market to film fishermen hunting hippos on the Niger (Eaton, 1979: 2-3; Feld, 2003: 4). The approach to ethnography Rouch developed over the coming years did not involve attempts to trace and plot a system of signs and symbols, or to establish the regularities of behaviour within a culture, but rather investigating the cultural by *making people and signs pass into the dialogical space of the Other*.¹¹ Two aspects of Rouch's earlier African films, also to be seen at work in *Chronicle* and *Pyramide*, make this particularly clear. Firstly, the participants in *Jaguar* (1957-67) and *Moi, un Noir* (1959) improvise within a scenario based on their real life experiences, playing roles within it based on those to be found in their real life milieu. The experiment of living out this scenario for the camera brings them into relation with some unknown factor: in *Jaguar* this factor is the jobs that the film's subjects move from their villages to the coast for and the world they encounter there; in *Moi, un Noir*, whose protagonists are actual migrants playing at being 'migrants' (Loizos, 1993: 53), it is the personae they take on and the roles they play, which in the case of the wayward character played by one man is so engrossing that the man ends up being put in jail. In *Chronicle* the unknown factor consists of the difference between the people who participate in the film, who though living and working in Paris would not normally interact with one another. Secondly, this encounter with the unknown means that individuals are taken to the limits of their *habitus*: the men in *Jaguar* have to find out how one

¹¹ I recognise in my discussion of signs 'passing into the space of the Other' that follows an echo of Gilles Deleuze's insight that in Rouch's films '[t]here is always a passage from one state to another at the heart of the character' (1989: 151).

lives in the city—they have to shed their country selves, to the degree that is possible, and take on ways of dressing and acting appropriate to the city; in *Moi, un Noir* the men and women who have taken on movie star names (Edward G. Robertson, Eddie Constantine, Dorothy L'amour etc.) explore the limits their situation sets on their aspirations.

When Rouch and Morin bring together different people in *Chronicle* it is to create an event that would not have taken place were it not for the film. This is an approach Rouch named simply '*provocation*' (Loizos, 1993: 46). Similarly, Lanzmann is using the filmmaking situation as a provocation when he invites Gawkowski to step up into the cab of the Treblinka locomotive, or when he takes Srebniak to the church at Chelmno. The difference is only that in *Chronicle*, especially its second half, the event is produced when the film's subjects encounter one another face-to-face within the filmmaking situation, whereas in *Shoah* it is produced in an encounter with the camera and the film in the person of Lanzmann. In a representational approach to documentary (e.g. direct cinema) any such intervention in people's lives is avoided as far as is possible, because it is assumed that it distorts pro-filmic reality. Intervention indeed changes what appears on camera, but Rouchian *provocation*, however, does not distort pro-filmic acts so much as *it replaces them with enunciated acts*. The assumption of the representational approach is that the act made unawares of the camera and innocent of its representation is ontologically superior to that produced for the camera, but this itself assumes that truth is an objective quality rather than the product of an encounter.¹² In the dialogical documentary, where acts are produced and enunciated in the context of the representational process, the representation of a pro-filmic reality is supplanted by the reality of enunciation—or as Deleuze says of the work of *cinéma-vérité* filmmakers like Rouch, it 'will not be a cinema of truth but the truth of cinema' (Deleuze, 1989: 151).

In the move from observation and representation to provocation and enunciation a decisive boundary is crossed. Where the emphasis is placed on the enunciative dimension in a film, the indeterminacy of the social encounter that is

¹² The contention that all documentaries are a product of the encounter between the filmmaker and their subject is made by Bruzzi, who writes that 'documentaries are performative acts whose truth comes into being only at the moment of filming' (2000: 7). See § 0.3 above.

occluded in the objectification of practice is brought to the fore, thus transforming documentary as a practice on a fundamental level. Enunciation places the sign in the space of the Other and makes explicit that its fate lies with their response. An enunciated sign, a sign-in-use, is not only addressed to others but calls for a response from them, and what emerges in this dialogical encounter, is, to varying degrees, either a response which forms a consensus with others on the meaning of what we do and say—which is no less a response for agreeing with what it responds to—or a response which in differing, draws on some other stratum of practice or discourse, and of social or historical meaning. Whether it is consensus or alterity that manifests itself at any one moment, no response is final; as Bakhtin said (in what was one of his last pieces of writing): ‘There is neither a first or last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future).’ (Bakhtin, 1986: 170). In the work of Rouch and Lanzmann, documentary now reflects on *and contributes to* this process in which evaluations of ‘truth’ and ‘objectivity’ arise, rather than simply representing its results.

What difference can such an intervention make to the dialogic context? We expect agreement in our use of and response to signs; we expect it in our ways of speaking as in our ways of acting, in our use of signposts as in our arithmetic. We expect the agreement that existed yesterday to remain today and continue tomorrow, and think nothing of the fact that it does. It doesn’t strike us as odd, because it doesn’t strike us at all. Although each interaction that conforms to our expectations is part of the mechanism by which the consensus in our responses is reproduced, it passes below the threshold of awareness. It is not, however, that the social production of meaning cannot be perceived, because it can. It is imperceptible if relationships of meaning are seamlessly reproduced; but as long as a response from the Other, who does not share my sense of the sign and who responds differently to it, interposes itself between my expectation and consensus, the boundaries of my own form of life become passible for me. Why, if not for this reason, is *Chronicle* composed of a series of encounters between socially distinct individuals and groups: because the difference between one response and another to what appears to be one and the same sign or situation brings the phenomenon of a form of life, a ‘world’, into focus. The meeting between Angelo, the white Renault factory worker, and Landry, the African student, is a case in point: they are introduced to one another by Morin in a stairwell, where Angelo then tries to impress on Landry the distraction of the

French worker from his menial existence by the consumption of the very products of his alienated labour, specifically the automobile. For Landry, however, the fact that the French working class can afford cars and vacations must seem unprecedented, as his slightly disengaged replies and look of awkward perplexity suggests.

In each of *Chronicle's* interactions an agreement in responses, a form of life shared, is what the protagonists are unable to take for granted. Although the language they use may be outwardly the same, the understanding of the world it discloses diverges at critical points. A particularly powerful instance of this occurs during a discussion touching on colonial politics that takes place among a group seated around a large café table: Rouch and Morin are there, as is Marceline and a number of other young whites, and Landry and another young African. The topic of the discussion alights on race. Marceline says she couldn't imagine marrying an negro, though she did once meet one who danced very well. Landry objects that it is a cliché to reduce Africans to the way they dance. At this point Rouch, who sits between him and Marceline, indicates the tattoo on her arm, asking Landry and then the others what they think it is.—Perhaps an affectation? Perhaps her telephone number? Though it is too long for that. They don't know. So Marceline tells them: it was her concentration camp number. Landry's response is legible in his face and the aversion of his eyes. His friend Raymond indicates that, yes, he does know what a concentration camp is because he's seen a film—*Night and Fog*, Alain Resnais' documentary.

Like Gawkowski's gesture in *Shoah*, which Lanzmann referred to as having been 'invented' by the train driver, the tattoo becomes a marker of difference and an arena of encounter. What Gawkowski 'invents' is actually an enunciation of the 'sign of death' in which it is no longer primarily either warning or threat, though both of these remain implied within it, but an acknowledgement of the events which marked Lanzmann's interviewees in such radically different ways and thus make dialogue between them all but impossible. Explicit within Gawkowski's enunciation of the gesture is the reality of betrayal for the Jews and duplicity for the local Poles. Likewise Marceline's tattoo, to coin a phrase from Lanzmann, is a 'space of meeting': it allows heterogeneous perspectives to encounter one another and, as Bakhtin would say, mutually illuminate one another.



Fig. *Chronicle*, discussion of race and colonial politics



Fig. *Chronicle*, left to right: Marceline, Rouch and Landry

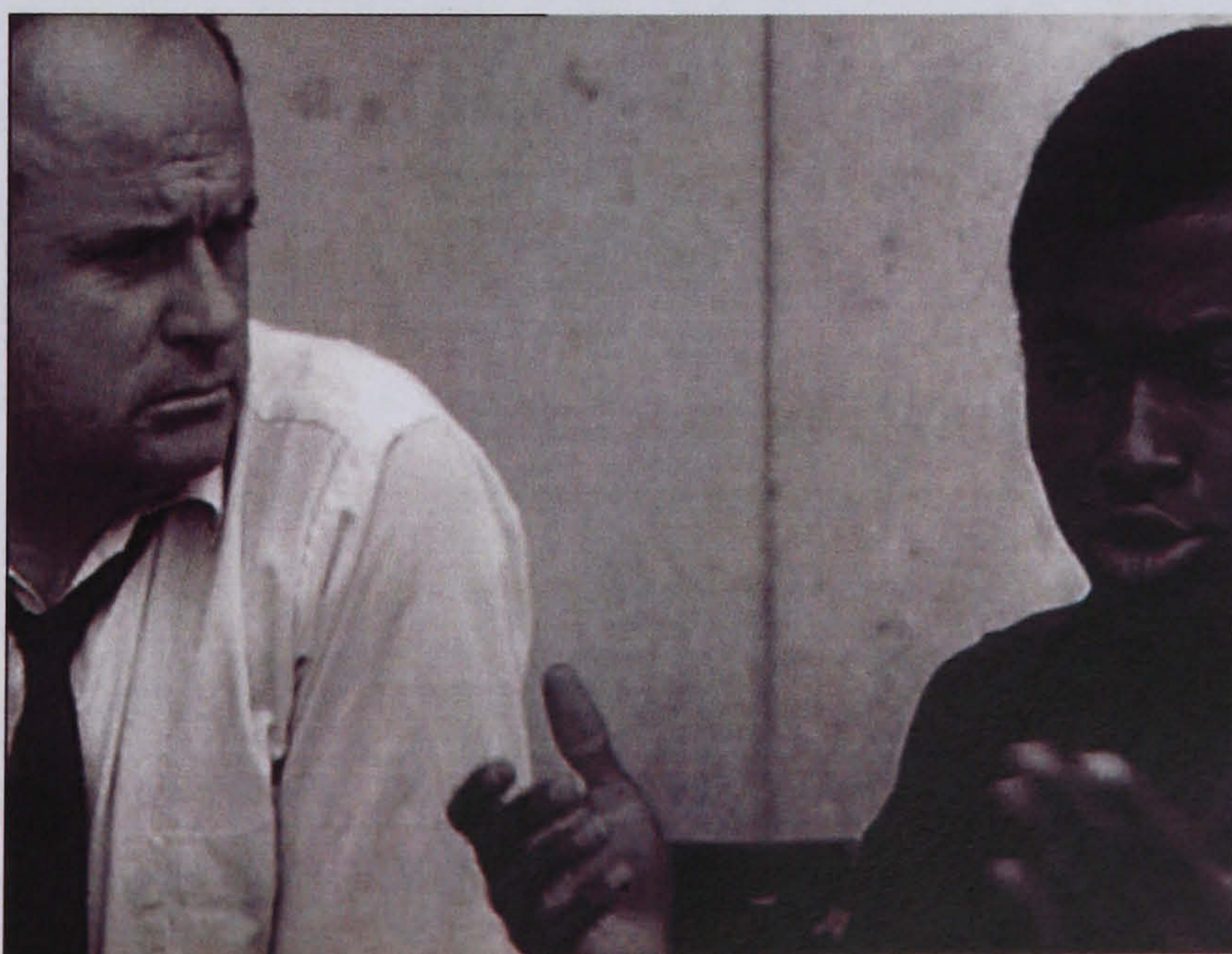


Fig. *Chronicle*, Rouch and Landry

As every fully-fledged act becomes one only in a context determined by the acts of others, and as the determination of every context is thus open-ended, any act could, at least in principle, serve as a 'space of meeting': every human act is formed on the basis of a consensus; but as the agreement in our actions that constitutes a consensus itself necessarily remains open to the response of the Other, the human act also rests on alterity. For the most part, however, because agreement is taken as self-evident, the fact that an act relies on the response of the Other to consecrate it as such goes unnoticed. However, what is implicit in everyday life is made explicit in the dialogical documentary; once it passes into the space of the Other as an overtly enunciated gesture or sign directed to some more or less specific recipient, the act is transformed. When Rouch indicates the sign inscribed on Marceline's arm to Landry, and Landry and the others respond to it, the tattoo and the historical experience it implies perceptibly transform the overall context in which these people interact. The conversation in the group up to this point has suggested a consensus that their identity is articulated by an opposition between Europeans and their former colonial subjects. Marceline's experience of the Holocaust which marks her out—a difference, like that of the Africans, legible on her skin—entails more than a fissure in the European identity; it suggests, more profoundly, that the binary opposition European/African, far from being fundamental, is the object of a tacit consensus that may be unsettled and reconfigured.

The filmmaker cannot passively observe this process; on the contrary, Rouch's active intervention in pointing out that aspect of the situation that makes the difference tangible is comparable to Gawkowski's 'invention'. Both Rouch and Lanzmann are preparing situations in which signs and gestures must be *enacted* for the camera, and are hence explicitly enunciated. The ambiguity of the sign becomes then its virtue, its open-endedness signalling the incompleteness of consensus and the dialogic context. Does the tattoo offer the possibility of translation between the European experience and colonialism? Or is it a sign confirming the inassimilable singularity of each? The very marginality of the tattoo and the gesture in *Shoah* directs the viewer away from the generalities of sign systems or knowledge. If the term 'signification' can be limited for the moment to the sign's relation to a virtual code, and 'meaning' to its relation to a concrete situation of enunciation, then to say that these signs were 'meaningless' would really be to say that the meaning that they open in *Shoah* or *Chronicle* cannot be 'signified'. They are extreme examples—but the clearer

for that—of those ‘encounters’ between signs and contexts of enunciation (see Todorov, 1984: 45), in which the dialogical practitioner can find concrete meaning in all its ambiguity or, as perhaps is more accurate, its heterogeneity.

2.8 Documentary Subject as ‘Witness’



Fig. *Shoah*, Lanzmann (left) interviews Borowi (centre)

Lanzmann stands with Czeslaw Borowi, a local farmer, the railway line leading to the Treblinka camp in the background of the shot, and asks the man about the trains he saw arriving during the war. Borowi tells him that at night the Ukrainian guards would walk the length of the train, which might wait for hours before being moved up to the ramp, and they would tell the occupants to be quiet. Once the guards had moved on, he indicates, the voices would start up again—only instead of saying that they started talking again, he imitates what he heard: ‘la-la-la’. It is clear what Borowi is referring to, but Lanzmann nevertheless gets the interpreter to ask him what he meant by the sound. ‘Jew’s language’, comes the reply. Does he understand it? ‘No.’ The film retains not only Lanzmann’s original question in French and Borowi’s reply in Polish, but the translations each way given by the interpreter: the whole transaction is what is focused on, not merely the signified information. In fact the film’s concentration on the interaction between Lanzmann and his interviewees

throughout substantially shapes its overall dialogical quality. In many interviews, like that with Borowi, he appears alongside his interviewee in the shot. When he asks the villagers of Chelmno about the traditional Jewish designs on their front doors and whether they remember the people who originally lived in the homes they now occupy, he is there on screen leaning on the wall beside the person being interviewed as they stand in the doorway or sit on the doorstep. Even when he doesn't appear in frame, his voice is heard asking questions off-frame. This constant presence, on screen or on the soundtrack, has a significant effect on how the viewer is able to relate to the film as a whole.

If *Shoah* succeeds in transcending the representational approach it is because the viewer is able and is encouraged to relate to it not merely as a representation but as the sign and source of an encounter. It is by taking an encounter as its starting point, as opposed to a pro-filmic fact or event, and aiming in turn to provoke an encounter, that the dialogical documentary puts itself in the position to go beyond both objectification of practices and reproduction of a monological understanding of the world. Of course, what the viewer sees represented on the screen are physical events—the acts and interactions of the film's subjects observed by the camera—and undoubtedly they automatically attribute intentions and emotions to these subjects; but the meaning of this attribution for a detached observer is very different to the meaning for someone who is implicated in the events and interactions observed. If the film is to become dialogical, then somehow the dimension not only of phenomenological understanding embodied in these acts and irreducible to their 'outward appearance' projected on the screen, but also that of the dialogical encounter implicit in the social interactions they are part of, must extend to the viewer.

For this reason, although the documentary subject may also function as a point of identification and empathy for the viewer, a dialogical approach requires that the subject's role go beyond this. Not every subject appearing in a dialogical documentary takes on this role to the same extent. In *Shoah* it is Lanzmann primarily who takes it on, but in so doing transfers it to his interviewees; Rouch and Morin, who appear as subjects in their film too, take on the role alongside *Chronicle's* principal participants, particularly Marceline, Angelo and Landry. The role that these subjects fulfil is that of a figure for whom the objects and acts seen in the same sequence of images in which she or he also appears, are encounterable as at least potentially intelligible entities and signs which have a

place in either the 'world' and 'circumspective concern' that is the subject's own or is that of the Other with whom they interact. Unlike the viewer, who is separated from events by the representational set-up, the dialogical documentary subject interacts with people who otherwise might appear as mere ciphers. During their interaction, Lanzmann and his interviewees, for example, appear to a greater or lesser degree as the dialogical Other to each other: the interviewees are the Other whose testimony the filmmaker elicits; he the Other who requires they appear on camera to give testimony.



Fig. *Shoah*, Abraham Bomba

Lanzmann interviews one subject in a barber's shop in Israel. A middle-aged man sits in the barber's chair while Abraham Bomba snips occasionally at his greying wavy hair. Reflected in the mirrors behind them from different parts of the shop other barbers, scissors in their hands, lean over the chairs where other customers sit, and around the perimeter of the room a number of mainly younger men stand looking on. For ten or so minutes, as the camera rolls almost continuously, Bomba, who apart from the occasional glance to the door looks only at the head of hair he is cutting, describes how he was selected at Treblinka to cut the women's hair before they were gassed. He recounts the circumstances, not specific events; he avoids going into detail. Lanzmann doesn't appear in shot, but quietly prompts him from behind the camera: how did

they cut the hair? Did they use clippers or scissors? How did he feel the first time he saw these naked women and children herded into the gas chamber? Eventually Bomba succumbs, he starts to recall a particular occasion. One day a group arrived from his home town, among them the wife and sister of a friend who is there with him cutting hair... Here he stops short, saying only that he can't continue. But Lanzmann encourages him: 'you must go on... we have to go on. Please.'

It is three to four minutes before Bomba starts his story again, during which time he is mostly silent. The camera simply bides with him as he seems to struggle with a memory he would prefer to repress. The scene is important, in part, because the trauma involved in recalling this particular incident impresses itself on the viewer as he or she watches Bomba try to steel himself. But it is also important because in it the appeal of the filmmaker to his subject is made, and his subject's difficult and reluctant acceptance of that appeal is given, on camera. Lanzmann had hired the barber's shop especially for this interview with Bomba, because he wanted him to talk about cutting the women's hair (SCL: 95), and in the film it is clear that it is no coincidence that this part of the interview takes place where it does, with scissors in the man's hand. Like the locomotive Gawkowski drives to Treblinka, this location is the setting for a re-enactment, though a non-representational one.¹³ Bomba is not being objectified by the camera, he explicitly enunciates his testimony for the camera within a staging that removes any suggestion that he could be innocent of the filmmaking process.

It is because the subject appears in the film as an immediate 'witness' to an encounter with the Other, that *in relation to the 'witness'* the places and people represented in the film are transformed into phenomenologically and dialogically encounterable realities for the viewer too—but how is this possible? How does a documentary subject enable the encounter to be extended to the viewer of an image on a screen? It is possible on condition that the 'witness' in the film, for whom other subjects are encountered as Other, also appears in the position of the Other to the viewer. When Marceline sits with Rouch and Morin at the beginning of *Chronicle*, the agreement that is enacted between her and the

¹³ As Shoshana Felman, one of the participants at Lanzmann's seminar, says: 'what you [Lanzmann] are doing in the staging is not representational', with which the filmmaker agrees (SCL: 97).

