EMBEDDEDNESS
AS CONDITION AND STRATEGY IN CONTEMPORARY ART
AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

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DECLARATION

The work presented in this thesis is the candidate's own.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the concept of 'embeddedness' as condition and strategy in contemporary art and cultural production. Identifying embeddedness as a motif of contextual proximity and a strategy in contemporary art, the thesis proposes immediacy to be the result of intrinsic mediation. The project's main concern is how embeddedness is contextualised by the current conditions that authors and cultural producers engage with. The primary question is whether and how embeddedness can convey a critical relation to the mediation that it undertakes. These concerns inform and arise from my work as an artist, and my participation in events, some of which I organise. The project claims that embeddedness in art is a critical condition and an editorial concept or a strategic plan that can be set up by the artist.

The investigation begins by looking at conditions of embeddedness by focusing on concepts of subjectivity and by elaborating strategies that I call 'auto-direction'. For example, concepts of subjectivity are taken up in relation to Richard Serra's video *Boomerang* (1974), in which the performer Nancy Holt reflects on her own spoken words, which are fed back with a short delay via microphone and headphones into her ears. Auto-direction, introduced with the example of Steven Spielberg's initiative of a video diary exchange project between Israeli and Palestinian children, describes the activity of the producer, who self-directs his situated presence. Taking up idioms of embeddedness from artists like Phil Collins, Christian Jankowski and Erik van Lieshout the project examines embeddedness through a comparative analysis between contemporary art, visual culture, media theory, sociology, art theory, psychoanalysis and philosophy. These practices lead to an identification of embeddedness as an author's immanent exposure, a claim taken up through analysis of theoretical texts and literature by Rosalind Krauss, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Gregory Bateson, Hal Foster, Bernard Williams and Alfred North Whitehead.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the concept of embeddedness by looking at and listening to work by artists and directors who make use of technologies like film, video and sound recording and who strategically appear in the work. The text will take up examples of framed artists or filmmakers in the work – such as Werner Herzog in *Grizzly Man* (2005), Phil Collins in *The Return of the Real* (2005) or Christian Jankowski in *The Holy Artwork* (2001) – who move with their presence beyond a mere representation or self-portrait. These works refer to considerations of the artist on his or her implication in the production process. In this text I am going to elaborate on these and other works by Herzog, Collins and Jankowski, as well as works by the artists Richard Serra and Erik van Lieshout.

The project's central concern is how embeddedness is contextualised by the current conditions that authors and cultural producers engage with. The thesis identifies embeddedness as a concept of presence and more precisely as a condition *and* strategy in contemporary art. In this context the thesis questions immediacy with regard to its intrinsic mediation.

Of course this thesis could also expand on the notion of embeddedness with a detailed self-reflexive discussion on my own work and the acting presence of myself within a number of works. However, with the exception of two examples, *The Editor's Cut* (2004) and *Facing* (2004), I decided to take a deliberate distance from looking back at my own work, because the work and a theoretical analysis of the same work in the context of this thesis would undermine what will be examined here. For reasons discussed in the main text – such as the review on Pierre Bourdieu's discussion on the relationship between practice and theory in Chapter 3 – elaborating concepts of embeddedness is not an embedded practice.

To introduce the notion of embeddedness we can turn to Werner Herzog's film *Grizzly Man*, in which the director is listening to a tape recording of the cruel moments of Timothy Treadwell's death as he is being killed by a grizzly bear in the wilderness of Alaska. The tape was found in Treadwell's video camera, which was left behind near the killing scene. The camera was continuously recording while the incident happened. Each summer for thirteen consecutive years the wild-life activist Treadwell travelled to remote parts of Alaska to live very close to the grizzlies. He

filmed them and himself while talking to the camera explaining the importance of being there and taking care of the bears. *Grizzly Man* combines Treadwell's footage from Alaska with Herzog's commentary and interviews of people and friends who knew about Treadwell's obsession with the grizzlies. Coming back to the sequence in which we see Herzog listening with headphones to the deadly moments, he is being fearfully watched by Treadwell's former girlfriend Jewel Palovak, who is sitting opposite him. Still under shock from listening to the audio recording, Herzog begs her to never listen to this tape. He says: "Jewel you must never listen to this." He gives her the tape and asks her not keep it, but to destroy it.
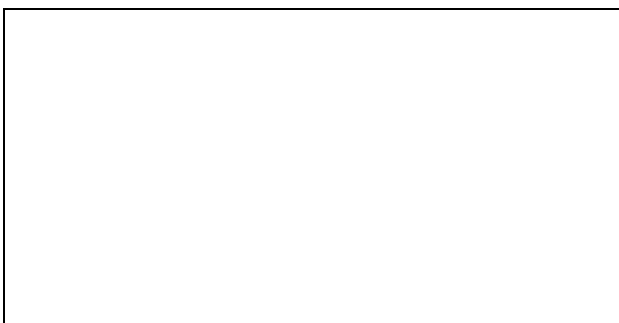
Fig. 1: Werner Herzog, *Grizzly Man*
(Film still: Timothy Treadwell), 2005 **(DVD 1)**

In the fatal sequence of *Grizzly Man* Herzog brings together two moments that describe notions of embeddedness.

First there is Timothy Treadwell's embedded situation in the natural environment of the grizzlies and the continuous filming of the bears, which ultimately results in a more or less accidental recording of the deathly incident of the protagonist. The ordinariness of Treadwell's embeddedness in the wilderness reminds one of documentaries with a scientific position or amateur footage filmed by a tourist. His obsession of living with these wild animals presents a distinct case of an adventurer. Treadwell feels that his life out there in remote Alaska is worth recording and presenting to schoolchildren at home, where he spends the winter months. With his camera he is looking into the world of the bears. At the same time he is looking out there, looking into the camera and addressing imaginary viewers.

Second – and more importantly to the concerns of this thesis – Herzog's film illuminates the challenge but also the fate of what is called embeddedness, which

implies questions on subjectivity, and which will be taken up in more general terms as a condition and strategy of cultural production and contemporary art. Herzog's embeddedness is that of the director of the film in the situation of revisiting this death when listening to this audio recording. Embeddedness in this case is a set-up and a predetermined idea by the director, who uses this moment to visibly appear only once in the film. The camera points over his shoulder and we watch Palovak, who is looking at Herzog.
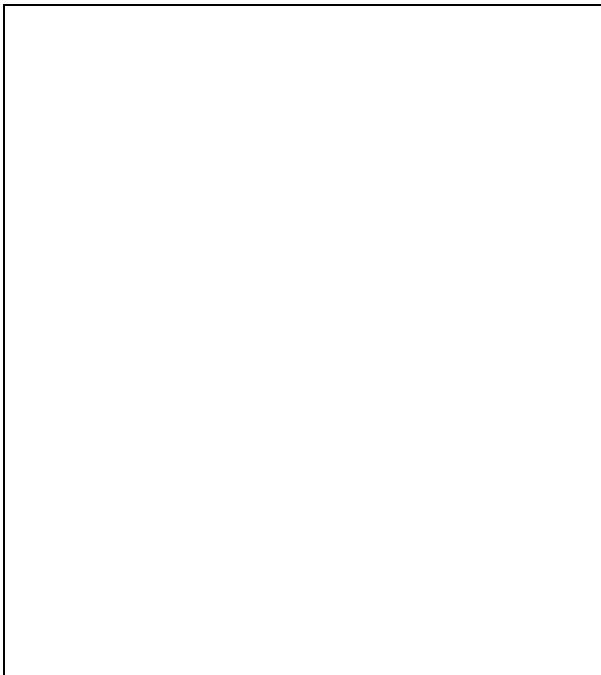
Fig. 2: Werner Herzog, *Grizzly Man*
(Film still: Werner Herzog and Jewel Palovak), 2005 **(DVD 1)**

In *Grizzly Man* Herzog's intention is to take a determined opposition to his protagonist. He is highly suspicious of Treadwell's manic intervention into the wild life of the grizzlies. His position is presented in an ordinary fashion with the filmmaker's distinct commentary off camera, the 'Voice of God'. The metaphor Voice of God refers to any director, who can be heard, but not seen in the film. In *Grizzly Man* the embedded practice of the director is however reinforced by the singular appearance of Herzog on screen. He is forcing himself to witness the tragic moment of Treadwell's death, yet by denying Jewel Palovak and the audience the chance to listen to the tape, he is revealing a preconsidered strategy, in which the audience is invited to understand his embedded nature within the archived life and

death of Timothy Treadwell. In fact, he is presenting his editorial decision making within the film. Thus, one could critically argue that Herzog himself is intrusive, which leads me to the question whether he is mirroring Treadwell's interventionist passion into the life of someone else. The crucial sequence that I picked out at the beginning tells a different story. His curiosity about the life and death of the grizzly man allows an understanding of his pre-detached thought in the situation. Herzog's conceptual thinking happens prior to the filming, some of it during the production, i.e., when listening to the tape. The work, as Herzog demonstrates, carries the notion of embeddedness in two very distinct ways. One is Treadwell's obsession of living with the grizzlies as well as documenting it on film. The other is Herzog's follow-up, while making embeddedness the main interest of his production.

The notion of embeddedness, one could argue, is at first a subjective response of the maker, the artist or filmmaker to their situation or disposition. Thus, the discussion here will focus on the one who makes the work or who is in the process of making it and subsequently on us, the recipients, who are discerning the maker's intention by looking at the work.

Fig. 3: Johannes Maier, *The Editor's Cut*
(Video still: Peter Millest and Shaun Ley), 2004 **(DVD 2)**

These concerns are part of my work as an artist, both the making and the collaboration with institutions and individuals. These collaborative events, which are documented on video, do not depend on any script or storyboard, even though they are meticulously planned in advance. In the last five years many of my projects were

concerned with the media, and in particular journalism. For example, in 2004 I approached the BBC in London to make a film about the newsreel picture editor Peter Millest. For the project I asked him to edit what was filmed simultaneously. In other words Millest edited his own portrait. In hindsight the collaboration and the work turned out utterly different to how I had initially imagined it. From the start I was relying on Millest's skills as a newsreel editor and expected a finished piece of work in no time. The main discrepancy occurred during production when Millest and the assisting correspondent Shaun Ley decided to include my discussions with them in the final version of the film. Whilst the production went on, the editor got lost in a non-existing narrative – and so did I. These revelations in the edit suite during the making of *The Editor's Cut*, as well as my reflection in hindsight on this finished piece of work – a kind of evidence of the afternoon in a BBC newsroom – reinforced my interest in an embedded practice.

From the point of view of an artist making such work, I cannot but try to unravel the intervention of the filmmaker Herzog. I am interested, if not intrigued, by his role in *Grizzly Man* and how he invests not only in the extraordinary life and tragic death of his subject, Timothy Treadwell, but also in his unique situation to deal with the overwhelming archive of this person. Online publications on *Grizzly Man* claim how "Herzog uses Treadwell's own startling documentary footage to paint a nuanced portrait of a complex and compelling figure while exploring larger questions about the uneasy relationship between man and nature" (http://www.rottentomatoes.com/ m/grizzly_man). This condensed interpretation is far reaching, but shows no critical in-depth interpretation of what it actually defines as 'the uneasy relationship between man and nature'. My interest in this film is towards a different kind of relationship. It is about the relationship between the embedded director and his production, of being close and distant to one's subject matter and it refers to one other important question: how do these embedded conditions reinforce the filmmaker's critical awareness within the production? This question relates to one of my central concerns in this thesis. In *Grizzly Man* Herzog interrupts the flow of Treadwell's obsession by raising his voice, the Voice of God, and by using the moment of Treadwell's last audible appearance on tape for his appearance in the film. Those interruptions take away the weight from the subject and make the director's predetermined notion of embeddedness the motif of the project. The concept of *The Editor's Cut* intended to

test my own controlling responsibilities as the maker of the work by giving away some of these responsibilities to the protagonist of the work. The main objective of the project was that the film would be entirely edited by the portrayed editor. My reflection on the film, as well as the specular self-reflection of the editor Millest was recorded and simultaneously post-produced. In fact during the making of *The Editor's Cut* there was hardly any time to consider why the production progressed differently. The strategies deployed during production had to be reconfigured minute by minute.

The intention of the artist or filmmaker is to be embedded. I have identified the filmmaker as the one who is present in the event, in other words, the one who can be named or located in the image. In Treadwell's case embeddedness demonstrates a condition, but in Herzog's case it highlights a critical tension between condition *and* strategy. Thus, Herzog's embedded presence conveys a critical relation to the mediation that embeddedness deals with. Herzog's awareness of these embedded conditions make him decide to be heard and to be seen in the film.

This tension between condition and strategy of the embedded filmmaker implies important concerns with regard to the subject. In the introduction of the book *Who Comes After the Subject?* (1991), Jean-Luc Nancy, one of the editors, raises the concern of presence and proposes the question of 'Who is who?' not as a question of essence, as in 'What is who?' but as a question of identity (p. 7). Identity and presence are closely related, and so are presence and embeddedness. Nancy gives the example of looking at a group photograph and asking for the people's names, i.e. their identity. In *Grizzly Man* one identifies Herzog's voice when looking over his shoulder. This voice that we hear and the person that we see from the back is the nameable director. What becomes apparent in reading Nancy's text are "two distinct uses of the word 'subject'", which again refer to the idea of presence, and of the subject's presence *in the film*. On the one hand, the subject is present to itself; it has 'the value of a metaphysical concept'. On the other hand, which concerns the artist's embeddedness, the subject is present "to a history, an event, a community, an oeuvre, or another 'subject'" (p. 5). In the text, Nancy expands on the concept of presence and subjectivity and asks more precisely: "Who is *there*?" or "Who is present there?"(p. 7). Herzog, who is present there in the film, demonstrates the presence to a history, an event, even a community, an oeuvre, that is Treadwell's video footage,

and obviously to another 'subject'. Accordingly, it is Herzog's presence in the film and *to the film* that he is in the process of making. This again implies a friction of closeness and distance, that is Herzog's presence in and to the film. In this way, embeddedness is immediately a matter of the identity of the subject and of to whom or what it appears; a friction and distance of the subject not only to its other but also to itself.

That other is not necessarily another human subject. Film, Nancy states in his book *The Evidence of Film – Abbas Kiarostami* (2001), "does not reflect an outside, it opens an inside onto itself". He insists that it is the image on the screen, which "is itself the idea" (p. 46). Herzog's film points at the relationship between the image, as the idea itself, and the making of this image. This is not simply about post-producing Treadwell's footage, but about Herzog's consideration of his presence or implication in the process of making a film with this footage. The tension between condition and strategy becomes apparent once again. The condition is Treadwell's footage that Herzog was given to make a film, whilst the strategy is Herzog's audible and visible appearance in the film.

Herzog challenges an autobiographical project with his own implication in the story that is Treadwell's story. In "Autobiography as De-Facement", Paul de Man (1984) challenges the common assumption "that life *produces* the autobiography as an act produces its consequences". He goes on to put the autobiographical project into question, asking if "whatever the writer does" – and here I take the 'writer' to be able to be substituted by any kind of author, including the artist or filmmaker – "is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of his medium" (p. 68). Treadwell's death is one such threshold when self-portraiture comes to an end but the recording goes on. Herzog's intrusion into the life story and the death story of Treadwell by means of post-producing the existing video footage refers to Herzog's deliberate motivation to interrupt what would without his directorial intervention remain an autobiographical record of Treadwell's presence in Alaska. Herzog's presence highlights the contrast between the recorded self that Treadwell represents and the recorded self that Herzog represents. Herzog's presence is the consequence of Treadwell's final act. For Herzog the protagonist Treadwell represents the subject *as film*. In *Grizzly Man* Herzog's intervention unravels the complex notion of subjectivity. It is the friction between distance and closeness from the other, i.e. from the subject Treadwell,

whom Herzog never met in person but got to know *as film*, as well as Herzog's intervention, i.e. his decision to perform as subject Herzog in front of the camera.

Employing a comparative analysis between contemporary art, visual culture, media theory, sociology, art theory, psychoanalysis and philosophy each of the four forthcoming chapters will address the notion of embeddedness differently. Chapter 1 looks at the technical 'other' of the embedded subject (the other 'what' that is its material condition) while Chapter 2 looks at the socio-ethnic 'other' (the other 'who' that is its anthropological–political other). The next two chapters reverse through this order: Chapter 3 looks at the content of embedded representation made explicit in the instance of journalism (truth) and Chapter 4 at its form as it is made explicit in art (mediation). With the exception of Chapter 3, which is entirely concerned with embedded journalism, all chapters will establish their arguments on the basis of art and technology. These arguments emerge from a number of artists' works, some of which have been mentioned before and will be introduced in the following chapter outlines. The works indicate the concerns that will be addressed and which question embedded art practices, the conditions and methods in relation to art production, as well as the effects on the progress and reception of the work.

  The core of this project examines how embeddedness conveys a critical relation to the mediation that it undertakes. Identifying embeddedness as a motif of presence, as well as condition and strategy in contemporary art, the thesis questions immediacy with regard to its intrinsic mediation. Embeddedness in art is not merely a passive undertaking of the artist in a particular situation but a critical manoeuvre within that situation, in which embeddedness becomes the main concern of the artist. The artist, if I return to Nancy's words once again, is present and subject "to a history, an event, a community, an oeuvre, or another 'subject'" (p. 5).

At the beginning of Chapter 1 the video piece *Boomerang* by Richard Serra from 1974 exemplifies these kinds of critical conditions of embeddedness. The chapter follows the concern of embeddedness in terms of its intrinsic exposure. By this phrase I mean in general how the embedded artist or producer and other participants of the production are exposed to the world by technological means. Thus, embeddedness's exposure is the main starting point and is discussed in contrast to a

claim made by the art historian Rosalind Krauss (1976) that identifies video as an aesthetic of narcissism (p. 50).

This claim is investigated further with reviews on the psychoanalytic experience of narcissism and the concept of subjectivity in the work of Sigmund Freud (1914), Jacques Lacan (1998 [1973]) and Kaja Silverman (1988). In terms of Lacan, the symbolic takes its idea from the exchange of symbols and derives from a linguistic dimension. It refers back to the speaking and listening subject in Serra's *Boomerang* represented by Nancy Holt. Holt reflects on her own spoken words, which are fed back with a delay of a split second via microphone and headphones into her ears. Here, I pay close attention to Kaja Silverman's claim about the subjective division that is the division between the biological body and the body of language.

Considering concepts of subjectivity the first chapter then introduces the strategy of embeddedness as 'auto-direction'. The notion of auto-direction describes the artist's strategic venture to direct others, but also the attempt to direct him or herself. In Lacanian terms auto-direction points at the isolation of the screen with which the subject plays. It is closely related to the Lacanian 'subject of representation' yet differs profoundly from a conventional autobiographical project, for which the author researches into his or her past in order to narrate a life story (Lacan, 1998 [1973]: 106). Auto-direction, when understood in terms of embeddedness as strategy, tends to break the loop of self-reflection. It proposes the 'I' that is the first-person pronoun that 'designates the subject' in a fantasised position, a scene presented to one's imagination. The fantasised scene of the artist is auto-directed and exposed, in other words it is staged.

Leading on from the introductory example of Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man* auto-direction can be illustrated with a project set up by the Hollywood director Steven Spielberg, who in 2006, distributed 250 video cameras to Israeli and Palestinian children offering them the possibility to make films about their lives and to share these films with their unknown neighbours. Auto-direction in this sense refers to an ethical concern amongst human beings. Thus with Spielberg, embeddedness deploys no strategy with regard to the project's intrinsic mediation. It primarily represents the geo-political condition that these children are in. The conditions of embeddedness in relation to the interruption of self-reflection as well as to increasing forms of auto-direction have to be reconsidered. And as a result of these

reconsiderations the understanding of embeddedness implies entirely new qualities regarding its exposure.

The focus of the second chapter is on the notion of 'framing the other', a concern that I borrow from Hal Foster's essay "The Artist as Ethnographer" (1996: 203). I discuss his text in relation to an essay by Gregory Bateson on 'culture contact,' in which he argues against abstractions that categorise cultures (1973: 36). For Bateson 'culture contact' implies a variety of different contact patterns, which inform the way cultures meet and how they persist in longer terms without eliminating one or the other (p. 35). Evaluating ideas by Foster and Bateson I then look at the embedded artist, who develops work in a given context, in which the artist is aware of his or her role as artist in relation to the other. In the most general sense the other is considered as the other that one portrays, describes or simply engages with and represents. In these terms, Chapter 2 looks specifically at ethnographic concerns and approaches by artists. It asks about the implications of framing the other and how these framings reveal a strong interest of the artist in exposing his or her embedded being.

The British artist Phil Collins, who travels the world and engages with different cultures and people for his projects, is a representative figure with regard to these kinds of embedded productions. He visits places like Belgrade, Kosovo or Baghdad, which are associated with hostility and violence. Since his work is produced by means of direct contact with his subjects the framing goes beyond a mere representation of the other. One example of his work is the photographic series *Young Serbs* (2001), which consists of a number of individual portraits of young people from Belgrade lying in a field of grass looking straight into Collins's camera lens. In his work, Collins highlights the relationship and tension between being present, that is his presence and proximity to the subject, and being re-presented, that is the attempted distance from the subject by means of an intrinsic mediation of presence, which is embeddedness.

More than a decade after Foster's investigation, the work "that attempts to frame the framer as he or she frames the other" takes a completely new turn (p. 203). In Collins's case this critique of 'framing the framer' is rearticulated in an embedded context of production. It is not only about 'framing the framer', and not about the artist, who is looking at ethnographic or anthropological movements and then re-framing or critiquing these movements by putting them in an art-related context. On

the contrary, in Collins's case the work brings together the framing as well as the artist's self-framing. The artist is now concerned about the self as framer being in the frame, not in terms of self-portraiture, but in terms of being present and re-presented. Persistence in Batesonian terms of 'culture contact' promotes the idea of embeddedness, which, as I claim during this investigation, reinforces the idea of the artist's primary ideological concern of immanent exposure. This means those artists like Collins, who represent, start with self-representation.

Chapter 3 takes on the concept of embedded representation by looking at the very recent phenomenon of embeddedness within the domain of journalism. During the Iraq war in 2003 an estimated 600 embedded journalists reported from the front line. They were attached to units of soldiers, with whom they shared the troops' activities in different locations. In 2004 I interviewed the BBC cameraman Darren Conway, who spent several months as an embedded journalist in Iraq during the war. According to Conway, one of the most significant conditions is the journalists' presence inside the situation of war, but at the same time the related implication of their exposed presence in the world. Embeddedness in the journalistic field raises questions regarding journalism's primary obligations to truth telling and objective reporting. Despite these fundamental concerns embeddedness also generates self-awareness to an extent that the live reportage (being live on air all the time), in relation to the journalist's life (staying alive in the battlefield), becomes the ultimate condition of the situated being.

Reconsidering ideas by Darren Conway, Jacques Derrida (2002 [1996]), Pierre Bourdieu (2003 [2000]) and Bernard Williams (2002) this chapter demonstrates a distinct understanding of ideological concerns regarding the mediation of embeddedness. In terms of Williams, the idea is that the embedded journalist's 'purely positional advantage' emphasises accurate positioning, which underlines one of the primary principles of journalism's objectives. Accuracy in this context is a *technical* matter, practised and exposed by the embedded journalist during his/her production in time and in the field. The second principle of sincerity is perhaps less obvious, but certainly illuminated by the embedded journalist's *natural* aliveness.

This looks back to an interview about television with Jacques Derrida. He is concerned about the making of actualities of what he calls 'artifactualities' by which

he suggests the inseparable notion of technique (live) and nature (life) (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 3). Despite obvious concerns about Western doctrine and propaganda, the embedded journalist is a representative figure during the progress of war providing a 'human interest story' that exposes 'live' (life).

The fourth chapter returns to practices by embedded artists and looks at the derived concept of live exposure, its form and mediation. I ask here, how the embedded producer negotiates between aspects of production, concept and thought process with respect to the event that the producer belongs to. Hence, there is an emphasis in this chapter on the production as such and how the embedded artist is concerned with the contradiction of "holding nature and looking at it", whilst being interested in the event as it passes along (Whitehead, 2004: 14). In the context of what I call the production as event, which refers to reflections of the artist on his or her implication in the production process, I deploy video work by the artists Christian Jankowski and Erik van Lieshout as well as concepts on nature and the event deriving from Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy.

Reconsidering Whitehead in the context of 'liveness', a term which describes the condition of live exposure, this chapter distinguishes between what he names 'sense-awareness' and 'thought'. The distinction is important, since it emphasises the difference between the immanence of awareness that is embeddedness as condition and a reflective notion of thought that is embeddedness as strategy.

Jankowski's work implies notions of liveness, and in particular processes of thought, that is thought which goes into the pre-planning of the project and 'live thought', that is thought which occurs during the event, in which he takes part. In his video piece *Telemistica* (1999) Jankowski phoned a number of fortune tellers on Italian live television and requested prophetical responses about his near future and the success of the artwork he was currently making. He recorded these questions and answers on video. These recordings resulted in the final work. Jankowski's events are not simply 'present for sense-awareness and passing'. The production as event, even during its own happening, is thought about, interrupted and made explicit whilst interacting with the situation.

The notion of embeddedness as it has been conventionally thought of proposes many new questions with regard to a technical and natural order. This investigation pays

attention to challenges faced by artists, who are, like Jankowski, strategically aware of embedded conditions or who, like van Lieshout in *Rotterdam Rostock* (2006), expose the fate of embeddedness, whilst performing as self and other. In presenting different works and cultural phenomena, the project tries to offer a new understanding for embeddedness's intrinsic exposure to the world and how the embedded subject artist is negotiating between the situated framed self, the framing of the other and the event which, in Whiteheadian terms, is constantly passing. The project advocates embeddedness as an intrinsic part of mediation and promotes live thought that takes the event, in Nancy's terms, by surprise.

CHAPTER 1: AUTO-DIRECTION

This first chapter introduces the cultural phenomenon of embeddedness with regard to its intrinsic exposure. On the basis of an essay by Rosalind Krauss (1976), in which she refers to Richard Serra's video work *Boomerang* from 1974, this chapter highlights notions of Lacanian subjectivity in relation to embedded practices in contemporary art and related methods of interruption and 'auto-direction'. The idea of auto-direction describes the artist's strategic undertaking to direct others, but at the same time the attempt to direct him or herself, in other words to expose him or herself and to be present. The artist is present as subject, and with regard to Jean Luc Nancy's (1991) take on subjectivity, the subject is present to an event, to a history, to a community, to an oeuvre and may be to another subject. In the context of embeddedness the 'subject to' implies the artist's presence or exposure in the work. This means the artist frames him or herself in the work. By this exposure, auto-direction's task is to interrupt the loop of self-reflection and self-reference. Auto-direction, understood in terms of embeddedness as strategy, can be thought of in relation to the convention of performance and acting. In this way, this chapter demonstrates explicitly how the embedded artist or producer and other participants in the production are exposed to the world by technological means.

