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**Subjectivity, (Self-)reflexivity and Repetition  
in Documentary**

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PhD-Thesis

2007  
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## Abstract

This thesis advances a deterritorialised reading of documentary on several levels: firstly, with respect to the difference between non-fiction and fiction, allowing for a fluctuation between both. As this thesis examines the movements of subjective documentary between self-reflexivity and reflexivity, it argues against an understanding of reflexivity as something that is emotionally distanced from its object and thus relies on a strict separation from both the subject and what it documents, such as for instance the stable irony in many found footage or mock-documentaries. In Werner Herzog's documentaries by contrast, irony manifests referential instability. This 'deterritorialised reading' concerns their oscillation between different levels of fiction and non-fiction as well as between authorship and agency. As his documentaries frequently do not assert a final interpretation and keep the decision about their truth value suspended infinitely, they assure a fluctuation, which concurs with what the early Romantic theorist Friedrich Schlegel says about the oscillation in Romantic irony between self-reflection and its object. However, the belief in the documentary status of a film is necessary to experience this fluctuation in referentiality. Another suggestion this thesis makes concerns the division between filmmaker and protagonist. It argues for a protagonist based reading of documentary that takes account of the diverse stages the protagonists operate on – instead of a purely author-filmmaker or reader-viewer based interpretation. One can then account for, the directions and performances the protagonists have already submitted to before the film team enters their stage. In contrast to a protagonist observed as an isolatable 'being' in a documentary conventionally taking place in front of the lens, and a voice reflecting in the commentary about a closed 'reality', this study examines documentary works where the filmmakers are not separated from what they comment upon. It is also the re-enactments that the protagonists undergo that deterritorialises the authorial status of the film. Against a conventional notion of documentary, that excludes unacknowledged repetitions instigated by the filmmaker, I argue that the repetitions discussed in this thesis' documentaries manifest a forward movement. A documentary re-enactment of a concrete and finished event can be the start of a new process, a 'forward recollection.' Re-enactments by the very protagonists who have experienced the events in the first place challenge representation in documentary.

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# 1

## Introduction

The central concern of this thesis is the way in which subjectivity relates to self-reflexivity. Is self-reflexivity merely textual and intellectual, thus creating a conventionally reflexive film that produces distance – distance between subject and object, filmmaker and protagonist? Or can there be a complicating self-reflexivity in which both filmmaker and protagonist are, in equal measures, subject and object? The latter alternative is what this thesis argues for, and finds such a mode of reflexivity in Werner Herzog's documentaries, the socialist documentary serial *The Children of Golzow* (GDR, 1961-), a video installation by Alexandr Sokurov, Tracey Emin's autobiographical art and Jeremy Deller's re-enactment of *The Battle of Orgreave* (2002).

Two forms of attention characterise my approach. The first is that in each case the relation of the filmic to the extra-diegetic is treated as crucial to understanding the significance of these works. The following chapters focus on the way in which documentaries fit into the greater textuality and reality in which their directors and protagonists move and with which the documentaries attempt to engage through reflection or repetition. This context can be a political system, as in the case of the socialist documentary serial *The Children of Golzow*; it can be personal, as it is with respect to the reception of Tracey Emin's autobiographical work; it can be, as in Herzog's documentaries, that it explores the complexities of documenting an experiential reality; or it can be, as in *The Battle of Orgreave*, the dissolution of artistic and directorial control.

The second form of attention I seek to bring to these films and bodies of self-reflexive work is guided by an interpretation of documentary that is based on the protagonists' experience. Through the figure of the protagonist, the extra-textual forms a bi-directional causal relation with the text in the works discussed here. Although the extra-textual is distinct from the text and can never be subsumed within it, equally it should not be excluded from it. The protagonist-director in turning the camera on the reality in which he or she exists - or in re-enacting the reality he or she has existed as part of - initiates a repetition. What sort of repetition will this be? Will reality be intellectually or mechanically repeated as a closed-off object? Or will it be repeated in such a way that the repetition itself becomes a lived and

affirmed reality? It is argued here that the latter is what the directors and protagonists of the works examined are involved in (the protagonists as directors, and the directors as protagonists). It is a repetition not *of* an object but *in* a subject – subjectively and self-reflexively lived. And in as much as it is lived, it becomes part of reality – a new, potentially transformative experience feeding back into the extra-diegetic, the extra-filmic. And it is this movement that then again is documented in the subjective and self-reflexive documentaries featured in this thesis.

### **1.1 The Context of (Self-)reflexivity**

As this thesis examines the movements of subjective documentary between self-reflexivity and reflexivity, it critiques reflexive exercises of external appropriation, such as for instance the stable irony in many found footage or mock-documentaries. There, irony is a merely rhetorical ‘repetition of the Same,’ as Gilles Deleuze terms it, and works from a position of objectivity. This thesis argues against an understanding of reflexivity as something which is emotionally distanced from its object and thus relies on a strict separation from both the subject and what it documents. In Herzog’s documentaries by contrast, irony manifests referential instability and serves subjectivity. Film Studies scholarship, by contrast, has usually regarded reflexivity as an intellectual property. In his book, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, Robert Stam argues that reflexivity is the ‘genre of self-consciousness.’<sup>i</sup> He also suggests, that the author of reflexive fiction is ‘a self-conscious narrator, asserting [...] absolute power over his own creation,’<sup>ii</sup> thereby ‘consciously destroying the illusion created by his story.’<sup>iii</sup> Such assertions of conscious control deny the fluctuation of ‘authorship’ between filmmaker, protagonist and external reality as well as the play between subject and object, and between non-fiction and fiction, which is a distinct feature of the self-reflexive documentaries under discussion. It is contended here that in the discourse of Film Studies, the notion of reflexivity has to a significant degree remained stuck in a pre-Romantic, Enlightenment understanding of reflexivity. The German Romantics doubted that even consciousness could ‘enlighten’ itself fully about itself.<sup>iv</sup> The relationship between self-reflexivity in film and Romanticism as yet has not been researched, not to mention the relationship between Romanticism and documentary. It seems that the ‘self’ of Film Studies has been too subject-specific.<sup>v</sup> The early German Romantics saw self-reflexivity both as a meta-structure and subject matter at the same time. The brothers Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, for instance, suggested that all poetry is ‘poetry of poetry:’ ‘In all its

descriptions, this poetry should describe itself, and always be simultaneously poetry and the poetry of poetry.’<sup>vi</sup> According to the Schlegels, a text should always be self-referential in this way. Although this does not necessarily mean that ‘the text about the text’ is also about the process of production of this text – a premise the anthropologist Jay Ruby for instance maintains for reflexive documentary. In his discussion of anthropological films, Ruby distinguished reflexivity from autobiography, self-reference and self-consciousness: the autobiographer can fail to be self-conscious or reflexive in the presentation of his or her work and merely follow conventions; the ‘self’ in ‘self-referential’ can be used as a metaphor and not necessarily be about a person; it can include a whole group or genre (as in Truffaut’s *Day For Night*, 1973). Yet, it can still avoid reflexivity. Ruby regards self-consciousness as an attitude, which only makes the film reflexive if the filmmaker makes this stance available within it.<sup>vii</sup> He ends up, however, with a definition of reflexivity that depends on coherency and artistic control over work and life:

To be reflexive is to structure a product in such a way that the audience assumes that the characteristics of the producer’s life, the process of construction, and the product are a coherent whole.<sup>viii</sup>

For the most part, this definition has grown out of an anthropological context where the inclusion of the autobiographical as a condition for reflexivity was considered progressive. In the case of the anthropological ‘participant observer,’ however, it is the situation of the researcher in relation to their research that is thought to constitute the ‘autobiographical,’ and is thus distinct from the ‘private’ autobiographical, which is separated from ‘work.’ Even though Werner Herzog’s documentary *My Best Fiend*, for instance, is about his subjective experiences, these are not merely private or autobiographical, since they refer to his experiences working as a fiction film director. According to Ruby’s definition - and in contrast to Robert Stam’s - Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville’s *Here and Elsewhere* (1974) would not be reflexive, since this documentary only reflects how images are made and not the personal position in which the filmmakers were when they made them. The congruencies between life and work receive special attention in Chapter III on the autobiographical art of Tracey Emin.

Like Stam and Ruby, Deleuze also sees reflexivity as a self-conscious act - but opposes it for that same reason. Self-consciousness makes reflexivity for Deleuze merely a repetition of the Same. What he develops is a concept that guides all the discussions of repetition in this

thesis: the question of what repetition makes a difference. A distinction between conscious and unconscious reflexivity has also been made with respect to the seminal reflexive documentary *Chronicle of a Summer* by one of its directors, Edgar Morin:

Truth cannot escape contradictions, since there are truths of the unconscious and truth of the conscious mind; these truths contradict each other.<sup>ix</sup>

A contradiction however is an oppositional stance, that, one could argue, is reflected (*sic*) in the paternalistic – and conscious - approach Morin takes as the male ‘filmmaker-therapist’ towards his ‘unconsciously speaking’ female ‘protagonist-patient’ in a scene in *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960), in which he interviews one particular subject, Marilou. The apparent contradiction is re-integrated into a hierarchy of filmmaker over protagonist, consciousness over unconsciousness, man over woman. In Romantic theory - and in Deleuze – these oppositions are displaced. Deleuze, in arguing against reflection and reflexivity for being merely oppositional, is following Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in their quest to ‘no longer reflect on the theatre in the Hegelian manner.’<sup>x</sup> The reflecting subject looks at a representative object and both are best left behind with Hegel: ‘He thus remains in the reflected element of “representation,” within simple generality.’<sup>xi</sup> We no longer live in times of reflection, since Kierkegaard and Nietzsche invented an ‘equivalent of theatre within philosophy.’<sup>xii</sup> The latter’s *The Birth of Tragedy* is not a reflection on ancient theatre so much as the practical foundation of a theatre of the future.<sup>xiii</sup> Philosophy had left the critical position of only reflecting what is on the theatrical stage:<sup>xiv</sup> ‘Philosophy is not made for reflecting on anything at all.’<sup>xv</sup> But can documentary also follow philosophy in this step of affirming rather than merely reflecting?

To re-iterate, Deleuze regards reflection as negative, because it involves a conscious standing back:

In barren times philosophy retreats to reflecting “on” things. If it’s not itself creating anything, what can it do but reflect on something? [...] What we should do, is stop allowing philosophers to reflect “on” things.<sup>xvi</sup>

In this stance, Deleuze in fact repeats Friedrich Schlegel’s proposition, that ‘One can only become a philosopher, not be one. As soon as one thinks one is a philosopher, one stops becoming one.’<sup>xvii</sup> It furthermore follows Schlegel’s suggestion that thinking – in the form of poetry - produces its own object.<sup>xviii</sup> Conventionally, documentary assumes a similar place to that of philosophy in the above quote: as secondary and only reflecting on something other

than itself. Deleuze targets his remarks against a reductive process of abstraction of philosophical thought, not against reflexivity in a work of art. In a documentary as a work of art, however, a narrator can philosophise about his own creation, like Alexander Sokurov did in *Elegy of a Voyage* (2001). Similarly, Deleuze endorses thinking *with* the cinema, rather than *about* it. For the creatively philosophising and philosophical maker of films Trinh T. Minh-Ha, the rejection of ‘speaking about’ results in a ‘speaking nearby.’<sup>xix</sup> Deleuze instead suggests an ‘absolute deterritorialisation of the cogito,’<sup>xx</sup> the faculty held responsible for reflecting. This idea is followed up in this thesis with the advancement of a deterritorialised reading of documentary on several levels: firstly, with respect to the division between filmmaker and protagonist (deterritorialisation allowing for several stages of direction and action to exist), and, secondly, with respect to the difference between fiction and non-fiction, allowing for a fluctuation between them. This fluctuation is elaborated as Romantic irony in Chapter V, which deals with Werner Herzog’s documentaries.

Deleuze proposes that a philosopher’s task is ‘to invent, to create and not to concern himself or herself with reflecting, even on cinema.’<sup>xxi</sup> A work and a critic, art and philosophy, should be creative and not only reflect and judge:

The encounter between two disciplines doesn’t take place when one begins to reflect the other, but when one discipline realizes that it has to resolve, for itself and by its own means, a problem similar to one confronted by others. [...] The only true criticism is comparative (and bad film criticism closes in on the cinema like its own ghetto) because any work in a field is itself imbricated with other fields.<sup>xxii</sup>

Through the works it examines, this thesis challenges the position of documentary as a secondary commentator. It proposes that a documentary creates by reflecting from within itself. For the German Romantics poetry and art were the medium of reflection and self-reflexivity.<sup>xxiii</sup> Obviously documentary film and video did not exist in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, so the means of artistic production - writing and painting – did not bear indexical verisimilitude to reality as film does, or at least can. To achieve a similarity to reality in his or her work required the artist be especially skilful in mimesis. By contrast, with film, the contribution of the artist would be to make the image unfamiliar, since it resembles reality by default. (Symptomatically, the concepts of alienation and defamiliarization only came about after the invention of photography and film.) Documentary thus occupies a unique place as a

commentator on and a copy of reality at the same time; as reflecting about and from within; as a secondary instrument of critique *and* as an original work of art. The traditional position of documentary as copy without repetition – according to the broadcasting codes – is challenged here in the section on re-enactments in Chapter V on Herzog's documentaries.

Walter Benjamin describes the parallelism between the relationship of critique and art, and that of observing and being, which the German Romantic, Novalis, who equated reflection in the work of art with reflection in the critic, had originally theorized:

All the laws that hold generally for the knowledge of objects in the medium of reflection also hold for the criticism of art. Therefore, criticism when confronting the work of art is like observation when confronting the natural object.<sup>xxiv</sup>

What this leads to, when one considers that the self as embodied is such an observable object, is the subject-object division being disassembled, such that one reflects on oneself as on a work of art. The observing criticism referred to by Benjamin would be comparable with the observing and commenting documentary. Benjamin paraphrased Schlegel's view of reflection, in which rather than finding a terminus outside the self in the form of a separate object, reflection takes the self as its object:

The subject of reflection is, at bottom, the artistic entity itself, and the experiment consists not in reflecting *on* an entity, [...] but in the unfolding of reflection [...] *in* an entity.<sup>xxv</sup>

Judith Butler has followed the process of subject formation into the paradox of what it is that can reflect when the reflection is part of the subject. She has problematized this process as such:

Power that first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity. The form this power takes is relentlessly marked by a figure of turning, a turning back upon oneself or even a turning *on* oneself. This figure operates as part of the explanation of how a subject is produced, and so there is no subject, strictly speaking, who makes this turn.... Such a notion, then, appears difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate into the account of the subject formation. What or who is said to turn, and what is the object of such a turn?<sup>xxvi</sup>

What is thematized here is a subject that is constituted in the oscillation between seeing and seeing itself being seen; between being the subject and the object. In contrast to a protagonist

observed as an isolatable 'being' in a documentary, conventionally taking its place in front of the lens, and a voice reflecting in the commentary about a closed 'reality', this study examines documentary works where the filmmakers are not separated from what they comment on. This is where self-reflexivity impacts on documentary subjectivity and objectivity. Although my general concern is how subjectivity and objectivity are negotiated in documentary, I examine in particular the differences in perception of what constitutes documentary subjectivity and objectivity in socialism and capitalism, with reference to *The Children of Golzow*. This ongoing Eastern German long-term documentary serial has observed its 'socialist subjects' since 1961 and through the transition from one ideological system to another. This thesis explores the notion of collective self-reflexivity in *The Children of Golzow*, and contrasts its style of interviewing and the reactions of the subjects with the more exploitative style of interviewing in documentaries made in a market economy. I argue that the intention of the directors (as well as the reactions of the documentary subjects to his often probing style of interviewing) is based on equality and the notion of collective. This is different to the sought alienation of the interview subject in many documentaries made in a capitalist context, from Nick Broomfield to Michael Moore. Furthermore, the notion of scientific distance that was associated with observational documentary made in the West did not apply in the same way for documentaries made under State Socialism. In Lenin's theory of reflection, a science was not detached. If everyone was equal, there could not be any 'objective distance.' The dialectic between 1960s observational *Direct Cinema* and the reaction against this in what Michael Renov called New Subjectivities in the 1990s in America did not apply to socialist documentary filmmaking. In a sense, there was neither subjectivity or objectivity, or both were identical. As my examination of documentary moves between the two terms that make up Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, I compare the *The Children of Golzow* to the British long-term project *7-Up* (1964-) and suggest that in *7-Up*, change is merely represented by what Deleuze would call a 'specific difference' of kind, in a system where this difference is sold to gain profit. The socialist serial on the other hand, being set in a system where everything was planned, progressively reflected more and more change.

Slavoj Žižek argues that the reflexive turn, which constitutes subjectivity for Butler, presupposes a radical withdrawal from the world: 'there is no subjectivity without this gesture of withdrawal'.<sup>xxvii</sup> This withdrawal:

[...] designate[s] the severing of links with the *Umwelt*, the end of the subject's immersion in its natural surroundings, and is this not, as such, the founding gesture of "humanization"?<sup>xxviii</sup>

Sokurov's *Elegy of a Voyage* thematizes distance, blockage and withdrawal from the world that seems to correspond to the words of Žižek:

[...] the withdrawal-into-itself, the cutting-off of links to the environs, is followed by the construction of a symbolic universe which the subject projects onto reality as a kind of subject-formation, destined for the loss of the immediate, pre-symbolic Real.<sup>xxix</sup>

In *Elegy of a Voyage*, however, withdrawal from and distance to (documentary) reality is not a manifestation of loss, as the video asserts another, albeit impossible, reality in its commentary. To comment on reality from a point of view of nostalgic loss has characterized criticism of postmodernism, such as that meted by Jean Baudrillard. John Rajchman criticizes this attitude:

In each case there is a question of loss (of "modernity" or of "reality") that gradually issues in the emergences of a figure that might be called the "melancholy critic". By that I mean not only a critic who presumes that work or thought is rooted in a sense of loss or absence; what characterises at least the po-mo variant of the melancholy critic is that his depression is compounded with a growing sense of impossibility or obsolescence; indeed, the melancholy critic makes of his sadness about his own disappearance a virtue.<sup>xxx</sup>

Even though Sokurov's narrator displays sadness, and to Western European ears even sounds depressing, he is, however, not a 'melancholic critic,' bemoaning a loss of reality external to images in the sense that Rajchman criticizes. Instead, one could rather say that, on the contrary, he bemoans the loss of the image's reality. Even though the filmmaker-narrator addresses the image (a painting) as if it were the model (reality) - and one could therefore argue that Baudrillard's "Beaubourg effect" applies, that is the copy cannot be distinguished from the model - in *Elegy of a Voyage* the commentator actively plays with an impossible temporal reversal between authorship of image and model. This play ultimately depends on the ability of the viewer to differentiate between the painting and documentary reality. *Elegy of a Voyage* therefore discounts a distinction such as that made by Dudley Andrew, who set a postmodern media world's 'spatiality and externality' against the 'temporality and interiority'<sup>xxxi</sup> of painterly films. Instead of bemoaning his own

disappearance, the filmmaker-narrator-critic decisively affirms his appearance, albeit only to hide it, by imposing himself in front of the image as a silhouette, thus making a suggestive link to the self-reflexive *Rückenbilder* in German Romantic painting.

With respect to Werner Herzog's documentaries, I examine subjectivity through the question of how to visually document an invisible event. Herzog has frequently problematised the notion of documentary by foregrounding that what he documents is an extraordinary experience or an inner vision (for instance in *Land of Silence and Darkness*, a documentary about the deaf-blind, or in *Wheel of Time* about the temporary realization of a mental image, the Buddhist sand mandala). As he focuses on the difference between internal experience and external, 'objective' documentation, Herzog shows subjectivity to be inaccessible. The singularity of subjectivity is even more emphasized through the highly physical and particular nature of the experiences Herzog documents. In this thesis, I argue that his emphasis on the visionary is not a meta-physical exercise, but a physical one: in what I call Herzog's 'athletic documentaries' the visionary exists in a dialectic with a materialism of the invisibly concrete.

The changing context of documentary as it is being made by artists and exhibited in a gallery, has affected how subjectivity (in Sokurov's case) and the autobiographical (in Emin's case) can be read. I look at Tracey Emin's autobiographical practice and its extra-textual recasting by critics as biographical objectivity. I argue that, post-structuralism had set a paradigm whereby textual reflexivity in biography and fiction was valued higher than autobiographical and textual self-reflexivity. Emin's work, especially in the light of its reception, has challenged these suppositions. In my concern with how the self is reflected in the text, I argue against a purely textual reading and for an acknowledgement of the diverse stages of self-fashioning. With respect to Emin, I argue for an equal critical appreciation of the self-reflexivity of the artist and the text. The metaphor of mirror reflection, in its usage from Lenin to Foucault, is frequently critiqued here in terms of a repetition of the Same. With respect to *The Children of Golzow*, I suggest that the socialist serial's self-reflexivity is quite different from Lenin's 'Theory of Reflection,' which is non-reflexive. The self-reflexivity of Emin's autobiographical art, it is argued here, includes the context of reception, as in an infinite biographical semiosis mirroring the facts which she has revealed in her art as comments about her.

This thesis argues for a ‘deterritorialised reading’ of documentary text, which is not centred on authorship or its status as representation, but is rather a reflexive reading. In addition, it suggests a protagonist based interpretation of documentary that takes account of the diverse stages the protagonists operate on – instead of a purely author-filmmaker or reader-viewer based one. One can then account for the directions and performances the protagonists have already submitted to before the film team enters their stage. To label a whole film as ‘participatory’ or ‘non-fiction’ does not account for the diverse contexts in which the protagonists are already placed. In respect of Herzog’s documentaries, this ‘deterritorialised reading’ concerns their oscillation between fiction and non-fiction – an oscillation, which as I point out, mock-documentary as fiction suppresses. In his documentaries it is also the re-enactments that the protagonists undergo that deterritorialises the authorial status of the film. With respect to the socialist documentary serial, it is the fact that the filmmakers and the protagonists are both included in a political system that calls for a distributed notion of authorship.

Unacknowledged repetition instigated by the filmmaker generally excludes the categorisation of a film as documentary. Thereby documentary occupies a paradoxical place as a copy - a document – conceived without conscious repetition (by the protagonists). From the point of view of the television network codes on documentary, repeating makes a person self-conscious and thereby rules out his action being admissible for documentary. This would be a repetition of the Same. Against this conventional notion of documentary, I argue that the repetitions discussed in the documentaries of this thesis manifest a forward movement. In documentaries such as Werner Herzog’s *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997) or Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), the active repetition Deleuze and Kierkegaard speak of moves documentary beyond the identity of experience. Such re-enactments by the very protagonists who have experienced the events in the first place challenge representation in documentary.

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<sup>i</sup> Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 127.

<sup>ii</sup> Stam, *Reflexivity*, p. 129.

<sup>iii</sup> Stam, *Reflexivity*, p. 129.

<sup>iv</sup> Herbert Uerlings, ‘Einleitung’ in Herbert Uerlings (ed.), *Theorie der Romantik*, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2000, p. 22.

- <sup>v</sup> This is also Raymond Bellour's opinion: 'As basic references and tools, I employed semiology and psychoanalysis. However, gradually I found those tools insufficient because of the confrontation with new images through the experience which I called "L'entre-image" in Raymond Bellour, 'Challenging Cinema' in Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds.), *Screen-based Art*, Lier en Boog Series of Philosophy of Art and Art Theory, Volume 15, Amsterdam/Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 2000, p. 42.
- <sup>vi</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, 'Critical Fragments,' (§238), in Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>vii</sup> Jay Ruby, 'Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film', *Picturing Culture. Explorations of Film and Anthropology*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 155.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ruby, *Reflexivity*, p. 156.
- <sup>ix</sup> Edgar Morin, 'Chronicle of a Film' in Steven Feld (ed.), *Jean Rouch. Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 263.
- <sup>x</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London: The Athlone Press, 1994, p. 8.
- <sup>xi</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 10.
- <sup>xii</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 8.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 9.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 8.
- <sup>xv</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Having an Idea in Cinema. On the Cinema of Straub-Huillet,' in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (eds.), *Deleuze and Guattari. New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 14.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Mediators' in *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 122.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. P. Firchow, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 24.
- <sup>xviii</sup> 'Es gibt ... eine Art des Denkens, die etwas produziert... Das Dichten nämlich: dies erschafft gewissermaßen seinen Stoff selbst.' Friedrich Schlegel, *Vorlesungen*, p.63, from Walter Benjamin, 'Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutsche Romantik' in Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (eds.), *Walter Benjamin. Gesammelte Schriften I.I*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974, p. 63.
- <sup>xix</sup> See Trinh T. Min-Ha's anti-anthropological documentary *Reassemblage* (1982). For an in-depth differentiation between Trinh's and Derrida's anti-representational stances see Herman Rapaport, 'Deconstruction's Other. Trinh T. Minh-Ha and Jacques Derrida,' *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer, 1995.
- <sup>xx</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 166.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 15.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'The Brain is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze' in Gregory Flaxman (ed.), *Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 367.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Novalis in Walter Benjamin, 'Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutsche Romantik,' in Tiedemann and Schweppenhäuser (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 64.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 151.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, p. 151.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power. Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject. The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London and New York: Verso, 1999, p. 34.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Žižek, *Ticklish Subject*, p. 35.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Žižek, *Ticklish Subject*, p. 35.
- <sup>xxx</sup> John Rajchman, 'Unhappy Returns, John Rajman on the Po-Mo Decade', *Artforum*, April 2003, pp. 61-62.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Dudley Andrew, 'The Unauthorized Auteur Today', in Robert Stam and Toby Miller (ed.), *Film Theory*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden and Oxford: 2000, p. 26.

## ***The Children of Golzow: How Socialist Documentary became Self-Reflexive***

This chapter examines the reasons for and the limits of self-reflexivity in Winfried and Barbara Junge's *The Children of Golzow* (GDR, 1961-), also known as the longest running documentary serial in film history. The Eastern German films chronicle the lives of the first generation to be brought up according to socialist ideals in the German Democratic Republic. Starting in August 1961, when the wall between East and West Berlin had just been erected, it follows the life-stories of a class of pupils from their first day of school. After the collapse of the socialist regime in 1989, the filmmakers accompany the former GDR citizens into unemployment, re-education and on holidays. In the course of the 19 films that collectively make up the serial, the style of filmmaking progressively became self-reflexive after starting out as expository and observational. The serial's self-reflexivity peaked and its subjects became self-conscious after the conversion from Eastern German State Socialism to Western German capitalism. The reasons for the increase of self-reflexivity were also in part due to its longevity, which led to a process of reflection on the nature of the aims of filmmaking, and in part due to the emphasis on language rather than images to describe the events referred to. Other grounds for the serial, the filmmakers and the interviewees to become self-reflexive were anxiety about discontinuation and legitimacy, explanatory and ethical reasons. This chapter furthermore examines how a specific aesthetic arises out of the textualization of temporality and the necessity for repetition of the same biographies covering ever more narrated time in ever longer films.

*The Children of Golzow* serial manifests how, under a change of political systems, the same subjects changed in their response to documentary 'observation' and the films changed too. As a consequence of the emphasis on the collective in socialism the style of interviewing is not based on the alienation of the interviewee as has become popular in recent Anglo-American documentaries. While 'Western' interviewees often react defensively to a provocative interviewing strategy, for example that employed by Anglo-American documentarists such as Nick Broomfield, Michael Moore and Louis Theroux, in contrast, Winfried Junge's probing questions to his protagonists did not alienate his subjects. In a society guided by the concept of the collective, the filmmakers were always already on the same side as their subjects. This chapter moreover highlights the

differences in perception of what might constitute documentary subjectivity and objectivity under both systems, arguing especially that the idea of ‘distance’ – foundational for objectivity in the West - was deemed neither threatening nor scientific under socialism. Whereas Western documentary saw a subjective and deconstructive reaction against an apparently ‘objective’ and impersonal observational mode, in the GDR the subject had to carry the burden of objectivity. After unification, the social philosophy changed from emphasizing the particular as an expression of the general in the German Democratic Republic to emphasizing the individual as an expression of difference in the Federal Republic of Germany.

## **2.1. Reflections on Change in the *Children of Golzow* and *7-Up***

I argue that *The Children of Golzow* fundamentally differs from the more structured British long-term television series *7-Up* (UK, 1964 -) to which it is often compared. The question I address here is how change is negotiated in both serials and what idea of difference is involved in that change. (‘Representation’ and ‘change’ here are set up as antithetical.) Both long-term documentary projects portray their subjects in a manner converse to the apparent ideologies of their political systems. In the British series, set in a dynamic capitalist system that seeks change as necessary for market growth, change is merely represented, whereas the GDR serial - set in State Socialism, where everything, including change, was planned - reflected progressively more unplanned change also evident in becoming more self-reflexive. The socialist participants, as presented in this serial, were less substitutable singularities as part of a collective than they are as individuals in the capitalist series *7-Up*.

In a scene in *Eleven Years Old* (GDR, 1966), the children are taught by their primary school teacher the dictum by Heraclitus that everything is always in motion and that one cannot swim in the same stream twice. This scene is, symptomatically, often repeated or referred to in the diverse life summaries of the histories of the children of Golzow within the serial. For instance in *I Talked to a Girl* (GDR, 1975), Winfried Junge explains this scene in his retrospective commentary to the now twenty year old former child of Golzow as an example of dialectics: ‘nothing stays like it is, the only thing that remains is change. Being twenty you know [...], what this is: dialectics.’ Twenty years after the filming of the initial classroom scene in which the socialist children learnt that the context always changes, the narrative theorist Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan noted from the perspective of Western structuralism with respect to the Heraclitian analogy: ‘Today we

might add, that not only the object of experience, but also the experiencing subject is in a constant flux.’<sup>1</sup> In Western documentary, the emphasis shifted from the stream to the one experiencing it, from matter and context to the subject. Whereas in the GDR, it was the context that changed and the socialist subject could only become a better version of its pre-planned self, in the West, not only the setting, but especially the subject was allowed - or perhaps expected - to change. But how does this flux manifest itself in the two documentary serials?

Here I would like to contrast *The Children of Golzow* (GDR, 1961-) to the British series *7-Up* (UK, 1964 -), which started two years later and to which it has often been compared, although it differs fundamentally from its British counterpart.<sup>2</sup> *The Children of Golzow* follows the life-stories of a class of pupils born 1953-55 in the village of Golzow in the most Eastern part of the former GDR, the Oderbruch. The *Junges* film their protagonists’ school days, exams, weddings and award ceremonies. The thirteen 6-7 year olds go on to become a painter and decorator, a cook and a major, an electronic worker and FDJ [Free German Youth]-functionary, a chemical worker, a carpenter, an engineer, an army officer, a truck driver, a locksmith, and a dairy hand. Unlike the *7-Up* series with its set structure of re-visits every seven years, the Golzow documentaries are not ordered according to a pre-planned schema of visits in intervals. They began as a one-off documentation. The first documentaries were short studies of the class, of between 14 to 36 minutes duration. These were screened in cinemas as a supplement to the newsreel and the following feature fiction film. Only the third film, in 1966, announces in the credits that it would follow its protagonists for the next 25 years. The length of the Golzow films grew from the initial short films about the whole class into films of over two hours duration, each focussed on a single former member in the new economic system. But the split of the amassed material into separate films was not only because the information which the filmmakers wanted to communicate had grown as time had passed and they had gathered more material on each individual’s personal history. After reunification, the format changed to individual biographies reflecting a process of individualisation in the new capitalist system. The portrayal of a school class started out as a socialist project about a group, since socialist SED ideology was against the portrait of the fates of individuals. But then, due to the children leaving the school and thus the class as a group formation, the course of their lives parted and the filmmakers had to follow the former children as single characters. Nevertheless, even though they were filmed separately, in the GDR the now grown-up ‘children’ were still presented together in one film, with the exception of the early biography *I Talked to a*

*Girl* (GDR 1975). Even though the class was separated when the children became adults, the protagonists were still collective members of each documentary. The GDR state would not fund individual portraits, only the assemblage of blocks of single portraits into a group film such as *Biographies* (GDR, 1980). With the transformation from a socialist to a capitalist system, the process of separation extended into the filmic representation. *Screenplay, The Times* (FRG, 1992) became the last group portrait. Afterwards the adults of Golzow were presented in single biographies. The ‘heroes’ of the Golzow cycle - nicknamed ‘Dallas East’ by the DEFA<sup>3</sup> studio - starred in their own spin-offs. The multiple lives were separated into individual biographies, not only as an effect of the uncontainability of the vast amount of material assembled over time, but also as a result of the funding methods in a market economy that usually only paid for the next project and did not allow for the continuous covering of each of the multiple strands all the time. When the films became dependent on grant money, the fact that the filmmakers only received funding for the next film meant that they could not follow the lives of the others. The separation of the group films into single films was the effect of a systemic change to a market society. Winfried Junge (in the following referred to as ‘WJ’) explains:

WJ: Afterwards [after reunification when the project stopped being state-funded], it was more difficult. That has to be said. I am therefore glad that we could decide the endpoint of the project would come with 8 portraits and that they are now finished. Otherwise, I would have to be continually reproaching myself with my inability to hold onto what was important. Especially in these dynamic times, now, of the inward process of reunification in Germany. It is a pity.<sup>4</sup>

The representation of the former members of the socialist group as separate individuals therefore is characteristic, not necessarily of ‘free’ human beings, but of free enterprise. As becomes clear when the shifting form of the documentary is attended to, this separation is an effect of the subjects of the film entering a capitalist system. Individuality, in this documentary then, is not only the cause, but also the effect of a free market.

Furthermore, in contrast to the *7-Up* series, the Golzow serial intentionally relies on the filmmakers being invited by the protagonists to return to interview them and follows diverse strands of personal and public events, such as the anniversaries not only of the protagonists’ first day in school and therefore of the documentary serial, but also of the development of the GDR itself. After the protagonists left the school and the fixed

context of the class room, they were responsible for inviting the film team to occasions they thought were important, but equally they would intentionally or unintentionally forget to do so. Whereas the protagonists were distracted from filming by the teaching in class, once the meetings had to be individually arranged, the former children also staged their encounter more, as Barbara Junge (henceforth referred to as 'BJ') explains:

BJ: And later, it became more difficult. One had to agree upon a meeting.

And at first, the wife suddenly had to go to the hairdresser.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the release date of the films is irregular. The only pre-determined structure of the GDR serial was the schedule of availability of the technical equipment, which resulted in key scenes not being documented. Since the documentation takes place over such a long time, however, and given the irregularity of the re-visits, these omissions are intrinsic to the serial and have progressively been revealed through the commentary or in the interviews. The organisational elements of the Eastern German serial, such as release dates and length of films, were more unplanned and fluctuating in a state based on socialist planning than the British series that takes place in the context of a market economy which is driven by and sells change.

### **2.1.1. Capitalist Structuralism**

Barton Byg argues that the directors of the Golzow films and the *7-Up* series alike 'emphasize the timeless and immutable nature of human life in their subjects' and that both series 'emphasize[s] the unchanging.'<sup>6</sup> I argue, by contrast, that we find change indeed to be an issue in these serials. In *The Children of Golzow*, changes on a mundane level are subtly noted as responding in material ways to larger historical changes, whereas through the pattern of re-visits and the structure of the films, as well as the nature of the interviews, change is merely represented summarized and in retrospect in the interviews of the *7-Up* series. The lack of evolution in the English series mirrors the determination of the English class structure at the time, rather than the dynamics of a market society. The portrayal of lives as predetermined was not only an effect of class in Britain, however, but of the aesthetics of the documentary series itself. In this sense, the *7-Up* series is analogous to the early 'capitalist representations' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari critiqued as overdetermining through structure. The subordination of the signified to the signifier is said to be similar in the capitalist '*Urstaat*' and in Saussurian structuralism.<sup>7</sup> In both cases, a signifier would overcode the flow.<sup>8</sup> The form of the series thus reflects the system it was produced in, i.e. the presentations of the protagonists' lives are overcoded by the containing format they are filmed in. With respect to the *7-Up* series, the structure of the documentary reflected and produced ideology.

In *The Children of Golzow*, in the classless society of the GDR, the individual features of the protagonists' personalities emerge paradoxically as much more important in determining their paths in life and the structure of the films. Even though the classmates in school were also members of the same social class, since only one class officially existed in the socialist state, the structure and style of the films about them depends on their individual developments (and on the individual material that was shot), as Barbara Junge elaborates:

BJ: In essence the structure of the film [*Jochen - a Golzower from Philadelphia*] is determined through reflecting on its material. It is a similar structure to that of Marie-Louise [*I'll Show You My Life. Marie-Louise – Child Of Golzow*], though Marie-Louise is a lot more reflective than Jochen.<sup>9</sup>

The structure of the films reflect the personalities of the protagonists as they appear in that footage. In that respect, *The Children of Golzow* differs not only from the *7-Up* series, whose structure is pre-determined and independent of the protagonists, but also from the ideology of a socialist state that does not allow for unplanned and individual development.

The *7-Up* series largely does without textual and directorial self-reflexivity and instead determines self-reflexivity as a process only within the protagonist. Even though this individualising of reflexivity goes hand in hand with an ideology of the market, the *7-Up* participants, in representing themselves without reflecting on their former representations, are rather 'rememorizing' in the Hegelian sense of, as Slavoj Žižek puts it, 'reflectively returning to what the thing always already was.'<sup>10</sup> While one might expect that this returning to what always already was there, would be more likely the case in a documentary following the lives of socialist subjects in a Marxist-Leninist state based on a Hegelian model, it is the socialist documentary that not only witnesses but allows and acknowledges change.

Whilst the *7-Up* participants were asked how the repeated filming has affected their lives - the voice-over narration does not reflect on how the act of filming has affected the films' content and style. By contrast, in *The Children of Golzow* serial, Winfried Junge already comments on his own commentary even when it was still a GDR serial.<sup>11</sup> For instance, when Jürgen is called up for military service and the filmmaker suggests that he might get away with not being drafted (and the protagonist then replies that he would have had to go to the initial interview with his head under his arm if they were going to exempt him from military service), Winfried Junge narrates in *Biographies* (GDR, 1980):

‘What would I have answered in his position? But I was lucky enough to be asking the questions.’ Features of self-reflexivity in the Golzow serial are include the way that the protagonists are persistently asked why they still want to continue, how the filmmaking influences them and if they would like to ask the filmmakers questions too. (*Children of Golzow* goes further in its self-reflexivity than the classic participatory documentary, the French *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) though in revealing the way it is made. Furthermore, due to the political system, the filmmakers also don’t see themselves as much different to their subjects, unlike the interviewers of *Chronicle*, sociologist Edgar Morin and the filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch). We eventually see the filmmaker whilst we hear his dry reflections about himself and about the form and methodology of the films. He reflects on the ‘stagings’ in the former films: ‘Winfried puts his hand up exceptionally often because he has got the microphone round his neck.’ And he comments on the deception of appearances: ‘Gudrun is not as self-confident as she wants us to think.’ The dead-pan commentary continues to reveal reconstructions either by showing the repeated efforts of the protagonists at getting to act as themselves or by laying bare the device: ‘We reconstruct a scene which happened like this a few minutes before.’ Insight into the stagings of the GDR government are given when the film reveals how Golzow had to pretend it was a different town for a visit of the premier of North Korea. The serial’s self-reflexivity even extended to announcing itself as the longest running documentary project in its credits.

Because the Golzow serial already reflects on the limits of representation through its commentary, and the protagonist’s development through its structure, the task of representing does not have to be carried by the documentary subjects being and narrating ‘the way they are,’ as it does in the *7-Up* series. In *7-Up*, the protagonists are charged with the responsibility of representing their own development. Change is represented as negative and only seen as a deviation from the previously outlined future. Tony is successful in the fulfilment of his working-class type of a taxi-driver. In this vein, he asserts symptomatically in *28-Up*: ‘I don’t wanna change. If I am ever going to change, it proves that the other Tony Walker was a fake.’<sup>12</sup> And the upper-class John and Andrew are successful because they have fulfilled their past predictions for their future, predetermined by class expectation. Whether we move forward or look backward does not matter, since life is just a fulfilment of a prediction, and thus the retrospective cannot differ from the forecast - this critique of the *7-Up* series could be mistaken for the temporal model of a socialist state. In the British series, we merely see older versions of the same model, but no transformation of the model itself. Whereas I argue in Chapter V

on Werner Herzog, that his ‘underachiever’ fiction films such as *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) or *Stroszek* (1976) function like a Platonic model in which the heroes’ actions are judged according to their resemblance to a scripted concept, in the *7-Up* series, the model that produced substitutable particulars for the same generality - as Deleuze would phrase it - was ‘class.’