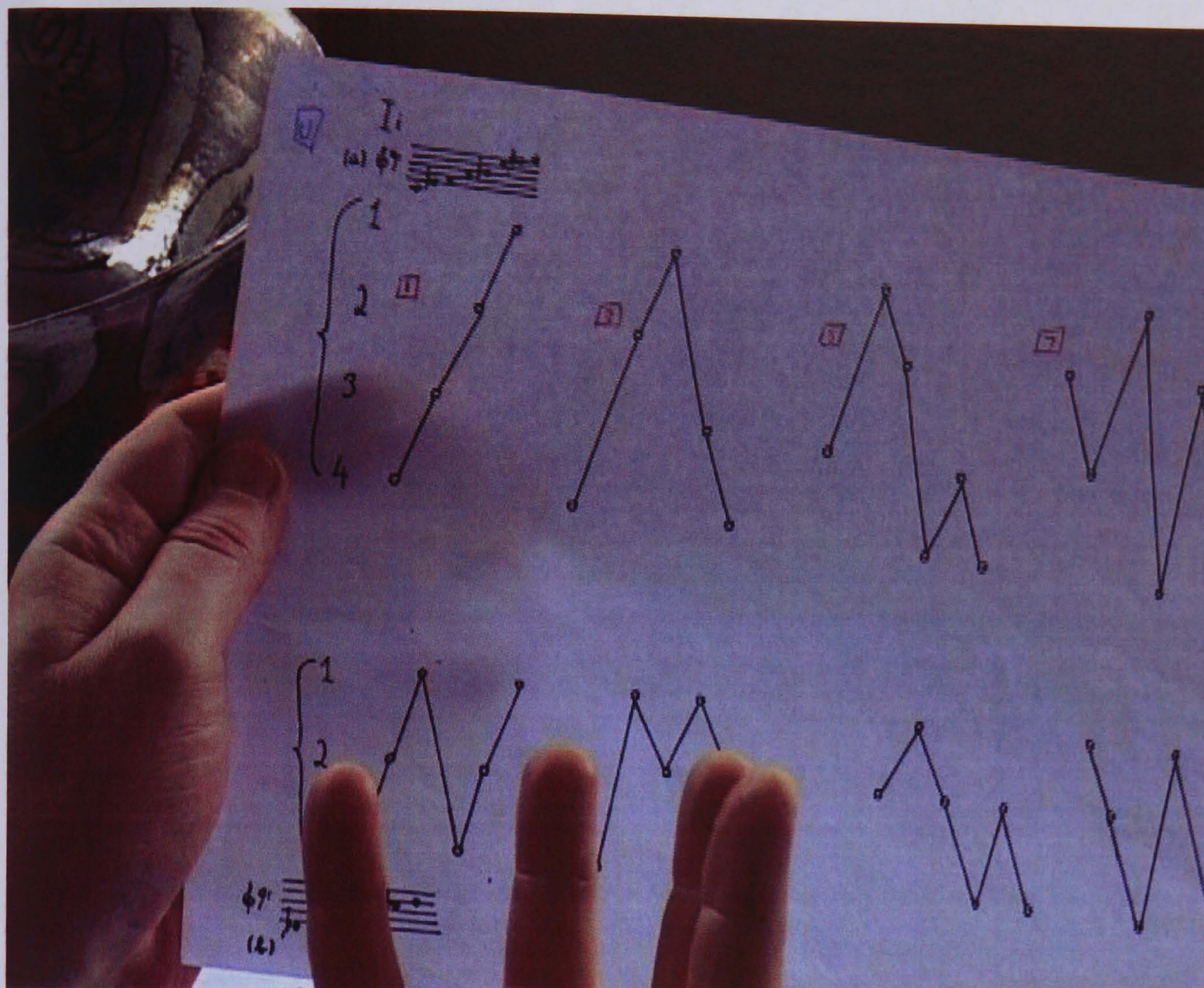
film's authors is recognisably an example of one of a clutch of techniques that Rouch termed 'shared anthropology'. By and large this term refers to the authorship of an anthropological document being shared with the ethnographic subject, who can comment on the representation made of him or her (possibly within the document), and to the potential for the ethnographer, i.e. author, to appear as subject within the same representation as well (see Feld, 2003: 18-19).¹⁴ This contrasts markedly with Gardner's approach in *Forest*, where although the camera must have been an obtrusive presence, no one is invited to respond to it.¹⁵ Evidently Gardner believed that to preserve their authenticity his subjects should remain 'innocent' of the representational process (see Ruby, 2000: 102). Marceline, on the other hand, is invited not only to acknowledge this process *per se*, but also her active part in it. She becomes integral to the enunciation of the film, which Rouch and Morin, by taking up the position of subject within their own documentary, bring into the film's frame. Marceline thus enunciates her appearance in the film jointly with the film's authors. Even where the author doesn't appear directly, the enunciation of the film, as it is in *Jaguar* and *Moi un Noir*, can be brought into the frame indirectly simply by allowing the subjects to acknowledge the filmmaking process. The documentary subject, in turn, as they find a position within the complex of the film's enunciation, thereby initiates a dialogical relation with their unseen Other, the viewer, to whom the film and their performance within it are addressed. The 'witness' thus plays a pivotal role in the dialogical documentary: the dialogical encounter which their interaction with other people appearing in the film involves, extends to the viewer by dint of the fact that in enunciating his or her appearance in the film the 'witness' is apprehended by the viewer as a dialogical Other.

¹⁴ Deleuze points out that a character in Rouch's films is not objective for the camera because he is involved in an encounter with the film in which he invents himself. Rouch's characters are, he says, no longer constructed out of subjective shots (in which they see) and objective shots (in which they are seen), and in large part this seems to be because the camera is no longer ignored, but played to, used as a medium by the character, and so its 'active effect on situations' is acknowledged (1989: 151).

¹⁵ Although Gardner does occasionally use long lenses in this film, a lot of the intensive observation is filmed at close quarters. Clearly, then, not only did Gardner not invite his subjects to acknowledge the camera, he must have given them to understand that they were to ignore it.

Evidence of Work: C. *Changing the System* (DVD 1)

C. *Changing the System* (part 1), c.16mins



This and the following video segment (Evidence of Work: D) rework some of the footage used in early *Rehearsals for Changing the System* edit (Evidence of Work: A1), but integrated with additional rehearsal footage (of which there were some 35 hours in total) and further interviews with participating musicians conducted during the course of 2005. The early edit does briefly indicate the techniques used in Wolff's composition, but it does not dwell on how the musicians actually dealt with them. In this two-part later edit, by contrast, the emphasis lies, firstly, on the score and what it requires, and secondly, on the musicians negotiation of these requirements.

Wolff's score calls for several independent quartets of players (for this performance there were six), whose performances are not co-ordinated with one another in any orchestrated sense, apart from roughly the timings of their entries within the course of the performance as a whole and some arrangement of chords. In essence there are three sorts of musical 'material' given in the composition, which are divided between the quartets: an instrumental score, a percussion score and a vocal score. It is the instrumental material that is the focus of the first part of this edit—the percussion score that of the second.

Now, one of the main curiosities of the score, and what made its rehearsal and performance so pertinent to my overall project, was that whilst giving basic material (notes) from which the musicians were to select, it did not determine the syntax in which this material was to be assembled, but rather provided a system or technique of assembly, as it were, which involved the musicians signalling and responding to one another in rotation. The instrumental score, for example, consisted of melodic and harmonic pages. The melodic score involved what is termed 'hocketting', which is to say a chain created of single notes played one after the other in immediate succession by the separate players of a quartet. What the hocket score establishes is the order of players, not what note they'll play or the dynamics and duration of that note. Slightly more determined, on the other hand, were the chords of the harmonic score. Here sequences of chords are written out, but the responsibility for beginning each chord in a sequence, and for its duration and dynamics rests with a player in the group who must cue each chord as it is played. Again, this responsibility then rotates through the group for each sequence.

Please view Changing the System (part 1) on DVD 1 before reading the next part.

3. Documentary as Intervention

3.1 Towards a Theory of the Dialogical Approach

A central hypothesis of this dissertation has been that there is a significant distinction to be drawn between representational and dialogical approaches to documentary practice. The aim of the Part 2 was to describe how the dialogical differs from the representational approach: whereas the latter primarily represents practices and social agents, the former provokes and communicates an encounter with the Other. I've argued that the dialogical documentary, if it is to avoid objectifying practices and thus missing the ambiguities of the dialogical process, must cease to aim at making practices understood. What, then, does it do, if it does not produce objective representations or knowledge? It is my contention that it instead *intervenes* in practices, making their ambiguity and their contingency explicit, and therefore opening possibilities of thinking and doing otherwise than the hegemony of the average allows. Close observation of acts and even connections between phenomena forged from the film-editor's point of view may remain, but they serve a different purpose. No longer is the act presented as an objectified reality made transparent to the external gaze, but is rather presented as part of a dialogical context in which the film, the film-maker and viewer are to some degree implicated too, along with the film's subjects. My aim in these closing sections of the dissertation is limited to suggesting some rudimentary terms in which the idea of documentary as intervention could be described and assessed.

The first thing to say is that what I have in mind is an intervention whose impetus arises in practices themselves; the dialogical documentary does not supervene upon practices, applying some transcendent structure or interpretation to them, but rather would seem to draw on the potential of a certain reflexivity, or as I will call it, *articulation* immanent to them. The question is then where this articulation can be found: is it there to be found in the act in its relation to a practice, because isn't the fundamental relationship of the act to practices *reproduction*? That is to say, practices exist only in so far as they are reproduced, and acts exist only in so far as practices exist: on the one hand an action becomes an act in the context of a practice, and on the other the practice is in turn perpetuated by acts and responses conforming to it. So, while an act's intelligible 'shape' comes from its position in a form of life, which is the context

against which it comes into existence, the act is equally the reproduction of that form of life. Going back to an example from *Forest of Bliss*, beyond the carpenter's immediate practical actions, the manipulations of his tools and materials, stretches the hinterland of roles, relations and purposes which supply them with their significance—a form of life. The object he fashions supposes a particular set of practices; the funeral litter he produces refers to the job of the pall-bearers, which likewise refers to the ritual as a whole and the cremations or river burials that it involves—in another culture he might be making coffins. In this way each act within the ambit of the ritual takes shape with reference to the other acts it encompasses, and in doing so reproduces its relationship to those acts. In this background context environmental phenomena are already *evaluated* as being good for this or that purpose, things to avoid or to strive for etc. (Benares, for example, is thought of as a spiritually propitious place to die by many Hindus—see Östör, 1994: 70), and using or approaching phenomena in these ways reproduces their cultural evaluation, which is to say their position and 'shape' within a form of life.

The concept of *evaluation*, which I make recourse to here, is Bakhtin's. Characteristically for him, evaluation is a global concept comprising a complex of interrelated phenomena and is hard to pin down. On the one hand Bakhtin uses the term to describe the attitude of the speaker to his or her words, which is expressed in their selection, combination and the tone with which they are spoken. On the other hand evaluation is said to be accumulated in words, whose meaning is simply a sedimentation of repeated and diverse uses. In the guise of the linguistic *habitus*, evaluation is said dictate the form of the utterance, and at the same time as naming what shapes it, is used to indicate what is expressed in the utterance about some particular circumstance in the world. As Volosinov hints, evaluation is a constituent part of the phenomenon: 'all the phenomena that surround us are... merged with value judgments' (in Morris, 1994: 165); and so phenomenological experience itself depends on evaluation, because 'without some kind of evaluative social orientation there is no experience' (MPL: 87). If I read the concept of evaluation through the more rigorous lens of Heidegger's thought, it becomes apparent that fundamentally it describes the relation between human activity and its environment, and hence the underlying meaning and impetus of that activity which is existence within an understanding of a 'world'. So, in my use of the term 'evaluation' and its cognates, it is to be borne in mind that I am interested in what is revealed, or

'disclosed' as Heidegger would say, as a possible way of existing in and comporting oneself towards the world.

So, in reproducing a practice, an act can be understood to reproduce the way something has been evaluated, because a practice represents a consensus in our way of comporting ourselves towards things. Over and against this, however, in articulating a practice an act would open the potential of *re-evaluation*, and it is this potential of evaluating differently that I am suggesting, ultimately, the dialogical documentary makes explicit. However, it may not necessarily be that the acts the dialogical documentary seeks out are themselves articulations of practices, though *Shoah* and *Chronicle* seem to be constructed so as to push towards or provoke acts which do indeed articulate practices and, by doing so, in some or other manner and degree exceed their reproduction. This, though, is not yet the documentary's intervention in the social world, although it is part of it; by incorporating it within its enunciation, the film *raises to the level of discourse* the act that it either discovers or provokes and the articulation of practice it implies. What does this mean? An act made in the everyday context, though it might articulate possibilities within it, is a response made within the limits of a local situation and will have little or no impact on the character of the overall context, unless, that is, it is repeated, say in reports people make of it. Its appearance in the context of the film, however, extends its reach; it allows it a greater enunciative force and articulates it against other such enunciated statements or images. In other words, it makes it part of the discourses about the world in which its articulation otherwise would have dissipated.

For example, the 'sign of death' made by the Polish farmers, who tell Lanzmann about the trains they witnessed arriving at Treblinka, is enunciated for the camera. The tone of their explanations varies, but each time the gesture is presented as relatively unequivocally. There is as yet no overt acknowledgement of its ambiguity; but raised into the enunciative context of the film, however, it no longer reproduces the stories in common circulation about the Otherness of the Jews whom Poles nonetheless meant no harm, but becomes the nexus of conflicting stories.¹ Gawkowski's use of the 'sign of death'

¹ In an essay based on fieldwork conducted in Poland, the anthropologist Jack Klugelmann writes of 'the persistence of a national narrative [in Poland] in which Jews

during the re-enacted arrival at Treblinka is somewhat different. The presence of the camera and the scenario Lanzmann's film presents him with are clearly a crucial part of what he is responding to, but it is not the film that imbues the gesture with articulation. While the consensus of his compatriots is that the sign was a warning, more or less, Gawkowski's gesture does not reproduce this. Nor does it reproduce the darker implications that range from indifference to 'good riddance'. Rather it articulates a possibility of meaning that otherwise remains shrouded in a general ambiguity. It is an *acknowledgement* of the events he witnessed and the meaning of his part in them—something which none of the other uses of the gesture in the film achieve. Gawkowski is the only one who manages to use the film to bear witness; it is as if the dialogic context he addresses is the fulcrum on which he is able to re-evaluate the past in which he finds himself entangled. In the context of the film this acknowledgment becomes an enunciation within what Lanzmann called a 'cascade of the same gestures' (SCL: 84), so that its articulation counterpoints and comments on their conformity.

It is in raising the act to the level of discourse that the dialogical documentary intervenes in practices. Clearly this itself is not another practical or everyday act, it is a discursive act. Nor is it an act of force, in the sense that it exercises no power over people and cannot therefore compel them to act in a certain way. If the nature of this intervention is to be made clear, it seems to me that first I must ask what it is in the act that can be dialogised and become part of the film's enunciation and how this relates to what can be articulated in practices.

3.2 The Dialogised Act

Evidently there are differences between utterances and other acts, but the question is which of these differences if any are significant when considering the possibility of raising an act to the level of discourse? Utterances occur within the context of a dialogue of some or other form however indirect the response of one utterance to another, and they are therefore explicable as rejoinders to other utterances and discourses, which consequently can come to resound in them. When in this way the relations implicit in the dialogic context become tangible in the utterance itself, it is described by Bakhtin as being 'internally dialogised'. As I have premised my description of an approach to documentary

figure conspicuously and enigmatically as a mysterious people complicit in their own demise' (Klugelmass, 1995: 281).

on this conception, before asking about the act in general and its enunciation in the dialogical documentary, it would seem wise to establish what within the utterance is dialogised.

Bakhtin speaks of language, as it is perceived by the novelist, as 'something stratified and heteroglot' (DN: 332), and it is this 'heteroglossia' with its 'stratified' structure that is dialogised in the utterances appearing in the novel. Bakhtin's term 'heteroglossia' refers to the heterogeneity of 'social languages' or 'speech genres', of which, he maintains, what we call language is in actuality made up. In the dialogical view of language words are seen to carry enfolded within them the different uses to which they have been and are put, because indeed they are no more than the accumulation of these uses—everyday or specialist uses, scientific or literary, complimentary or pejorative, etc.. Social languages are formations of linguistic practice in which one or other distinct network of these uses predominate, and along with it a certain range of evaluation. So, according to Bakhtin, language is neither a neutral nor even a unified medium such as *langue* is for structuralists—it is 'unitary only in the abstract' (DN: 356); rather it consists of a continual stratification according to its heterogeneous uses and their changing relationships. 'For the novelist working in prose', therefore, as Bakhtin wrote,

'the object is always entangled in someone else's discourse about it, it is already present with qualifications, an object of dispute that is conceptualized and evaluated variously, inseparable from the heteroglot social apprehension of it. The novelist speaks of this "already qualified world" in a language that is heteroglot and internally dialogized. Thus both object and language are revealed to the novelist in their historical dimension, in the process of social and heteroglot becoming.' (DN: 330).

When language—or better, when linguistic practices become dialogised, the heterogeneous social and historical meanings implicit within them (heteroglossia) become articulated. When, for example, in *Shoah* Lanzmann asks the farmer Borowi to explain his imitation of the voices he heard on the trains waiting outside Treblinka, Borowi replies that it is 'Jew's language' and that he doesn't understand it. Lanzmann's intervention is subtle, but it nonetheless articulates Borowi's utterance. By acting as if he doesn't understand him and repeating his utterance in his own question, Lanzmann exposes Borowi's possibly unconscious but nonetheless dismissive and distancing reference to these people. He counters Borowi's casual incomprehension with his own in which it is mirrored, so that the man's

utterance appears in light of that response and its underlying imputation of Otherness is made clear. What happens in the 'internally dialogised', or, as Bakhtin also describes it, the 'double-voiced' utterance, is that 'two potential utterances are fused, two responses are, as it were, harnessed in a potential dialogue' (DN: 361). Perhaps in the documentary it is rare for a discrete act to be so clearly the location of a potential dialogue as the utterance is in the novel—this dialogue being 'an encounter' taking place, as Bakhtin says, 'within the arena of an utterance' (DN: 358)—but there are at such moments as the scene from *Shoah* described above, definite crystallizations of heterogeneity brought about by dialogic interaction in the documentary.

Where the novel suffices with the utterance, however, and creates within it an encounter 'between two linguistic consciousnesses', the documentary can seek the dialogical in a broader range of human acts, including gestures and of course speech, but also physical manipulations and performances, and conceivably even facial expressions and bodily postures too. Nonetheless, like the novel, the documentary seeks to dialogise in the act the various cultural or social orientations toward the world it apparently implies, which like those sought in the utterance are 'separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor' (DN: 358). One distinction the interactive or dialogical documentary has in relation to the novel, however, is that whereas the latter of course can concoct its utterances and invent its characters, the acts that appear in the former are ones that have actually been produced by real human beings at a certain point in time. Nevertheless, in both cases it is the enunciation of an act or utterance that originates in social reality within the context of the documentary or novel that causes it to become internally dialogised. In both *Chronicle* and *Shoah* it is through external dialogues, actual social encounters, that the dialogical relation is established—encounters which can be face-to-face, as that between Marceline and Landry; mediated through the film, as the encounters between Lanzmann's different interviewees are in *Shoah*; or encounters with the camera and the film itself, as is the case with the restaged arrival at Treblinka for Gawkowski. More often than not two of more different acts are actually shown, which respond to one another either directly or across the edit—but the phenomenon or sign 'evaluated variously', such as the 'sign of death' or ethnic identity in *Chronicle*'s tattoo scene, becomes itself 'internally dialogised' as a result.

3.3 The Enunciated Act

It would seem that the documentary can dialogise an utterance as rudimentary as Borowi's imitative glossolalia, so how far removed from the linguistic utterance could the act in principle be and still be dialogised?

Many everyday non-linguistic practices may seem at first glance to be no more than simply functional manipulations of the physical environment. Such basic manipulations as those carried out by a carpenter, for example, seem at first sight relatively unambiguous acts: whether he makes bamboo litters or wooden coffins, does not the nature of his activity remain fundamentally the same? Aren't the actions of the labourer, unlike the words of a lawyer, say, or the gestures of a dancer, appropriate for no other reason than they fit the physical task in hand?