This technological exposure and the 'subject being present to' is illustrated with a project set up by the Hollywood director Steven Spielberg, who, in 2006, distributed 250 video cameras to Israeli and Palestinian children offering them the possibility to make films about their lives and to share these films with their unknown neighbours. In this instrumental context auto-direction refers to an ethical context amongst human beings and turns out to be a self-sufficient activity that includes Spielberg's charitable activity. In contrast to Serra's *Boomerang*, Spielberg's activity does not reveal questions of *what* the project's outcome is, but of *how* ethical exposure is promoted.

1.1 Loop of Reflection

In his video *Boomerang* (1974) Serra gives a prominent example of art that literally makes use of a loop of reflection. This work documents a situation in which Nancy Holt, wearing headphones, speaks about her experience of hearing herself through the headphones, but hearing herself delayed by a split of a second. In other words,

the words that Holt speaks are fed back into her ear and she receives these signals less than a second later. "I hear my own voice slightly delayed" says Holt and continues "coming back in on top of me, so that I am surrounded by me, and my mind surrounds me (...) there is no escape."

Boomerang is one of several films by Serra that accompanies his sculptural project of the late 1960s and 70s. Rosalind Krauss (1986) and Benjamin Buchloh (1978) discuss independently the relationship between his early sculptures and films. For Buchloh Serra's work derives from a minimalist tradition where process, rather than static form in sculptural practice is considered. 'Process sculpture' is Buchloh's defining term that stands for work such as Serra's *Scatter Piece* (1967), *Splashing* (1968) and his "castings" of the late 1960s and early 70s. In his essay "Process Sculpture and Film in the Work of Richard Serra" (1978) Buchloh expresses his thoughts on process sculpture and how it "translates most readily into the medium film, which by its very definition permits the reproduction of the space-time continuum" (p. 4). He says:

> Minimalism involved an analysis of the very principles that constitute plastic phenomena, and such procedures of plastic production as alternating positive and negative spatial segments, casting materials in molds, setting up masses against gravity, and weighing and balancing them in the space-time continuum. It was the recognition of these principles and the need to render them in visual terms that required the introduction of filmic means into sculptural discourse. What distinguishes Serra's films is that, in arriving at a new definition of plastic phenomena through the necessary use of film, they demonstrate their own necessity as films. (p. 4)

Buchloh thinks about minimalist principals in sculpture and how they emphasise 'the need' for a visual translation into the moving image. He refers to Serra's early film work, such as *Hand Catching Lead*, *Hands Scraping* or *Hands Tied* (all 1968) where "manual (subjective) labour power" as he says, confronts "(objective) matter and physical laws" (1978: 17). In her essay "Richard Serra: Sculpture" (1986) Krauss claims that in all of these works one can find "the condition of self-reflexiveness" (p. 103). However, Krauss's 'condition of self-reflexiveness' is not what I call auto-direction. Auto-direction can imply self-reflexiveness, but derives primarily from the

presence of the maker in the work. Thus, auto-direction is part of the strategy of embeddedness. I will return to the concept of auto-direction at a later stage in this chapter.

For Krauss, *Hand Catching Lead* addresses the problem of producing art within modernism. She is interested in the falling lead, which is sometimes caught and let loose again by a hand that stretches out into the image frame. It is the falling into and out of the frame, which imitates "the movement of the celluloid strip of film itself and its steady passage down into the gate of the projector and out again" (1986: 105). She explains:

> In imaging-forth the constant movement of the band of film as it unwinds from reel to reel, *Hand Catching Lead* participates in that experience of the auto-referential, that sense of the way the content of a work exists as an echo of its formal, and even material, structure, that we associate with high modernism. (p. 104)

Serra's intentional use of lead, the material that his hand tries to catch, points to its formal purpose within sculptural production. Thus, in agreement with Buchloh, it is Krauss's understanding of a meaningful critique connected to minimalist work. She says:

> The logic of process that had led Serra to turn to film as a way of manifesting a pure operation on a physical material was also a way of opposing the rigid geometries of minimalist sculpture in which a viewer was presented with an object whose construction was a closed system, secreted away within the interior of the object, invisible and remote. (p. 104)

There is an important comparison that Krauss makes in her text, which brings the discussion back to Serra's *Boomerang*. In contrast to modernism's sculptural project, which configures the human body for the viewer, Krauss proposes the question: what kind of subject does Serra's sculptural work insist on modelling? "That subject, specific to Serra's props" Krauss claims with regards to his sculptural work, "might

be located in another passage of Nancy Holt's self-description from within the space constructed for her by *Boomerang*" (1986: 112). She continues:

> Still attempting to analyze her experience, she says, "I'm throwing things out in the world and they are boomeranging back… boomeranging… eranginging… anginging." Which is a way of conjuring an image of subjectivity as a function of objective space, of what is external to the self, of what impresses itself upon the subject not by welling up from within but by appearing to it from without. (p. 112)
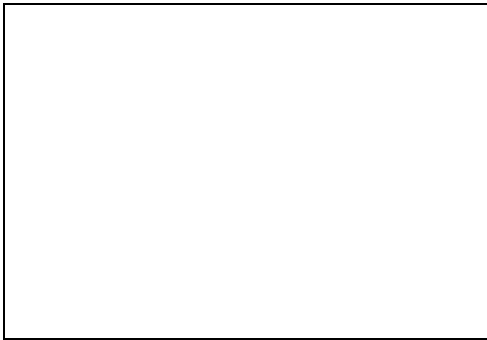
Fig. 4: Richard Serra, *Boomerang*
(Video still: Nancy Holt), 1974 **(DVD 1)**

The repeatedly spoken word 'boomeranging' begins to melt into one long utterance. The word and its meaning, the continuous play with it and the resulting sound led Krauss to think of the 'objectified space' and of what is 'external to the self'. "The image of subjectivity", as Krauss says, "as a function of what impresses itself upon the subject" refers to the struggle of the subject to coincide with itself. Only the play and repetition of the word seems to release the subject from this struggle. It presents a moment when Holt is less distracted by her own words. The processed sound is clearly appearing to the subject 'from without'.

Ten years earlier, in her essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976), Krauss speaks about *Boomerang* as an 'image of distraction' (p. 53). Holt keeps on being interrupted and mesmerised by her own words. She is exposed and directed at the same time. In the text Krauss underlines the prison that Holt enacts and describes. Krauss is interested in the body and the psyche that surrounds itself, and she

discusses the work more broadly within a psychological framework: the self that is "split and doubled by the mirror-reflection of synchronous feedback" (p. 55). For Krauss in 1976, reflectivity as a psychological and narcissistic feature is predominantly entrenched in video art. She distinguishes strictly between the modernist object in art that, like Jasper Johns's painting *Flag* (1954/55), deploys reflexiveness from within the work, in that it has a 'radical asymmetry' between the 'picture' (flag) and the 'painting' (canvas), and video that by contrast can't be spoken of as a physical medium and hence has no inherent reflexive but only reflective potentials. In other words, reflexiveness in art allows the viewer to discern a causal relationship between the medium (form) and its 'picture' (content) while reflectivity implies no causal relationship, since it is the medium that reflects exclusively on itself.

However, the video *Boomerang* carries the problem of reflectivity even further than Krauss asserts by introducing not just the imprisoned Nancy Holt in front of a camera, who is being confronted with her own feedback, but also *by explicitly conveying the work as work being realised in the process of its making*. Serra says that in *Boomerang* "language and image are being formed and revealed as they are organized" (http://www.ubu.com/film/serra.html). Before returning to the work's intrinsic process of organisation and the artist being involved in this process, I would like to consider the predominant question of self-mirroring and reflection.

Krauss makes clear how, in its simultaneous reception and projection of the image, the medium of video, as the word 'medium' suggests, is sender and receiver at the same time. In philosophical terms it's what Rodolphe Gasché (1986) has in mind when he says: "Reflection is the structure and the process of an operation that, in addition to designating the action of a mirror reproducing an object, implies that mirror's mirroring itself, by which process the mirror is made to see itself" (p. 16). The idea of 'the action of a mirror' refers to the analogy between the mind that has knowledge of itself and the operations that it undertakes and the optical phenomenon of a light beam that is thrown back upon itself from a reflecting surface. Hence, this claim of the 'mirror's mirroring' – the subject that is made to see or hear itself – which arises from the concept of reflection as self-reflection that "coincides in modern metaphysics with the powerful motif of subjectivity" (p. 20), leads Krauss to critique the medium of video as an aesthetics of narcissism. In order to pursue and question Krauss's critique in view of the extra ingredient of the artist's presence in

the work proposed here, it is then essential to first investigate the theoretical context of the concept of narcissism which will lead to the related questions on subjectivity and auto-direction.

1.2 The Concept of Narcissism and the Exchange of Gifts

In her essay Krauss (1976) compares the reflective/reflexive binary in art with the psychoanalytic project, and she claims how "it is there, too, […] that the narcissistic re-projection of a frozen self is pitted against the analytic (or reflexive) mode" (p. 57). Krauss refers to Jacques Lacan's writing in *The Language of the Self* (1968), in which he addresses the silence of the psychoanalyst that produces a void into which the patient "projects the monologue". From this monologue emerges a perpetual frustration of the subject about which Lacan says:

> "[…] the subject makes himself an object by striking a pose before the mirror, he could not possibly be satisfied with it, since even if he achieved his most perfect likeness in that image, it would still be the *jouissance* [pleasure] of the other that he would cause to be recognized in it." (p. 12)

Lacan's assertions derive from Sigmund Freud's writing on narcissism. In the essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914) Freud's understanding of narcissism is based on the psychoanalytic concept of the ego. He says: "The subject's narcissism makes its appearance displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, finds itself possessed of every perfection that is of value" (p. 24). Freud explains how, in later life, the subject "is disturbed by the admonitions of others and by the awakening of his own critical judgement" and how it cannot retain the earlier perfection, but tries to compensate this loss with "a new form of an ego ideal" (p. 24). He continues: "What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal" (p. 24). For Freud this understanding implies serious difficulties when working with patients. It refers to the complicated notion of uninterrupted self-love of the patient in the context of an analytic treatment. Freud explains it as "the cure by love, which [the patient] generally prefers to cure by analysis" (p. 31).

      In *The Seminar, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1998 [1973]) Lacan contributes to Freud's understanding and refers to "the field of

primary narcissistic identification", which for him is the "essential mainspring of the effects of the ego ideal". He says:

> I have described elsewhere the sight in the mirror of the ego ideal, of that being that he first saw appearing in the form of the parent holding him up before the mirror, the subject sees appearing, not his ego ideal, but his ideal ego, that point at which he desires to gratify himself in himself. (p. 257)

Lacan, in contrast to Freud, distinguishes profoundly between the ego ideal and the ideal ego. The origin of the ideal ego can be found in the mirror image – the Lacanian 'specular image' – in which the child begins to identify with itself. Here, the child desires a unity with the other. The ideal ego constitutes the imaginary or 'primary identification' and is part of the 'imaginary order'.

The symbolic or 'secondary identification' gives way to the formation of the ego ideal. It is connected to the subject's identification during the final stages of the Oedipus Complex, a term defined by Freud that speaks of the child's phase of life when it desires one parent, usually the parent of the opposite sex, whilst building up a rivalry with the other parent. This part of identification is called 'symbolic', since it describes the passage of the subject into the 'symbolic order'.

Lacan calls the moment of the child's primary identification 'the mirror stage'. However, the mirror stage does not simply apply to the infant's identification, nor does it simply apply to the imaginary order, but according to the Lacanian scholar Dylan Evans (1996), to "a permanent structure of subjectivity". It is a state he says, "in which the subject is permanently caught and captivated by his own image" (p. 115). Evans refers to Lacan, who says in Book IV of the Seminar Series, *Le séminaire, Livre IV: La relation d'objet* (1994): "The mirror stage is far from a mere phenomenon which occurs in the development of the child. It illustrates the conflictual nature of the dual relationship" (p. 17). In fact, it is this dual relationship which lets us return once again to the narcissistic dimension. Evans explains: "The dual relationship between the ego and the counterpart is fundamentally narcissistic, and narcissism is another characteristic of the imaginary order" (1986: 82).

How then is the imaginary differentiated from the symbolic order? Lacan makes a radical distinction between the ego, according to Evans, the "conscious sense of agency", which is an illusion produced by the ego and therefore part of the

imaginary order and the subject, that is the subject of the unconscious, and part of the symbolic order. The symbolic takes its basic idea from the exchange of symbols and is, according to Evans, "essentially a linguistic dimension". He refers to the social world that "is structured by certain laws which regulate kinship relations and the exchange of gifts" (1996: 201). This exchange, structured by laws, is the fundamental concept of the symbolic order.[1]

Serra's *Boomerang* unfolds operations in 'linguistic dimensions'. Its audible feedback loop illustrates a peculiar circuit of exchange. Holt's performance puts an emphasis on the listening to her own speech rather than her speaking. Whilst listening to herself as subject, she attempts to keep up with what she is saying. In this sense Holt is acting within the laws of the symbolic. The first-person pronoun, the 'I' that Holt refers to, is designated as subject, and in this case of the feedback loop an illustration of the inability of reaching the 'I' as subject. Holt's speech signifies her dilemma as a speaking subject.

In the context of the speaking subject Kaja Silverman in *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988) thinks about the child "which identifies with a signifier through which it is inserted into a closed field of signification". She continues: "Within that field of signification, all elements – including the first-person pronoun which seems transparently to designate the subject – are defined exclusively through the play of codified differences (p. 7). For her "the entry into language is the juncture at which the object is definitively and irretrievably lost, and the subject as definitively and almost as irretrievably found" (p. 7). But what is the dilemma for the speaking subject in *Boomerang* and what is it for us when witnessing the subject's entanglement in speech? Silverman gives some hints by explaining the voice as "perhaps the most radical of all subjective divisions – the division between meaning and materiality" (p. 43). In Holt's case this subjective division can be explored literally: first of all by herself during the act of speaking and listening, and then by us, whilst listening to the recording. There is meaning, but there is also materiality in her voice. Silverman also distinguishes between the subject of speech and the

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[1] The third order that accompanies Lacan's 'the imaginary' and 'the symbolic' is 'the real'. In *The Seminar, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis* (1988 [1978]) Lacan explains that there "is no absence in the real" (p. 313). In comparison, absence and presence are always there in the symbolic order. The real is undifferentiated, whilst the symbolic consists of differentiated elements (signifiers).

speaking subject. She explains: "the speaking subject refers to the existential person engaged in discourse, and the subject of speech to the discursive marker through which he or she assumes linguistic identity" (p. 200). Here again, it is the subjective division, in Silverman's terms between the biological body and the body of language, which manifests itself in the symbolic. In relation to the concern and the condition of subjective division it is important to come back to *Boomerang*, and in particular to the artist's presence in the work.

1.3 Audio Trouble

Despite Holt being the dominant subject in Serra's work, *Boomerang*, in its entirety, escapes Holt's enacted subjective division for a short while. Krauss acknowledges Serra's "separation from the subject of *Boomerang*, his position outside it" (1976: 59). She puts Serra's separation in relation to the tape's brevity of ten minutes and to "how long it takes to shape and develop an argument" (p. 59). However, something important is missing in her analysis of Serra's separation from the subject. In fact, because of this essential missing part, one might argue against her claim of the artist's position 'outside it'. Half way through, about five minutes into the video, Nancy Holt is first interrupted by some dubious sounds from a different source but not by her own voice, second, by an Amarillo, Texas television station logo that flickers across the screen, then by a preliminary break of sixty seconds and shortly after we hear a studio technician or perhaps Serra himself explaining to her that they will need to change the recording tape.[2] These preliminary sixty seconds are not extracted from the video work but acknowledged in the film as sixty seconds of real-time interruption by showing the words "AUDIO TROUBLE" as a caption on unicoloured blue background. The work is no longer existent in a hermetic covering of audible reflectivity, but dislocated in an environment where the work is recorded, where technical adjustments have to be made, where perhaps by accident other traces of sound interfere with the work and where the author has to direct and redirect the process of the work. The continuation of the work relies on the participants' and producers' spontaneous acknowledgement of the relationship between them, the recording and transmitting technology that surrounds them.

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[2] In her essay "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence" (2000) Anne M. Wagner claims how "Serra is insisting his viewers know exactly where they are, and recognize that it is in the realm of the TV network that such destabilizations occur" (p. 75).

"The body" of the performer, Krauss says, "is therefore as it were centered between two machines that are the opening and closing parenthesis. The first of these is the camera; the second is the monitor, which re-projects the performer's image with the immediacy of a mirror" (p. 52). As Krauss emphasises the artist raises the awareness of the intrinsic position between the receiving and the sending end. But the directorial interruption that interests me in Serra's work already lifts the initial concern with the medium to a different stage. The focus is not necessarily only on the performer's body and her mirrored voice, but on the open relations between everyone involved in the recording studio. Holt's inescapable presence becomes effectively disrupted by the director's intervention. It is an audible intervention and a visual one. Serra confirms his participation by inserting the text frame and by allowing the interruption to be part of the work. The focus of the work, if only for sixty seconds, shifts markedly from the one Krauss highlights and the 'image of distraction' suddenly becomes a different order of distraction by revealing the embedded position of the artist in the making of the work. The artist takes the concentration away from the performance that is taking place in front of the camera. He shifts the point of view in order to demonstrate various dependencies within the medium. In her analysis Krauss treats Serra's video as distinct from other work at that time, arguing that the latter "tried to exploit the medium in order to criticize it from within".[3]

One of the other examples is Vito Acconci's *Centers* (1971), in which he is literally using the monitor as a mirror. In the video we see a television monitor and on the screen of this monitor is Acconci himself, who is sighting along his outstretched arm and forefinger towards the centre of the screen. What separates Serra's from other work of the time is, in Krauss's terms, the critical distance that "it maintains on its own subject". And she continues: "the angle of vision we take on the subject does not coincide with the closed circuit of Nancy Holt's situation, but looks onto it from outside" (p. 59). I agree with Krauss that one reason for the work's critical distance on its own subject is the use of an audible rather than a visual feedback. But I would add furthermore that the subject is released from its given parenthesis with the artist's interference, which is interrupting the flow of audible

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[3] Krauss describes three existing phenomena within the corpus of video art: "1) tapes that exploit the medium in order to criticize it from within; 2) tapes that represent a physical assault on the video mechanism in order to break out of its psychological hold; 3) installation forms of video which use the medium a sub-species of painting or sculpture" (p. 59).

mirroring. "AUDIO TROUBLE", the sixty-second time filler, is the moment when the technical feedback fails or rather when it is exposed, when Holt engages in an exchange with someone behind the camera, who is also present during the production. The interruption is the moment when the viewer 'looks onto it from outside', which means when both the artist Serra and his performer Holt are exposed to the outside world. This exposure breaks with Krauss's determination of video's aesthetic of narcissism. There is no void at the moment of "AUDIO TROUBLE" into which the subject would project its monologue. The monologue turns into a dialogue between Holt and the other subject that is the artist Serra.

The issue of the artist being present and exposed – either by image or sound – is not unique to Serra's *Boomerang*. Acconci's *Centers* has already been mentioned. One of the other works that Krauss refers to is Acconci's *Air Time*, from 1973, in which we see the artist facing a mirror and talking to his own reflection using the words 'I' and 'You'. A third video is Lynda Benglis's *Now* (1973). She films her head in profile and performs as Krauss says "against the backdrop of a large monitor on which an earlier tape of herself doing the same actions, but reversed left and right, is being replayed" (p. 55). All of these works demonstrate what Krauss has in mind when she speaks of narcissism in video. Another work from the last decade can be added to the list, when thinking along the lines of Krauss's argument. In *Monologue*, from 2009, the artist Laure Prouvost performs in front of the camera, without showing her head or face and speaking in the first person, whilst addressing the viewer, and explaining in parts the production process and the labour involved. This work, similar to Acconci's work *Air Time*, deploys irony and humour, whilst addressing the subject other: Acconci addresses the mirrored self as subject other, Prouvost the subject other, which is the viewer. Despite the presence of the artists in these works, Serra's *Boomerang* emphasises the ambiguity of embeddedness in art. Embeddedness as condition is a given in every one of these works. This is because of the subject's appearance in the work, and its reference to subjective division. By comparison, embeddedness as condition *and* as strategy supports reflexiveness within the work, which becomes evident at the moment of Serra's interruption in *Boomerang*. The interruption breaks with the subject's self-reflection, without undermining the concern of 'subjective division'.

Thus, reflexiveness is inherent in such video work as *Boomerang*. Reflexiveness becomes apparent with the artist urging the viewer to witness the interruption of reflection. Again, I would like to take advantage of Kaja Silverman's writing, in which she says:

> When the voice is identified in this way with presence, it is given the imaginary power to place not only sounds but meaning in the here and now. In other words, it is understood as closing the gap between signifier and signified. Even more important, at least within the context of the discussion, Western metaphysics has fostered the illusion that speech is able to express the speaker's inner essence, that is 'part' of him or her. It locates the subject of speech in the same ontological space as the speaking subject, so that the former seems a natural outgrowth of the latter. (1988: 43)

Silverman's claim affirms what in *Boomerang* is performed in front of us. Because of the technical delay and the feedback of the voice, the speech's gap between signifier and signified gets bigger. In other words, the speaking subject demonstrates its ontological dislocation from the subject of speech. Serra challenges audio-technologically what seems to speak against an 'inner essence' of the speaker. Second, in the moment of technical failure the authorial voice from behind the scene takes over to provide the exchange that is necessary for Holt's interrupted feedback.

1.4 'I see myself seeing myself'

Silverman's 'subject of speech', which she rightly questions in terms of a natural outgrowth of the speaking subject, reminds one of a passage in Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1998 [1973]) in which he refers to the philosopher and poet Paul Valéry. From 1914 to 1917, Valéry wrote *La Jeune Parque*, the acclaimed poem presented to the reader in the first person singular. The young woman Parque contemplates life and death, and thinks about her future during one sleepless night. Lacan's critical focus is on the representation of the gaze of the subject young Parque, as well as the poem's entire voice, that is the subject's conscious self-reference. Lacan reminds us of the young woman's words: "I saw myself seeing myself." In the French original of *La Jeune Parque* at the end of the third paragraph of the first part of the poem we read:

Je me voyais me voir, sinueuse, et dorais

De regards en regards, mes profondes forêts.

(1997 [1917]: 18)

This excerpt leads to the critical analysis not only of an apprehension of the visual experience of the subject, but also in distinction of the audible experience that is at stake in pieces like *Boomerang*. In Serra's work the subject is interrupted in its uninterrupted flow of self-reflection. Because of the audible delay, the subject is able to hear itself speaking. The 'inner essence' of the speaking subject is challenged throughout Holt's performance: by means of audible delay and by means of technical interruption. In comparison, the young Parque is entirely occupied with self-reflective thought. The 'I' is the subject's signifier who perceives and apprehends. Thus, Lacan addresses the philosopher Valéry, not the poet, and explains his concerns about the representation of the subject. He says:

We are dealing with the philosopher, who apprehends something that is one of the essential correlates of consciousness in its relation to representation, and which is designated as *I see myself seeing myself*. What evidence can we really attach to this formula? How is it that it remains, in fact, correlative with that fundamental mode to which we referred in the Cartesian *cogito*, by which the subject apprehends himself as thought? (1998 [1973]: 80)

In this paragraph Lacan refers to René Descartes to explain how 'thought by itself is a sort of doubt'. In Lacanian terms the Cartesian 'I' in 'I think, therefore I am' is doubtful, and one can ask comparatively, whether or not the 'I' in *Boomerang* that Holt listens to is doubtful, too. This Cartesian doubt, according to Lacan, "concerns whatever might give support to thought in representation" (p. 80). In fact, Lacan discusses in detail questions about representation and their belonging. In the 'I see myself seeing myself' Lacan claims that "there is no such sensation of being absorbed by vision" (p. 80). He continues:

[…] phenomenologists have succeeded in articulating with precision, and in the most disconcerting way that it is quite clear that I see *outside*, that

perception is not in me, that it is on the objects that it apprehends. And yet I apprehend the world in a perception that seems to concern the immanence of the *I see myself seeing myself*. The privilege of the subject seems to be established here from that bipolar reflexive relation by which, as soon as I perceive, my representations belong to me. (p. 81)

Lacan's 'bipolar reflexive relation' refers to the friction between embeddedness as condition and embeddedness as strategy. In Serra's *Boomerang* this friction unfolds on the one hand with the subject's self-reflection and the subject that perceives itself speaking, which is Holt's embeddedness as condition and on the other hand Serra's interference and break of self-reflection. Here the strategy of embeddedness emphasises Holt's concern with regard to her interrupted reflection and feedback. The interruption of audible feedback is comparable with the conclusion of the Lacanian mirror stage. In other words it is the subject's entry into the symbolic order. The embedded artist is implicated in the production process, allowing interruption to be exposed and emphasising subjective agency.

Lacan's concerns with regard to Valéry's *La Jeune Parque* are reminders of the narcissistic psychoanalytic dilemma. From an analyst's point of view the patient's self-love is unreachable. The self belongs to the patient only. However, in the seventh chapter of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan does not refer to the psychoanalytic experience of narcissism, but to the phenomenological notion of the visible and in particular the gaze and the notion of representation a determination pertinent to the 'self' of Serra's piece as much as it is to the broader notion of embeddedness. What is interesting in the context of embeddedness is how Lacan expresses his concern about the philosopher's position, how Valéry invests idealistically in his subject, and at the same time how he reveals his own confrontation with himself as the subject philosopher. Lacan says:

This is how the world is struck with a presumption of idealization, of the suspicion of yielding me only my representations. Serious practice does not really weigh very heavy, but, on the other hand, the philosopher, the idealist, is placed there, as much in confrontation with himself as in confrontation with those who are listening to him, in an embarrassing position. (p. 81)

Nancy Holt, performing for an audience in *Boomerang*, is in confrontation with herself, that is her own voice. Lacan understands 'my representations' in terms of a meditation or a 'reflecting reflection'. In other words Lacan is concerned with the notion of reflexivity. "The mode of my presence in the world," he stresses, "is the subject in so far as by reducing itself solely to this certainty of being a subject, it becomes active annihilation" (p. 81). By comparison, in Serra's *Boomerang* one can experience a reflective process, but this process is under continuous construction from outside, i.e. from Serra and his crew, who are ultimately part of the work. Serra puts an emphasis on the subject's self-reflection, but also on the doubts and failures that are involved in self-reflecting processes.