What change there is for the subjects in respect of their expectations, is represented as dramatic failure. This is exemplified in the figure of Neil. He is a failure, *because* he has changed and this is marked by a downward trajectory. Neil became the most tragic figure of the *7-Up* series, therefore generating the most audience response. By contrast, Winfried Junge rejects building the narrative structure of the Golzow films up towards the tragic elements in the protagonist’s lives and to thereby heighten their struggles in the films for dramatic purposes. With respect to showing that Jürgen is drinking quite a lot in *The Life of Jürgen from Golzow* (FRG, 1994), Winfried Junge explains:

WJ: We ended the film as Jürgen was just going through a sober period, sitting in front of an alcohol-free beer, which one sees in the film. We gave him the option to talk about it: And he also says he will stop drinking, that things are much better without alcohol [...] and that it is no solution to drink. It is very important that the film ends on that note. We could have also filmed him in delirium. That is of course much more sensational if we would have ended the film on such a low note [...] and investigative journalists or the like would be delighted by such material.<sup>13</sup>

News, of course, is supposed to be about what is ‘new’. In a market society, change itself is part of a commodity culture and interpreted as newness. Newness is a concept that was criticized by Marxist thinkers, who argued that something new does not just suddenly appear, but develops dialectically from the old. George Lukács, for example, noted: ‘It would be a mistake to contrast socialist realism as something “radically new” to everything that is “old.” Its essence develops dialectically.’<sup>14</sup> How can there be a change acknowledged then, without this being about the New? By insisting on the value of showing, or telling, what apparently has not changed, the filmmakers have determined the *The Children of Golzow* serial as a documentary film distinct from actuality television. ‘Change’ is given the opportunity to leave the broad categories such as same job, same wife, same place and allow minor material change to take place or even allow us to see how the protagonists cope with this ‘lack of change.’ Drawing from Deleuze, but slightly changing the application of his terms for this serial, I suggest that beyond the everyday as the habitual repetition of the Same, the serial finds difference in sameness.<sup>15</sup>

*The Children of Golzow* acknowledges change, whereas in the series made in a capitalist system, *7-Up*, which allegedly supports change and difference, merely represents change as a 'specific difference' within a generic sameness.

In a market society, in the portrayal of ordinariness, what events are deemed worthy of depiction? And how much lack of change, upward movement or happy endings can a documentary about life-stories bear? At the end of *Jochen – a Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001) the filmmaker teases Jochen, who has just told him that he is going to quit the serial, because he fears his life is not entertaining or successful enough; because it has not changed enough. The filmmaker asks Jochen in the film: 'Is it because you don't want to bore the audience? [...] No viewer expects that you will move into a castle at the end of the film.'<sup>16</sup> Not to have changed was judged as negative by Jochen, who perceived his life to be too static and eventless and thus ended his participation in the serial. The filmmaker remembers the process:

WJ: He always said, when I asked him, that nothing new had happened. When I wanted to film him on a holiday, he said that they don't go on holiday. Nothing had changed at work. And he is still married to the same woman.<sup>17</sup>

And even the filmmaker reveals a similar fear with respect to a supposed stasis in another protagonist's life for *Actually I Wanted to be a Forrester – Bernd from Golzow* (FRG, 2003): 'I didn't dare make a film for a long time, and waited in case something happened. But it all carried on like before.'<sup>18</sup> Unlike Jochen, Bernd had a different stance toward the worthiness of the ordinary and an apparent lack of change, and was of the conviction that something always happens and that there is never an end.<sup>19</sup> In Bernd's life, some of what might be described as a lack of change can be interpreted as positive, since he is still employed by the same company as he was in the GDR. And, like Jochen, he is still married to the same woman. But unlike him, Bernd does not think that this has no entertainment value. Interestingly, the Junge's film *Actually I wanted to be a Forester – Bernd from Golzow*, has a straightforward chronological structure, whereas *Jochen - A Golzower from Philadelphia* is one of the most self-reflexive biographies. Jochen's repetition of other people's expressed or imagined judgment of him as a self-reflexive act determines the structure of the film. It repeats the judgments Jochen imposes on the representation of his life by having him comment on previous footage of himself. Here, the subject also assumes the judgmental position of – or rather instead of – the director, who said himself being interviewed:

WJ: Well, Jochen was the one who was always asking himself, ‘who would be interested in my life?’ [...] And when he saw the other films about his erstwhile school fellows, like Marie Louise - nice house, and, what is more, one in the West, and the like - that’s naturally when he started to ask, ‘how will my story look?’ [...] And that’s why he actually never truly understood why we always returned to film him again. [...] He did not believe that it was ever going to be turned into a film.<sup>20</sup>

This comparison with the trajectories of the other protagonists only arises after the conversion of their state to a market economy. In this case, it coincides with the documentary subject judging himself as an object in competition with higher achievers. Here, competitive comparison has fostered self-reflexivity.

### **2.1.2 The Fetishization of Change as ‘Specific Difference’**

As a genre, documentary has changed from the freezing of lives and personalities into type and class, such as in the *7-Up* series to today’s pressure for change in non-fiction television (be it on the side of the protagonists such as in *Faking It*, *Wife Swap* or *Jamie’s Kitchen*, or, on the side of the presenter such as in *Louis Theroux’s Weird Weekends*).<sup>21</sup> The emphasis on the fast acquisition and shedding of identity has turned identity into a commodity in documentary television. Capitalism has itself transformed from a disciplinary, institutional, top-down power<sup>22</sup> - what Deleuze and Guattari called the overcoding capitalist ‘*Urstaat*’<sup>23</sup> - to a decentralized global market thriving on flow and variety.<sup>24</sup> *7-Up* with its inscriptions of class might have been a symptom of what at the time was an ‘overcoding *Urstaat*,’ and *10-16* (1997), a *7-Up* inspired work by the British artist Gillian Wearing, a re-negotiation. In State Socialism, change, like everything else, was planned, and therefore, contradictory to the very notion of change, only the retrospective representation of a concept. The aim of capitalism on the other hand, is change for the sake of market renewal. I would argue that there is an emphasis on change in current documentary and non-fiction television produced in a market society that is immanent to the capitalist system, a fetishization of change that is a mere superficial difference that does not diverge from the Same. This superficial difference within the Same, of mere variability within the concept of containable differences, is, as Deleuze argues, a difference which feeds into identity and representation. Difference in capitalism is subordinated to economy: ‘surplus-value is, after all, nothing but a difference’ wrote Deleuze and Félix Guattari.<sup>25</sup> Difference, in a market society, is brought back into line as a saleable commodity within the system and thus is turned into surplus value. Deleuze noted that this kind of contained, specific difference establishes:

[...] a confusion disastrous for the entire philosophy of difference: assigning a distinctive concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of the undermined concept. [...] Difference then can be no more than a predicate in the comprehension of a concept.<sup>26</sup>

This ‘specific difference’<sup>27</sup> bolsters an identity that is not collective, ‘but only distributive and hierarchical.’<sup>28</sup> And judgment is the instance that assigns the place of this specific difference:

For judgment has precisely two essential functions, and only two: distribution, which it ensures by the partition of concepts; and hierarchization, which it ensures by the measuring of subjects.<sup>29</sup>

This judgment in capitalism can be literally the value of difference expressed in economic terms, which is not the same as to say that all difference or change is inherently capitalist.<sup>30</sup> This judgment can become self-imposed, when for instance, a protagonist, Jochen, judges his documentary screen presence in terms of entertainment value after he became a capitalist subject.

In the first part of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari critique capitalism as fostering an ‘interplay of differential relations’ that glosses over the difference between the ruling and the ruled:

If the movement of capitalism, in the interplay of its differential relations is to dodge and displace its interior limits, and to always effect breaks of breaks, then the socialist movement seems necessarily led to fix or assign a limit that differentiates the proletariat from the bourgeoisie – a great cleavage that will animate a struggle not only economic and financial, but political as well.<sup>31</sup>

Here they actually propose a freezing of difference that matches the stasis of temporality in the socialist state since the differential relations of the capitalist market blur all difference into that of the same:

[...] from the viewpoint of the capitalist axiomatic there is only one class, a class with a universalist vocation, the bourgeoisie. Plekhanov notes that the French School of the nineteenth century, under the influence of Saint-Simon, should be credited with the discovery of class struggle and its role in history - precisely the same men who praise the struggle of the bourgeois class against the nobility and feudalism, and who come to a halt before the proletariat and deny that there can be any difference in class between the industrialist or banker and the worker, but only a fusion into one and the same flow as with profits and wages.<sup>32</sup>

In *The Children of Golzow*, it is the collectivity of the socialist society - including that of the filmmakers and their subjects - which paradoxically ensured against the state socialist ideology of equality, or sameness, of socialist subjects. Collectivity warranted that change, or difference, would not only be represented and contained from a distance as a limited event, insignificant in its specificity, but followed in its minor and ordinary manifestations from a position of equality without judgment that gives change a platform. *The Children of Golzow* has allowed change to become evident, not only historical change - as one would assume to be the case in a state subscribing to historical materialist ideology - nor the fetishization of change and the loss of normality - as is taking place on Western television, but material changes in the everyday.<sup>33</sup>

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the socialist state in East Germany, the universalist self of socialism - the union of the subject and the state - was separated not only into individuals as independent of the state, but also as distinct from each other. The now capitalist subjects were no longer substitutable parts for a whole. The social philosophy changed from the particular as an expression of the general, as was the case in the GDR, to the individual as an expression of difference in the FRG. From a Deleuzian perspective, one can criticise in the former the way in which the particular can be substituted and exchanged for the general and vice versa. However, difference in capitalism is inherently only specific. Thus, whilst supporting individuality, the market opposes real singularity. By being confronted with the same protagonists first as stable GDR subjects and then as decentred FRG subjects - before both they and the serial had adjusted to the changed political and economical circumstances - we are made to witness their new instability as the effect of the change from socialism to capitalism, and that self-reflexivity is perhaps is a symptom of capitalism.<sup>34</sup>

After the fall of the iron curtain and now working in the context of the 'self' fostered in the West, the Golzow chronicle became more self-reflexive. *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992), the first film after reunification, is subtitled: 'A Film about a Film.' When the protagonists became Western subjects the idea of performing a self emerged and even their names were 'privatised.' In the credits at the beginning of *Screenplay: The Times*, the protagonists 'act' as themselves with their full names given as their 'real' identity and their private name as their role name: 'Dieter Finger as Dieter.' In a market economy, documentary film became role-play. Winfried Junge explains:

WJ: This is important to understand: the 'as'. These are the [actual] names; and now they get their stage name: they are merely Dieter and Brigitte.<sup>35</sup>

With the change from socialism to capitalism, the protagonists, who were now individuals, had to sell themselves as someone else. While the GDR citizen did not need a surname, since he or she represented the collective anyway, the FRG individuals adopt a role name so that what they sell is not all of themselves. Symptomatically the ‘credits’ at the beginning of the film run over a scene in which the former GDR citizens visit the Reeperbahn for the first time, an area in Hamburg where individuals sell themselves or their image in peep shows and prostitution.<sup>36</sup> The Junges see the introduction of character names in the shape of their first names as a shift from the documentary heroes and heroines as real life and thus presumably singular figures to more general figures of their time:

WJ: We just wanted to say that we have real life heroes and that these become, through their generalisation, more than actual existing individuals: they become figures of their time. It is also a bit funny, since this is how the big films start.<sup>37</sup>

The credits were also intended as a mockery of Hollywood star-based cinema: documentary protagonists too can be heroes. In this series of reversals, the film starts with fireworks, whereas usually an American fiction film would reserve the ‘happy end’ as the goal for and resolution of the conclusion.

## **2.2 The Emergence of Self-reflexivity and Self-Consciousness**

Apart from the dissolution of the GDR and its transformation into a free market, a number of factors were essential for the serial becoming self-reflexive: firstly its longevity; secondly the fear that the serial would be discontinued; thirdly lack of material; and fourthly, ethical reasons. The longevity of the serial effected the move from observation to explanation and the resulting emphasis on language rather than images to describe the events referred to, as well as more self-conscious protagonists as they grew older. Most of these developments were considerably reinforced through reunification. Furthermore, through the duration of the project, temporality works as context and against self-conscious performance, which just could not be maintained over such an extended period of time.

In the section on Jürgen in the group portrait *Screenplay: The Times* (GDR, 1992), and in the individual portrait *The Life of Jürgen from Golzow* (FGR, 1994) we see Jürgen and his wife Anita being interviewed on a bank in front of their house, but we see the interviewer in the image as well:

Winfried: 'How do you feel about me sitting here with you and having myself filmed? Do you think it's right?'

Jürgen: 'It's fine.'

Winfried: 'Why?'

Jürgen: 'Well, people should see who undertook this with us here, right?'

Winfried: 'Well, I can't always hide behind the camera, right.'

Jürgen: 'It's easier to talk.'

Winfried: 'Do you think so?'

Jürgen: 'Yes.'

Winfried: 'Do you feel better when I'm sitting here with you?'

Jürgen: 'Yes.'

Whereas *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992) and *The Life of Jürgen from Golzow* (FGR, 1994) was finished and shown in 1994 after reunification, this scene - one of the first to manifest a turn towards self-reflexivity - was actually already shot in 1985, before the fall of the wall. The move towards more self-reflexivity was thus initiated before reunification of the two Germanies. In what follows I examine the reasons why the serial became gradually more self-reflexive under socialism first, but then peaked shortly after reunification.

### **2.2.1 Self-Reflexivity as a Result of Longevity**

Firstly, self-reflexivity emerged as a result of longevity of the serial. Before the shift to a capitalist economy made the justification and selling of the project necessary, it was its longevity which triggered a need for its justification. Both the sheer length of duration and the resulting legitimisation of the project increased its self-reflexivity.

WJ: Because of the longevity, we were told and we told ourselves, it [the self-reflexivity] is a legitimization that is okay after twenty years: to show who is responsible. This in a way was expected of us. You also want to know how it has been made.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, when anxieties about ending the serial arouse, this contributed to its progressive self-reflexivity. The chronicle could have ended at several points in time. The project did not only have to be legitimised, but also to be explained. In the GDR, the project had to be explained to the audience rather than legitimized for potential investors who might commission further instalments after reunification. Laying out the serial's ontology for the viewers involved a progressive falling back on language as the means to get through the accumulated mass of background information. Barbara Junge articulates the effects on the aesthetics of the serial as such:

BJ: It actually started in 1982/83, when it was unclear if the project would continue and you [Winfried Junge] and Hans Leupold, the cameraman, stood in front of the Golzow signpost and were quite depressed: ‘this could be the end now.’ As a result, you said that this could be one of the last shots. [...] So already in the GDR, things came to a halt. And then we made the decision – if the project has to end – we should at least say something about it.<sup>39</sup>

Here the reason to become self-reflexive is the fear that the documentary serial will have to end, like a flashback of its life or an accounting before it meets its maker, so to speak. This seems to be the initial rationale prompting the filmmaker and the cameraman to pose in front of the camera for the first time in 1982/83 after over twenty years of the serial’s running. (This scene, made self-reflexive in *Screenplay: The Times* (GDR, 1992), is further examined in the section below ‘Distance as Objective in Anglo-American Documentary and as Subjective in Socialist Documentary.’) After reunification, when as Winfried Junge put it, ‘the state was finished, but the people continued to live,’ the fear of an ending involved not only the end of working on the serial but of the employment of the filmmakers themselves.<sup>40</sup> The fear of becoming unemployed documentary directors and hence the threat of the serial ending repeatedly affected the filmmakers as well as the protagonists (as will be elaborated under ‘Self-consciousness and “Self-Realization” as an Effect of Reunification’). This information that what we are watching is about to come to an end and lose its creators - since they are not employed as these - is disclosed in dialogues with their protagonists, for instance in *Jochen – A Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001): ‘You also come from the job centre. That’s where I must go soon. I too am now sacked.’<sup>41</sup>

Thirdly, the serial was motivated to become self-reflexive because aspects and periods of the protagonists’ lives were inaccessible to filming. In some instances, the material necessary for telling the story was simply unavailable. Since Jochen had moved away to another town after he had been a pupil in Golzow for only a year, there was a 10 years hiatus in the Junges’ filming of him. Thus, the filmmakers had created new material out of what they did not have by asking him to reflect on earlier scenes.

BJ: On top of this there is the fact that 10 years are missing, 10 years during which we couldn’t Jochen film in Golzow, as we only discovered him again during his apprenticeship, before which he had been away. In essence the structure of the film is determined through reflecting on its material. It is a similar structure to that of Marie-Louise, though Marie-Louise is a lot more reflective than Jochen. So we had to build the film around this interview and

reflections on former scenes. Because in comparison to the other portraits we had too little material of him. After all, we had not filmed him since 1993,<sup>42</sup>

For *Jochen, a Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001) self-reflexivity in effect is used as a framing device:

WJ: [...] to record how he sees his material and how he talks about it. Had we not done that, there would not have been a film. As such it became the frame.<sup>43</sup>

Because there was not enough 'direct' footage of Jochen being observed or interviewed at earlier stages, in order to arrive at a film of a similar length to the other biographies, new material was generated by having Jochen comment on previous scenes. As each subject is given the same amount of time, this insistence in an equality of duration can of course be regarded as another implementation of socialist ideas.

### **2.2.2 The Shift from the Visual to the Spoken**

A further effect that follows on from the longevity of the project is the dependence on language rather than on the image. Even though reunification bolstered the self-reflexive impulse, prior to the collapse of the GDR, self-reflexivity had already set in, ensuing from the longevity of the project and the resulting need for the growing amount of previous material to be incorporated and reflected upon within the present material. Symptomatically, the serial started with more or less observational and expository short films that have only descriptive commentary in *When I Finally Go to School* (GDR, 1961) and *Observations in a First Class* (GDR, 1962). The next film, *Eleven Years Old* (GDR, 1966) was perhaps the first GDR observational documentary film, without any commentary at all.<sup>44</sup> The absent voice-over in this third film was substituted by an impressionist mosaic of children's voices, the classroom whispers of each child blending into the others without being related visually to a specific person. The unavailability of synchronous sound recording at the time for this kind of documentary is one of the reasons for this. In *Eleven Years Old* (GDR, 1966) the individual character of a child and its personal interests nevertheless begins to emerge from the depiction of the class as a whole, leading the development of the serial to ultimately leave the class behind for portraits of the individual life histories. This progressive focus on the individual stories is paralleled by the narration moving from a universal expository one, framing the blend of children's voices, to a continuous personal commentary that due to its sharpness is easily attributed to the filmmaker.

What's more, the serial's earlier films do not have Winfried Junge as the narrator, but a more 'objective' sounding actor, as was convention of the time. From *I talked to a Girl* (GDR, 1975) onwards though - with the exception of the next film, *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* (GDR, 1979), which the writer Uwe Kant narrated - the filmmaker spoke the commentary himself. In *I Talked to a Girl* - the first biography of the serial about only one protagonist - the filmmaker relays the commentary in the first person and directly addresses his 'silent' subject in the images from off-screen in retrospect: 'It is four years now since you have left school....' The soundtrack alternates between the interviews in which both, the interviewer and the interviewee are audible, and Junge's commentary. Since the voices are not synchronised, the results of the interviews only feature as a 'dialogue' of impressionistic, floating sound-bites, unconnected with the images rather than as a grounded, synchronous experience. This effect is strangely 'recreated' through the English dubbing of *Biographies* (GDR, 1980), even though in the German original Winfried Junge's authorial voice is quite distinct and the protagonists' voices had been recorded in sync sound. Because the English version has only three speakers for all protagonists as well as for the commentary, it has the effect of erasing differences, starting with those of intonation, and merging the protagonists and the filmmaker together. Furthermore, the English speaker's voices give an upper-class accent to Golzow's socialist 'heroes' thus making the serial more 'bourgeois' in its capitalist, dubbed version.

The more the subjects advanced in age, the more the encounters with the filmmakers had to be planned in advance and the more they expected to be questioned after the event rather than observed in action, as Winfried Junge states:

WJ: Since 1972 all filming was based on research and conversations, in which we discussed with the Golzowians the possibilities of shooting. Situations, which characterised the everyday and which repeated themselves in this way or that, were equally precious to us as special days. However, for either of these one had to arrange to meet. It makes no sense, for example, to hide around the side of a house and wait until the protagonist comes home at some time or other. Is the situation then 'found' or 'created'? As you see, 'to observe' here would be quite problematic. And the expression 'long term observation' then acquires a comical double meaning.<sup>45</sup>

In a sense then, *The Children of Golzow* serial is no 'long term observation' since all the 'observations' had to be planned. Thus since the children left school, their meetings became more stationary and verbal. Rather than aspire to interviews with comprehensive

answers, Junge is often found in an exchange where he says more than his curt interviewees. In its trajectory towards self-reflexivity via the establishing of an authorial voice, the off-screen narration later changes from commenting on what we see in front of the camera to commenting about what has gone on behind the camera.

What happens in 40 years of represented story time cannot be observed, it has to be summarized. Because it represents such a long duration, the *Children of Golzow* relies more on spoken or written language than on direct observation. Inter-titles or commentary that indicate time and place of the footage is one of the aesthetic features of a long-term documentation.

WJ: The commentary produces a new level - which is essential in various places. [...] Can an aesthetic be seen in that? [...] If one shows the things without text, nobody knows what's happening. Who is who of 13 children? *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* [FRG, 1979] still deals with every child in the class in 1 hour 45 minutes, right across the whole history of class, a period of eighteen years. One had to understand that faces change and if one wants to recognize a child again, one has to lend a helping hand.<sup>46</sup>

Because the children might not be recognisable through all their bodily changes in the course of their physical development, and since sequences jump between bits of footage shot at different times, orientation through language and dates became necessary. As appearances changed, the filmmakers also had to establish visual and content based connections in order to ensure that the audience could follow the development:

WJ: Yes, when they were 14 years old they all sat opposite the village policeman. He took down the information for their identity card, and so also their 'identifying characteristics'. Colour of eyes. At which point Ilona said: "Dark blue." "Dark blue?" he said, "you mean 'blue.' Let me have a look." She maintained she had dark blue eyes. That's a word which makes sense in the scene, and which is retained in memory. And when years later Ilona appears again at the round dance you don't recognise her anymore. So I say, "Ilona with the dark blue eyes," and straight away everything is clear: so that's her, yes. That's how simple the bridges are that are built in the commentary.<sup>47</sup>

Collectivity, then, is another cause for the need for explanation through language and the use of connectors: because there are more people involved at the different stages of their lives, there has to be more contextualization through the film.

WJ: And then, it also is an aesthetic of compressing time. What does one do if one wants to show forty years in two hours? How does one compress it, and doesn't something new grow out of this, when things are presented so condensed in sequence? Therefore a certain aesthetic develops. But this cannot be compared with a documentary about just one site and with only a few people: 'now paint the situation there.' With respect to such a film, I often don't know why it lasts 90 minutes, because I am bored well before that. As beautiful as the images are, I must be critical here. I envy everyone who has so much time for a single situation, who takes this time. We cannot do that. If we were to detail all the situations that fly past, the film would be 10 hours long. That is not possible, no; and there lies the aesthetic problem.<sup>48</sup>

Junge uses the term 'to paint' to describe a different style of documentary that is observational and based on the image and thus only captures the present time of filming. Unlike the long term documentation where the passing of time requires a translation through language this observation can 'make do' without summary. In the above quotation, the filmmaker of the longest spanning documentary serial ever made, treats time like narrative space (in German he actually says 'who takes this space') and in a language of economy. Even though the later Golzow documentaries are not exactly short, often with a customary length of 140 minutes, the represented time is so much more. The ratio between the span of time represented and the material filmed on the one hand, and the length of the finished film, the filmmakers argue, should not be too far apart. This is the reason why their longest film, *Screenplay: The Times*, is 4 hours and 44 minutes. As aforementioned, unlike in the *7-Up* films, the length of the Golzow films varies and depends on the footage shot:

BJ: The length of the individual films grows out of the abundance of material, and that television still allows us to make such long films. As a consequence, we had to move into the late hours of the evening, 22.20 or 23.00, but we do not have to feed into the 90 Minutes slots, or even worse, into 45 minutes. That would not be possible. We can't do that. Then the material really would be violated.<sup>49</sup>

### **2.2.3 Temporality as Context**

Whilst the longevity of the project encourages language and representation, the linear and narrative effect that language has is here not employed for drama, but for the undramatic ordinary. In addition, the effect of the time-lapse of compressing by now 45 years into far fewer hours (or a life into a film), what was not important at the time is

given the chance to gain value in retrospect, or to put it differently: the ordinary becomes extraordinary through it having become past:

WJ: To make a film about nothing else than the non-dramatic everyday and typical ordinariness has been a motivation for us. Through the time-lapse effect of a film covering 41 years, the non-sensational sometimes gains importance.<sup>50</sup>

Ordinariness would thus be a feature of the present and importance only made possible through time past. This is also the way in which newness or change arrives in the serial, as that which is not predetermined.

WJ: We never know, when we drive home with the film rolls, why we filmed all this. What's the point? But when we let the material lie for a few years, suddenly it develops a relation to other things that we shot before and after. And suddenly even the most modest thing becomes important. This is the historical effect inherent in this process. When one lines up the events of a life, as in time lapse, the singular incident need not have been momentous, but in place within the sequence, it becomes significant.<sup>51</sup>

Whereas time-lapse makes the ordinary extra-ordinary in the *Golzow* serial, the structural, representative aspect makes the extra-ordinary ordinary in the *7-Up* series. What transpires through the longevity of the *Children of Golzow* chronicle is that time functions as context. A change of context, as defined through temporality rather than space, effects a change of meaning. One could even argue here that the relative unimportance of the singular events of a person's life matches the relative unimportance of a person as a singular individual in the socialist state - like the singular image had to be submitted to the series of images edited together for a film. That the importance of events can only be acknowledged in retrospect is another feature of the serial that differs from the conventions of socialist documentary since it works against the forward trajectory of socialism.

Through an extensive array of references interrelating various moments in time the films explain the history of the project and its subjects. (As has been elaborated, the structure changed over the years and with respect to the subjects and the material shot.) *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* (GDR, 1979) was the first film of the serial which gained from the effects of its longevity, as it cuts extensively between the diverse times of the material and generates a time-lapse aesthetic using flashbacks. The availability of a vast amount of material permitted cuts between the same subject at different ages, and to a new generation who for example now play in the same sandpit. These children serve as

reference points for the protagonists, but remain deliberately unknown. By contrast, the filmmakers intentionally refused to close an ongoing life-story in spite of its perceived insignificance. Thus, the intricacies of the serial's selection and combination remain testing. (Since they continuously reuse their material for the life summaries, the filmmakers refer to the times the footage has been shot, rather than the release date of the films.) Following all the diverse lifelines is of course exhausting and ultimately impossible. When the idea for a long running documentary serial was conceived in 1961 by Junge's superior Karl Gass at the DEFA, 18 years his senior, in order to secure the continuation of the project, Gass felt it necessary to hand it over to a younger man. An informing expectation of the project had been that the Junges also would succumb to the serial's inherent infinity and again hand it over to a younger filmmaker.

WJ: It is in principle an infinite story. Many people expected this [that it would continue]. But we have never said that. It is a finite infinite story.<sup>52</sup>

The project adheres to the confines of each family tree. The more it progresses, the more it has to block other potential narrative threads, thereby leading to the reduction to 8 biographies, the last of which is symptomatically called: '*... And if They Haven't Died Yet*' (FRG, 2006). (This is the direct translation of the generic beginning of fairy tales in German, the whole sentence being: 'And if they haven't died yet, they still live on. The English translation would be: 'Once Upon a Time.')

As Winfried Junge relates, the filmmakers wanted to end the serial with a last retrospective film: 'What a relief, that most of the films are finished, that I don't have to think about all of them. That's not good.'<sup>53</sup>

In this context of necessary repetitions of a life's history, the way in which a similar event is presented differs. The repetitions show what has changed. When, for instance, Bernd is asked to sing the Brecht/Weill song 'Spare No Charm and Spare No Passion' again as an adult for *Actually I Wanted to be a Forester – Bernd from Golzow* (FRG, 2003), the repetition of the song shows the differences in the context of the situation (being asked by the filmmaker on holidays rather than by the music teacher in class as a child in *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* (GDR, 1979)) and in the conviction of the repeating instance (betraying how much he has remembered rather than how good he can represent socialist ideology by singing). Repetition here made memory visible, or perhaps rather audible.

The close relationship with the protagonists, who are also the serial's audience, and the dependency for the continuation of the serial on their agreement, results in a 'holistic'

approach to their life histories. Rather than portraying a person for example through details decided by the filmmaker, or determining the importance of events through idiosyncratic, personal values, it was social occasions that decided the importance of events, especially if they were based on a group experience, rather than an individual one such as a marriage. If in a biography, for instance, the *Jugendweihe*<sup>54</sup> was missing, the audience - expecting this socialist confirmation to be covered – may not think that the filmmakers simply decided not to include it, but assume that, because it is not shown, it did not happen.

WJ: There are also problematic repetitions. Take for example the *Jugendweihe*. Barbara pointed out that we wouldn't be able to show it again and again each time. Each of them de facto has their *Jugendweihe*, apart from the two exceptions [...] It was a way-station for everyone we portrayed. So, what are we now to do with this recurring ceremony that is always the same? [...] But then it's always possible for us that one viewer who sees this film says: What, didn't they have a *Jugendweihe*? And so it starts all over again.<sup>55</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Self-consciousness and 'Self-realization' as an Effect of Reunification**

The films made in the years after reunification manifested a pressing desire - and a pressure – for the filmmakers and the protagonists to be self-reflexive. The more recent films however, such as on Dieter and Bernd are not as self-reflexive any more. They do not ask the protagonists to comment on previous scenes and thus do not jump in time, but are chronological and linear.

BJ: There was a brief moment in which things had opened up. We had interviewed most of them [as GDR subjects] and noticed that the attitude was receding beforehand: 'We can't do anything about the political state of things or what surrounds us anyway'. And so, people withdrew into the private and spoke more about the private, and so suddenly [just before reunification] people could get things off their chest. One can see that in the interviews which were made 1989/1990. [...] These were issues that arose from that time. And when things then moved towards reunification, it ebbed away. Everything went much more quiet. One could feel that the steam had been released now.<sup>56</sup>

To focus on the private in the GDR resulted from the blockage of debate about public politics. In a paradoxical sense then, *work* in the workers-and-peasants' state, was located in the same discursive space as the private realm: work and private life were open for discussion, whereas to object to the state was taboo. Winfried Junge observes:

The most willing they [the Golzow subjects] were, was when we wanted to film their work. They felt comfortable with that, could show what they were able to do and spoke quite openly about their problems.<sup>57</sup>

With unification not only did the project become more self-reflexive, but its protagonists became more self-conscious. After conversion from State Socialism to Democratic Capitalism the protagonists were uniquely reminded of their past existence as GDR citizens. However, because they were subjects of this documentary, the historical subjects of Golzow could not deny their GDR past, but the serial could be used as evidence against them like a STAASI file.<sup>58</sup> As GDR subjects some of the children of Golzow were as untroubled about their careers as they were by their image on film. After reunification, what was rewarded under one system was punished by the next. Their affirmations under the eye of state censorship were replaced by fear that a company superior could see them. Whereas the GDR citizen did not say anything against the state but complained about work, the former GDR subject who is lucky enough to be employed in the FRG is under pressure to keep quiet about their employer, though they now can criticize the government:

WJ: If someone has work now, you will not hear him saying anything against his employer. [...] But it was run of the mill in the GDR: this firm, how it's run, the daily slog, and couldn't things be done differently – you never hear that now. Now everything is great, because employees fear that they will lose their employment if they get bolshie. This is a new experience. Only people without work complain now; but about politics you can complain.<sup>59</sup>

Not only has the emphasis been shifted, but the paradigms have been reversed. What was overemployment in the GDR became underemployment in the FRG. Whilst some children in the *7up* series acted as though they were already grown ups, in the Golzow cycle people who had been fully trained and adults in employment under one system became learners again under the next. Their old qualifications were not acknowledged and most became unemployed. After reunification, many were trained in infinite re-education programmes and taught that self-realization and motivation is everything. Reasons were individualised as well. Barbara Junge witnessed the loss of government approval that guaranteed a positive image as causing a retreat into the private - or as Winfried Junge phrased it: 'The new situation closes mouths in a different way.'<sup>60</sup> Thus for several reasons the reactions of the now grown-up children of Golzow and their filmmakers changed after unification of the two Germanies.

That the protagonists become more self-conscious is also another effect of the process of having acquired more experience.

BJ: Observations become more difficult, because the older one gets, the more one becomes aware of one's impact in front of the camera. And one controls oneself more than one did as a child.<sup>61</sup>

What Barbara Junge argues here implicitly is that observations do not only become more difficult with the longevity of the film project, but that it is the duration of the lives themselves, the fact of getting older and, like the film project, accumulating more material of experience, that makes the protagonists become more self-conscious. In line with this observation, it would appear that not only did the protagonists become more self-conscious through the changed value system in capitalist society, but also just by getting older.

### **2.3 The Ideological Background**

This section deals with the specific ideological background of socialism which affected the way in which documentary subjectivity and objectivity was handled in the GDR. The dictates and perceptions of, for instance, socialist realism, scientific socialism or Brechtian alienation often function as a counter-model to what actually applies for *The Children of Golzow*. However, other socialist concepts, such as the notion of the collective and the subsequent rejection of observational 'distance' are manifested in the serial.

#### **2.3.1 The Identity of Subjectivity and Objectivity**

In Lenin's assertion of 'the objectivity of the universal in the individual and in the particular,'<sup>62</sup> the subject is understood as reflecting objectivity. This superimposition of subjectivity and objectivity can be traced back to the concept of the identity of opposites in Hegel. Lenin here cites Hegel to further the socialist notion of a subject that is the same as an object: 'From a certain point of view, under certain conditions, the universal is the individual, the individual is universal.'<sup>63</sup> Since everyone was thought to be equal under socialism, so too were - potentially - subject and object. But then in the conflation of opposites, the new equals at the same time still have to be separate entities in order to function in a dialectical process, according to Hegel:

'Subjectivity (or the Notion) and the object – *are the same and not the same.*'<sup>64</sup>

'It is wrong to regard subjectivity and objectivity as a fixed and abstract antithesis. Both are wholly dialectical [...]'<sup>65</sup>

Dziga Vertov transposed the notion of objectivity in socialism, as something supposedly carried by every subject, onto the perspectives of the images themselves. In *The Man With the Movie Camera*, the different perspectives of the shots have left the privileged centre.<sup>66</sup> Deleuze found this to be a situation where ‘all the images vary as a function of each other.’<sup>67</sup>

What montage does, according to Vertov, is to carry perception into things, to put perception into matter, so that any point in space itself perceives all the points on which it acts, or which act on it, however far these actions extend. This is the definition of objectivity, “to see without boundaries or distances.” [...] The materialist Vertov realises the materialist programme of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* through the cinema, the in-itself of the image.<sup>68</sup>

Whilst Deleuze then goes on to use Vertov as an example for ‘the eye of and in matter,’ what is of interest in this context is that the diverse subjective perspectives are elaborated as constituting objectivity, not subjectivity. Deleuze took this kind of objectivity constituted through multiple, a-subjective perceptions from Henri Bergson:

[...] a subjective perception is one in which the images vary in relation to a central and privileged image; an objective perception is one where, as in things, all the images vary in relation to one another, on all their facets and in all their parts.<sup>69</sup>

Vertov’s construction of a new reality through montage of documentary footage had been regarded as a realization of dialectical filmmaking. In the following explanation of the quote above, in which Deleuze cites Bergson, Ronald Bogue could have substituted the term ‘non-socialist’ or ‘Western’ for the phrase ‘the standard sense of subjectivity and objectivity’:

This definition has the curious effect of reversing the standard sense of *subjective* and *objective*, in that what we usually think of as subjective shots and sequences – dreams, hallucinations, visions – are the classic cinema’s most striking appropriations of what Deleuze calls the objective “perception in things,” in which an “eye in matter” traces the acentered undulations of a single vibratory flux.<sup>70</sup>

Since there is no distance between the socialist subjects, there is no distance between the images. François Zourabichvili observes this about Vertov and Bergsonian materialism: ‘[...] perception becomes internal to matter, relations of distance pass into the image, become relations between images.’<sup>71</sup> The Deleuzian ‘photogramme,’ which displays a genetic, ‘molecular perception’ from the perspective of matter, ‘the eye of matter, the eye

in matter,<sup>72</sup> for which Deleuze used Vertov's *Man With The Movie Camera* as an example, is not so far away from Lenin's 'reflective materialism.' Both make do without human perspective or active consciousness and are thus materialist and without distance. In socialism, through Lenin following Hegel's concept of identity of opposites, there was a dialectical relation of subjectivity and objectivity. The decentred perspectives in *The Man With The Movie Camera* were objective through multiple subject positions.

### 2.3.2 Lenin's Theory of Non-reflexive Reflection

It was not only early German Romanticism that used the concept of 'reflection' (as will be elaborated in detail in Chapter V), but later Lenin too, albeit for quite different purposes than those of the Romantics, for whom it denoted an ironic and destabilising subjectivity. In his 'theory of reflection,' Lenin adhered to the idea that objectivity was historically and scientifically proven. From his materialist perspective, subjectivity was idealistic and thus inherently reactionary. Romanticism was charged with being about 'non-existing life.'<sup>73</sup> In advocating scientific objectivity, Lenin followed Hegel in his critique of Kant, who held that the latter was too subjectivist:

To deny the objectivity of notions, the objectivity of the universal in the individual and in the particular, is impossible. Consequently, Hegel is much more profound than Kant, and others, in tracing the reflection of the movement of the objective world in the movement of notions.<sup>74</sup>

In Lenin's materialist interpretation, reflection is conceived of as indexical evidence and therefore unalterable by the reflecting instance. Reflection here is not reflexive. This rather mechanistic interpretation of reflection is distinct from conscious reflexivity involving choice, paradoxically *because* it is used as evidence.

Hegel actually *proved* that logical forms and laws are not an empty shell, but the *reflection* of the objective world.<sup>75</sup>

The laws of logic are the reflections of the objective in the subjective consciousness of man.<sup>76</sup>

With objectivity as an effect of reflection, the 'subjective consciousness of man' cannot decide to reflect upon the 'objective' 'laws of logic.'<sup>77</sup> In this repetition without difference - conscious, but passive - it cannot reflect 'about,' it can only reflect. Thus, reflection here is not a meta-activity. If consequently the mind is merely passively reflecting, 'reflection is then not independent, but itself a material function.'<sup>78</sup> In his critique of the 'object-reflection model' Raymond Williams maintained that, 'the simplest theories of "reflection" were based on mechanical materialism.'<sup>79</sup> This mechanical materialist theory of reflection – 'seeing the world as objects and excluding

activity'<sup>80</sup> – was distinct from historical materialism that included human activity in the process of reflection. Williams described the negative effects of the metaphor of reflection with respect to art as follows:

The most damaging consequence of any theory of art as reflecting is that, through its persuasive physical metaphor (in which a reflection simply occurs, within the physical properties of light, when an object or movement is brought into relation with a reflective surface – the mirror and then the mind), it succeeds in suppressing the actual work on material – in a final sense, the material social process – which is the making of any art work. By projecting and alienating this material process to “reflection,” the social and material character of artistic activity – of that art work which is at once “material” and “imaginative” – was suppressed.<sup>81</sup>

Mechanical materialist reflection and any foregrounding of process as only of the material itself thus makes any reflection on the social processes of materialism impossible. Marx opposed these ‘passive implications of mechanical materialism and insisted on a Hegelian dialectic of active mind and objective reality.’<sup>82</sup> In historical materialist documentary, unlike in materialist experimental film, man was determined by social processes. This is in line with Marx’s dictum: ‘It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.’<sup>83</sup> In order to portray these determined men, the material of the film had to be transparent for the materialism of what it represented, or as Marx phrased it, ‘the materialist productive forces of society.’<sup>84</sup> The material of the film would be formed by and be dependent on ‘the materialist productive forces’ of the society that made it. It is this which, for instance, the documentary *The Man With The Movie Camera* self-reflexively foregrounds. Nevertheless, whereas for Vertov man fell short of the movie camera, as Richard Taylor observed,<sup>85</sup> Marx had argued that man was alienated through his industrialized labour with machines. Thus in their submission of man to machine, Dziga Vertov and *The Man With The Movie Camera* were more Leninist-Hegelian than Marxist.