The answer may be that such reduction is illegitimate as '[w]henver we encounter anything, the world has already been previously discovered' (BT: 114), which is to say that even the use of a hammer rests on how the tool and its purpose are understood within a 'world'. Of course, a carpenter's actions have to do the job, but this consideration ultimately does not determine the intelligibility or cultural 'shape' of his activity; nor would it be adequate to explain why his work takes the form it does in this culture while taking another elsewhere, or why the meanings and values accrue to it that in actuality do. Such rudimentary naturalism that would explain the existence of an act as the sole and literal consequence of its functionality, could not explain why even the most basic human behaviours vary despite our shared natural history. It might be that nature requires of the human species certain general behaviours (like eating and drinking) and disposes it to others (like using tools and language), but how these behaviours manifest themselves, and are transformed in the process, is at the very least to be explained with reference to culture. As the philosopher Bernard Williams writes: 'The generic human need to make and listen to music, for instance, might be explained at the level of evolutionary psychology, but the emergence of the classical symphony certainly cannot.' (Williams, 2002: 28). In reproducing a practice, the everyday act does not become an event determined by natural processes; what it reproduces is precisely a cultural type with its necessarily incomplete and heterogeneous determination.

Presuming that everyday acts have the irreducible cultural dimension I suggest, it would follow that they are—alongside acts in other fields and on other levels—constituent parts of the social process determining the types available in a particular ‘world’. That is to say, they too would be stratified and heterogeneous like language. If this is so, then by rights it should be possible for them to appear in a dialogised form. That is the principle, at least. But the question would be only half answered, because this would not yet tell me what concretely allows an everyday practice to be perceived dialogically. An everyday act may be part of the social process in which types are determined, but as it doesn’t play the same role in that process that discourse does, it cannot be automatically assumed non-linguistic acts in the everyday can be similarly dialogised. It seems necessary, therefore, to look at the fundamental differences between the discursive act or utterance and the everyday, non-linguistic act, and ask whether these differences determine the one as amenable to being dialogised and the other not.

The first difference would seem to be that while all human practices contain a pre-ontological understanding of phenomena, apparently it is only in discourse that phenomena are *interpreted*. Language, or the use of signs generally, as Heidegger says, ‘lets something ready-to-hand become conspicuous’: it ‘explicitly raises... into our circumspection’ some aspect of the ‘world’ already understood (BT: 111; 110). The activity of the carpenter in *Forest of Bliss*, for example, as he fabricates objects of bamboo, has within it an understanding of, among other things, the bamboo, the tools he uses, the objects he is constructing, and the purposes they are destined for; but this understanding need at no point be explicit. Once spoken of, however, the carpenter’s activity is interpreted in some or other way. Attention is drawn to the nature of bamboo as a material as opposed to wood, say, or it is drawn to the goal of an action as opposed to its physical shape, etc.. Undoubtedly this is different to what happens to the act by dint of the fact that it has been filmed and is seen as a representation in the context of Gardner’s documentary, but there too certain details in the act, and connections between it and other acts and activities, are made conspicuous. Does this not warrant the name ‘interpretation’ too? If so, what counts lies not, as it were, in the ‘substance’ of the act, but rather in the context in which the act appears. Consider for a moment Borowi’s imitations of the Jewish language (Yiddish, presumably) in *Shoah*. What he is imitating is language, and Lanzmann’s questioning takes place in language, but what

effects the interpretative dimension of each act is a recontextualisation of the last act or activity in the series, which is repeated in it—the voices he hears in the rail cars being repeated and recontextualised in Borowi's act, which in turn is repeated and recontextualised in Lanzman's act. Lastly, Lanzmann's question to Borowi, and with it the rest of the series, is recontextualised once more when it becomes part of the film.

Nonetheless, if it were agreed that in their everyday context, acts, especially non-linguistic acts, did not for the most part or to any appreciable degree explicitly interpret phenomena, it would not necessarily follow that they were exclusively *reproductions* of practices. Equally, just because discursive acts do offer interpretations and make aspects of phenomena conspicuous, it doesn't follow that they are automatically *articulations*. The best that can be said, it would seem, is that inasmuch as a situation is seamlessly and instinctively responded to in terms of a generic context, the everyday act reproduces this context, whereas if the act responds to a situation such that it, or some aspect within it, is not assimilated to a generic context, the seed of an articulation is present. As discursive acts necessarily draw attention to some or other particular aspect of a phenomenon, it would seem, in principle at least, that an act operating as an articulation will likely be a discursive one, which is to say one removed from an everyday context.

The second difference between everyday and discursive acts seems to be that, although an everyday act implies the acts of others that it responds to and anticipates, it does so, for the most part, without any overt enunciation to or address of the Other. Every utterance, by contrast, has this enunciative dimension to some degree, even without a particular addressee. It might be argued that everyday acts implicitly acknowledge the existence of others—the carpenter, for example, makes litters *for* other people. Does this constitute enunciation in any significant degree? Perhaps one might take actual encounters and transactions with customers to be implicit in the act, but then the work the craftsman engages in is at best indirectly occasioned by, or anticipates, encounters in which enunciated acts may be produced. The enunciative dimension of the discursive act is its address to the Other, and as enunciated it is necessarily dialogical (though not necessarily dialogised), it is a part or social interaction (though it does not necessarily make the implication of different social viewpoints explicit). By contrast, it looks like the everyday act, especially the non-linguistic acts of work, labour and private behaviour, lacks that

enunciative dimension and hence is not dialogical, which is where at least some of the doubts that it can be dialogised stem from.

Both the capacity for interpretation and the enunciative dimension discussed above would indeed seem to be necessary attributes of an act in which heterogeneous understandings of phenomena can be dialogised. They are characteristic of discourse, and discursive acts are therefore clearly able to function as 'the arena for the [dialogical] encounter' as Bakhtin terms it (DN: 282). The question then is simply: what constitutes a discursive act? It is not, as one might immediately suspect, language as such. For one thing, language can be often used in everyday situations in a way that its interpretative and enunciative dimension becomes negligible. It would seem rather to be the appearance of the act within a context, in which it is perceived as enunciated and as a sign of some or other form—as indeed is the case for the carpenter's act appearing in the context of Gardner's film. If enunciation and interpretation are less prominent in everyday contexts, they are not for that absent from them. Were they absent, and were the everyday act wholly reproductive, the great diversity of evaluation that Bakhtin and Volosinov find in language, though theoretically present in the act as it occurs as part of the everyday, would be entirely inaccessible in it. On the contrary, every element of human behaviour, however rudimentary, so long as it can be perceived as an element of behaviour and can be reiterated, can also be enunciated and appear as an interpretative sign. Therefore, whether it be a finger being drawn across a throat or a cadence of speech, any act can serve as a dialogised sign: *once raised to the level of discourse, there is no difference between linguistic acts and non-linguistic or everyday acts, because the latter become 'discursive'*. It is for this reason that the dialogical documentary does not passively observe practices, but makes sure that the acts it focuses on are more or less explicitly enunciated, either by requiring the subject to address the camera or acknowledge the filmmaking situation, or by seeking out moments of dialogical interaction in which a practice or act is in dispute.

3.4 The Reach of the Act

Having indicated, admittedly briefly, how an act once enunciated may become the arena of dialogical encounter, the space in which the heterogeneity of practice is dialogised, it is possible to finish by outlining the intervention that documentary makes in practices. This intervention has two aspects which are

interrelated and must be considered in tandem. The first pertains to the nature of the enunciation that is the documentary itself, the second to the nature of what is enunciated within it. Like any representation, the documentary is part of a dialogical context: it responds to the social phenomena it films, to the dialogic context and social discourses that surround them, as well as to those of course that surround it. The documentary may not directly engage in the production and reproduction of the practices that form its subject, but it does intervene in the discourses that surround and interpret those practices. Nonetheless, unlike its representational counterpart, what the dialogical documentary does when it intervenes in those discourses is not only to offer an interpretation of a practice, which inevitably it will do to some extent, but to raise some aspect of that practice, some act from it, to the level of discourse.

Talking in early 2003 at London's I.C.A. after a screening of his film *Sobibor* (2001), Lanzmann described the torturous process involved in getting *Shoah* broadcast on Polish television. The point of *Shoah* was not to act as a memorial to the past, a memorial serving fundamentally to remove the past from any implication in the present, displacing it to the sphere of memory and therefore allowing it to be ignored; for Lanzmann the point of the film was rather to address the present and to intervene in it. As he notes in his seminar, the only images in *Shoah* that could be called 'archival' in the entirety of its nine and a half hours are the fading photos a Holocaust survivor shows him of relatives who perished in the camps. Whilst in post-war Germany, where the culpability for the Holocaust obviously lay more clearly, the past was not only not forgotten but actively engaged with in a process of what the Germans call *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), 'Poland', as the anthropologist Jack Klugelmann notes, 'refused to acknowledge either the special Jewish dimension of Hitler's genocide or that not all of its citizens were saints during the war' (1995: 279), this despite the fact that Poland was where the majority of the death camps were located. This denial seems to have continued substantially until the fall of communism in the Eastern Bloc, and it is just such a situation in the present that Lanzmann wanted to address with his film.

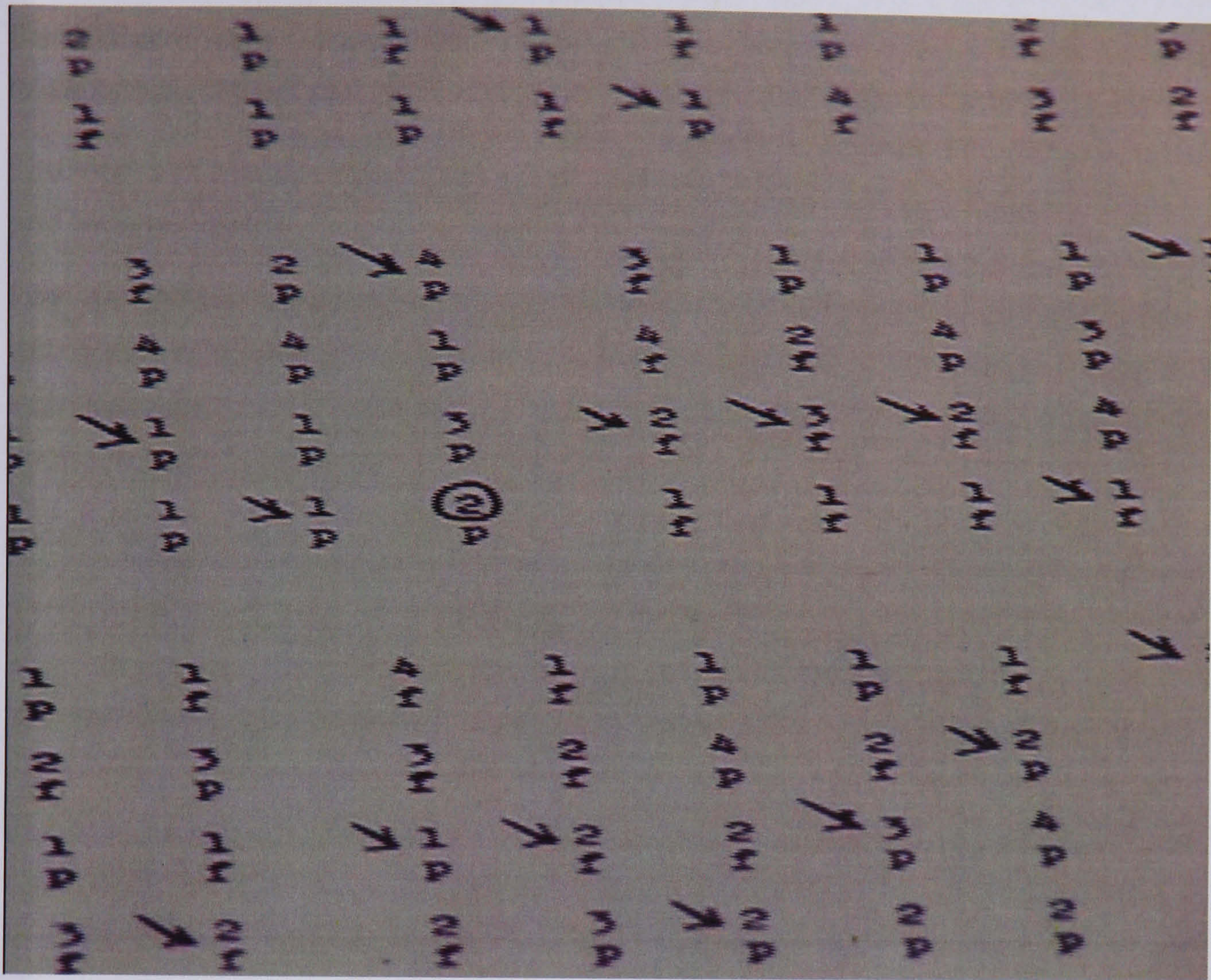
What is important is the manner in which the film addresses itself to this situation, because rather than describing it, or prescribing a solution to it, in *Shoah* acts from the practices sustaining that situation on a social level, the acts of the people who are immersed in it, are raised to the level of discourse so that

the practices themselves are raised into awareness.² Since its broadcast, Lanzmann said, there has been a general rediscovery of Poland's Jews and their fate, a development corroborated in Klugelmann's article (see 1995: 297). Of course, to what extent *Shoah* will have contributed to this would not be easy to determine. What is certain, however, is that the acts enunciated in it have become far-reaching in their repercussions in a way they never could have had they not become part of the film's enunciation. Whether they predominantly conform to the consensus and thereby reproduce it, or, as Gawkowski's gesture does, they articulate the other possibilities within it, enunciated and dialogised in the context of the film they make a heterogeneity of evaluation apparent and hence the possibility of re-evaluation.

² For simplicity's sake I restrict myself to considering the scenes dealing with the Polish response to the Holocaust and the film's effect on Polish attitudes. Clearly this is only one among many dimensions covered by *Shoah*.

Evidence of Work: D. *Changing the System* (DVD 1)

D. *Changing the System* (part 2), c.17mins



Whilst part 1 dwells on the different tasks required by the score, the way they are put together, and the nature of following them, part 2, which moves to concentrate on the percussion pages, goes further into the actual process undergone by the players to realise the score working as groups. This is the actual topic of the project: the dialogical process at the base of an enunciation. Indeed, Wolff's score itself defines not a product but a process of interaction between individuals out of which different performances may arise. So, this second part of the documentary moves from the score's definition of the process to the actual responses and interactions of the musicians, their experience and negotiations of the demands of performance. What is being explored in the video might be termed the 'conditions of enunciation' for this musical work, so that, towards the end of the edit especially, the idea that the identity of the piece being located in the tasks asked of its performers is interwoven with practical discussions between players on how to realise those tasks. It would seem that Wolff was himself concerned to distribute the responsibility for enunciation to each of the players by leaving a significant degree of indeterminacy to his score that they have to fill in. This process has an effect on the quality of the performance, but what I aim to do with in the video is to make Wolff's

articulation of responsibility and collaboration in the performance situation explicit through following the process its sets in train.

Acknowledgements:

The camera and sound operators on this project were: Wayne Clements, Donald Cuthbertson, Martin Earle, William English, Silke Panse, Abigail Reynolds, Lawrence Sullivan, Kay Walsh and me.

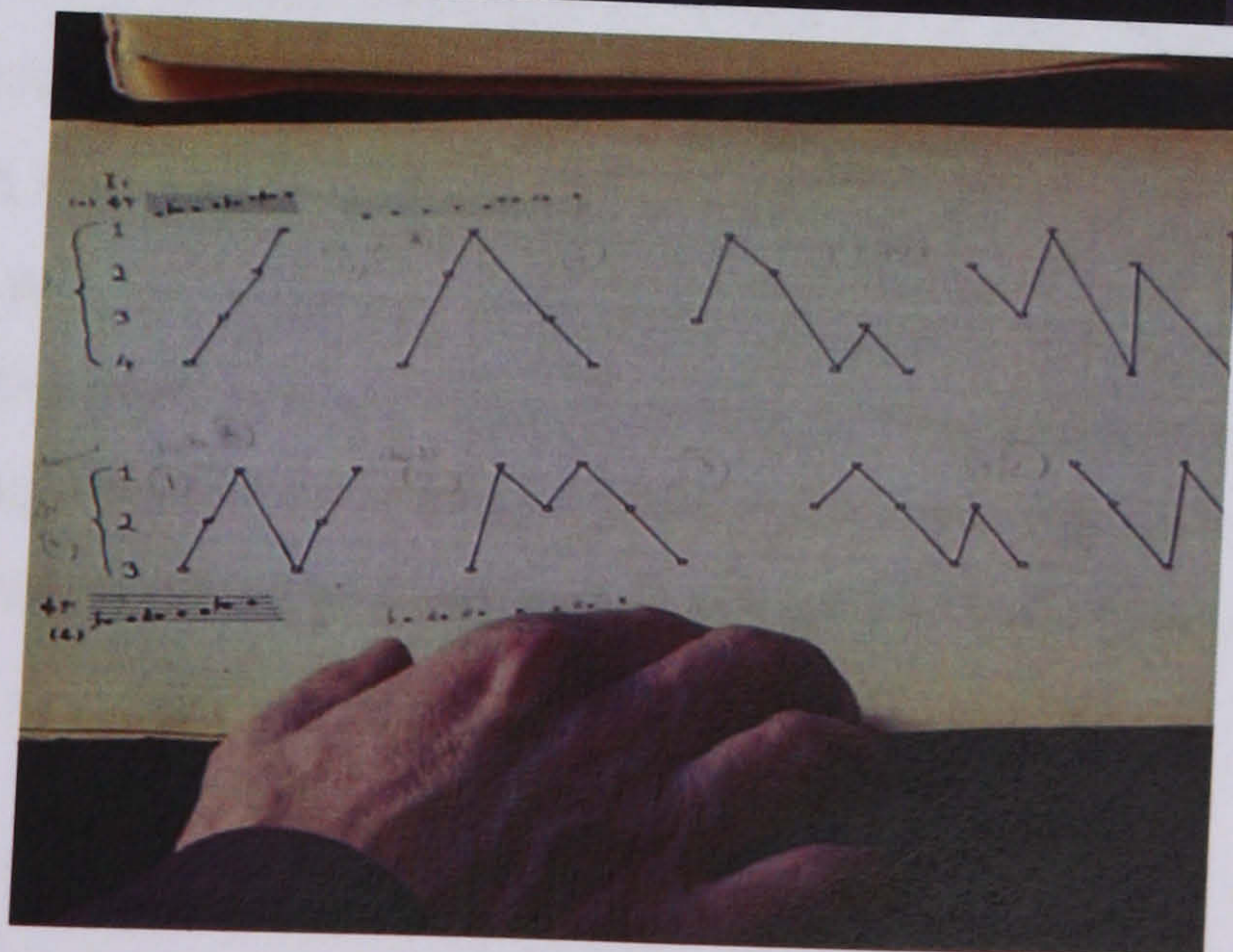
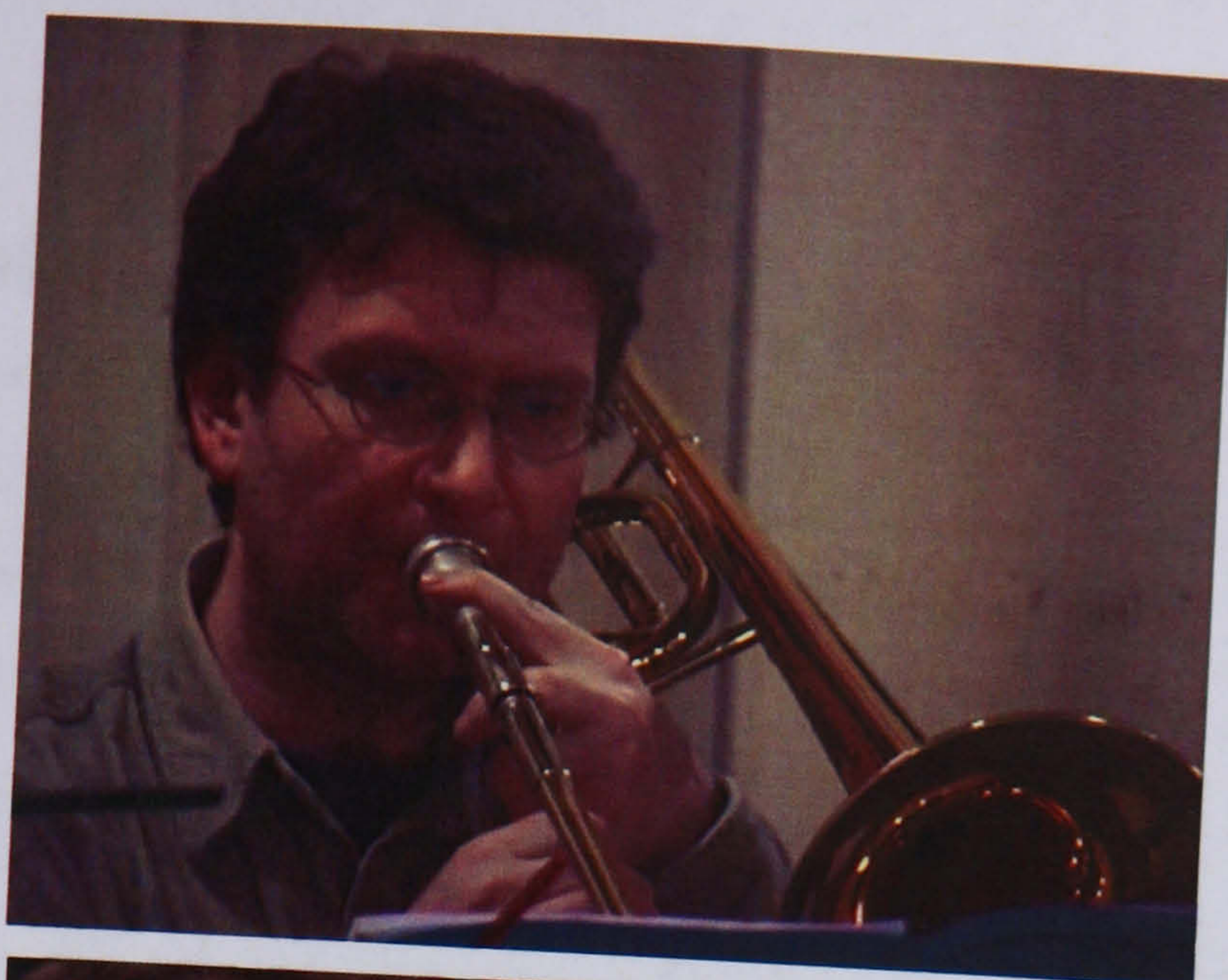
The main interviewees featuring in these edits are: Dave Ryan, Ian Mitchell, Dave Smith and Michael Parsons.