1.5 Auto-Direction

The notion of auto-direction is closely related to the Lacanian concept of subjectivity. The term 'auto-direction' was introduced at the beginning of the chapter as an attempt to direct oneself. Auto-direction is not to be mistaken with an autobiographical project, when the writer begins to revisit his life. It is radically different: the progress of auto-direction depends on recognition from outside. My 'I' that assures myself as a consciousness that it knows that it is only representation, derives from auto-direction, which in return depends on it. Auto-direction can be thought of as part of the 'illusion of consciousness'. Thus, the subject who auto-directs is the Lacanian 'subject of representation'. The image or the screen, as Lacan puts it, is there for the subject of representation to be played with. Auto-direction cannot be thought of without considering fantasy, which is the support of desire. It offers a detailed understanding of embeddedness in art and cultural production. In this respect auto-direction relates to the convention of performance, and is part of the strategy of embeddedness.

In the context of Lacan's thorough discussion on the subject, as well as Rodolphe Gasché's twofold notion of self-mirroring and mirroring the object, I intend to review once again Krauss's critique on video art. One has to repeat Gasché's question of how the reflection of objects can "lead or be related to self-reflection" (1986: 20). With this question Gasché emphasises the missing link between the reflection that is directed at the reproduced image or concept of an object and the

reflection that is directed at the act of reflecting itself. But in doing so, he is already providing the missing link. He says:

> The […] first moment of reflection is found in the recognition that the object reflected by the mirroring subject is not just any object but rather this subject's symmetric Other – in other words, a representation of its alienated self. With such an alienating positing of itself as object, its reflection truly becomes an act of bringing back, a recapturing recognition. (p. 21)

Lacan pays close attention to these concerns and he questions philosophy's phenomenological problem of representation. He says: "when I am presented with representation, I assure myself that I know quite a lot about it, I assure myself as a consciousness that knows that it is only representation, and that there is, beyond, the thing, the thing itself" (1998 [1973]: 106). Lacan is concerned with the division of what he calls the surface and that which is beyond. He sets out from the fact "that there is something that establishes a fracture, a bi-partition, a splitting of the being to which the being accommodates itself, even in the natural world" (p. 106). He states:

> Only the subject – the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man – is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is here the locus of mediation. (p. 107)

The gaze for Lacan is that which is there 'beyond', or in other words which is outside. For him the concept of the gaze does not belong to the subject, but to the object of the gaze. The gaze is "the object on which depends the phantasy from which the subject is suspended in an essential vacillation" (p. 83). Evans (1996) explains the subjective fractures or divisions, with the split between the eye and the gaze and quotes Lacan, who famously says: "You never look at me from the place at which I see you" (p. 72). One understands Lacan better if one imagines the gaze as that which doesn't look at an object, but as that which already gazes back at the subject, but, according to Evans "from a point at which the subject cannot see it" (p.

72). This is what Lacan in contrast to Gasché understands as the big Other, a radical alterity that you cannot see, or in other words the Other that you misunderstand, that is, the Other which is inscribed in the order of the symbolic. Lacan explains:

> From the moment that his gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it, he becomes that punctiform object, that point of vanishing being with which the subject confuses his own failure. Furthermore, of all the objects in which the subject may recognize his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible. That is why it is, more than any other object, misunderstood (*méconnu*), and it is perhaps for this reason, too, that the subject manages, fortunately, to symbolize his own vanishing and punctiform bar (*trait*) in the illusion of the consciousness of *seeing oneself see oneself*, in which the gaze is elided. (1998 [1973]: 83)

Auto-direction emerges in the field of the human's desire, i.e. the unconscious desire, which in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms is a social product and according to Evans "constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects" (1996: 39). Thus, auto-direction, in relation to desire, tends towards something that one does not have. Evans refers to Freud and explains how he "uses the term 'fantasy' to denote a scene which is presented to the imagination and which stages an unconscious desire" (p. 60). The fantasised scene of the self is directed and exposed; in other words it is staged. Lacan in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* says: "The subject situates himself as determined by the phantasy." He continues:

> The phantasy is the support of desire; it is not the object that is the support of desire. The subject sustains himself as desiring in relation to an ever more complex signifying ensemble. This is apparent enough in the form of the scenario it assumes, in which the subject, more or less recognizable, is somewhere, split, divided, generally double, in his relation to the object, which usually does not show its true face either. (1998 [1973]: 185)

My claim is that there is a continuous dynamic between auto-direction, self-reflection and representation. The continuity evolves out of the loop of reflection that I have been describing. Returning for a moment to *Boomerang* Holt is on the one

hand self-reflective and aware of the split portrayal of herself as the speaking subject and the subject of speech: especially at that moment, when the feedback fails and when in hindsight the gap becomes apparent. She has an image of herself becoming an image and she is aware that she is playing to the camera. On the other hand Serra witnesses and applies auto-direction and emphasises it with his interruptive presence in the work. In this looping and mode of conscious recognition, auto-direction is to some degree a method to break out of the circle of self-reflexivity. In Lacanian terms auto-direction can be considered in relation to the isolation of the screen with which the subject plays. The one who auto-directs is the Lacanian 'subject of representation'. The image or the screen, as Lacan puts it, is there for the subject of representation to be played with. The gaze however is outside. Lacan says: "I am looked at, that is to say I am a picture" (p. 106). This picture under the influence of the gaze from outside is the same picture that the subject of representation understands to be the subject, who is embedded. Hence, the one who auto-directs is eventually looked at or in the case of *Boomerang* listened to. The subject (-artist) of representation is looked at with the outside gaze – and this is the embedded subject.

Krauss takes a critical distance from video works of the 1970s, yet she argues in support of the psychological implications that all these works carry and convey. She treats video art almost therapeutically in order to break, as she states in relation to the process of analysis, "the hold of this fascination with the mirror" (1976: 58). In *Boomerang* Serra addresses the performer and breaks the hold during the process of the production. His directorial – or better auto-directorial – announcement comes from behind the scene and introduces the embeddedness of his subject position in the context of the loop of reflection, which Holt experiences. Serra's embeddedness in the work, his manipulation of Holt's experience of herself via technology, initially creates a conflict with the flow of text, doubtful thought and feedback. However, the embeddedness of Serra in the work itself evidences exactly some of these qualities that are seemingly under threat: the flow of sending and receiving, of feedback and reflection are some of the features that arise from the conditions of embeddedness. The artist as performer in a post-minimalist context understands his historical position as subjective agency. The dialectics between embeddedness as condition and embeddedness as strategy is highlighted once again. How after all can the critical

relationship emerge and develop between the medium and the artist, if, as I tried to establish here, the artist is so firmly embedded in the process of production?

This seems to be one of the key questions for Krauss, while considering the modernist tradition of painting and sculpture. She says:

> If psychoanalysis understands that the patient is engaged in a recovery of his being in terms of its real history, modernism has understood that the artist locates his own expressiveness through a discovery of the objective conditions of his medium and their history. That is, the very possibilities of finding his subjectivity necessitate that the artist recognize the material and historical independence of an external object (or medium). In distinction to this, the feedback coil of video seems to be the instrument of a double repression: for through it consciousness of temporality and of separation between subject and object are simultaneously submerged. The result of this submergence is, for the maker and the viewer of most video art, a kind of weightless fall through the suspended space of narcissism. (p. 58)

Krauss is urging me to think about the collapse with the emergence of video art of the conventional modernist separation between subject and object. In addition she refers to video's and audio's possibilities to record and play back at the same time. For the moment it would not be enough to simply object to Krauss's comparison. However, it highlights the fate of embeddedness, which I argue for as a critical model in art production. In fact, in Serra's example, it is the significant interruption that lifts the work from its 'weightless fall' to an obvious relation with distinctive positions between artist, work and viewer.

Boomerang offers a tangible example of video art that makes the embedded condition part of the possibilities and limitations of the medium. The decision in Serra's case to work with the interruption may have happened spontaneously during production, but it is exactly this decision-making and the exposure of it, which reinforces the critical embedded condition that the artist finds himself in.
With regard to a very different example of cultural enterprise, in fact an example that is entirely unrelated to art and its histories, one is able to demonstrate that it is not always the final work or visualised result that conveys the embedded interest of the

work and its maker, but the disposition and ideology of an envisioned project that brings these crucial aspects to the front. The following case draws attention to the exposure as an ethical concern. In consideration of Krauss's critique we don't have to ask about the aesthetics of narcissism, but rather the aesthetics of interruption and exposure, which emerges from auto-direction as part of embeddedness as strategy.

1.6 Spielberg's World

The example relevant here is a project launched by the American film director Steven Spielberg. I introduce Spielberg as the author of the project, but more so as an institutional authority, who invests his idea in children as authors and filmmakers. In February 2006, a few months after the release of his thriller *Munich* (2005), Spielberg started the project that aimed at tackling the lack of understanding between Israelis and Palestinians.[4] At the time the *Observer* journalist Andrew Anthony (2006) wrote:

> In March, Spielberg will make his own contribution to lessening fear in the Middle East by distributing 250 video cameras to Palestinian and Israeli children. He made a similar gesture in Los Angeles, handing out cameras to kids in the 'inner city danger zone'. The idea is that they make films about themselves, which will then be shown to one another. 'I just thought it would be interesting to let young Israelis and Palestinians talk about who they are, what music they listen to, what they watch on television, what they want out of life and who they love. These are important questions.' (p. 5)

This chapter opened with the idea of auto-direction and how it describes the subject's strategic undertaking to direct others, but at the same time the attempt to direct him or herself. Auto-direction in this instrumental context turns out to be a self-sufficient activity that includes Spielberg's charitable activity. Thus, the questions that

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[4] The film *Munich* portrays the Israeli intelligence officer Avner Kauffman, who was asked to hunt down eleven men accused by Israeli intelligence of masterminding the murders of the Israeli Olympic team in Munich in 1972. Spielberg received a lot of criticism from representatives of the Jewish community, as well as from members of the Israeli Government. Some of these critical assessments focus on the divergence between Spielberg's arguments that he gave in interviews and what the film actually represented with regard to the event in the aftermath of the massacre "Black September".

Spielberg's auto-directive impulse reveals are not questions of *what* the project's outcome is, but rather of *how* ethical exposure is promoted.

In general, these questions look back to Serra's *Boomerang* and to what has been discussed in section 1.3 with regard to auto-direction's interruptive qualities. These refer to the moment when Holt's self-reflection is interrupted by Serra's embedded strategy during the production of the work. The young citizens from Israel and Palestine, if we stay with the proposed concept, appear to be interrupted in their self-referential convention, thus invited to expose their embedded nature by video to each other and imaginatively to Spielberg and the rest of the world.

The media's representation of the video exchange project, including Spielberg's proposal to the participants in the Middle East, is primarily a concern about Spielberg's public image. His awareness, I would argue in support of the Hollywood director, with regard to the divergence between his personal encounter with the historical subject matter, the justification of his films in interviews and the actual dramatisation, led to thoughts and activities in the present socio-political world. Thus, Spielberg extended the idea and positioned himself in the presence of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Accordingly, auto-direction – Spielberg's investment to direct others – refers to an ethical concern amongst human beings. It is a cooperative human endeavour between the institution Spielberg and these children. Spielberg invited these children to act in front of recording devices. The recording of the self and the playing back refer to the Lacanian 'specular image'. The subject, as if posing in front of a mirror, is literally caught and captivated by its image. It is an image of the self and for the self, but primarily an image of the self for the other.

Spielberg's investment in these children is an investment in human-interest stories, which they share between them. Videoing one's own life results in a dislocated representation but also in a self-reflection at the same time 'at home'. Spielberg's 'important questions' that he wants those young producers to answer – like 'who they are' or 'what they want out of life' – are immediately readdressed by his participants. They now ask themselves: what or who do I show? They are facing questions of mediation and how to record and portray their personal life in the context of sharing it with their neighbours. They look at themselves and direct their life in front of Spielberg's giveaway cameras. However, Spielberg's intention with this project does not extend beyond a conventional performance of representation,

which simply says: 'I am Israeli' or 'I am Palestinian'. In fact his idea to support an exchange between these children enhances self-reflection. Spielberg's attempted interruption doesn't necessarily break the loop of self-reflection. His investment to direct others is an investment to direct himself, in other words to be present in this socio-political context. His motivation to take a distance from critical judgements about his film *Munich* ended in attempted auto-direction. He pointed at these kids in the Middle East, so that they could reflect on themselves and on each other. The first and most obvious phenomenon is the level of exposure amongst those children. However, this is only an intermediate step towards the identified authority of Spielberg.

Hence, what the Hollywood director immediately achieves as the institution Spielberg is to tell a story about 'Spielberg' and a more general explanation about authors' awareness of their implication in the reception of a work that eventually leads to auto-directive trajectories. During the video exchange project Spielberg was not embedded in the process as such, but he created a sense of embeddedness by means of auto-direction (subjective impulse) and by promoting publicly the cooperative nature of the project between him and the children. In fact in doing that, he highlighted once again his position in the historical context, which is not merely his interest in fictional interpretation by means of feature film, but a hands-on initiative with people who still feel the effects of history. Thus, auto-direction in Spielberg's case is a pointing away from himself, and a testing of this 'away' in terms of his own context. Just to remind us: Spielberg pointed at children in the Middle East and sent them 250 video cameras. He has been extending his own view on the conflict with 250 camera lenses that are 'looking' at these children.

Spielberg's original intention of ethical exposure redefines self-determination amongst his target group. The project's success depends explicitly on two conditions: on the children's self-reflective exposure to the outside and on Spielberg's PR skills to communicate this idea to the world. The 'outside' for those kids is first the unknown neighbourhood and second 'Spielberg's World', a world that is beyond the local neighbourhood. This world is watching Spielberg, his dramaturgic skills and how he directs ethical concerns. What does it mean to think of exposure in this context of a world that is watching? In Lacanian terms, it is the spectacle of the world that 'appears to us all-seeing'. Lacan explains whilst referring to Maurice

Merleau-Ponty "that we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us consciousness institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*" (1998 [1973]: 75).

Spielberg, who masterminds the whole idea of 'Spielberg's World', does not conventionally direct what these children enact in front of their cameras. There is no evidence of the outcome of his project, no documentation available and, as far as I am aware, there is no trace of these children's films in the public domain. Yet, it reveals the ethical trajectory of the charitable project. In setting up the possibilities of communication between these children, ethical concerns by means of auto-direction are now primarily concerns of exposure.

The various qualities of embeddedness in relation to the interruption of self-determination as well as to increasing forms of auto-direction have to be reconsidered. Spielberg as authority offers an understanding of exposure by means of communication technology. He makes embeddedness, even if not fully exposed in its potential spectacular dimension, an ethical concern. Embeddedness is therefore no longer a matter of the local, and in Spielberg's scenario no longer a matter of the local and its neighbour, but essentially a matter of the local and the wider public, respectively a matter of a 'being in the (wider) world'. It comes down to Spielberg's interruptive force and institutional power. For now we can summarise how the participant in such a project is targeted from the outside, and how the participant is aware of being auto-directionally interrupted and how he or she is capable of interrupting. Thus, it is most important to understand how Spielberg uses these methods of interrupting with regard to his own embedded condition in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict. In the end, Spielberg's strategy and its outcome have to be reviewed carefully. On the one hand, auto-direction introduced by Spielberg succeeds over conventional skilful forms of direction practised in Hollywood and elsewhere. But on the other hand, embeddedness in this project deploys no strategy with regard to the project's intrinsic mediation. These representations find their limit within the geo-political context.

Embeddedness suggests the potential of a situation to be interrupted by an outside factor that has not yet been introduced to this situation. The impulsive nature of auto-direction evokes a context shift, not only for the author or director, but also for the

receiver, participant and in the final stage of reception also for the viewer. Auto-direction is a phenomenon that interrogatively interrupts the present situation. It alludes to the critical tension between embeddedness as condition and embeddedness as strategy. This is why video art does *not* propose an aesthetics of narcissism and why, on the other hand, the conditions of the exposure to (the) others need to be elaborated and understood further. This latter issue is the concern of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMING THE OTHER

In the essay "The Artist as Ethnographer" (1996) the American art historian Hal Foster speaks of "*flâneries* of the new nomadic artist" (p. 180), expressing concerns about the ethnographic turn within art production. In his text he is advocating an art that "attempts to frame the framer as he or she frames the other" (p. 203). Furthermore he argues for the parallactic model, which refers to medium-specific and discourse-specific art making. Looking at the work of Phil Collins in particular I argue that 'framing the other' and 'framing oneself', are linked to concerns of immanent exposure to other cultures. This second chapter focuses on cultural encounters between artists and others, how such encounters come into play and how they are exposed and framed as artwork under embedded conditions. These investigations reflect on the artists' interest to travel the world, to observe and research in foreign places and people, to interact with different cultures, to be as close as possible to events and to document these encounters. As discussed in the previous chapter, the notion of 'framing oneself', which arises from Foster's 'framing the framer' refers to the artist's auto-direction, which in turn implies embeddedness. The notion of embeddedness argues against the Fosterian parallax in art making, which seems to depend entirely on exteriority. It understands the artist to be active in a critical distance, outside of 'form and content'.

Collins's art is of interest to this argument because his method of visiting places that have been under particular journalistic and photographic observation suggests the motivation of a critique of standard media production. Collins is interested in the production and the framing of this critique. Furthermore, since his work is produced by means of direct contact with his subjects, the framing goes beyond a mere representation of the other. His contact with the other turns out to be the main factor of production of which he is the framer being framed, while framing the other. Hence, in relation to the embedded artist and the ethnographic other, the other in question here has to be dealt with in two ways: who is the *artist as other* in relation to the *artist's other*? The discussion in this chapter is concerned more particularly with the artist as other, with the artist as the one who is exposed as 'other' under embedded conditions of production. How do these embedded conditions reinforce the filmmaker's critical awareness within the production?

In general terms, embedded artists are concerned with their situated presence and its immanent critique – that is, the artist's presence in the work is determined not only by relationships inside and outside their field of activity but moreover by his or her performance to which he or she is subject in the context of the given situation. These claims point at the exposure of the artist to the world. In the field of the other, from where the artist works, he or she is primarily embedded *as artist*. Thus, the latest 'artist as ethnographer' is not concerned about change or transformation in terms of a Fosterian or Benjaminian avant-garde. The artist needs to be concerned about the embedded state he or she is in. For Collins these immanent complexities of production and exposure, which are hardly separable, lead to detectable observations of self-reference and self-exposure. These kinds of exposures of the self do not emerge from an autobiographical interest. They are not about the self as framer being in the frame, not in terms of self-portraiture, but in terms of being present and re-presented. They are in fact closing in on the embedded artist's endeavour to persist *as artist* and subjective agency in the field of the other.

The complexity of framing, re-framing and self-framing, which refers back to questions of self-reflection/auto-direction in Chapter 1, leads on to an investigation into contact patterns, between one and the other, between the artist and his or her subject or between different groups. For Gregory Bateson (1973) 'cultural contact' implies a variety of different contact patterns, which inform the way cultures meet and how they persist in longer terms (p. 35). The pattern of persistence is of importance to the embedded artist, since he or she persists as artist (other) in the context of the *artist's other* as well as in the context of exposure and production.

2.1 The Embedded Artist

Today, artists, whose intention is "negotiating the contradictory status of otherness as given and constructed" (Foster, 1996: 203), are in constant face-to-face situations with the other, in which critical distance depending on the conditions of production raises the concern of critical embeddedness. Embeddedness is conditioned by the production process and takes advantage of the producer's presence, which is simply confronted with framings from within the framework. Phil Collins attracts situations in which the contradiction of distance and closeness to the other can often be observed radically. In photographic examples of his work this contradiction can be perceived in the image as if one gazes through the camera lens that he has been

looking through to take the picture. In the photographic series *Young Serbs* (2001) he portrays five Serbians in single close-up shots of these persons' heads lying in a green field of grass while looking straight into the camera. The work's title and the year of production – *Young Serbs* (2001) – ask for the historical reference, the Balkan post war era. What can we read from these young faces? And what from the composition, the closeness between the person's face and the camera? And are these questions that Collins addresses with the work? He describes them in an email to Branislav Dimitrijević, art historian and curator of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Belgrade, as "romantic, sexy, deathly, intimate, posed, bucolic, disappointed, suspicious" (Collins, 2005: 35). Collins is concerned about the expression and what it conveys to the viewer, who is prepared to understand them in the context of the post war era. His idea was "to escape the urban grit and aggressive posturing of Western photography in Belgrade and try and pick at a romantic sensibility" (p. 35).

In "The Artist as Ethnographer" (1996), Hal Foster's main concern is the ethnographic turn, which in his point of view "has rendered contemporary art dangerously political" (p. 202). He explains how the artist attempts "to frame the framer as he or she frames the other" and asks: "Who in the academy or the art world has not witnessed these testimonies of the new empathetic intellectual or these *flâneries* of the new nomadic artist?" (p. 180). Foster's 'nomadic artist' can be readily taken to be one who is mobile, who is not necessarily depending on a studio in terms of production, or in other words of the artist who engages with other fields, in other domains or in a variety of geographical terrains. By comparison, Collins's nomadic endeavour and framing goes even further. For example, he develops an encounter with the Serbs, in which his direct encounter and presence is essential to the project. In fact, his direct encounter is crucial to the struggle considering the representation that he tries to address. Collins's portraits have no voice and do not speak about their experiences during war times. There exists no verbal account or framing in a Fosterian sense. This means there is no obvious foregrounding of 'framing the framer' by Collins that would directly relate to Foster's theory. Collins is the framer, who frames the other and himself whilst framing. In the context of the photographs *Young Serbs* this can be discussed in relation to a publication accompanying the work.

Fig. 5: Phil Collins, *Young Serbs (Vesna)*, 2001

in Collins, P. (2005) *yeah…..you, baby you*, Hove: Shady Lane Publications

In his catalogue *yeah…..you, baby you* (2005) the work and the representation of the young Serbs are documented in conjunction with letters and emails, short reviews and thoughtful comments by some of the portrayed participants and by the curator Branislav Dimitrijević. In the aftermath of their production and in relation to these reflections, Collins represents the images in the catalogue in the context of these personal accounts. With the supplement of these comments the photographic series as documentation in the catalogue engages in a discourse that closes the gap between these intimate portraits and a representation of a group of young people that are supposedly representatives of a generation of post war Serbs. One more time Collins finds himself implicated in the productive context of his own practice. In some of these comments he is addressed directly. It is the distance that Collins attempts to create by separating the images from the actuality of post war Serbia, but it creates the effect of his closeness to these young people, who in the light of a multiplicity of intimate portraiture find themselves categorised as one group, which is formally

titled and described as one generation of post war Serbs, *Young Serbs*. Vesna Jovanović, one of the portrayed young persons, reviews in her text all other contributions that appeared in relation to Collins's work and highlights the complexity of the representation and concept of a post war generation. She says: "Collins places some anonymous faces in the grass, calls them 'young Serbs,' and all of a sudden these same 'young Serbs' can't agree about the context they were taken out of" (2005: 59).

The struggle that Jovanović points to is seemingly the concern Collins tries to capture. How the other, including the subject other in the images, but in general also the critic and the recipient "fill the blank representation", as Jovanović says. It is the case – perhaps part of the struggle – and made even more obvious by placing these comments below the images in the publication. The documentation in the catalogue provides us with a self-reflective critique of the participants in the context of the project with regard to their own representation. What is the origin of these contextual and representational struggles that Collins provokes with his encounters? What are their sources and where to do they relate?

2.2 Framing the Framer

Collins's provocation mirrored in Jovanović's comment resembles in part what Foster discusses in his essay. In taking advantage of Foster's 'framing the other' and in focusing on the artist's discovery of self-framing, I will demonstrate the complex condition of embeddedness and framing in general.

Foster's understanding of the ethnographic turn has consequences for observation and reflection on art, and also on critical engagement with the artist's field of research. He elaborates thoroughly how artists, like Martha Rosler, Lothar Baumgarten, Dan Graham or Allan Sekula, invest pseudo ethnographically in ideas of representation. Some of these art projects, like *Mining the Museum* (1992) by Fred Wilson, are digging deep in institutional cellars of archives and collections to bring them back to the surface. In this case Wilson acted as an archaeologist of the Maryland Historical Society and was sponsored by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Baltimore. Historical artefacts that have once been valued and displayed are now being reinterpreted and newly installed for a public presentation. This example

can provide only a fraction of what Hal Foster focuses on and in the course of this chapter I will return to a project by Baumgarten that he is discussing in his text.

Wilson's *Mining the Museum* leads my argument towards one of Foster's main arguments in "The Artist as Ethnographer", which is his advocacy for "parallactic work that attempts to frame the framer as he or she frames the other" (1996: 203). 'Parallactic work' in Foster's receptive point of view has its origin in the conventional critique of form *and* content. Foster refers to art historical accounts that regard a shift from art making that is concerned with form, medium and genre to art making that is concerned with content and discourse. This shift demonstrates a primary expression of what he calls 'postmodernist art making' (p. 199). He explains:

> [Artists] work *horizontally*, in a synchronic movement from social issue to issue, from political debate to debate, more than *vertically*, in a diachronic engagement with the disciplinary forms of a given genre or medium. (p. 199)

Contemporary artists, Phil Collins amongst others, who work horizontally from "social issue to issue, from political debate to debate", do not only engage with the site or the place they work in, not only with the discourse and the content, but also with the discipline, the genre or the medium. On the basis of Foster's parallactic model Collins's practice could be understood to emerge from now well-established historical traditions. In his work these traditions unfold in numerous 'formal qualities', which stem from performance and installation to photography. His engagement with current worldly affairs places the horizontal way of working against a vertical way of working and vice versa. His critique is about the medium of video and photography, its powerful means of representation both in the past and in the present.