Formal materialism would have prevented the textual manifestation of political materialism. As will be discussed, the term ‘formalism’ had a specific resonance in the GDR and Soviet context. In documentary theory, the conflict between reflective and historical materialism has been reiterated in the contrasting modes of formal and political reflexivity by Bill Nichols. Nevertheless, that a political system was based on reflective materialism did not mean that it favoured materialist experimental films as its preferred

filmic expression. Whereas the mechanistic implications of Lenin's theory of reflection suggest a certain formalism and no space for historical materialism or any reflexivity, not even political, it was applied to the documentaries under a socialist state in the sense that the socialist world was per se objective, and ideology was a part this objectivity. Formalism was excluded as not reflecting because of it being self-centred.

### **2.3.3 The Film Images as 'a Collective'**

The reproach of formalism in GDR documentary was not directed against abstract, non-naturalistic representations (like it was being used in the other arts), but against aesthetically pleasing images and a self-serving montage that were not legitimised by the ideological context.<sup>86</sup> Formalism was seen in State Socialism as the consequence of inadequate ideological consciousness. Ernst Opgenoorth writes:

[...] while a lack of, or unclear partisanship [German: 'Parteilichkeit,' see section '*The Children of Golzow*: from "Collective Subjectivity" to "Individual Objectivity"' for further discussion] is subsumed under the reproach of 'formalism.' This word denotes, in the context of documentary film, not abstract forms of expression distant from the naturalistic understanding of art, as it did elsewhere in the arts, but rather the inclination towards an aesthetically pleasing and, in relation to cinematography and montage, a virtuosic realistic image, in as much as it becomes an end in itself and ceases to stand in a sufficiently clear relation to the intended ideological message.<sup>87</sup>

In addition, formalism had been perceived as a consequence of the division of labour in filmmaking. The separation between the content, as assigned to the director or writer, and the image, as the responsibility of the cameraperson, resulted in the word defining the content and the image marking the form. Especially in actuality documentary, excluding the cameraperson from content-based decisions together with the lack of preparation time because of the necessity to react speedily to unfolding events was surprisingly seen as contributing to the production of 'beautiful' images. The camera-operator was too little informed, or, so to speak, left out of the frame, to be able to contribute to ideological contextualization. Since beauty had been marked as ideologically unsound, the GDR camera-operators became reluctant to shoot 'beautiful' images for fear of being accused of formalism.<sup>88</sup> The images themselves thus were looked at in terms of the 'collective,' here of the collection of images that make up a film. To elevate an image by looking at it as a singular entity, rather than it working for the whole of the edited film, was frowned upon. Moreover, because they were not aware of the context, the camera-operators

sought the extra-ordinary in their images, which would further heighten each image's singularity. A GDR cameraman identifies this as a problem for socialist documentary in 1955:

The context, the flow of the scenes, the binding content dries up, and singular images stand alone and thus become formalist. Camera-operators as well as directors, [...] if they examine the circumstances and the singular elements only superficially, are forced to use so as to offer something interesting, the eccentric, the bizarre, in other words not characteristic but uninteresting shots which merely have impact due to their extra-ordinariness.<sup>89</sup>

The division of work in the industrialized labour that is filmmaking was thus seen to effect the alienation of images as 'a collective.'

### **2.3.4 Marx vs Socialist Realism**

Marx, however, in his later writings appreciated the formal aspects of art. He wanted art to involve a play with the material conditions of its creation and not solely to be made for propagandistic and thus utilitarian purposes, as historical materialism would seem to aim for.<sup>90</sup> According to Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski:

This stress on such formal structures of art [symmetry, proportion, balance, and harmony] means that for Marx ... art serves more than merely mimetic or directly utilitarian purposes. There is in art always an element of self-purpose in which the creation of formal attractiveness is an exercise of human capacity for playful material activity (the lack of which in modern capitalist labour is a prime measure of its alienation.)<sup>91</sup>

Even though art had a 'use value' in Marx's view, he regarded utilitarianism as bourgeois. Hence art was 'of fundamental human use for Marx, although he rejected [...] narrow nineteenth-century bourgeois notions of utility.'<sup>92</sup> This position against utilitarian art is perhaps comparable to the rejection of the notion of art as 'direct propaganda' in the young GDR, albeit propagated for another reason than by Marx. GDR cultural politics officially took a stance against the totalitarian use of film as simply serving the dictates of the state since this would be following the recent fascist tradition. Whereas Marxist filmmaking in general historically fostered political didactics, Marx's own later stance on the role of art - though appreciative of the uses of art as agitation - was opposed to the reduction of art to the role of the merely instructional and functional.<sup>93</sup> While Marx's understanding of art took into consideration the way in which the social order inflected and conditioned the art produced under it, he ultimately rejected the notion of art being merely a 'copy' or a 'reflection' of reality.<sup>94</sup> The artist was understood to be a

productive labourer as any other and thus should not be alienated as an instrument for mechanical reproduction. On the contrary, art was supposed to help overcome alienation by introducing the human element into production, notably pleasure arising out of sensuousness and the appreciation of formal features. For Marx, therefore, art was useful only insofar as it operated as an indicator to how rich unalienated life could be. Unlike later Marxist theoreticians and practitioners such as Brecht whose notion of art embraced alienation as a means of fostering radical consciousness, in Marx, art ideally provided a model of the overcoming of alienation.<sup>95</sup> (At this point we must distinguish between Brecht's consciously sought artistic strategy, the *Verfremdungseffekt* – translated as alienation effect, estrangement effect or, perhaps best, distancing effect - to avoid confusion with the involuntary alienation of the worker in a capitalist society Marx opposed.) Accordingly, art should not only reflect external reality, but actively evoke alternatives to alienation and dehumanization.<sup>96</sup> For Marx, the artist does not only reflect, but actively changes, not only by creating works but moreover by inducing a new response. Art can thus serve to potentially change consciousness and to 'create needs which capitalist society cannot satisfy,' that thus transcends consumerism in a positive way.<sup>97</sup> In short, Marx hoped that, since production creates demand, the product that is art would create new sensibilities too, and therefore a different reality.<sup>98</sup> As he remarks:

Does not the pianist as he produces music and satisfies our tonal sense, also produce that sense in some respects? The pianist stimulates production either by making us more active and lively individuals or [...] by arousing a new need.<sup>99</sup>

Marx's humanist stance against the reduction of art as merely reflecting, sets his position apart from Lenin's view on art as 'objective' reflection and his rejection of reflexivity in art. Although Lenin shared Marx's emphasis on change, this was not on the humanist level with the artist as an example of a free individual as Marx did, but by displacing objectivity onto the artist as on any other socialist subject. As such, Lenin emphasized that 'man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it.'<sup>100</sup> This creation of a new world was of course the revolution itself. And art should be creative only by reflecting 'the guiding points of the revolution.'<sup>101</sup> In a circle of objectivity, the artist should reflect and perpetuate the creation that was the revolution. This would be the foundation for socialist realism.

### 2.3.5 The Position of Documentary in Socialist Realism

But if an artistic work produces a reality, what are the implications for documentary filmmaking? Could documentary also create a new kind of response like Marx had suggested art can? And could Marx have regarded documentary, which of course did not exist in his own time, as neither a mimetic nor a utilitarian instrument of information or propaganda? Instead, could socialist documentary be regarded as an art that creates a reality that cannot be consumed? To what extent could the filmmaker in this context be seen as an artist who defies alienation? Filming and other time-based media inherently lack the sensuousness of the tactile arts available at the time of Marx – drawing, painting, sculpture or playing an instrument. They are produced through a mediated, indirect process and thus presuppose alienation. The situating of documentary as an art form whose reflection is not merely a copy becomes more precarious when documentary is perceived simply as ‘reflecting’ reality. Whereas ‘documentary’ and ‘realism’ became used synonymously in the West, art devoted to ‘reflecting’ socialist reality became known as ‘socialist realism’ in the Soviet bloc. And since art was supposed to reflect concrete life (albeit through the ideological values of the socialist state), art in a sense was already seen as a document. For documentary was regarded as the ‘direct reflection of reality’ by contemporary soviet film scholars.<sup>102</sup> Art and documentary, in this respect, were conceived as no different from each other. In the socialist realist circle, art should reflect the world it creates, and even more so if it is documentary.

Now, how was the step made from the ossified objects of socialist realist art such as sculpture and painting (for which any dialectical movement had to take on a solidified form) to the moving documentary image as a representation of reality? In other words, how was documentary made socialist realist? Documentary subjects usually do not pose frozen in time like the proletarianised adaptations of classical heroes that are socialist realist statues. For socialist realism, the documentary moment of observing ‘concrete’ reality was quickly passed over in favour of the realist aesthetic of defining and repeating its socialist ‘essence.’ On the one hand, far from today’s television documentary programming, such as *Faking It*, which relies on typecasting (albeit in order to judge if the type can change its cast, but also different from Eisensteinian ‘types’), Soviet film scholarship found that the document is that which defies stereotype and myth.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, socialist documentary was expected to present a ‘typical image.’<sup>104</sup> And this dialectical boundary between the exemplary ‘type’ and the spurned mythical ‘stereotype’ was often hard to maintain. It was difficult for the celebrated ‘type’ not to become a

mythical 'stereotype.' Documentary should 'reveal' the "true essence" of reality' as declared by the DEFA co-founder Kurt Maetzig. Or to put this another way, what we can actually see is less important than a deeper reality. Observational documentary never took off in the GDR because it did not fit into socialist realist aesthetic. Objectivity is not to be found in the surface, but by bringing out the underlying essence that structures the social reality<sup>105</sup> - which again makes it difficult to regard this 'essence' not as a possibly idealist meta-intervention (like the 'type' not as a 'stereotype'), the very reproach Marx made against Hegel. In his emphasis on the production of art as a sensual experience, Marx differed from Hegel, whom he regarded as too idealist. For the materialist Marx, the artist's interaction with the material mattered, according to Eugene Lunn:

Marx was to break with Hegel's approach to contemporary reality: the subordination of art to conceptual thought was part of the idealist neglect of the material reality of the working-class sensual deprivation and unhappiness.<sup>106</sup>

Hegel here transpires as the intellectual father of conceptual art and perhaps of socialist realist documentary.

In the Golzow serial, reflection is manifested in a non-mechanistic and dialectical manner whereby 'the events of the time are echoed and reflected through the protagonists.'<sup>107</sup> This contradicts the mechanical slant of the object reflection model. Of the Leninist writings on his theory of reflection the following passage by the Soviet scholar K. Dolgov from 1976 thus seems to apply best to *The Children of Golzow* serial:

If an artist wants to show the true place of the subject and his attitude towards the object, then he has to take into account a concrete man and his life and activity in concrete, objective circumstances.<sup>108</sup>

But when the same scholar continues to write that 'only the bad artist can proceed from some sort of general, abstract type-scheme and "fit" living people into it,'<sup>109</sup> what is criticised here inadvertently describes actual socialist realism. As has been noted earlier, the dialectical process that made the living subjects of art 'by virtue of definite, objective, concrete and historical circumstances become typical of one society'<sup>110</sup> had stopped at some point and from then on the 'type,' such as 'the worker,' ossified and became a schematic figure modelled after an idea. Similarly, the dialectical element in the socialist realism of a Socialist State in effect was lost in favour of the plan with respect to economics, and the script with respect to film. By contrast to the style of the Socialist State where socialist realism had frozen its heroes in either plans, poses and scripts, *The Children of Golzow* serial realized the presentation of change.

### 2.3.6 Scripted Reality

‘Scientific socialism’ became the guiding theory of state socialist societies. It declared bourgeois societies anti-scientific.<sup>111</sup> But science as well as reality was controlled and pre-determined and social life itself became an object. Lenin’s view on art as an ‘objective’ and ‘active’ reflection – whereby the reflection itself was not independently active, but just the implementation of socialist ideology - was followed by Soviet scholars in the sense that art was understood to be about ‘the aesthetic appropriation of reality.’<sup>112</sup> This suggests that reality is not merely interpreted in a representation, but that aesthetics have a direct effect on reality, that they can change reality. This idea of course is consistent with the socialist state’s planning of reality in the first place. Joris Ivens, a Dutch documentary filmmaker who frequently worked in the GDR, also fed into the notion of the representation affecting its referent, when he said in 1955 that the difference between fiction and documentary is that the audience of the latter must be under the impression that they can control the facts.<sup>113</sup> Of course, this view on documentary chimes with the conventional, non-socialist opinion that documentary documents facts and does not control them and that instead fiction film is the representational format that controls what it films. As such, reality was acted for and planned by the socialist state according to a script, like a fiction film. Similar to the company who already has ‘directed’ its employees before a docu-soap team comes in to observe them, the GDR state had already educated its citizens, before the documentary team filmed them. Early GDR articles on film separate ‘real life itself’ from the social aspects of life that were to be the focus of socialist documentary.<sup>114</sup> What art should reflect is this social ‘life’ and not a mystical absolute idea or the subjective viewpoint of the artist.<sup>115</sup> The subjective, artistic perspective had to reflect the objective world, that is the socialist idea of reality, and therefore there was no difference between the two. And since there was by definition no difference between how reality really and ideally was, by extension there was no difference between documentary and fiction.

Documentation and fiction seemed to have often changed their appointed roles in the media scene of the GDR. What is presented as documentary appears over long stretches to be harmonizing fiction. What makes itself out to be literary invention generally impresses through its realistic and astute observation.<sup>116</sup>

In respect to fiction film, within this Marxist-Leninist context, the writer assumed the position of the planner and the film script became the equivalent to the 2 or 5-years-plan.

In this spirit, Hermann Axen, the former chair of the DEFA again quoted the Soviet politician Andrei Shdanow to address the SED conference on film politics in 1952:

The writer cannot go limping after events, it is his duty to stride forth in the front row of his people and to direct them along the path of their development.<sup>117</sup>

When this quote is paired with the remark that often writers refuse to work on concrete actualities, because their subject matter changes whilst they are writing about it, the advice is given that a writer ‘could predict the main developments with the help of Marxist-Leninist analysis.’<sup>118</sup> It is in this sense that one can read Stalin’s comparison of the writer to an engineer of human souls.<sup>119</sup>

When Winfried Junge was asked about the serial’s most socialist realist film, *When You Are 14* (1969), he replied to the following question:

Schenk: You wanted to film a utopia and did not find it?

Junge: You say that today. But since Marx, we did not speak of socialism as an idea, but as a scientific world-view that was also supposed to be put into practice step by step in the GDR. The film had to find examples for it. And if it failed, one had simply been looking for them in the wrong place.<sup>120</sup>

The conception of temporality in a socialist state was different from that of temporality in a capitalist state. The term ‘utopian,’ used in Western terminology to discredit Marxist ideas as a fantasy, assumed a different temporal trajectory in the socialist state: with reality being planned and not evolving, the future was just the realization of what had been thought before and could not bring anything new. In this context, optimism was not naive, but realist. The dialectical process had been effectively stopped by looking so much forward into the ‘new’ future, that the present became scripted. Skaterstschikow writes: ‘Lenin taught the Bolschewiki to dream – to dream, to hurry on ahead of the events and overtake the course of life.’<sup>121</sup> If this anticipatory trajectory of constructing the present is used for art or literature, it might not be so disconcerting, but if planning is employed for documentary, it obviously goes against the notion of documenting as that which takes place *after* the event, or at least at the same time. But neither does the predetermined, scripted reality of State Socialism equate with the evocation of a future reality through filming, which had been theorized through the notion of the performative in the Western context.

### 2.3.7 Paedagogy instead of Propaganda

The explicit aim of GDR cultural politics was to change its people into new socialist subjects.<sup>122</sup> It was, however, the relationship between Germany's recent Fascist past and the new socialist aspirations of the GDR which gave film production in East Germany its distinctive character.<sup>123</sup> The GDR documentary filmmakers were caught up in the task to construct new citizens, but without using propagandistic methods. The utilitarianism that the latter method implied was too reminiscent of German national-socialism. The new anti-fascist state, in seeking to distance itself from National-Sozialism, inevitably had to use other methods to change its citizens, who shortly before had been fascist. By making objective its message, this was not expressive propaganda, but the didactic mediation of objective facts. One reason to be pedagogical in GDR socialism was that, since people did not turn against the Nazis on their own accord, they needed to be educated. The citizens themselves were turned into pupils. In that sense, *The Children of Golzow* were doubly the receptors of education.

WJ: After the war we were told: a nation will not of its own accord comprehend what happened under Hitler. We must pre-determine things and see that they prevail, and little by little everyone will understand that it was good to have socialism as the model for society.<sup>124</sup>

The new socialist East German citizen independently had to come to the same 'scientifically' determined conclusions without propaganda. This is how on the one hand, there could be the unity of the collective and on the other independent minds, since they were all inevitably compelled to arrive at the same conclusions.<sup>125</sup>

WJ: I'd also like to say that we in the GDR of course supposed that with the change in social circumstances new and different people would also develop. In Brecht *The Good Person of Szechwan* is also a parable: no one can be a good person in adverse circumstances. That means, in other words, under socialism things were to change that up until then had been a problem. People were to have become better people. Everything is done to change people so that they become socialists, then the state will be socialist. Vice versa, if the state changes then the people will also become socialist.<sup>126</sup>

The explicit aim of the *Children of Golzow* was to chronicle the first generation of socialist subjects growing up in the GDR.<sup>127</sup> It begins with posing the question that is also asked in the *7-Up* series to ensure later comparisons: 'What do you want to be some day?' This question renders a child's defining feature as being constituted in moving towards the future and not being in the present. In a sense, a child was as fresh as the

young socialist subjects themselves, into which the Eastern Germans in the new born state had to grow and be educated. And since the *Children of Golzow* serial was the first to follow children born in a socialist state from the beginning of their education into their life as a socialist subject, there were certain expectations as to how these new beings would turn out to be:

WJ: [...] and when it wasn't possible to recognise, even by the time the children had reached fourteen [*When You Are 14*, GDR 1969], that the socialist mentality and personality had evolved, then officially they became nervous. It was thought that the results of the socialist education would now gradually appear. [...] And as *Biographies* was made - lets take the [perhaps negative example of] Jürgen, the first portrait [in it] - we started slowly to get frightened that it would be used against us, in the sense of: 'Excuse me, but you have been filming for 18 years - is that the sort of person who develops out of that?' So my last chance of rescue was when he became a soldier. I then say in the voice-over: 'Something will become of Jürgen, which he himself can't imagine: he will become someone different.' Thus if it had been said officially, that Jürgen was unacceptable as he was, I could always have said that he would be re-educated. [...] It was something like an attempt to protect the project.<sup>128</sup>

### **2.3.8 Lenin against Meta-Language and Metaphors**

Congruent with his rejection of reflection as a meta-activity, Lenin was opposed to seeing art as a meta-language. Consequently, he criticised signs and symbols as absolutist and idealist illustrations of abstract and metaphysical thought, and embraced documentary film and newsreel as a reflective art preferable to fiction film. Art and documentary were seen as resisting fiction.<sup>129</sup> Materialist reflection was supposed to disenable idealistic myths and other fictions.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, this was in line with his stance that there was more to the image than just being a representation of the object. This would make his materialist approach inappropriate for experimental materialist film. Lenin's preference for film also mirrors his comparison between art and science, in that film is more 'scientific' as it is less sensual than other arts. However, Lenin's stance against symbolic interpretation and for concrete dialectics did not prevent the excessive use of symbols in socialism, such as marches, and the employment of metaphors in socialist realism. For instance, in *Turbine I* (GDR, 1953) by Joop Huisken and Karl Gass (the head of DEFA documentary who conceived the idea of *The Children of Golzow*), the repair of a turbine is used as a metaphor for building a new society. *Screenplay: The*

*Times* (FRG, 1992) and *Jochen – A Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001) mocks this metaphorical use of actions and language through its commentary on Jochen in a milking competition. Similarly, just as the particular action of milking stood for the general one of fighting for world peace, the object had come to represent the image and the event had become interchangeable for the metaphor, the individuals were exchangeable for the mass. Identification had to be with the state and not with an individual. Following from this, the state, in a sense, was treated as a person under State Socialism. This was made evident, for instance, when *When You Are 14* (GDR, 1969) was made as a ‘birthday present’<sup>131</sup> for the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the GDR. With the collapse of the GDR, the former state and its party, the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany), had their life data chronicled in the first film of the serial after reunification *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 2001) in the manner a deceased protagonist would have: ‘SED 1946 – 1989.’

Dziga Vertov, working within the context of Soviet State Socialism, was criticised by his comrades in 1932, for presuming that the success of his film’s abroad were due to his individual achievements or those of the individual film. Instead, foreign audiences would applaud the heroes of the working class and the success of socialist progress in the Soviet Union.<sup>132</sup>

‘By the end of the 1920s discussions within Soviet cinema were being conducted primarily, if not yet exclusively, in Party terminology. [...], these terms had not been previously been imposed on the cinema world from outside.’<sup>133</sup>

This meant that not only were the boundaries of artistic agency and control moved ‘outside of’ the individual artist, but also outside of their discursive art system to the inclusion of the state in artistic production and discourse.

In the early phases of the GDR, the official politics on documentary were to operate independently from the state, such as the GDR tried to cultivate an autonomous post-Nazi German democratic socialism independent from the Soviet Union (with liberal bloc policy.)<sup>134</sup> After the founding of the new state in 1946 Kurt Maetzig suggested that documentary should no longer be an instrument of state propaganda, but show the everyday life of people as part of building an anti-fascist society. He was the most influential documentary filmmaker of the post-war period, co-founder of the DEFA and chief editor of the weekly newsreel *The Eye-Witness*.<sup>135</sup> However, from 1948 onwards GDR cultural politics adopted the Soviet ideology of state truth monopoly and with it

Lenin's model of scientific reflection and socialist realism. The DEFA and their now director Maetzig became subordinate to the Department for Agitation of the SED and their close censorship monitoring. This was exactly what Maetzig had tried to prevent three years earlier.<sup>136</sup> In the 1950s GDR documentary became the instrument of socialist propaganda.<sup>137</sup> As reality had to comply with socialist planning, GDR documentary films were made to illustrate a socialist realist fiction.<sup>138</sup>

### 2.3.9 Representation in State Socialism

GDR private life was organised by the state and like the one party system, filming was for all. One child of Golzow understood that far: 'We all make a film about our class together with the DEFA.' The filmmakers too did not refer to themselves with their personal names, but with the name of their company, the governmental documentary film institution: 'We, the DEFA.' And where the individual stands for the collective, the meaning of an activity is not confined to that of a personal gesture. In GDR times an activity often would mean something else. A particular activity, such as the one of milking a cow, would then represent something else, or rather something more. It would be symbolic. In a scene in *Jochen - A Golzower from Philadelphia*, shot during the GDR and commented on in post-GDR narration, the commentary pokes fun at the activity of milking representing the fight for socialism over footage of Jochen in a cow milking competition:

'Competition milking. Raising awareness of the responsibilities of work and thereby strengthening the Republic, the Brotherhood with the Soviet Union, Socialism in the world as a whole, and in addition world peace, as it was expressed in so many words on the official banners.'

Here all that Jochen does is milk a cow, but it is interpreted as an action for world socialism and thus world peace, as Winfried Junge's deadpan commentary teases. (With respect to the milking competition the judge announces that the system of working in the GDR had to be unified, so that it can be judged.) As well as a single gesture standing for a universal movement and the individual representing the collective, the town stood for the nation. And what stands for something else can easily be replaced. The substitutability of the name 'Golzow' became imminent when it was temporarily replaced by another one for the state visit of the premier of North Korea of the time, Kim Il Sung, as is revealed in *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992). Speaking against documentary as a deductive methodology, and by implication through this documentary serial, Junge already argued as a GDR filmmaker for the singularity of his subjects and trusted the viewer to make of this something universal.

### 2.3.10 *From Marx and Engels to Marks and Spencer*

An example of the non-alienating, humanist style of documentary filmmaking of the Junges, which is more Marxist than socialist realist, is *From Marx and Engels to Marks and Spencer* (UK/GDR, 1988). For this production in two parts, Winfried and Barbara Junge and the DEFA collaborated with the British Amber film group while the GDR was still in existence and a closed state.<sup>139</sup> (The title plays with the phonetic similarity between Marx and Marks, contrasting, on the one hand, the two figures who together established the theory of Marxism and, on the other, the British shopping chain symbolic of capitalism.) In the first part, the film team from Newcastle visit factory workers in Rostock. It was a well-meaning attempt at leftist propaganda for the GDR by the British team, although their 'interviews' suffered not only from restricted access to the people and their milieu, but also from not speaking the German language. This resulted in pre-prepared questions and responses, which were not in actual dialogue with the situation and the answers. For the second part, *From Marx and Engels to Marks and Spencer: an English Journey*, the Junges were allowed to leave the GDR and interview factory workers in Tyneside. They were in Britain for a week in the first joint documentary film project involving the DEFA and a western partner. Contrary to the questions of the Amber group, Winfried Junge's commentary and queries treated his interviewees in a - to him - foreign country as he did the Golzowians, dryly critical, but open and not alienating:

WJ: 'We liked the red pullovers [jumpers]. They disguised the differences of children from well off and not so well off homes. But only superficially.'

Through his open questions, the interviewee's situation is de-familiarized, at least to a British viewer, but this effect was not achieved through alienating the interviewee. Since the GDR had a continuous lack of workers, the threat of unemployment was difficult to conceive from the perspective of State Socialism. Junge's style of questions allow this difference to be manifested in the interview with a worker in Tyneside whilst he is gardening:

WJ: 'Maybe there will be a time you can cut grass the whole day if there is not a job for you?'

John: 'Yes.'

WJ: 'Are you afraid?'

John: 'Not afraid, concerned.'

WJ: 'And what will you do the whole day?'

John: 'Housework, decorate, look for a job, go to the job centre, the dole.'

WJ: 'You are a house -man then?'

John: 'Yes.'

WJ: 'How can you live threatened by unemployment? What do you think?'

John: '[...The unemployment is] only threatened. I'm lucky. We have to move south, or emigrate.'

WJ: 'Would you find someone to buy it [the house in Newcastle]?'

Junge also gives the interviewees the chance to self-reflect on the prospective film:

WJ: 'Sheila, this film will soon be finished. Do you think that it will be a sincere film?'

Sheila: 'Oh, yes. Yes.'

The filmmakers' take the ordinary seriously and encourage a distancing from fantasy when in the commentary they compare the images of elderly ladies singing 'Aloha' in a labour club to the fiction film images the song evokes. Barbara Junge narrates:

'They were never part of the cinema world they are singing about. That was always a fantasy. Now they themselves have appeared in a film: ours. What did life bring to them? What did it make of them?'

The last images the film leaves us with are images of the workers leaving their factory. Such shots of workers leaving their workplace have come to epitomise documentary film ever since the Lumiere brothers' first documentary footage *The Workers Leaving the Factory* in 1895. It was followed over half a century later, in 1968 – 1972, by other French filmmakers, such as the Dziga Vertov group and amateurs documenting politicised workers in front of the Renault and Wonder factories (*La reprise du travail aux usines Wonder*, Jacques Willemont, 1968).<sup>140</sup> Like the workers representing the working class (and by extension the socialist subject), workers leaving the factory is itself a motif that has come to represent documentary. Moreover, the Lumieres' documentary already was implicitly self-reflexive: the factory that the workers leave is that of the filmmakers.

In Dziga Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera*, the machines and the images themselves assumed the positions of workers and the process of filming was made to resemble the production in a factory. To thematize the workings of the images and draw an analogy between the film itself and its subjects has become a customary way of turning a documentary into a formally self-reflexive one. Still, Vertov and the Dziga Vertov group used documentary to demonstrate to the audience what they already knew before starting to make the film. By contrast, rather than representing a representation, the Junges focus on the constitution of the subject and on the process of addressing and

understanding the protagonists with whom and with whose country they only have contact because they film them. It is on this level where the film's self-reflexivity lies. With respect to *From Marx and Engels to Marx and Spencer. an English Journey* the institutional difference between the filmmakers and their subjects could have been further amplified by the fact that the GDR filmmakers, who were usually not allowed outside the Soviet bloc, did not only encounter their subjects as previously unknown strangers, but in a foreign country and in an opposing political system. However, whereas the Junges could have heightened the differences between themselves and what they know, and their foreign subjects - consequently presenting their strange subjects as alienating representatives of Otherness - *From Marx and Engels to Marx and Spencer: an English Journey* depicts the system as alienating, but not the subjects. In the last words of the film, narrated by the filmmakers to the images of workers leaving the factory, the Junges compare their current process of getting to know their documentary film subjects to that of a model socialist thinker's way of understanding the Other not merely as representatives of another nation:

BJ: 'For our closing shot we borrowed an old commentary.'

WJ: 'I've tried to lay before my German countrymen a faithful picture of your condition, of your sufferings and struggles, of your hopes and prospects. I wanted more than a mere abstract knowledge of my subject. I wanted to see you in your homes. To observe you in your everyday life; to chat with you on your condition and grievances. I found you to be more than mere Englishmen, members of a single isolated nation. I found you to be men, members of the great and universal family of mankind who know their interest and that of all the human race to be the same. Though my English may not be pure, yet I hope you'll find it plain.'

BJ: 'Friedrich Engels, 1845, in his preface to *The Condition of the Working Classes in England from Personal Observation and Authentic Sources*.'

The Junges do not show their English subjects as representing Englishness. Thanks to a humanist socialist stance - and contrary to Deleuze's conviction, that sameness fosters and is fostered by representation - here sameness defies representation. Even though the filmmakers are filming 'foreigners' in a different country with a different political system, they approach their subjects as if they were equals. If we are all the same, we cannot represent ourselves to each other. This is how to bypass representation.

## 2.4 From ‘Collective Subjectivity’ to ‘Individual Objectivity’

The title of this section brings together contradictory terms that echo a remark of the headmaster of the Golzow school, soon to be closed after reunification. In *Screenplay: The Times* he resumes that maybe they should have been more objective with what they taught. He proceeds to explain however, that rather than effacing the individual for an objectivity determined by scientific distance, they should have encouraged more individual opinion: ‘One should have seen some things more objectively and shown the pupils how to trust their own judgment.’ In this specific post-socialist rethinking, individualism is now thought to be objective and set against a former collective subjectivity in the GDR. In an inversion of Western thought, here in retrospect the collective was ‘subjective,’ in the sense of partial, whereas the individual is now the agent of objectivity.

One could interpret the use of the German word ‘*parteilich*’ in the GDR in exactly this post-socialist sense, namely as a synonym for a subjective perspective. A film could, for instance, be accused of lack of ‘*Parteilichkeit*.’ Since the root of this German word for ‘partiality’ is ‘*Partei*’ (party) however, it connotes at one and the same time ‘subjectivity’ and ‘toeing the party line.’ Since in the GDR there was only the one party and one party line, this paradoxically meant that either by being ‘*parteilich*’ (partial) one was not being ‘*parteilich*’ (toeing the line), or that everyone was ‘partial’ as part of the party, to which of course there existed, at least officially, no alternative possibility. So GDR ideology’s ‘*Parteilichkeit*’ either situated the individual as being ‘partial’ in the sense of being merely subjective, and hence being in opposition to the party line to which there was supposedly no outside, or - and this was the more common use in this GDR context - it demanded partiality of every citizen as part of the party, in the sense of being a mere part in a larger subjective whole: collective subjectivity. Thus when a film was reprimanded for being not ‘*parteilich*’ enough, as, for instance, in the reproach against a documentary being too formalist, it meant that it was not ideologically partial enough towards the official party line.

This inversed usage of subjectivity (the collective as partial) and objectivity (the individual as making objective judgments) had implications for the way in which the images are presented through the figure of the filmmaker-author-interviewer as an individual. The following examines the question of image and narration in *The Children*

of *Golzow* and how it relates to the films' dry and distanced but not alienating style of commenting and interviewing.

#### 2.4.1 Negative Commentary to Positive Images

The relationship between the commentary and the image had specific implications in the GDR. Usually, the images – and the image - of GDR reality were not very glamorous. But their dreary look could be transcended and the image idealized through the use of commentary. By and large, the commentary served as 'rose-tinted spectacles' with which to view the mundane appearance of socialist reality in the GDR. And the Junges recognize the commentary of their fourth *Golzow* film, *When You Are 14* (GDR, 1969) as doing exactly that.<sup>141</sup> Together with *These People Of Golzow – Analysis Of The Circumstances Of A Place* (GDR, 1984) these were the only *Golzow* films over which the filmmakers did not have authorial control and had to submit to state intervention.<sup>142</sup> Made for the twentieth anniversary of the state, *When You Are 14* (GDR, 1969) was a conventional, propagandistic documentary whose commentary, the most ideological of the serial, had a containing effect and whose upbeat music expressed an overly bright mood. Interestingly, this documentary and the next, *The Exam* (GDR, 1971), have the most emphasis on learning as the reflection of acknowledged knowledge. This is the most socialist realist documentary of the serial which through its subject matter – pupils learning science - followed scientific socialism.

In all the other subsequent films of the serial, Winfried Junge's commentary often casts doubt on this *heile Welt*, this illusory coherence of the world. After he abandoned the expository and observational style of the first films, which only had a descriptive and still quite positive narration, his commentary became more negative and his questions took a more provocative stance towards the presented reality. The filmmakers' awareness of and conscious insistence on off-screen narration becomes apparent in the commentary of *Screenplay: The Times*, the group portrayal of the *Golzow* films, which is the most self-reflexive. *Screenplay: The Times* begins as such: 'This film will have a commentary. I know this could cost him sympathies.'<sup>143</sup> The serial continues to be criticized for its dependence on the commentary, for telling more than showing: 'The people are never shown eating, celebrating or procreating' a German newspaper actually complained.<sup>144</sup> The following question of the interviewer Ralf Schenk in the most recent publication about the *Children of Golzow* confirms the above as a continuous myth of documentary authenticity (in observed action) even today:

Schenk: [...] from the very first minute [of *When You Are 14*] music and an elaborate commentary is laid over the images, which, not only today, appears quite overpowering. Why did you decide at the time after making *Eleven Years Old* without commentary to take the step back?

Junge: A film with a really good authorial commentary need not be a 'step back.'<sup>145</sup>

In *Jochen - a Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001), in what could be interpreted by the viewer as an unstaged scene, we see Jochen's family entering the living room and assembling around the table. However, Winfried Junge's commentary discourages any notion of this being an observed and thus normal situation, and with the same stroke marks the image as inherently prone to deception and the language track as more truthful than the image track:

'Now the lighting has been set up in the parlour and that means: now do your directing. That is difficult when there is actually nothing to film, though we have the camera, which on days when something really does happen is often missing. It only remains to have them be seated for the unpopular 'interview' and converse about what was, is, or will be.'

Through its self-reflexive commentary, the Golzow serial acknowledges that with a project covering such a long time, the visits of the documentary team can only ever represent the protagonist's life and never 'catch' lives unawares, to use Dziga Vertov's expression for the fast track to documentary authenticity. What Junge says here not only means that the documentation has inevitably missed opportunities, but it also suggests that it has documented the missing of opportunities. Thus, the *Children of Golzow* serial has found ways to witness and express change that is independent of direct observation and includes the process of filmmaking by becoming self-reflexive.

#### **2.4.2 Distance as Objective in Anglo-American Documentary and as Subjective in Socialist Documentary**

Whereas Anglo-American observational documentary argued against narration, and for the image as that which is more objective and truthful, in the GDR the image could not 'reveal' a new 'truth.' The 'objectivity' of the image in the GDR was predefined by the ideology of the state. If the commentary did not turn the images into examples of something positive, it would merely be regarded as subjective. On the other hand, the alternate documentary route, of narration revealing 'the truth,' which was rejected by the observational *Direct Cinema* but practiced by Western non-fiction television, was not available to the GDR filmmaker. Only when the image depicted something that was not

part of socialist reality did it have to be criticized in the commentary. In this case, to resist commenting and leave a scene as an observation could mean to defy the official version. For instance, when in the observational *Eleven Years Old* (GDR, 1966), one of the children is seen going to church with her father, this image of an activity deemed controversial given the socialist state's stance against the church, is left without explanation. A commentary would have had to critique what is seen in the image as a negative example:

That we left the film without commentary seems to be of importance for this scene: if we had put a commentary to the images, we would probably not have been able to avoid making a critical judgment here, which would then certainly have had to correspond to the current official stance on the church.<sup>146</sup>

The portrayal of aspects of life under the socialist state in a negative light, however, rarely happened. Socialist realism was defined by optimism: as the state was the realization of a utopia, optimism was realist by nature. Whereas in Western journalistic programmes, the commentary of the reporter would provide background revelations that re-contextualize and question an otherwise superficial external reality, the official GDR image was always already regarded to be objective and the GDR filmmaker as an individual could not be more objective, i.e. they could not individually disclose a more objective truth. The individual was only good as a copy of the model socialist citizen in the Platonic sense judged according to how much he or she resembled the underlying ideal.

Furthermore, since everyone was supposed to be equal and working for the same goal in a socialist society, the notion of scientific distance did not assure objectivity. Because everyone, by socialist definition, had the same perspective, a distanced position could only be subjective. Lenin's theory of reflection determined a science without distance. 'Scientific socialism', the underlying idea that informed State Socialism, distinguished objectivity and science from distanced observation. This was distinct from the approach of being scientific by being distanced that motivated the American observational cinema and – as a counter-reaction – also the 'New Subjectivities' of Anglo-American documentary:

It is not difficult to imagine observational cinema of the 1960s as a cinematic variant of the social scientific approach to which [Clifford] Geertz disparagingly refers, an approach in which generalizable truths about institutions or human behaviour can be extrapolated from small but closely

monitored case studies [e.g., *Primary* (1960), *High School* (1969), *An American Family* (1973)].<sup>147</sup>

What a social scientific experiment meant in a capitalist system (based on the individual family unit and other institutions) differed from the notion of scientific socialism in a communist system based on equality, where science is not defined through distance. It is for these reasons that Winfried Junge interpretes his de-mystifying and dry comments as subjective rather than objective, like a television reporter from the West would have done with the same narration:

WJ: Television means that much is based on the word. And it is therefore important to narrate the film to the audience from the stance of the author. Purists among documentarists can say that this is not the way to do it; that this is not a convincing document; that it is not objective, but rather very subjective. But there are no objective documents.<sup>148</sup>

Symptomatically, Junge's association of reporting with subjectivity rather than objectivity is relayed through presenting reporting as self-reflexive in a scene shot in 1983, but only reworked as a self-reflexive one in 1992 for *Screenplay: The Times*. In contrast to a 'Western' reporter, and perhaps particularly to a West German one as the individual embodiment of objectivity, here paradoxically the documentary filmmaker reveals the way in which his documentary had been made by acting as a reporter. The sequence begins with his off-screen-commentary:

'We decided to begin the shot in front of the signpost [of Golzow] years ago. GDR TV had commissioned the film from us. And I thought: TV is, when the journalist reports on site. Then it looked like this. Today I will use self-censorship.'

First, we see Junge standing in front of the camera and next to the signpost in an earlier photograph. This is then faded into the same scene in the present and on film. The date '3 October 1983' appears in the subtitles. Junge narrates from within his image: 'When we speak of people and times, we must speak of ourselves too. Perhaps it is time to step out in front of the camera.' A monotone blue image appears with the word 'Schnitt,' German for 'cut,' in the centre to foreground that here had been self-editing. Then, continuing with the previous scene, Junge says whilst the cameraman Hans-Eberhard Leupold steps out from behind the camera and joins him in the image: 'We've known Golzow for almost a quarter of a century and have accompanied our children here.' Another blue frame filler with the German word for 'cut' appears. Subsequently, we are back with the filmmaker stating next to his cameraman that: 'We've been chroniclers of peace kept and lived.' When the word 'cut' appears again after this, it not only indicates self-censorship,

but censorship and thus not at all objectivity, as it is ironically inserted between depicting the serial as a chronicler of peace and a reference to happy ending as fiction or, more specifically, myth: 'And as they say in fairy-tales: they lived happily ever after.'<sup>149</sup>

### 2.4.3 Negative Questions for an Optimistic Protagonist

It is not only the optimistic official images - metaphorically speaking - that Junge's narration questions. In the interviews, his critical response also counters the upbeat assertions of his protagonists. This can be seen, for instance, when the Junges say that Dieter's personality, who often found himself in denial of the diverse impediments he came up against, prompted the filmmaker to probe him about his positive self-descriptions. In *A Guy Like Dieter - Native of Golzow* (FRG, 1999), in a scene shot before reunification, Winfried Junge asks Dieter:

Winfried: 'So what didn't go as you expected it to?'