I am grateful for Dave Ryan's invitation to film at the rehearsals he was organising, the willingness of all the players to allow me to film them whilst they rehearsed, and the interviews given to me by Andrew Sparling and Alan Tomlinson, though I have not used them (the fault of my questions, not their answers).

Please view *Changing the System* (part 2) on DVD 1 before reading the next chapter.

4. Conclusion: Theory and Practice

What I have attempted to set out in this dissertation are terms in which a mode of documentary practice can be conceptualised. I have outlined a theory of the philosophical grounding for that practice and distinguished it from alternative conceptions. I have sought to analyse and explain the basic methodology of this practice—its emphasis on enunciation, provocation and the dialogical encounter—and have indicated how a documentary produced in light of these factors differs radically from a representational documentary. The particular focus of the theoretical element has been to describe how a dialogical method might respond to the essential ambiguity of the evaluative and dialogical dimension of practice. Following this argument through has entailed suggesting that, corresponding to the intervention within the immediate situation being filmed, the filmed act has the potential to intervene within the field of public discourse when it has been articulated and re-enunciated in the film. This prepares the ground for an examination of the specifically political aspects of human action in relation to documentary practice. To conclude the thesis, however, I want to concentrate on the relation between theory and practice by reviewing the edits of *Changing the System* presented as ‘Evidence of Work: C’ and ‘D’ (DVD1-C and D).



4.1 Structure

The two-part edit of *Changing the System* presented within this thesis could be characterised overall as structured around the alternation between observational footage of rehearsals on the one hand, and interviews, on the other, in which the musicians talk about the rehearsal process. Part 1 of the edit, for example, begins with images of the brass quartet rehearsing (figs. 1-2), which are followed by remarks made by the director of the concerts, Dave Ryan, who, after making one or two general references to the performance of Wolff's composition, explains how a series of notes forming a melodic line is created by the musicians playing single notes consecutively, rather like runners in a relay race. At this point the corresponding page of the score is shown, Dave's hand arranging it on the black lacquered lid of the piano, at which he is being interviewed (fig. 3). Then, after a cutaway to the brass group preparing to play (fig. 5), over which Dave's voice continues to be heard describing this part of the score, the image returns to him as he explains that the 'hocket', which is the name for this technique of a note being passed between players, might go as follows: 'a trombone plays a note; as soon as that note is finished a horn picks up on that etc. etc.. So it develops a kind of sequence of patterns in performance where notes are being passed around.' (fig. 4). The interviews all focus on the score; in the edit the first function they serve is that of 'commentary': in effect they serve to explain what is seen in the observational shots of the rehearsal process, as Dave's comments do here. When the image next returns to the score, the camera zooms in on Dave's hand as he points to each note on the line two or three times and tells us that this phrase 'can be repeated over and over again'. What follows over the next few minutes is a sequence in which the brass group are seen, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say heard, to play a series of these hockets. Without the preceding commentary, which the interview in effect becomes once it has been interleaved with the rehearsal footage, the nature of the process the musicians are engaged in would, I suspect, be largely unintelligible to the layperson; with it, especially with the descriptions of the scores that are being played and are seen as they are being described handled by the musicians themselves, it is apparent to the viewer that the rehearsal process involves the interpretation of the score.

Fig. 5-8

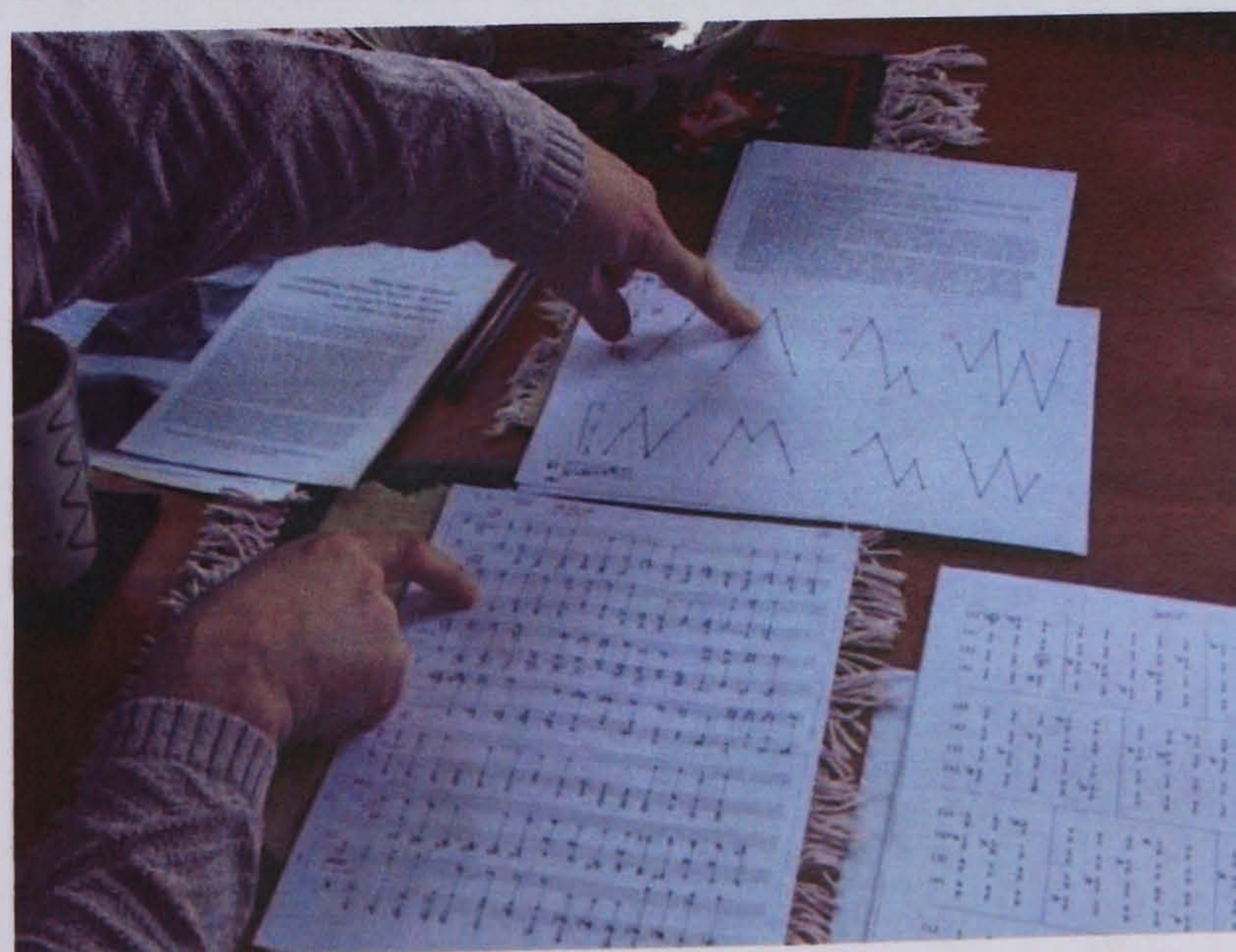
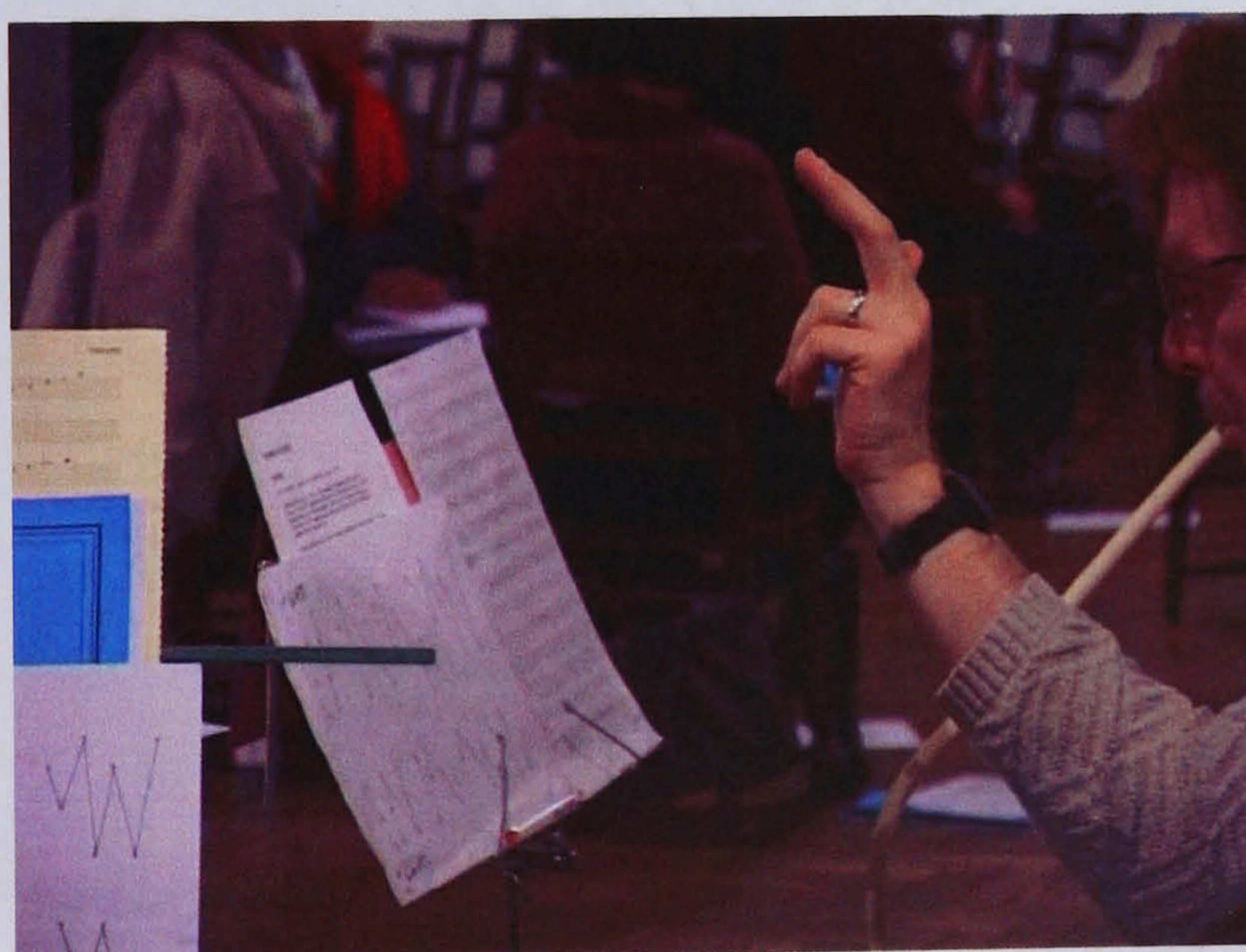
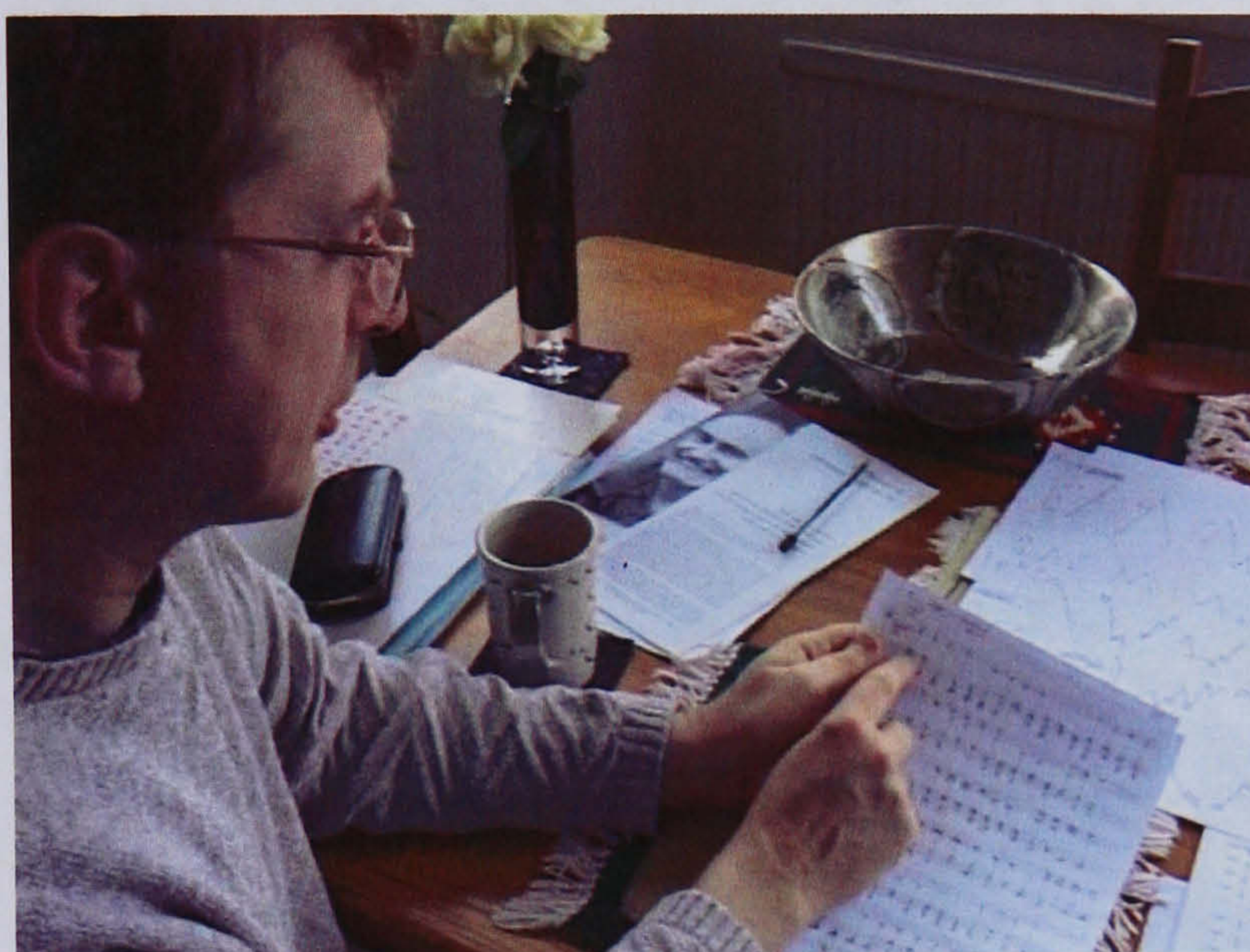


Fig. 9-12



4.2 Situation

It would be true to say, it is only in the edit that a particular remark made in an interview comes together with a particular sequences of events in the rehearsal room; however the people speaking, and whose words form the commentary, are also the people observed rehearsing. In the first part of the edit, Dave Ryan only appears very briefly in the observational footage walking past the brass group. In a couple of interview shots that follow Dave's introduction of the hocket technique, Ian Mitchell rounds out the description; but Ian does not materialise in the rehearsal footage at all at this point. The third interviewee to appear in the edit, however, is preceded by his observed image: in fact David Smith's first words are spoken just after the interview shots of Ian, when he suggests to the rest of the brass quartet that they play through the hocket score. At the end of this sequence when the observed David puts down his horn, his voice is heard again, this time though from an interview, to which the image cuts after a few seconds revealing the score held in one of David's hands whilst he points to the first hocket notation with the other. Then, when the brass group play the chordal pages of the instrumental score, David is seen first in rehearsal before appearing directly afterwards as an interviewee explaining the notation of the chords they have just been playing (fig. 6)—a pattern repeated a few minutes later, when after being shown cueing a sequence of chords (fig. 7) the next image shows David pointing to separate pages of hocket and chordal notations that they alternated in performance (fig. 8). Clearly what he is saying in interview plays the same role as Dave and Ian's comments do, but the fact that he appears in the image that he is explaining and that his description of the rehearsal process is given in the first-person, means that his voice is not detached from the scene it relates, as an 'expository' commentary would be (see § 0.1).