Foster gives another example, which supports his claim about the parallax: "Thus if one wishes to work on AIDS, one must understand not only the discursive *breadth* but also the historical *depth* of AIDS representations" (p. 202). In Fred Wilson's case the Fosterian 'parallactic work' encounters the discourse of 'history' on site in an institution, in which 'history' is represented, i.e. by re-installing all artefacts in the same environment. Foster claims:

In order to extend aesthetic space, artists delved into historical time, and returned past models to the present in a way that opened new sites of work. The two axes [the horizontal, spatial axis and the vertical, temporal axis] were in tension, but it was a productive tension; ideally coordinated, the two moved forward together, with past and present in parallax. Today, as artists follow horizontal lines of working, the vertical lines sometimes appear to be lost. (p. 202)

On the one hand Foster's parallax is based on exteriority, a quasi-objective approach by the artist regarding his or her distant position in the present from where the past can be discussed. On the other hand he mentions concerns about the reflexivity of contemporary art and asks if critical distance is still desirable, let alone possible (p. 203). Despite Foster's claim of lost historical or vertical lines of working, despite his right to assert a move away from medium-specific practice and despite his fear of the ethnographic move that has rendered art 'dangerously political', parallactic work still exists, but it exists differently. The artist is now concerned about his or her embedded condition, which is the artist's exposure in the work. It is a condition that relates to questions of representation, technological means of production and its histories, as well as to conditions of presence and actualities. The artist's presence, which is the artist's embeddedness, is not only a condition, but also a strategy that he or she undertakes. Thus, the complexity of framing the other, which brings together the framing artist, who frames the framing ethnographer or historian, has to be reviewed.

More than a decade after its introduction in "The Artist as Ethnographer", 'parallactic work' implies framing the other, framing the framer and framing oneself, because framing oneself refers to the notion of embeddedness as strategy, which extends beyond a mere framing of the other or the framer. Moreover, such a framing oneself is not from a position that would assume autonomy, not to claim to have knowledge about oneself, not as the self which is capable in a transcendent sense to view the world as it is, but rather framing oneself as subject that is being looked at, already a picture constructed by the world prior to the presentation that the artwork forms. The artist is conscious of his or her embedded position in the context of the

other. This means that he or she contributes to the construction of fantasy and acts, performs or plays with 'the subject of representation'.

Thus, the artist, with regard to his or her embedded exposure, e.g. Phil Collins's framing by means of inviting the represented young Serb to comment on the project, contradicts the conventional practice of framing the other. The practitioner's question is whether or not the conventional parallactic model makes sense when the artist enters a discourse and acts from *within* the discourse, when, as we will see in another of Collins's works, the production within a discourse *is* the discourse. How does the artist change the position towards the discourse from *within* the discourse? In other words, how is the embedded artist's imagination counter to what is historically or institutionally given around him?

The notion of embeddedness challenges Foster's understanding of the parallax in art making, which seems to depend entirely on exteriority. The parallax model anticipates the art practitioner active in a critical distance, outside of 'form and content'. In claiming a 'productive tension between past and present', one has to take into consideration the artist's embeddedness, since he or she is part of that productive tension that looks back to the tension of distance and closeness. The artist's embeddedness is based on practice, not theory and it is presented to us as part of the artwork. By nature the embedded artist is acting from within a framework of discipline, discourse, genre and medium and it is on the basis of these embedded conditions that we arrive at a critical junction. In relation to the reworked parallax, Gregory Bateson's critique in "Culture Contact and Schismogenesis" (1973) is concerned with the author's inside and outside position. Bateson's theories on "culture contact", a context which applies to many of the discussed works in the thesis, will offer some understanding towards these latest reconsiderations of art making's parallactic model.

2.3 Culture Contact

Bateson's focus is on 'culture contact' and in particular contact patterns that emerge when anthropologists observe and analyse cultures that meet. On the one hand he is interested in how different cultures change when they meet; on the other hand he is investigating the concept of 'schismogenesis', a term that circumscribes a creation of division. The motivation for Bateson's interest is a critique of the use of systems of

categories amongst anthropologists (1973: 35). Bateson's critique fosters the argument of this thesis with regard to the artist's subjective agency. That is the artist's partaking in an event, in relation to a history or to another subject. The artist is not excluded from any contact pattern, but is subject to change during cultural contact. Thus, the critique of art and its making is closely related to the Batesonian critique of categorisation in anthropology. The argument in this thesis derives from the artist's interest in contacting the other. In addition, it is the artist's concern about change, which is embeddedness as strategy. Before following up the argument, it is important to investigate Bateson's critique first.

Bateson's aim is to unravel categorically systemised 'problems', whilst actually highlighting the substantial concern of 'culture contact' following a Memorandum written by a Committee of the Social Sciences Research Council in Britain in 1935. He says:

> In general it is unwise to construct systems of this sort until the problems which they are designed to elucidate have been clearly formulated; and so far as I can see, the categories drawn up by the Committee have been constructed not in reference to any specifically defined problems, but to throw a general light on 'the problem' of acculturation, while the problem itself remains vague. (p. 35)

Bateson notices the misleading concept of the Committee to systemise by category traits of different cultures before clearly formulating the problem:

> The Memorandum is based upon a fallacy: that we can classify the traits of a culture under such headings as economic, religious, etc. We are asked, for example, to classify traits into three classes, presented respectively because of: (a) economic profit or political dominance; (b) desirability of bringing about conformity to values of donor group; and (c) ethical and religious considerations. (p. 36)

Later in the text he says that these "categories 'religious,' 'economic,' etc., are not *real* subdivisions which are present in the cultures which we study, but are merely *abstractions* which we make for our own convenience when we set out to describe

cultures in words" (p. 37). Bateson does not claim for any kind of specific activity of framing with regard to categories. He does not ask for a title of the event, nor for a consideration of one classification, which might then dominate the discussion of this particular engagement between two cultures. He suggests looking at distinct aspects of behaviour, in particular amongst homogeneous groups.

In a sense Bateson prompts questions that ask what makes individuals a group, how groups do or don't integrate with groups, how they exist side by side, and what is meant by a 'fusion' of different groups. He names the structural aspect of unity, which implies behavioural patterns "of any one individual in any one context" that is "cognitively consistent with the behaviour of all the other individuals in other contexts". In relation, Bateson foresees the inherent logic of one culture and continues: "Here we must be prepared to find that the inherent logic of one culture differs profoundly from that of others" (p. 37). He then goes on to affective aspects, which are concerned with "emotional settings of all details of behaviour". He also points to economic unity, which is "the whole body of behaviour as a mechanism oriented towards the production and distribution of material objects" (p. 37). Chronological and spatial unity is concerned with "behaviour patterns as schematically ordered according to time and place" and finally, sociological unity, which looks at the behaviour of the individual oriented towards an integration or disintegration of the major group (p. 37).

In this context, Bateson proposes three patterns that are predominantly concerned with how cultural contact changes the behaviour of each of the two or more groups that meet. Bateson distinguishes between the 'complete fusion' of two different groups, second, the 'elimination' of one or more groups and thirdly, the 'persistence' of both contacting groups. Embeddedness as strategy is in progress with respect to Bateson's third contact pattern, which he names "the persistence of both groups in dynamic equilibrium" (p. 38). He uses the term 'dynamic equilibrium' to suggest an active and often enterprising relationship between two groups that have enough in common to keep that relationship going. The embedded artist is investing in culture contact, whilst establishing it as discourse, of which he or she is a related part. In relation to the persistence of contacting groups Bateson claims:

This is probably the most instructive of the possible end results of contact, since the factors active in the dynamic equilibrium are likely to be identical or analogous with those which, in disequilibrium, are active in culture change. (p. 41)

The artist being embedded and hence an important element during 'culture contact' is concerned about the contact's persistence and dynamics, as well as its potential for change. He or she is not investing in categories or abstractions that are static and will bear no change. Equally, Bateson's struggle is with abstractions, which in his view are formal devices that classify cultures, overshadowing the more complex behavioural relationships that are at stake when at least two different cultures meet. The categorisation that Bateson criticises can be translated as a practice of framing, an abstraction in his terms of one culture over another culture. The framing is an instance to communicate about the cultural other within one's own community. Additionally, and here I come back to Foster's observation, such framing *excludes under these conditions the framer* "as he or she frames the other" (1996: 203). One of the cultures, that of the anthropologists, to take up Bateson's example, formulates these abstractions from the beginning of their engagement with the other, isolating themselves from the investigation and thereby creating a hermetically sealed frame around the other culture. These abstractions are usually based on one of the above mentioned categories or other categories relative to the discourse one is situated within. The problem originates in the constructive element that has been discussed here in Bateson's terms, but not in consideration of the complexity of 'culture contact', which implies the concept of embeddedness. Thus, the contact between the subject (artist or anthropologist) and the other is not based on theoretical categorisations, but refers back to questions of the subject's identification and fantasy, when being in contact with the other. The critique provides an understanding of the complexities when encountering the other. For this project the critique allows the discussion to prioritise the concern of the framer within the framing and not the categorisations, which are supportive of framing alone.

In terms of Bateson's critique categories like 'religious' or 'economic' are mere excuses for Collins's cultural contact. In fact his pronounced 'romantic, sexy, deathly' images are self-serving until he charges them with his own thoughts and fantasies and with the reflections given by his participants. As a consequence, these

images are no longer framing the subject other alone, but shift the focus onto the photographer Phil Collins and his methods. Collins not only names the image, its making and the power of the camera his main concerns – and this is what he usually refers to in interviews and talks – but he also choreographs the reflective framing of his participants with their personal statements about the photo shoot as an extended motif for representation, i.e. publication. His catalogue *yeah.....you, baby you* is essentially another level of framing of the artist's repertoire of inherent exposure.

2.4 In the 'Elsewhere'

Other embedded working strategies beside Collins's are for example those of Christoph Schlingensief and Renzo Martens, who on separate occasions worked in Africa. The following brief introduction to their work will contribute to Foster's concerns with regard to "the site of political" and "the site of artistic transformation" (1996: 173). For *Operndorf Afrika* (2010, in progress) Schlingensief collaborated with the architect Francis Kéré. In early 2010 they visited Burkina Faso to lay the corner stone for 'the first African opera village'. The project "will put in place working and living conditions and facilitate education, dialogue and art production in one of the poorest countries in the world" (http://www.operndorf-afrika.com). In the same year Schlingensief's 'musical image and dark phase scenario' *Via Intolleranza II* (2010) premiered in Brussels and brought together various performers and musicians from Africa and Europe. Schlingensief, who also appeared on stage, asks provocatively in the press release: "Why do we always want to help the African continent, if we can't help ourselves?" (www.schlingensief.com). The artist Renzo Martens travelled to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to point with his film *Episode III – "Enjoy Poverty"* (2009) at Western exploitations of poverty. He exploited the situation in the Congo by the same means that he intended to critique: image making of poverty.

Embedded practices such as those of Collins, Schlingensief or Martens are often thought of as powerful means to transform culture. In the context of transforming culture Hal Foster refers to the assumption that "the site of political transformation is the site of artistic transformation as well" (1996: 173). His concern stems from Walter Benjamin's seminal text "The Author as Producer" from 1934, in which Benjamin argues for the author's committed position within current relations of production. Both Benjamin and Foster share the idea of the struggle of the artist

with the other in the widest sense. Benjamin is concerned with the economic relation, Foster with the cultural identity of the subject. Despite Foster's critical awareness of 1930s ideology, he is making use of Benjamin's approach of cultural identification with the other. With regard to the artistic site of transformation Foster continues:

> The assumption [is] that this site is always *elsewhere*, in the field of the other – in the producer model, with the social other, the exploited proletariat; in the ethnographer paradigm, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial, subaltern, or subcultural – and that this elsewhere, this outside is the Archimedean point from which the dominant culture will be transformed or at least *subverted*. (p. 173)

Foster's 'elsewhere' relates to the myth that "is basic to leftist accounts of modern art: it idealizes Jacques Louis David in the French Revolution, Gustave Courbet in the Paris Commune, Vladimir Tatlin in the Russian Revolution, and so on" (p. 173). Can we account for a continuation of this myth to today? This question is not proposed to find an adequate example or an answer. It is proposed to re-imagine the artist's elsewhere in today's cultural production. These assumptions imply how contact with the social or the cultural other is the primary concern during the artist's embedded production. The elsewhere may possibly be a site from where transformation can take place; yet it remains a site where the artist's notion of embeddedness is growing due to the artist's condition being situated in this elsewhere. In the elsewhere the artist's concern is to frame the discourse he or she is investigating. On the one hand the elsewhere provides the discourse of the work, on the other hand the embedded artist in the elsewhere as agency is part of the chosen discourse and sensitive to the artistic production he or she belongs to. This means the artist as subjective agency fantasises about the self and the other, whilst playing a part in the elsewhere. The fantasies are challenged and nourished during culture contact when change is anticipated. The elsewhere as the site to instigate transformation and/or subversion of the 'here' is no longer the strategic site for representations, since embeddedness presupposes primarily the contact between groups as well as the difference between those groups in the elsewhere. Gregory Bateson summarises some of his complex findings about "culture contact and

schismogenesis", while pointing out the need for more detailed examination. He says:

> It is certain that either type of schismogenesis between two groups can be checked by factors, which unite the two groups either in loyalty or opposition to some outside element. Such an outside element may be either a symbolic individual, an enemy people or some quite impersonal circumstance – the lion will lie down with the lamb if only it rains hard enough. But it must be noted that where the outside element is a person or group of persons, the relationship of the combined groups A and B to the outside group will always be itself a potentially schismogenic relationship of one or the other type. (p. 45)

Collins's images seem to offer a strange unity between the subject represented and the photographer taking a picture and lying down next to them in the grass. This unity of artist and portrayed subject can potentially be interpreted as an act of loyalty in opposition against the Western model in media representation. Kate Bush (2005) makes this point in her essay "This Unfortunate Thing Between Us", in which she distinguishes between the work of Collins and the work of a press photographer. Is this what we categorically read as 'political' in the artwork? Does it come down to schismogenesis – a creation of division – between Collins (elsewhere) and the media (here)? Despite the multilayered system of potentially endless schismogenic relationships, Collins's work, his methods of representation and publication, favours the concern of the embedded condition the artist finds himself in. The work demonstrates the artist's entanglement that makes his project happen. The embedded condition and the related motivation of the artist do not reveal any complicity on an institutional level. *Embeddedness is the subject's engagement with otherness through formations of performance*. Whilst taking the pictures of the young Serbs, Phil Collins acknowledges his identification with the other and the subject that he embodies.

2.5 Self-Othering

These observations in relation to artists' embedded working strategies differentiate between an exact socio-scientific framing of the event, which includes profound

knowledge-oriented claims or institutionally led motifs, and the production in itself, for example the document or publication as a means and 'thing' to provide a framework. In other words the focus of the investigation in this thesis is primarily on the production and its mechanisms, or in Batesonian terms the culture contact, and only later on its designation: not the contact itself, but what is described, e.g. as 'religious', 'economic' or 'political'. The discussion here evolves from the author and artist's point of view, or in Bateson's context, the anthropologist's point of view. The motif of production, which is the recurring idiom in this chapter, plays a crucial role for embeddedness. *The investigation that I undertake claims that the author does not document events and that he or she does not research in cultures as such, but that research in this respect requires attempting embeddedness.* The embedded producer has to persist as the distinct figure in the production.

This persistence as a distinct figure emerges from what can be named 'self-othering'. In Foster's "The Artist as Ethnographer" the notion of self-othering refers to the danger of the artist's 'over-identification' with the other. However, in the context of this thesis the embedded artist, like Collins, is in no danger of over-identifying with the other, since it is the artist's self-othering, i.e. his identification with the other, that asks the other to point back at the producer of the work and therefore return the question of identification to the embedded artist. In this way, the embedded artist questions primarily the constitution of identification and exposes the condition for the fantasy of the other.

The embedded condition therefore promotes two strategies: framing the other and framing oneself. These two strategies are distinguishable, since we acknowledge the embedded producer making the work and, simultaneously but on the other hand, making the work in the context of the other. However, the general convention of 'other' is critically unstable, since it is self-exposure, which also generates the *artist as other*: often in connection with the cultural other, sometimes completely on its own. The other is not simply subject of the work of the artist, but subject in relation to the artist's otherness, i.e. the condition of embeddedness.

Foster explains: "A related othering may occur with the artist as ethnographer vis-à-vis the cultural other" (1996: 174). The question for Foster is how othering in the context of 'culture contacting' relates to cultural politics, and in return what the consequences might be for art. It's important to mention again that we are referring to the art historian Foster, who is driven by Benjamin's critique of production, as

well as by his parallax model, which brings together past (history, representation) and present (interest, discourse). The danger, just to complete Foster's thoughts, is "the danger, for the artist as ethnographer, of 'ideological patronage'", which stems "from the assumed split in identity between the author and the worker or the artist and the other" (p. 173).

Foster develops his argument on the basis of economic and cultural conditions that seem to predetermine the relationship between the artist and the other. His backward-looking concerns about ideologies within the cultural avant-garde are categorically informed and hence remind us of the Batesonian critique. Foster's following assumption provokes further questions: "If the invoked artist is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but limited access to this transformative alterity, and that if he or she *is* perceived as other, he or she has automatic access to it" (p. 171). The perception of being other offers the artist, if one stays with the argument, 'automatic access' to transformation. There is of course a disputable dimension in Foster's thinking, which concerns the seemingly self-apprehending artist identifying with the other. How to identify with the other, when the self has yet to be apprehended?

For Foster there is a strategic value in being other as artist. How is the artist perceived as socially and/or culturally other? Who guarantees 'automatic access' to the transformative alterity? In Batesonian terms, the primary step towards alterity is the fact that two cultures meet. The meeting manifests what divides them, what makes them other, and what makes them want to meet, or not, as other. Why then would the culture artist in comparison to any other culture be an exception? In the scenario of embeddedness the artist, like any other author or cultural producer questions his or her own otherness. Eventually, how is the artist other perceived when being embedded?

Foster explains how "reflexivity is needed to protect against over-identification with the other (through commitment, self-othering, and so on) that may compromise this otherness" (p. 203). In the context of embeddedness the artist's self-othering can be explained with the subject's constant negotiation with the self, that image that he or she has of him or herself, which reminds us of the Lacanian imaginary order. One way to negotiate the notion of self is to comprehend this dual relationship of the subject, which is "permanently caught and captivated by its own image" (Evans, 1996: 115). Collins, the Westerner, looks at the other, often a non-

Westerner, but at the same time looks at himself to explore the dual relationship of the subject.

There is then one more concern that Foster is occupied with, which must be raised in terms of embeddedness and which is formed from the danger of 'over-identification'. This is the question of critical distance in art production. Thus, to establish a critical distance within the artist's own production and work implies conflicts between artist and work that have an effect on the artist's way of working. With both of these issues, the critical distance from the other, which in Foster's terms can be 'too little or too far' as well as the critical distance from one's own production – I presume he refers to his own experience as an art historian, critic and writer, leads to questions that have been raised before. Who is framing whom? Is the artist framing the framer/discourse? But the question that now follows is whether the artist is subject to the framer's framework, therefore framing him/herself and because of this framing addressing concerns of over-identification and self-othering.

Foster's previously outlined discussion about the artist's work as "an attempt to frame the framer as he or she frames the other" takes the parallax model into consideration. This model however has to be interpreted as distinct from the embedded strategy that the artist is employing. In order to reinforce the question of framing and the distinction between the parallax model and the model of embeddedness I would like to refer once again to an artwork discussed in "The Artist as Ethnographer". In Lothar Baumgarten's *America Invention*, installed in the spiral of New York's Guggenheim Museum in 1993, names of indigenous societies of North and South America are printed as big letter signs on the walls of the institution. They are presented independently from any narrative supplement and are framed by the modernist Frank Lloyd Wright architecture that surrounds it. Foster indicates 'the framer being framed' in the collision of the native and the modernist. Here, the notion of parallax "involves the apparent displacement of an object caused by the actual movement of its observer" (1996: xii). One can pay attention to the art historian and the observer in general who, because of their actual movement in a temporal, spatial or architectural context, indicate the collision of the 'here' and the 'elsewhere'. What Foster means is the collision of framings of the past with positions of the present and these positions, Foster concludes, "are defined through such framings", which in the context of *America Invention* are exemplified with ethnographic naming and signing of indigenous societies (p. xii). This displacement

is effectively completed with the museum and the institution that frames Baumgarten's installation. The struggle in *America Invention* occurs between the artist and the discourse (the other). Baumgarten deals intellectually with the other, uses familiar terminology and wording and moves the observer from the conventional historic viewing to the represented viewing in a museum of contemporary art.

The crucial point is that Baumgarten's critique implies only *one* other: the indigenous societies of America. The production process reveals various stages leading from fundamental research to the actual displacement and final representation. The embedded model presents itself differently. In this model the artist deals with at least *two* 'others', usually at the same time. The artist, who is embedded and exposed, may consider parallactic art making, but he or she does, by nature, also consider self-framing as a strategy, which questions the condition of being embedded. The 'second other' is therefore the 'outside other' that is watching him or her whilst being embedded. In Collins's *Young Serbs* the second other is in fact the young people portrayed in the images. In this case first and second other are the same. They are the second other since they motivate the exposure of his presence in the follow up to the photographic representation.

Accordingly, embeddedness as framing oneself or self-framing is the strategy of embeddedness. It takes place within the event, during the production or in general during 'culture contact'. This strategy contradicts the framing of the other or the framer. It assumes the framing oneself as subject that is being looked at, a picture constructed by the world prior its realisation as the artwork.

2.6 The 'Generous Artist'

Nine years after Foster's "The Artist as Ethnographer" in *The Return of the Real*, Phil Collins completed the first edition of a video installation called *The Return of the Real* (2005) that premiered in the UK in 2006 at Tate Britain's Turner Prize exhibition. Despite the title's intentional or unintentional reappearance, the ethnographic turn in the arts that Foster described in the mid 1990s is still evident, yet certainly different in terms of the representation, and different considering the relationship between artist and work and work and audience. One important difference that has been identified so far is the increasingly framed presence of the artist *within* the work and the work's situatedness *within* the discourse. One

prominent example is Collins, who can be counted on for his social sensibility and ambitious cultural endeavour. The London-based writer and curator Andrew Renton describes Collins as a 'generous artist' since he has the ability to draw people into his projects and is concerned with the embedded nature of his presence in the work.

In *The Return of the Real* Collins invited people who "felt their lives had been ruined by appearing on" Turkish reality TV, talk or makeover shows, to talk once again about these devastating experiences at a press conference that he organised alongside the 9th Istanbul Biennial (http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/ turnerprize/2006/philcollins.htm). In a six-minute-long video interview that Collins gave for Tate Britain's Turner Prize exhibition and website he explains his proposal for the extended version of *The Return of the Real*, which at the time was still in preparation.

Fig. 6: *Phil Collins (Interview)* (Video still), 2006 **(DVD 1)**

The intention here is to cite parts of the interview in order to present the currency of embeddedness in his work. Collins begins by reflecting on his own exposure as an artist nominated for the Turner Prize:

> When I was asked to do the Turner Prize, I thought about it for a week. I felt it would be like that moment in the horror film *Carrie*, in which she has a bucket of blood thrown over her and feels like she has made a fool of herself on a really grand scale. It felt to me like a very uncomfortable idea of being exposed. Because I work in production and with groups of people, who are quite difficult to reach, I thought it would be a great opportunity to try and

produce work through the Turner Prize, in order to instrumentalize the event as a spectacle, to see it as a media spectacle and to begin to engage with it. This is how I came to the piece, which has not begun yet, because we are filming before the show opens, but will be open by the time that you see this.

He then continues and explains his ideas for the exhibition:

In the first room that you come into, is a day long video. In the room are two projections and its interviews between a director of a plastic surgery show in Turkey interviewing people, who participated in makeover shows, reality shows and talkshows in Turkey. And they are talking about their experiences of being on the shows but also their life and their histories. (http://www. tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/2006/philcollins.htm)

One screen in the installation shows each of the six participants in succession, each one for about an hour. The director on the opposite screen, who is filmed similarly by facing the camera, is surrounded by technical video equipment that is in use for production purposes. A control monitor on the upper left corner of the image shows the picture with the TV show victim in synchrony with the opposite screen in the installation. The video camera fixed on a tripod in the background is filming the victim, who is sitting opposite the director. The dual-screen installation and the synchrony, as well as the visual feedback that Collins creates by showing control monitor and video camera, suggests the representation of the interview and in a sense the making of the interview at the same time. The live streaming that he composes via camera and monitor results in a kind of closed circuit situation, in which the witnessing of *The Return of the Real* is under scrutiny within the production mechanisms of the piece.

From time to time during the interviews Phil Collins and his technical assistant appear behind the director's back to control the camera, look in the viewfinder or just to follow the progress of the interview.
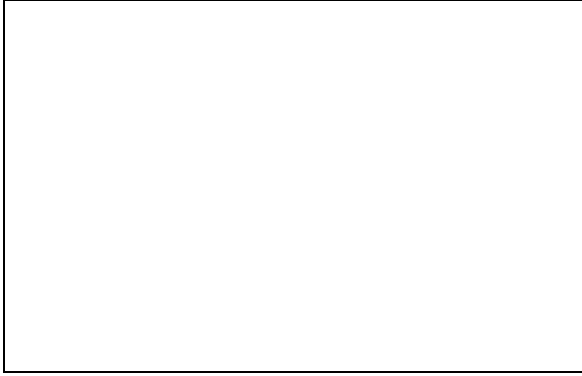
Fig. 7: Phil Collins, *The Return of the Real*, (Video still), 2005

Collins's discomfort with his exposure by the Turner Prize event leads on to a number of paradoxical links, which are represented in *The Return of the Real* through Collins's deliberate presence and exposure as the artist and maker of the video in the back of the studio, in which the interviewer's scene takes place. There is a tendency in many of Collins's works to display the encounter of the artist and his camera with the other, hence describing his embeddedness and inherent exposure in the work and in the context. This tendency is highlighted even more so in the second part of Phil Collins's Turner Prize exhibition:

> The second room that you come to is an office and it's called *Shady Lane Productions*. It's a full functioning production office, which is open Monday to Friday, 10 until 6. If you look through the window you will see, let's say, three of us working and researching stories of people in Britain, who have been on talk shows, make over shows or reality shows and felt their life has been ruined or impacted in a negative way by this. (http://www.tate.org.uk/ britain/turnerprize/2006/philcollins.htm)

The office that Collins describes is a space within one of Tate Britain's exhibition halls. The audience walks past a closed door, a little window where you can ring a bell and make enquiries, followed around the corner by a long window that allows an unrestricted view inside the office. At the time when I was visiting Collins's exhibition the office was closed for Christmas, but a postcard in Tate Britain's shop shows the idea behind Collins's description. On the image he and one of his assistants are present in the office.
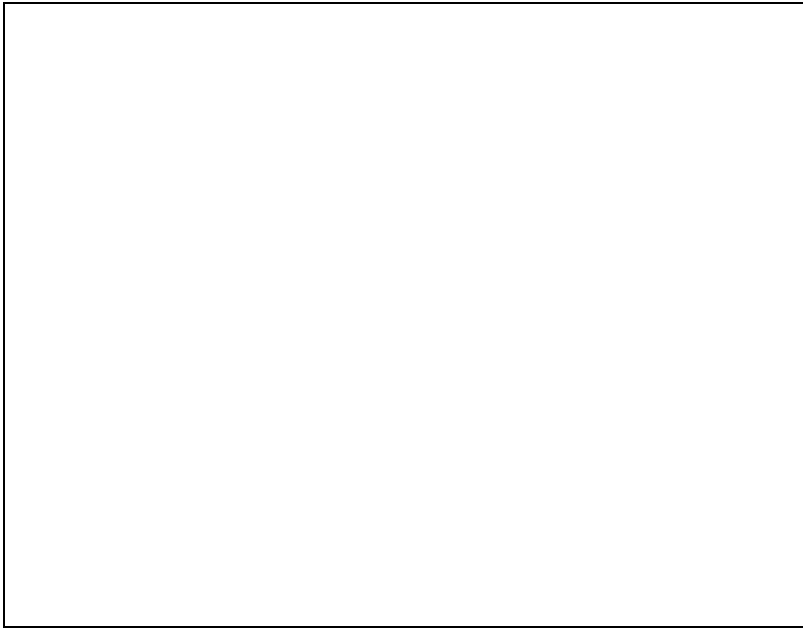
Fig. 8: Phil Collins, *Shady Lane Productions*,
(Postcard, Tate Britain Oct 2006 – Jan 2007), 2006

The postcard's evidence is supportive of the project, as is the representation and exposure of the office inside the museum. The postcard's image, a simple document and available in the shop for sale in an unlimited edition, illustrates the embedded position of the artist. The audience outside the office window observes the artist inscribed in his production, surrounded by a large photographic print with images of participants in Turkey, a black and white photograph on the wall with a portrait of the artist, computers on desks, chairs, a meeting table in the middle, telephones and a video monitor facing the outside showing other documentations of the event, e.g. a press conference held with British participants. With *Shady Lane Productions* in Tate Britain Collins is not interested in showing a video document, which would be the evidence for his engagement with these people, but rather into staging the pre-production of a work that might look like the British version of the Turkish original of *The Return of the Real*.