Dieter: 'What didn't work out? Why? It is all is going smoothly.'

Winfried: 'Really?'

Dieter: 'We got a flat at the first attempt. And now I've got a Kindergarden place for the little one. First none and now three to chose from. Apart from that, on the whole I am quite content.'<sup>150</sup>

Here as well, the filmmaker's interpretation of the events appears to be more negative than that of his protagonists. The filmmakers describe Dieter's approach to a negative reality with the German term '*überspielen*' (meaning to cover-up, but literally to act over something). Symptomatically, they use an analogy to a figure from a Grimm's fairy tale to sketch his character:<sup>151</sup>

BJ: Dieter is someone, who covers over a lot of things, a *Hans-im-Glück*, who leaves with a gold nugget and returns with a stone which to top it all he then throws into the water. He always falls on his nose and then gets up again. At the end of the day, everything is always fine. In this situation one must ask quite pessimistically, whether really everything is so good, to hear from him how things presently stand. Because otherwise one would certainly be told only that everything is going fine.<sup>152</sup>

The appearance of reality as positive here is seen as a cover-up achieved by acting. Thus, the essence of reality is defined as negative. Contrary to socialist realism, this thinking rather echoes the one behind the bleak look of Western social realism, which classifies reality through negativity. There, violence and poverty are markers for realism, and glamour is regarded as fantasy. But optimism in capitalism differs from optimism in socialism. Capitalist optimism is utilised to achieve things which have not yet happened,

or to sell something that actually does not merit such positive description, as otherwise the expressive optimist would not make a profit by selling it to someone who believes their assertions. Thus whereas capitalist optimism might inherently be based on deception in order to attain profit, socialist optimism is supposed to reflect back on the speaking subject articulating such a positive stance as it grows in socialism. In an anticipatory movement, in socialism, the enunciator is supposedly shaped by the optimistic utterance he or she is encouraged to make. In this vein, Dieter's positive attitude thus mirrors that expected of socialist realism. In contrast to critical realism, where the negative element rules and 'the pathos of exposing dominates,'<sup>153</sup> socialist realism was affirmative. With respect to reality and documentary, this allegedly uncritical realism meant that the act of affirmation was pushed upon and internalized by the social actors. The positive responses of the GDR citizens were effectively guarded by a very critical system that did not allow any criticism.

WJ: Well, independent of Dieter's personality, it was also the influence of the camera. It is true that he reacted like that; 'take it easy' is a fitting description for him. But on the whole - I don't want to generalise - but, people in the GDR thought, when a camera is directed at us we say what they want us to say.

BJ: To preserve the state.<sup>154</sup>

The filmmakers occasionally pursued opportunistic answers to pre-empt censorship and get their films approved. Because the GDR state upheld its own image as a positive one, it could have repressed self-reflexivity as potentially and undesirably self-critical. Nonetheless (and perhaps also because GDR censorship focussed on television rather than film), the serial became self-reflexive already under GDR objectives. The children of Golzow were deliberately not socialist heroes, and the serial was not socialist realist. The documentary serial thus was directed in a different manner than one would expect considering the political context it was produced.

#### **2.4.4 Socialist Optimism**

The notion of socialist realism was imported from the Soviet Union. After the establishment of the new state, socialist realism was declared as the core principal of GDR documentary by the founders of the DEFA in 1947.<sup>155</sup> In socialist realism, the typical is strong and optimistic. Joseph Stalin had declared, in 1924, that 'the philosophy of pain is not our philosophy. May the leaving and the dying experience this pain.'<sup>156</sup> (The optimism expected from socialist realism extended to documentary.) In this vein, the former chairman of the DEFA, Hermann Axen, cited the Soviet politician Andrei

Shdanow in a paper on advancing the art of film in the GDR at an SED party conference 1952:

Contrary to naturalism, which only shows the negative, the degeneracy of bourgeois society but through its nihilism propagates the despair and the submission to capitalism, Soviet realism focuses on the new, the growing, onto the positive appearances of life.<sup>157</sup>

The DEFA chair continues to identify change as proliferation in the Hollywood action film, in a remark that would perhaps apply even more so today, over half a century later:

Because capitalist film glorifies negative heroes, it must take refuge in formal effects of a continuous change of images and scenery; not in order to portray a person, of the good, creative deed, but for a proliferation of sensations, catastrophes and adventures, etc.<sup>158</sup>

With respect to the proper positive camerawork for GDR documentary in the 1950s, Kurt Stanke compares how three different cameramen would have filmed the same event, the rallies of 1<sup>st</sup> of May, as representatives of three different ideologies. The reactionary and as such 'hostile' newsreel camera-operator would have focussed on boring or angry faces, give the impression that less people attended than were really there and depict the police as oppressive rather than helpful. The 'apolitical' one would follow his individual taste and perhaps focus on clouds and back-lighting in subjectively, and therefore arbitrarily, chosen detail or long shots. He would be prone to the reproach of being formalist. But the socialist cameraman would have 'expressed the essence of the rally',<sup>159</sup> like socialist documentary should express the 'essence of reality.'<sup>160</sup> He would have highlighted the positive aspects, such as the unity of the people in their rallying for a shared goal.<sup>161</sup> Socialist representations were supposed to emphasize the joy and usefulness of the individual in and for the smaller unity of a group event or the larger one of socialism. The unperturbed reactions of the Junges' interviewees thus could be contributed to the pressure to be an optimist as well as the pressure to be a socialist.

#### **2.4.5 The Distance of Film and the Closeness of Television**

From a 'Western' perspective it may seem surprising that such a continuous endeavour such as *The Children of Golzow* (1961-) was produced for film rather than television. When the *7up* (1964 -) series subsequently began in Great Britain following the lives of a group of people at seven year intervals, it was commissioned by Granada television. But *The Children of Golzow* has been and continues to be filmed on 35mm, nowadays combined with BETA video blown up to 35mm. Before the onset of television in the GDR in 1951/1952, documentary film was strictly censored as the medium for socialist

realism.<sup>162</sup> Whereas ‘subjective authenticity’ was only allowed when it was tied to social and historical progress,<sup>163</sup> at the same time documentaries that focus on the social and historical context were regarded as ideologically threatening and invited censorship. As in other countries with state censorship, filming children was seen as ideologically uncontroversial and Winfried Junge would go on to make several other films about the lives of learners and teachers.<sup>164</sup> While the representation of societal processes could be censored, the expressions on the faces of the individuals could not. By the time the Golzow cycle began, documentary film in the GDR had turned to the everyday and to ‘the people’ and left political history to television. In the 1960s, the attention of the censors shifted from film to television and the party politics on information were now dealt with by television. Documentary films on the other hand could now be made with more creative and critical freedom. Still, the films’ screening on television was again submitted to a more rigorous procedure. *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* (GDR, 1979), for instance, was only allowed to be broadcast after the premier of the GDR, Erich Honecker, had personally approved it. And often films were only shown on GDR television because they had been successful outside the country. *Biographies* (GDR, 1980), for example, was only screened in the GDR after it had been bought by West German television.

That *The Children of Golzow* was produced as film rather than for television (like *7-Up*) had implications on the aesthetic and on the regularity. The unquestioning form of representation that *7-Up* uses - of the protagonists representing their time passed verbally, for instance, and the employment of images as illustrations of statements – matches the project as being a representative sociological experiment. This is, however, without attention to milieu. Winfried Junge agrees that *7-Up* series is representative, whereas his serial is not, since *The Children of Golzow* operates less according to a plan, but grows out of situations.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the advertising determines the rigid narrative structure, dividing the time for every protagonist into blocks of approximately ten minutes, corroborates the argument made earlier of structure as an effect of capitalism.

After reunification, television became West German like the state. In what was now Western television, actuality images without commentary were seen to connote and create closeness, albeit superficially and unfounded. The task to subvert the inappropriate closeness of televisual news imagery through distancing strategies fell to documentary film. For instance, the formerly East German documentary filmmaker Jürgen Böttcher

filmed reporters reporting on the reunification celebrations for actuality television at the Brandenburger Gate in Berlin in *The Wall* (FRG, 1990), but without the verbal commentary. Rather than the absence of a newscaster's voice of reason heightening emotion into the sublime or bathetic, this is argued by Eggo Müller to have a distancing effect and that this distance is reflexive:

Jürgen Böttchers sequence about new year's eve celebrations 1989/90 at the Brandenburger Tor is a clear document of this distance to the images and interpretations of television: without the obligatory televisual enquiry for emotions [...] Next to images of the spectacular fireworks at the gate of German history Böttcher shows at times minute long sequences of celebrating and drinking youths who are otherwise without words convincing themselves that they are happy. [...] Not a commentary, by Böttcher, but the mere duration of the sequence, force the viewer to be reflexive. In the end, Böttcher leaves the camera far away from the Brandenburger Tor, in the distance of the darkness of the border while the television cameras throw themselves into the pit.<sup>166</sup>

Here the medium of film itself, rather than a specific film, is interpreted as inherently distancing in comparison to television's evocation of closeness. Film here is seen as subverting the celebratory televisual images of reunification and liberating them from the opportunism they acquired in their televisual context. Also the observed rehearsals of a CNN reporter in *The Wall* situates film as the critic and liberator of television. Here documentary film is used for Brechtian alienation. Television has become the negative template for documentary films by Eastern German filmmakers after reunification, Müller argues.<sup>167</sup> Again, one might add that this time it is not because of its censoredness, but on the contrary, because of its apparent intimacy. Television has gained from reunification, as it not only accumulated more audience but more coverage - unlike the separate entities of documentary films. In the *Children of Golzow* during GDR times, to show the children watching television acknowledged the impact of television on the first generation for whom it had become another conduit of education as an alternative to school.<sup>168</sup> After reunification, the grown up 'children' watched their younger selves on video on the television screen for the film and the monitor became a marker of self-reflexivity.

## 2.5 Non-alienating Reflexivity

As has previously been argued, *The Children of Golzow* is not distanced in the ‘Western’ sense of scientific observation. But neither is it distanced in the Brechtian sense of alienation. Due to the specific situation of the documentary interview, Brechtian distancing (which was developed with theatre or fiction film in mind) does not apply to the serial’s kind of reflexivity - even though the filmmakers share many of Bertold Brecht’s concerns. Indeed, the seventh Golzow film, *Spare No Charm And Spare No Passion* (GDR, 1979), takes its title from the children’s song by Bertold Brecht and Hans Eissler from 1950, and this song through its repetitions in diverse contexts becomes a sort of ‘theme tune’ for the serial. Reflexivity in film generally has been defined as Brechtian (exemplified, for instance, in Jean-Luc Godard’s films) as by Robert Stam in his book *Film and Reflexivity*. Whereas Marxism in Western cultural discourse has been employed for and interpreted in artistic works in terms of the distancing effect and modernist reflexivity, the reflexivity evident in the Golzow interviews and commentary is not alienating, but rather based on what the filmmaker called an ‘Aesthetics of Trust.’<sup>169</sup> Even though Winfried Junge saw in film a didactic tool and therefore was happy to have school children as his subjects, the didactic attitude of the former student of pedagogy is confined to his commentary. The life stories are not arranged as paedagogical lessons themselves or as Brechtian ‘exercises.’ Brecht outlined the paedagogical *Lehrstück* [didactic play] for instance, as a demonstration of the radio play *Der Flug der Lindberghs* as such ‘for instruction, not for pleasure.’<sup>170</sup>

He [the speaker of the pedagogical part] read the section to be spoken without identifying his own feelings with those contained in the text, pausing at the end of each line; in other words, in the spirit of an *exercise*. At the back of the platform stood the theory demonstrated in this way. The individual will reach spontaneously for a means to pleasure, but not for an object of instruction that offers him neither profit nor social advantages. Such exercises only serve the individual in so far as they serve the State, and they only serve a State that wishes to serve all men equally.<sup>171</sup>

Brecht used pedagogy as a means for equality to counter-act pleasurable consumption and emotional attachment. He regarded identification as unmaking equality. To identify with a singular figure meant to distinguish and separate oneself from the rest:

[...] the figure of a public hero in *Der Flug der Lindberghs* might be used to induce the listener at a concert to identify himself with the hero and thus cut himself off the masses.<sup>172</sup>

Brecht therefore suggests, for instance, that the part of the hero be sung by a chorus. The resonance of this notion of the collective for documentary was already elaborated in the mid fifties by the documentary filmmaker Joris Ivens, who supported the idea of a group of protagonists as ‘the’ hero of a documentary instead of a single individual.<sup>173</sup> For the sake of equality, identification with and emotional attachment to an outstanding character had to be prevented. In Brechtian theatre and fiction film, this detachment is achieved for example by delivering the lines mechanically thus enhancing the distance between actor and role.<sup>174</sup> Marx and Engels on the other hand critiqued making ‘individuals into mere mouthpieces of the spirit of the times’<sup>175</sup> as ‘Schillerizing,’ a strategy that Friedrich Schiller employed in his novels. At this point one could argue that Brecht’s pedagogic exercises did exactly that, even if these were criticising what they represented. Moreover, this ‘Schillerizing’ could be seen as one aspect of what later became institutionalized as typicality in socialist realism. By contrast, Engels had endorsed an ‘organic,’ and as such non-modernist, plot development without the use of distancing techniques whereby not only the ideological message ‘must spring forth from the situation and the action itself, without explicit attention called to it.’<sup>176</sup> He found that, ‘each person is a type, but at the same time a distinct personality, as old Hegel would say.’<sup>177</sup> It is in this line of Marx and Engels rather than Brecht which *The Children of Golzow* documentaries follow, even though the commentary and interview questions of Winfried Junge are kept in a sympathetic distance:

In our films, which always try to grasp the whole personality of a person, a presentation of the individual under only one specific aspect is inappropriate.<sup>178</sup>

Perhaps in line with his rejection of making his protagonists into mouthpieces, a feature that Gillian Wearing took to the extreme in her works inspired by the *7-Up* series, *10-16* and *2 into 1*, Winfried Junge finds that documentary should not be about a problem, but about a person. Thus, the serial does not seek out problems - which can be seen as in line with ‘socialist optimism’ - but is rather impressionistic. This in turn enables the importance of events to be determined in retrospect – which is not in line with socialist pre-planning.

For the theorist of realism, Georg Lukács, ‘the best historical novels’ were ‘not simply passive reflections of apparently determined “facts,”’<sup>179</sup> but ‘presented general historical reality as a process revealed in concrete, individual experience, mediated by particular groups, institutions, classes, etc.’<sup>180</sup> Since as the serial explicitly follows a group grown out of a class - unlike in *7-Up* where the class is already broken up into examples of

different classes (in the other sense of the word) to represent a broader spectrum – the Golzow serial is perhaps also more Lukácsian than Brechtian or Leninist.

Whereas the alienation of the viewer was an artistic strategy for Brecht, Marx wanted art to have a disalienating effect for the human working to produce it. He regarded ‘distance’ as negative in his critique of the alienation of the worker from his or her product. Marx opposed not only the distance of the artist or worker from their product, but also between the producer and the consumer or viewer of the work. For Marx, even self-reflection was too abstract a motion in a work. ‘You sometimes allow your characters too much self-reflection - which is due to your preference for Schiller,’ he wrote to Ferdinand Lasalle, criticizing his play *Franz von Sickingen* (1858/59).<sup>181</sup> While Lenin followed the orientation towards the science of the French enlightenment, Marx initially followed the German Romantics and idealists of the eighteenth century in his stand against alienation and mechanisation.<sup>182</sup> (Marx was a student of the Romantic theorist August Wilhelm Schlegel). However, as has been noted previously, Lenin’s theory of reflection took the observational distance out of science and made it ‘parteilich.’ By contrast, even though Brecht’s alienation effect had its stakes in scientific socialism, it followed the stance that science furthers distancing and that distance was more objective, which had been employed by ‘Western’ documentary. As such, Brecht wrote:

Characters and incidents from ordinary life, from our immediate surroundings, being familiar, strike us more or less natural. Alienating them helps to make them seem remarkable to us. Science has carefully developed a technique of getting irritated with the everyday, ‘self-evident,’ universally accepted occurrence, and there is no reason why this infinitely useful attitude should not be taken over by art.<sup>183</sup>

As is apparent here, the everyday is the familiar that has to be de-familiarized. Brecht also equates the everyday with common sense: the ‘universally accepted occurrence.’ *The Children of Golzow*, by contrast, appreciates the everyday and de-familiarizes documentary filmmaking - be this an extraordinary event for the protagonists and ordinary for the viewers – by making the everyday strange through being self-reflexive about the filming of it. But the reflexivity in the Junge serial is not there to ‘impair the illusion of the audience and paralyze its readiness of empathy’ as Brecht suggested.<sup>184</sup> Whilst a detached and didactical attitude is betrayed in the commentary, this is not done to destroy the empathy with the protagonists. By contrast to Brechtian distancing, Junge’s detached commentary develops in dialogue with the images, interviews and activities portrayed. Unlike in Brechtian theatre, where what is shown is what is

criticized and where the viewer is alienated through his commentary and in his interviews, Junge might de-familiarize, but he does not want to alienate his documentary subjects nor his viewers. The purely informational summaries contrast with Junge's provocative commentaries. But neither is designed to destroy the empathy with the protagonists. Even though *The Children of Golzow* has inter-titles (intervals and captions were Brechtian devices meant to destroy empathy) here they merely sum up the history of the chronicle as neutrally as possible (that is, before the serial became self-reflexive in its later stages). Thus, when the serial was most socialist, it was its least Brechtian.

### **2.5.1 Alienation as Surplus Value in Western-style Interview Documentary**

In the following, I argue that as an effect of collectivity, the interviewing style in socialism did not provoke the alienation of the interviewee, as is the case in many Anglo-American documentaries and television formats. Even though Winfried Junge tries to provoke his GDR subjects when he teases them about their weight or choice of marriage partner, his interventions are not confrontational and are not taken as such. If something is presented as alienating in the *Children of Golzow*, it is not the interviewees, but the context (thereby turning Brechtian reflexivity into a self-reflexive movement). In recent Western-style interviewing documentaries, by contrast, it is the interviewees that are intentionally alienated as well presented as alienating. 'Western' interviewees also often react defensively to a provocative interviewing strategy that aims to alienate, for example that employed by Anglo-American documentarists such as the earlier Nick Broomfield (in, for instance, *The Leader, His Driver and the Driver's Wife*, 1991), Michael Moore and even Louis Theroux. Their interviews, as diverse as their individual approaches might be, are typically conducted in styles that rely heavily on irony.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari situated modern capitalist society in an 'age of cynicism' where 'cynicism is capital as the means of extorting surplus labor.'<sup>185</sup> With respect to these interviews conducted in a capitalist system, one could ask: what is the surplus for the product 'documentary interview'? Even though the interviewees might be more leftist or progressive (and in fact less politically cynical) than their interviewees, the way in which these documentaries generate revenue and establish a reputation for the filmmakers is through the addition in value between their interviewees unlaboured and unchallenged original stances, and their defensive and often by consequence unwittingly self-revelatory replies. These are then employed in the argument of the film for the moral superiority of the viewer who identifies with the filmmaker. This surplus here is reciprocal to the alienation of the 'worker-interviewees.' Provocation functions as a

means to generate productivity. The filmmaker in these interviews functions as the capitalist, and the interviewees as the workers, unpaid because they just supposed to 'be themselves'.

Alienation, in the context of these Western-style documentary interviews, has become a tool for identification with the interviewer against the interviewee, thus differing vastly from the effect Brecht had intended with his strategy of distancing:

The efforts in question were directed to playing in such a way that the audience was hindered from simply identifying with the characters in the play.<sup>186</sup>

Because the interviewees are intentionally alienated by provocative questions or situations - and henceforth the audience from them - the viewer identifies (unlike Brecht intended) with the 'inter-viewer' (symptomatically thus called as the stand-in between the viewer and the viewee). In documentary, the voice of reason and the object of identification is the interviewer, who is usually also the filmmaker. We as the audience consume the polemics of the interviewer in a way Brecht would have opposed. Following Viktor Shklovskij's concept of de-familiarization, Brecht proposed it as a way of making a work unpleasurable, thereby resisting a circle of consumption and illusion:

The artist's object is to appear strange and even surprising to the audience. He achieves this by looking strangely at himself and his work. As a result, everything put forward by him has a touch of the amazing. Everyday things are thereby raised above the level of the obvious and automatic.<sup>187</sup>

What Brecht suggests as the desired outcome for the theatre audience is in contrast to the behaviour expected from the documentary protagonist: 'the spectator can learn to behave in his daily life like someone who is being looked at. In this respect, the actor is a model to be imitated. The individual derives great advantages from being conscious of being looked at.'<sup>188</sup> Being conscious of being looked at and changing one's behaviour for that reason is usually what is not sought in a documentary protagonist (even if the documentary is about changing one's behaviour with respect to another context other than that of being filmed). Brecht did not consider alienation with respect to the documentary 'actor', but developed his distancing effect with respect to fiction in either theatre or film: 'The audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place.'<sup>189</sup> The theatre audience of a Brechtian play are not supposed to become self-conscious interviewees in a Michael Moore documentary. The alienation of the interviewee in these Western-style interview documentaries is based on the protagonists being 'authentic' before they are being

alienated for the purpose of the audience's entertainment, not their intellectual education. Alienation effected in the documentary interviewees fosters their objectification, not their emancipation. For Brecht, distancing eventually was meant to have a positive, educational effect in that it makes the audience see the ordinary as having the 'touch of the amazing,'<sup>190</sup> He did not want to alienate the 'viewer in the sense of making him hostile to the play'<sup>191</sup> - or perhaps making them hostile to the actors (which in a documentary would be the protagonists or social actors.) Alienation employed in these Western-style documentaries and television programmes marks distance as negative. Brecht took into account the distancing between the actors, their roles and the audience, but not between the diverse levels of realities and the impact of agencies in a documentary set-up, where one party is delegated to play themselves (the interviewee) whereas the other (the interviewer) not only has the authorial control, but furthermore gets rewarded by the audience's identification.

By contrast, Winfried Junge's probing questions did not alienate his subjects. In a society guided by the concept of the collective, the filmmakers were always already on the same side as their subjects. Questions that might be understood as malicious intrusions in a capitalist society were not perceived as such by his GDR subjects, who appear unperturbed. For instance, often it sounds as though the filmmaker wants to stir up trouble between the former children of Golzow and their partners, as in these three scenes in *Biographies* (GDR, 1980):

Jürgen: Now I've got a girlfriend. We want to get married next year. So now I've got to save a bit for that.

Winfried: And you're going to keep an eye on her a bit longer, before you decide?

Jürgen: No, I've had my eye on her long enough.

Winfried: Is there anything that might stop you?

Jürgen: No, nothing to stop us now.

Winfried: Is there a child on the way?

Jürgen: No, no child yet. We've known each other for two years

In another scene in *Biographies* he asks Jürgen about his contribution to housework whilst he is at home peeling potatoes:

Winfried: Is this just a hobby or is it a division of labour?

Jürgen: Oh, no. It's better if the wife gets some support. She can get on with her cleaning in peace and I prefer dinner to touching anything else.

Winfried: Well, at least it tastes the way you like it.

Jürgen: Oh, it tastes alright anyway.

Winfried: I mean it might be a criticism that she can't cook.

Jürgen: No, no. Anyway, I always do the cooking.

And in a further sequence in *Biographies*, which later is commented on in *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992), Winfried Junge mischievously applies the crisis tactics of American *Direct Cinema*, which previously had been proclaimed as a strategy by Dziga Vertov - to film a person when their attention is directed elsewhere; to catch them unawares - to the conducting of an interview. But unlike observational filmmakers, Junge does not want to remain unheard and makes his questions more provocative to counter the distraction, here supplied through television. Jürgen is watching the World Cup and his wife Anita sits disengaged next to him, while Winfried tries to provoke the football fan into talking about the couple's lack of dialogue. In this scene not only the voice-over narration in *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992) is self-reflexive, but already the choice of the initial interview situation for *Biographies*:

Winfried narrating: My probing will be a nuisance too. I chose this moment to start up a conversation; and not about football.

[...]

Winfried interviewing: Will Anita get used to you being a football supporter?

Jürgen [smiles]: Not her.

Winfried: Why not?

Anita: Am not interested. Don't understand it.

Winfried: You'll have to share a hobby or you'll have problems.

Anita: Yeah, but not football.

Winfried: What then? Fishing?

Anita: Yeah, we go along sometimes.

Winfried: Then you can enjoy the silence together.

[...]

Winfried: You are good at being silent together, aren't you? Or have you got nothing to say?

Jürgen: If one sees one another every day, what does one have to keep talking for?

Winfried: You're not a great talker, are you? And you found the right person for it.

Jürgen: Yeah. But I talk a bit more than her.

Winfried [in disbelief]: More?

Winfried narrating: For Jürgen, talking to each other seems to be even less important than being there for each other. How could he realize that I am trying to provoke him? Was I being fair to him? He stands on his ladder all day and deserves his sofa in the evening. He hasn't had one for long. Now he wants a little peace and quiet.

Being interviewed himself about this scene Winfried Junge answered on his probing style of questioning:

WJ: I admit, that this is the wrong moment to involve him in something. And I must be grateful that he doesn't throw me out, and that he replies at all, even with pauses. But naturally in one way or another I have exposed him somewhat with respect to his relatively simple way of life: football and beer - and one sees all of that. Not talking to the wife, no conversation with the wife. [...] Well, it was a difficult episode. But in general, people were impressed by it. It stays in one's memory like another scene when Jürgen stands in his garden early after reunification and is upset because now he cannot sell his tomatoes and cucumber any more. He is close to tears and one senses that he has had something to drink before the interview. Once again: the questions of what one should and shouldn't show. But I'm told it's a document that is very important: the despair of the people when everything tumbled and turned around. And Jürgen wasn't able to take that corner.<sup>192</sup>

Nevertheless, Jürgen did not find these scenes objectionable. Whereas in other contexts, to show something negative about the protagonist - in Jürgen's case an alcoholic drinking alcohol - would perhaps have had a negative impact in turn on the protagonist's life, in the Golzow serial, *not* to show something, would have provoked a negative reaction in his peers:

BJ: Anita was embarrassed that we mentioned the alcohol issue. But Jürgen said, no, this is part of my life and it has to be shown as it is. One has to realise especially that the film is going to be shown to his neighbours and the people of the village, and when this is not shown or mentioned they will say: we can't believe anything they say. In this sense it was important that he stood by it and that we could use it in the film.<sup>193</sup>

Whereas the English subjects in *7-Up* are generally not only dispersed as individual adults in terms of location, but also socially since they were chosen from different classes (in both senses of the word), it is because the former children of Golzow still think of themselves as a group that they also have more power over their representation. The

filmmakers know that if they alienate one, the others would follow and they would stop taking part in the serial.

BJ: Their neighbours and colleagues are bound to watch the films on television and because these are living people who have to continue living in their environment, one has to be careful. Especially since they conceive themselves as a group, even though they do not live together. But if we were to expose one of them, the others would end the friendship with us. One can expect that much.

WJ: They would stop participating.<sup>194</sup>

The ethical argument for an 'aesthetics of trust' in this long term documentary thus has practical reasons as well. One is content control through the protagonists and the audience as they could refuse to participate. The other is that the protagonist's expression will be changed by their disaffection:

BJ: You cannot of course record something about someone, which they themselves don't like. They would have such an expression in front of the camera that it would impossible to use it.<sup>195</sup>

Here again, what first appears to be an ethical argument – one should not film of someone what they do not like about themselves – turns out to be a practical one. Winfried Junge believes that 'that each person is concerned to present the best image of themselves, and clearly they have the right to do so.' But the best image is not the everyday image, and the preparations of the protagonists, which turn the ordinary into the extraordinary, prevent the filming of the everyday:

WJ: The women really do go to the hairdresser when they know that the film team is coming. Then everything is cleaned up and is prepared. They all wait for the film team and for me to tell them what to do. Then I ask them: 'Isn't there anything to do in the kitchen?' – 'No, we have prepared everything. We just need to heat it up.' – 'But then we don't see how you cook.' – 'No, no, because we have prepared it all already.' So, it's like that. One can't really film anything. In the end, one can just say: 'Okay, let's sit down and talk about things.'<sup>196</sup>

### **2.5.2 The Ethics of Socialist Aesthetics**

After the first film the filmmakers renounced the ostensibly 'hidden camera.' For *When I Finally Go to School* (1961) the film team looked into the class through the windows from outside, but the pupils were obviously under full 35mm lighting. This method was dismissed as it created distance and was not likely to cultivate trust. Junge has described

his approach to documentary filmmaking with a phrase merging ethics and aesthetics: an 'aesthetics of trust.'<sup>197</sup> In a long-term documentary serial, the ethics of filmmaking are affected by the temporal dimension. Due to the longevity of the chronicle, it could not rely on the often exploitative approach of short-term filmmaking. This is also the difference between *The Children of Golzow* and other documentaries, which, since they only show instances of a life, can afford to neglect the destructive influence of their filmmaking. Furthermore, as staging and role-playing cannot usually be sustained over a longer period of time, the fact that the protagonists were acting would become noticeable. Performance is at odds with any long-term observation. When the Golzow serial was about to begin, the director of the film and the director of the school declined official offers to supply the school with better performers in the shape of exemplary teachers. The sample had to be ordinary.

The socialist notion of the collective is also one of the reasons why Junge had abandoned the earlier exercises in observation. In the socialist context, 'pure observation' was regarded as non-collective, as top-down direction and was rejected in favour of filmmaking as a collective effort of the team and the protagonists. Winfried Junge stated:

We are filming 'our' film here. This is utterly different from us either hiding with the camera or directing next to the teacher from in front of the class.<sup>198</sup>

And Junge's stance against observation, steeped in the ethics of a collective, did not change after reunification, as he maintains:

WJ: But we are in the same situation as the people of Golzow. We might be a different generation, but we have lived in this eastern part of Germany, which was a state, a state that has now collapsed, and we are all affected. Now I cannot just exhibit them in the shop window and pretend that I don't exist with my stance. [...] In this respect, I put the political first and the formal in second place. Not everyone appreciates this. The audience thanks us for it.<sup>199</sup>

Reunification thus has not only affected the nation, but has unified the filmmakers with the protagonists by making them equally foreign in the new system. And in this unification of East Germans, the filmmakers cannot be separated from the protagonists. In the filmmakers' experience, the audience appreciates that the filmmakers noticeably express their opinion in the film and prefer this to a formal separation into objective author and authorless film.

The success of Michael Moore's documentaries *Roger and Me* (US, 1989), *Bowling for Columbine* (US, 2002) and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (US, 2004) would perhaps be an apt

comparison in the 'Western' context for the political having become subjective and for when a mainstream audience has appreciated a politically driven documentary filmmaker. However, the rise of documentary subjectivity – celebrated since the 1990 as progressive 'new subjectivities' by theorists such as Michael Renov<sup>200</sup> - works well in a market economy that is based on individualism. This is even pointed out in the Condè Nast publication *The New Yorker* with respect to Michael Moore's documentaries:

For Moore, though, everything is personal. He's not angry with capitalism, or even with companies; he's angry with Roger Smith, the C.E.O. of General Motors, and Philip Knight, the C.E.O. of Nike. He doesn't fight against war; he fights against Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Bush.<sup>201</sup>

The form of subjectivity encouraged in his argument-based documentaries is one that criticizes other individuals, but not one that challenges the system. In that way, their self-reflexivity is also contained. Even though the reaction of Moore's subjects constitutes a main part of the documentaries, the making of the films themselves is not being reflected upon, which has set Moore up for accusations of being hypocritical.

By contrast, even though Junge's commentary and way of interviewing is sometimes polemical, the Junges do not set out to make an argument with their films, but regard themselves as chroniclers. It is rather that things only fall into place and the single scenes make an argument in retrospect, [as has been examined in the section on 'Temporality as Context.'] In this sense, Bill Nichols' definition of documentary as consciously making an argument does not apply.<sup>202</sup>

WJ: In documentary film, it is always the content that decides the form. And nothing else. And I don't want to philosophize about aesthetics in this form of documentary. In that respect a unique aesthetics has developed. [...] Documentary films need the aesthetics of trust. It is not possible in any other way with people in front of the camera [...] with whom one wants to continue filming.<sup>203</sup>

As we see again, what initially seems to be an ethical argument for the 'aesthetics of trust,' is also a practical one.

After the borders of the GDR opened following the collapse of the socialist state, the filmmakers were able to invite the protagonists to screenings of the films in which they starred at the international festivals. From the cinema stage Winfried Junge then takes photos of his subjects in front of their different audiences in the background, thereby keeping the self-reflexive focus on the experience of the protagonists rather than making

them representatives for it. Congruent with the ‘self’-reflexive loop being propelled for the protagonists rather than the filmmakers, when asked in Q&A sessions about their opinion, they often refer back to the film.

Q: What will you tell your grandchildren about the GDR?

Petra: I will show them the film.<sup>204</sup>

Contrary to expectations, and betraying that the ‘aesthetics of trust’ was successful, the protagonists defend the films and decline any suggestions that the filming has had much impact on their lives, apart from the convenient one of being invited to screenings to other countries.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, the impression of continuous contact and thus a larger influence arises easily on the part of the audience. By contrast, the Golzow films have condensed a long duration of lives covered into relatively short films, by comparison. This is even though the biographies tend to be around 140 minutes long. Through the regular revisitations, the Golzow films obviously distinguish themselves from conventional biographies that have been conceived in retrospect and are often assembled out of found footage. However, the filmmakers actually only visited their subjects for a few days each year, which fits with the protagonists’ assertion that the filming only had a low impact on their lives. In addition, the screening of the series did not in turn have an effect back on the protagonists’ lives in the sense that, for instance, they would have become ‘stars’ and thus perhaps even be employed. Unlike in more frequently broadcasted televisual docu-soaps where a protagonist then might become a television presenter, Petra, the wife of Bernd, who in the GDR had the same job as her husband, now, as so many women, is long-term unemployed and does not get a job even though many people in her area must know of her plight.

One of the reasons to be more self-reflexive was ethical. The protagonists objected that – by documentary tradition - they always had to be unprepared with their answers, while the filmmaker was prepared with his questions.

WJ: We then arrived at the opinion, that we need to emerge from behind the camera and should sit next to them. And they confirmed this. Jürgen said: ‘we can talk better, when he [the filmmaker und interviewer] is in the same situation as I am. He is always in the shadow and behind the camera and does not come forward.’ Everyone found this unfair, that they are always the ones, who have to answer without any preparation while I come properly prepared.<sup>206</sup>

This is an attitude shared by the filmmaker himself when he is an interviewee. At the beginning of the interview he pointed out that now has to improvise. The Junges try to

keep some editorial control over the articles and interviews that are published about them. However, this stance derives from a belief in a dialogue among equals and a rejection of ‘speaking about’ as a superior form rather than from than from image control. Winfried Junge’s reaction to an academic writing about *The Children of Golzow* betrays this:

WJ: Well, I know of course what Barton Byg wrote. But we have never discussed this, because he does not engage me in the discussion. He travels through Germany and tells this to everyone and I have no opportunity to object.<sup>207</sup>

But the Junges also treat their interviewees as they wish to be treated and show them the films before they are made public and give them the option to intercept. The protagonists control their ‘image’ insofar as they will all be shown the films in their near final cut and then have the option to veto scenes. For instance with respect to some scenes the screening of which could perhaps have upset the protagonist, Barbara Junge tells of how they sought his comments:

BJ: Well, we had not finished the film. Jürgen had seen it in the studio and then we recorded additional voice tracks, because we hoped that he would perhaps say something afterwards as a reflection. But nothing much came.<sup>208</sup>

WJ: When it is noticed that this [the ethical reason of attempted equality between interviewer and interviewee as a response to the protagonists request outlined above] is the reason for the camera then to pull back to a long shot in which one sees me sitting there, then it’s not a matter of me being so vain and now wanting to be in the picture too, but because, as Jürgen happily confirms, a dialogue is easier when the other person is also included in the image. Really, I should have sat down with them on the same bench. But that would have meant that I would have been always in the frame, with every sentence, and that is not good either. So if [the camera is to pull back], then it is to make clear that I am sitting there, asking the questions; but then it’s back to him, one needs to close in again, and it’s only him again.<sup>209</sup>

Winfried Junge makes a further important point here by relating the degree of self-reflexivity to the framing of the image through the zoom. A long shot includes the author and with him the context and thus allows for more self-reflexivity. A close-up blinkers out self-reflexivity by focussing on only one person, who is the protagonist and not the filmmaker.

### 2.5.3 The Limits of Self-reflexivity

The self-reflexivity of Winfried and Barbara Junge's films goes so far as to document that one of their protagonists is filmed by a television team (in *Dieter – A Golzower from Philadelphia*), since the 'children of Golzow' have become famous now. But they do not film the effect that filming had on their own lives, as over the years the filming for them has developed into a by-product of their friendship with the protagonists. They do not film, for instance, when Jürgen repairs their windows. And likewise, they do not film the images the protagonists themselves have shot. We only see them filming, such as for instance Bernd in *Actually I wanted to be a Forester – Bernd from Golzow* (FRG, 2003). The images their protagonists might have taken of the filmmakers are also outside of the self-reflexivity of *The Children of Golzow* serial.

The limit of self-reflexivity is for the Junges the point when the filmmaker becomes the main subject of the film. And the filmmakers' reservation against the wish of Jürgen for him to be always in the picture as well, makes sense:

WJ: He [Jürgen] thinks, sitting on the same bench [and in the same frame] would make us wholly equal; that this would be the best. But this really is not possible. Then I would be the main hero in all of the stories because I am always with them - and we now have thirteen. And that is just not possible.<sup>210</sup>

Here, equality between filmmaker and subject, or the interviewer and the interviewee, is argued to be ultimately impossible. It could also be extended to suggest that equality, as in socialism, is impossible. Junge's stance of believing in a kind of equality that nevertheless insists in non-substitutability – or of difference in sameness, as Deleuze would put it - is distinct, for instance, from that of the Dutch documentarist Joris Ivens', who worked internationally as well as in the socialist Soviet context. In a speech at a film festival in Warschau in 1955 reprinted in a GDR film journal Ivens stated that at the end of a documentary on a movement for farmers' collectives in the USA, he would have liked to exchanged his profession with that of his subjects and vice versa.<sup>211</sup> To let the author and narrator of the voice into the image can only be the exception that proves the rule. If the narrator becomes the main protagonist, he might also not be able to reveal as much and to give as sharp commentary. Paradoxically here subjectivity in the image, i.e. to focus on the author of the images, would prevent the subjective voice.

Whereas 'Western' documentary developed a subjective and deconstructive reaction against an overly 'objective' and impersonal observational mode, in the GDR the subject

had to carry the burden of objectivity. In a Marxist society, 'history from below' meant that the working class was alleged to lead the society and that the model citizen in the workers' and peasants' state came from below, not from above. This contrasts with the image of the marginalized populace at the bottom of a capitalist society, who eventually had their voices heard in 'minor' documentaries or through identity politics. Symptomatically, in the 'West', (and perhaps especially in the epitome of a market based society, North America) the most individualised way of filming, to film oneself or one's impact on the world, autobiographical and performative documentary, had been the last movements in documentary filmmaking. Barbara Junge opposes this option:

BJ: [...] for me it would be too vain, because it would look as if we wanted to place the roles we played in the foreground in the final film. And Winfred couldn't of course always be there in front of the camera or he'd be the main protagonist.

The Junges give vanity as a reason for not turning the biography into an autobiography by literally turning the self-reflexive pan a notch further onto themselves as has been the case with many 'new subjectivities' in Western-style documentary. The kind of self-reflexivity at play in *The Children of Golzow* remains grounded in a more collective notion of 'self' which we see in the previously socialist filmmakers and subjects. As such, the serial bears witness to Marx's stance that the subjective experience is the result of the individuals' interactions with society:

Man, as much as he may therefore be a particular individual (...) is just as much the totality – the ideal totality – the subjective existence of thought and experienced society present for itself; just as he also exists in the real world as the awareness and the real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of human life-activity.<sup>212</sup>

Frederic Jameson describes what is at stake as follows:

In the 1960s many people came to realize that in a truly revolutionary collective experience what comes into being is not a faceless and anonymous crowd or 'mass' but, rather, a new level of being – what Deleuze, following Eisenstein, calls the Dividual – in which individuality is not effaced but completed by collectivity. It is an experience that now slowly has been forgotten, its traces systematically effaced by the return of desperate individualisms of all kinds.<sup>213</sup>

With their view of rejecting too much emphasis on their own 'selves,' the Junges are in line with the socialist stance for the group and against the elevation of the one or the few.