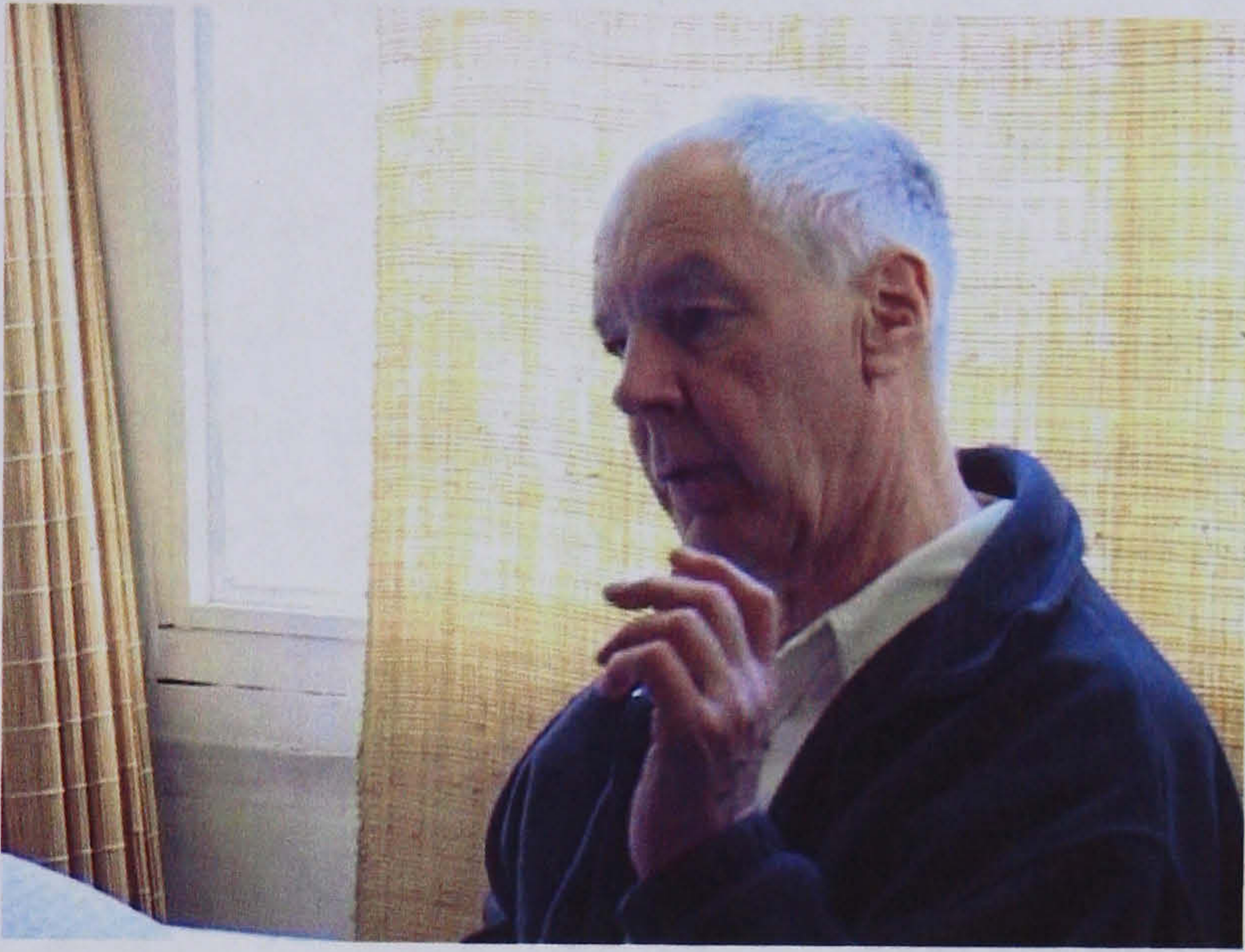
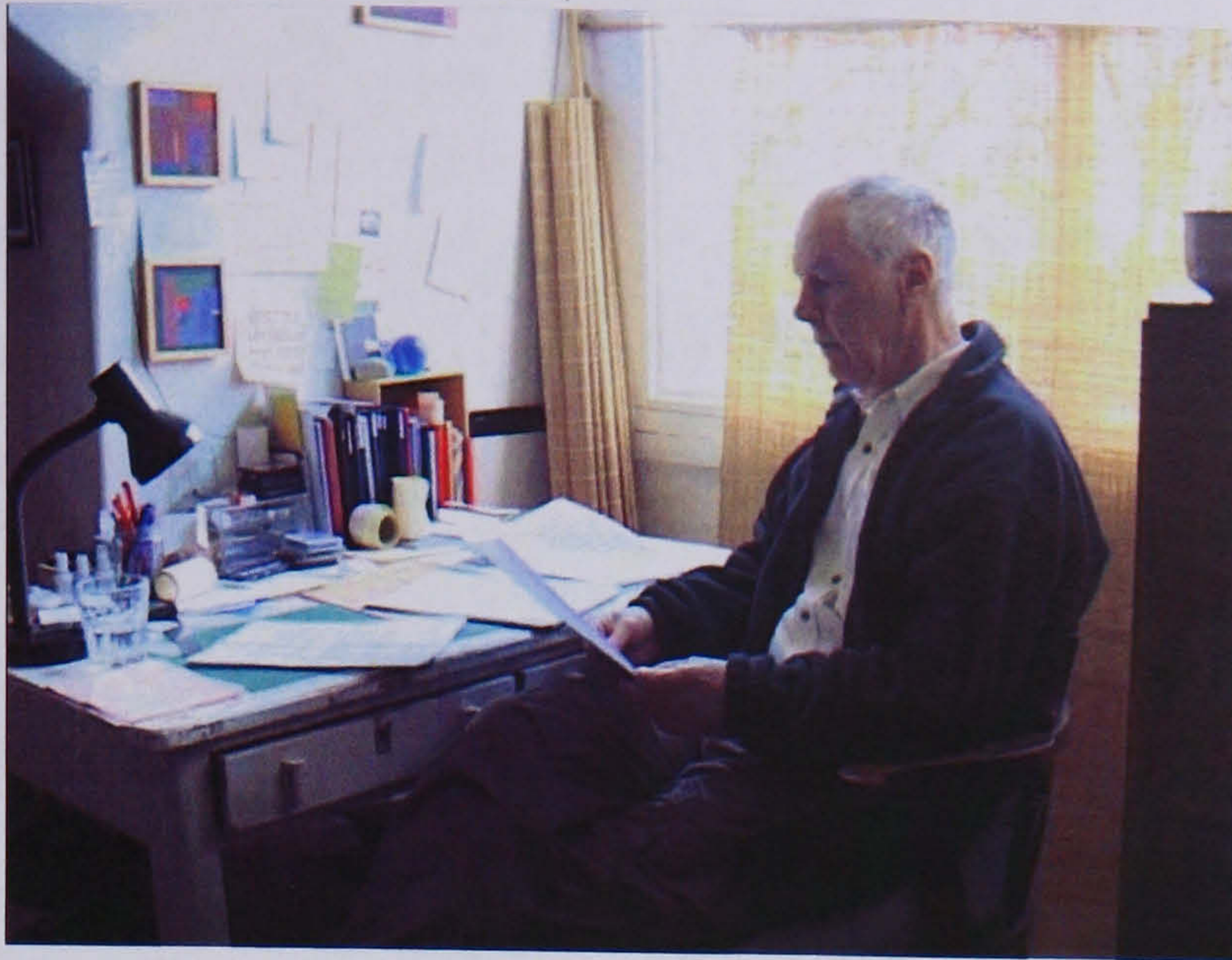
In spite of the critique I submit observation to in Part 1 of this dissertation, used as part of a dialogical approach observational camerawork itself can locate the witness within a particular situation, as it does I believe in this example. If in documentaries that belong to Nichols' 'observational mode' the documentary subject is not encouraged to acknowledge the camera or address an interviewer, this nonetheless often seems to happen by default when a small camera crew spends intense periods in close proximity with their subjects. In their very self-consciousness the men who tout Bibles door-to-door in the

Maysles brothers' *Salesman* (1968) acknowledge the camera constantly loitering in the corner of the room; and occasionally, although any prompts they are reacting to are cut from the footage, these salesmen speak of their colleagues and their own lives on the road as if spontaneously thinking aloud. In their later *Grey Gardens* (1976) this intensifies as the mother and daughter whom David and Albert Maysles film in their dilapidating, ramshackle Long Island mansion, greet them as guests with whom they have one-sided conversations and whose camera finally becomes the audience for songs and dancing. Indeed Stella Bruzzi notes that there is a 'link between the observational and the performative', as she says the filmmakers' she champions, who might be said to pursue a particularly reflexive strand of Nichols' 'interactive mode', cite direct cinema as 'the biggest influence on their films' (Bruzzi, 2000: 7).¹ It would seem that this affinity most probably exists because the observational camera, biding with the subject alongside whom it moves and so attending with greatest felicity to their immediate presence within a situation, is also necessarily both in that same situation with the subject and part of what forms it.

As well as playing a key role within Nichols' 'interactive mode', the encounter between the film and the subject is the crux of both Bruzzi's description of 'performative' documentary and her definition of documentary *per se* (see §§ 0.1 and 0.3). In *Chronicle* and *Shoah*, this interaction between film and subject undoubtedly is a major factor in the foregrounding of the act and its enunciation, and yet in *Changing the System*, I did not concentrate on this form of encounter. In part this was because for the documentary the die was cast when the rehearsal footage was shot, which was before I had theoretically worked out the particular relation between enunciation and documentary methodology. On the other hand, as I say in the Introduction, it is the world and its social construction that is my concern in developing a dialogical documentary practice, and neither documentary truth and its construction, nor the self-reflexivity that such a preoccupation tends towards—and indeed I believe the same could be said of

¹ She says, however, that performative documentaries are the 'binary opposite of the performer-based direct cinema films', because the presentation in the former purposely makes the camera and filmmaking process intrude on its subject, whereas the subjects of the latter were chosen precisely (which is the probable case with *Grey Gardens*) because they 'were so used to performing that they would not notice the potentially intrusive documentary cameras' (Bruzzi, 2000: 157).

Lanzmann and Rouch. So, if one reverses the priorities and asks what role the encounter between film and subject plays for the dialogical documentary in its engagement with the social encounter, the answer is that it firstly underlines the enunciation of acts as opposed to presenting them as mere events; secondly it allows a sign to be taken up and re-enunciated, so underlining dialogical interaction generally; and thirdly its consequence is that the documentary subject appears for the viewer as a witness to the social encounter and the milieu it occurs within. As far as the last of these effects is concerned, what is important is the creation of a subject who is both situated in the world and at the same time addresses the film, because it roots the image in a dialogical situation. It is precisely this creation of a situated enunciation, if less explicit than in *Chronicle* and *Shoah*, that arises when in my film David Smith addresses the film in interview about a situation that he himself is part of and which is seen by the viewer in adjacent shots. Here the observational image serves, I think, to anchor the interviewee to a particular situation, just as, conversely, the interview with the person observed serves to turn them into a 'witness' of sorts.



4.3 Scenario of Perception

In *Shoah* it is often how Lanzmann chooses to shoot the location which he has sought out to conduct his interview in, that situates the interviewee, as much as their interaction with the filmmaker himself does. The *mise-en-scène* of the interview with Czeslaw Borowi, for example, has been carefully set up to create composition-in-depth with the railway carriages visible behind interviewer and interviewee (see § 2.8).² Now Borowi can turn to and indicate the scene behind him as if it were not only ‘over there’, but ‘back then’. The importance of reading through depth, through the planes of the image, in this way, is emphasised in the film by the endless zooms along trains and railway tracks that constitute the work’s melancholic continuo. A shot of the locomotive driven by Henrik Gawkowski introduces another *mise-en-scène*: when the train comes to a stop the sign reading ‘Treblinka’ is directly behind Gawkowski (see § 2.4). Not only does the gesture he now makes as he runs his finger across his throat read as situated because of this *mise-en-scène*, but when he appears later in the edit being interviewed by Lanzmann in his home, his words and gestures can be referred back to this situation and take on an indexical specificity. So, in these and many other instances in *Shoah*, Lanzmann situates his subjects by creating what I propose calling a ‘scenario of perception’; and each of these interviewees is associated by some sort of indexical relation, established in the context of this scenario, with the events they are asked to recount—‘I was *there*...’; ‘*here* I saw it happen...’. Rouch and Morin create slightly different scenarios of perception which locate their subjects not only in space and time, but also in relation to one another in a social encounter: what occurs across the edit in *Shoah*, happens then in front of the camera in *Chronicle* (see §§ 2.4 & 2.7 respectively). On the whole the physical *mise-en-scène* seems to be of less importance in *Chronicle*,

² Composition-in-depth involves ‘the inclusion of all planes bearing upon an action within a single camera set up’. In a scene set up as a composition-in-depth ‘action is advanced by way of the alternation and interaction of planes... done by camera movement and/or by the movement of actors, themselves planes or part of planes, through or *in relation to* the planes of the scene’ (Henderson, 2004: 62). It is sometimes alluded to simply under the term ‘deep focus’ (Wollen, 1998: 87); Deleuze refers to it as ‘depth of field’ when describing how Orson Welles use of depth transforms ‘depth in the image’ into ‘depth of image’, so that different planes signify different moments in time, and someone located in one plane can refer ‘directly to an element of a different plane’ (Deleuze, 1989: 105-112).

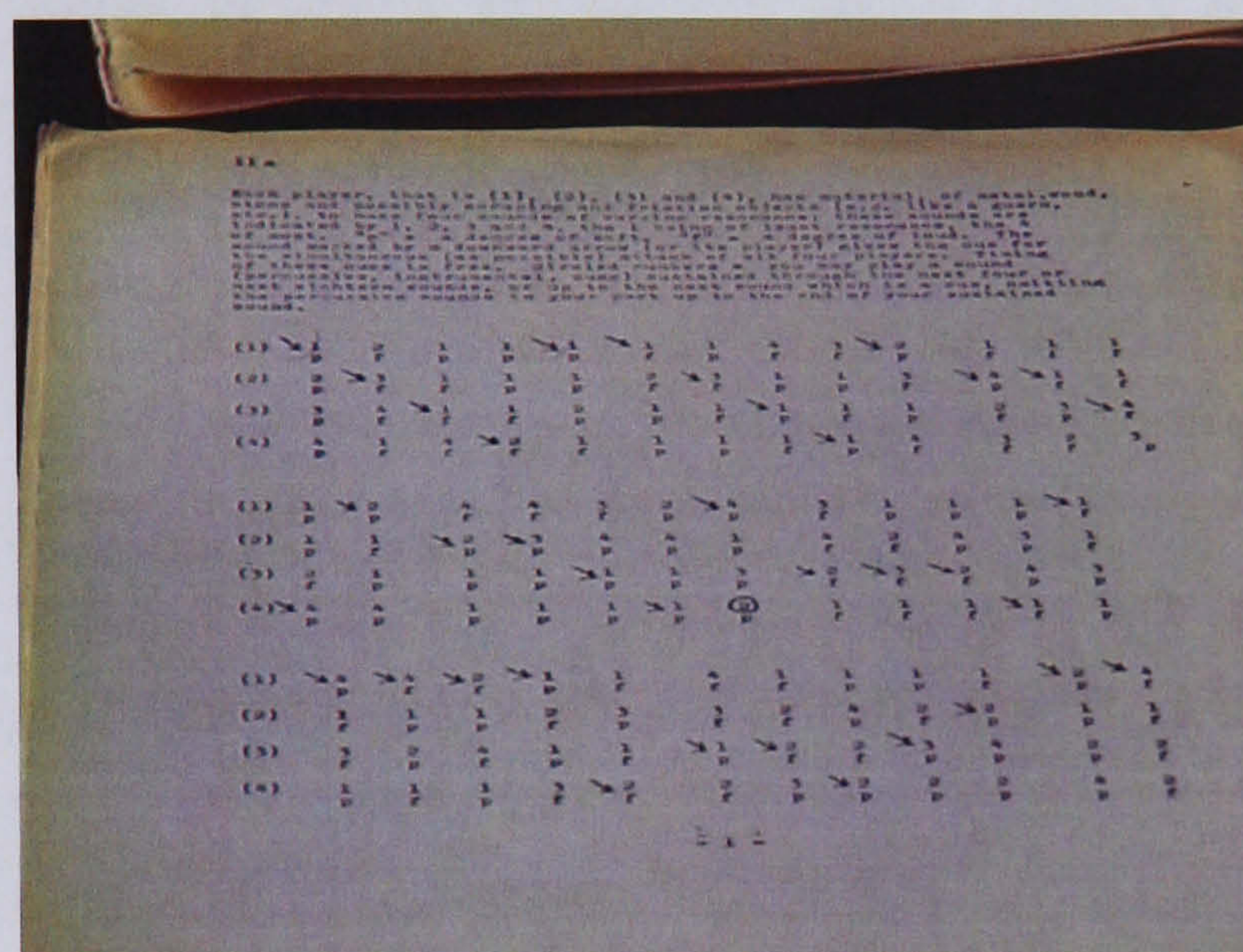
and is replaced by sequences made of more or less contiguous shots and 're-framings'³ in which a social encounter taking place in the world is revealed.

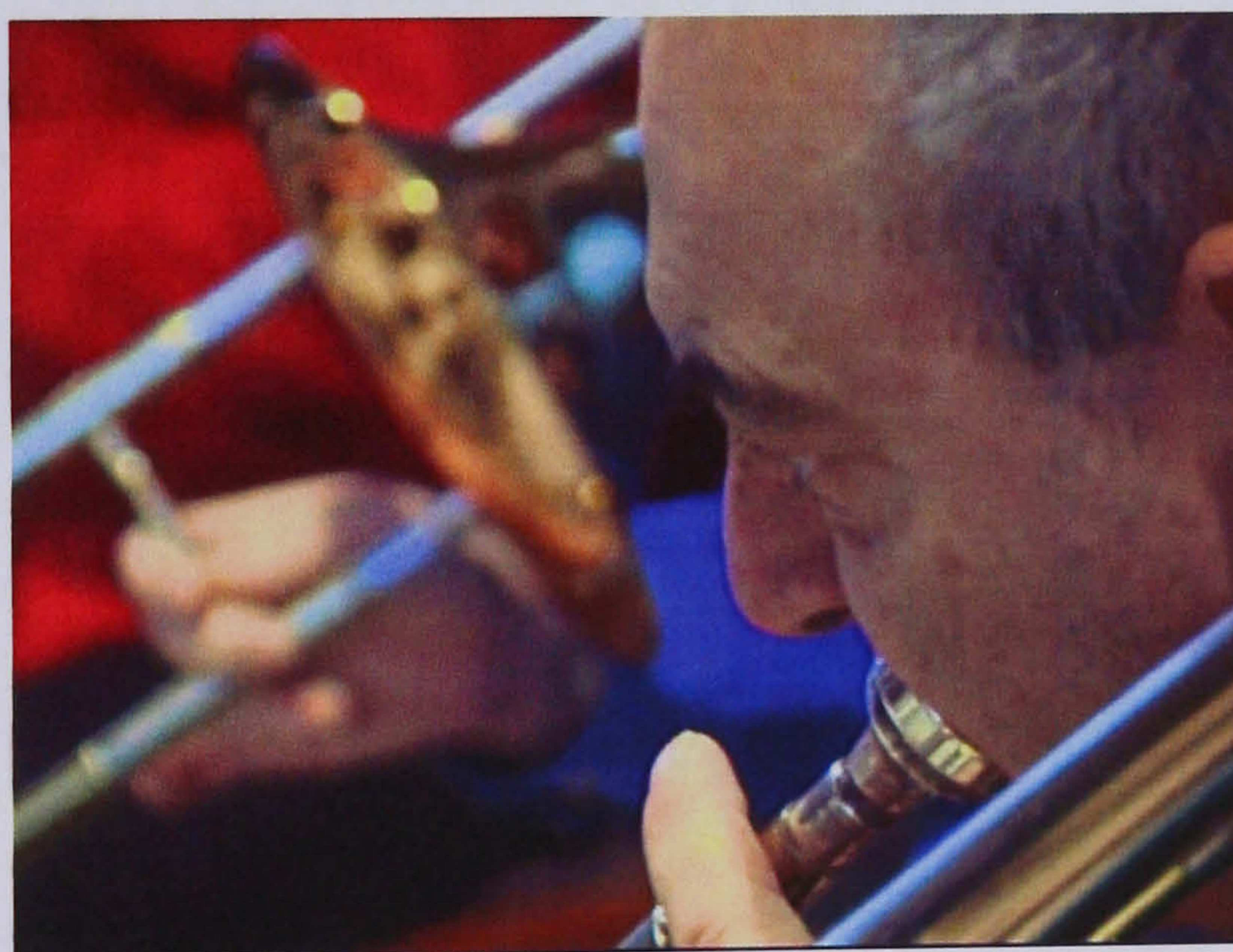
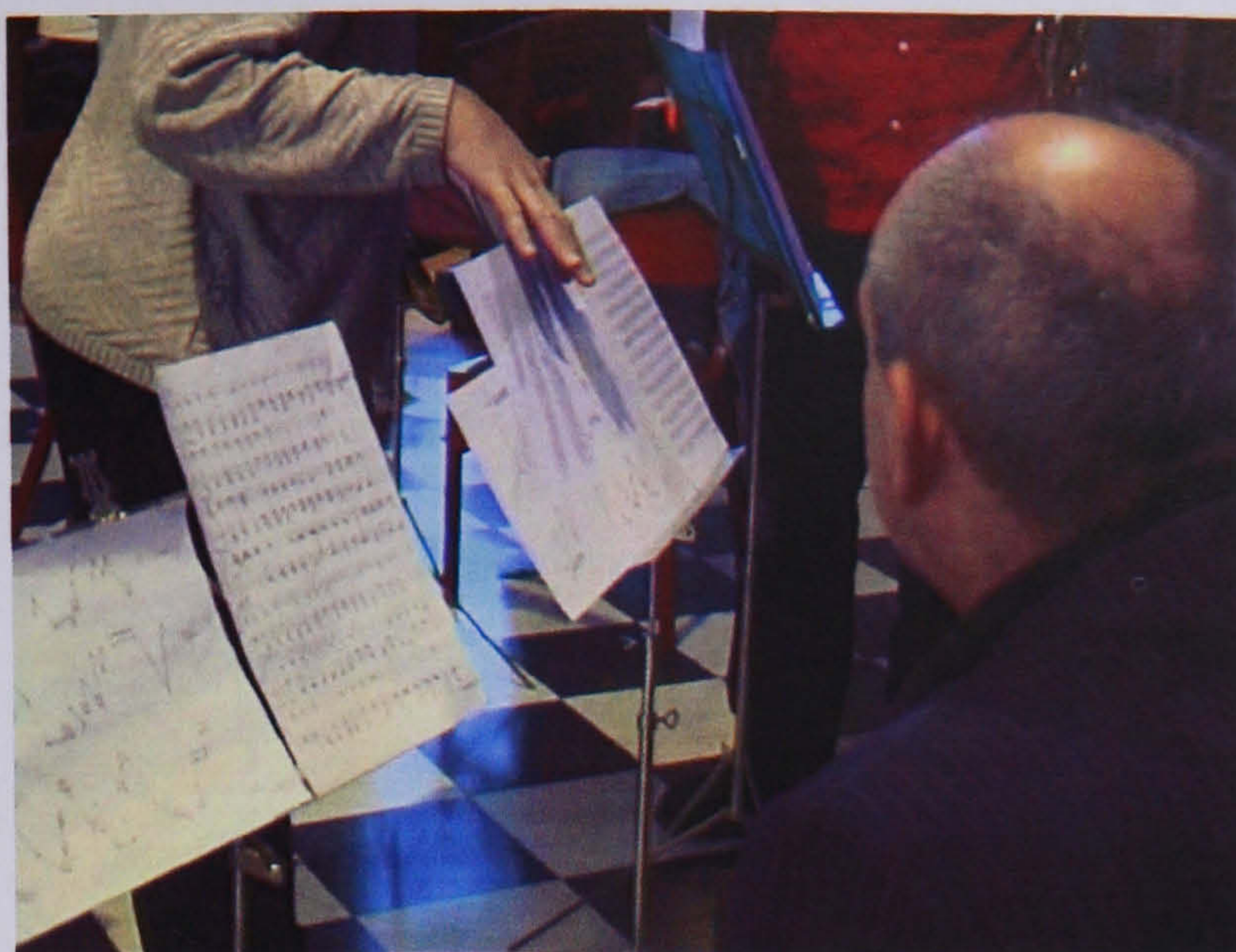
Part 2 of *Changing the System* ends with a discussion between the members of one of the percussion quartets. Although shot with two cameras, between whose points of view it alternates, this sequence is the record of a continuous event. There is no *mise-en-scène* as such here; it is simply an observed interaction. However, the discussion between the musicians, which effectively picks up themes from previous interviews, explicitly refers to the rehearsal process it interrupts. The question being deliberated on is what they are to do if they slip out of sync with one another, which ties this sequence back to what in actual fact is the beginning of the same discussion that has appeared some seven minutes earlier in the edit. At that point the players discover they have been reading from different places on the page, and so have been expecting different people to cue the next chord. This segment ends with an image of Dave Ryan's hand pointing to the score lying beside various instruments on the table before him as he suggests a possible solution: 'this is where, almost, we need to *point* to the score' (fig 9). When the edit returns to the discussion, Dave is heard to reiterate his suggestion while in the image two of the other percussionists, Richard and Simon, are seen looking down at their instruments and scores on the table (fig 10). The images that follow are a series of medium close ups of hands and faces; only at the very end of the sequence does the camera pull out so that we see the space in which all four musicians stand (fig 12). Firstly, the significance of the discussion in this sequence is that it echoes what is 'reported' in the interviews, establishing retrospectively Dave as a situated subject in his interviews too. The same could be said for David Smith in relation to the discussion between the brass players that ends the first part of the edit. In both cases what is said in interview takes on, I believe, a dialogical quality after the interviewees are seen engaged in dialogical encounters with their fellow players, because it is their engagement in the rehearsal process and its negotiations which qualifies them to speak of it.