Andrew Renton in the audio guide of Tate Britain's Turner Prize website mentions that Collins avoids being centre stage in the piece. He is behind the camera or behind the scene of his initiated events to hand over the stage generously to the people that he invites to work with him. However, with *Shady Lane Productions*, Renton's

argument is put into doubt, since in this piece the stage on which Collins acts, i.e. produces his artwork, is exposed to the public.

Fig. 9: Phil Collins, *Shady Lane Productions*,
(Postcard, Tate Britain Oct 2006 – Jan 2007), 2006

In retrospect one can experience the dilemma of exposure that Collins admits at the beginning of his video interview, and how the reflection about this dilemma results exactly in an exposure. The development from *The Return of the Real*, in which the presence of Collins as producer can be occasionally perceived, to *Shady Lane Productions*, where the office and the artist are under audience observation, demonstrates the awareness of the artist's own embeddedness. Collins says in his interview that he intends to "instrumentalize the event as a spectacle" and in the spectacle he places himself in the centre *within* the production. In a short documentary on Collins's Turner Prize exhibition, part of the Channel 4 series *Three Minute Wonder*, produced by the media department of Tate in London, he explains one of his main concerns regarding television production, and in particular the powerful means of recording devices, such as cameras. He addresses Emily Dixon, the director of the documentary and says: "How can I ask you to stop filming, when I know when I say that, that's the thing you include" (http://www.tate.org.uk/ britain/turnerprize/2006/philcollins.htm).

Collins's reflection of his own position within the production and his decision to record the life stories of talk show participants uncovers the fate of embeddedness

in his work. He reflects on himself and is aware of the exploitation of the other. It turns out to be increasingly complex when he describes his own desire to tell his life story, like the participants in his project: "In fact with each project, I would say, it is something I wish I could do." And he continues: "So these are the kind of gambles that I make, in which these are the things that *I* would do" (http://www.tate.org.uk/ britain/turnerprize/2006/philcollins.htm). Collins's practices are not just gambles with the other, yet with the production per se to which he belongs in terms of self-othering, self-framing and self-exposure. With respect to embedded strategies, identification or over-identification, which in the subject artist's case has been questioned before, has to be put in context with the production itself. What I mean is that Collins's primary motivation is the production, in which he is embedded. In Collins's catalogue essay "The Producer as Artist" (2005), Claire Bishop and Francesco Manacorda support this claim accordingly: "The photographs and videos are neither documents of his production, nor the intended outcomes of this process; the production itself is the medium" (p. 30). Under these conditions identification of the artist is hardly stimulated by the associated subject, but by productive elements that emerge from cultural contact.

2.7 The Persisting Artist

Embedded artists like Christoph Schlingensief, Renzo Martens and Phil Collins face twofold demands when meeting cultures. First, they are concerned with their situated presence and its immanent critique, which implies activity, observation and exchange inside the field. Second, they are concerned with outside elements. This chain of relationships, from inside to outside and backwards, points at the exposure of the artist to the world. In the field of the other, from where the artist works, he or she is embedded *as artist*. As proposed before, the latest 'artist as ethnographer' is not concerned about change or transformation in terms of a Fosterian or Benjaminian avant-garde. The artist's concern focuses on the embedded state he or she is in. This state implies complex contact patterns of persistence, precisely because the artist is not solely taking an interest in the other, the anthropological other that he or she is working with or looking at, but also with the other, that recognises the artist as other in return and to which he or she is exposed. For Collins, especially in *The Return of the Real* these inherent complexities of production and exposure, which are hardly separable, lead to detectable observations of self-reference and self-exposure. These

expositions are in fact closing in on the embedded artist's endeavour to persist *as artist* in the field of the other.

Culture contact with respect to Bishop and Manacorda's 'production as the medium' promotes the idea of embeddedness. It reinforces the relationship of artist and other, i.e. of artist and 'production', which implies the outside other, to which or to whom the artist is exposed to. Again, like in *Young Serbs*, 'outside other' and 'inside other' can sometimes fall together. With Collins in mind one can slowly understand the implications of the theory. The embedded artist, who is concerned about the subject other, but in particular about the outside other, which allows him or her to self-reflect on his or her otherness, adjusts to patterns of the other, as well as the other willingly showing behavioural patterns that reflect the same patterns of the artist. This is for example the case when artists collaborate with people, introduce them to their idea of production and invite them to participate. The other is not simply the object of desire but aware of his or her collaborative role of the work, either through representation or immediate collaboration.

In the end, *who* speaks or in other words *who* produces? Bateson argues from the outside, by analysing the anthropologists' endeavour. In a sense the anthropologist Bateson frames his own profession, self-reflects and critiques it. In similar terms the art historian Hal Foster challenges the artist, who is interested in the notion of ethnography and the discourse of art's criticality. In both cases we are reading texts from the authors about their subject other, namely the anthropologist, the ethnographer and the artist. My discussion argues *about* the artist and *with* the artist as someone contacting the other, framing the other and being framed at the same time. The framing is unavoidably re-framed. In the following chapter framing, re-framing and self-framing reappear in the context of the embedded journalist, who goes to war in order to be as close as possible to the event, i.e. to the enemy. During the war in Iraq in 2003 journalists were as much concerned about presenting the unfolding event 'live', as about staying alive. These concerns explain the exposed embedded nature of the journalist at war. The journalist's presence and closeness in relation – or better, in contrast – to that of the artist illustrate what has been named embeddedness as condition and strategy. In the case of the journalist, however, condition *and* strategy are the same.

CHAPTER 3: EMBEDDEDNESS AND JOURNALISM

This chapter will focus on the contemporary phenomenon of 'embeddedness' within the domain of journalism. The discussion emerges from an aesthetic experience that is presented to the viewer, listener or reader on screen, as a moving or still image, an oral account or a written text. I will claim that embeddedness in journalism in contrast to embeddedness in art bears no tension between condition and strategy. Embeddedness in journalism demonstrates precisely when condition *and* strategy are the same.

In 2003 the US government decided to send journalists together with the military troops to the Arabian peninsula. Correspondents and camera people were attached to units of soldiers with whom they shared military activities in different locations. These journalists covered events in real time and acted as commentators in action. Altogether, an estimated 600 embedded journalists and 2100 'unilateral' reporters – that is, reporters who were not officially embedded – covered the war in Iraq (Katovsky and Carlson, 2003: xiv). The joint venture between the military and journalism has generated many obvious concerns, mainly about the propagandistic tendencies established by governmental policies. But embeddedness also throws up questions that journalism in general is confronted with today, not least of which is: how can immediate or embedded reporting claim objectivity in respect of journalism's first obligation, the principle of truth? Embeddedness also generates a self-awareness to an extent that the live reportage (being live on air all the time), in relation to the journalist's life (staying alive in the battlefield), becomes the ultimate condition of situated being. I propose that what is involved here is an ideology that is concerned with situated being, and in particular with a human being exposed by tele-visual means.

These concerns are explored in this chapter in two ways: empirically, in the context of conversations and documents of embedded journalists who have been in Iraq in 2003, and philosophically, regarding immanent conditions of the situated being, which means the phenomenon of being inside a distinct context, yet exposed to the world at the same time.

With regard to the philosophical approach, I will refer to Bernard Williams (2002), who pays close attention to the immediate and sensational encounter with what he calls a "purely positional advantage" (p. 42). In his book *Truth and*

Truthfulness Williams's fictional 'State of Nature' offers a simplified abstraction of a situation in which people who come together and who share the same language pass on information that the other does not know. This of course requires a positional advantage, or in other words one has to be well positioned to see or hear in order to represent the seen or heard to someone else who has not had the same advantage. Williams's 'State of Nature' concept will reduce the focus on the 'local', the situation and the position without adding any discourse, culture or history to it. Accordingly, the simplification and reduction will reinforce questions concerned with the potential advantage of the embedded journalist, the 'insider' who offers his point of view to the outside, the 'non-embedded' world. Hence, this chapter will provide a close encounter with the embedded journalist, not in a specific biographical sense, but by establishing an understanding for, on one hand, the local experience of the embedded journalist inside the given context and, on the other hand, the embedded journalist's objectified communication with the outside world. The conflict between being an insider and outsider will be taken up and reviewed with a discussion led by Pierre Bourdieu (2003), who urges the anthropologist to reflect on his or her position in "the microcosm of anthropologists" (p. 283). The fields of anthropology and journalism will not be compared directly; however, both raise important concerns with regard to observation, participation and objectivity and thus promote related questions concerning embeddedness in art.

In consideration of the empirical approach I make use of facts that have been relevant for eyewitnesses of the Iraq war in 2003. These eyewitnesses are embedded journalists and camera people. The relationship between these facts and my retelling of these facts implies a complexity, which contributes to this empirical method. It is important to know that the reader is not dealing with a factual production set up by a journalist who relies on his sources and investigations, but what will later be seen to be an 'arti-factual' production, an idiom borrowed from an interview with Jacques Derrida (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002), which relies merely on sources uncovered by an artist. It is thus important to include Derrida in this context, since he adds the technical conditions to what will be discussed with regard to Williams's 'natural' concern.

3.1 The Cameraman's Story

In Spring 2004, one year after the war in Iraq, I met an embedded cameraman for an interview in London. His name is Darren Conway. The BBC Public Relations Department helped me to find him and finally I was able to contact him by email. He replied shortly after my initial approach: *"I was passed your details from the BBC PR people. Please let me know how I can help you. I'm in Argentina at the moment and pass through London for 1 night only on my way to the Congo. Then I'll be finished with that project around the 24th and in London from the 25th for a couple of days before I head back to Asia."* In not more than four sentences Darren Conway describes his global enterprise. It was a couple of weeks later, when I contacted him again to confirm our meeting in London. He answered: *"I am in Congo and difficult to access Internet. Will be back in London on 25th for few days. Best then."*

A few weeks before, I saw his documentary *The Cameraman's Story* (2003), which portrays two camera people in the war in Iraq. The film presents Conway and his colleague Fred Scott, in close-up shots, showing how they prepare themselves for a battle and how they wait in hotel rooms for the next military move. On the one hand I felt seduced by Conway's performance, how he shows confidence when at the frontline and carrying weighty camera equipment. On the other hand he is telling of his anxiety and is expressing his personal feelings.

As I was chasing him via the Internet, I noticed how his life is determined by targeting certain environments, like the Congo: environments where it is difficult to reach him, but from where he is trying to reach the 'rest of the world', to bring news to the world.

On the 26th of March 2004, a year after the war in Iraq, I met Darren Conway in a flat in Marylebone, London. He arrived with a plastic bag in his hands. "These are the tapes from the Congo," he said. He was supposed to pass them on to the BBC that night.[5]

In fact, the situation we were both in that evening was arranged. I had *set the scene* beforehand, so that the interview, of which my film *Facing* (2004) is the result, would run through without any interruption. I had prepared a video with all the

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[5] Darren Conway returned from the Congo, where he was documenting activities of the civil war. The BBC produced a programme named *One Night at War*, which showed video footage by eighteen camera people, who spend one night in a hostile environment.

sequences that he filmed of himself in Iraq. In between each sequence he had a few minutes to recall these experiences.

Fig. 10: Johannes Maier, *Facing*
(Video still: Darren Conway), 2004 **(DVD 2)**

At one point Conway remembered the ambiguous relationship between him and the soldiers, which is the starting point for my later discussion, where I try to differentiate between journalists who are conventionally detached from events, and embedded journalists, who are present in the field:

> Our stories had gone out – they get reports back obviously. We were just saying: our focus was exactly on what was happening in our situation – we couldn't get reports of the rest of the war, so we focused on what was going on around us. That was appreciated, I think, editorially and also by the guys we were with; they were becoming open to us they were telling us about operations they had coming, so we could plan a little bit in advance. (…) They were on our side. We were being kind to them in the reports – not in an editorial way, but in the fact that we wouldn't say, that this other battalion or command group of British Forces that were in some other position had done something wrong, that they had people killed or people injured. We just focused on the story around us, which editorially was the right thing to do (Maier, *Facing*, 2004).

Here, Conway refers to the battalion he was with, the Fortieth Commando, a British military troop. Under these circumstances Conway was fulfilling at least two operative functions: first, there is an editorial responsibility, which relates to the

cooperation with the broadcasting company. Second, the embedded journalist also cooperates internally, inside the battalion. He works internally as a mediator for the troops. The soldiers refer to the journalist or camera person to get information on the current progress of their operation. In return the journalist gains trust and receives feedback on the operative progress of the soldiers he is with. The news production is clearly useful on two levels, as this kind of journalism not only mediates and produces information for the receiver at home, but also provides a monitor-effect in the situation.

Conway explains that there was a focus on what was happening around them. Immediacy is the result of Conway's embeddedness. His personal account enhances a sense of privacy between him and the soldiers. The focus of his activity as a cameraman is on the local surrounding. The close observation of Conway's statement reveals a distinct anticipation of the soldiers' operations. He tries to take advantage of this anticipation to regulate his knowledge and 'plan a little bit in advance'. The notion of knowledge, which struggles between anticipation and regulation on one hand, and flow and openness on the other, is part of the journalist's state of embeddedness.

Hence, there are two aspects that configure embeddedness in the cooperation between journalism and military. First, Conway's position as the embedded journalist is to some degree a negotiation with the situation he finds himself in. He expresses confidence in the battalion in the same way that the soldiers show confidence in him. I will call this embeddedness's 'internal aspect'. The focus 'on the story around them' that Conway mentions, is the ambition for the embedded model of journalism. With regard to the embedded journalist's conditions there is no greater overview on the war needed, perhaps even possible. The witnessing of the activity is primarily shared amongst the battalion and the journalist. The internal aspect stands for the journalist's self-preservation in the field. It is the embedded journalist's 'natural' self-awareness in the situation.

Second, the 'external aspect' is the representation of embeddedness to the outside: at first to the broadcasting company, which takes advantage of the journalist being in the place of war. The broadcasters and audience welcome the journalist's embedded nature and all the factors that are provided through the nature of his being there. Rick

Levanthal, a correspondent who worked as an embedded journalist for *Fox News* in the 2003 war in Iraq, recalls what his producers from *Fox News* had told him: "Whatever you can come up with, whatever you can get on the bird, whenever you can go live, just come up and we'll take you. Call us, we'll take you" (Katovsky and Carlson, 2003: 190–91). There is no set limitation to the journalist's televised presence. The cooperation between the embedded journalist and his producers at home shows the diversity of relationships during the media operation. The journalist negotiates between the internal and the external aspect of embeddedness. This critical relationship in war reporting between the internal and external has existed since long before the introduction of televised journalism.

3.2 A Short History of War Reporting

The following short history of war reporting will support the discussion about the reporter's distinct relationship to the soldiers, his or her employers, i.e. the publishers or broadcasters, and the governmental policies that come with reporting from battlegrounds.

The Crimean War (1853–56), in which France and Britain went to war against Russia in the Crimea, can be named as one of the first wars in which technology led to a new way of reporting from the frontline. In order for the press in London and Paris to receive and publish the latest reports in the shortest time possible, a telegraph line had been extended to Bulgaria. Large numbers of groups of correspondents from around the world, but in particular reporters from Britain and France, were represented in the Crimea. William Howard Russell covered the war for *The Times*. He is called 'the father of modern war reporting', which Trevor Royle (1989) in *War Report* explains in relation to the introduction of the telegraph. It meant, he says "that the most successful war correspondent was the man who had not only uncovered the best stories but who was then able to transmit them fastest back home to base" (p. 20). Russell was known for his 'clarity and accuracy' of reporting in the situation of battle, but also on revealing military incompetence which, according to Royle, "changed the face of the war and brought about radical changes in the army's attitudes towards the treatment of the men" (p. 22).

The years between the end of the American Civil War (1861–65), in which Russell reported for *The Times* once again, and the beginning of the First World War

in 1914 are often described as the 'Golden Age' of war reporting. The circulation figures of publications and newspapers increased, due to high numbers of reports circulating the globe. Reporting in this period, says Greg McLaughlin in *The War Correspondent* (2002), had an impact on "the popular myths of glamorous adventure" (p. 54). Correspondents saw in their participation an opportunity to make a name for themselves and they were often given 'considerable creative license' when reporting from the battlefields. According to McLaughlin, minor incidences and events "were often overplayed", which resulted in reporters and their newspapers attacking each other "for poor and inaccurate reporting, each one of them at the same time occupying a morally superior position" (p. 55).

Military officials tried to gain control over the press during the early stages of the First World War (1914–18). Depending on the progress of each participating nation, members of the press had either more or less freedom in their daily activities. Germany and Austria, for example, offered hospitality to an international community of correspondents at the beginning of the war. Restriction and censorship was the norm on the British side and no accreditations were granted to journalists to join the British Expeditionary Forces to France. The British commander Lord Kitchener, according to Mitchel P. Roth (1997) in the *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism*, appointed officers, known as 'eyewitnesses', to report on a daily basis about the progress of the Forces (p. 350). Each report was scrutinised by Lord Kitchener or one of his generals. Civilian war photographers were equally barred from frontline coverage and army officers were again asked to photograph the activities from the front. Over the four-year period, in particular from 1917 onwards, more and more photographers and reporters were accredited to join the allied forces; however, all documents had to pass censors on the way to the American or British publishers.

In the mid 1920s lightweight 35mm Leica cameras changed the way photographers could work in the field. On one hand it seemed easier to get closer to the action; on the other hand restrictions made it impossible to access war zones. In response to these restrictions, as Roth puts it, "photographers of the Ethiopian War and the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s produced numerous staged combat photographs" (p. 335). The seminal image *Death of a Republican Soldier*, taken in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War by the Hungarian born photographer Robert Capa, is conceived as one of the most controversial photographs in the history of war photography. The image shows a Spanish soldier, falling to the ground, in the

moment of his death. For a long time, the image has been contested and its authenticity questioned. The instant of death captured in one camera shot was rare during these years and the disbelief in the image as a historical document amongst many of Capa's colleagues was widespread. Capa, who was known for saying "if your pictures aren't good, you aren't close enough", came to more prominence in 1944, when he was one of four photographers joining the invasion forces on D-Day.

Radio transmission was available for the first time during the Second World War (1939–45) and in Britain the BBC's *War Report* became essential listening for people with access to radios. War correspondents from Britain and the US, who were attached to units of the Allied soldiers, were known as 'warcos' and dressed identically to the armed forces. A golden letter 'C' as a cap badge made them distinguishable from the unit. Roth claims how "military authorities regarded the war correspondents as vital elements of the war effort and often provided them current information with the unspoken agreement that they would produce favourable reports" (p. 353). McLaughlin adds: "The US Army saw public relations and news management as a vital part of the overall strategy, as General Dwight D. Eisenhower put it to a meeting of American newspaper editors, 'Public opinion wins war'" (2002: 65). Thus, news censorship and military censorship appeared in a variety of manifestations throughout the Second World War. For example, American military officials selected in agreement with news executives so-called 'pool' reporters, who would get special access to battlefields and who would then report back in accordance with military ground rules to non-members of the pool. Similar control by the Allied officials was taken over photographic reproduction, which meant that images showing wounded GIs, victims of Allied bombing raids, images of disunity and confrontation amongst members of the Allied forces were censored. Ernest Hemingway, perhaps one of the most prominent war correspondents of modern times, added to his fame by breaching wartime press protocols on a regular basis. In 1944, following the Normandy invasion, he accompanied Allied forces outside Paris and, according to Roth, helped to obtain weapons for French resistance fighters, which led him to lead "his compatriots on reconnaissance sorties, looking for hidden German troops" (p. 138). Hemingway was one of the first Americans to enter liberated Paris.

From 1961 to 1975 the Vietnam War was covered by hundreds of journalists. In contrast to official restrictions during the Second World War access to the battlefields was generally allowed, journalists were routinely accredited to accompany US troops and there was no strict censorship. In *War and Photography* (1997) Caroline Brothers says how "members of the media recall being 'overwhelmed by the help and hospitality of the propaganda machine' when they arrived in Saigon as the US administration strove to convey its version of the conflict through public relations rather than censorship" (p. 202). The rise of numbers of television journalists and camera people in Vietnam, as well as millions of viewers at home following the war on television, granted this conflict the title of the 'living room war'. In accordance with the high number of participating news correspondents, their unlimited access to the frontline, and their production of powerful representations from there, "the most enduring myth in the recent history of war reporting" emerged that it was the media in Vietnam that turned the public against the war. In line with this opinion, the US commander in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, complained how "television's unique requirements contributed to a distorted view of the war… The news had to be compressed and visually dramatic. [As a result] the war Americans saw was almost exclusively violent, miserable or controversial" (p. 38). In response, this view was highly criticised, since the media could only give "a stylized summary and a distanced overview of a disjointed conflict" (p. 39). One reason for this was, they say, that live reportage, due to unaffordable satellite transmission, was not yet in use by television broadcasters.

More recent conflicts like the Falklands War in 1982, in consequence of this 'enduring myth', saw extended controlling mechanisms in place, and only twenty-nine correspondents and photographers – none of them from international news agencies – accompanied the British fleet to the South Atlantic. Direct censorship by the British Ministry of Defence and a practice of self-censorship by the journalists were in operation throughout the conflict.

The Gulf War in 1991 inaugurated, as Roth puts it, "a new era in war journalism in which print reporters were consistently scooped by television newscasts from CNN that delivered the news instantaneously" (1997: 126). In the tradition of the restricted

reporting from the Falklands War, 1400 journalists, who had arrived in Saudi Arabia, were entirely dependent on US military briefings, interviews with military officials and news pool activities, run by six army Public Affairs officers and Michael Sherman, who usually directed the Navy's PR office in Los Angeles. Eventually, 159 correspondents as part of the pool system were attached to units of soldiers. Critics claim that CNN's chief war correspondent, Peter Arnett, was not only the most prominent but also the most dependable war reporter since the Second World War. These arguments were based on the disposition of strict US news protocols, but at the same time, on allegations by US officials against Arnett, having been misled by Saddam Hussein's regime and used by their propaganda machinery.

The overwhelming critique on the pool system deployed by the US military in Iraq in the early 1990s led to different approaches in the Balkan conflict a few years later. McLaughlin states how "the media were much freer to move about their own personal risk" and according to US military objectives the concept of 'the embedded journalist' was introduced for the first time (2002: 98).

3.3 Immanent Critique

The implementation of 'embedded journalism' points towards strategic methods and practicalities, which operate within military environments and under strong regulations that are laid down by government policies. The embedded operation has to be understood under these influential power relations. If we claim that journalism generally acts in the context of political aims, then the mediation of the Iraq conflict in 2003 represented the relationship between governments and the media vividly. Questions arise as to whether journalism has supported politics for decades, or whether it has produced politics and created the basis for current concerns within societies. And also, whether or not politics, politicians or parties have used journalists on their behalf. However, these questions, which might be answered too quickly, relate to *how*, not if, these relations come into play and what then follows these relations.

A second important link is the progressing relationship between military warfare and information technology. Strategies of embeddedness in war operations are supported by current information technologies that allow the journalist to report via satellite and videophone from almost anywhere in the world. The argument in return is that warfare has always had a great impact on the innovation of information

technology. In the essay "Story and History" (2005) media historian Sebastian Köhler writes how wars and hostile conflicts are "regarded as important factors for the creation, distribution and development of the media" (p. 321, my translation). In Köhler's opinion, not only technical innovation benefits from warfare. For many journalists war events have always ranked high in news reporting. News factors like intensity, immediacy, conflict, elite relations, and negativism (destruction, victims, breakdowns) as well as the newly occurring factor of 'visuality' – i.e. the visualisation of emotions, controversies and conflicts – are equally of high news value in cases of hostile conflicts. Köhler also comments on how events like these are always confirming and re-evaluating the targets of news value ('gatekeeping') (p. 322). Amongst many journalists and media producers a common understanding is that the embedded journalistic method intensifies the representation of the war as it happens and that it shows an immediate encounter with the battalion, in general that it enhances all the factors Köhler mentions.