WJ: It is about the life of these 10 people from Golzow. What opinions we might have, or whatever we have thrown in of ourselves - all this is takes second place. It really isn't important. What is important is that it is clear, to a certain degree, what the relationship was like with the subjects, how we made it.

The space of contact as it is manifested in the documentaries about the previously socialist subjects perhaps constitutes what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe as 'a singularity that is a reality produced by cooperation.'<sup>214</sup> Contrasting with Jay Ruby's definition of reflexivity as making 'his or her awareness of self a public matter and convey[ing] that knowledge to the audience,'<sup>215</sup> in the Junges' practise of self-reflexive filmmaking it is not the exposing of the filmmakers' autobiographical selves that matters, but the new joint entity of the relationship between them and their subjects.

#### **2.5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the longest running documentary in film history, and the multiple reasons for its increasing self-reflexivity. The movements and congruencies between the internal and the external, the protagonists and the filmmakers, the personal and the textual in this chapter have been explored with respect to the larger context of the economic and ideological system the work is generated in. The Junges' post-socialist style of self-reflexive filmmaking does not merely expose and ossify autobiographical selves but the new joint entity of the relationship between them and their subjects. Whilst subjectivity has generally been manifested in documentaries (in the context of a market society) as that of an individualist, *The Children of Golzow* serves as an example of a subjectivity that is shared. In the socialist context, the filmmakers shared a collective 'self' in which the protagonists have a greater say in a product that deterritorializes the conventional power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee (i.e. the right to veto their images). Like the increasing self-reflexivity of the serial, the emphasis on an 'aesthetics of trust' can also be seen as the result of the longevity of the chronicle, since there cannot be the short term exploitation a documentary film production often imposes on its protagonists.

This chapter argued that as an effect of the focus on the collective in State Socialism, the style of interviewing in the *Children of Golzow* serial does not rely on the alienation of the interviewee as has become endemic in many Western-style interview documentaries such as those by Michael Moore. In contrast to a reflexivity that is based on emotional distance, the socialist chronicle betrays a self-reflexivity that is not distanced. In its

objecting to traditional concepts of ‘scientific’ distance as realized in observational documentary, this thesis began with an exploration of the notion of sympathetic distance in the documentary interview that will be further explored in Chapter IV with respect to Alexandr Sokurov’s *Elegy of a Voyage* – where controversially it will be argued that, distance allows for subjectivity, not objectivity. This chapter argued that in contrast with the British series *7-Up*, *The Children of Golzow* registers minor material changes in a self-reflexive manner and that it is not merely a representation of the protagonist’s individual life experiences. Furthermore, it has been contended that both have a different style than one would expect from the ideologies of the system they were produced in.

<sup>1</sup> Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, London and New York: Routledge, 1983, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> In Britain, the *7-Up* series continues to be regarded as the earliest of its kind: ‘Michael Apted’s long-running documentary series is identified by many as the earliest predecessor of reality television. Starting with 14 British 7 year olds, he goes on to film them every seven years.’ Owen Gibson, ‘Big Brother and Beyond. Landmarks in Reality Format,’ *The Guardian*, 21.4.2005.

<sup>3</sup> Acronym of the Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft (German Film Corporation) in the former East Germany/GDR.

<sup>4</sup> Winfried Junge, in Silke Panse, unpublished interview with Winfried and Barbara Junge, London: Goethe Institute, 12.12.2003. When quoted in the main text, Barbara Junge will be referred to as BJ and Winfried Junge will be referred to as WJ.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.

<sup>6</sup> Barton Byg, ‘GDR-Up: The Ideology of Universality in Long Term Documentary,’ *New German Critique*, No. 82, Winter 2001, p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 2000, p. 241-243.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 240. The British artist Gillian Wearing has used the structuralist aspects of *7-Up* as the basis for her work *10-16 and 2 into 1* to a somewhat different effect. Rather than suppress ‘original’ personal development, her videos created new subjects through a more rigorous imposition of the signifier.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.

<sup>10</sup> Slavoj Žižek sums up Søren Kierkegaard’s and Gilles Deleuze’s reproach of Hegel: ‘Hegel is the ultimate Socratic philosopher of memorization, of reflectively returning to what the thing always already was.’ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and the Consequences*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Byg also acknowledges that the Golzow films ‘reveal an increased amount of self-reflexivity largely absent in the British versions.’ Byg, p. 129.

<sup>12</sup> *42-Up* (Michael Apted, UK, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.

<sup>14</sup> My translation of: ‘Es ware ein Fehler, den sozialistischen Realismus als etwas “radikal Neues” allem, was “alt” ist, strikt gegenüber zu stellen. Sein Wesen entwickelt sich dialektisch.’ George Lukács, ‘Der Höchste Grad des Realismus’ Rede von George Lukács, Budapest, Juni 1949, Wortlaut des im *Neuen Deutschland* veröffentlichten Auszugs, in Elimar Schubbe (ed.), *Dokumente zur Kunst-, Literatur- und Kulturpolitik der SED*, Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1972, p. 117.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Everyday life is characterised by repetition as the return of the same, primarily in the standardized production of commodities and the proliferation of information.’ David N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 203.

<sup>16</sup> Winfried Junge’s commentary in *Jochen – a Golzower from Philadelphia* (GDR, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.

<sup>18</sup> Winfried Junge, in Erika Richter, ‘Gespräch mit Barbara und Winfried Junge,’ in 33. *Internationales Forum des jungen Films*, catalogue, Berlin: Berlinale, 2003, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Winfried Junge, in Richter, ‘Gespräch,’ in *Forum*.

<sup>20</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.

<sup>21</sup> This notwithstanding the vast array of reality-TV programmes that are directly about selling oneself on to the other contestants and/or the audience such as BBC3’s *Three is a Crowd*. A manifestation of subjectivity in capitalism is property: ‘Production as the abstract subjective essence is discovered only in the forms of property that objectifies it all over again, that alienates it by reterritorializing it.’ Deleuze and

- Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 259. Property programmes represented as a subjective experience have replaced narrative fiction in contemporary television. They are contemporary television's outlet for fantasy.
- <sup>22</sup> 'Capitalism starts intensifying or diversifying affect, but only in order to extract surplus value. It hijacks affect in order to intensify profit potential. It literally valorises affect.' Brian Massumi, 'Navigating Movements,' in Mary Zournazi (ed.), *Hope*, New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 224.
- <sup>23</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 240.
- <sup>24</sup> Zizek, *Organs without Bodies*, p. 185.
- <sup>25</sup> Eugene W. Holland, 'Marx and Philosophies of Difference,' in Ian Buchanan (ed.), *A Deleuzian Century*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 150.
- <sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London: The Athlone Press, 1994, p. 32.
- <sup>27</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 31.
- <sup>28</sup> 'This concept of Being is not collective, like a genus in relation to its species, but only distributive and hierarchical.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 33.
- <sup>29</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 33.
- <sup>30</sup> Slavoj Zizek has argued this in *Organs without Bodies* and accused Deleuze and Guattari of doing exactly what I would say they argued against: a fetishization of difference. However, I agree with Zizek with respect to the frequent contemporary employment of Deleuze for those ends.
- <sup>31</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 255.
- <sup>32</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 253-254.
- <sup>33</sup> Brian Massumi, following Antonio Negri, noted that in the dynamic of capitalism normality is lost. Brian Massumi, 'Navigating Movements,' in Zournazi (ed.), *Hope*, p. 224.
- <sup>34</sup> Frederic Jameson was the most prolific proponent of this line of argument of postmodernism as commodity in for instance Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of late Capitalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1991.
- <sup>35</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>36</sup> To call someone with their first name in Germany is not only a sign of familiarity, but could also mean that the other person is a child or of lower social status and thus indicate a loss of respect.
- <sup>37</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>38</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>39</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>40</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>41</sup> Winfried Junge says this to Jochen and his wife Michaela in *Jochen – A Golzower from Philadelphia* (FRG, 2001).
- <sup>42</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>43</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>44</sup> This was at a time when the pressure from older GDR documentary filmmakers was on to provide a commentary. To have the protagonists speak for themselves, however, was convergent with a process of democratisation in the GDR and the rise of the *Alltagsfilme*, realist fiction films. It was made under the influence of *Cinéma Verité* and Chris Marker's *Le Joli Mai* which had been celebrated in the Leipziger Dokumentarfilmwoche in 1963. Winfried Junge, in Ralf Schenk 'Lebensläufe – Ein Lebens- und Werkstattbericht: Ralf Schenk im Gespräch mit Winfried Junge,' in Winfried and Barbara Junge, with Dieter Wolff (ed.), *Lebensläufe - Die Kinder von Golzow. Bilder – Dokumente - Erinnerungen zur ältesten Lanzeitbeobachtung der Filmgeschichte*, Marburg: Schüren Presseverlag, 2004, p. 37-38.
- <sup>45</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 54.
- <sup>46</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>47</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>48</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>49</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>50</sup> Winfried Junge, in Richter, 'Gespräch,' in *Forum*, p. 34.
- <sup>51</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>52</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>53</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>54</sup> Jugendweihe literally translates as 'youth initiation.' The Collins German Dictionary defines it as a: 'ceremony in which 14-year-olds are given adult social status' (GDR).
- <sup>55</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>56</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>57</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 64
- <sup>58</sup> Barbara Junge, in Sylke Kunath, 'Der längste Dokumentarfilm der Welt' in *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30.8.1993.
- <sup>59</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>60</sup> Winfried Junge, in Richter, 'Gespräch,' in *Forum*.
- <sup>61</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.

- <sup>62</sup> The full quote is footnote 65 in the section ‘Lenin’s Theory of Reflexivity.’ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works. Philosophical Notebooks*, Vol. 38, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972, p. 177.
- <sup>63</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 177.
- <sup>64</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke*, Bd. VI, Berlin, 1840, p. 362, cited in Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 184.
- <sup>65</sup> Hegel, *Werke*, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 184.
- <sup>66</sup> Or as Deleuze puts it: ‘The privileged centre is itself put into movement’. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, London: Athlone Press, 1986, p. 76.
- <sup>67</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 80.
- <sup>68</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 81.
- <sup>69</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 76.
- <sup>70</sup> Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, New York and London: Routledge, 2003, p. 73.
- <sup>71</sup> François Zourabichvili, ‘The Eye of Montage: Dziga Vertov and Bergsonian Materialism,’ in Gregory Flaxman (ed.), *The Brain is the Screen*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 146.
- <sup>72</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 81.
- <sup>73</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, ‘Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus, Material für den Kongreß junger Künstler’, *Wissenschaftliche Beilage des Forum* 8, 23 April 1951, p. 4.
- <sup>74</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 178.
- <sup>75</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 180.
- <sup>76</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 183.
- <sup>77</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 183.
- <sup>78</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 95.
- <sup>79</sup> Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 96.
- <sup>80</sup> ‘Moreover, there was already a crucial distinction between “mechanical materialism” – seeing the world as objects and excluding activity – and “historical materialism” – seeing the material process as human activity.’ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 96.
- <sup>81</sup> Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 97.
- <sup>82</sup> Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism. An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1982, p. 30.
- <sup>83</sup> Karl Marx, *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1959 cited in Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 75.
- <sup>84</sup> Marx, *Preface*, cited in Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 75.
- <sup>85</sup> Richard Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema 1917 – 1929*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 125.
- <sup>86</sup> Ernst Opgenoorth, *Volksdemokratie im Kino: Propagandistische Selbstdarstellung in DEFA-Dokumentarfilm 1946-1957*, Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1984, p. 45.
- <sup>87</sup> Opgenoorth, *DEFA-Dokumentarfilm*, p.45.
- <sup>88</sup> Istwan Hildebrandt, ‘Über einige Probleme der Kamera’ in ‘Für eine Verbesserung der Wochenschau und des Dokumentarfilms!’, *Deutsche Filmkunst*, 1953, No.2, p. 117.
- <sup>89</sup> Hildebrandt, ‘Probleme der Kamera,’ p. 118.
- <sup>90</sup> This was after a shift from Marx’s early writings, where art was seen as a product of economic forces and thus ideologically preconditioned, to a later position, where he came to see art as quasi-autonomous. If the superstructure was not a simple reflection of the base-economics, culture could assert a quasi-independence from economic factors. It could thus be instrumental in offering a model of genuine freedom, not a ‘freedom’ that was false consciousness and an alibi for bourgeois ideology.
- <sup>91</sup> Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski, ‘Introduction’, in Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (eds.) *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, St Louis: Telos Press, 1973, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>92</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 13.
- <sup>93</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 13.
- <sup>94</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p.10 and p.16: ‘Art, as a distinct part of human labour, is no mere “copy” or “reflection” of so-called reality according to Marx, but its infusing with human purposes.’
- <sup>95</sup> Though one has to recognise that for Brecht the use of alienation is a strategic move made in order to rupture the illusion that there exists a seamless relationship between bourgeois ideology and its naturalization of culture - an illusion, which excludes consciousness of its constructedness as well as the relation of its forms to ideology. Alienation as aesthetic strategy then is the beginning of a movement towards an unalienated world of freedom beyond bourgeois ideology.
- <sup>96</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 16.
- <sup>97</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 17.
- <sup>98</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 12.
- <sup>99</sup> Karl Marx, in David McClellan (ed.), *The Grundrisse*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, p.94, cited in Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 12.

- <sup>100</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, p. 121.
- <sup>101</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 12, Wien und Berlin: Verlag für Literatur und Politik, 1933, p. 413.
- <sup>102</sup> Sergej Drobascenko, 'Der Dokumentarismus als ästhetisches Problem', *Kürbiskern, Dokumentation und Wirklichkeit in der Literatur*, 2/74, p. 71.
- <sup>103</sup> Drobascenko, 'Der Dokumentarismus als ästhetisches Problem', p. 72.
- <sup>104</sup> Kurt Maetzig, 'Vom Wesen des Dokumentarfilms,' June 1947, cited by Günther Jordan, 'Von Perlen und Kieselsteinen: Der DEFA Dokumentarfilm von 1946 bis Mitte der 50er Jahre,' in Peter Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost. Dokumentarfilm der DEFA von der Nachkriegszeit bis zur Wiedervereinigung*, Konstanz: UVK-Medien/Ölschläger, 1995, p. 55.
- <sup>105</sup> Kurt Finke, 'DEFA-Film als "nationales Kulturerbe"? Thesen zum DEFA-Film und seiner wissenschaftlichen Aufarbeitung,' in Klaus Finke (ed.), *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?*, Series: Beiträge zur Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft, Band 58, Jahrgang 42, Berlin: Vistas Verlag GmbH, 2001.
- <sup>106</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 12.
- <sup>107</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 107.
- <sup>108</sup> K. Dolgov, 'Artistic Creativity and Lenin's Theory of Reflection' in I. Kulikova and A. Zis (eds.), *Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics and Life: A Collection of Articles*, Moscow: Progressive Publishers, 1976, p. 37.
- <sup>109</sup> K. Dolgov, 'Artistic Creativity and Lenin's Theory of Reflection', p. 37.
- <sup>110</sup> K. Dolgov, 'Artistic Creativity and Lenin's Theory of Reflection', p. 37.
- <sup>111</sup> Claus Offe, *Varieties of Transition: The Eastern European and East German Experience*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>112</sup> Sergej Drobascenko, 'Der Dokumentarismus als ästhetisches Problem', p. 74.
- <sup>113</sup> Joris Ivens, 'Der Mensch im Dokumentarfilm', *Deutsche Filmkunst*, 1955, No.6, p. 250.
- <sup>114</sup> Kurt Stanke, 'Die Arbeit des Kameramannes im Dokumentarfilm,' *Deutsche Filmkunst* 1954, No.4, p. 12.
- <sup>115</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, 'Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus', p. 2.
- <sup>116</sup> Peter Zimmermann, 'Der Dokumentarfilm der DEFA zwischen Propaganda, Alltagsbeobachtung und subversiver Rezeption,' in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 17.
- <sup>117</sup> A. Shdanow, 'Über Kunst und Wissenschaft,' p. 42, cited in Hermann Axen, 'Über die Fragen der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst: Rede auf der Konferenz des ZK [Zentralkomitees] der SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands] am 17. und 18. September 1952 in Berlin,' in *Für den Aufschwung der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953, p. 38.
- <sup>118</sup> Hermann Axen, 'Über die Fragen der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst,' p. 38.
- <sup>119</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, 'Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus,' p. 4.
- <sup>120</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 32.
- <sup>121</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, 'Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus', p. 4.
- <sup>122</sup> SED party conferences urged artists in 1948 to 'change the people.' See Jordan, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 28.
- <sup>123</sup> See Jordan, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 28.
- <sup>124</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>125</sup> Sergej Drobascenko, 'Dokumentarismus als ästhetisches Problem', p. 72.
- <sup>126</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>127</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 36.
- <sup>128</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>129</sup> For instance by the contemporary Soviet film historian Sergej Drobascenko, 'Der Dokumentarismus als ästhetisches Problem', p. 73.
- <sup>130</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, 'Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus', p. 2.
- <sup>131</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 36.
- <sup>132</sup> Proletarskoje Kino, no.5, 1932 (Editorial), reproduced in Dziga Vertov, *Tagebücher/Arbeitshefte*, Konstanz: UVK-Medien, 2000, p. 45.
- <sup>133</sup> Richard Taylor, *The Politics of Soviet Cinema 1917 – 1929*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 124.
- <sup>134</sup> Peter Zimmermann, 'Im Winde klingen die Fahnen: Dokumentarfilme und Reportagen der DDR und der BRD im Kalten Krieg und zur Zeit der Wiedervereinigung' in Klaus Finke (ed.), *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?*, Series: Beiträge zur Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft. Band 58, Jahrgang 42, Berlin: Vistas Verlag GmbH, 2001, p. 12.
- <sup>135</sup> Zimmermann, in Finke (ed.), *DEFA-Film*, p. 11.
- <sup>136</sup> Zimmermann, in Finke (ed.), *DEFA-Film*, p. 13.

- <sup>137</sup> Zimmermann, in Finke (ed.), *DEFA-Film*, p. 13.
- <sup>138</sup> Zimmermann, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*.
- <sup>139</sup> The Marx and Engels title however is strangely 'preserved for our German audience', as the Amber film website stipulates. They were screened on C4 under the title These Britons, These Germans followed by the explanation 'En route towards each other in Newcastle and Rostock. Two films - one dialogue.' [http://www.amber-online.com/html/marks\\_and\\_engels.html](http://www.amber-online.com/html/marks_and_engels.html)
- <sup>140</sup> The footage of the Wonder factory and the people in it were re-visited again in such documentaries as *Reprise* (Hervé Le Roux, F, 1996).
- <sup>141</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 36.
- <sup>142</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 98.
- <sup>143</sup> Winfried Junge's commentary in and on *Screenplay: The Times* (FRG, 1992).
- <sup>144</sup> *Die Tageszeitung*, 20.2.1999.
- <sup>145</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 42.
- <sup>146</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 41.
- <sup>147</sup> Michael Renoy, 'New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-Representation in the Post-Verité Age' in Diane Waldman and Janet Walter (eds.), *Feminism and Documentary*, Visible Evidence. Volume 5, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- <sup>148</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>149</sup> This is the translation in the English subtitles using the equivalent English proverb. The literal translation of the phrase Junge uses is in German: '[...] and as they say in fairy-tales: if they are not dead yet, they live happily ever after.' Unlike the English translation, this is not a happy ending, but a happy continuation: the original German text connotes a possible ending.
- <sup>150</sup> *A Guy Like Dieter - Native of Golzow* (FRG, 1999).
- <sup>151</sup> Hans im Glück is the German title of one of the brothers Grimms' fairy tales. In contrast to the title, which suggests otherwise, the hero of the tale, Hans, is actually in quite bad luck as he leaves his home with a gold nugget and enters a cycle of exchange whereby he keeps ending up with an item of lesser value and ends up with nothing.
- <sup>152</sup> Barbara Junge in Silke Panse, unpublished interview with Winfried and Barbara Junge.
- <sup>153</sup> W. Skaterstschikow, 'Die Leninistische Widerspiegelungstheorie und die Kunst des Sozialistischen Realismus,' p. 4.
- <sup>154</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>155</sup> Maetzig, 'Vom Wesen des Dokumentarfilms,' cited by Jordan, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 55.
- <sup>156</sup> J.W Stalin in 1924, quoted in Hermann Axen, 'Über die Fragen der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst. Rede auf der Konferenz des ZK [Zentralkomitees] der SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands] am 17. und 18. September 1952 in Berlin' in *Für den Aufschwung der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953, p. 30.
- <sup>157</sup> Andrei Shdanow (über Kunst und Wissenschaft, S.9) quoted by Hermann Axen, 'Über die Fragen der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst. Rede auf der Konferenz des ZK [Zentralkomitees] der SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands] am 17. und 18. September 1952 in Berlin' in *Für den Aufschwung der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953, p. 30.
- <sup>158</sup> Hermann Axen, 'Über die Fragen der fortschrittlichen deutschen Filmkunst,' p. 31.
- <sup>159</sup> Kurt Stanke, 'Die Arbeit des Kameramannes im Dokumentarfilm,' *Deutsche Filmkunst* 1954, 4, p. 12.
- <sup>160</sup> Maetzig, 'Vom Wesen des Dokumentarfilms,' cited by Jordan, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 55.
- <sup>161</sup> Kurt Stanke, 'Die Arbeit des Kameramannes im Dokumentarfilm,' *Deutsche Filmkunst* 1954, 4, p. 12.
- <sup>162</sup> Zimmermann, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, p. 15.
- <sup>163</sup> Rüdiger Steinmetz, 'DDR-Wirklichkeit im Film. Bemerkungen zum historisch-kulturellen Quellenwert von DEFA-(Spiel-)Filmen,' in Klaus Finke (ed.) *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?* Series: Beiträge zur Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft, Band 58, Jahrgang 42, Berlin: Vistas Verlag GmbH, 2001, p. 74.
- <sup>164</sup> *Kinder lernen in aller Welt [Children learn all over the World]* (1964), *Vom lernenden Menschen [About the Learning Human Being]* (1964), *Studentinnen – Eindrücke von einer technischen Hochschule [Students – Impressions from a Technical University]* (1965), his only fiction film *Der Tapfere Schulschwänzer [The Brave Truant]* (1967), and *Keine Pause für Löffler: Ein Lehrer und seine 6c [No Break For Löffler: A Teacher and 6c]*(1974).
- <sup>165</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 82.
- <sup>166</sup> Eggo Müller, 'Dokumente der Distanz: Identitätsbestimmungen in Dokumentarfilmen über die DDR, November 1989 bis zur Vereinigung,' in Rainer Bohn, Knut Hickethier and Eggo Müller (eds.), *Mauer-Show: Das Ende der DDR, die deutsche Einheit und die Medien*, Sigma Medienwissenschaft, Volume 11, Berlin: Sigma, 1992, p. 141.
- <sup>167</sup> Müller, in Bohn, Hickethier and Müller (eds.), *Mauer-Show*, p. 141.
- <sup>168</sup> For instance, in *Eleven Years Old* (1966), Dieter seems horrified by television images of the Vietnam war in a montage sequence. Actually though, he had been watching images of massacres in the Congo at

- the time of filming. There is only the memory of the filmmaker to verify this, since there was no synchronous sound available to substantiate it. Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 40.
- <sup>169</sup> Winfried Junge, 'Aesthetik des Vertrauens [Aesthetics of Trust]' in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, pp. 133-145.
- <sup>170</sup> Bertold Brecht, 'An Example of Paedagogics. (Notes to 'Der Flug der Lindberghs')' in John Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic*, London: Methuen Drama, 1964, p. 31.
- <sup>171</sup> Brecht, in Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 32.
- <sup>172</sup> Brecht, in Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 32.
- <sup>173</sup> Ivens, 'Der Mensch im Dokumentarfilm', p. 249-250.
- <sup>174</sup> Brecht, in Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 31.
- <sup>175</sup> Karl Marx, 'Letter to Ferdinand Lasalle, April 19, 1859' in Baxandall and Morawski (eds.), p. 107.
- <sup>176</sup> Friedrich Engels, 'Letters to Minna Kautsky, November 26, 1885,' in Baxandall and Morawski (eds.), p. 113.
- <sup>177</sup> Engels, in Baxandall and Morawski (eds.), p. 113.
- <sup>178</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 174.
- <sup>179</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, pp. 78-79.
- <sup>180</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p.78.
- <sup>181</sup> Karl Marx, 'Letter to Ferdinand Lasalle,' in Baxandall and Morawski (eds.), p. 107.
- <sup>182</sup> Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 30.
- <sup>183</sup> Bertold Brecht, 'Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which produces an Alienation Effect' in Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 91.
- <sup>184</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'What is Epic Theatre?' in *Illuminations*, Fontana, 1973, Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, p. 155.
- <sup>185</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 225.
- <sup>186</sup> Bertold Brecht, 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting' in Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 91.
- <sup>187</sup> Brecht, 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting' in Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 92.
- <sup>188</sup> Bertold Brecht, 'Der Messingkauf' in Elizabeth Hauptmann (ed.) *Gesammelte Werke*, Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1967, p. 573.
- <sup>189</sup> Brecht, 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting' in Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 92
- <sup>190</sup> Brecht, 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting' in Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 92
- <sup>191</sup> John Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, 177.
- <sup>192</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>193</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>194</sup> Winfried and Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>195</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>196</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>197</sup> Junge, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder Ost*, pp. 133-145.
- <sup>198</sup> Winfried Junge, in Schenk, in Junge, *Lebensläufe*, p. 39.
- <sup>199</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>200</sup> Renov, 'New Subjectivities' in Waldman and Walter (eds.), *Feminism and Documentary*.
- <sup>201</sup> Larissa MacFarquhar, 'The Populist. Michael Moore can Make you Cry,' *The New Yorker*, 16.2.2004, p. 133.
- <sup>202</sup> Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- <sup>203</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>204</sup> Petra Oesterreich, the wife of Bernd, Q&A following the premiere of *Actually I wanted to be a Forrester – Bernd from Golzow*, Goethe Institute, London, 11.12.2003.
- <sup>205</sup> Bernd and Petra Oesterreich, the protagonists of *Actually I wanted to be a Forester – Bernd from Golzow*, Q&A, Goethe Institut, 11.12.2003.
- <sup>206</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>207</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>208</sup> Barbara Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>209</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>210</sup> Winfried Junge, in Panse.
- <sup>211</sup> Ivens, 'Der Mensch im Dokumentarfilm', p. 251.
- <sup>212</sup> Karl Marx 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,' in Baxandall and Morawski (eds.), p. 71.
- <sup>213</sup> Frederic Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, London and New York: Verso, 1998, p. 10.
- <sup>214</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 395.
- <sup>215</sup> Jay Ruby, 'Exposing yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film', *Picturing Culture. Explorations of Film and Anthropology*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 155.

**Opacity through Transparency:  
Tracey Emin and her Art between the Autobiographical and the  
Biographical**

The manifestations of a joint, self-reflexive enterprise in a collective context as discussed in the previous chapter is here explored in terms of the art works generated by the more private interactions between the autobiographical artist Tracey Emin and her partners in her formerly ‘promiscuous narrations.’ Following the biographies of the *Children of Golzow* this chapter reports another instance where live stories are repeated, and traces the negotiation of Emin’s autobiographical art in the biographical comments about her. I argue here, that the biographical discourse on her repeats what she said about herself in her art, just in the negative and as a judgment. Emin’s autobiographical art, in the light of its reception as celebrity biography, holds the mirror in front of the press discourse producing a Deleuzian repetition of the Same as an infinite representation of ‘identity.’ Her art in the context of its reception manifests ‘identity’ as a form. It makes opaque through transparency. Autobiographical subjectivity in Emin’s practice is recast by her critics as biographical objectivity. This chapter continues to pursue the critique of diverse applications of the mirror metaphor and its infinite reflection that runs as a thread through this thesis, and which has been considered in the previous chapter as Lenin’s mechanical reflection. Whereas post-structuralist critique has valued textual reflexivity in biography and fiction over self-reflexivity in autobiographical non-fiction, I argue for a critical appreciation that the self-reflexivity of the artist is not submitted to the reflexivity of the text.

This chapter charts the critical reception of her work, beginning with the years around 1997, when Emin became known to a wider audience not through her art, but by being drunk and walking out of a Turner prize discussion on live television. Her most controversial piece to date, *My Bed* (1999) was part of the exhibition staged at the Tate gallery for the same prize two years later. Emin exhibited her bed looking as though she had left it in the state it was after she spent several days of despair there. Previously she had triggered a lot of negative response through her embroidered tent *Everyone I have ever slept with 1963-1995* (1995). In the next decade, the artist went from working through her earlier promiscuity and abortions in her art to declaring in her newspaper

column that she is now living like a nun.<sup>1</sup> As an artist, she went from struggling and being not taken seriously to becoming a celebrity – and again often not being taken seriously. Her work still seems disrespected, perhaps even *because* she has become successful. ‘She was just a little monster then, not an Empress monster,’<sup>2</sup> the art critic Matthew Collings judges Emin’s development. Emin has frequently been met with critical antagonism, something that has grown alongside and perhaps been intensified by her increasing celebrity. Her work has become regarded as art that ‘the public really like,’<sup>3</sup> but apparently because it shares a lowest common denominator - of the autobiographical personal story, of the scandalous or of celebrity - rather than being critically appreciated as complex art. Emin is not being valued as an artist because of the kind of autobiographical art she makes, which is frequently dismissed as being narcissistic<sup>4</sup> (whereas one could of course apply this reproach generally to the sheer act of making art, or, more specifically - as Rosalind Krauss has done - to video, the ‘aesthetics of narcissism.’)<sup>5</sup> Her position furthermore has shifted from having to represent herself as an artist in the media to being a representative of the media. This chapter traces the earlier, more outspoken antagonism in the reception of her work, which dared to speak its name more, when her art had less commodity value.

Emin’s public persona outside of her art has been much better received. In contrast to her telling stories about herself in her own documentaries, which have been dismissed by art critics as *High Art Lite*,<sup>6</sup> her live public appearances as a story-teller in the extra-textual of art have been much more appreciated. In fact, it seems that due to the popularity of her public persona and her use of the media (as a member of it) in recent years, she could, in a sense, apply ‘external pressure’ back onto the reception of her work as an artist. Her criticism in the media of the *Royal Academy of Arts* for its lack of female artists, for example, was followed in 2007 by her being voted as a member of the academy.<sup>7</sup> Without being able to place herself in the discourse of her reception from a position external to her art, she would perhaps never have shifted gender imbalance of this elite institution.

Because her subject is herself, she is in the unfortunate position of having her public appearances scrutinised as to whether they are art, or having her work dismissed as an ‘art of being.’ I argue that neither of these positions are appropriate. Neither does she perform her life as art nor does she just exist unedited in her art. In the reception of her work, Emin’s reviewers are caught up in a circle of infinite regress, a repetition of the

Same, whereby they merely repeat what she has said in her autobiographical art as biographical information about her. This has been simultaneously used as a critique of her art and evaluated negatively for a naïve repetition by her of her life in her art. 'She is inseparable from her art work,'<sup>8</sup> maintains even Emin's American gallerist. Consequentially, personal traits are criticized by art critics as though they would belong to an art work: 'the self-obsession, the crowning and the preening, the crass Harrods and Prada lifestyle.'<sup>9</sup> Emin would not be criticized in that way, if her art were not so personal.

Contrary to the critical perception that Emin is all content, no form and all confessional, I propose that with Emin's work honesty has become form and that this is not confessional. The ambiguity in her autobiographical work has been contained by critics at an earlier stage by the categorisation of her work as fiction. Often accompanied by a word-for-word repetition of the facts of her life from her art in the critical writings about her, this constant repetition of the Same – of statements made by her about her repeated as statements by others about her - went along with the perceived need to make her a worthwhile subject, that is to 'save her' by classifying her autobiographical work on female promiscuity as fiction whilst repeating as factual the information she provides. Examining her earlier art as promiscuous narrations, I will attempt to touch on the matter of how their referential promiscuity relates to their textual promiscuity, without one dominating the other. The way Emin's work is perceived as autobiographical gives rise to a reproach of repetition and the personal accusation that her work is merely a cry for therapy.

### **3.1 The Experience of the Biographers**

Tracey Emin is now the most famous living British artist, and the first artist to have become a tabloid celebrity. What makes her case so exceptional in this respect is that her work is autobiographical. More people are familiar with biographical data on her than with her actual autobiographical works, even though these convey the same information. This is particularly so as the intimate revelations she made about herself in her art make fitting tabloid material; nevertheless it also means that there is nothing more sensational to reveal about her than what she has already said in her art. Compared with other artists who do not work autobiographically and thus are able to talk freely about their lives, when Emin is interviewed she will repeat what she said in her art. As a result, the press and the purveyors of biography, who are supposed to illuminate the gap between the work and the person, are left no room to operate:

The problem is that an artist like Emin is a threat to the professional critic because there is generally nothing in her work to unravel. It is all there, spelled out, often literally, in black and white.<sup>10</sup>

For a journalist there is no value gained by interviewing Emin about her life or her art, since she will only repeat what she has said in her art. (This repetition of the Same is usually taken negatively, but it can also be interpreted as positive: ‘She makes my job as an interviewer easy because she is so desperate to explain herself.’)<sup>11</sup> The reviewers in trying to produce additional value for the journalistic text then often reverted to turning ‘Tracey’s’ autobiography into their own experience:

But there is something wrong with her mouth – she keeps chewing on the side of it and I finally ask, “Is there something wrong with your mouth?” “Only what comes out of it!” she guffaws, before explaining she lost all her top teeth as a child. Then she opens her mouth and shows me the great scaffold of ironmongery holding her teeth in place.<sup>12</sup>

This journalistic text first discloses an observation to the reader and then repeats the same phrase in direct address. Here repetition of the Same even features within the same text. The fact that some of Emin’s teeth have been knocked out as a child has been ‘reported’ by herself frequently before in her own art works, but the journalist had to turn Emin’s autobiography into an experience of her own. Reviewers often seem to ‘forget’ that the details about her personal life already appeared in her art – thereby reversing the order of creation and documentation and submitting the personal as work to the personal as life. By the same token, they heighten the importance of themselves as mediators. Emin’s autobiographical art is rewritten as the autobiographic, subjective experience of the journalist. Because a journalist needs to report ‘first-hand,’ and the autobiographic artist generally is the first on the scene of her life, the reception of Emin’s art was mired by a jealous press reaction. Impersonal conceptual art, by contrast, gives secondary commentators the chance to produce more ‘originality.’ Damian Hirst, the other similarly famous once ‘Young British Artist,’ never received such hostility of the same sort. The irony in his work implies a distance between the artist and the work, which leaves commentators with a space to fill. Emin, by contrast (like the other philosophers and filmmakers discussed in this thesis: Deleuze, Herzog, Junge), rejects that distance: ‘It’s not a joke. It’s not a game.’<sup>13</sup> An example of how the journalistic ‘secondary processors,’ upheld the Cartesian division between between intellect and emotion can be found most notably in Philip Hensher’s ‘Bad news Tracey - you need to have brains to be a conceptual artist.’<sup>14</sup> Having become the first artist to appear on *Have I Got News For*

*You*,<sup>15</sup> Emin had her artistic abilities judged according to her performance on the comedy game show. In a conflation of life and art in the reception of her as an artist, the body and the diaristic were eliminated as sites for concept. The reviewer argued that ‘great painters’ do not need to be bright, because they work manually, but conceptual art demands brainpower: ‘The best conceptual artists [...] are very intelligent people.’<sup>16</sup> Needless to say that there are more kinds of intelligence than the one that is measured according to how fast one can deliver a pun, as is the province of *Have I Got News For You*. In Emin’s work as an artist the conceptual is produced in tune with the emotional narration of her experiences, not in a detached way that would substitute a superiority of the mind with the supremacy of a body without emotions, nor simply as an intellectual game that affords detachment. The art critic Mathew Collings, who too finds Emin unoriginal, nevertheless made the point that Henschler does not understand her ‘brand of nouveau conceptualism,’ because he is merely a journalist rather than an art critic.<sup>17</sup> But also art historians seem to forget their knowledge of the intentional fallacy (judging a work according to what the author says about it), when it concerns autobiographical art. The art historian John Walker for instance does not distinguish between who makes a hateful utterance and in which context it is made:

She had no qualms about revealing details of her sex life: boasting about how many men she has slept with, but then complaining when accused of being a “slag.”<sup>18</sup>

Here, the critic actually sounds wounded and bitter like a spurned lover, as though he has entered into a personal relationship with the artist just because she makes personal art. As has been made clear in post-colonial and feminist studies of the last century, there is a vast difference between someone making a negative remark about someone else and the attempted re-appropriation of that derogatory term by the victim. When Emin is exhibiting an appliqué with *Psyco Slut*, a repetition of the names she has been called (‘The reality was worse – I was being called a slag on the street – not just in the dance hall,’) <sup>19</sup> choosing to reveal painful facts of her life in her art (she became promiscuous after she had been raped), this is very different from a male historian in effect repeating the insult.

### **3.2 High Art vs. Low Documentary**

Since the exhibition, *You forgot to kiss my soul* (2001), her work has been more readily accommodated on the side of art by critics although these journalists might have just needed to produce a new take on an old subject to avoid repetition. They were now

judging her work positively: 'Emin emerges as an artist, not just a callow diarist.'<sup>20</sup> In the reception of Emin's work, high art and concept is opposed to the diarist as low art and Emin more often than not has been situated on the latter side of the equation.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless a typical view remains that her work is not art: 'You can't talk about it as art [...] but I think she's a fantastic phenomenon,'<sup>22</sup> or in a near repetition: 'Emin is not just an artist but a phenomenon.'<sup>23</sup> This positive evaluation, nevertheless excludes her from the art world because she is now a 'phenomenon:' 'Emin is no longer an art phenomenon, but something else.'<sup>24</sup> Just because she is a celebrity however, does not mean that she is not an artist. The other side of the same coin is that her autobiographical work is art because she is 'one of us.' The art journalists do take her side, identify with her as a personification of the 'ordinary people.' In contrast to Matthew Collings' assessment of Emin as a Prada-wearing diva a year earlier in the same journal, the art reviewer Marcus Field writes in *Modern Painters*: '[The tent's] concerns are the ones us ordinary people share – the memories of people we have loved, the intimate family moments, the mistakes we made.'<sup>25</sup> This is strange, firstly because now she is not ordinary any more, and secondly, because whoever would be the not ordinary people presumably also have memories of people they have loved.

Before the embrace of documentary by the art world in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, art reception went through a phase in which art and documentary were seen as separate. The earlier reception of Emin's work is marked by this separation of art from documentary together with a denial of creativity in documentary. For example, in 2001 the caption writer of the Serpentine Gallery still separated art from documentary. The caption to Stan Douglas' film *The Sandman* (2001), which was filmed in sets build to mimic real *Schrebergärten*, read: 'The atmospheric intensity is what distinguishes them from documentary location shots.'<sup>26</sup> This denial of constructedness (or 'atmospheric intensity') in documentary works from art can also be observed in the reception and marketing of the documentary artist Gillian Wearing. Here as well a simple representation of unconstructed reality outside of art was pitted against complex artistic creation, though in a different way than with Emin. The caption on the wall of her *Serpentine* exhibition read that Wearing's 'work rejects the impartiality of documentary film. [...] It is the way in which the artist engages with the possibilities of her medium and the tension she creates between objectivity and subjectivity that distinguish her video installations from the work of most documentary filmmakers.'<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in the catalogue of the same exhibition the ex-boyfriend of Emin, the curator Carl Freedman,

asks Wearing: 'Your work is often perceived as a form of documentary. But to me it's something different. You often release a work a considerable time after it has been filmed. There is a lot of post-production involved.'<sup>28</sup> Here the argument seems to be that a 'normal' documentary is not composed through editing, and it pits an artist's subjective editing of her documentary work against a supposedly non-selectively edited documentary filmmaking. Though even Emin herself has referred many times to her process of selecting from her life for her art as 'editing,' a claim also made by many documentary filmmakers.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3 The Self-reflexive Self-Interview

In the context of renegotiating the fiction film auteur, Timothy Corrigan has written that the interview would be 'one of the few documentable extra-textual spaces where the auteur, in addressing cults of fans and critical viewers, can engage and disperse his or her own organising agency as auteur.'<sup>30</sup> With autobiography, it is debatable whether this space is extra-textual. Emin often stages interviews with herself as another (*How It Feels, The Interview*) and challenges this kind of 'authentic' extra-textuality. Emin has followed her staged interviews with herself in her art works with staged interviews with herself in her newspaper column. This is an excerpt of a self-reflexive interview with herself which she has either invented or documented in her *Independent* column in 2005:

Emin: 'No, what I'm saying is that, at times, some things should be kept private, unspoken, to keep them special.'