³ Like composition-in-depth, 're-framing' is a term coined by Andre Bazin. It refers to a film language in which 'lateral camera movements deserted and recaptured a continuous reality. The blackness surrounding the screen masked off the world rather than framed the image.' (Wollen, 1998: 87).

Secondly, the sequence's significance lies in the way the camera focuses on the gestures made within it, which echo those made during the interviews and other situated discussions: the circling gestures Dave makes with his hands as he describes how the percussion needs to be sustained but is repeatable, echo the gesture he makes in interview when he describes the repetitions of the hocketed phrase at the beginning of part 1 (fig. 4); and equally, as the camera zooms out at the end of the sequence, they are echoed by Simon's larger gesture, when he indicates that the group could move through the material with greater speed. Dave's finger pressed on the score in the earlier segment of this discussion also links all the verbal mentions and images of signalling and cueing through the edits (e.g. fig 8), to the various images in which notations are pointed to as they are described in interview (figs. 4, 6 and 7), or are alluded to at other points during the rehearsal (e.g. fig. 21). This series of gestures seems to me to bear significance for a number of reasons. Firstly, it translates the graphic notations of the score into a gestural space. An example of this occurs when Dave's finger is seen to run through the notes on the scored hocket in sequence (described above, § 4.1), which follows another interview image that has shown him gesturing to imaginary players to his left and right who will play one note of the hocket and then the next: 'a trombone plays a note... a horn picks up on that' (fig. 3). Secondly, the gestures which cue chords or indicate the end of a note in a hocket, are of course visible to the camera as well as to the other musicians. So, they are elements that can be identified as discrete acts, which when explained during an interview are also more often than not repeated, which is to say re-enunciated, at the same time. Such is the case with Michael Parsons' explanation of a cue signalled by the raising of the beater that will strike the note, which he demonstrates as he speaks (fig. 14), and which is then echoed two shots later in an image of Michael making the very same gesture in rehearsal (fig. 15). Lastly, as can be seen in this example, the gesture links interview and observational image, situating Michael's enunciation of the gesture during the former in the context to his participation in the events taking place in the latter. So, there is a relation set up between the score and its rehearsal, which is communicated to the viewer on the one hand by the descriptions and discussions of the score and its interpretation, and on the other by an entire language of gesture that accompanies these words. It makes a great difference that Czeslaw Borowi in Lanzmann's film looks over to the railway tracks as he speaks, and that Henrik Gawkowski produces his gesture from a train he has just driven up to the platform at Treblinka. In a similar way, in

my film it is significant that the gestures made in interview refer to those made in rehearsal, and that both refer at times to the social space in which the music is performed (i.e. the relations between the musicians), and at others to the structures of the score and the patterns of performance—even sometimes seemingly referring to the graphic space of the score and social space or musical duration at one and the same time. Gesture is so important, it seems to me, because whatever verbal descriptions are given, it is gestures that act as the indices anchoring verbal accounts in the score and in the acts of the rehearsal process. Finally, gesture is part of a shared language—one that has been learnt, that echoes techniques of playing and ways of conceiving of musical shape, and which is now being refined, or simply extended, within these interactions taking place in the rehearsal room.





4.4 Observation

The isolation of gestures and expressions in close up may seem to run counter to the general notion of creating a scenario of perception and a situated subject. I decided on this shooting strategy, however, to counteract the clichéd and unmotivated image so often seen in recordings of musical performances, where a shot of a note being played serves more as mere accompaniment to the music—which is in no need of it—than any sort of exploration of performance. There was, therefore, a necessity for the image to *estranger* what it depicted, so as to bring fresh awareness to the process which otherwise the viewer would be unlikely to attend to. To an extent I was seeking images that would not be simple indices of the musician's playing, but would counterpoint with it. For example, the image that begins the play-through of the percussion in the second part of the edit is of a black cowbell being sounded (fig. 17). Within a few seconds, however, this sound is replaced by a loud metallic ringing, whose source the slow upward tilt of the camera across a red wooden bell and the grooved surface of a bamboo instrument seems to seek. By the time the shot pauses on a beater resting on the springs of a metal instrument the ringing sound has already stopped, and as the musician picks up the instrument the camera follows the movement, continuing upward to reveal the musician's face in close up. On the one hand this sequence shot works indexically, as it slowly reveals different parts of the event presented as a whole aurally: the beater on the bell; the instruments; the hand and body of the musician; the face reading the score. However, as it denies the viewer a visual overview of the event, it forces them to search for the relation between image and sound. So, whilst indexing certain events and acts, in isolating them as fragments in a series of close ups, this sequence abstracts the image from the whole, i.e. the resulting sound, to which it contrasts as a suggestion of the intensity of anticipation internal to the process of performance. Here, clearly, this sequence does not include the sorts of social encounters and enunciations that I have analysed in *Shoah* and *Chronicle*; in fact it has more in common with the qualities of duration and subjective experience which Nichols' associates with his 'performative mode' of documentary (see § 0.1). Nonetheless, the subjective attention the sequence evokes, on the one hand could not have been 'shown' directly, and on the other, it is only really understood as such because of the discussions of the score and the attention it requires of a player to his or her fellow musicians and the musical event unfolding around them. This dialogical

context is reintroduced a few shots later. First the edit cuts away from the rehearsal to an image of the score the percussionists are playing (fig. 18), over which Dave Ryan's voice is heard explaining that the musicians must strike their notes simultaneously as a 'chord'. This is followed by another close up of a percussionist's hand (Simon's) (fig. 19), which, after the playing stops because someone has lost their place, moves upward to Simon's face (fig. 20). Now Dave's voice, explaining how responsibility for cueing a chord rotates through the quartet, is heard again, functioning now as a bridge to the discussion about cueing that follows (described above: § 4.3). The at least partially affective rather than indexical images of the first part of the sequence give way to another series of close ups, but this time the gestures *refer* to the score, whose performance is in dispute. So, the performance segues with a social encounter in which it is the topic of discussion, and in which the people who *speak about* the performance are those who were *observed within it*.

The close ups of the percussionists playing represent a particular use of the camera as instrument of observation. It is detached in as much as it looks on while an event takes place; but the images it creates, as I hope I've shown above, do not necessarily serve the straightforwardly objectifying role that they do when integrated within a purely representational schema. This is then one form in which observational camerawork is integrated into a more dialogical approach; another form is represented by the way the subsequent discussion between the percussionists moves towards the sorts of 're-framings' characteristic of certain sequences in *Chronicle*, that disclose an actual social encounter in its physical and temporal unfolding. In both cases the camera needs to be mobile and responsive, but in the latter it is a great advantage, as Rouch noted, if not only the camera's gaze, but the camera itself moves through space in tandem with the subject in a manner he describes as reminiscent of 'the improvisation of the bullfighter in front of the bull' (Rouch, 2003: 39). The technique of 'the walking camera' was brought to *Chronicle* by the Canadian cameraman Michel Brault, who 'had been practicing for a year to walk forward, backward, and sideways so well that the camera in his hands became absolutely mobile' (272).⁴ Whereas Morin was happy with sedentary discussions

⁴ Although they pale in comparison to the sustained virtuosity of cameramen like Brault and Gardner, there are a couple of mobile sequence shots in the *BPA: Observational Edit* (DVD1-A2) in which I believe potential lies. In particular the shot in the dining hall that first follows the man collecting bowls from the tables and then pans to reveal three

between people around a dinner table—what he called ‘commensality’ (Morin in Rouch, 2003: 234)—Brault’s ability allowed Rouch to experiment with filming people in the midst of everyday activities. No *mise-en-scène* was necessary: the film’s scenario of perception would arise from the footage recorded as encounters took place in actual situations. The difference to Gardner’s ‘walking camera’, which is possibly technically superior, is principally the context—firstly the context in which the images are shot, and secondly that in which they appear in the film.

There are a few brief interviews that I shot during the rehearsals themselves, in which the observed subjects do address themselves to the filmmaking situation. Two of these impromptu interviews can be seen towards the end of the ‘early edit’ (DVD1-A1).⁵ A third, with Alan Tomlinson, is part of the sequence that ends part 1 of the fuller edit (fig. 22). Picking up the thread from previous sequences involving the brass quartet, this one begins with Alan asking David Smith about the order in which they will play the material, and Dave describing it while pointing it out on Alan’s score (fig. 21). The edit then cuts to Alan being asked how the rehearsals are going, behind him the distinctive black and white tiled floor seen in the previous shot which places him in the same location, before cutting back to Alan rehearsing with the rest of the quartet (fig. 23); and as the other players stand up to move to a table of percussion instruments, Alan remains seated to alter the annotations to his score (fig. 24). This is the closest this edit comes a direct encounter between film and situated subject, and with hindsight I can say that this sort of subtle intervention with a mobile camera was used too infrequently. Talking with someone in the situation they are witness to, and in which they function as the viewer’s surrogate, these impromptu interviews adapt something of what Lanzmann does. In contrast to Lanzmann’s technique, however, the situation that the interviewee refers to as they speak to camera is an actual social encounter. So, whereas in *Chronicle* the encounter

boys engaging in banter; the shot of the same man as he leaves the hall with tray stacked with bowls; and the shot of the boys at the basin outside, which turns to follow one of them as he walks off down the corridor.

⁵ In the first, a percussionist (Simon Allen) talks about the way the score is designed to get musicians to communicate and to allow non-musicians to be involved, and another percussionist answers my next question about how many non-musicians are taking part in this performance. In the second a clarinettist (Andrew Sparling) refers to the performance as ‘a prototype of a political situation’.

between camera and subject generally takes place separately from the social encounter, and in *Shoah* it mediates the social encounter, here there is the possibility of both happening side-by-side. I think that had I recognised the usefulness of this strategy and introduced it earlier in the shooting process, there would have been more of a sense among the musicians that they were part of the filmmaking situation and not merely the film's objects, which would have made it possible for them to intervene within it, too. I rule out the sort of performativity Bruzzi lauds in Nick Broomfield and Molly Dineen as necessary or even particularly helpful to the sort of dialogical practice I aspire to, but something of the conversational relationship those filmmakers develop with their subjects, which in different ways is there in Rouch's and Lanzmann's work, is something to aim for, nonetheless.

References

Abbreviations

- BT Martin Heidegger (1962), *Being and Time*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- DN Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), 'Discourse in the Novel', *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin: University of Texas, pp.259-422.
- LP Pierre Bourdieu (1990), *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- MFB Robert Gardner & Ákos Östör (2001), *Making Forest of Bliss: Intention, Circumstance, and Chance in Nonfiction Film*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard Film Archive.
- MPL V. N. Volosinov (1986), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press.
- PI Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958), *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- SCL Claude Lanzmann (1991), 'Seminar With Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990' *Yale French Studies*, No.79, Jan 1991, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.82-99.

Other Reference Material

- Hannah Arendt (1998), *The Human Condition*, Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press (2nd edition).
- J. L. Austin (1975), *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, Austin: University of Texas.
- Mikhail Bakhtin (1993), *Towards a Philosophy of the Act*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Roland Barthes (1983), 'Myth Today', *Barthes: Selected Writings*, London: Fontana, pp.93-149.
- David Bloor (1997), *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions*, London: Routledge.
- Stanley Cavell (1976), 'The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', *Must We Mean What We Say?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.44-72.
- James Clifford (1988), 'On Ethnographic Authority', *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, pp.21-54.
- Roderick Coover (2001), 'Worldmaking, Metaphors and Montage in the Representation of Cultures: Cross-cultural Filmmaking and the Poetics of Robert Gardner's

- Forest of Bliss*, *Visual Anthropology*, 14(4), London: Taylor and Francis, pp.415-438.
- Michel de Certeau (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California.
- Douglas Crimp (1998), 'This Is Not a Museum of Art', *Marcel Broodthaers*, New York: Rizzoli; & Minneapolis: Walker Arts Centre, pp.70-91.
- Thierry de Duve (1996), *Kant After Duchamp*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT.
- Gilles Deleuze (1989), *Cinema 2: the Time-Image*, London: Athlone Press.
- Jacques Derrida (1982), 'Signature Event Context', *Margins of Philosophy*, Brighton: Harvester, pp.307-330.
- Jacques Derrida (1988), 'Afterword: Towards an Ethic of Discussion', *Limited Inc*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, pp.111-160.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus (1991), *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1983), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2nd edition).
- Hubert L. Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa (1996), 'Two Kinds of Anti-essentialism and their Consequences', *Cultural Inquiry* 22, Summer 1996, Chicago: University of Chicago, pp.735-763.
- Mick Eaton (ed.) (1979), *Anthropology—Reality—Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch*, London: British Film Institute.
- Steven Feld (2003), 'Editor's Introduction', in Jean Rouch, *Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.1-25.
- Hal Foster (1996), 'The Artist as Ethnographer', *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT, pp.171-203.
- Michel Foucault (2002), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Robert Gardner (1996), 'The Impulse to Preserve', in Charles Warren (ed.), *Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film*, Hanover; London: Wesleyan University Press, pp.169-180.
- Robert Gardner & Ákos Östör (2001), *Making Forest of Bliss: Intention, Circumstance, and Chance in Nonfiction Film*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard Film Archive.
- Alfred Gell (1998), *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

- Erving Goffman (1971), 'Regions and Region Behaviour', *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, pp.109-140.
- Erving Goffman (2002), 'Front and Back Regions of Everyday Life', in Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader*, London: Routledge, pp.50-57.
- John Grierson (1966), 'Flaherty', *Grierson on Documentary*, London: Faber and Faber, pp.139-144.
- John Grierson (1979), 'Flaherty's Poetic *Moana*' in Lewis Jacobs (ed.), *The Documentary Tradition*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, (2nd edition), pp.25-26.
- Brian Henderson (2004), 'Towards a Non-Bourgeois Camera Style', in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, New York; London: Oxford University Press, pp. 54-64.
- Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (eds.) (1989), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- David Howarth (2004), 'Hegemony, Political Subjectivity, and Radical Democracy', in Simon Critchley & Oliver Marchart (eds.) (2004), *Laclau: A Critical Reader*, London; New York: Routledge, pp.256-271.
- Richard Jenkins (1992), *Pierre Bourdieu*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Jyotsna Kapur (1997), 'The Art of Ethnographic Film and the Politics of Protesting Modernity: Robert Gardner's Forest of Bliss', *Visual Anthropology*, v.9(2), London: Taylor and Francis, pp.167-186.
- Saul Kripke (1982), *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Malden, Mass.; Oxford; Carlton: Blackwell Publishing.
- Jack Klugelmaass (1995), 'Bloody Memories: Encountering the Past in Contemporary Poland', *Contemporary Anthropology*, 10(3), Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association, pp.279-301.
- Christopher Hookway (1985), *Peirce*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Peter Loizos (1993), 'Challenging documentation-realism: three early experiments by Jean Rouch', *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness 1955-85*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.45-66.
- Peter Loizos (1992), 'Admissible Evidence? Film as anthropology', in Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton (eds.), *Film as Ethnography*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, pp.50-65.
- David MacDougall (1982), 'Unprivileged Camera Style', *RAIN*, London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britian and Ireland, n.50, June 1982, pp.8-10.