Analysis, commentary and reports on embedded journalism, which are formed from the journalistic field, can be divided into two strands. One is concerned with the embedded journalist per se, the adventurer, who travels the world and who 'makes good stories'. The book *Embedded, The Media at War in Iraq* (2003) edited by Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson presents an 'oral history' of soldiers and military officials, who have been embedded during the war in Iraq and who write about their personal experiences. The book demonstrates not only how journalists, like Rick Leventhal, tried to make editorial sense of what was going on in their immediate surroundings but also how they were primary witnesses of their individual participation in the war. Because of the enormous number of more than fifty contributions and essays, the book offers varied perspectives on the event. However, most share the same short-term autobiographic interest. Hence, the individual journalist or camera operator becomes the subject of their own discussion.

The second strand of analysis is self-reflective: journalists investigate their own field and discuss the related issues of objective and truthful reporting. Critics like David Miller, who is the author of the *Guardian* article "The Domination Effect" (2004), focuses on information politics implemented by governmental officials in the US and the UK. For Miller there was a radical change in media strategies at the beginning of this century. 'Information dominance' describes the integration of

propaganda and news media into the military command structure, which as a consequence he calls 'weaponised information'. This means that information is no longer just controlled by the state's propaganda machinery, but is simply functioning as an important weapon of war. In Miller's understanding, the embedded journalist has been introduced to reinforce this ideology of 'information dominance'. He says: "Seen in this context, embedding journalists in Iraq was a clear means of building up 'friendly' information."

On the one hand, these numerous personal statements highlight the importance of publicity of the situated being – to present the step-by-step experience in the situation of war; on the other, immanent critiques in newspapers on current journalistic circumstances demonstrate a distance that the media itself tries to achieve, whilst being continuously confronted with 'close-up' imagery and 'live' commentary from the war.

The investigation in this chapter, which uses journalism's embeddedness as one major example, will take advantage of the 'friendly informant', the war reporter, who is asked to perform live as himself or herself, because of his or her embedded nature. It will also take advantage of the media's self-reflective ambition to deconstruct the value of reporting under these conditions of embeddedness. First, in consideration of William's philosophy we need to discuss the 'purely positional advantage', which literally suggests the embedded journalist's concern of immediacy and presence.

3.4 Insider Advantage

According to the philosopher Bernard Williams (2002), the embedded journalist's insider advantage can be characterised in terms of the disadvantage of someone not participating in a particular situation. Williams talks about a "purely positional advantage" of the situated speaker, who provides original information for the non-participating recipient (p. 42). He explains:

> This is the idea that a speaker can tell someone else about a situation because he is or was in it, while his hearer is not or was not. There are of course different kinds of purely positional advantages: I may be unable to observe what you observe because you are there now and I am not; you can tell me

what happened here a while ago because you were here then and I was not; and so on. (p. 42)

In his book *Truth and Truthfulness* Williams articulates his thoughts by introducing the story of 'The State of Nature'. Though Williams's major concern is linked to theories of truth and truth telling, he really begins by asking how people communicate.

What is 'Nature' in this context, and what is its 'State'? Williams's State is a raw and original image of one community. Metaphorically speaking, it is an organic salad without dressing. The State of Nature has no preconception of the world and its nation states and no preconceptions of the West versus the East or the South. It has the advantage of thinking about relationships within this community free from historical conflict or cultural heritage. The story is a fictional abstraction of the State that functions without culture and history. In other words Williams is introducing a fictional genealogy, a narrative that doesn't rely on a cultural phenomenon or a real history. For this reason and at least initially, we will think of the embedded journalist as a fictional character. His or her cultural connotations shall be disregarded. Williams focuses on activities that are taking place inside 'The State of Nature' and explains:

> In setting out my own State of Nature story, I shall invoke some very basic human needs and limitations, notably the need for co-operation, and I shall consider ways in which they are related to discovering and telling the truth. The aim is to derive within the story *values* connected with these activities. (p. 38)

Later on he continues: "The State of Nature Story is a fiction, an imaginary genealogy, which proceeds by way of abstract argument from some very general and, I take it, indisputable assumptions about human powers and limitations" (p. 39). These powers and limitations are dependent on the cooperative nature of the human being. The embedded cameraman Darren Conway explains vividly the co-operative need that he experienced under extreme circumstances. He remembers the crucial moment, when he noticed how his troop of soldiers was on his side. Conway

experienced trust between him and his battalion. Conditions of embeddedness relate to a great extent to the necessity for cooperation.

In his chapter "The State of Nature: A Rough Guide" Williams argues that it is important to begin in highly abstract terms. At the beginning of his story, he is keen to filter out elements that could blur the recognition of these values. These are, as he says, perhaps "*too* abstract" and he stresses that "more will have to be added to them" (p. 42). One of his initial and highly attractive concerns is the cooperative function of language arriving from notions of communication. He says: "In The State of Nature there is a small society of human beings, sharing a common language, with no elaborate technology and no form of writing" (p. 41). Thus, with regard to the idea of the 'purely positional advantage' Williams describes communication patterns that are about "telling other competent language-users things they do not know" (p. 42).

The 'purely positional advantage' suggests an advantage of closeness or immediacy, i.e. being close to what is happening in this place, at this moment in time. Immediacy is the advantage that argues in contrast to the disadvantage of spatial and temporal distance. Embeddedness can be considered a communicative advantage because of its features that provide immediacy in time and in space. But what about distance? Is distance considered a disadvantage? Does distance oppose the concept of embeddedness? The question here is not to weigh up distance against closeness or immediacy – and in fact Williams uses the word 'position' which comprises both. It can be a nearby position and a distant position, both in time and in space. I have argued my point by literally changing position from 'nearby' to 'distant' and by doing so presenting the advantage of both. It is thus important to point out that there are two types of position. One is spatial or temporal, the other refers to position in terms of involvement. They are not the same of course. You can be very close to someone, e.g. in a bus, but you might not be involved in communication with him or her. A lawyer might be involved in a criminal case of a prisoner but he or she is spatially not close to the person. The question remains if the embedded journalist, who is considered as being as close as possible, can have distance as well. In other words, how does the embedded journalist change position and yet find an advantage in it?

In comparison to the culture of journalism's objective to mediate facts in time and space, the State of Nature story does not refer to a particular place or a specific time. However, as Williams claims, this doesn't mean that "the story is one about a society which, remarkably, exists at no time or place" (p. 53). It is interesting to find out how Williams resolves the problem of time and space and how this will influence our understanding of the aspect of journalist's being 'live' (life) under embedded circumstances. Williams looks back to his protagonists, to the people involved in the State of Nature. He makes us, the reader, understand that those fictional people have a concept of time and space, but this concept is not exposed in calculable numbers and nameable places. He explains how "their conceptions of these things are *local*", thus applying a spatial and temporal aspect to the State of Nature (p. 54).

Darren Conway refers to the journalist's focus on what was going on around them as editorially appreciative. 'Going on around us' is primarily a communication between us, that is the participating journalist, the soldiers and the immediate environment around them. 'Going on' also implies that there is something 'taking place'; it is not just a static idea of a place, yet, something alive and therefore communicatively shared live. It is useful to imagine that the embedded journalist, whether a journalist or any other person who is embedded, is first and foremost aware of some aspect of time and space, the local aspect of time and space. The local is the immediate sense of the surrounding and the 'taking place' in it.

The local also reinforces the embedded journalist's conditioned situation as 'informant' who functions within media/military operations. The embedded journalist has a very local relationship to his or her media/military agency, which keeps him or her present in the war for the viewer at home. The embedded journalist is also under severe conditions of battlefield operations, thus in order to survive he or she is closely linked to the media and the military, which reduces the enterprise to a very local and pure experience within a given context. Williams identifies some fundamental issues regarding people's relationship to the local. He says:

> In giving them [the people] even the few capacities and practices that we have already considered, which involve (as I put it) the notion of a purely positional advantage, we have supposed that they have some notions of time and space. They can think of some things as being farther away than others, not just from each of them or from a group of them, but from a place where

they all live. They can think of events as past, and of some of them as longer ago than others. We can reasonably imagine, however, that their thoughts are carried by such concepts only so far. Their ideas of what is beyond a certain distance are vague or non-existent, and although they tell tales of what happened before their grandfathers' time, these tales do not have much of what we would call temporal structure. We can lay down that this is how it is in the State of Nature and there is a reason for us to do so, that we know that this is how it is with actual societies. Human beings can live with very local conceptions of where they are and of what has happened. (p. 54)

My specific interest is not the tales themselves but rather the fact that the stories are narrated from places far away, from events that one does not experience personally. The embedded journalist, who is located in the battlefield, is interested in the present event away from 'home'. It is his or her understanding of the local and the present that can be mediated to the viewer. The viewer in return appreciates the local aspect of the report. For the viewer, the embedded journalist is the ideal insider and for media/military operators the embedded journalist is 'native' to the operative system. I will return shortly to the embedded journalist being native to the system.

The idea of The State of Nature promoted by Williams asks the reader for a radical engagement with his concept. In breaking it up – however slightly – and bringing in the embedded journalist, I ask once again that we simply understand the positioned embedded journalist as a human being informing audiences who do not have his or her 'purely positional advantage'. The embedded journalist in this State is essentially a human figure without conspiratorial intentions. Williams repeats his argument about the precondition of the abstraction and says that all participants in his State "are people, human beings," and he continues: "They are not just recording devices" (p. 43). If they were recording devices, or if they were recording through writing or any other technology (e.g. video), Williams's concept would not be plausible. Thus, the embedded journalist is not only a strategic tool (device) dominating the technical scenario of war but, I am claiming here, primarily to be considered as a human being.

3.5 Policies and Principals

In the lead-up to the Iraq war in 2003 governments in the United States and in Britain postulated arguments for embedded journalism that reinforced ideologies of positional advantage. One argument was to provide truthful information against so-called 'unfriendly' and misleading information given by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. In a meeting at the Pentagon in 2002 US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld claimed: "Having people who are honest and professional see these things and be aware of that is useful. So I consider it not just the right thing to do but also a helpful thing" (Katovsky and Carlson, 2003: p. xiii). In retrospect, a few months after the war in Iraq, Bryan Whitman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs in the Pentagon, said:

> We knew that information warfare would be very much a part of any sort of conflict. We knew that Saddam Hussein was a practiced liar, who used denial and deception to deceive the international community. We looked for ways that could mitigate Saddam's lying, and of course, one of the things that came to my mind was exactly what the reporters, editors and bureau chiefs were asking for, and that was to put independent objective observers throughout the battlefield. (pp. 205–06)

Statements such as these by Rumsfeld and Whitman consider journalists as useful agents and independent objective observers, but also reporters, who have a desire to play a part as witnesses inside the war. I am particularly interested in descriptions such as 'objective' and 'independent' since they confirm the journalistic convention. Generally, what does objectivity imply with regard to journalism? What is the convention, if there is one at all? And what is that convention's link to the embedding of journalists? In order to establish some related arguments and to return to Williams's argument for 'positional advantage', I quickly review the history of journalism's 'norm of objectivity' in the US.

In the journalistic field of the United States the 'norm of objectivity' was introduced in the early 20th century. Michael Schudson (2003), Professor for Communication at the University of California in San Diego unfolds the historical developments of journalistic practices, and describes how in the second half of the 18th century, when

the conflict between Colonial Northern America and England heated up, it "became troublesome for printers," who were editorially responsible, "to be neutral rather than partisan" (p. 73). Partisanship at that time belonged to the norm. Neutrality and objectivity were disregarded, due to political cross-Atlantic relations. About 150 years later in 1922–23 the American Society of Newspaper Editors "adopted a code of ethics called the 'Canons of Journalism' that included a principle of 'sincerity, truthfulness, (and) accuracy' and another of 'impartiality' which included the declaration 'News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind'" (p. 82). What Schudson calls the 'industrial discipline', when introducing the 20th-century norm of objectivity, could currently be extended with the awareness for operational and functional qualities within the news industry. Bryan Whitman for example, is called 'Deputy for Media Operations' (Katovsky and Carlson, 2003: 204).

Media deputies, including Bryan Whitman, who are involved in the organisation of these war operations, agree to the canonical principles by simply proposing the need to argue against the enemy's untrue information. These rather pragmatic methods are being established to defend one's own conventions. So what do these principles and pragmatic methods imply? And how can one understand those principles working with respect to the embedded condition?

Unsurprisingly, sincerity, truthfulness and accuracy stipulated in the 'Canons of Journalism' appear in Williams's *Truth and Truthfulness*. For Williams the main theoretical target is truthfulness and how sincerity and accuracy are dispositions of truthfulness. The discussion brings together the question of 'the local' and the 'purely positional advantage', which has been identified as the embedded journalist's premise, with the canonical journalistic principles established in the 20th century. The question once more then is how 'position' in embedded terms can be claimed to be politically useful with respect to journalism's 'norm in objectivity'? And what is the journalist's 'position' in ideological terms?

Principles like sincerity and accuracy question embedded strategies that are imposed on the war by the West. For Williams these dispositions concern "people, who have beliefs and desires and intentions, and who may or may not express their beliefs" (2002: 44). He argues that both 'Accuracy' and 'Sincerity' are 'virtues of

truth'.[6] Considering everyday usage these virtues have an instrumental value. US government policy makers highlight these canonical norms by pointing to the fact of their strategy being functional and operational.

The first disposition, Accuracy, applies to the people's "acquiring a correct belief in the first place, and their transporting that belief in a reliable form to the pool [of information]" (p. 44). Dispositions of Accuracy, Williams explains, are more like skills and capacities than virtues. Accuracy's instrumental value is clearly distinguishable, as we are dealing with a disposition, which somehow requires specialised skills. In his chapter, "The Elaboration of Accuracy", Williams claims that "people who gather information and act as informants acquire a strategic sense" (p. 123). In the situation of war, military strategies are essential for the soldiers' progress. The embedded journalist with his own strategic sense has to conform to these military strategies in order to get access to the frontline.

The second disposition is Sincerity. Williams underlines that we are dealing with people who are reflective creatures and therefore they have "the opportunity within this structure for deceit and concealment" (p. 44). This means that people who are using the pooled information act in accordance with their motivation and they wait for the right moment to tell someone else about something – ultimately, in Williams's terms, to say something that they believe (p. 44). He continues later:

> It may easily suggest that that Sincerity is largely a matter of the will, while Accuracy is not. This is wrong on both counts. Sincerity basically involves a certain kind of spontaneity, a disposition to come out with what one believes, which may be encouraged or discouraged, cultivated or depressed, but is not itself expressed in deliberation and choice. Equally, Accuracy does involve the will, in the uncontentious and metaphysically unambitious sense of intention, choice, attempts and concentration of effort. (p. 45)

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[6] In spelling 'Accuracy' and 'Sincerity' with capital letters Williams highlights them as 'terms of art'. He says: "I shall call Accuracy and Sincerity the two basic *virtues of truth*. The choice of the term 'virtue' is meant to make a point about the way in which the distinction is to be understood. In everyday usage, it may be natural to think of Sincerity and its relatives as virtues, as being morally commendable, while the disposition of Accuracy, care in acquiring correct information and so on, are more like skills or capacities than virtues. It is hard to say whether this is everyday usage: 'virtue' is now to a considerable extent itself a philosophical term of art, and it is hard to detach it from one or another set of philosophical prejudices" (pp. 44–5).

Williams's concern regarding questions of the will allude to notions of 'position'. On the one hand, position implies the context of the local; on the other hand, position raises ideological concerns. In Williams's terms the idea of the embedded journalist's 'purely positional advantage' highlights accurate positioning. In this context accuracy is a technical matter, as such practised and exposed by the embedded journalist during the production in the battlefield. The second principle of sincerity is disguised by the embedded journalist, but certainly illuminated by his or her natural aliveness. His or her position is the human's live presence in the war. In the war the journalist being alive represents his or her own life most sincerely. The journalistic undertaking has to be regarded as a truly 'alive' experience. Accordingly, the media's 'live' coverage is the soldiers' and the journalist's aliveness. The argument that has been raised before, claiming the embedded journalist as being an insider and informant, emphasises once again the strong link between the embedded journalist, the military and the media, which is all about the advocacy of position. Hence, the concern is to focus on how these principles manifest internally and how they are shared and exposed live via communication technology to the greater pool run by television networks across the globe. The embedded journalist's position is making use of the technical and the natural live involved. It is the *how* as much as the *what* that keeps the 'live' (life) alive.

3.6 The Technical Natural

In consideration of Williams's philosophy, The State of Nature is a safe place for everyone involved. In the battlefield, however, the embedded journalist is essentially concerned about saving his or her own life in order to continue live reporting. Under these conditions the State of Nature (life) collides with structures and innovations of a technical environment (live). At the beginning of this chapter I introduced the relationship between live reportage (being live on air all the time) and the journalist's life (staying alive in the battlefield). What I would like to propose is the journalist's embeddedness being a phenomenon within a technical *and* natural environment. It is an example in which the 'technical natural' is exposed to the audience.

In this context we need to look at Derrida who, being involved in an interview, discusses the notion of the 'factitious' and 'artificial'. In the interview in 1993, which has been transcribed, edited and published in *Echographies of Television* (2002) as "Artifactualities", Derrida describes "what makes actuality in

general". He says:

> The first trait is that actuality is, precisely, *made* [faite]: in order to know what it is made of, one needs nonetheless to know that it is made. It is not given but actively produced, sifted, invested, performatively interpreted by numerous apparatuses which are *factitious* or *artificial*, hierarchizing and selective, always in the service of forces and interests to which subjects and agents (producers and consumers of actuality – sometimes 'philosophers' and always interpreters, too) are never sensitive enough. (p. 3)

Hence, the artifactual stems from actuality and is itself 'precisely, *made*'. The embedded journalist is essentially experiencing the war from inside the battalion's confinement. 'Natural' experience is the best possible description for what I understand as a first-hand experience of the environment that the embedded journalist encounters. The 'natural' or the 'pure' is also the experience in The State of Nature that Williams promotes thoroughly. However, in a necessary complication of Williams's account, in this 'natural' environment there are various kinds of technologies involved, and the journalistic event is artificially produced. In Derrida's understanding it is "actively produced, sifted, invested, performatively interpreted by numerous apparatuses" (p. 3). One of these artifactual encounters is this televised notion of 'live'. Derrida asks:

> How to proceed without denying ourselves these new resources of live television (the video camera, etc.) while continuing to be critical of their mystifications? And above all, while continuing to remind people and to *demonstrate* that the "live" and "real time" are never pure, that they do not give us intuition or transparency, a perception stripped of interpretation or technical intervention. (p. 5)

For Derrida, in comparison to Williams's 'purely positional advantage', the 'live' is never pure. He is very aware of the technical intervention of this 'live', which already interprets the purity of the event that one attempts to call 'natural'. However, as with this project, the interest lies exactly in this pairing of the 'live' (technical)

and the 'pure' (natural). The technically equipped embedded journalist as insider portrays the 'technical natural' most vividly.

In a second interview Derrida expresses suspicion towards a notion of 'live', more precisely, of him being recorded live. This 'live' is part of what Derrida describes as the "actuality effect" (p. 5). The recorded conversation between Derrida and Bernard Stiegler is held at Derrida's home. The intrusion of the technical devices into his private environment and the camera pointing at him and his interviewer creates a significant situation for the content of the discussion. At the beginning of the interview Derrida says:

> Already, I have the impression that our control is very limited. I am at home (chez moi), but with all these machines and these prostheses watching, surrounding, seducing us, the quote "natural" conditions of expression, discussion, reflection, deliberation are to a large extent breached, falsified, warped. (p. 32)

Derrida's somehow romantic homely idea of 'natural conditions' is appealing to the extent that he feels not in control considering the technical intervention. These conditions are different because in privacy ('chez moi') we can now be asked to negotiate with these framing devices that transmit 'live' or play back the recording later. Derrida gives an example that seems closest to him: he talks about an 18th- or 19th-century writer, whose text at "the moment of inscription was not kept alive" (p. 38). It is not only the 'what' but also the 'how', or as he puts it "the trace of the writer, the face, the voice, the hand" (p. 38). The 'how' becomes as much the content of the message as the 'what', and the awareness of 'live' is part of this content.

At home, Derrida asks for pauses 'to think one's own time' and he continues: "An interview should provide a snapshot, a movie still, a freeze frame: This is how this person, on this day, in this place, with these interlocutors, struggles like an animal in a difficult position" (pp. 7–8). At this moment, the notion of 'live' that Derrida is confronted with, forces him to think in time, and time is measured in relation to the live activity. In other words the 'live' asks for an impulsive thought and an instant narrative to which we will return in the final chapter. This 'live' – in Derrida's sense a conflict with the 'natural' and a struggle for all participants – is conveyed in different ways.

Whilst thinking of the struggling animal one is reminded of broadcasting strategies from the battlefields. Earlier I quoted producers from *Fox News*, who asked the embedded correspondent Rick Leventhal to be on air whenever he could. For Leventhal it seemed to be an easy task. His reply was:

> In some cases, I would interview whoever was closest to me because we had a lot of time to fill on some days. I would just grab someone and say, 'Hey how is it going?', 'What are you doing?', 'What's your story?', 'Where are you from?', 'Want to say hi to anybody?', 'Were you involved in the firefight last night?' (Katovsky and Carlson, 2003: 190–91)

These questions address the soldier's well-being, his personal story and his thoughts about friends and family at home. With regard to the spontaneous questions, 'liveness' the natural condition is not necessarily resulting in a struggle between the interviewer and the interlocutor. It is, I would claim, a comfortable way to communicate one's own well-being to the people at home. The embedded journalist includes all soldiers around him in his 'technical natural' activity of being 'live' (alive). In "Story and History" Sebastian Köhler goes one step further and describes the reporter at war as the main actor of war: "Here, we have a protagonist. In the situation of war we ask urgently only about the survival of the protagonist. Considering the angle of the camera, we notice that he hardly ever looks down on us, but is on the same eye level with us or looks up to us while sitting in a trench" (2005: 327, my translation). The embedded journalist, if we agree about him being the protagonist, co-creates the live effect.

In *The Cameraman's Story* (2003), Darren Conway represents the role as protagonist. He attempts to narrate a personal story and requires footage of himself. He films himself sitting in a tent near the Kuwait border or shows his preparation for the next attack while hiding behind a wall. He recalls: "For those instances, just when something was about to happen, when I had a spare moment, I would turn the camera around on myself and try to get a sense of the anticipation of the excitement that was about to come across" (Maier, *Facing,* 2004). The embedded journalist's anticipation of the situation and the technical natural conditions, supported by a small palm-sized camera, which can simply be turned around, suggest a distinctive and

often instinctive behaviour of the participant. The palm-sized camera that he uses as a back-up device is always available for spontaneous usage to film him and others. The advantage of the embedded journalist's presence in the war implies a different appreciation of the time involved. Derrida's request for pauses can be anticipated only under purely 'natural' conditions in a situation like an interview at home. In comparison, the embedded journalist's own time has to be discussed in the light of 'technical natural' conditions, precisely conditions that promote the journalist's 'being in time all the time'. Taking up ideas of the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead in my fourth chapter, I will emphasise this concept of timing. In the battlefield Conway as well as Leventhal are prepared to film and transmit their footage at any time. Being in time all the time means to be prepared, to be ready, but ideally also to be *on air* all the time. Effectively there are no pauses to think one's own time. In other words to think one's own time is to think in time, that is, to think 'going live' all the time. Considering these conditions, we will need to focus on the embedded insider, who is 'native' to the 'technical natural' environment.

3.7 Going 'native'

The idiom 'native' has been brought up in the context of the embedded journalist's ideal 'position'. Within an operative system, i.e. the media, the embedded journalist is a receiver and a sender of information. These communicative notions of embeddedness revolve around forms of involvement and participation. Participation has the advantage to offer immediate knowledge about the activity that surrounds the embedded participant.

In the fields of anthropology and ethnography the participating insider has been discussed for some time. In *The Pleasure of the Crown* (1998) the Canadian anthropologist Dara Culhane says: "Anthropologists sought to immerse themselves in the lives of the people they studied and, in this way, to achieve an 'insider's' point of view." Here, Culhane describes the anthropologist as a Western intellectual, who investigates "in the life – the 'cultures' – of those classified as 'others' in dominant European social theory" (p. 19). In anthropology and ethnography distinctions are made between the 'participating insider', the researcher, and the '(native) informant'. The native informant – also an insider – belongs to the observed environment and therefore participates within the context of research.

It will not be my aim, nor would it be possible, to compare the field of journalism and its power relations within modern politics with the field of anthropology. However, one way to clarify some of the pressing questions concerned with the embedded journalist is to demonstrate notions of insider/outsider, or better, questions about participation, observation and objectivity in the field of anthropology. These concerns refer back to Williams's advantageous position.