Interviewer: 'This is a big departure for you. Do you feel that, in the past, maybe you've given too much of yourself away?'

Emin: 'YES. And now I want some back.'

Interviewer: 'Don't you think it's too late? Pandora's box is well and truly open.'<sup>31</sup>

In the video *The Interview* (1998), Emin acted as her own critic. Her accusative super-alter-ego anticipated: 'Oh yeah, really funny, put yourself down. You say the worst things about yourself and it doesn't leave room for anyone else.' This was then imitated by Adrian Searle, the art critic for *The Guardian*, who wrote: 'This tortured nonsense can't go on. It isn't my job to criticise you as a person, but to comment on the art you make. But you leave no space for that. There's nothing to see in your work but you.'<sup>32</sup> He must have seen himself in her work, however, as he chose to imitate Emin's alter-ego-critic, quoting critical diatribes that Emin used in *The Interview*. Moreover, his writing, like that of John Walker, he manifests a personal reaction. Searle argues that

because her art is so personal, it is difficult for him to criticise it without criticising her. This fine line is of course what Emin's work makes apparent. It is in contrast to the conventional view expressed by Walker that 'secondary material with its intricacies, exaggerations and simplifications would either distract attention away from the works or inflect the public's interpretation of them.'<sup>33</sup> In her early documentary *How it feels* (1996) Emin talks about her aborted abortion, so to speak. In the interview documentary usually the interviewee is in possession of some knowledge and therefore questioned, but s/he is not in the invisible position of mastery the filmmaker or interviewer is in. In *How it feels* Emin has re-cast these roles so that she is the director *and* the interviewee, which makes it appear like a biographical intervention. In what is neither a video diary nor a normal interview, she answers her interviewer with a story of disempowerment in the termination of her pregnancy that went wrong. Narrated with ambivalence and a traumatic climax, this unclosed story of another life had a terminating effect on her production of art as distinct from life. From this point on her art was to be about her life.<sup>34</sup> Since she has become known for her autobiographical art however, this apparent transparency of her life in her art then in turn has effected her personal life:

Whenever I meet someone they say: "Oh, are you not Tracey Emin?" And then they know all about me. There's no mystery. They know how I look like naked, they know who my ex-boyfriends were. [...] I made my bed and I lie in it, I think that's what they call it.<sup>35</sup>

### **3.4 Birth Outside the Womb**

In telling about her abortions, writing about her vomiting, and exhibiting her bed complete with blood stained underwear, used tampons, contraceptive devices, and other insignia of non-procreation, Emin takes subjects, objects and feelings outside, that are supposed to be inside, physically and psychologically. Emin's moment of entering the consciousness of the British nation due to her drunken exit on television, also marked a change of direction in the circle of eternal return. Her televisual 'birth' took place when she left the 'womb' of television to visit her mother in the real world. (Emin declared: "I wanna be with my mum" and left the art prize discussion.)<sup>36</sup> In an inverted version of the narcissistic attempt to recover the lost object, her place of public birth is outside in the real and Emin has outwombed the box. In the video installation *A Conversation with my Mum* (2001) the concept of birth is again turned on its head, but in a very different way than that suggested by Michel Foucault, for whom birth only took place in language and death takes place outside of the text. Post-structuralist thought perceived the origin as

negative and glamourised death which – unlike birth – is not dependent on sex, in the two sense of the word. The idea of the author giving ‘birth’ to a text was rejected. The divide between an inside/outside opposition as opposed to total dissolution was in the same traditional place. Emin's work on unmaterialised birth subverts the post-structuralist equation of birth with death and allows us to conceptualise conception in a non-essentialist way. Emin's work marks a female thematics in which self-representation is distinct from reduplication, and thus where birth literally can result in death and that encourages a question like: ‘What if I ever get to a point in my life where I get tired of the narcissism?’ – a question which allows the answer of the mother to be: ‘I just don't want you to have children, ever.’ The interview Emin conducted with her mother who nearly aborted her and who insisted that Emin terminate her own pregnancy and was put on the pill, *A Conversation with my Mum*, also touches upon the impossible experience of not being conceived.

Like Foucault, who wrote an imaginary dialogue with his critic in *The Archeology of Knowledge*,<sup>37</sup> Emin too interviews herself in her column and in her video *The Interview* (1999). She also acted as her own double in the video sculpture *The Bailiff* (2001). Here, the viewer has to enter a wooden cabinet to witness a violent Tracey in a leatherjacket trying to break down the studio door of a frightened Tracey. In her work she progressively has been following up the figure of the double. Apparently she acts as her double at a stage in her life where a decision not to become self-perpetuating through reproduction will be sealed in finitude. Until now, she has reproduced herself only through images of herself. Emin's work allows us to theorise an uncontained self which is distinct from complete dissolution and that could potentially double itself, but without this actually being materialised due to a mixture of choice, undecidedness, misfortunes and her mother's determination. If Emin had actually had a child and have claimed that she sees creation in a totally different light - this might just have been a case of furnishing with a final signified, not by giving a text an author, but giving the author a baby.

‘Every part of me is bleeding’ says a neon sign by Emin. The artist bleeds for real *and* in pink neon instead of giving birth. Emin's art about herself is made of many parts, but she frequently stated that as a child she wanted no physical part of her to survive her death.<sup>38</sup> This was before she began creating art that revolves around the recuperation of her past and personal reminiscences. But then, while she is living she displays a lot of what and

whom she has left behind, even if she herself has been left. Her work is about dealing with the transgression of not procreating: 'People have children so their legacies can continue. It's cool being a recognised artist. You don't have the pressure to procreate.'<sup>39</sup> One might argue that one's re-creation of one's life in work is the best realisation of omnipotence that is, as an illusion, a feature of primary narcissism.

### **3.5 Autobiographical Art beyond Post-Structuralism**

I would like to contend that Emin's work, set against its reception, lays out a path beyond post-structuralism. In order to do this I want to place her work in a negative dialectic with that of Barthes and Foucault, and through this to provide an instructive point of comparison from the conversation between the two. Roland Barthes developed the modern autobiographer as a figure of fiction and suggested the blurring of the relation between the writer and his characters, as he argues Proust did. 'By radical reversal, instead of putting his life into his novel, as so often maintained, he [Proust] made of his very life a work for which his own book was the model.'<sup>40</sup> The life of the writer of a 'Text' would no longer be 'the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work.'<sup>41</sup> As we know, Barthes regarded personalization and anecdotes as oppressive and imbued with the terror of signification and wrote against a tradition of fiction being closed by autobiography. But in contradistinction to Barthes' notion of the fictionalised autobiography, Emin's autobiographical work closes on the biographical to keep the autobiographical in her work open. To regard her works as simply fiction is limiting and occludes the creative mutability of autobiography. The classification of documentary or autobiography as fiction overwrites the ambiguities and constructions that make up a life – or art using life as a material. The main question here, I suggest, is how does the self-reflexivity of a text negotiate the self-reflexivity of its author? In the legacy of post-structuralism, reflexivity was deemed less worthy in autobiography than in biography and textual reflexivity was regarded as superior. Emin's work challenges these suppositions.

Only textual reflexivity seems to deserve a surname, autobiographical self-reflexivity apparently does not. Whilst Emin was referred to as 'Tracey' in the captions on the wall of the *Saatchi Gallery*, her fellow artist friend Sarah Lucas is referred to with her surname in the same exhibition. 'Tracey' has also attracted less in the way of theoretical writings (in contrast to tabloid inches) than Gillian Wearing. A reason for this might be that Wearing's documentary works, for example, *10 - 16* or *2 into 1*, are in line with

post-structuralist thought. In these works, the visible speakers are miming karaoke-like to someone else's pre-recorded utterances. In *10 - 16* older people seem to speak with children's voices, in *2 into 1* a mother and her sons have been interchanged. The videos could be read as serving as an illustration of modernist enunciation: the speaker is being spoken by the text. But the difference between them could also be summed up as: 'Tracey' makes autobiographical art and Wearing makes biographical art. Evidentially, Emin's entrance into the public consciousness through being drunk on television was at the panel discussion when Wearing won the Turner price. In the series *Theresa and Chris, Theresa and Mick, Theresa and Seamus, Theresa and George, Theresa and Gerry, Theresa and Ali* and *Theresa and Ben* (1998), Wearing shows photographs of Theresa in moments of drunken dissolute behaviour, represented each time in bed with another man. These photos are paired with letters that Wearing asked each lover to write to Theresa. The similarities to Emin's autobiographical work are not to be overlooked. Theresa could have been 'Tracey.' Emin made herself the subject of a similar enterprise in a work in which she asked her friends and (ex-) lovers to describe her for her catalogue accompanied by photos of her and them.<sup>42</sup> In that piece a friend describes her as a 'control freak' and writes, how much more likeable she is when she loses control. Symptomatically, Emin was propelled into immortality through her most public moment of lost control, the drunken exit out of the Turner price discussion on television.<sup>43</sup> Paradoxically, the autobiographer's name became famous at the moment the autobiographer was most lost. With Emin, we do not have a director illuminating his or her enigmatic art film. If "the standard directorial interview [...] is the writing of a film through the promotion of a certain intentional self,"<sup>44</sup> Emin's agency as portrayed by herself in her work was made up of the loss of self. She did not even know that she was on television. At the same time, she also does not perform her private life or her relationships - at least not publicly as part of her work in the way John Lennon and Yoko Ono did for their *Bed In*, which is often evoked in regard to her *My Bed*<sup>45</sup>. Their performance took place in the present and in the context of pop culture and it exploited the celebrity status of the protagonists. In contradistinction, Emin revisits and relates. We follow her experiences after a time delay and mediated in her art. The events she evokes are in the past. Her work is from memory and about loss, but as artistic pieces, they are controlled.

### **3.6 Containing Fictions**

The attempt to contain the autobiographical content of Emin's work by categorising it as

fiction is exemplified in *The Independent on Sunday* cover story titled: 'A portrait of the artist as a young writer: Tracey Emin's tortured fictions' in which the autobiographical artist is overwritten by the writer of fiction.<sup>46</sup> In this equation (set up by writers, not by the art curators that initially contrasted non-fiction and documentary to art), non-fiction is on the side of art while writing is on the side of fiction. Unlike her other prose poems, which have obviously fictional elements like a talking dog, there is no apparent reason why the scenes she depicts in *Exploration of the Soul* should not have happened. Another manifestation of wish fulfilment on the part of the press could be found in the pre-emptive headline of *The Times*: 'Tracey Emin to drop art and bed down as a writer.' Here the implied writer in dropping art will presumably produce novelist fiction, not autobiography.<sup>47</sup>

That the object referred to is also the author is less easily detectable in drawing than in writing. Because a visual self-portrait has no possessive pronouns and Emin's drawings of herself in childhood do not foreground their means or agency, they were regarded as paedophilic in America. Does it follow from this that the visualised is more easily prone to be regarded as morally bad, so much so that to adapt literary work for video it requires a double portion of moral goodness to counter this? In her own work, the step from prose fiction to visualisation seems to demand just such an extra portion of rectitude. In Emin's video *Love is a Strange Thing* (2000) a virtuous first person persona emerges in contrast with the disreputable protagonist in the prose that provides the narration. Here Emin's complex multi-subjective prose poem "Fantasy island: Tracey Emin - New York May 2nd 1998" is reduced for the video by her selection of a small part of the poem and, like in other adaptations of her prose, the simple optical point of view does not match the adventurous subject positions of the literature.<sup>48</sup> The poem *Fantasy Island* involves a dog chatting up a character called Tracey and suggests that they have had a sexual encounter, at which point the narration shifts from first person singular to third person. By the end, the narration is subject to a series of shifting and ultimately untenable subject positions. In the video version *Love is a Strange Thing* the complexity of subject positions is simplified and the bestial scenario absent. Tracey played by Emin rejects the dog's proposition and departs in a long shot. In the video she stays - or through the video she becomes? - a good girl in that she mysteriously exits and thus avoids visualisation. As shown in this example, Emin's work is not simply non-fictional. She not only talks about her experiences in synchronous videos, but also has fictional parts in her prose poems and narrates these in voice-over on video. By ascribing her work to one or the other

genre we eliminate the ambiguity and the discursive interplay between fact and fiction inherent in it. Ann Jefferson described the same common mistake in the reading of Barthes' autobiographical texts: 'If we over-privilege the status of the novelistic in Roland Barthes and read it only as fiction, we risk repressing the full ambivalence in Barthes' writing.'<sup>49</sup> Neither is the author in the text *all* 'bad girl,' nor does it *all* have to be fiction.

The misconception of documentary as unmediated reality as it existed in the art world contrasted with documentary theory, in which the referential had been opposed to the performative. The question here is whether the performativity of the text cancels out the performance of the actor. Stella Bruzzi states that in the last decade a shift had occurred 'towards more self-consciously "arty" and expressive modes of documentary filmmaking.'<sup>50</sup> This has been the case, with documentary film. Perhaps the opposite occurred with artists' documentaries which in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seem to seek external authorisation through authenticity. Whereas in the late 1990s, documentary realism was used to keep art and documentary separated, a few years later, the same notion was employed for documentaries made within the art context. While in the late Nineties, the perhaps too 'hardcore' content of her autobiographical art was related to as fiction, a few years later Emin's practice supposedly 'fits in with a wider vogue for degradation and "hard core" realism within contemporary art'<sup>51</sup> as Mark Durden finds in 2002. Emin is an artist, but does not make 'arty' films in the sense referred to by Bruzzi. However she is expressive to the degree that for her, as Suzie Orbach rightly observes, only expressive, dramatic emotions count, not the less visible ones. Nevertheless, her documentaries are not overtly performative since as such they would directly demonstrate 'the inherent performativity of the non-fiction film.'<sup>52</sup> Emin's deployment of the camera for instance, (often done by someone else filming her), is not performative, and there is little cinematographic awareness or a self-conscious style.

### **3.7 Promiscuous Narrations**

The video adaptations of her poetry, narrated by Emin off screen, often lack the decisiveness of the initial written material, while also lacking the focus of her synchronous utterances in her video works. Optical point of view often does not match the elaborate subject and object positions of her prose and the aesthetic focus of her drawings. This transformation from autobiography to autobiovideo becomes particularly

noticeable when she adapts her prose poem 'Looking for him (The sweet smell of desire)'<sup>53</sup> with Super 8 images into the video *Burning up* (1997). In this work we hear her voice yearning 'I'm looking for him. Every street I turn - every journey I take [...] I look for him. I search the whole world just to kiss him,' whilst, among impressions of Istanbul, we see images of her on a tourist boat. Here, this filmed image of the searcher instead of the search takes away the power of the images the text evokes in the reader's mind. Like in *Finding Gold* (1996) discussed below, 'her' image returns to look at her. Even though she speaks of her looking, we see her rather than what she sees. The impressionistic biographical images take away the power of her expressionistic prose. To see an image of one's face, or of oneself as a whole in a long shot always requires a point of mediation, through objects like a mirror or a camera and a monitor. It also implies a third person and the biographical. This gesture of handing over to biography becomes the more weighty the more people the subject has shared her self with and connotes the point where the 'auto' could be overwritten by the 'bio.' Emin also often presents images that show her from behind or walking away. Here the divergence between what she can see of herself and how she is seen is most apparent. Moreover, to show oneself as seen by others is also different from writing about oneself in the third person. Unlike the intermixing of personal pronouns Barthes employed to question essentialist notions of the self,<sup>54</sup> for trauma victims speaking of themselves in the third person singular signifies the need to distance themselves from their lack of agency in their past and from the horrors that they were made to take part in. Survivors often refer to themselves in the third person when relating to a traumatic event in order to distance themselves from the situation that has led to the trauma, transforming themselves from protagonist to witness. Emin in contradistinction refers to her traumatic experiences in the first person, but shows images of herself only a third person could see.

In her voice-over of her video *Finding Gold* (1996) she appears to have reacted to the Super 8 images at the moment she saw them: 'There's me! Oh, Carl must have filmed it. Look! Actually I look quite happy, even though at the time I was very very sad.' We see her in a beach hut in Whitstable, that later became her exhibit *The last thing I said to you is don't leave me here* (1999), waving into the camera to Carl, her boyfriend at the time. Through the astonishment the artist reveals towards the images that constitute the piece, the scene marks the difference between appearance and essence, between how she looks and how she feels, between a biographical image and an autobiographical voice-over. The video also marks the end of their relationship. Later, in the same narration she says

that if she has loved someone once, (if she has ‘found gold,’ which gives the video its title), she loves them ‘forever.’ If all these people in a way remain a part of her, then one of these parts has taken the images of this film. On the blanket *Love poem* (1996) the appliquéés read:

‘YOU PUT YOUR HANDS  
ACROSS MY MOUTH STILL  
THE NOISE CONTINUES  
EVERY PART OF MY BODY IS  
SCREAMING IM LOST  
ABOUT TO BE SMASHED  
INTO A THOUSAND MILLION  
PIECES EACH PART FOR  
EVER BELONGING TO YOU’

What constitutes a part (and a partner) is their ability to part. The parting from her parts is brought about by closure towards infinity.

In *English Rose* (1997) the artists Tracey Emin, Gillian Wearing and Georgina Starr mutually impersonate each other.<sup>55</sup> The director Carl Freedman plays Emin’s boyfriend, a part he in actuality had played earlier and who, in that role, took some of the aforementioned images of Emin in her *Finding Gold*. In *English Rose*, the viewer has to search for the essence of a person in-between one person performing another. They are never shown as themselves. Of course, the person who is portrayed through her typical traits does not display these traits in impersonating another personality. Like in Jean Rouch’s *Moi Un Noir* (1958) the performers comment on the ‘originals’ through their acting. The actor is written by his version of the impersonated, and the viewer searches for the depth of the person and oscillates in her or his interpretation between these two poles. The signifieds are suspended between impersonator and impersonated, and the referent becomes more important, thus not baring the device of the text, but baring the instabilities of the referent. Unlike in *English Rose*, where the person referred to is absent in person in front of the camera and which says more about the portrayed than about the actor, Emin’s earlier work on her past promiscuity is built on her presence and the absence of her partners and is assembled through the linkages of many partners and parts. Still, like in that video, promiscuous narrations present a play on the level of the referent rather than the signifier. These narrations subvert the idea of the autobiography

of the autonomous self, because they mark the point of meeting. Emin's pieces necessarily work in their connection with each other. The representation of many past connections at the same time makes them seem more promiscuous through their compression in the present or their focus on one object.

What happens if an abject female experience of rape and violation of boundaries is brought to you by a medium that Jean Baudrillard claims to have 'the unclean promiscuity of everything which touches, invests and penetrates without resistance'<sup>56</sup>? Do the unrestricted boundaries of her video art in television in *Close up: Mad Tracey from Margate* (BBC2, 1999)<sup>57</sup> double the past 'sharing' in her life and repeat the vulnerability of not only literally letting other people into her body, but also in her body of art? Or is the promiscuity of the medium in fact 'baring the device' of the past promiscuity of the referent? Within the confines of her work, we can read the same story as a letter or hear it being spoken by her in sync, or as voice-over in her video before we hear it in the biographical register in a documentary about her or read the story reported from a third person in the press. In another phase of the metamorphoses her autobiographical work undergoes, it is further adapted into other media by other authors. For example, her rendition of *Looking for Him (The Sweet Smell of Desire)*<sup>58</sup> is made into a sound collage that is accompanied by a mixture of the fleeting Super 8 images she used for her own video and short annotations to her writings in neon on a gallery wall. This sound and image collage, which metonymically fetishizes her work (the parts stand for a whole) is then a part of the BBC documentary *Close up: Mad Tracey from Margate*,<sup>59</sup> in which she narrates over her self-portraits and over images of herself, as in her own work. The documentary is also patched up with excerpts of her art works where only the beginnings are marked with a caption so that it is difficult to define the borders of her work in relation to that of the BBC producer. Similarly, her interview with her father might as easily been presented as a video exhibit by her. Is this then a biography by the BBC or her autobiography? And what relationship does this have to her art? This diffusion of boundaries has affected art reviewers as well:

We relate to the trials and tribulations of the subjects in Emin's drawings as we do to our family and friends or the characters in a TV soap or the contestants in the *Big Brother* house.<sup>60</sup>

Given that this assessment was made in the art journal *Modern Painting*, one needs to ask where does this reviewer situate art and its reception? It seems that in a critical u-turn, the same argument that other writers used to discount her autobiographical work as

art (Emin is too ordinary and her work is merely autobiographical) is used here to evaluate and elevate it. This critic *only* relates to her work because it is autobiographical. The extra-textual accessibility of Emin and her work on television stand in contrast with the inaccessibility of Emin's videos for academic presentations. Videos by artists that in the past have had a difficult status due to their reproducibility, have in recent years been sold as limited editions for high prices in the art circuit. For an academic it has become virtually impossible to obtain clips of her videos from her gallery since she has become famous with the argument that her videos are a work of art that should not be presented out of context. Leaving monetary issues aside, to present parts of her work at a conference is deemed out of context, but not to do so on television.

### **3.8 Infinite Biographical Semiosis**

In the beginning, much of the criticism directed at her autobiographical works seemed to be driven by a fear of the exhaustion of narrative: when will she run out of stories to tell?<sup>61</sup> The reproach that her stories could dry up not only has sexual and reproductive connotations. It is also as if, when one recounts facts about somebody else's life biographically, the object's otherness comes together with an impression of infinity and mystery: there still must be something which we do not know and probably never will do. It is as if 'we' all want to be a part of 'our Trace' and our narcissistic fear is, that she will 'disappear' as her facts are used up. An infinity of narrative here is reassuring, for in autobiography a conclusion can be perceived as threatening and even connoting death. Emin's stories are potentially infinite, but they are not multiplied and relativised in infinite representation, in a Foucaultian 'mirror to infinity.'<sup>62</sup>

Before the imminence of death, language rushes forth, but it also starts again, tells of itself, discovers the story of the story and the possibility that this interpretation might never end.<sup>63</sup>

Even though the theme of death and finitude as opposed to that of birth has become more prevalent in her work,<sup>64</sup> her language does not tell of itself, does not discover 'the story of the story and the possibility that this interpretation might never end.'<sup>65</sup> Her writing is not about giving 'birth to its own image in a play of mirrors that has no limits,'<sup>66</sup> which is what the male post-structuralist theorists suggested. Instead, she holds the mirror towards biographical discourse that has become a reflecting shield behind which the subject can continue with her autobiography.

For Deleuze the sameness in infinite semiosis presupposes and results in an infinite identity: 'in the last resort infinite representation does not free itself from the principle

of identity as a presupposition of representation.’<sup>67</sup>

Infinite representation invokes a foundation. While this foundation is not the identical itself, it is nevertheless a way of taking the principle of identity particularly seriously, giving it an infinite value.<sup>68</sup>

Emin’s autobiographical art holds the mirror in front of her ‘biographers’ producing an infinite representation of ‘identity.’ Her art in the context of its reception manifests ‘identity’ as a form.

Emin's autobiographical work undermines the notion of the discourse on sex as a means of control over reproduction that Foucault criticized through the very device that he deemed constitutive of regulating discourse: through telling. ‘I am talking’ Foucault wrote, ‘of the nearly infinite task of telling - telling oneself and another, as often as possible, everything that might concern the interplay of innumerable pleasures, sensations and thoughts, which through the body and the soul had some affinity with sex.’<sup>69</sup> The infinite deferral of meaning that Barthes privileges in his textual poetics had a negative aspect for Foucault. He saw this act of telling only as having a regulatory function. Infinity was to be guarded by the Christian imperative and everything was to be examined according to its potential of being sinful. ‘Not only will you confess to acts contravening the law, but you will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse.’<sup>70</sup> The infinity of telling thus prevents the infinite play of desire. For Foucault telling as confession was the regulatory subordination of sex by a repressive discourse.

A term that crops up again and again in reviews of Emin’s work is ‘honesty.’ Emin has been described as ‘memorably honest,’ ‘dramatically honest,’ ‘brutally honest,’ ‘unsettlingly honest’ etc.<sup>71</sup> Her factual transparency has more or less nailed the facts of her life into all sites of discourse. Emin’s autobiographical expressionism has become here a biographical minimalism painted with thick facts; honesty has frozen emotions into facts and made events opaque through transparency. Unlike Foucault's use of opacity as a stylistic means of resistance against transparency (which he saw as the premise for the controlling tendency of discourse), it seems to have liberated the subject from the markers of its subjectivity while leaving these with the discourse.<sup>72</sup> In making an unfoucauldian distinction between the discourse *of* and *on* a text, one could say that through this honesty, a wall of facts has been erected that is constantly re-built by the media's biographical construction. Thus, Emin has managed to make the discourse on

her impenetrable whilst keeping the style of her work on herself open. Symptomatically her account of working-through her trauma is by watching herself telling about it. She recounts an exorcism of identity through her reaction to watching herself telling the story of the importance of creating life over art in her gallery:

By me watching the film twelve times and watching the people watch it, was my cathartic reaction to the abortion. I was well and truly over it by that time.

The person, when I watched it on the screen [...] wasn't me. [...] That person no longer existed any more.<sup>73</sup>

Emin is in a unique position as an autobiographical artist who also generates 'celebrity discourse;' her self-reflexive work fosters a detachment of the biographical from her, even though both use the same facts. The biographical discourse on Emin is like Orlan's face becoming detached from her head and becoming 'pure exteriority:'<sup>74</sup> it has become like a mask. And this is neither a death-mask signifying a dead original, nor the death of the mask, the material, the text; as has been described in regard to film authorship by Corrigan: 'In today's commerce we want to know what our authors and *auteurs* look like or how they act; it is the text that may now be dead.'<sup>75</sup> In her work one could argue there is a 'de-identifying' notion of telling, a detaching of subjectivity from its purported markers.

In the reception of Emin's work, telling is often confused with confessing. Emin is honest, but she does not confess. She is not, or does not deem herself, guilty. In contrast the confessional is directed to a higher authority which is perceived to have the power to absolve the confessor from guilt.<sup>76</sup> In the confessional, one has to overcome the hurdle of admitting to a moral transgression, even if that authority is just the confessant's own judgmental instance. This does not apply to Emin. Even though her topics are sexual (the realm in which Foucault places confessions),<sup>77</sup> there is no ritual, no punishment and no disciplinary authority - or at least, none other than her own. Emin does not squirm or regret or seek judgement. As her utterances are about her emotions, and about the encounters in her life, Emin occupies the authoritative position in the text. Because feelings cannot be valorised, there can be no account more truthful than hers. Her word is the word of God in this self-referential context, and makes her very much in control. A therapist might challenge her account of her emotions, but no biographer would say that she did not really feel this at that time. She might be publicly criticised for being an artist too closely entangled in a personal approach to her work, and even for her emotions, but their existence cannot be discounted.

‘To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.’ Barthes once declared.<sup>78</sup> This does not happen to Emin's work, but rather to her life as biographically constructed in the media, even though she displaces the circle of a repetition of the Same by creating art about life instead of creating life. Through the excessive distribution of the facts of her life, her life outside of her work has been foreclosed to the reader thus demarcating the limits of discourse. Symptomatically, in her autobiographical texts about herself as a journalist, she is much less revealing than in her art about herself.<sup>79</sup> Whilst in self-referential utterances in her work the signifier is open, in secondary utterances about Emin's life that are not part of her work, the signifier is closed. It is precisely once this story of closure had been established and her life has been furnished with a final signified, that a fear of exhaustion of stories arises. Another fear of her ‘biographers’ is that with her pain her art might cease to be - the pain of the artist still being regarded by some reviewers (here, *The Guardian's* Tim Adams) as what turns life into art and perpetuating a populist, ‘romantic’ image of the struggling artist:

I wonder [...] whether, in the light of her apparently content relationship ... and her new-found wealth, she ever feels like she is losing the edge of her pain, which she has made the basis of her art.<sup>80</sup>

This fear of exhaustion in autobiography includes the even more irrational dread of Emin running out of a body, so to speak. In criticising the cannibalistic mentality of art consumers, who expect artists to exploit their own bodies, the argument falls back on an essentialist idea of substance: “What of the artist who plunders her own body? Who steals their substance for some sort of exchange?” asked, for instance, Tessa Adams.<sup>81</sup> Just because like Orlan, her subject matter is her own body, Emin is, in this case misguidedly, compared to the former. Orlan's operations on her face have real physical limitations. While the boundaries of Orlan's art are also the boundaries of her physique and she literally takes her face as text that is publicly ‘edited,’ Emin only portrays or talks about her body in her art and does so in retrospect, not in the present of a performance.<sup>82</sup>

### **3.9 The Reproach of Repetition**

As Emin's experiences are not originated in identity, but in a loss of self, in a loss of meaning – her unstable or lost self seems to have fed the continuity of our ego until we found that the loss of hers has continuity. Like her lost moment of presence on

television, the tortured nature of the way she speaks in her work has come to be seen as a lost cause that constantly reduplicates itself. The initial fear of finitude of autobiographical material has been superseded by a fear of the repetition of the Same that has been put to her (work) in the reproach of solipsism, boredom and repetition. Jonathan Jones writes in the same newspaper as the art critic he refers to:

The scandal of *My Bed* is not the knickers or the stains but the fact that never before has a Turner artwork been so violently disliked by critics sympathetic to contemporary art. Those who have turned against Emin are champions of young artists, and most vociferously the *Guardian's* art critic, Adrian Searle, who addressed Emin personally: 'Once I was touched by your stories. Now you're only a bore.' [83] Off the record, art world insiders agree with him. They describe her bed as 'boring' [...] Few people deny that Emin has talent; [...] The row is over whether her work is repetitive.'<sup>84</sup>

Repetition as the dominant structural element and the prevalent presentational form of most video art displayed in galleries, that is in a loop, has not been criticised in a similar vein. Whereas monotony and a manifestation of emptiness has been a valued trait in other - usually more distanced - art works, it has been criticized with Emin:

Like Warhol, Emin knows how to smile and say as little as possible, hoping - like him - that silence will be taken for depth, for reflection, for wit, for sensibility, rather than for what it actually is: emptiness.<sup>85</sup>

And Matthew Collings too reproaches Emin's prose for its monotony and 'one-note narcissism.'<sup>86</sup> Fellow artists employing time-based media, but not in an autobiographical mode, like Bruce Nauman, Douglas Gordon, Stan Douglas or the documentary video artist Gillian Wearing, have not been approached with complaints about repetition. In regard to the press, repetitions of the same life are usually required to allow the many representations of the same story in multiple media. An interviewee becomes an automaton through the many times she or he has to repeat the same story to another medium, each of which wanting to appear singular and wanting to have their 'own' and 'original' quotes. 'Original' here has become a term whose one meaning, of authenticity, works against its second meaning, of exceptionality. The subject has to be not only the author, but also the messenger of its statements and thus can only give 'original' quote by being very unoriginal, by mechanically repeating the same for the umpteenth time. The media itself makes its subjects repetitive. By working through her life in her work and by repeating statements from her work on her life again for the press, Emin draws attention to the repetitions inherent in representing and presenting life

for the media in their self-defeating quest for authenticity. The viewers and readers have the option to make comparison between her life in her art and her life in the press. But also the media, as a supposed unmediated window to the real, are punished, when their repetition becomes solipsistic. Channel 4 was fined by the Independent Television Association because it repeated Emin's moment of transgressive behaviour too often.<sup>87</sup> Her drunken rejection of the Turner prize discussion round became one of the most repeated moments in British television history culminating in its self-referentiality with a spot on *100 greatest TV Moments*.<sup>88</sup>

If this art is about a life, then surely it should not only focus on, but also work through repetition, in both directions this phrasing suggests. But of course interpretation, which has been regarded by Freud as the element that transforms the unconscious repetitions of acting-out to the consciously understood working-through, is closed off in Emin's process of making opaque through transparency on the level of discourse. However, insofar as it refuses any dialogical relation it should also thus foreclose the inappropriate perceptions by the reader-as-therapist of the artist, and any confusion of art with illness. This obviously has not happened.<sup>89</sup> Autobiography invites calls for therapists. Because a person takes his or herself as a subject, it is perceived that they also should work on themselves. Of course just because a person does not work on themselves but biographically, does not mean that this person is mentally healthier. Emin's response to this call for therapy has been to declare that when she feels she needs it, she would give another interview.<sup>90</sup>

In the case of Emin an opposition had been laid out between autobiographical documentary and concept art. Repetition in her work was not valued as formal because her work is about her life. Artistic form is neatly separated from living content. Then the content is criticised for being repetitive. Aesthetic *jouissance* - these terms seem to be antithetical, but they sum up the post-structuralist's courtly love of transgression just to contain it in adversarial distance. A corollary of this is the art-critic's opposition of 'pure dirty art' versus 'unclean dirty life.' Emin's 'unclean' autobiographical work elicits the contradictions of such positioning. In the context of art, autobiographic documentary stands for unconstructedness. A case in point would be an early review of Emin's first exhibition entitled *My Major Retrospective* (1994), about which a reviewer assesses that her assemblage of letters, diaries, photos, appliqués and objects in *Uncle Colin 1963-*

1993 (1993) must be fiction.<sup>91</sup> The logic of his suspicious argument is that because ‘her life was eventful,’<sup>92</sup> it must have been fictitious and because her letters are well thought through, but include so many spelling mistakes, she must have ‘faked authenticity.’<sup>93</sup> Her view on life would be inconceivably uncomplicated,<sup>94</sup> meaning she is too smart to be authentic, but then again also not complicated enough; Emin would know ‘perfectly well that she does not have anything to show as an artist,’ that she just has herself to show.<sup>95</sup> In this vein of thought, her form, so to speak, does not count as content. A further comment, that her exhibits would only document her education, but would not themselves be art, indicate again the unwillingness of this art reviewer to consider the autobiographical as part of the art.

Similarly, fellow artists do not separate the image of an autobiographical artist in their art from their external image as a private person – the ‘private image’ here being that of a celebrity. Even though for example the Chatman brothers advocate a ‘political or wider cultural debate about how art works,’<sup>96</sup> they argue from a position that makes a clean separation between work and life. This is although their own art displays abject manifestations of fears and neuroses. In yet another programme on contemporary British art that apparently criticises art as dependent on celebrity while at the same time perpetuating it, the circle of repetition of the Same remains unacknowledged. Instead of a discussion of the works, celebrity artists criticise the perpetuation of celebrity, like for instance Jake Chapman:

The celebrity status has become more interesting than the work itself, so the work becomes a kind of trace element of the trajectory of famous people, rather than a question of thinking about what the work means. Most of the interest is in the person and not the work. But I think a lot of these artists believe that this is the correct way in which the work should be analysed; them first, then the work. They treat the works as though the work is a symptom of their ego.<sup>97</sup>

This way of thinking paradoxically commits the intentional fallacy whilst at the same time arguing that it is not the artist’s intentions but their persona that is considered. The work of the artist then is an unconscious exhibit – which then of course might be in need of therapy. Either way, the persona of the artist is deemed more important than their

work – a stance that an artist is likely to perpetuate, as Chatman argues, since it flatters their ego:

The artist has been so reified and fetishized that their work has now obtained the value of a work of art beyond any critical consciousness on the part of the artist to be able to explain why that is the case.<sup>98</sup>

Chapman's blaming of the artist for the uncritical reception of their work is shown to the inevitable images of Emin's bed and a truncated fragment of her speaking about her art - if only we could hear her.

### 3.10 Documentary and/as Concept and/as Art

This title is a play on Peter Osborne's essay 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy'<sup>99</sup> and Thomas Wartenberg's lecture at the *University of Kent*: 'Film and/as Philosophy.'<sup>100</sup> In their rejection of high modernism with its search for the specificity of the artwork and an emphasis on the purely visual, artists have had to recourse to using philosophy. Osborne traces this submission of art to philosophy in the form of concept. When conceptualism took hold in the art world,

philosophy was *the means* for this usurpation of critical power by a new generation of artists; the means by which they could simultaneously address the crisis of the ontology of the artwork (through an art-definitional conception of their practice) and achieve social control over the meaning of their work.<sup>101</sup>

More specifically, it involved an attempt directly to transfer the cultural authority of the latter [the philosophers] to the former [the artists], thereby both bypassing and trumping existing forms of art-critical discourse.<sup>102</sup>

By becoming conceptual, art 'challenges its definition as the object of a specifically "aesthetic" (that is, non-conceptual) or quintessentially "visual" experience.'<sup>103</sup> If we then look for a comparison with a similar development in documentary film, a prototypical documentary that placed emphasis on the visual with its alleged rejection of narration would have been *Direct Cinema*, thus making observational cinema an unlikely proponent of modernism in a Greenbergian understanding of the term (even though he only considered painting in this respect.)

Emin seems to be regarded as a conceptual artist, or not, whichever way it could serve as a

criticism. In contrast to the aforementioned Phillip Henscher (who found her too unintellectual to be conceptual),<sup>104</sup> famously Ian Massow had to resign as the chairman of the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, for writing in the *New Statesman* that much conceptual art was dominating the art market with 'pretentious, self-indulgent, craftless tat.' For Massow, Emin 'has become synonymous with conceptual art and conceptual art has become synonymous with contemporary art.'<sup>105</sup> Even though Emin's work is emotional and intimate, and conceptual art is supposed to be dispassionate and detached<sup>106</sup> - the way in which she controls the narration of her work as a repetition without difference of her autobiography - is reminiscent of 'the erosion of the division of labour between critic and artist'<sup>107</sup> through conceptual art 'as a means of maintaining control over the representation of their [the artists'] project within the art world.'<sup>108</sup> Now Emin has entered the extra-textual of art and has become a celebrity, she is able to control her 'biographical sphere.' Emin had the first publication of a critical anthology about her work pulped because she was not satisfied with the repetition of autobiographical 'facts' from her work that had also been circulated uncontested in previously published writings on her in the art press.<sup>109</sup> Ruth Ginsburg and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan suggest the following:

Both the relaxation of authoritative control and the freedom-granting recognition of others bring home the need for a new, contextually oriented conception of authors as Janus-like as doubly directed beings defying borders (for example, the border between the textual and the extra-textual) and challenging comfortable distinctions (for example, narrator versus author).<sup>110</sup>

The breakdown of the borders between the textual and the extra-textual in and around Emin's autobiographical work challenges the notion of, especially female, autobiography as fluid and 'romantic' - a term which in its popular usage is often used as an accusation against Emin. Emin uses autobiography as a form of extra-textual control, in contrast to the lack of control in the experiences she narrates in her art. For Emin, autobiography is the means for the usurpation not of critical power, but of content. In the film context on the other hand, the *auteur* had been become an outmoded model because it was deemed romantic and thus anti-intellectual<sup>111</sup>. Rather than the artist taking the place of the critic, the critic has taken the place of the filmmaker. Dana Polan for instance suggested 'that paradoxically the true auteurs are not the directors but the critics who study them since these auteurists work to impose their own vision of directorial meaning on the director's corpus.'<sup>112</sup>

Whereas for the conceptual artists philosophy acted as the mystified Other that provided legitimation for the abstraction of their work, for the philosopher Gilles Deleuze art offered ‘percepts, or new ways of seeing and hearing’, and ‘affects, or new ways of feeling’ which was needed to develop ‘concepts, or new ways of thinking’ – and vice versa.<sup>113</sup>

Now concepts don’t move only among other concepts (in philosophical understanding), they also move among things and within us: they bring us new percepts and new affects that amount to philosophy’s own nonphilosophical understanding. And philosophy requires nonphilosophical understanding just as much as it requires philosophical understanding.<sup>114</sup>

Philosophy is a discipline that is just as creative and inventive as any other discipline, and it entails creating or even inventing concepts. And concepts do not exist ready-made in the sky waiting for a philosopher to seize them. Concepts must be made.<sup>115</sup>

So the concept has to be created, even if the exhibited object is ready-made. The unassisted ready-made became the model for conceptual art. It was an object taken out of its commercial context and exhibited in the gallery without any changes to the object itself (like Marcel Duchamp’s urinal). What the artist created was not an object, but a concept, even if that was invisible and inaudible.<sup>116</sup> Deleuze would not have been interested in the *ready-made* because with it, art made thought abstract whereas he wanted thought to be inventive. He contested a hierarchy of philosophy or theory over works or art and was against a self-reflexive study as inherent to a discipline, be it philosophy about philosophy or film studies about film studies:

A theory of cinema is not “about” cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices, the practise of concepts in general having no privilege over others, any more than one object has over others.<sup>117</sup>

A work of art is ‘an object which cannot be represented by anything else.’<sup>118</sup> Similarly, the document must be the same as that which it represents and is not substitutable. It can still become a work of art through the way in which it is produced and through the context of exhibition. A documentary, in contrast to the document, is conventionally defined as being about something else and judged according to how well it represents it. In this sense the labelling of a work as documentary differs from its appreciation as art.