- David MacDougall (2001), 'Gifts of Circumstance: Making Forest of Bliss: Intention, Circumstance and Chance in Nonfiction Film', *Visual Anthropology Review*, Arlington VA: American Anthropological Association, Spring-Summer 2001, v.17(1), pp.68-85.
- Normal Malcolm (1995), 'Wittgenstein: The Relation of Language to Instinctive Behavior', *Wittgensteinian Themes, Essays 1978-1989*, Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, pp.66-86.
- Pam Morris (ed.) (1994), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Volosinov*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Bill Nichols (1991), *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Bill Nichols (1994), 'Performing Documentary', *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*, Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp.92-106.
- Ákos Östör (1994), 'Forest of Bliss, Film and Anthropology', *East-West Film Journal*, 8(2), (July 1994), Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 70-104.
- Philip Rosen (1993), 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts', in Michael Renov (ed.), *Theorising Documentary*, New York; London: Routledge, pp.58-89.
- Jean Rouch (2003), *Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jay Ruby (2000), 'Robert Gardner and Anthropological Cinema', *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology*, Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, pp.95-113.
- Tzvetan Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Michael Tomasello (1999), *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press.
- Trinh T. Minh-ha (1990), 'Documentary Is/Not a Name', *October*, 52, Summer 1990, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, pp.76-98.
- Bernard Williams (2002), *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.20-40.
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1981), *Zettel*, Oxford: Blackwell, (2nd edition).
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1989), *Culture and Value*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Bibliography

- Giorgio Agamben (1999), 'The Passion of Facticity', *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp.185-204.
- Giorgio Agamben (2004), *The Open: Man and Animal*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- G.E.M. Anscombe (2000), *Intention*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hannah Arendt (1998), *The Human Condition*, Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press (2nd edition).
- Jacques Attali (1985), *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- J. L. Austin (1975), *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin: University of Texas.
- Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, Austin: University of Texas.
- Mikhail Bakhtin (1993), *Towards a Philosophy of the Act*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Roland Barthes (1983), *Barthes: Selected Writings*, (ed. Susan Sontag), London: Fontana.
- Roland Barthes (1985), 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein', *The Responsibility of Forms*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp.89-97.
- C.A. Bayly (2004), *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global connections and comparisons*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Walter Benjamin (1977), 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, London: Fontana, pp.219-253.
- Bruce Ellis Benson (2003), *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- William D. Blattner (1996), 'Existence and Self-understanding in *Being and Time*', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 56:1 (March 1996), Providence, Rhode Island: International Phenomenological Society, pp.97-110.
- David Bloor (1997), *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions*, London: Routledge.
- Pierre Bourdieu (1990), *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Pierre Bourdieu (1991), 'Authorized Language: The Social Conditions for the Effectiveness of Ritual Discourse', *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity, pp.107-116.
- Pierre Bourdieu (1993), 'The Field of Cultural Production, or: the Economic World Reversed', *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge: Polity, pp.29-73.
- Pierre Bourdieu (1994), *In Other Words*, Cambridge: Polity, (revised edition).
- Craig Brandist (1997), 'Bakhtin, Cassirer and symbolic form', *Radical Philosophy*, London: Radical Philosophy Ltd, n.86, Nov.-Dec.1987, pp.20-27.
- Stella Bruzzi (2000), *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Benjamin Buchloh (ed.) (1988), *Broodthaers: Writings, Interviews, Photographs*, ed. Benjamin Buchloh, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.
- Judith Butler (1999), 'Performativity's Social Magic', in Richard Shusterman (ed.), *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, pp.113-128.
- Judith Butler (1997), 'Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All: Althusser's Subjection', *The Psychic Life of Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.106-131.
- Stanley Cavell (1976), *Must We Mean What We Say?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stanley Cavell (2002), 'Forward to *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*', in Shoshana Felman, *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.xi-xxi.
- Michel de Certeau (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California.
- Michael Chanan (1994), *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism*, London; New York: Verso.
- James Clifford (1988), 'On Ethnographic Authority', *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, pp.21-54.
- James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. (1986), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Claire Colebrook (2002), *Gilles Deleuze*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Roderick Coover (2001), 'Worldmaking, Metaphors and Montage in the Representation of Cultures: Cross-cultural Filmmaking and the Poetics of Robert Gardner's *Forest of Bliss*', *Visual Anthropology*, London: Taylor and Francis, 2001, v.14(4), pp.415-438.

- Douglas Crimp (1998), 'This Is Not a Museum of Art', *Marcel Broodthaers*, New York: Rizzoli; & Minneapolis: Walker Arts Centre, pp.70-91.
- Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchart (eds.) (2004), *Laclau: A Critical Reader*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Francoise Dastur (1995), 'Reflexions on Modernity, Presence and Ethics in Heidegger's Thought', (audio cassette, lecture given on 11 March 1995), London: ICA Video.
- Thierry de Duve (1996), *Kant After Duchamp*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT.
- Gilles Deleuze (1986), *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*, London: Athlone Press.
- Gilles Deleuze (1989), *Cinema 2: the Time-Image*, London: Athlone Press.
- Gilles Deleuze (1994), *Difference and Repetition*, London: Athlone Press.
- Jacques Derrida (1973), *Speech and Phenomena*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Jacques Derrida (1976), *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Jacques Derrida (1978), *Writing and Difference*, London; Henley: Routledge.
- Jacques Derrida (1982), 'Signature Event Context', *Margins of Philosophy*, Brighton: Harvester, pp.307-330.
- Jacques Derrida (1988), 'Afterword: Towards an Ethic of Discussion', *Limited Inc*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, pp.111-160.
- Peter Dews (1995), 'Writing in the Lifeworld: Speech-Acts, Metaphor and Deconstruction', *The Limits of Disenchantment*, London; New York: Verso, pp.90-114.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus (1991), *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus (1997), 'The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment' (paper originally delivered at After Post-Modernism conference 1997) http://www.focusing.org/apm_papers/dreyfus2.html (accessed August 2005).
- Hubert L. Dreyfus (2005), 'Can There Be a Better Source of Meaning than Everyday Practices? Reinterpreting Division I of *Being and Time* in Light of Division II', in Richard Polt (ed.), *Heidegger's Being and Time: Critical Essays*, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, pp. 141-154.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus (undated), 'Could anything be more Intelligible than Everyday Intelligibility?: Reinterpreting Division I of *Being and Time* in light of Division II', http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~hdreyfus/rtf/Heidegger-Intelligibility_1099.rtf (accessed August 2005).

- Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1983), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2nd edition).
- Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1999), 'Can there be a Science of Existential Structure and Social Meaning?', in Richard Shusterman (ed.), *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, pp.84-93.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus & Charles Spinosa (1996), 'Two Kinds of Anti-essentialism and their Consequences', *Cultural Inquiry* 22(4) (Summer 1996), Chicago: University of Chicago, pp.735-763.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus & Charles Spinosa (1999), 'Coping with Things-in-themselves: A Practice-Based Phenomenological Argument for Realism', *Inquiry* 42(1) (March 1999), London: Taylor and Francis, pp.49-78.
- Hubert L. Dreyfus, Charles Spinosa & Fernando Flores (1997), *Disclosing New Worlds: Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action, and the Cultivation of Solidarity*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT.
- Mick Eaton (ed.) (1979), *Anthropology—Reality—Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch*, London: British Film Institute.
- Okwui Enwezor (2002), 'The Black Box', *Documenta 11, Platform 5: Exhibition*, (cat.), Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, pp.42-55.
- Joseph P. Fell (1992), 'The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the Early Heidegger', in Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, Oxford, U.K.; Cambridge, U.S.: Blackwell, pp. 65-80.
- Günter Figal (2005), 'Being-with, Dasein-with, and the "They" as the Basic Concept of Unfreedom', in Richard Polt (ed.), *Heidegger's Being and Time: Critical Essays*, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, pp. 105-116.
- Bruce Fink (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hal Foster (1996), 'The Artist as Ethnographer', *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT, pp.171-203.
- Michel Foucault (1991), *The Foucault Reader*, (ed. Paul Rabinow), London: Penguin.
- Michel Foucault (1998), 'Theatrum Philosophicum', *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, vol.2: Aesthetics*, London: Penguin, pp.343-368.
- Michel Foucault (2000), 'Truth and Power', *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984 vol.3: Power*, London: Penguin, pp.111-133.
- Michel Foucault (2002), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.

- Robert Gardner (1996), 'The Impulse to Preserve', in Charles Warren (ed.), *Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film*, Hanover; London: Wesleyan University Press, pp.169-180.
- Robert Gardner & Ákos Östör (2001), *Making Forest of Bliss: Intention, Circumstance, and Chance in Nonfiction Film*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard Film Archive.
- Alfred Gell (1998), *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Anthony Giddens (1981), 'Agency, Institution, and Time-Space Analysis', in K. Knorr-Cetina & A.V. Cicourel, (eds.), *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Towards an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies*, Boston; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.161-174.
- Erving Goffman (1971), 'Regions and Region Behaviour', *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, [1969], pp.109-140.
- Erving Goffman (2002), 'Front and Back Regions of Everyday Life', in Ben Highmore ed., *The Everyday Life Reader*, London: Routledge, pp.50-57.
- Timothy Gould (2003), 'The Names of Action', in Richard Eldridge (ed.), *Stanley Cavell*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.48-78.
- John Grierson (1966), 'Flaherty', *Grierson on Documentary*, London: Faber and Faber, pp.139-144.
- John Grierson (1979), 'Flaherty's Poetic *Moana*' in Lewis Jacobs (ed.), *The Documentary Tradition*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, (2nd edition), pp.25-26.
- Boris Groys (2002), 'Art in the Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation', in *Documenta 11, Platform 5: Exhibition*, (cat.), Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, pp.108-114.
- Boris Groys and Carl Hegemann (2004), 'Der Betrachter an sich: Über Theater, Ready-mades und das Transzendente Subjekt der Kunst' (interview by Carl Hegemann), *Lettre International*, n. 65 (Summer 2004), Berlin, pp.58-62.
- Charles Guignon (1992), 'History and Commitment in the Early Heidegger', in Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, Oxford, U.K.; Cambridge, U.S.: Blackwell, pp.130-142.
- Ian Hacking (1990), *The Taming of Chance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Anna Hakkens (1994), 'Introductory essay', *Marcel Broodthaers: Projections*, Eindhoven: Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, pp.10-36.

- Roy Harris (2002), 'Why words really do not stay still' (Review of Ferdinand de Saussure, *Ecrits de Linguistique Generale*), *Times Literary Supplement*, July 26th 2002, London: Times Literary Supplement Limited, p.30.
- Martin Heidegger (1962), *Being and Time*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Martin Heidegger (2001), *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, (18th edition).
- Karl Heider (2001). 'Robert Gardner: the early years', *Visual Anthropology Review*, Arlington VA: American Anthropological Association , Fall-Winter 2001-2002, Vol.17, No.2, pp.61-70.
- Brian Henderson (2004), 'Towards a Non-Bourgeois Camera Style', in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, New York; London: Oxford University Press, pp. 54-64.
- Paul Henley (2001), 'Fewer words, more pictures' (Review of Jay Ruby, *Picturing Culture*, 2000), *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 February 2001, Times Literary Supplement Limited.
- Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (eds.) (1989), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Christopher Hookway (1985), *Peirce*, London; New York: Routledge.
- David Couzens Hoy (ed.) (1986), 'Introduction', *Foucault, A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp.1-25.
- Edmund Husserl (1989), 'The Origin of Geometry', in Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska, pp.155-180.
- Roman Jakobson (1990), 'Langue and Parole: Code and Message', in Linda R. Waugh & Monique Monville-Burston (eds.), *On Language*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, pp.80-109.
- Fredric Jameson (1998), *Brecht and Method*, London; New York: Verso.
- Fredric Jameson (1999), 'Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze', in Ian Buchanan (ed.) *A Deleuzian Century?*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp.13-36.
- Richard Jenkins (1992), *Pierre Bourdieu*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Jyotsna Kapur (1997), 'The Art of Ethnographic Film and the Politics of Contesting Modernity: Robert Gardner's Forest of Bliss', *Visual Anthropology*, 9(2), London: Taylor and Francis, pp.167-186.
- Ryszard Kapuscinski (2004), 'Beruf Reporter: Dabeisein, Sehen, Hören, Teilhaben, Reflektieren – Werkstattprotokolle', *Lettre International*, Berlin: Lettre international Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, no 67, Winter 2004, pp.62-72.

- Magda King (2001), *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time*, (ed. John Llewelyn), Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Theodore Kisiel (1993), *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press.
- Richard Kostelanetz (ed.) (2003), *Conversing with Cage*, New York; London: Routledge.
- Rosalind Krauss (2000), *A Voyage on the North Sea*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Rosalind Krauss (1985), 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, pp.277-290.
- Saul Kripke (1982), *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Malden, Mass.; Oxford; Carlton, Au.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Jack Klugelmass (1995), 'Bloody Memories: Encountering the Past in Contemporary Poland', *Contemporary Anthropology*, 10(3), American Anthropological Association, pp.279-301.
- Edith Kurzweil (1996), 'Michel Foucault: Structuralism and Structures of Knowledge', *The Age of Structuralism: From Levi-Strauss to Foucault*, New Brunswick; London: Transaction Publishers, pp.193-226.
- Ernesto Laclau (1996), *Emancipation(s)*, London; New York: Verso.
- Claude Lanzmann (1991), 'Seminar With Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990', *Yale French Studies*, No.79, Jan 1991, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.82-99
- Claude Lanzmann (2001), 'Ghosts of Sobibor' (interview by Peter Lenon), *the Guardian*, July 27th 2001, <http://film.guardian.co.uk/interview/interviewpages/0,6737,527708,00.html>, (accessed July 2006).
- Maurizio Lazzarato (undated), 'Dialogism and Polyphony', <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/crisp/source/papers.html>, (accessed June 2004)
- Alphonso Lingis (1995), 'The World as a Whole', *Research in Phenomenology*, 25, pp.142-159.
- Stuart Liebman (ed.) (2007), *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peter Loizos (1993), *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness 1955-85*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Peter Loizos (1992), 'Admissible Evidence? Film as anthropology', in Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton (eds.), *Film as Ethnography*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, pp.50-65.

- Phillip Lopate (1996), 'In Search of the Centaur: The Essay Film', in Charles Warren (ed.), *Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film*, Hanover; London: Wesleyan University Press, pp.243-270.
- Jean-Francois Lyotard (1989), 'The dream-work does not think', in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *The Lyotard Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp.19-55.
- Kevin MacDonald and Mark Cousins (eds.) (1996), *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary*, London: Faber.
- David MacDougall (1982), 'Unprivileged Camera Style', *RAIN*, London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, n.50, June 1982, pp.8-10.
- David MacDougall (1995), 'The Subjective Voice in Ethnographic Film', in Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman (eds.), *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography*, Berkeley and London: University of California Press, pp.217-255.
- David MacDougall (2001), 'Gifts of Circumstance: Making Forest of Bliss: Intention, Circumstance and Chance in Nonfiction Film', *Visual Anthropology Review*, Arlington VA: American Anthropological Association, Spring-Summer 2001, v.17(1), pp.68-85.
- Norman Malcolm (1995), *Wittgensteinian Themes: Essays 1978-1989*, Ithaca; London: Cornell University.
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), 'Other Selves and the Human World', *Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge, pp.346-365.
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964), 'The Film and the New Psychology', *Sense and Non-Sense*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, pp.48-59.
- William McNeill (2005), 'The Genesis of Theory', in Robert Polt (ed.), *Heidegger's Being and Time: Critical Essays*, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, pp.89-104.
- Ray Monk (1991), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, London: Vintage.
- Edgar Morin (2003), 'Chronicle of a Film', in Jean Rouch, *Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, pp.229-265.
- Edgar Morin (2002), 'The Multidimensional Method', in Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader*, London: Routledge, pp.153-160.
- Pam Morris (ed.) (1994), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Volosinov*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Bill Nichols (1991), *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

- Bill Nichols (1994), 'Performing Documentary', *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*, Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press pp.92-106.
- Peter Osborne (1999), 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy', in J. Bird and M. Newman (eds.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, London: Reaktion Press, pp.47-65.
- Ákos Östör (1994), 'Forest of Bliss, Film and Anthropology', *East-West Film Journal*, 8(2), (July 1994), Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 70-104.
- David Pears (1985), *Wittgenstein*, London: Fontana Press.
- Brigit Pelzer (1999), 'Marcel Broodthaers: The Place of the Subject', in Michael Newman and Jon Bird (eds.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, London: Reaktion Press, pp.186-205.
- Richard Polt (1999), *Heidegger: An Introduction*, London: Routledge.
- Richard Polt (ed.) (2005), *Heidegger's Being and Time: Critical Essays*, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers.
- Brendan Prendeville (1999), 'Merleau-Ponty, Realism and Painting: psychophysical space and the space of exchange', *Art History*, 22(3) (September 1999), Oxford; Malden: Blackwell, pp.364-388.
- Brendan Prendeville (2005), 'Discernment', *Oxford Art Journal*, (February 2005), Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.213-226.
- Paul Rabinow (1986), 'Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology', in James Clifford and George E. Marcus eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp.234-261.
- Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad (2006), 'Caste out', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5390, 28 July, London: Times Literary Supplement Limited, p. 28.
- Andreas Reckwitz (2002), 'Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing', *European Journal of Social Theory*, v. 5(2), London: Sage Publications, pp.243-263.
- Jack Reynolds (2002), 'Habituality and Undecidability: A Comparison of Merleau-Ponty and Derrida on the Decision', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, v. 10 (4), November 2002, pp.449-466.
- Philip Rosen (1993), 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts', in Michael Renov (ed.), *Theorising Documentary*, New York; London: Routledge, pp.58-89.

- Jean Rouch (2003), *Ciné-Ethnography*, (ed. Steven Feld), Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jay Ruby (1988), 'The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film', in Alan Rosenthal (ed.), *New Challenges for Documentary*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California, pp.64-77.
- Jay Ruby (2000), *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology*, Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Horst Ruthrof (1999), 'Deleuze and the Body: Eluding Kafka's "Little Death Sentence"', in Ian Buchanan (ed.), *A Deleuzian Century?*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp.183-198.
- Sean Sayers (2003), 'Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx', *Historical Materialism*, 11(1), Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, pp.107–128.
- Roger Scruton (2004), 'Wittgenstein and the Understanding of Music', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 44(1), Jan 2004, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.1-9.
- David Seligman (1976), 'Wittgenstein on Seeing Aspects and Experiencing Meanings', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 37(2) (December 1976), Providence, Rhode Island: International Phenomenological Society, pp.205-217.
- Steven Shaviro (1986), 'From Language to "Forms of Life": Theory and Practice in Wittgenstein', *Social Text*, 13-14, (Winter-Spring 1986), Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, pp. 216-36.
- Richard Shusterman (ed.) (1999), *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Charles Spinosa (1992), 'Derrida and Heidegger: Iterability and *Ereignis*', in Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, pp. 270-297.
- David Stern (2000), 'Practices, Practical Holism, and Background Practices', in Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (eds.), *Heidegger, Coping and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, Volume 2, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, pp.53-69.
- David Stern (2004), *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- John R. Searle (2002), 'How Performatives Work', in Daniel Vanderveken and Susumu Kubo (eds.), *Essays in Speech Act Theory*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp.85-107.
- Lucien Taylor (1993), 'Rouch's Seed', *Current Anthropology*, 34(4), (Aug.-Oct. 1993), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 511-516.

- John B. Thompson (1991), 'Editor's Introduction', in Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.1-31.
- Tzvetan Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Michael Tomasello (1999), *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Trinh T. Minh-ha (1990), 'Documentary Is/Not a Name', *October*, 52, Summer 1990, Cambridge, Ma.: MIT, pp.76-98.
- V. N. Volosinov (1986), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press
- Bernard Williams (2002), *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bernard Williams (2005), 'Pluralism, Community and Left Wittgensteinianism', *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp.29-39.
- Raymond Williams (1977), *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958), *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell (2nd edition).
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1979), 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough', in C. G. Luckhardt (ed.), *Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives*, Hassocks, Sussex: The Harvester Press, pp.61-81.
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1981), *Zettel*, Oxford: Blackwell, (2nd edition).
- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1989), *Culture and Value*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Peter Wollen (1998), 'The Semiology of the Cinema', *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, London: BFI, pp.79-106.
- Christian Wolff (1973), *Changing the System* (musical score), New York: Editions Peters.
- Mark A. Wrathall (2000), 'Background Practices, Capacities, and Heideggerian Disclosure', in Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (eds.), *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science, Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 2*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT, pp. 93-114.
- Slavoj Zizek (2000), 'The Oberhausen Lecture', *Filmwaves* 12 (Summer), pp.10-15.

Lectures

- Claude Lanzmann (2003), In conversation with David Cesarani, ICA, London, Jan 18.
2003

Appendices

Appendix 1: Repeat Performance (conference paper, July 2003)

Abstract

Repeat Performance was a paper on my developing notion of dialogical practice, which I gave at the CATH Conference in Leeds in the Summer of 2003. It presented a discussion of artist Pierre Bismuth's 'Blue Monk in Progress' (1995), in relation to which I theorised a particular form of strategy operative in dialogical practices, namely that of 'doubling', in which one and the same utterance, gesture or artefact is referred to two distinct modes of practice simultaneously. To simplify, Bismuth's piece basically consists of a performance played back on a computerised player-piano. What intrigues about 'Blue Monk in Progress' is that the seemingly abstract, open-textured musical performance that one hears is the serious interpretation by a professional musician of a score, but at the same time that score is a record of the tentative probings made by an amateur (Bismuth) with negligible knowledge of piano technique. The final reproduced performance thus doubles up within itself the professional and the amateur - the presumably achieved intention of the former and the gradual approach to an intended performance of the latter.