Pierre Bourdieu questions the participant, the insider, who is commonly known as the 'participating observer'. In his essay "Participant Objectivation" (2003) that he delivered as a lecture at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London in 2000, he understands 'participating observation' as "the conduct of an ethnologist who immerses her- or himself in a foreign social universe so as to observe an activity, a ritual, or a ceremony while, ideally taking part in it" (p. 281). He continues and explains the inherent difficulty in such conduct, which "presupposes a kind of doubling of consciousness that is arduous to sustain". He asks: "How can one be both subject and object, the one who acts and the one who, as it were, watches himself acting?" (p. 281). Here, we are reminded of Jacques Lacan's account on Paul Valéry's *La Jeune Parque*, discussed at length in Chapter 1. Perhaps the concern here is slightly different, since we are thinking about the one who writes down, photographs or films social phenomena that occur in his presence in an unknown environment. However, it is this being inside which Bourdieu believes to be essential for the ethnographer's research. The sociologist Karen O'Reilly in *Key Concepts in Ethnography* (2009) refers to Raymond L. Gold's distinction (1958) of four positions when undertaking fieldwork: the complete participant, the participant as observer, the observer as participant and the complete observer (O'Reilly, 2009: 153). "The complete participant," she says, which in fact refers back to Bourdieu's criticism about 'participant observation' "is covert and runs the risk of going 'native' and therefore losing any sense of objectivity, while the complete observer is overt and detached" (p. 154). For O'Reilly ethnographic observation involves at least a minimum of participation. And she continues: "Even trying to act as if we are not there would have effects. On the other hand a complete participant is not an ethnographer; he or she is a participant" (p. 154). Bourdieu is not against the active role of the ethnographer in the field. On the contrary, with his discussion he asks the community of anthropologists to invest into the idea of 'participant objectivation',

which demands that the researcher reflects on his or her position in 'the microcosm of anthropologists'. He or she should not objectivise his or her performing in a 'foreign' world, but objectivise "both the anthropologist and the conscious and the unconscious anthropology that she (or he) engages in her anthropological practice" (2003: 283). He says:

> In short, one does not have to choose between participant observation, a necessarily fictitious immersion in a foreign milieu, and the objectivism of the 'gaze from afar' of an observer who remains as remote from himself as from his object. Participant objectivation undertakes to explore not the 'lived experience' of the knowing subject but the social conditions of possibility – and the act of objectivation itself. It aims at objectivizing the subjective relation to the object which, far from leading to a relativistic and more-or-less anti-scientific subjectivism, is one of the conditions of genuine scientific objectivity. (p. 282)

Bourdieu recalls his own experience in the field and demonstrates his view on insider participation by comparing his research in the southwest of France, where he grew up, with his work in Kabylia, Algeria. In Béarn, his place of origin, Bourdieu adopted a position of 'distant intimate'. He explains:

> I realized very early on that, in my fieldwork in Kabylia, I was constantly drawing on my experience of the Béarn society of my childhood, both to understand the practices that I was observing and to defend myself against the interpretations that I spontaneously formed of them or that my informants gave me. (p. 288)

Bourdieu refers indirectly to the closeness that he has to the people in his home village, so close that he does not even have to ask for their personal and collective history. In contrast, he speaks about an awareness of his own transformation over time undergone through the experience of the social world, which indicates a distance that he has to his place of origin. Thus, the real object, the life in Béarn was as he says 'the subject of objectivation' and since "one ceases to 'live' it, [one] simply and instead takes it as an object" (p. 289). Bourdieu took his experience from

France, his distant relationship to the familiar peasant life, to the unfamiliar peasant context in Algeria, in order to keep a critical distance to his increasingly close encounter with the people from Kabylia. For Bourdieu the idea was to invert the insider and outsider position. In his preface to *The Logic of Practice* (1990 [1980]) he says:

> […] what had to be done was not to sweep away the distance through spurious primitivist participation, but to objectify the objectifying distance and the social conditions that make it possible, such as the externality of the observer, the objectifying techniques that he uses, etc. (p. 14)

Bourdieu's critical writing works *with* the notion of practice – the research in the field, which for him stresses the valuable distinction between the logic of practice of both researcher and informant, that is participation, and the logic of theory of the sociologist. Once again, I quote Bourdieu:

> Because theory – the word itself says so – is a spectacle, which can only be understood from a viewpoint away from the stage on which the action is played out, the distance lies perhaps not so much where it is usually looked for, in the gap between cultural traditions, as in the gulf between two relations to the world, one theoretical, the other practical. (p. 14)

Bourdieu unravels a freedom that he has by distancing himself from the world, which those, the Béarnaise for example with whom he is familiar, do not have. This is the social gap that he alludes to. He was forced he says, "to question both the generic and the particular aspects of [his] relationship to the object (without […] introducing any self-indulgence)" (p. 15).

Performance in Bourdieu's case is carried out as objectification of the generic relationship between the observer and the observed. The discussion that Bourdieu presents is not about a dilemma of being inside or outside cultures, but more an inside or outside of practice, and accordingly an inside or outside of theory. Bourdieu's awareness of this gap between these relations to the world, the theoretical and the practical, emphasises the critical context the observer in social sciences deals with. It relates back to Williams's argument about having a position, which questions

the idea of spatial or temporal distance and closeness. Having a 'purely positional advantage' emphasises the involvement or non-involvement of the observer to his or her subject. And again, this is not about being spatially or timely close to someone or something. It connects up with the key argument that I introduced at the beginning of the chapter. The argument is that condition and strategy bear no tension in the field of embedded journalism, since there is no gap between condition and strategy, between what the journalist is asked to do and what he or she intends to do. This tension in general can exist only if one can establish in Bourdieu's terms a slipping in and out of practice, which is a slipping in and out of theory.

Inside and outside positioning in journalism are thus commonly discussed and criticised in the context of objective reporting. But under these given circumstances of closeness in the battlefield the embedded journalist can identify with the soldiers and cannot establish a required distance in order to report objectively on the situation. This at least would be the fear of the critics of embedded journalism. In comparison with Bourdieu's 'participating observer', there is no doubt about some form of participation of the journalist in the field. This so-called 'objectivity' is of course always subjective. But what would be the limit of participation in order to secure objectivity? Is it a question of 'fictitious immersion' of the journalist? The limits of freedom for the journalist within military operations or within strategic movements of the troops are given. History in war journalism tells us how journalistic attachment and restriction have always been decided prior the event. Journalists' attempts to re-narrate some of their experiences in book, film or online diary form may suggest maintaining a distance from the event. However, journalists are far from making experiments, as Bourdieu describes it, to test their observational position. War correspondents are 'going native', when asked to participate journalistically in the war. They are technically and naturally native to the media environment, and there is no 'fictitious immersion' required. Hence, in journalism this relationship of condition and strategy, in other words the embedded journalist being an insider specialist, is simply exploited.

The embedding of journalists has produced numerous controversial discussions on television and among media scholars. Debates implying conflicts of belief and disbelief in information, of neutrality and propaganda, of identification with and

alienation from the subject or subject matter, are politically effective. However, these disputes have taken attention away from embeddedness as a 'technical natural' concept, which implies an even greater effect: the turning of the television-territory that is the 'living room' into a territory for 'natural' human interest stories, and of the battle field, which we are aware of as being a field of media expansion, into various microcosms and pools of information that offer spectacular live (life) narratives about human individuals. The live exposure portrays the embedded war reporter as a human figure who is concerned as much about being 'live' as about staying alive.

CHAPTER 4: LIVE

In this final chapter I return from the embedded journalist to the artist and the established concept of live exposure, which reconsiders concerns of immediacy and presence in terms of its intrinsic mediation. I will introduce the terminology of 'liveness' that describes conditions of live exposure. In the context of liveness and in relation to the first chapter I will ask again, how the artist deals with the critical tension between condition and the strategy of embeddedness. This chapter links back to the technical other of the embedded subject, but this time considering the natural aliveness of the artist, who is also the protagonist of his or her work. The notion of embeddedness highlights many new questions with regard to a technical and natural order. The questions that derive from these reconsiderations refer to the embedded producer's negotiations between aspects of the production, the concept of the work and most importantly the process of thought – that is, a reflective notion of thought – with respect to the event to which the producer belongs. Hence, the embedded artist is concerned with the contradiction of "holding nature and looking at it" (Whitehead, 2004: 14), whilst being interested in the event as it passes along. In the context of the event's passing and what I call the 'production as event', which refers to reflections of the artist on his or her implication in the production process, I am going to consider Christian Jankowski's video work and the concept of the event postulated by the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. The reason to contextualise Jankowski's work with Whitehead's theory is to expand on the question of content with regard to the embeddedness that is involved in making the piece happen.

Thus, this final investigation into the notion of embeddedness pays close attention to new challenges faced by artists who, like Jankowski, are strategically aware of embedded conditions. The notion of 'live', as previously discussed in Chapter 3, is a technical concern. Jankowski in particular but also the artist Erik van Lieshout communicate live. This live is the restlessness within events, the being in time all the time, that these artists sense. In other words, the live is nature that cannot be held still. It is the live as it happens, and not just the live advertised by television companies as 'real time' and 'in time' broadcasting. The live has a technical momentum, but at this point also a natural one. In this technical environment the project offers a new understanding for embeddedness's intrinsic exposure to the

world and how the embedded artist is negotiating between the situated self, the framing of the other and the event, which in Whiteheadian terms constantly passes.

In consideration of the embedded artist's participation and his or her immediate reflection on the event, one important question has been raised indirectly in the Introduction: what are these critical moments of perception and reflection that come together under live conditions? In *The Concept of Nature* (2004), Whitehead addresses this concern and asks about how one thinks about nature, and how one perceives it as a passing event in contrast to scientists, who tend to define nature as an entity. In his text, the 'passage of nature' evolves as the most significant idea, that is "nature as an event present for sense-awareness and essentially passing" (p. 14). Thus, my concern will not be nature in a scientific sense, but the proposed link to its eventfulness and the event's significance for embedded practices. Part of this concern is Whitehead's invitation to distinguish between two important elements deriving from the notion of sense-perception. The first is sense-awareness, the second is the notion of thought, which in his view is more difficult to justify as an element of sense-perception. The twofold distinction however is significant, since it emphasises the difference between the immanence of awareness, which is the condition of embeddedness, and a reflective notion of thought, which is the strategy.

Coming back to Jankowski and his interest in embedded strategies, how does he negotiate between what is passing and the simultaneity of the event's exposure? In the video piece *The Holy Artwork* (2001) Jankowski takes part as artist but also as protagonist in a televangelical sermon at the Harvest Fellowship Church in Texas. In many of Jankowski's works in which he makes use of the broadcasting media, the artist is interested in the representation of his influential partaking in a given situation. However, Jankowski's event is not simply 'present for sense-awareness and passing'. His event, during its own live happening, is thought about, interrupted, made explicit, whilst being exposed. *Embeddedness is not just part of the event and passing along, but primarily exposed to the world*.

4.1 The 'live' Artist

In Christian Jankowski's artwork, the artist is crucial to the progress of the work. He is not only the maker, i.e. the filmmaker of his videos, but also a complicit participant in the work. In his video piece *Telemistica* (1999) Jankowski phoned a number fortune tellers on Italian television and requested prophetical responses about

his near future and the success of the artwork he was currently making. In the exhibition catalogue *Christian Jankowski: Everything Fell Together* (2005) the curator Jeff Fleming, who initiated a retrospective presentation of Jankowski's work in the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa in 2005, recalls some of the questions that Jankowski asked on the phone: "Is this idea for an artwork a good one? Will my work when it is finished be beautiful? Will the public like it?" (p. 10). Jankowski then recorded these questions and conversations on video. In the catalogue essay "Christian Jankowski: The Big Wow", Fleming explains how "the very process of creating *Telemistica* is the completed artwork" (p. 10). The following transcript is one example of the conversations Jankowski had in early 1999. On the screen we see Maestro Vitale sitting at a desk, looking into the camera and talking to Jankowski on the phone:

> Jankowski: (calling Maestro Vitale and speaking Italian with a heavy German accent) *Hello? … Good evening!*
>
> Vitale: *Good evening!*
>
> Jankowski: *My name is Christian.*
>
> Vitale: *Christian!?*
>
> Jankowski: *Yes … ehmm … I have a question about my work … yes. Excuse me … I am German … please excuse me … I don't speak Italian very well.*
>
> Vitale: *Me neither, we have something in common!*
>
> Jankowski: *Can you please speak slowly? Yes … ehmm … I have an idea for my work and I would like to know if this idea that came to me is good, if it is interesting, if it is sufficient and original!*
>
> Vitale: *Alright, where are you calling me from, Christian?*
>
> Jankowski: *From Venice.*
>
> Vitale: *How old are you?*
>
> Jankowski: *31.*
>
> Vitale: *Do you know your sign?*
>
> Jankowski: *Ehmmm … I am a Taurus!*
>
> Vitale: *So, did you recently have your birthday, or is it coming up?*
>
> Jankowski: *Birthday?*
>
> Vitale: *Count the years … practically when one … ehmmm … if you were born on the 7th of May, the 5th … When were you born?!*

Jankowski: *Ah! Yes, yes, yes, yes, the 68 … 6 … 8 … in the year 68.*

Vitale: *Yes, but the day of the month.*

Jankowski: *Ahh, yes! April … the 21st of April.*

Vitale: *21st of April! Oh yes, it's the last day…*

Jankowski: *Yes, yes! Please excuse me!*

Vitale: *No, no, don't worry! But even in Germany you know something about astrology, right!?*

Jankowski: *Yes!*

Vitale: *Also about magicians … they also exist … okay. So … why did you call me?*

Jankowski: *I am an artist and I'm thinking about a new art piece.*

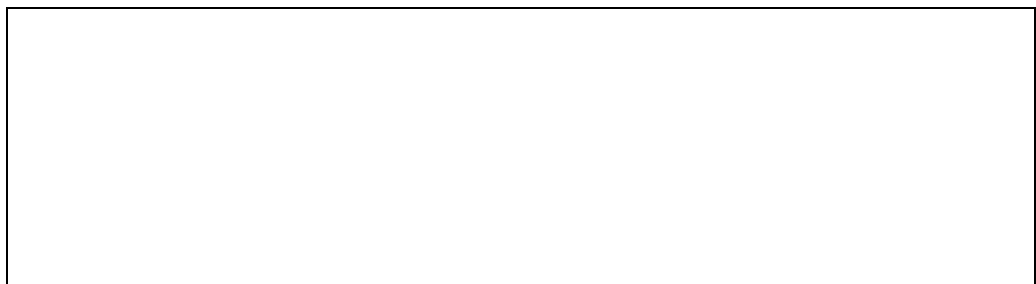(Vitale lays down the tarot cards.)

Fig. 11: Christian Jankowski, *Telemistica* (Video Stills), 1999,
in Jankowski, C. (2005) *Everything Fell Together*, Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center

Vitale: *Well then … the idea that you have, Christian, is definitely positive.*

Jankowski: *Ah! Good!*

Vitale: *Something important surrounds you, or your artistic work – a person of the female sex?*

Jankowski: *Yes!*

Vitale: *You see … because this is very important for your future. It is really a point of departure where you will do things with much skill and dexterity. The card of the magician also means … the magician is a starting point, dexterity and skill, and there will be a renewal … like if you would start to do something fundamentally new.* (Jankowski, 2005: Title No. 22)

Jankowski's embeddedness in the live broadcasting of fortune-telling questions not only the commercial television industry to which the artist employs a circular

strategy of production, but a circular critique on his currency as an artist, who uses the media without, in this case, the media's awareness of his complicity. This is what I call embeddedness. Fleming's interest in the circular strategy of production derives from a particular attention in the artwork's tradition of the mystical and the ritual which, considering Walter Benjamin (1992 [1936]), has been absent since the establishment of mechanically reproduced art works like film and video. In Jankowski's video works Fleming recognises the skill of the artist to readdress the ritual in today's media production, particularly in film and television. Fleming says: "Ritual is still a means of inserting mystery into the work of art, but it is also a tool for communicating to the viewer a personal belief system, whether religious or secular" (Jankowski, 2005: 9). However, some questions immediately follow: What is so mystical about Jankowski's intervention when phoning up tarot card readers? Isn't it an attempt to take away the mystical from the magicians? Is Fleming seduced by the work's title? Is Jankowski really interested in the foretelling that promises him success? In other words, would the work be unsuccessful if most replies predicted failure? These are questions that the work provokes. But these questions are not mystical in terms of the viewer's reception of the piece. It is important to point out that one is not experiencing any otherworldly dimension in *Telemistica*. There might be a critical stance in Jankowski's work towards issues of the mystical, but the inherent concern of the work is far from being mystical in a traditional sense of the ritual and the artwork. The artist Jankowski has deliberately chosen to interact within the event of his production, and by doing so critiquing humorously his own implication in the process of the work. Also by being implicated – or in this context embedded – the artist raises questions about what Fleming calls 'personal belief systems', but yet again, these questions do not result in the mystical. Accordingly, the title of the catalogue *Christian Jankowski: Everything Fell Together* and the essay headline "Christian Jankowski: The Big Wow" are structurally significant, in so far as they start with the artist's name and, if one wishes to believe, make him responsible for the headline, although we cannot call him the publisher of the catalogue or author of the essay. In the video *Telemistica* it is the act of presenting him as this 'live' and implicated figure at the other end of the line, not once but on several occasions with various fortune tellers. This is how far the ritual goes. But what exactly is the live in Jankowski's *Telemistica* despite the obvious fact that the artist has been 'live on air' with the fortune tellers?

The communicative feedback between the artist and the TV show is set up as if the sender, which is the television programme, is now the receiver of the artist's input. Jankowski invests in new rules without changing the show's official format. However, this concept of sender/receiver exchange can be identified only by the connoisseur watching the compiled work, who understands the artist is playing a game with the show, asking fortune tellers for their prophesies with regard to the in progress piece of work. In the end the work, its success or failure can be identified by the connoisseur in the context of art and not by the fortune tellers in the context of the televised show. It may be true that the work, which primarily portrays the fortune tellers on screen, represents a tele-magical world (the voice of Jankowski is audible only off screen); however, Jankowski's implication in terms of 'liveness' as artist is critical in comparison to the magician's visual presence on the screen. This means, the strategy of embeddedness, which is liveness, can be read, seen or heard. It is the artist's implication in particular that is critical. The technical 'live on air', which the artist used for his playful concept, is his liveness represented in the video piece, but also for Jankowski it is the inherent consequence in terms of success or failure (there will be success or there will be failure, mediocre prophesies are boring!).

The focus on liveness, and here I would agree with Fleming, highlights the ritual that is involved in these kinds of televised productions. Jankowski makes use of the ritual in the TV show, and he engages with it in a pseudo ritualistic way. Thus, Jankowski is playing a game. In an interview he speaks of how games that we play in our life don't necessarily have the immediate effect of punishment in case of failure. On the other hand he claims, that an artist who produces a bad piece of art may certainly be punished for it. What he does not acknowledge, but what he possibly means, is the immediate punishment and judgement of art by the media. In this interview he is not interested in commenting on the distinction of good or bad art, and he is not necessarily interested in the judgement of art, but he is interested in the relationship of games that we play, e.g. as children, and games that he plays as an artist, in which he invests in opportunities in a defined context (Schröck, 2005: 134). Jankowski's humorous and clever intention is more than simply receiving feedback on success or failure. He is tackling a world, the art world, in which he is embedded and in which he is exposed live. It recalls Jacques Derrida's suspicion towards a notion of live, which we discussed in the previous chapter in conjunction with the significant pairing of the technical 'live' and the natural 'pure', accomplished by the

embedded journalist. Jankowski is the 'live artist', who plays and reflects on his part in the art world, by means of the technical media environment. Thus, in the case of *Telemistica* he is not just embedded in the art world, its judgements, histories and critiques, but once he is on air with the fortune teller he is also live, embedded in a televisual game that he initiated. Therefore he is taking the consequences immediately and deliberately. Could this critical yet playful engagement with the media and his provocations of immediate judgement on art achieve a critique of art in general? Is it simply portraying Jankowski's thinking of art's embeddedness, a form of liveness from within the field of art?

The notion of liveness that includes 'live thought' is crucial to the work of Jankowski. In order to investigate in detail in Jankowski's deliberate provocation of the event's happening and its simultaneous exposure, it is necessary to take a closer look at live thought, which leads to looking at Whitehead's *The Concept of Nature*. Jankowski, being live on air, senses what is going on during the event but there is no holding on to it. At this moment he is asked to think live, and that is the exposure of liveness. How does thinking live derive and distinguish itself from notions of reflective thought?

4.2 Live Thought and Embeddedness

Live thought makes use of Whitehead's propagated distinction between what he calls 'sense-awareness' and 'thought'. Under embedded circumstances 'our bodily life', a term that Whitehead refers to is part of the course of nature. Nature and 'bodily life' are both eventful. Thus, what we are thinking about is the relationship between the bodily life's immanence of awareness and the living notion of reflective thought. Both of these are significant for embedded practices – non-separable – and culminate in what has been articulated as live thought. Hence, the immanence of exposure and the immanence of awareness under embedded circumstances emphasise live thought.

It has already been said at the beginning of this chapter that the reason to include Whitehead's thinking and to contextualise it with Jankowski's work is to expand on the question of content with regard to the embeddedness that is involved in making the work happen. Thus, the discussion on Jankowski's embeddedness asks for a comprehensive understanding of Whitehead's notion of 'sense-perception'. How does he distinguish between 'sense-perception' and 'sense-awareness'? And

how does he argue for 'sense-awareness', which is, as he says, impenetrable by thought? He claims:

> Sense-perception has in it an element which is not thought. It is a difficult psychological question whether sense-perception involves thought; and if it does involve thought, what is the kind of thought which it necessarily involves. Note that it has been stated above that sense-perception is an awareness of something which is not thought. Namely, nature is not thought. I call this factor 'sense-awareness.' Accordingly the doctrine that natural science is exclusively concerned with homogeneous thoughts about nature does not immediately carry with it the conclusion that natural science is not concerned with sense-awareness.
>
> However, I do assert this further statement; namely that though natural science is concerned with nature which is the terminus of sense-perception, it is not concerned with the sense-awareness itself. (Whitehead, 2004: 4)

Whitehead claims that natural sciences are generally concerned about nature, that they think about nature, or in other words that they perceive nature. Let's rethink his claim one more time. The terminus sense-perception, that is 'thinking about nature', has the ingredient which is 'not thought'. "Nature", Whitehead says, "is not thought." And this ingredient he calls 'sense-awareness'. How can one think of 'sense-awareness' being 'not thought' and once more, why is it of interest for this particular investigation into embeddedness?

As I will now show, Whitehead says that sense-awareness is incommunicable, whereas thought "is compensated by the fact that it is communicable" (p. 13). Accordingly, embeddedness is informed by at least two related ideas: one is embeddedness being communicated by means of thought, the other embeddedness being primarily informed by the idea of sense-awareness, which is not communicable. The awareness towards communicating thought has to be considered only if one understands the discussion that surrounds Whitehead's idea of sense-awareness. In this sense-awareness nature is always passing. It is only sense-awareness which is nature and not thought. In order to proceed with the discussion

and before returning to the notion of embeddedness, I will look at Whitehead's detailed arguments concerning sense-awareness. He says:

> The process of discrimination in sense-awareness has two distinct sides. There is the discrimination of facts into parts, and the discrimination of any part of fact as exhibiting relations to entities which are not parts of fact though they are ingredients in it. Namely the immediate fact for awareness is the whole occurrence of nature. It is nature present for sense-awareness, and essentially passing. There is no holding nature still and looking at it. We cannot redouble our efforts to improve our knowledge of the terminus of our present sense-awareness; it is our subsequent opportunity in subsequent sense-awareness which gains the benefit of our good resolution. Thus the ultimate fact for sense-awareness is an event. This whole event is discriminated by us into partial events. We are aware of an event which is our bodily life, of an event which is the course of nature within this room, and of a vaguely perceived aggregate of other partial events. This is the discrimination in sense-awareness of facts into parts. (p. 14)

Whitehead says there is always 'the discrimination in sense-awareness of facts into parts'. And he stresses that 'there is no holding nature and looking at it' considering the discrimination in sense-awareness. Now these considerations of nature's passing are most important to the idea of embeddedness. Under embedded circumstances 'our bodily life' is part of 'the course of nature' within this environment. In this sense, bodily life and environment are both eventful. However, in the context of this investigation it is the termini of thought with regard to embeddedness that makes it debatable. In other words, thought that has entered nature informs the current debate on embeddedness. The situated 'bodily life', namely the embedded life, has to be considered in terms of thought and in terms of sense-awareness. The latter idea is that embeddedness informed by sense-awareness is commonly unexposed, since it is incommunicable. Whitehead distinguishes even further and says:

> The termini for thought are entities, primarily with bare individuality, secondarily with properties and relations ascribed to them in the procedure of thought; the termini for sense-awareness are factors in the fact of nature,

primarily relata and only secondarily discriminated as distinct individualities. (p. 12)

Though it seems that Whitehead draws a line by making a conceptual distinction between termini for thought and termini for sense-awareness, one needs to point out how these termini exist in relation to each other. It is possible to argue how termini for thought are established through termini for awareness. Whitehead illustrates the related distinction with the example of the colour 'red':

> Thus for thought 'red' is merely a definite entity, though for awareness 'red' has the content of its individuality. The transition from the 'red' of awareness to the 'red' of thought is accompanied by a definite loss of content, namely by the transition from the factor 'red' to the 'entity' red. This loss in the transition to thought is compensated by the fact that thought is communicable whereas sense-awareness is incommunicable. (p. 13)

Hence, one of natural science's concerns is to be communicable. Similarly, one of cultural production's concerns is to be communicable. The critical focus is on the transition from sense-awareness to thought that is communicable. Both of these concepts, namely sense-awareness and thought are not separable ideas and they are not separable in the context of embeddedness either, since both make embeddedness, at least in a critical context, an event. *In other words, there is condition (sense-awareness) and there is strategy (thought).* They are not split in two, as if one could discuss thought independently from sense-awareness or vice versa. On the one hand it is helpful to think about embeddedness in relation to sense-awareness, which is the situation in a given or namely natural context that does not involve thought. On the other hand one has to think of strategic elements in the context of embeddedness, which imply, for example, the embedded artist's thinking and communicable senses, accompanied by termini of thought in relation to these given contexts.

In retrospect, the Whiteheadian sense-awareness is key to the artist's negotiation with the 'live' condition. The live thought is not without sense-awareness, even if sense-awareness is not thought. What I propose with the example of Jankowski's *Telemistica* is the artist's negotiation during production with live thought. Thus, live

thinking leads the artist's production towards a result while making it – live. Jankowski is on the phone, perhaps watching the person that he is talking to 'live on air'. At this moment Jankowski senses the impact of being 'live on air'. However, his sensing does not come by surprise. Jankowski was thinking about the circular condition prior the production. Eventually, he uses this technical condition to present liveness as a strategy and to engage critically with his own embedded position as the artist.

4.3 On Air

It is difficult, yet important to clarify how in Jankowski's case critique is inherent in the making of the work, whilst being on the phone and 'live on air'. Accordingly, it is also difficult, yet important to say how live thought, which derives from Whitehead's critique, relates to Jankowski's awareness in the situation that he is implicated in. We have learned from Whitehead how "the ultimate fact for sense-awareness is an event". In Jankowski's work live thought, communicated and exposed, is essential for the project. In the case of *Telemistica* it is Jankowski, thinking out loud and in conversation with the fortune tellers, wondering how people will perceive the work.