Andrew Bowie found that: 'Though art works will more and more become commodities, neither their use-value nor their value as commodities constitutes them as a work of art.'<sup>119</sup> Documentary on the other hand has often been defined in terms of its usefulness, in terms of how much we understand of the referent, even if its use is to be merely entertaining. Documentary can of course also become a work of art through the way in which it is produced, its aesthetic qualities and through the context of exhibition.

The *ready-made* in art has often been compared to found footage in film.<sup>120</sup> Found footage and the *ready-made* have in common that the source material has not been made for the context it is then placed in. The creator of the object had different intentions than the creator of the artwork or the film. However, whereas the art object has been 'found' as a whole object and has not been altered, the filmmaker who employs found footage has often edited the images and provided a soundtrack.<sup>121</sup> Thus, arguably, the filmic equivalent to the *ready-made* in art is not 'found footage,' but 'found film'. Here the filmmaker has found the whole film and presents it unaltered, such as Hollis Frampton, who supplemented the footage of an instructive gardening documentary he found with just a title and a logo for *Work and Days* (1969).

There are more differences between an object and film or video images as a *ready-made* apart from the fact that the latter are time-based. The documentary film or video images such as home movies are already another person's non-commercial, creative work, albeit that of an amateur, who does not even have filmmaker status – never mind that of an artist. (Perhaps the television reportage images De Antonio uses can be better compared to the urinal, since both have been made by professionals.) The *ready-made* art object also had not been subjected to the same rhetoric of loss as has the photographic and the filmed image. Whereas a copy, in Benjamin's terms, allegedly lost the aura of the original,<sup>122</sup> the *ready-made* only acquired added aura through its re-contextualisation.

In the recent context of exhibiting, documentary itself has often been treated like found footage. At the *Documenta XI* documentary films were exhibited which had not been made for an exhibition in an art gallery. This is similar to Duchamp choosing a ready-made urinal, only that the documentaries were shown without the introduction of a 'higher level creator,' like the artist is deemed in comparison to the designer of the urinal or the filmmaker appropriating found footage is seen in comparison to the amateur. Rather, it is the curators who have taken the position of the artist. In a hierarchy of

meaning and value, the curator towers over the filmmaker-artist who looms over the maker of home movies and the hired camera-person of commercial television.<sup>123</sup> Conversely, Austin's term 'performative', previously appropriated by Judith Butler for emancipatory ends to subvert sex in terms of gender, has become a term designating the power of those who are in the position to be performative. The emergence of the notion of 'performative curatorship'<sup>124</sup> for instance seems to have shifted performativity from a subversive one to that of the employer and the institution. The shift of authorial control towards the curators also means that this art is not possible without the institutions that fund them. If we were to situate the institution as the initiators of events onto the documentary context, it might compare to an airline company hiring a television editor to instigate and oversee the production of the Airline docu-soap on television. Performativity in this context thus is only possible through control, whereas previously the performative moments in documentaries, such as for example Nick Broomfield's *Fetishes*, manifested a loss of pre-planned control.

The 'found documentaries' had not been made to be exhibited in a continuous loop without starting times. The smart and subversive move of presenting a urinal in the gallery is distinct from screening a conventional, content-based documentary about the Pakistani-Indian border in a black box.<sup>125</sup> Whereas Duchamp's *ready-made* questioned the value of art and the institutional context of exhibition in conferring artistic status and aesthetic value, to exhibit a conventional documentary such as Amar Kanwar's *A Season Outside* (1997) in an art exhibition utilizes documentary to supply art with authenticity. Likewise, whereas Duchamp's *ready-made* raised questions, the 'found documentary' is there to provide answers. The 'found documentaries' exhibited were often conventional as films, but this was precisely what gave them a higher status within the art context – not unlike low image quality and violence count as features of realism. This value, however, could only be gained because art reception provides a context for thinking more conceptually about its objects of display, an option not open to the documentary filmmaker. In the documentary context, they would be merely non-inventive films. Conversely, the notion of the concept in art has re-introduced conservative ideas of documentary.

In the *Documenta XI* catalogue Boris Groys argues that documentation acquires a new aura through the gallery space. According to his interpretation (which obviously draws on the thought of Walter Benjamin), art has transformed documentation from copy to

original. When Groys uses Benjamin to argue for a ‘deterritorialization of the original’ into the art space,<sup>126</sup> he lists as a reason the difference between an art exhibition and a film screening, and thus implicitly reinstalls the superiority of art over the mass media: art makes original out of copy.

[...] for Benjamin the distinction between original and copy is exclusively a topological one – and as such it is entirely independent of the material nature of the work. The original has a particular site [...] The copy, by contrast, is virtual, siteless, ahistorical [...] The copy lacks genuineness, therefore, not because it differs from the original but because it has no location and consequently is not inscribed in history.<sup>127</sup>

Groys claims that ‘the difference between original and copy is merely a topological, contextual one.’<sup>128</sup>

Art documentation, which by definition consists of images and texts that are reproducible, acquires through the installation an aura of the original, the living, the historical. In the installation the documentation gains a site – the here and now of a historical siting.<sup>129</sup>

On the contrary, the *Documenta XI* did not actually exhibit much documentation of art, but instead presented either art as documentation (such as the *Park Fiction* project) or previously made documentary films. The archives and the documentaries at the *Documenta XI* mainly seemed to have value for the exhibition because of their reference to a location and a context outside the gallery space, and not because they instigated a process in the present of the exhibition. The mainly social processes, which depended on a topology elsewhere, were not made site-specific again for the exhibition and neither were they questioned. The subjectivity of the artist has been replaced by the apparent objectivity of non-artists groups, albeit often managed by the artist. Art at the *Documenta XI* betrayed a reality complex that manifested itself as a documentary complex. The referent has been granted a revival. And where that referent is situated impacts on its appreciation. It seems to be lauded, when it is outside of one’s own ‘frame of reference,’ for instance outside the art context itself, like Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Bataille Installation*, which was situated in a social housing project at the *Documenta XI*. If, however, the referent is oneself, as in the case of the reception of Tracey Emin’s work in Britain, it has been much less appreciated and rather more envied for the audacity of the proposition. While autobiographical documentary had been looked down on for its seeming lack of constructedness, as in Emin’s case, at the *Documenta XI* documentary was put on a pedestal for the same reason. In this respect, I would argue against Groys that

documentary as art at the *Documenta XI* has served to contain processes as past and elsewhere in the representational. The disinterestedness in the documentaries themselves - the way in which documentary has been exhibited in this art context and the rejection of the autonomy of the documentary work - is similar to conceptual art's dismissal of medium specificity. This is done, however, in a rather unphilosophical manner that re-introduces authenticity. The emphasis on the referent elsewhere also highlights the invisibility of the art object, even though of course we see the documentary film.

### 3.11 Conclusion

Séan Burke made the following statement in regard to authorship:

Beneath and behind the continuing theoretical refusals and reductions of authorial subjectivity lies a model of textual simplicity which seeks to keep 'life' at bay. For the best part of the twentieth century, criticism has been separated in two domains. On the one side, intrinsic and textualist readings are pursued with indifference to the author, on the other, biographical and source studies are undertaken as peripheral (sometimes populist, sometimes narrowly academic) exercises for those who are interested in narrative reconstructions of an author's life or the empirical genealogy of his work. The proximity of work and life, the principles of their separation and interaction are neglected by the representatives of 'work' and 'text' alike. Work and life are maintained in a strange and supposedly impermeable opposition, particularly by textualist critics who proceed as though life somehow pollutes work ... The grounding assumption of theoretical objections to 'life' is that through appealing to the biographical referent, we are importing phenomena from one realm into another wherein it is alien, improper, incongruous.<sup>130</sup>

Though Burke is writing here about authorship in a literary context, his views are also pertinent to the way documentary and especially autobiography are portrayed in the arts. In regard to fiction film authorship Catherine Grant has made a similar argument suggesting that the widespread perception that the author's position is always outside the text would be a 'rather too straightforward opposition between "simple" agency and "complex" textuality.'<sup>131</sup> Instead, she has argued for a broadening of the 'notion of what constitutes a 'primary text.'<sup>132</sup> Emin's art on her life forces us as 'readers' to confront what has become a well-moulded critical division between the textualist versus the empiricist into either work or life, 'Text' or biography. The picture that emerges of the

discourse on Emin is that after the denial of constructedness within documentary followed the classification of her work as fiction. In both of the latter accounts, autobiographical non-fiction is refused any notion of constructedness and artfulness. This is distinct from the post-structuralist strategy to liberate a text from an author and the consideration of all enunciation as fictional. The issue with Emin is neither to reject the possibility of regarding autobiographical works as fiction, nor to submit the self-reflexivity of the person to the self-reflexivity of the text. By categorizing her work as either documentary or art, either non-fiction or fiction, we eliminate the ambiguity and the discursive interplay between fact and fiction inherent in it. The argument I make here – for the appreciation of a referential ambiguity – introduces the one I will make in Chapter V with regards to Werner Herzog’s documentary and his use of irony.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘For years now, I have been living like a fucking nun. I set up so many rules and regulations. And I stick to them. There has to be some parameters, some kind of fence, otherwise I think I would be totally out of control.’ Tracey Emin, ‘My Life in a Column: The idea of one week in bed, having had, unconditional sex - what I would do for that?’ *The Independent*, 24.3.2006.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Collings, book review of Tracey Emin’s autobiographical book, *Strangeland*, in *Modern Painters*, November 2005, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Collings, *The Turner Prize*, Channel 4, 31.10.2003.

<sup>4</sup> ‘I personally don’t find the narcissistic side of Emin’s art compelling.’ Collings, book review, *Modern Painters*, p.120.

<sup>5</sup> Rosalind Krauss, ‘Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism,’ *October*, Spring 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 50-64.

<sup>6</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite. British Art in the 1990s*, London: Verso, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Emin becomes a member of the Royal Academy of Arts on 29.3.2007.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Lehmann, director of Emin’s gallery in New York, *Lehmann Maupin* in Marcus Field, ‘Emin for Real,’ *Modern Painters*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn 2002, p.113.

<sup>9</sup> Collings, book review, *Modern Painters*, p. 121.

<sup>10</sup> Field, ‘Emin for Real,’ p.114.

<sup>11</sup> Lynn Barber, ‘Just be Yourself and Wear a Low Top’ in *Parkett* 63, 2001, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Lee Bumpus, ‘The Personality Eclipses Art’, *The Art Newspaper*, No.118, October 2001, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> Emin interviewed by John Humphreys quoted in Bumpus, ‘Personality Eclipses Art,’ p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Hensher, ‘Bad News, Tracey,’ p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Have I Got News For You*, BBC 2, 20.4.2001.

<sup>16</sup> Hensher, ‘Bad News, Tracey,’ p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew Collings, ‘The case of Emin vs Hensher,’ *Art Review*, Vol. 1 No. 11, 2003, p. 134.

<sup>18</sup> John A. Walker, *Art and Celebrity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 250.

<sup>19</sup> Tracey Emin, in Robert Preece, ‘Artist over - and in -the broadsheets,’ *Parkett*, No. 63, 2001, pp. 50-61.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Jones, ‘Tracey finds her Voice,’ *The Guardian*, 26. 4. 2001, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> ‘... those terrible old mottos (*You forgot to kiss my soul*), all too reminiscent of the sort of things girls used to write on the back of their exercise books...’ Philip Hensher, ‘Bad News, Tracey - You need Brains to be a Conceptual Artist,’ *The Independent*, 27.4.2001, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Allison Pearson of the *Daily Mail* in *Newsnight Review*, BBC 2, 22.4.2001.

<sup>23</sup> This term is repeated by Robert Preece, only with the acknowledgement that she is an artist: ‘He also claims that Emin is not just an artist but a phenomenon.’ Bibliographical index abstract for Robert Preece, ‘Artist over - and in -the broadsheets,’ *Parkett*, No. 63, 2001, p. 50-61.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, ‘Tracey finds her voice,’ *Guardian*, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Marcus Field, ‘Emin for Real,’ *Modern Painters*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn 2002, p.114.

<sup>26</sup> Caption to Stan Douglas, *The Sandman*, London: The Serpentine Gallery, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Caption on the wall in the Gillian Wearing exhibition, London: Serpentine Gallery, 9.-10. 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Serpentine Gallery catalogue, ‘Gillian Wearing in conversation with Carl Freedman,’ *Gillian Wearing*, London: Serpentine Gallery, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Tracey Emin as a panelist in *Public Emotions*, London: ICA, 26.1.2001.

- <sup>30</sup> Timothy Corrigan, "The Commerce of Auteurism," *A Cinema without Walls: Movies and Culture after Vietnam*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 107-108.
- <sup>31</sup> Tracey Emin, 'My Life in a Column. Q: "Do you feel you've given too much of yourself away?" A: Yes. And now I want some back....' *The Independent*, 11.11.2005.
- <sup>32</sup> Adrian Searle, 'Tracey's Pants but McQueen's the Real Pyjamas,' *The Guardian*, 20.10.1999, p. 12.
- <sup>33</sup> Walker, *Celebrity and Art*, p.197.
- <sup>34</sup> Tracey Emin in *How it Feels*: 'I realised if I was going to make art it ... couldn't be another fuckin' picture, it couldn't be about something visual, it had to be about where it was really comin' from. And because of the abortion and because of conceiving I had a greater understanding of where things really came from and where they actually ended up. So ... I just thought it would be unforgivable for me to start making things, filling the world up with more crap. There was no reason for that, if I couldn't fill the world up with things which I could love foreverandeverandever, then there was no way that I could fill the world up with just like menial things - that's art.'
- <sup>35</sup> Tracey Emin on *Women's Hour*, BBC4, 28.5.2004.
- <sup>36</sup> *The Turner Prize*, Channel 4, 1997.
- <sup>37</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, London: Tavistock Publications, 1972, p. 203.
- <sup>38</sup> 'She never wanted to have children because she did not ever want to leave part of herself, blood and genes, behind, when she dies.' Tim Adams, 'Tracey Emin,' *The Guardian*, 10.10.1999, p.2. Emin also said this at *An evening with Tracey Emin*, London: *The British Museum*, 19.5.2001.
- <sup>39</sup> Tracey Emin, 'My Life in a Column: When I'm miles from home I sometimes have a clear view - and God, my life's a mess,' *The Independent*, 28.10.2005.
- <sup>40</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana Press, 1977, p. 144.
- <sup>41</sup> Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, p. 161.
- <sup>42</sup> Tracey Emin, 'I asked friends to write what they thought and felt about me in less than 200 words and be as honest as they liked,' *Tracey Emin*, catalogue supplement, London: Jay Jopling, 1998.
- <sup>43</sup> *The Turner Prize*, Channel 4, 1.12.1998.
- <sup>44</sup> Corrigan, *A Cinema without Walls*, p. 108.
- <sup>45</sup> See for instance David Hopkins, 'Women Behaving Badly,' *Art Monthly*, No.236, May 2000, p. 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Tracey Emin, 'Exploration of the Soul,' *Tracey Emin*, catalogue; republished in 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Writer. Tracey Emin's tortured fictions,' *The Independent's Sunday Review*, 19 September 1999, pp. 18-19.
- <sup>47</sup> Richard Brooks, 'Tracey Emin to drop Art and Bed Down as a Writer,' *The Sunday Times*, 3.12.2000, p. 12.
- <sup>48</sup> Tracey Emin, 'Fantasy island: Tracey Emin - New York May 2nd 1998,' *Tracey Emin*, catalogue, pp. 26-27.
- <sup>49</sup> Ann Jefferson, 'Autobiography as Intertext: Barthes, Sarraute, Robbe-Grillet,' in Michael Wharton and Judith Still (eds.), *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 114.
- <sup>50</sup> Stella Bruzzi, *The New Documentary*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 163.
- <sup>51</sup> Mark Durden, 'The Authority of Authenticity,' *Parachute*, No. 105, Jan-March 2002, p. 22.
- <sup>52</sup> Bruzzi, *New Documentary*, p. 164.
- <sup>53</sup> Tracey Emin, 'Looking for him (The sweet smell of desire)/Burning up,' *Tracey Emin*, catalogue, pp. 26-27.
- <sup>54</sup> Barthes wrote of himself in the third person in his 'autobiography.' Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975; this edition published in London: Macmillan Press, 1995.
- <sup>55</sup> Carl Freedman, *English Rose*, video (1997).
- <sup>56</sup> Jean Baudrillard, 'The Ecstasy of Communication,' in *Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster (ed.), London: Pluto Press, 1983, p. 132.
- <sup>57</sup> Waldemar Januszak, *Close Up: Mad Tracey from Margate*, (BBC2, 15.9.1999).
- <sup>58</sup> Emin, 'Looking for him (The sweet smell of desire)/Burning up,' *Tracey Emin*, catalogue, pp. 26-27.
- <sup>59</sup> Januszak, *Close up: Mad Tracey from Margate*.
- <sup>60</sup> Marcus Field, 'Emin for Real,' *Modern Painters*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn 2002, p.114.
- <sup>61</sup> 'Could Tracey Emin have anything left to say?,' *W*, April 2001, p. 320.
- <sup>62</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Language to Infinity,' in James E. Faubion (ed.) *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: essential works of Foucault 1954 - 1984*, Volume 2, London: Penguin 1998, p. 90; original published in *Tel quel* 15, 1965, pp. 44-53.
- <sup>63</sup> Foucault, 'Language to Infinity,' in *Aesthetics*, p. 90.
- <sup>64</sup> 'I want to go to sleep - but I don't want to wake up,' Tracey Emin, written in 'cloth-letters' of the appliquéd blanket *Terminal I*, London: Saatchi Gallery, 2000.
- <sup>65</sup> Foucault, 'Language to Infinity,' in *Aesthetics*, p. 90.
- <sup>66</sup> Foucault, 'Language to Infinity,' in *Aesthetics*, p. 90.
- <sup>67</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London: The Athlone Press, 1994, p. 49.

- <sup>68</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 49.
- <sup>69</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: an Introduction*, Volume 1, London: Penguin, 1990, p. 20.
- <sup>70</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 21.
- <sup>71</sup> See for example: 'Although Emin's notoriety and reputation for brutal honesty has drawn huge crowds to the Tate Gallery this week, she has been savaged by critics,' in Fiachra Gibbons, 'Controversy over Bed will not Rest,' *The Guardian*, 23.10.1999, p. 10. See also: 'If honesty were the same as art, Tracey would be the surefire bet for this year's Turner Prize' in Joe Joseph, 'When it Comes to Grass, who's the Biggest Dope?' *The Times*, 26.8.1999, p. 7. And: 'Tracey Emin's show is a monument to that frank and often brutal honesty of hers she bangs on about so much,' in Searle, 'Tracey's Pants,' *Guardian*, p. 12.
- <sup>72</sup> Hayden White argued this in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984, p. 104.
- <sup>73</sup> Tracey Emin, in Silke Panse, unpublished interview, London: *The Tracey Emin Museum*, 9.1.1998. Interview partly used in Panse, Silke and Isabel Gruntges, 'Spiel am Abgrund,' *Vogue*, Germany, April 1998.
- <sup>74</sup> Parveen Adams, 'Operation Orlan' in Orlan, *This is my Body...This is my Software*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 1996, p. 59.
- <sup>75</sup> Corrigan, *A Cinema without Walls*, p. 106.
- <sup>76</sup> Michael Renov refers to Jeremy Tambling for further reading: 'Jeremy Tambling makes the case for the distinction between autobiography, which he takes to be a 'self-fashioning,' and confession, which, of necessity submits itself to the judgement of a higher authority.' Jeremy Tambling, *Confession: Sexuality, Sin, the Subject*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 9 quoted in Michael Renov, 'Video Confessions,' in Michael Renov and Erika Suderburg (eds.), *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 98, ff. 5.
- <sup>77</sup> Michael Renov makes a similar argument with respect to the confession according to Foucault. Renov, 'Video Confessions' in Renov and Suderburg (eds.), *Resolutions*, pp. 78-101.
- <sup>78</sup> Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' p. 147.
- <sup>79</sup> For instance, in her *Independent* column, Emin refers to a recent lover merely as 'the Womble' and does not disclose his name. Tracey Emin, 'My Life In A Column: I Crash-landed in London like a Giant Flamingo Speeding down the Runway, Gullet Wide Open...,' *The Independent*, 22.12.2006.
- <sup>80</sup> Adams, 'Tracey Emin,' *Guardian*, p.2.
- <sup>81</sup> 'Soon, bartering the bodily intimacies of her youth and beauty will become a hard act to follow.' '[...] where the boundaries of abuse, submission, promiscuity and art blur - her body will never be reinstated.' Tessa Adams on Emin at the talk 'Stolen Bodies,' London: Goldsmith's College, cited in John Ezard, 'Alarm at Modern Art's Atrocity Exhibition: Questions Raised about the Moral Basis of Carnal Art and Whether Practitioners like Tracey Emin can Carry on,' *The Guardian*, 27.1.2001, p. 5.
- <sup>82</sup> Emin and Orlan were also likened to Marc Quinn who filled a transparent sculpture of his head, *Self* (1991) with his own blood.
- <sup>83</sup> Searle, 'Tracey's Pants,' *Guardian*, p. 12.
- <sup>84</sup> Jonathan Jones, 'Road to Infamy: Factors that Conspire to Create an Icon. Jonathan Jones Analyses the Birth of a Phenomenon,' *The Guardian*, 26.19.1999, p. 2.
- <sup>85</sup> Peter Watson, 'Why Tracey Emin isn't Smiling: Peter Watson reveals that, Weary of Pickled Sheep and Unmade Beds, Art World Insiders are Plotting to end Bad Aesthetic Times and Change the Turner Prize,' *New Statesman*, 18.2.2002, p. 10(2).
- <sup>86</sup> Collings, book review, *Modern Painters*, p.121.
- <sup>87</sup> Will Self, "A Slave to Truth," *The Independent on Sunday*, 21.2.1999, p. 6.
- <sup>88</sup> Emin's Turner prize transgression on Channel 4 was No. 90 on *The 100 greatest TV Moments*, Channel 4, 13.1.2001, and became *The Observer* reader's all-time favourite television moment before the moon landing. Adams, 'Tracey Emin,' *Guardian*, p.2. Elsewhere it has been refereed to as an event 'that now has mythic status in TV footage.' Simon Grant, 'Joyriding on the Precipice,' *Evening Standard*, 22.7.1999, p. 32.
- <sup>89</sup> The call for therapy started right at the beginning of her career: 'Like a patient in front of a therapist, her compulsive need to talk about herself has a quality of desperation about it. Emin is constantly testing the reality of her experiences by giving concrete from to events that otherwise might not feel real to her. She designates this activity 'art.' I would call it therapy.' Richard Dorment, 'All about Tracey Emin,' *Daily Telegraph*, 3.5.1997. Tim Dean criticised that cultural critics have become doctors of art and that one should not pathologise the artist in a paper given at the ICA conference *Way Beyond The Pleasure Principle*. London: ICA, 11.11.2000.
- <sup>90</sup> Tracey Emin as a panelist at the symposium *Public Emotions*, London: ICA, 26.1.2001.
- <sup>91</sup> Michael Archer, transl. by me, 'Im Nachinein. Tracey Emin und andere,' *Texte zur Kunst*, Vol. 4, No.13, March 1994, p. 60.
- <sup>92</sup> Archer, 'Tracey Emin und andere,' *Texte zur Kunst*, p. 60.
- <sup>93</sup> Archer, 'Tracey Emin und andere,' *Texte zur Kunst*, p. 60.

- <sup>94</sup> That something is of higher value when it is complicated seems to me a very German idea and in contrast to the British appreciation of simplicity. Archer, 'Tracey Emin und andere,' *Texte zur Kunst*, p. 63.
- <sup>95</sup> Archer, 'Tracey Emin und andere,' *Texte zur Kunst*, p. 62.
- <sup>96</sup> Jake Chapman, *The Art Show*, 14.11.2003, Channel 4.
- <sup>97</sup> Chapman, *The Art Show*.
- <sup>98</sup> Chapman, *The Art Show*.
- <sup>99</sup> Peter Osborne, 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy' in Michael Newman and Jon Bird (eds.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, London: Reaktion Books, 1999.
- <sup>100</sup> Thomas Wartenberg, 'Film and/as Philosophy,' Film Studies Research Seminar, *University of Kent*, 2003.
- <sup>101</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>102</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, p. 50.
- <sup>103</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, p. 48.
- <sup>104</sup> Hensher, 'Bad News, Tracey,' p. 5.
- <sup>105</sup> 'Massow has no Regrets in Art Row,' *BBC news online*, 5.2.2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/1803087.stm>, downloaded 16.6.2007.
- <sup>106</sup> Sarah Kent uses the term 'cold conceptualism' in Sarah Kent, *Time Out*, London, 9.4 -16.4.2003, p. 49.
- <sup>107</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, p. 49.
- <sup>108</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, p. 49.
- <sup>109</sup> Mandy Merk in conversation with me, London: Senate House, 6.6.2003.
- <sup>110</sup> Osborne, 'Conceptual Art' in Newman and Bird (eds.), *Conceptual Art*, pp. 66-67.
- <sup>111</sup> '[...] the Author was an outmoded romantic notion, one that deferred attention from the signifying structures of filmic discourse.' Dana Polan citing an unnamed doctorate student in 'Auteur Desire,' *Screening the Past*, Issue 12, 1.3.2001, <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0301/dpfr12a.htm>
- <sup>112</sup> Polan, 'Auteur desire', *Screening the Past*.
- <sup>113</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Letter to Reda Bensmaïa, on Spinoza' in *Negotiations, 1972 - 1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 165.
- <sup>114</sup> Deleuze, 'Letter to Reda Bensmaïa' in *Negotiations, 1972 - 1990*, p. 164.
- <sup>115</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Having an Idea in Cinema. On the Cinema of Straub-Huillet', in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (eds.), Deleuze and Guattari. *New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press*, 1998, p. 15.
- <sup>116</sup> The development of contemporary art as read through Kant has been traced in depth by Thierry De Duve in *Kant after Duchamp*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998. He wrote about a video installation by the artist Sylvie Blocher: 'Her camera, like all cameras, incorporates *ready-made* the conventions of Renaissance perspective' in 'Address and the Issue of Community in Sylvie Blocher's *L'annonce amoureuse*', *October* 85, Summer 1998, p. 110.
- <sup>117</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, London: The Athlone Press, 1989, p. 280.
- <sup>118</sup> Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 4.
- <sup>119</sup> Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, p.4.
- <sup>120</sup> Thierry De Duve found the film image itself to be *ready-made*. de Duve, 'Sylvie Blocher's *L'annonce amoureuse*,' *October*, p.110.
- <sup>121</sup> For a survey of diverse the forms of found footage see William C. Wees, *Recycled Images. The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films*, New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1993.
- <sup>122</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, transl. by Harry Zohn, Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd., 1979.
- <sup>123</sup> In this vein, the found footage filmmaker is often being written as the discoverer or saviour of otherwise hapless images – making conscious of the unconscious. The employment by a person who knows what they are doing would alter the material 'on such a fundamental level that its naïve identity is almost wholly obscured and thus rescued from its proper ephemeral destiny.' Atkinson, p. 81.
- <sup>124</sup> The term 'performative curatorship' was employed by Maria Lind, director of the *Kunstverein München* as quoted in Alex Farquharson, 'I Curate, You Curate, We Curate' in *Art Monthly*, No.269, 9.2003, p. 8.
- <sup>125</sup> Amar Kanwar, *A Season Outside* (1997).
- <sup>126</sup> Boris Groys, 'Art in the Age of Biopolitics. From Artwork to Art Documentation,' in Okwui Enwezor et al., *Documenta XI* exhibition catalogue, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002, p. 113.
- <sup>127</sup> Groys, 'From Artwork to Art Documentation,' in Enwezor et al., *Documenta XI*, p. 113.
- <sup>128</sup> Groys, 'From Artwork to Art Documentation,' in Enwezor et al., *Documenta XI*, p. 113.
- <sup>129</sup> Groys, 'From Artwork to Art Documentation,' in Enwezor et al., *Documenta XI*, p. 114.
- <sup>130</sup> Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992, reprinted 1998, pp. 187-188.

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<sup>131</sup> Catherine Grant, 'Secret Agents. Feminist Theories of Women's Film Authorship,' *Feminist Theory*, 2:1, 1.4.2001, p. 120.

<sup>132</sup> Grant, 'Secret Agents,' *Feminist Theory*, 2:1, 1.4.2001, pp. 124-125.

**The Filmmaker as *Rückenfigur*, Documentary as Painting in  
Alexandr Sokurov's *Elegy of a Voyage***

Alexandr Sokurov's video installation *Elegy of a Voyage* (2001) was commissioned as part of the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum's exhibition *Unpacking Europe* (2001) that featured artists' responses to the theme of revisiting Europe's past, and it charts Sokurov's voyage as the filmmaker and protagonist from Siberia into the museum in Rotterdam itself. He presented the video like a painting on canvas alongside Dutch paintings from the eighteenth century. The journey to Europe ends with close-ups of St Mary's Square with St Mary's Church in Utrecht (1765) by the Dutch painter Pieter Saenredam, thus ostensibly establishing continuity between 'documentary realism' and the realist tradition of painting. This relationship is complicated by refraction through the self-reflexive aesthetic of German Romanticism, particularly as the figure of the filmmaker in the video functions as a Romantic *Rückenfigur* (back-view figure) within which documentary subjectivity and self-reflexivity are recast.

*Elegy of a Voyage* uses painting to break with the notion of documentary as retrospective documenting that is 'uncovering'. *Elegy of a Voyage* uses a variety of boundaries in the form of frames and the outline of the filmmaker's body to convey a detachment from documentary reality. Playing with temporal and causal inversions, the video instigates a double 'framing' of reality and of the creator. Sokurov treats the scenes in the paintings he films like the 'reality' he found in front of his documentary camera and vice versa. The filmmaker's narration addresses the paintings in the same way as the documentary images, as he slips from one reality to the other. In his documentaries, Sokurov often obstructs the viewers' comprehension of the very visual image itself, as well as of what they refer to. His images are frequently blurred, softened, darkened, superimposed or contorted and they take an exceptionally long time to come into focus. The fact that they keep us from being able to fully comprehend what we see by making themselves hard to read, in his documentaries has the effect of creating referential uncertainty. In *Elegy of a Voyage*, subjectivity is destabilizing. *Elegy of a Voyage* serves as another example for a deterritorialised assignment of fiction and non-fiction in the same text. Like the other works discussed in this thesis, *Elegy of a Voyage* is not self-reflexive in the alienating, modernist sense that is

usually employed to theorize reflexivity. Instead, distance produces closeness, that is to say, intimacy is paradoxically presented as being only possible through detachment; monologue, for example, is used to block out dialogue but so as to re-create an indirect closeness. In contrast to expository or observational documentary, distance here works for subjectivity, not for objectivity.

#### **4.1 The Passive Creator**

*Elegy of a Voyage* presents the documentary filmmaker as powerless, not only in confronting reality but also with regard to his own existence. He does not appear to have authorship of his own life or film, but rather looks at it as a distanced, but nevertheless emotional, observer. Sokurov's exaggeration of the notion of documentary filmmaking as a passive following of events inverts the orders of before and after, of creation and documentation. In the delicate balance between creating and being created, the filmmaker repeatedly indicates his lack of control about his destination – and by extension his video. His narration is littered with phrases indicating passivity and uncertainty such as 'Then for some reason I found myself with [a monk]', 'houses appear', 'I thought I heard ... but then I wasn't sure' and even more explicit question markers of narrative confusion such as 'Where am I?' And neither has the commentator mastered the temporal order of events. In Sokurov's fiction film *Russian Ark* (2002), the filmmaker too provides the whispering voice of an invisible narrator who wonders where he is and whether the events have been staged for him, treating the images that his narration questions like documentary images that have might give a referential clue to his location. In *Russian Ark*, fiction film is presented as a found reality. However, whereas in the fiction film the effect of this uncertainty is merely theatrical, in the documentary this purported lack of agency of the filmmaker over his video has consequences in regards of referentiality. The narrator's stance pushes the apparently passive attitude of observational documentary filmmaking to its impossible limits: he denies knowledge and responsibility as a filmmaker and as his own protagonist, of where he is (or who he is). On the other hand, he assumes knowledge about what he cannot possibly have experienced, (such as that a window of a house which was the model for a painting in Utrecht in 1765 never could be opened.)

In narrative literary fiction, the author in the text can only be implied through the language as the reader's silent construction, unlike the narrator who is identified by the reader as the

speaker of the text: 'Thus, while the narrator can only be defined circularly as the narrative "voice" or "speaker" of a text, the implied author is – in opposition and by definition – voiceless and silent.'<sup>1</sup> The 'voice' and 'speaker' literally exist in film. In *Elegy of a Voyage*, the self-reflexive 'turn back' onto itself is literally addressed to the back of the speaking subject. We see the filmmaker – or rather the back of him – and we hear the voice of the narrator, whom we assume to be the same person whose *Rückenfigur* we see. With this manoeuvre of making only a silhouette of the author visible, accompanied by a doubtful commentary that manifests uncertainty, Sokurov realises a lack of agency not only with regard to his orientation as a protagonist of his film but also with a lack of 'authority' over his own creation. Uncertainty in communication introduces subjectivity by making the subject visible. The notion of 'experience' itself renders us passive. Gilles Deleuze distinguishes between the active 'I' and the passively experiencing 'Self':

The Self is in time and is constantly changing: it is a passive, or rather receptive, "self" that experiences changes in time. The I is an act (I think) that actively determines my existence (I am), but can only determine it in time, as the existence of a passive, receptive, and changing self, which only represents to itself the activity of its own thought. The I and the Self are thus separated by the line of time, which relates them to each other only under the condition of a fundamental difference.<sup>2</sup>

With respect to film, the above could be rephrased as follows: the *I* is an act (I film) that actively determines my existence (I am). In self-reflexive documentary, filming can determine who I am. The passive stance the narrator takes towards his actions in *Elegy of a Voyage* highlights the difference between the *I* and the *Self*. The conventional 'I film'/'I am' of the filming author is separated from the experiencing *Self* of the documentary protagonist. Deleuze complicated any neat division between internal and external as well as implicitly of subjectivity and objectivity:

But is there an inside that lies deeper than any internal world, just as the outside is farther away than any external world? The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movement, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside.<sup>3</sup>

Sokurov's 'subjectivity' too is folded impossibly 'inside' a painting and the video that looks at it through an internal monologue. This is in contrast to documentary, which is

traditionally being positioned outside events and at a distance in order to be able to observe and be objective, or at least indexical. The place of documentary on the outside of life had been 'sealed' by André Bazin, for instance, who praised film as being a death mask and who sought a kind of film image that, at its best, would have documentary qualities of spiritual preservation.<sup>4</sup> In *Elegy of a Voyage*, Sokurov does not just look outside in order to find his inner self, but poses questions addressed to no one that remain unanswered. From being outside Europe and looking onto landscapes, the journey into Europe literally becomes a look inside that ends with one of Saenredam's few paintings depicting an exterior scene.<sup>5</sup> Thus in an added turn we have an outside as seen from an interior perspective. After the snow-covered landscapes of Russia, Sokurov's images dwell in the dark as soon as they have reached Europe and, through the reduction of colour, evoke even more the impression of two dimensions. The narrator's silhouette also enters the museum at night.

At the time of the video installation, the painting St Mary's Square with St Mary's Church in Utrecht was absent from the Rotterdam museum, on loan to the museum of Utrecht, the town it depicts. Sokurov's video was exhibited with two paintings by the Dutch painter Jacob von Ruisdael who, in a reverse process, usually started to paint 'from a dark ground',<sup>6</sup> later adding lighter colours to produce his paintings of landscapes conceived in the studio. For the Romantics, insight was often achieved through darkness. A representation of external reality was best created on the basis of an internalised image. Caspar David Friedrich, for instance, painted his outdoor landscapes with the dark outline of the Rückenfigur following an internal image from memory. He was convinced that:

The artist should not only paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees within him. If, however, he sees nothing within him, then he should also omit to paint that which he sees before him.<sup>7</sup>

The Romantic theorist August Wilhelm Schlegel even suggested that '[s]ome people prefer to look at paintings with closed eyes, so as to not disturb their imagination'.<sup>8</sup> Schlegel hailed the outline as the 'pictorial method that came closest to the allusive manner of poetry, since its sketch-like quality "incited the imagination to complete" the details of the scene'.<sup>9</sup> A *Rückenfigur* is such an outline in the poetic documentary *Elegy of a Voyage*.

Sokurov's *Rückenfigur* narrator may be compared to the painted Figure that Gilles Deleuze finds in the paintings of Francis Bacon. Deleuze begins by equating the figurative with representation:

The figurative (representation) implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them. Narration is the correlate to illustration. A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate and illustrate the whole. Isolation is thus the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration, to liberate the Figure: to stick to the fact.<sup>10</sup>

A Figure is constituted through isolation. Isolation of the Figure also introduces the notion of 'fact' through the phrase 'the brutality of fact', which Bacon himself used to describe his paintings. Here, the 'fact' is that of painting itself as a nervous and direct sensation, not that of an independent external reality usually referred to in documentary. *Elegy of a Voyage* in effect contrasts these two possibilities of 'fact': the reality of the representation and the represented reality. Sokurov's figure is isolated not only in terms of the *Rückenfigur* but also through the absence of direct dialogue or control of his surroundings and his own place in them. Whereas Deleuze affirms that for Bacon isolation prevents figuration, illustration and narration, the isolation of the narrator-author figure in *Elegy of a Voyage* does not prevent narration, but instead propels it forward as in a fiction film with an off-screen narrator. On the other hand, the isolation of Sokurov's narrator eludes figurative documentary illustration. Isolation works on several levels: the filmmaker isolated as a foreigner travelling from Russia into Europe; his black outline isolated against his environment; the isolation of the filmmaker's speech in the commentary from the speech of the other figures he comes across; the isolation of the filmmaker from any communication with the living and the moving in the documentary image; and the impossibility of accessing what for him seems to be the only meaningful reality – that of the painting. Sokurov's narrator treats dead objects as though they were living (he feels the warmth of the floor, wall and paint), and Saenredam's painting becomes his own living history (the paint is still wet, the clock stopped). At the end of the journey, he has found living subjects only in the paintings: 'At last we find people.'

Christian religious beliefs, according to Deleuze, liberated the Figure since they adhere 'literally to the idea that God must not be represented. With God – but also with Christ, the Virgin, and even Hell – lines, colours, and movements are freed from the demands of representation.'<sup>11</sup> *Elegy of a Voyage* not only questions religion and religious representatives, such as the monk encountered in Sokurov's whispering commentary, but it liberates documentary from realist representation by blocking out dialogue, blurring the image into a painterly one and frequent reversals of chronological temporality. The *Rückenfigur* of a religious representative famously inhabits Friedrich's painting *The Monk by the Sea*; the outline of the director also meets a silent monk in *Elegy of a Voyage*:

I ask him a question. I ask him why did Christ pray that his father not send him to his sacrificial cross? Why did Christ want to avoid crucifixion? If he so loathed being crucified, then how can I accept his sacrifice? – Why did I speak about this? My monk keeps silent. God knows what he is thinking about.... Perhaps about those he left behind? And I doubt seriously that he knows the answer to my question.