My research at this time was focused on the means by which dialogues are catalysed between different ways of seeing the world which social practices embody. What is explored in this paper is how the relation between one mode of practice and another is made palpable through strategies of presentation or staging, and in particular, through strategies in which different modes of practice are superimposed or doubled up within the same space or instance.

This paper was delivered at the Warp/Woof conference run by the AHRB Centre for Theory and History, Leeds University, July 2003

Repeat Performance: The Enunciative Relation and Pierre Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress*

Introduction: Practice and Medium

The specificity of a material support no longer automatically defines practice for contemporary artists. Naturally what they do, their aesthetic practice, still requires material supports, and it may be that in any number of individual cases the materiality of these supports retains, to a greater or lesser degree, a centrality in defining these practices. Since the end of the 1960s at the latest, however, the belief that aesthetic practice is wedded to its specific material support, which it reflexively explores, has been in general decline. In contrast, the idea that any material might be used as a support for practice, which arose at that time in particular with Conceptualism, is of continuing influence in contemporary art. The notion of the medium has expanded from a modernist aesthetic understandings that linked it with a perceptual material, to the point where the medium for aesthetic practice is as materially diverse as that which grounds the broader practices of the society in which it is located.

This paper addresses a piece of work by the artist Pierre Bismuth [France, b.1963], in which such questions about practices, their supports and medium, are distinctly implicated. In particular, Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress* (1995) focuses us on the *enunciative* dimension of practice as opposed to its materiality - *enunciation* being concerned with the stating of something, the presentation or performance of something as a *statement*, rather than with its materiality or meaning etc.¹ The *enunciative act*, as Foucault describes it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, derives its authority from the context it invokes, as a judge pronouncing sentence invokes the authority invested in him by the legal context. Even more apposite to *Blue Monk in Progress*, though, is the fact that what is enunciated would simply not exist as a statement if it weren't for the context it invokes. *Blue Monk in Progress* is not an arbitrary illustration of this fact, but, as I hope to show, is very much an exploration, if not an experimental

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 2002). In 'Archaeology of Pure Modernism' in *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), pp.373-425, Thierry de Duve applies Foucault's notion of enunciation in his reassessment of the Duchampian readymade.

demonstration, of the enunciative relation, which I suggest can also be viewed as its medium.

Performance and Reproduction

In *Blue Monk in Progress* Bismuth explored the technology of a Yamaha Disclavier, an instrument which consists of a regular grand piano linked to a computer via a system of hydraulics. The computer records the performance made on the piano - not the sound but the actual gestures of the player on the keyboard, their intensity and duration, as registered through the hydraulics. The process can be reversed and the recorded performance played back on the piano, reactivating the sequence of keys depressed with the differing speed and duration of each depression. Bismuth noted that this sort of reproduction seems to be of the performance itself rather than it being, as he described the alternative, 'a static recording'.² The Disclavier, for all its technological sophistication, however, is a latter day incarnation of the player-piano, which had its heyday during the transitional phase that began with the invention of sound reproduction in the late nineteenth century and ended with the rise of durable means of storing and distributing recordings on disks in the 1920s,³ a phase when recordings had not yet vitiated the role played by the performative dimension of music in its general reception. According to Jacques Attali's account, it was precisely the spread of recording technology that effected the severance of music from performance, and from the aura of performance.⁴ It is the Disclavier's corresponding capacity to evoke the aura of performance whilst replaying the music outside of its actual performance, however, that is used so brilliantly in *Blue Monk in Progress*.

The first step towards *Blue Monk in Progress* was for Bismuth, who by his own admission has some basic notion of music but no notion of how to play the piano, to attempt to reconstruct, from his memory of it, a tune by Thelonius Monk called *Blue Monk*. He played for an hour on the Disclavier, which faithfully recorded the entire process, with all its faltering and necessarily repetitious

² Quoted in Michael Newman, 'Contingency and rule in the work of Pierre Bismuth', in *Pierre Bismuth* (London: Lisson Gallery, 1999), p.28

³ Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica* (London: Verso, 1994), p.208

⁴ Jacques Attali, 'Repeating', in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp.87-132

attempts to find the tune through the process of trial and error. 'The progress I made,' Bismuth wrote in the statement that accompanied the work, 'was minimal, but it is recognisable nonetheless'.⁵

A further aspect to the Disclavier, another link in its Heath-Robinson-like chain of technologies, is that for the performance it has registered via its hydraulics and recorded in the digital matrix of its computer, it can produce a musical score.⁶ Of course this is a thoroughly conventional affair: the machine must encode the performance it has recorded using a strictly standardised notation. Thus its production of a score is a simple linear translation of what the computer must apprehend as mere signals; a process which neither needs nor can, one would assume, respond to anything more than the 'bare performance', or, in other words, the player's gestures in the absence of any consideration of their status or meaning. Nonetheless, musical scores suggest a certain musical intention. After all, standard musical notation would not be very useful for transcribing sounds that weren't 'musical'; on the contrary, notation is 'a matter that in music goes well beyond a simple transcription of sounds and whose categories (tones, keys, etc.) will [after their permeation of Western music in the late fourteenth century] generate and direct musical innovation'.⁷ Thus, not only is such notation obviously incapable of registering 'bare sound', it plays an active role in the generation and delimiting of 'musical' sounds and forms.⁸ In addition, its introduction into musical practice allows and eventually institutionalises the division within it between performance and composition.⁹ This has its consequences: that a musical score is an artefact which evokes a certain enunciative authority is so because it bespeaks a compositional intention.

⁵ Michael Newman, 'Contingency and rule in the work of Pierre Bismuth', p.28

⁶ This is function, it would seem, is not actually indigenous to the Disclavier, but was effected by transferring the data recorded by the machine to another programme capable of expressing it in the form of musical notation.

⁷ Fredric Jameson, 'Forward', in Jacques Attali, *Noise*, p.viii

⁸ Where a score involves some translation of extra-musical sounds, this must clearly be understood not as a literal but a *poetic* translation, of which Messiaen's transcriptions of bird song would be an example.

⁹ Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica*, p.59

The second step was for Bismuth to hand the score that the Disclavier created for the hour he spent on the instrument to a professional pianist, who, however, was not told of its origin. In the final piece all we actually see is a grand piano and a score. The sounds we hear emanating from the piano are a reproduction of the pianist's interpretation of Bismuth's score, though of course we don't witness any performance - the performer is absent, an unknown, a blank. Nonetheless, it was into this blankness that I found myself, on first encountering the piece, projecting a certain form of intention. Undoubtedly influenced by the aura of the black lacquered grand piano and the authoritative score, I heard the sound as 'serious music', as a statement enunciated against the background of serious composition. In particular, as it had some superficial resemblances, to my ear at least, to Webern's *Variations for Piano*, or a Boulez Sonata, I heard it as if it were a serialist, or proto-serialist composition.

The Performed Object

Considered from the point of view of sound alone, Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress* clearly presents us with acousmatic sound. Pierre Schaeffer, who in the early 1950s introduced the term *acousmétré* into the contemporary context, used it to refer to his own *musique concrète* experiments, in which sounds recorded from various sources were then manipulated and collaged in the studio and hence abstracted from them.¹⁰ Sound is said to be acousmatic if it appears to be severed from its actual source, and thus recorded sound would generally be experienced as acousmatic if it weren't for the fact that in the age of technical reproduction we have become inured to the experience of hearing sounds abstracted from their sources. In cinema, for example, a source for recorded sound is largely established through synchronisation with the image, and film sound is only perceived as acousmatic where it floats detached without an apparent source appearing on screen. Michel Chion describes how an 'acousmatic voice' in cinema will seek a source in the visual image, or call for a source to enter the image - it looks for, or rather we the viewers look for, a body to embody it.¹¹ As long as it remains acousmatic it has the potential to suggest

¹⁰ Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica*, p.15, pp.266-267; Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.18

¹¹ Michel Chion, 'The Impossible Embodiment', in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, (London: Verso, 1992), pp.195-207

several divergent possible embodiments which merge within it. In a similar fashion, Bismuth's piece allows the *performed object* - here I'm careful not to say sound - to float without 'embodiment'. To follow the acousmatic analogy through, and indeed it is no more than an analogy, this floating performed object suggests several divergent authors, or rather author positions. An acousmatic voice, which is to say a sound - and it makes little difference whether it is real or imagined - finds its embodiment in a physical body. In contrast, what I am here describing as a performed object - in distinction to the sound object that is its support - correlates with an author position, rather than any actual source or body. The difference being that author positions, being simply positions a speaker can take in a specific discursive situation, are no more than functions of a structure, and for this reason it would be misleading to think of the relation between these and performed objects as being one of embodiment. It is not a physical relation of this ilk that is at stake, but rather a particular form of context in which author positions arise.

A musical performance is a performance *of* something: a performed object. That object may in certain instances even come into being only with its performance, yet a performance doesn't ever create an object in a vacuum: performed objects are inseparable from the context in which they arise. They are examples of what Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* calls *statements*, and each and every statement, whether it belongs to a musical, legal or any other context, comes with that context attached to its heel. Nonetheless, whilst a performed object cannot be severed from its context, the number of statements or objects and correlating contexts may be multiplied in relation to any single material instance. In *Blue Monk in Progress* sound is indeed severed from performance and from the performer; the acousmatic ambiguity that arises from this, however, gives rise to a further ambiguity of quite a different order and in the relation between a different set of terms. On this second level it is no longer a question of the disavowal of the source, located in performance, and sound, but of a doubling up of performed objects and the author positions that they imply.

Context and Performance

What we hear in the final piece is simultaneously the professional pianist's rendition and a reproduction of Bismuth's playing. We may assume that there were material differences between the two, between what Bismuth produced

and what the pianist plays, differences that would be caused firstly by the entire mechanism of translations from gesture to score, and secondly by the professional interpretation of that score, which presumably will have brought in certain conventions of intonation and the cultivated personality of the player. These material differences don't necessarily hinder us, however, from relating the sound we hear to Bismuth's performance, from hearing in it Bismuth's performance. It may be that another professional with a trained ear could hear the difference, could make out the traits of musical training, though it seems doubtful that even this nuanced perception would stop them from being able to hear Bismuth in it too.

In as much as we hear in this sound different authors' performances, we also hear it in different contexts - that is, hear different contexts *in it*. This difference in context though is clearly neither a question of a change in the syntactical arrangement of sounds, as the sound heard remains materially the same, with the same dynamics, timbre, durations etc, nor of a change in its situational context as this has not altered either. If we imagine hearing a piece of piano music on CD, and that we've been informed that it is by a composer attached in some way to Serialism but whose name is unfamiliar to us, we would probably give it attention comparable to that we'd give to a recording of Boulez or Stockhausen. If it were subsequently to emerge that what we were actually listening to was a recording of Bismuth's 'gradual process of thought'¹² as he tried to recover the Monk tune from his memory and pick it out on the keyboard, it might not necessarily disqualify it from consideration within the field of Serialism, or at least of 'serious' music - there are after all no immutable criteria we can refer to - but this knowledge would certainly complicate things.

The Enunciative Relation

The context in question bears on the status we attribute to this sound, it has to do with the field we locate it in as a performed object. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault refers to this sort of context as an *enunciative modality*. In this book Foucault was mainly concerned to describe a methodology for analysing discursive practices manifesting themselves in linguistic artefacts, and

¹² Bismuth described *Blue Monk in Progress* as 'a work that examines the gradual process of thought by bringing it together with an act of remembering', Michael Newman, 'Contingency and rule in the work of Pierre Bismuth', p.27

it is probably for this reason that what an enunciative modality corresponds to, what it contextualises, is translated in the English version of the text as a 'statement'.¹³ One particular distinction that Foucault draws, one which is perhaps rudimentary but no less important for that, is the distinction between a statement and a sentence.¹⁴ The points of distinction are exactly the same as those between the performed objects suggested by *Blue Monk in Progress* and the 'bare sound' which acts as their material support.

It seems self-evident that a sentence, and any comparable sign or group of signs, must be characterised by some sort of actual syntactical or structural articulation. It is the constancy of this syntax and structure that is the condition of their reproducibility; it is part of their 'iterability'.¹⁵ A sentence spoken or written in diverse contexts remains grammatically the same sentence, even if its meaning changes radically between them; and in just the same way the sequence of sounds that resulted from Bismuth's use of the piano, and was analysed and reproduced by the Disclavier's computer, remains materially the same regardless of the authorial source we attribute to it. Conceivably the only distinction between the sound of the performance and that of its mechanical reproduction is in the time and place of its occurrence. There would seem no reason to believe that it cannot, when reproduced, remain the same in terms of the syntax of notes, their pitch and duration, etc., even, at least in principle, if manually reproduced as it was by the professional pianist. For surely it doesn't matter whether what we are looking at is sound, noise, linguistic phonemes or syntax: in as much as these are actually manifested structures or sensible objects none would remain impervious to this sort of material repetition.

So, just as the sentence acts as *material support* to a discursive statement, the same role is played by sound for the musical statement, regardless of whether the structure of the 'sound object' is defined in the conventional terms of keys and

¹³ In the original French the term used is apparently *énoncé*, which is more clearly connected to *énonciation* than statement is to enunciation. See Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) p.187 n.9, where translator Martin Joughin expands on the translation of Foucault's *énoncé*.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, 'The Enunciative Function', in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp.99-118

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', in *Margins of Philosophy* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), pp.315-316

tones, or in terms of 'frequency, duration and intensity.'¹⁶ The statement, however, has quite a different existence to that of its material support. Reproducing the material support of a statement, whether it be a sentence or sequence of notes, will not insure that the statement itself is reproduced, indeed it may well entail its transformation. In what then does the repetition of the statement consist? It consists in the repetition of the *context* along with the statement. This of course cannot be a material repetition: if it were, say, Webern's *Variations for Piano* Op.27 that were being performed, that work would constitute the statement within the canon of modern music, and its performance would be its repetition on the level of the canon, which would be by necessity *implicitly*, though clearly not actually, repeated along with it.

In contrast to the statement, the performance producing the sound that is identified as a work by Webern, what Foucault terms the *enunciation* or the act of enunciation, this conversely is in itself not repeatable. This is because in the repeat performance the new enunciation is marked as distinct from the first by the very fact of its being a repeat, the next term in a chronological succession. There is though, of course, the statement that this particular interpretative performance itself constitutes - Maurizio Pollini's interpretation of the *Variations* at different moments in his career, or his interpretation in relation to that of another pianist. Even outside the spectacle of performance that interpretation is essentially the same whether recorded on CD or vinyl, transmitted by radio or reproduced on a Disclavier. The statement is distinct from the material support and the enunciative act, its identity is dependent on neither of them and is rather established by its relation to a field of statements such as a canon. Thus the performed object as a musical statement is - as is the case for the performed objects that are doubled in Bismuth's piece - distinct from both the actual sound (reproduced by the Disclavier) and the performance in which it is enunciated (those of Bismuth and the professional pianist).

Relation as Medium

Enunciative modalities need not be precise, there is always a degree of fuzziness as to what constitutes them, as indeed there is to the reasons why I would consider something to be an example of modern serious music. This

¹⁶ Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica*, p.266. These being 'the three fundamental parameters' derived from information theory, which 'all sound can be measured along'.

fuzziness didn't hinder me in jumping to the conclusion on first encountering Bismuth's *Blue Monk in Progress* that the sound I was hearing was a serious musical statement. The enunciative context of any statement would seem never to be fully saturated, however articulated and institutionalised a field of statements becomes; there is always need of some degree of fudging - akin to reflective judgement - which means that we operate tactically, both as 'authors' and as 'readers', finding leeway in the strategic spaces of enunciative modalities. It is this leeway or gap that *Blue Monk in Progress* brings into focus. Doubling up the statements around a single series of sounds effectively severs the 'bare performance' from first the one modality and then the other, which would have identified it as either a statement of serious music or a non-performance. A statement is only repeatable if its enunciative modality remains the same; it becomes a new statement if it appears in relation to a different modality, just as Bismuth's improvisation becomes an intended musical work when heard in the context of the professional pianist's rendition. In *Blue Monk in Progress*, however, the 'bare performance' is paradoxically suspended between two statements, belonging either to both modalities simultaneously or to neither the one nor the other.¹⁷

Sound may operate in *Blue Monk in Progress* as a material support, but clearly what the piece deals with, and the material, so to speak, that it works with, is relation. Enunciative modalities split, dissolve, amalgamate and otherwise constantly alter, but they do so in relation to the statements that derive from them, because any change on the level of either the enunciative context or the statement is in actual fact a change in the relation between the two. This relation, usually invisible because it is necessarily taken for granted, is itself what *Blue Monk in Progress* points us to, as the work draws our attention by means of a paradoxically doubled statement exactly to the difference between the various modalities and statements it confronts us with - the difference between the performance of serious music, non-performance, and possibly also the improvisatory performance of the jazz tradition from which Monk's original composition comes.

Confining ourselves to the professional performance and Bismuth's learning process, it becomes clear on further reflection that I have not been comparing

¹⁷ On the subject of the paradox see Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, (New York: Columbia university Press, 1990), in particular 'Sixth Series of Serialization', pp.36-44

like with like. The difference is not between equivalent categories of action existing side by side on the same stratum. Bismuth's non-performance is not the sort of act that is usually intended for consumption as music; as a learning process it is more readily located backstage, as it were, where the skills and knowledge necessary for performing are assimilated, and where it is received, if at all, as a rehearsal or practice. As such it lacks the broader 'socially grounded and stable audience'¹⁸ enjoyed by professional performance, which having claim on the serious attention due to fully fledged statements, does so because it takes place in the relatively autonomous context characterised by recognisable institutions such as the canon, the concert and musicianship. Such statements, though they are necessarily enunciated in time, have an aspect which is atemporal. The statement remains intact through its various enunciations, like Webern's *Variations* does across its various performances and interpretations. This relative stasis may be illusory but it is a necessary illusion, for whilst a statement may accrue new shades of significance or conversely come to seem trivial through the course of its repetitions, only the endurance of the modality that allowed its initial emergence stops it from disappearing as soon as it arises. The 'gradual process of thought' that Bismuth goes through as he attempts to learn the Monk tune lacks this atemporal face; it is immersed in the mundane creep of time. How time will be filled, how will unfold, is part of what we take to be intended in a musical composition, which is therefore quite different to a series of actions developing solely within time, like that involved in trying to approximate a skill you don't yet master, which moves in fits and false starts. The way Bismuth gets us to perceive the gradualness of his process is ironically to make it possible for it to be mistaken for something that is not contingent but instead a fully developed intention: we take Bismuth's fumbblings for the thing itself, rather than simply an attempt at the thing. The 'mistake' here, however, is precisely what Bismuth works with. In other words, our patterns of response, modes of recognition and evaluation are his medium.

¹⁸ V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), p.92

Appendix 2: Practice Documentation (DVD 3)

Documentation of projects from early stages of the research:

Backstage (2003)

Video documentation of a performance-intervention within the context of the PhD process, which involved introducing a recording of a tutorial as part of a seminar presentation, thus attempting to dialogise the two activities (preparation and presentation) within the same situation.

A Lecture (2004)

Video documentation of a performance-intervention, which took place in the lecture theatre at Chelsea College of Art and Design, February 2004. The intention was to draw those practices that are invisible from the point of view of the lecture, i.e. activities of the audience, into relation with a lecture itself. The event started with me speaking in the idiom of the academic lecture, standing on the stage and theorising a relation between exhibitions and lectures. I then moved off the stage and spoke from within the auditorium itself amongst the audience, who now appeared along with me on the stage in the form of a live video projection. Once among the audience I switched to speaking about the graffiti that populates the reading lamps in the auditorium, linking it with anecdotes and personal reminiscences about the transgression of the divide between stages and audience.

Rehearsal (2004)

An interview with myself, reflimed from the screen and simultaneously dubbed with improvised text. The video was exhibited in the empty lecture theatre at Chelsea College of Art and Design.