Telemistica is one amongst other pieces in Jankowski's oeuvre that demonstrates the complexities of embedded working strategies. Two years after *Telemistica* Jankowski collaborated with the American televangelist Pastor Peter Spencer. The catalogue *Everything Fell Together* provides a good synopsis of *The Holy Artwork* (2001):

> Jankowski films Pastor Peter Spencer's televangelical sermon at the Harvest Fellowship Church. Pastor Spencer invites Jankowski up onto the stage, where he falls down as though possessed. Pastor Spencer's own camera crew takes over the filming, which from there on is executed in full-blown televangelist style. The artist's collapse is used by the Pastor as a means to sermonize on art, creativity, and religion to his congregation, his viewers, and the art world. He prays on Jankowski's pre-arranged request for *The Holy Artwork*, and asks that it be a bridge between art, religion, and television. The

sermon is broadcast on Pastor Spencer's own show three times. (Jankowski, 2005: Title No. 23)
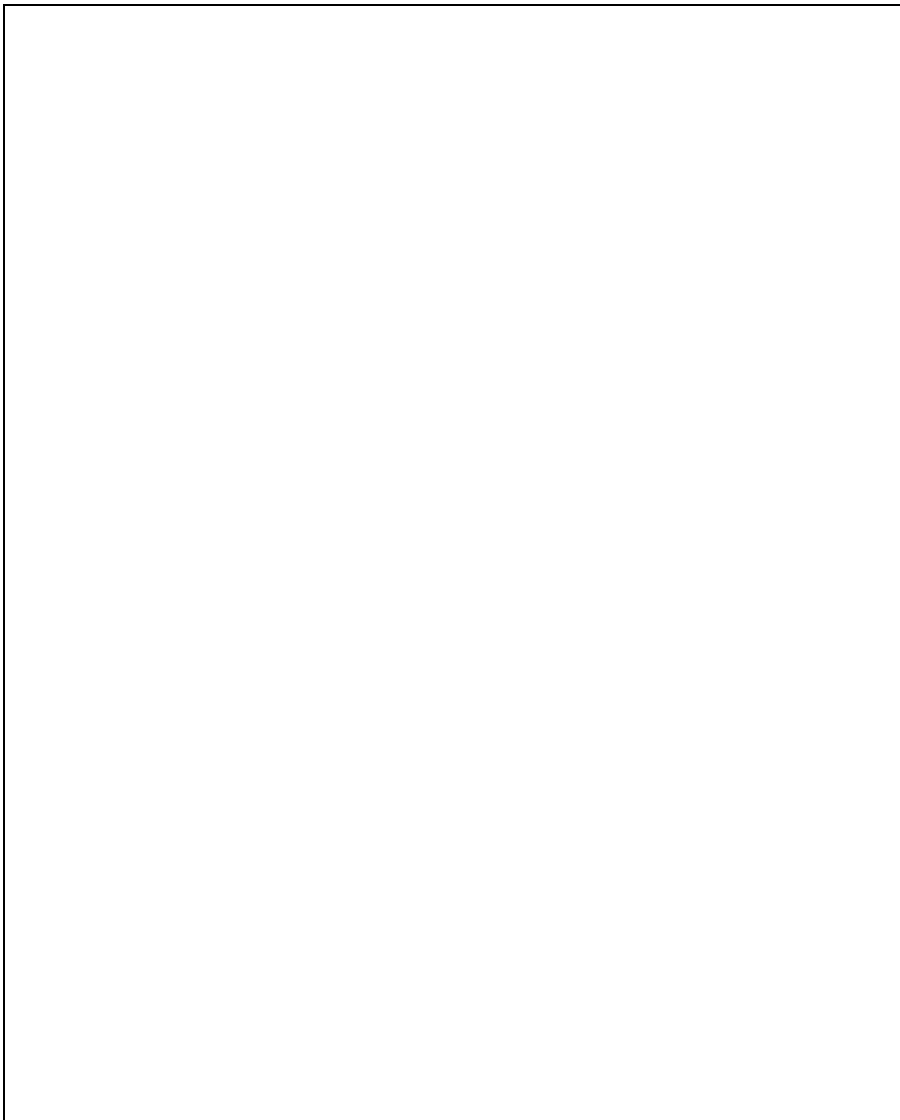
Fig. 12: Christian Jankowski, *The Holy Artwork* (Video stills), 2001
in Jankowski, C. (2005) *Everything Fell Together*, Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center

In the catalogue the technical specification describes the *The Holy Artwork* as a television broadcast, performance and colour DVD. In this combination the embedded strategy of Jankowski unfolds. The combination 'broadcast, performance and DVD' is misleading, yet significant at the same time. Again, as with *Telemistica*, the embedded strategy becomes apparent for the connoisseur, who watches the video. From a conventional point of view, there is a studio audience witnessing the performance on stage, as well as the television audience at home watching the

sermon. The art audience is watching what the television audience is watching, which is Jankowski's work that includes the performance and the broadcast recording. Only the final result on DVD reveals the complexity of this work, a kind of mediated layering. Thus, a simple trick informs the embedded nature of the artist, which is the juxtaposing point of view of Jankowski's camera and all studio cameras.

Let's repeat the scene again: Jankowski sits in the audience while filming the stage on which Pastor Peter Spencer begins his sermon. The image of the handheld camera is wobbly and the sound slightly distorted. In the distance one can hear Pastor Spencer, who invites Jankowski onto the stage. There, Jankowski collapses and falls to the ground. At that moment the perspective switches from Jankowski's camera, which he still holds in his hand to the studio cameras. The viewer witnesses a layered representation of the performance. Pastor Spencer devotes his entire sermon to *The Holy Artwork*. He describes passionately the work of art, which the studio and the art audience experience as the work of art, even if they experience it differently. He praises the artist and says, how "the real attention goes to the one who is behind the camera – the Spielbergs, the other great directors. Those are understood as genius – not the camera" (Jankowski, 2005: Title No. 23). Jankowski is behind the camera, as well as in front of the cameras. Jankowski uses his own camera and all available studio technology for his embedded condition, and he uses it to unravel his implication as *The Holy Artwork*. Thus, if we were asked to think about the mystical in relation to the ritual in *Telemistica*, we can now ask about the holiness in *The Holy Artwork*.

In this piece the holiness or religiosity is secondary. For Jankowski Pastor Spencer's televangelical sermon is reason to make the camera – or better, the cameras – the protagonists of the piece. Accordingly, attention is paid to the production of the video piece itself. It also means that it is not just the person behind the camera, since it is the person with the camera or the person between the cameras, who makes the work happen. The event had been planned in advance: Pastor Spencer had been introduced to the idea and had been asked to contribute with his own interpretative words to *The Holy Artwork*. These preparatory operations reveal Jankowski's directorial thinking prior the production. Thought went into the piece before its making, before it went live. This means that thought went into what then becomes eventful. The preparatory thought that one can read from Jankowski's work does not

however undermine what is so crucial to the embedded artist's condition during production; it is what makes embeddedness so observable. Thought prior to the production enables live thought during the production. Undoubtedly, Whitehead enables us to understand nature's passing through his distinction of sense-awareness and thought when he says that "we cannot redouble our efforts to improve our knowledge of the terminus of our present sense-awareness". In other words, in Jankowski's embedded presence, there is no 'holding on to it', yet it is exactly the preparation and the thinking that makes the event critical. Hence my related theory is a critique of Whitehead.

Despite the preparatory directorial activities, Jankowski's embodiment of holiness is not performed, but is rather the demonstration of his implication as artist and filmmaker in this production. He finds himself in a role, since he plays the role of the embedded artist. For example, he plays the innocent observer when sitting in the audience. In doing so he simply confirms his implication. In the end, Jankowski returns to his seat and we watch the recording of his camera again. The beginning and the end of *The Holy Artwork* make the religious and the spiritual meaningless, since it is solely Pastor Spencer's sermon that represents the religious and not Jankowski's performance. Initially, the viewer of the DVD is in the same seat as Jankowski, watching the spectacle from his perspective. Only later is the viewer the observer of Jankowski's method and strategy. Jankowski invites the audience to be part of his technical experience, i.e. to watch the scene through his viewfinder. After that the audience is unleashed to the embedded presentation of the broadcasting image, while watching Jankowski on stage, being presented as *The Holy Artwork*. It is worth mentioning again how Jankowski places himself between two producing components. He is the one filming and he is the one being filmed at the same time. The final structure of the video – beginning, middle and end – emphasise the artist's implication.

Hence, belief systems, as Fleming points out, and the media environment that supports these belief systems are an indication but not the critique of Jankowski's artwork. There is the representation of the discourse, the religious belief behind the holy sermon, but predominantly there is the artist with the camera: he witnesses the sermonic performance and performs his technical natural intervention.

4.4 The Circular Critique

Fleming also emphasises the 'circular process of invention', which Jankowski uses regularly in his work. He says: "In this circular process, the final product results directly from the actions of its creation, thereby commenting on the concept of simultaneity" (Jankowski, 2005: 11). Fleming gives art historical examples, such as Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) and Gary Hill's *Hole in the Wall* (1974), but does not investigate any further into the theoretical concept of simultaneity. It is very much Jankowski's embeddedness that makes these circular processes readable. He is the connecting point between all technologies that are in use. It is not the technology as such, which suggests simultaneity, but Jankowski's embeddedness within these technological systems that present the critical aspect of the circular. In Fleming's terms the simultaneity stems from 'actions of its creation', but more precisely one should argue, it is the live thought and therefore simultaneous action that enables the artist to work critically within the work that is live. Whitehead expands on the given complexity of simultaneity, and, again, for Whitehead the starting point is nature. He says:

> Any concept of all nature as immediately known is always a concept of some duration though it may be enlarged in its temporal thickness beyond the possible specious present of any being known to us as existing within nature. Thus simultaneity is an ultimate factor in nature, immediate for sense-awareness. (Whitehead, 2004: 56)

Sense-awareness requires the presence of the one that perceives, or the one that attends nature in awareness. Embeddedness and sense-awareness are linked to the concept of simultaneity, to an extent that *the discourse is not the content*, like the mystical or the holy, but the circular method, the work itself as event.

There is one more aspect that highlights the importance of embedded and circular strategies in Jankowski's work: these are aspects of collaboration. These collaborations are again only critical, in so far as Jankowski is embedded within these formations of people or institutions. Fleming claims these collaborations are critical because they question 'the boundary between low and high art'. He continuous: "the moment at which the everyman going about his everyday business

steps into the process of creating an artwork blurs any separation between art and the everyday" (Jankowski 2005: 11). Fleming's claim seems to make sense with regard to Pastor Spencer's case, but Pastor Spencer is not creating the artwork and he is not stepping out of his everyday business, because, as we can see, he is doing what he always does, praying to his studio and television audience. Although Fleming talks about blurring boundaries, I would suggest by contrast that the work itself and the collaboration is simply a means for the artist Jankowski to produce his embeddedness and make the viewer aware of these conditions at the same time. The artist collaborates, he invites Pastor Spencer to participate, he makes use of the televangelical production, but the artist certainly does not give away the responsibilities of making the work. The collaboration effectively reinforces the strategy of the circular. The collaborative participant is the addressee of the work's concept, and since he or she is participating in it, he or she is also the receiver of the work at the same time. This simply means that there are different receivers of the work, some of whom are participating, and some of whom are not participating, i.e. the connoisseur looking at the work. All participants however are the basis for Jankowski's circular critique. In those works, in which Jankowski appears, he and all participants depend collaboratively on each other. The participant – aware or unaware – awaits the artist's introduction to the concept, and Jankowski expects feedback from his participants. Since Jankowski is always the initiator and connoisseur of his work in relation to the given context, the work is continuously circling around him, but with him being a part of the circulation. This internal critique is possible because of Jankowski's embedded participation in existing media structures. The pre-existence of the work, meaning the context, like the televangelical sermon, and the work initiated by Jankowski, underpins once again the durational and simultaneous aspects of this artwork. They enhance our reading of the embedded strategy. *The Holy Artwork* suggests that we are watching what Jankowski is recording, and that the studio audience is watching what the TV audience is witnessing, while the TV audience is witnessing what we are watching, but again we are also watching what Jankowski is recording. While watching what others are watching, Jankowski tries to *work out* the situation by himself, but at the same time he makes us see what he is *working on*. The Whiteheadian 'temporal thickness' in a technological context is Jankowski's spectacular attraction, in which he is part inventor, part participator and part performer.

On the one hand it seems Jankowski does not play a fateful game when partaking in a given situation. His work is meticulously planned. It is planned to such an extent that the circular critique sheds light on the pre-planned nature of his work. On the other hand, however, one might suggest that fate is involved when watching *Telemistica*. Looking at work by another artist, who also performs in front of a camera, I will now investigate in more detail the notion of fate and control. Erik van Lieshout's videos depend on him losing control in situations in which he participates. Fate under attempted control is here the predominant motif of embeddedness.

4.5 The Fate of Embeddedness

Van Lieshout makes films about himself. In fact he makes films with himself and with others. These videos are not self-portraits and they are not autobiographical exposés, in the sense that one would know more about van Lieshout's life after having watched one of his films. *Rotterdam Rostock* (2006) is a filmic document of a bicycle journey, which van Lieshout took across Holland and Germany. The film is edited chronologically, though one easily loses control over time while watching this fast-edited video clip. On the road, van Lieshout decided to take a detour coming from Rotterdam and Limburg in the Netherlands, following a route to Bavaria in Southern Germany, and finally heading north towards Rostock at the Baltic Sea. The film jumps quickly from one scene to the next. One time we see van Lieshout in a close-up on his bike cycling through a forest energetically shouting 'Just that smell is enough'. In the next moment we see a man in his sixties, whom van Lieshout met on his way and who says that "Holland is beautiful". The shaky image takes us across a small road in Limburg. Shortly after, van Lieshout at a distance – this time without his bike, jumping up and down and exercising. Van Lieshout records everything that comes across his path: homeless people in a shelter, a woman who praises her hotel in the German town of Bad Münstereifel. Most of the time however, van Lieshout appears in the film himself. He comments on the Germans: 'Deep down they know they are superior'. He interviews two old ladies in their Bavarian home. He records their anti-Semitic commentary when talking about American Jews who invest in a new hotel in town. He judges his bodily condition while inspecting his 'yellow piss'. He masturbates in the dark, he gets in trouble with some Neo-Nazis, he cries over the loss of his girlfriend and he is devastated by the fact that some car ran over his

mobile phone and broke it. In the end, he looks into the camera once again and says that he wants to go home.

Fig. 13: Erik van Lieshout, *Rotterdam Rostock* (Video still), 2006 **(DVD 1)**

It seems that van Lieshout is not ashamed of anything. He is not ashamed of his tears, he is not ashamed of his words and he is certainly not ashamed of the people that he meets. He is an investigator of life, of the life of others *and* of his life. But how far can the investigation of one's life reach? This question of self-knowledge is repeatedly addressed in his work. It is addressed in the context of the other, or as Tom Morton states in van Lieshout's catalogue *This Can't Go On (Stay With Me)* (2006), in the division between two characters. Morton names them:

> Erik and Not-Erik, 'I' and 'you'. Erik, at least, is physically consistent, with his spectacles, his close-cropped hair, and his compact, puppyish body that pulses with the promise of violence or love. Not-Erik, though, wears multiple guises. Not-Erik is the sum of everyone, with Erik removed. (p. 184)

In the same essay Morton refers to a scene in *Rotterdam Rostock* in which we see van Lieshout rocking on a playground stool, which is fixed to the floor with a steel spring. "Lulling himself to sleep" Morton explains, "he sings the words 'contact, contact, contact, contact' in an abrasive Brabant accent" (p. 183). Here, the character Erik is alone. There is nobody else around on the playground. Who is Erik

addressing in this scene? The camera? Us? Is he hoping for some contact with the neighbouring population? Is it Not-Erik, the other, or Erik himself that he is continuously contacting? Morton claims that it is about different types of contact "between the self and the other, between the boy and the man, between innocence and experience, between our familiar and unfamiliar selves" (p. 183).

In *Awakening*, a video installation from 2005, van Lieshout puzzles together scenes of protests of immigrants in Rotterdam, footage of far-right political candidates and heroin addicts who legally inject government-subsidised drugs. The video piece mediates on the future, and, according to van Lieshout, is an immediate reaction to politically motivated events that took place not long before in the Netherlands. In 2002, Pim Fortuyn, the gay, anti-immigration politician, was assassinated on a street in Hilversum. In Amsterdam two years later a young Moroccan Muslim murdered the filmmaker and writer Theo van Gogh, who was known for his anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic statements. In an interview conducted by the curators Mirjam Varadinis and Rein Wolfs published in the same catalogue, van Lieshout refers to the relationship between politics and his work, and how these two are inseparable. Van Lieshout clarifies:

> I'm not interested in politics if they have nothing to do with me. That's actually what is so good about *Awakening* – it's really my thing. A friend of mine voted for Pim Fortuyn, the right-wing populist. I found that problematic and didn't want to see him any longer. But after two years I thought, okay, I would like to continue my friendship with him. So in this case the political came into very direct contact with the personal. (p. 68)

In *Awakening*, the material of protest and drug consumption is interwoven with scenes of Erik's personal encounter with Geert, his gay friend and Fortuyn voter. They smoke dope and Geert, placing a dildo in the middle of the room and wandering around naked in the apartment, discusses his bi-sexuality and masculinity. Morton suggests that Erik, the character in conversation with Geert, is an alien. Not in a sense of being alienated from the world, but looking at the new world, at himself as alien and into the future in the aftermath of the assassinations of Fortuyn and van Gogh. Morton asks: "How then, to familiarize ourselves with ourselves?" (p. 188). In

Awakening, as in other works by van Lieshout, the self and the other, the 'I' and the 'We' in confrontation with the camera are constantly tested. In *Up!* (2005) van Lieshout turns his gaze inwards, listens to himself and undergoes therapeutic treatment. In some scenes he is in conversation with a therapist, in other scenes he turns to the camera. Morton describes one of these scenes in detail:

> From time to time he addresses the camera directly, confessing to various loveless, almost pornographic (mis)adventures. Relating an anonymous encounter with a guy in a sex shop ('such a dong in my mouth!'), he informs his cameraman that 'This isn't to go on the video … This can't go on, Core.' But the footage, of course, does 'go on' – *Up!*, after all, is about remorselessly asking 'who the fuck am I,' a process through which we can begin to understand our alien selves, and by answering it that we can begin to love (in our blundering way) the aliens around us. (p. 189)

Video's aesthetic of narcissism, described by Rosalind Krauss in the 1970s and discussed at length in Chapter 1, will, in the light of van Lieshout's self-search be imported once again into the 21st century. What we need to ask is whether or not reflexiveness, in contrast to the ego's self-reflectivity, self-love or narcissism, is inherent in video works by Jankowski or van Lieshout.

In *Rotterdam Rostock*, whenever possible van Lieshout's camera is on, and most often the camera points towards him. In this case, he is his own cameraman and his own subject. The very gesture of turning the camera on oneself manifests the unfolding of events, one after another. In this work, as in other works by van Lieshout, these events or encounters circulate around the character Erik, they animate him, they let him lose control, they play with his fate, and they make him aware of a 'screen' that he can play with. In Lacanian terms the function of the screen is what the subject is able to isolate. Let us go back to Lacan once again: "Only the subject – the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man – is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it." (1998 [1973]: 107). The mapping that Lacan points to is the essential recognition of the subject. With the psychoanalytic experience of narcissism the ego is caught up in the imaginary capture, in other words the ego is caught up with its ideal ego. Van Lieshout however, maps himself in the context of the other. Thus, Erik and Not-Erik

are never far apart. Lacan highlights the important distinction between the ego and the subject, between those two characters that Morton names 'Erik' and 'Not-Erik'. Not-Erik, to repeat what I have already pointed out, isn't Erik, but Erik *and* all the others that he fantasises with. They are, Morton says, amongst so many more "a Ghanaian rap tutor, the residents of a home for the mentally disabled, immigrant kids from a Rotterdam suburb, a beautiful Chinese girl, Dutch right-wingers, philosophical junkies, a nouveau riche businessman, and his own lovers, family and friends" (p. 184). In comparison, Jankowski, less personal – and certainly less extrovert – in his approach prefers the institution, such as TV stations and film production companies, as well as museums and galleries to be situated in their context. In Jankowski's case it is – at least with the majority of his works – not an interest in or a search for the self, but what the other, namely the institution, makes of such an encounter with the subject artist. Jankowski invites the other to write the story for the work with him, not a biography about the artist, even if one might think that the fortune tellers will talk about his life in the near future.

There is then a small difference in the working methods seen in the practices of both of these artists. Jankowski, although relying on the unfolding of the work during the production, pre-plans his projects quite meticulously. He sets up the rules prior the production event. Van Lieshout's focus, less motivated by rules, is on the event itself, in which as he says, he loses control in order to get over a state of fear, which is always involved in these moments of self-search. He gets the control back when handing over the video footage to his friend and editor Core van der Hoeven, with whom he has collaborated since 1999. In collaboration with van der Hoeven he completes the work. In comparison to Jankowski, the post-production stage in van Lieshout's practice is after the event, whereas with Jankowski, the post-production – at least with those works that we have looked at – is part of the event and already planned into the 'outcome'. For van Lieshout there is a deliberate interfering with the material to reach a final result. "Art is control" van Lieshout says and continues:

In order to make a film you must in the end have control over your work. When I do a project, I start out by not thinking of the film at all. But there is one person who does this for me from the very outset, and that's Core, my editor. We spend a lot of time together, and sometimes we just talk bullshit, because a project takes a very long time – an average of six weeks. Core

pushes me, though, because he's already concerned about the film, even if I'm not. (p. 67)

Van Lieshout describes his working method whilst making the film and performing as not thinking about the end result at all. His encounters and confrontations – and here we keep in mind that they are filmed – provoke fantasies in him and in the people that he meets. These fantasies or to use another term 'fictions' are carried forward into the editing stage, and van Lieshout begins to confront his fantasised position with control mechanisms, i.e. montage techniques. Early on in the Introduction of this thesis I set up a distinction between the self as fantasised subject, the subject which is not for itself and the self as an autobiographical project, as described by Paul de Man in his essay "Autobiography as De-Facement" (1984). For de Man "autobiography, then, is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts. The autobiographical moment happens as an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution" (p. 70). De Man distinguishes between the referent and the figure, but he doesn't try to establish a hierarchy between those two subjects. In fact de Man tries to claim how one informs the other, i.e. the referent writes (and reads) the figure and the figure informs the life of the referent. I would claim that van Lieshout's 'reflexive substitution' takes place prior to the editing stages, already 'inside' the making of work, him being embedded, which means filming or being filmed and representing a struggling self. Reflexiveness is here performed in front of us, and made explicit in the editorial.

Reflexiveness in Jankowski's work presents itself differently. If we refer to Krauss's modernist reference to Jasper Johns's *Flag* in Chapter 1, it is the work itself that deploys reflexiveness from within – but now as video not as object. In *Telemistica* and *The Holy Artwork* Jankowski attempts to set up a 'radical asymmetry' between the 'picture' (the television show) and the 'video' (installation on monitor or as projection). Jankowski, who is implicated in the work and who makes liveness explicit with his implication, exposes the 'subject artist Christian' as performer. Both artists, Jankowski and van Lieshout, invite 'the other' in order to present their own implication in the given context.

CONCLUSION

Embeddedness in the arts unfolds in various ways. First, embeddedness is naturally given in the context of the new technical environment, in the context of the other, as well as in the context of one's own deliberate dilemma being implicated as the embedded participant. Erik van Lieshout's self-search in the name of 'Erik' and 'Not-Erik' highlights the fate of embeddedness. The self-aware subject plays its part in the production of the artwork. The Lacanian 'subject of representation' is here exposed in front of the camera and explicitly challenged by the artist. In *Rotterdam Rostock* van Lieshout continuously films his obsessive interrelationship with the world that he cycles through and it is us – not Erik as the subject in action, who loses control – who witness the twofold condition that he as Erik and Not-Erik is entangled in. He might be highly alert by his embeddedness and the entanglement of his activity and he uses his camera to present it like this. But he is not necessarily thinking his entanglement, nor has he been preparing for it. One important question recurs: *what does it mean to think live under embedded conditions?*

Differently, but with a similar challenge for the subject, Richard Serra has proposed his search for the 'I' in *Boomerang*. Here the voice of Nancy Holt illustrates how a division takes place between the subject of speech and the speaking subject, which the performer experiences. Most importantly, it is Serra who is embedded during "AUDIO TROUBLE" when the technical feedback is exposed and when Nancy Holt engages with someone behind the camera. Reflexiveness, in contrast to Rosalind Krauss's arguments, is inherent in such video work, exactly at that moment when the reflective feedback interrupts.

Jankowski's embeddedness is based on the strategy of live thought. Live thought is thought that reacts to embedded conditions, and it is the activity of thinking that exposes embeddedness as a strategy. Live thought passes along the event. Live thought would not exist without the event of thinking. And live thought attempts to slow the 'passage of nature' down. Ideally, thinking live is an attempt to stop the 'passage of nature', which is the ultimate strategy of embeddedness.

Similarly, in *Grizzly Man* (2005), when Werner Herzog appears in the film for the first time, embeddedness exposes its full condition and its strategy, which is intentionally set up by the filmmaker. The contrast between the embeddedness of Herzog, who is thinking live while being implicated when listening to the murderous

moment, and the embeddedness of the protagonist Timothy Treadwell, who is completely entangled in his environment in Alaska, again emphasises the two-faced notion of embeddedness. Herzog's distinguishable intrusion into the life of Treadwell, if only by making a film with his footage, implies the directorial decision to interrupt what would otherwise remain an autobiographical account of Treadwell's presence in the wilderness. In Treadwell's case embeddedness is primarily a concern of the filmmaker's natural aliveness. Thus, he has chosen the ideal environment in which to present his aliveness. And in doing so he is contrasting aliveness with his recorded death.

Embeddedness in the Alaskan wilderness bears a resemblance to the embeddedness of journalists in Iraq in 2003. In retrospect, turning the camera around and pointing it on oneself, whilst exposing embeddedness in the battlefield, generates self-awareness to an extent that the live (life) becomes the ultimate condition of the situated human being. It is the 'positional advantage' of embedded journalists like Darren Conway that implies a dual responsibility, i.e. the internal communication and the mediation to the outside world. The embedded journalist reacts against the condition that he or she is situated in, and in time he or she is exposed to the world. In comparison to Treadwell, who by nature surrenders in front of his camera, Conway challenges his entanglement in the activity of war, films himself and films to survive. And so does the embedded Werner Herzog, when listening to his dying protagonist.

Embeddedness has to be perceived as a layered phenomenon that makes embeddedness, *i.e. the 'subject of representation' a resource for the author's reiteration of his or her embedded condition*. This means that the attempt to represent the other implies *immanent self-exposure*. Spielberg's project in the Middle East is an obvious example of conditioned embeddedness and self-exposure. His auto-direction, which, pointed at the children in the Middle East, results primarily in the exposure of the institution Spielberg. Thus, his embedded nature is exposed as part of a Middle Eastern conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. With the example of Spielberg we are able to understand how overlapping conditions of embeddedness complicate what is exposed, what is exhibited, what is made available and hypothetically, what makes us, the viewer, aware of our own embedded situation.

The 'subject of representation', that is the subject who auto-directs, does not propose an aesthetic of narcissism. Auto-direction hints at the critical tension between condition *and* strategy of embeddedness and supports inherent reflexiveness in art. The live as it has been discussed here invigorates this tension. Live thought interrupts the condition of embeddedness and promotes a strategy, which in turn exposes the author's or artist's embedded condition.

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