Deleuze ascribed to Christian dogma the power to overcome figuration, but reproaches photography for being synonymous with representation, representation as synonymous with cliché and therefore photography as being synonymous with cliché:

[...] modern painting is invaded and besieged by photographs and clichés that are already lodged on the canvas before the painter even begins to work. In fact, it would be a mistake to think that the painter works on a white and virgin surface. The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with.<sup>12</sup>

The photograph 'is dangerous not simply because it is figurative, but because it claims to reign over vision'.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to painting, those portrayed in it initially do not stand for something in reality, they just are. Whereas a painting needs elaborate work to render it realist, a documentary requires self-conscious stylisation if is not to appear realistic. The documentary image is always already filled with realist clichés to break away from, which Sokurov does by having special anamorphic lenses made to flatten the image into two dimensions:

Since camera lenses are generally specifically designed to create the impression of volume, we have had two developed in Russia specifically for our films. They reverse traditional illusionistic volume and emphasize the illusion of a plane.<sup>14</sup>

Since *Elegy of a Voyage* is a time-based ‘autobiographical’ documentary, this ‘erasure of volume’ does not only have a spatial effect but a temporal one, and another of reversed agency. For instance, the description ‘Then the black sheet appeared’ is uttered after we have already seen it. When the monk – dressed in black – bows down, the temporal dimension of the movement is made visible in the form of an after-image of his black silhouette against a white background, a time-image of sorts. It allows us to see the past and the present movement simultaneously, causing a disturbance of realist movement. This making visible of time in two dimensions is similar to the paint covering the space that the figure supposedly has just covered in a Bacon painting. Since painting on something can only make this more opaque, it introduces a spatial effect of a ‘before’ and a ‘behind’, and these jumps in temporality acquire a more immediate physical dimension than they could through translucent film and beamed video. Film and video generally give the impression of being more three-dimensional than painting, founded on the verisimilitude of the images, especially in documentary. Sokurov works against this and flattens and lengthens his images through anamorphic distortion that stretches the film-image like a canvas:

I didn’t want a three-dimensional space, but rather a surface, a picture. I finally wanted to be honest and say: the art of film is a lie if it maintains that it can produce three-dimensional space, or spatiality.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the notion that documentary would depict a reality ‘out there’, Sokurov ‘sees’ the two-dimensionality of the canvas-screen as its ‘objective reality’ and, turning the documentary gaze back on the canvas-screen, his camera draws attention to its flatness:

The development of pictorial art reposes on the artist’s understanding of the flat surface as a canon, an objective reality that should not be fought. Filmmakers treat it as a void that has to be filled – an absolutely ridiculous practice.<sup>16</sup>

Sokurov treats the documentary image like Deleuze’s not-blank canvas clichés, with which the artist starts: ‘Strictly speaking, the surface of the screen and that of the canvas are one and the same.’<sup>17</sup> In Sokurov’s fiction film *Mother and Son* (1997), the composition of the beautiful landscapes is achieved by painting on mirrors and glass in front of the camera and by greasing the lens.<sup>18</sup> It is not clear if we see a painting on or of a reality:

There is no spraying. I work with very thin, delicate paintbrushes. Like those used in traditional Chinese paintings. [...] If it was sprayed then it would look very harsh.<sup>19</sup>

Sokurov produces a 'soft' image that lacks documentary realism's apparent authenticity of a 'harsh reality' and is more associated with a cheap fiction film aesthetic. The difference between Sokurov's painting on the glass in front of his lens and between subjects and objects painted further away from the camera, such as Dr Seuss's hand-painted film-sets in *The 5000 Fingers of Dr T* (1953), is one of degree, which nevertheless should be acknowledged. The dissolution of the opposition between fiction as 'painted' and non-fiction as 'filmed' encourages a deterritorialisation of a text as either pure fiction or non-fiction.

#### **4.2 The Surfaces of Depths**

As in a number of Caspar David Friedrich's paintings, colour in Sokurov's work is reduced to create a more two-dimensional impression. Friedrich's *The Monk by the Sea* 'emphasises that the picture, despite its visionary aspirations, is nevertheless no more than a picture'.<sup>20</sup> The flatness and opacity of the medium foregrounded in Friedrich's painting is paralleled in *Elegy of a Voyage*, where the use of low contrast not only obscures the impression of three-dimensional space but also prevents us witnessing the dialogue between the narrator and his interlocutors. In addition to the implicit critique of the image's transparency as a means to access the world, Sokurov also implicitly critiques the documentary strategies of 'uncovering'. On the surface, painting suggests a logic that runs counter to the notion of documentary as a transparent window or the means of clarification. Painting covers up, it conceals, it adds on top of something. In *The Theory of Colours*, Goethe describes a continuum existing 'between transparency and white opacity' and progressing through 'degrees of cloudiness'. 'One could call white', he concludes, 'the fortuitously opaque flash of pure transparency'.<sup>21</sup> In a similarly paradoxical way, the flurries of white snow that feature frequently in *Elegy of a Voyage* and other Sokurov films could be said to 'reveal' by obscuring. Sokurov's images often turn depth into surface, three dimensions into two, and peel opacity from transparency. In his documentary *A Soldier's Dream* (1995), the image seems to turn into an aerial shot of the ground below as the clouds above appear to open. What we see as we get closer is that we are actually looking at the camouflage of a shirt on a soldier. The impression of being at a great distance from a landscape is resolved into a close-up of a patterned surface. Another example of a 'painted' surface, of making opaque by adding something that looks like what it covers, occurs in Sokurov's fiction film about Hitler's Berghof, *Moloch*. Eva Braun's 'skin-suit', a form of camouflage, hides what is

underneath by repeating it. Are we supposed to think she is naked or dressed? Are we looking at naked reality or at a cover-up? The colossal grey stones of the bleak interiors resemble the *mise-en-scène* of some computer games and this further questions the referential status of what is shown. Sokurov explicitly eschews computer-generated images, as they presuppose that everything is made out of the same constructed and fictional material. This would eliminate a dynamic and deterritorialised relationship between the referential status of painting and of documentary.

Whilst Sokurov's narration betrays a curious distance from his subjects, the filmmaker's figure relates to objects tactilely. He touches the walls and the paintings, and he feels the temperature of the ground beneath him. The filmmaker's disorientation and his non-access to documentary reality are contrasted with the direct touching of objects in that world. The modernist shift in painting and sculpture from sight to tactility foregrounded the materiality of the medium rather than what it represents. Touch in what we believe to be documentary instead reintroduces the referent as the cause of sensation. While the hand of the modern artist, such as Robert Rauschenberg,<sup>22</sup> was defined through action, Sokurov's hands on the museum's walls and on paintings are receptive. Instead of positing touch only as an indicator of direct activity, *Elegy of a Voyage* emphasises it as a medium of indirectness. In another manifestation of closeness through mediation, the filmmaker relates to Rembrandt by touching the same canvas that the painter touched. The notion of touch in documentary is different from that advanced by some Deleuzian readings of touch of cinema that appropriate touch as the viewer's visceral experience. This reading subordinates the protagonist's touching to the viewer being 'touched' by the film. It advocates that 'film renders vision tactile'<sup>23</sup> rather than tactility rendering film visionary. A reading of film as a deterritorialised terrain is called for here.

Deleuze has also been used to advance the concept of a 'memory of touch'.<sup>24</sup> Laura Marks writes that cinema appeals 'to embodied knowledge, and to the sense of touch in particular to recreate memories'.<sup>25</sup> However, Deleuze was critical of a 'recreation' of memory as a repetition of the same. In contrast to Marks, who suggests that touch is 'capable of storing powerful memories that are lost to the visual',<sup>26</sup> for Deleuze, to store something would mean to contain it. Keith Ansell Pearson explains Deleuze's much more complex stance on the surface sense:

This surface topology cannot be restricted to the determinations of a centred subject (consciousness or natural perception); it is rather the surface of a “skin” that acts as a membrane which allows for an interior and an exterior to take shape and communicate, transporting potentials and regenerating polarities: ‘Thus, even biologically, it is necessary to understand that “the deepest is the skin”’.<sup>27</sup>

An emphasis on touching the ‘membranes’ of buildings and paintings actually disassembles ‘pure’ subjectivity. What is interesting about *Elegy of a Voyage* is that it does not re-create memories, it creates them. In what Kierkegaard calls memory ‘recollection’, he has argued that to recollect is to prevent the present from happening. Kierkegaard describes in *Repetition* how the poetic love of a young man imprisons his beloved as an object of his emotions, and thus thwarts any exchange of ‘real’ love as movement:

He was in love, deeply and sincerely in love; that was evident, and yet at once, on one of the first days of his engagement, he was capable of recollecting his love. [...] The young girl was not his love, she was the occasion of awakening the primitive poetic talent within him and making him a poet. Therefore he could love only her, could never forget her, never wish to love anyone else; and yet he was forever longing for her [...] she had made him a poet, and thereby had signed her own death warrant.<sup>28</sup>

How does this notion of paralysis through focusing on recollective discourse apply to documentary? Does the documentary-maker step into the young man’s shoes, and by making a poetic declaration of his subject freeze it into an object state? Has Sokurov not done exactly that by silencing any direct dialogue in his poetic documentary? In a sense one could say that, yes, Sokurov blocks out dialogue in favour of his own monologue. Just as we never see either the front or the face of the filmmaker, we also never hear him talk directly to anyone. When a stranger talks to Sokurov, we never hear the filmmaker’s reply, only his voiceover commentary. This stranger is the only person we see speaking; and yet, the filmmaker talks over his speech. This assertion of the commentary’s ‘reality’ destabilises subjectivity by foregrounding it, rather than asserting a coherent subject position of, for instance, desire, as with Kierkegaard’s hero. Whilst Kierkegaard’s recollector unwittingly throws himself into a subjective emotional reality, under the pretence that it was a real exchange, Sokurov consciously plays with and inverts documentary and artistic reality. In an intricate choreography of talking and silencing, action and reaction, Sokurov’s poetics are

carried out behind the narrator's own back, so to speak. The filmmaker outlines himself as the unstable purveyor of subjectivity. The commentary poses the unit of filmmaker and camera as so passive that an encounter appears to be that which the protagonist needs, not what the filmmaker seeks:

‘For some reason this man has noticed me.... He comes to my table and takes a seat. Then I realise he needs somebody. I understand he badly wants to speak. He has something to tell me.’

In the only ‘face-to-face encounter’ with another human being – which the viewer experiences as ‘back-to-face’ – the filmmaker silences his protagonist by talking over his voice: ‘He begins to speak. I listen to his voice.’ It is analogous to what in writing would be called ‘direct speech’ within the author’s first-person narrative. Sokurov’s voice-over ‘frames’ the ‘direct speech’ of his protagonist. The indirectness of the ‘direct speech’ is acknowledged in the subtitles by putting the stranger’s utterances in inverted commas:

‘... will never learn the reason of life. But I can ... the reason is to live, to be alive.... I mean, I am happy ... to be living.’ I look at him and think: if you are so happy, then why do you need me? A stranger, a foreigner, a mute.... He looks me in the eyes and continues....’

Sokurov here extends the reality of the documentary – in which the filmmaker does not directly speak – to that of reality itself and relates to himself as a mute. The narrator silences the protagonist only in the medium, whilst in reality it is apparently the filmmaker who remains silent. His ‘muteness’ in the ‘dialogue’ is expressed in a monologue. Sokurov substitutes a directness of distanced observation – direct because he is intimate in his commentary – for direct voice-over speech in synchronous film. A sublime feeling of the inaccessibility of reality or of the reality of another person is here evoked by turning the narration into a more literary one, whereby the filmmaker’s narration is like ‘writing’ in its adoption of all voices.

### **4.3 Painting as the Window to Documentary**

Before representation became self-reflexive with Romantic painting, the desire to imitate reality in Dutch realist painting followed the assumption that neither the painter nor a personal style should be visible in his work. He should ‘follow life so closely, that one cannot see any manner at all’.<sup>29</sup> The artist was not seen as a part of reality. This anti-subjective stance bears resemblance to the documentary realism of 1960s *direct cinema*,

which in *Elegy of a Voyage* is blocked by manifestations of authorial subjectivity and played out against the realism of the paintings the filmmaker looks at. Even though *Elegy of a Voyage* is narrated by the filmmaker, it nevertheless does not belong to the expository mode of documentary. Sokurov's images are underlined by a subjective narration that responds to what it is not master of. The filmmaker's 'voice of God' is of a 'creator' walking amongst us, and a far from omniscient one at that. In contrast to Bill Nichols's definition of commentary as drawing attention 'toward a more distanced, conceptual accounting of' the world,<sup>30</sup> in this self-reflexive documentary, commentary implies neither the emotional distance of the conventional expository mode nor the modernist reflexive Brechtian style of documentaries. Distance does not pave the way to objectivity but to subjectivity.

Unlike the deferral of responsibility in the indirect narrations of Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* (1983), Patrick Keiller's *London* (1994) and *Robinson in Space* (1997), or John Sergeant's *Blue Summer* (1998), in which the narrators continuously refer to what somebody else has either said or written, Sokurov's narrator agency is not emotionally distanced. On the other hand, it is also not an intervening agency that distinguishes his narrator's passive stance from the failure of early Nick Broomfield, or other proponents of the 'aesthetics of failure',<sup>31</sup> such as Michael Moore or Ross McElwee, to achieve the overt goals set out in their documentaries. Sokurov's hero is even uncertain about his goal. *Elegy of a Voyage* is self-reflexive in a manner that is not captured by earlier documentary theory's distinctions between formal and ideological reflexivity based on emotional detachment. Here, distance is not equated with emotional alienation, but is the prerequisite for closeness. The impression of intimacy in the narration depends on the blocking of realist direct dialogue. Or to put it in a way that can be also interpreted literally and visually with regards to an image: only distance allows depth. Only the separated position from which Sokurov's isolated narrator speaks allows him intimate observations. Sokurov's anti-Eisensteinian stance against montage goes so far as to block not only the third element arising through synthesis but also the impression of film's third dimension. *Elegy of a Voyage* is thus anti-illusionist as well as intimate. In this, it shows its pedigree in Romanticism, which had introduced self-reflexivity as well as anti-illusionism – a distance laden with emotion. Robert Stam describes reflexivity as one's ability to distinguish between a representation of reality and an illusion of reality. A distanced and unemotional sanity of reflexivity here is opposed to involved emotionalism that is unable to differentiate and is equivalent to madness: 'the impression of

reality does not generally become the illusion of reality. No sane person tries to picnic in landscape paintings or converse with statues.<sup>32</sup> Sokurov might disagree with Stam on this account since he has explored the theme of living inside a work of art – or in a museum – in different ways. With *Mother and Son*, Sokurov turns the film images into paintings; in *Russian Ark* (2001), the diegesis takes place within the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, and in *Stone* (1992) Anton Chekhov's home is depicted as having been transformed into a museum.<sup>33</sup> In *Elegy of a Voyage*, eighteenth-century realist paintings are treated as having the same degree of reality as the contemporary documentary image. Sokurov turns art into documentary – rather than life into documentary art – in treating the reality of the painting as 'real' reality. In Sokurov's own words: 'In the elegies, my romantic idea that film is another life shines through. Film not as a means of communication, but film as another life.'<sup>34</sup> He argues that he creates not only documentary but reality: 'I destroy real nature and create my own.'<sup>35</sup> Now, 'documentary' and 'nature' both conventionally function as markers of authenticity. But for Sokurov, nature is at the end of the same process of creation as art. His images 'create nature', rather than trying to capture its spirit in a Bazinian manner. Sokurov's embrace of the long-take frequently evokes comparisons with André Bazin,<sup>36</sup> but his approach differs significantly from that of Bazin. This neo-realist critic sought the long-take and deep focus as the way to access the documentary 'real'. For him, the image should have a documentary quality, even if it is a fiction film, with actuality giving access to the spiritual: 'This perfect and natural adherence to actuality is explained and justified from within by a spiritual attachment to the period.'<sup>37</sup> In Sokurov's spiritual documentaries, however, spirituality is removed from actuality.

#### **4.4 The *Rückenfigur* of the Documentary Filmmaker**

The German Romantics endorsed indirectness as a mode of communication: indirect seeing through the observer placed in the painting or communicating with God through nature. This theme of indirectness is manifested in the *Elegy's* reactive filmmaker who is uncertain about his agency and who does not communicate directly, at least not in the documentary mediation that we see. In a simultaneous movement, Sokurov's narrator indirectly assumes both positions of the creator with a small 'c' and of the Creator with a capital 'C' as the author of reality. Whilst looking at and touching the Dutch realist Pieter Saenredam's painting from 1765, the filmmaker comments in his video:

‘Didn’t I paint that picture myself? Didn’t I see all that before me? Every tree, every shadow. I remember well this sky, I remember it well, because I waited a long time for the cloud to move away from me so that I could see its reverse side ... Pieter Saenredam. I was just standing by, here on his right. And that – he added it later. At the time, there was no baby carriage. These people, they used to come here to talk. I do remember the trees, but I believe there were more of them. But I don’t remember any children. No, no children. And that window never did open. Pieter invented it, nobody knew who lived there. Neither had I ever seen that gentleman.’

The two-dimensionality of painting, as it is experienced here by the filmmaker-protagonist, brings out the possibility that there is a ‘before’ and a ‘behind’ – of which then ‘its reverse side’ can be seen. This can then be transposed from the spatial to the temporal, to a reversal of the before and after, and of reality and its representation. In this interplay, the narrator moves through many inconsistencies: ‘the paint has dried, but the canvas remains warm. Everything is still [but we hear church bells]. Should we return? But how? The clock has stopped. So let us restart it!’ The clock on the timeless painting, of course, could never work. ‘The shadows are motionless’, the director observes, but, then again, the shadows could never move. Here the narrator intervenes by stroking the painting with his hands and thus producing a shadow by obstructing an artificial light source that acts as the light of the moon: ‘The sun has changed position.’ This sentence puts the filmmaker, like the artist before him, in the position of the author of reality as though the narrator has just created the sun. Sokurov’s narrator assumes authorship for a work he has not made (the paintings) and rejects control of the work he has made (the documentary).

Sokurov’s filmmaker-in-his-video is a Romantic inasmuch as he is serious about his lack of agency in relation to the fragments of reality, which he himself paints as being exposed to rather than being in control of. This makes Sokurov’s video appear more fragmentary. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy wrote about the Romantic fragment:

Let us recall that fragmentation as chaos is also the material available to the creator of the world, and thus that the romantic Fragment conclusively conforms and installs the figure of the artist as Author and Creator. This creator, however, is not the subject of a cogito.<sup>38</sup>

If 'indifference has the status of a concept'<sup>39</sup> for the Romantic theorist Friedrich Schlegel, then this attitude has its correlation in Sokurov's poetic narrator's passivity. By apparently having removed himself as the protagonist and the director from any agency, Sokurov exaggerates the passivity of the observational approach of documentary filmmaking towards the world. This uncertain observing participant stands in contrast to a Cartesian subject explaining an autobiographical and identity-based documentary and asserting meaningful causal chains. *Elegy of a Voyage* follows many of Sokurov's previous documentaries in having the word 'elegy' in its title, for instance as do *Elegy* (1986), *Moscow Elegy* (1986–1988), *Maria (Peasant Elegy)* (1978–1988) *St Petersburg Elegy* (1990), *Soviet Elegy* (1990), *A Simple Elegy* (1990) and *Oriental Elegy* (1996). Elegiac writing was frequently favoured in Romantic aesthetics. Friedrich Schlegel even uses the term 'elegy' to describe the indeterminate state of Romantic poetry:

[...] transcendental poetry. It begins as satire with the absolute divergence between the ideal and the real, hovers in the middle as elegy, and ends as idyll with the absolute identity of both terms.'<sup>40</sup>

What Heinrich von Kleist wrote about Caspar David Friedrich's painting *The Monk by the Sea* (1809–1910) exemplifies the Romantic belief that art cannot evoke experience directly:

[...] that what I was supposed to find in the painting itself, I only found between me and the painting: a demand that my heart made towards the painting, and an interruption, which the painting effected: and so I became the Kapuzine [monk], the sea became the dune, but where I was supposed to look with desire – the sea – was altogether missing. Nothing can be more sad and uncomfortable than this position in the world.<sup>41</sup>

The self-reflexive *Rückenfigur* of the monk, which operates as both a stand-in and a barrier for the viewer in Friedrich's painting, is in Sokurov's video that of the filmmaker positioned in front of the moving sea as well as in front of the still medium of painting. The key theme of Romantic paintings – wildly turbulent nature, best manifested in water and clouds – is also one of Sokurov's favourite themes. Painting, of course, freezes the movement, in contrast to time-based media's option to indexically reproduce movement. One could say that the insurmountable distance experienced at the sight of windswept nature, which the viewer of a Romantic painting was encouraged to feel by looking at the back of his or her substitute in the picture, had already found its expression in the static nature of painting as the only medium available at the time. In *Elegy of a Voyage* the impenetrable barrier

evoking the feeling of the sublime is not merely the observer in the representation ‘spoiling’ the access to a ‘reality out there’, but the impossibility in principle of replicating experience, which is ‘illustrated’ by representations in the two-dimensional medium of painting that, like Medusa, freezes what it looks at. This is perhaps why Sokurov shows so much snow. Whereas Sokurov’s mentor Tarkovsky displayed a repeated interest in water, which is conventionally interpreted as a symbol for time, Sokurov’s continuing motif in his films is frozen water; the snow follows him from the Russian landscapes to the streets of Germany to the exterior of the Dutch museum. The snow at one point falls artificially in the medium itself and not only in the represented reality: once it snows indoors, perhaps a reference to the rain also falling indoors at the end of Tarkovsky’s *Solaris* (1972). Not only do the snow-covered fields erase the visibility of the boundaries of the ground topography to produce a Romantic image of infinity, but also the boundaries between painting, video and reality are thrown into doubt. Through the repeated imagery of snow and painting, *Elegy of a Voyage* explores the thematic of frozen time in the time-based medium of video. Sokurov’s narrator comments at the sight of people in a painting: ‘They are all frozen. The past must have been cold.’ In Russia, white is traditionally the colour of death. Mikhail Yampolsky refers to this tradition when he links the whiteness of snow in *Stone* (1992), Sokurov’s film about Chekov, to the absence of experience. For Yampolsky, the snow covering Chekov’s Cherry Orchard in *Stone* is a mask of death that erases previous experience and memory.<sup>42</sup> In *Elegy of a Voyage*, the filmmaker’s confusion about agency and authorship arises from his having no memory of experience. In this sense, the film separates documentary subjectivity from memorised experience.

#### **4.5 The Framing of Pictorial Reality**

*Elegy of a Voyage* suggests that documentary, in its development from realism to self-reflexivity and subjectivity, has followed a similar course to that of painting since the Renaissance. Before the Kantian Sublime in the late eighteenth century, and the subsequent Romantic movement, painting had functioned transparently as a window onto the real world. In this respect, one might even compare André Bazin’s embrace of neorealism in the twentieth century with French realist painting of the nineteenth century. Brad Prager describes the contrast between German idealism, which is concerned with the internal world of the subject, and the French window onto the world at the time:

In the German tradition, alongside Friedrich and Fichte and unlike the French, Kant's argument about the sublime undermines aesthetic discourses in which painting simply serves as a window through which one observes apparently objective depictions of time and space. Kant shifts emphasis back to the inner world of the subject as the one and only locus of representation.<sup>43</sup>

Sokurov's films made under the Soviet system had already deviated from the idea that films should aim at (and change) an outside social reality, or the idea of documentary as a window onto the world. For his fiction films, he often adopted realist literature to initiate a process that starts from an internal perspective, resisting the window notion of documentary in terms not only of spatial representation but also of temporality. The sublime feeling, according to Kant, is evoked if there is a tension between what can be apprehended and what can be comprehended. Apprehension is unlimited. Comprehension is framing.<sup>44</sup> If we remain too far in the distance, an object will appear too miniscule to let us see the parts that constitute it and its effect will escape us. Being too close, we shall have already forgotten the initial parts once we arrive at the last. It is temporality – or rather the absence of simultaneity – as an effect of spatial distance from which the sublime feeling arises. Kant could not have anticipated the advent of film or video, but a similar tension applies to the difference between visual perception (as apprehension) and verbal summary (as comprehension) in a time-based medium. We can apprehend ad infinitum, but to make sense in comprehension, we set boundaries. One could thus determine apprehension as looking into the unbounded present that is continuously opening to the future and comprehension as a retrospective look. Pure comprehension would make the Sublime beautiful. Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Cross in the Mountain* (1807) 'dissimulates by making comprehensible otherwise incomprehensible proportions'.<sup>45</sup>

'In Friedrich's paintings [...] one notices primarily not only the lack of a horizontal plane, but also the overall absence of the standard signs of differentiation between background and foreground.'<sup>46</sup>

But 'Friedrich's work violated not only spatial but temporal principles of traditional perspective regimens.'<sup>47</sup> Just as the observer of Friedrich's painting may 'be expected to undergo the disconcerting experience of thinking at once of dusk and dawn',<sup>48</sup> the viewer of *Elegy of a Voyage* may be expected to think of the filmmaker existing in the impossible pre-filmic past of a painting as documentary reality. One is encouraged to equate the documented present of the video-making with the present of the viewing. In *Elegy of a*

*Voyage*, the referent is situated impossibly in the reality that the painting represents as the narrator's past. In addition to the absence of visual differentiation within an image on the level of space, as in Friedrich's paintings, *Elegy of a Voyage* realises a disorientation of the chronology and causality of the before and after through a displacement of authorship and agency. Instead of making comprehensible the otherwise incomprehensible, Sokurov rather makes incomprehensible what is otherwise comprehensible. In Friedrich's *Cross in the Mountain*, 'the surging mountain in the foreground not only denies the observer entry in the depicted world, but also obscures the play of light among the trees that traditionally gives the illusion of depth'.<sup>49</sup> Sokurov not only obscures pictorial depth but also blocks entry in a reciprocal dialogue with the people he meets. Throughout the video, he substitutes the failure to enter the picture, which the Romantics thematised, with his narrator's intentional failure to enter into communicative reality. The flattening of film and video's three dimensions is supplemented by the narrator's existence outside of dialogues. *Elegy of a Voyage* does not only present 'conflicting light sources',<sup>50</sup> like a Romantic painting; it also presents conflicting sources of origin. Whereas a contemporary reviewer of Friedrich's painting, Friedrich von Rahmdor, complained that 'the time of day remains uncertain',<sup>51</sup> in *Elegy of a Voyage* it is agency and authorship that remain uncertain. The video opens the possibility of authorship towards infinity and does not take a superior meta-position towards the 'original.' In *Elegy of a Voyage*, the 'video-maker' in the documentary invents his own origins together with the origin of his representations.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter saw the self-reflexive movements in a documentary installation developed through some tropes of German Romanticism. Both Sokurov's and Werner Herzog's poetic documentaries share many similarities, and apply (in different ways) the Romantic notions of fragmentation and the Sublime. These will be discussed further in the following chapter. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, in *Elegy of a Voyage*, the visual outline of the *Rückenfigur* is itself a fragment of a body and the filmmaker's documentary is fragmented due to his sought inability to comprehend and master the documentary 'reality' he finds himself in. The isolation of Sokurov's filmmaker and his fragmented access to reality in some ways corresponds to the decontextualised footage in some of Herzog's documentaries. Both filmmakers oppose documentary realism and object to their films being called 'documentaries' since they believe their documentaries are too subjective. This thesis

advocates the destabilising effect their documentaries have with respect to their referential 'reality', and argues that only their inclusion in this genre makes these instabilities perceptible.

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<sup>1</sup> Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, London and New York Routledge, 1983, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy' in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, London and New York: Verso, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)' in Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, Continuum: London and New York, 1999, p. 96-97.

<sup>4</sup> André Bazin, 'An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism' in André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, Vol II, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 16-40.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Leymarie, *Dutch Painting*, Geneva: Skira, 1956, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Leymarie, *Dutch Painting*, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> Caspar David Friedrich. Unreferenced citation in William Vaughan, *Romanticism and Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1994, pp. 24-5.

<sup>8</sup> August Wilhelm Schlegel, §175 'Athenaeum Fragments' in Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 1991, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Vaughan, *Romanticism and Art*, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 2-3

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, p.11.

<sup>14</sup> Alexandr Sokurov, in Lauren Sedofsky, 'Plane Songs: Lauren Sedofsky talks with Alexandr Sokurov', *Artforum*, November 2001, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Gary Crowds, 'Aleksandr Sokurov', *Cineaste*, 26:3, June 2001, pp. 4-8.

<sup>16</sup> Sokurov, in Sedofsky, *Artforum*, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Sokurov, in Sedofsky, *Artforum*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Schrader, "'The History of an Artist's Soul is a very Sad History" - Aleksandr Sokurov Interview', *Film Comment*, 336, November/December 1997, pp. 20-5.

<sup>19</sup> Schrader, 'Aleksandr Sokurov Interview', pp. 23-24.

<sup>20</sup> William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979, p 465, cited in Frank Mitchell, *German Romanticism Redefined*, Aldershot-Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, p. 137, note 40.

<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colours* § 495, cited in Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, London: Athlone Press, 1986, p. 93.

<sup>22</sup> 'He [Robert Rauschenberg] desublimates the hand of the artist, allowing it to smear and rub, press and glue, privileging tactility over sight.' Helen Molesworth, 'Before Bed', *October*, No 63, Winter 1993, p 81, cited in Jack Ben-Levi et al, eds, *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> See the subchapters 'The Memory of Touch' and 'The Memory of Senses' in Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC- London, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 129.

<sup>26</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 130.

<sup>27</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 103, cited in Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 85-6.

<sup>28</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition: An Essay in Experimental Psychology*, Harper & Row, New York-Evanston: IL- London, 1964, pp. 38, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, pp. 38, 40.

- <sup>30</sup> Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington–Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 118.
- <sup>31</sup> Paul Arthur, ‘Jargons of Authenticity (Three American Moments)’ in Michael Renov (ed.) *Theorizing Documentary*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993, p. 126.
- <sup>32</sup> Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 35.
- <sup>33</sup> Mikhail Yampolsky, ‘Chekov/Sokurov: Repetition and Recollection’, *New Formations*, No 22, Spring 1994, p. 52.
- <sup>34</sup> Gary Crowds, ‘Aleksandr Sokurov’, pp. 4–8.
- <sup>35</sup> Schrader, ‘Aleksandr Sokurov Interview’, pp. 23–24.
- <sup>36</sup> Phillip French, ‘Take a Chance on a Long Shot’, *The Observer*, 6 April 2003
- <sup>37</sup> André Bazin, ‘An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism’, p. 20.
- <sup>38</sup> Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, New York: State University of New York, 1988, p. 52.
- <sup>39</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, p. 51.
- <sup>40</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, §238, *Philosophical Fragments*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, p. 50.
- <sup>41</sup> Heinrich von Kleist, ‘Empfindungen vor Friedrichs Seelandschaft’, in *Theorie der Romantik*, Herbert Uerlings (ed.), Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2000, p. 284.
- <sup>42</sup> Mikhail Yampolsky, ‘Chekov/Sokurov: Repetition and Recollection’, p. 57.
- <sup>43</sup> Brad Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, *Art History*, 25:1, February 2002, p. 75.
- <sup>44</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000, pp. 111–12 (§26).
- <sup>45</sup> Kant, (§26), *The Critique of Judgment*, p. 112.
- <sup>46</sup> Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 72.
- <sup>47</sup> Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 73.
- <sup>48</sup> Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 73.
- <sup>49</sup> Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 73.
- <sup>50</sup> Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 73.
- <sup>51</sup> Contemporary critic Friedrich von Rahmdor quoted in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, August Mahlmann (ed.) [Leipzig], 9:13 (17–21 January 1809), p. 103, cited in Brad Prager, ‘Kant in Caspar David Friedrich’s Frames’, p. 73, note 85.
- <sup>52</sup> Claire Colebrook, ‘Inhuman Irony: The Event of the Postmodern’, in Ian Buchanan and John Marks (eds.), *Deleuze and Literature*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2000, p. 101.

## Material Visions:

### Self-reflexivity and Physicality in Werner Herzog's Documentaries

*I am not a "German Romantic" as they called me in Playboy. [...] I am physical.<sup>1</sup>*

Werner Herzog, 1977

This thesis has been moving further 'inwards' on its trajectory of exploring 'self-reflexivity' (from the 'self' in the state socialist context in Chapter I. to the isolated figure of the filmmaker in his own documentary in Chapter IV) and has now arrived at its endpoint, looking at the question of how to relay an often extreme physical experience through documentary. This chapter continues to explore the notion of a reactive experience (which has been introduced as 'passive agency' in the previous Chapter IV) in another poetic documentary, this time by Werner Herzog (*Pilgrimage*, 2001). The self-reflexive tension of the sublime between apprehension and comprehension that has been discussed in the previous chapter is, in Herzog's documentaries, examined in terms of the appearance of the image and the 'essence' relayed through the narration. The German Romantic theory – mainly Friedrich Schlegel's notion of 'poetry of poetry' and of Romantic irony – that I use here to read Herzog's documentaries should not be confused with the populist view of idealist Romanticism nor with its Anglo-American version. Instead, its self-reflexive emphasis on the fragment can be seen as prefiguring the modernist crisis of human determinacy and as a precursor to deconstruction. This is why this chapter can move from the Romantic fragment to Derridean textuality.

With reference to his documentary manifesto *The Minnesota Declaration: Truth and Fact in Documentary Cinema* (1999), and Derrida's critique of Lacan's 'truth of fiction,' I will consider how Herzog's documentaries negotiate the issue of truth. In Herzog's documentaries such as *Bells from the Deep* (1993), the question of whether a scene has been staged or not is kept open on various levels of possibility. The documentary does not assert a final interpretation and keeps the decision about its truth value suspended infinitely. It therefore assures a fluctuation, which concurs with what the early Romantic theorist Friedrich Schlegel says about the oscillation in Romantic irony between self-reflection and its object. In respect to Herzog's documentaries, this oscillation is between different levels of fiction and non-fiction as well as between authorship and agency. This fluctuation is here contrasted with the rhetorical irony of mock-documentary, which

ultimately finalizes a ‘truth of fiction’. As it advances a democratic use of the possibility of performance and invention, *Bells from the Deep* does not simply assume the meta-textual position of mock-documentary. Instead, authorship and agency oscillate between various sources such as filmmaker, protagonist, ritual, institution or even a ‘Creator.’

In the multiple trajectories between documenting fiction and inventing documentary, Herzog turns the division between an extra-textual commentary ‘about’ something and creation as an internal process into a self-reflexive practice that combines both the external and internal perspectives. The belief in the documentary status of a film, i.e. its verisimilitude, is necessary to experience the fluctuation in referentiality. The abstract decision to call documentary a fiction like any other ultimately curbs this oscillation between the levels of reference. I suggest a reading of documentary as open to fluctuating levels of veracity, against documentary’s containment by an equal distribution of truth value and lack of invention. Even though Herzog contests the category of ‘documentary,’ I argue here for an inclusion of his documentaries in that genre precisely because of their ambiguous status.

In this chapter I will also look at the self-reflexive Romantic irony manifest in Werner Herzog’s documentaries such as *Bells from the Deep* and contrast it with the stable, rhetorical irony and formal reflexivity of mock-documentaries and found footage documentaries such as Johan Grimonprez’ *Dial History* and Emile De Antonio’s *Millhouse – A White Comedy*. In contrast to Herzog’s documentaries which remain ambiguous about their non-fictional status, I argue here that conventional mock-documentary effectively eliminates the destabilising dimension of irony by declaring itself as fiction.

Whereas Herzog scholars in the past, including the filmmaker himself, have stressed the similarity between his documentaries and his fiction films,<sup>ii</sup> I suggest here that there is a different structural dynamic at work in each. This chapter contrasts the affirmative repetitions (in a Deleuzian sense) of his documentary protagonists with the fatal repetitions (following the Freudian death drive) for the characters of his fiction films. Documentaries such as *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997) introduce difference through re-enactment. This protagonist-based form of repetition introduces difference into the identity of experience.

### **5.1.1 Athletic Documentary**

Herzog’s documentaries emphasize the physical aspect or limitations of his protagonists’ contact with the world, be it through the physical endurance of the plane crash survivors

in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997) and *Juliane – Wings of Hope* (1999); through athletic distinction in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* (1973) or *The Dark Glow of the Mountains* (1984); or in the disabilities of the blind-deaf in *The Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971). Herzog emphasizes filmmaking itself as a physical activity. According to him, due to the orientation and movement in space it requires, filmmaking itself is inherently athletic.

It [filmmaking] is athletic. [...]. It is not a coincidence that many of the really, really great filmmakers have been very athletic, very fine athletes in their physical private life, or in the life before they did films. And if I ask you to name me a great poet who has been an athlete, a great musician, a great painter, you would be at a loss. But when it comes to great filmmaking, you would have dozens of them. Film history is full of them. [...] It has to do with athletic instincts. A very keen sense of orientation within space, movement in space, something physical about it, which is very particular to filmmaking. It is very physical.<sup>iii</sup>

This valuing of physicality extends to the film team on location, even if it is a fiction film:

I told the actors, “[...] touch the rocks around you, feel everything there is to feel around you. You have to know the taste of these rocks, feel their smooth surfaces [...]” And it is the same thing for the cameraman: somehow he has to feel everything very physically with his whole body even though he never actually touches anything.<sup>iv</sup>

The point Herzog makes here is a stance that his documentaries show to be impossible if taken literally: to experience merely through seeing; to physically feel without touching. Through their emphasis on physicality and because physical experience cannot be abstracted into a meta-perspective of fiction or non-fiction, Herzog’s documentaries push referentiality beyond representation. This is why Herzog’s ‘athletic cinema’ is more challenging as a documentary than as a fiction film.

Because Herzog’s inventions are embedded in the physical terrain, they elude the abstraction of pure ‘fakery’ in the symbolic. That the physical per se is defined by not being invented, creates a paradox in which the diverse degrees of documentary manifestation can fluctuate. The fact that not everything is faked or faked to the same degree further encourages a process of deterritorialised viewing. Their physicality, however, is where Herzog documentaries have moved beyond the early German Romantic theories.

As alluded to in the previous chapter, physicality in Film Studies scholarship has thus far been addressed as visceral reception<sup>v</sup> of the spectator, or as *The Skin of the Film*,<sup>vi</sup> or phenomenologically,<sup>vii</sup> rather than through the physicality of the experience of filmmaking or of the protagonists. In Herzog's documentaries, physical experiences can be read as a subjectivity of the physical, thus displacing a subjectivity of identity in what Deleuze would call 'a repetition of the Same.' Physical experience is subjective in the extreme. What we physically experience with our bodies is singular and not repeatable without difference. Such corporeal materialism is a radicalization of the experiential - Herzog's documentary cinema gives us materialism in the form of physicality.

In raising the question of how a subjective experience such as an inner vision can be 'documented,' Werner Herzog's documentaries have frequently problematized the very notion of documentary. Herzog's documentaries explore the gap between documentary objectivity and spiritual or physical experience, foregrounding subjectivity in documentary. Even though his remarkable heroes and heroines are very articulate in expressing their experiences, these are nevertheless marked as singular. The experience of being blind-deaf, for example, cannot be shared by the film audience or be directly represented in a documentary. Thematizing the discrepancy between an inner vision and its external documentation, these films present documentary itself as a paradox.

### **5.1.2 Between the Visionary and the Documentary**

Herzog has often been called a visionary filmmaker with respect to his fiction films. This chapter explores the contradiction at work in the terms 'visionary' and 'documentary' - one geared towards the potentialities of the future, the other often either an observation of the present or a retrospective, secondary commentary from the past. Friedrich Schlegel (about whom we will hear more later with respect to his notion of Romantic irony as a paradox that cannot be sensibly contained in merely one interpretation) gives a clue as to how we could apply this approach to the generation of history in documentary via an inversion of temporality in the book title *The Historian as a Backwards Looking Prophet*.<sup>viii</sup> Deleuze argued for a visionary cinema in which 'descriptions replace objects,'<sup>ix</sup> the time-image. In contrast to Deleuze's visionary cinema of descriptions, however, documentary conventionally has descriptions, but is generally not regarded as visionary.

The emphasis of Herzog's films on material, physical reality has often been read as their documentary, i.e. factual, quality, as here by Timothy Corrigan:

[...] his insistence that these irrationalities are in fact hard, material reality is

attested by his frequent return to seemingly documentary subjects that stand alongside and support the radical perception of his fictional narratives.<sup>x</sup>

Whereas Herzog's fiction films have frequently been described as having a 'documentary quality,' his documentaries seem to contest the category of documentary. In fact, the filmmaker himself has emphasized that, due to the stagings in his films, they are not documentaries. In his polemical manifesto *The Minnesota Declaration: Truth and Fact in Documentary Cinema* he criticizes the notion of 'fact' - what he calls 'the truth of accountants' - as superficial. Uniquely, however, physicality in Herzog's documentaries is used to demystify 'facts.' The immediate working through of Herzog's meta-physical visions in physical materialisations, and his rejection of objective facts as untouched by paradoxes and by a dialectics of deeds is reminiscent of how Walter Benjamin found the German Idealist Gottlieb Fichte elevating an already accomplished fact (*Tatsache*) over an act (*Tat*):

Fichte's philosophy does certainly start from an active deed, not from a fact, but the word "act" [*Tat*] still alludes, in a subordinate meaning, to "fact" [*Tatsache*; a linkage between 'deed' and 'object'], to the "fait accompli."<sup>xi</sup>

The philosophical stance detectable in Herzog's documentaries differs from Fichte's idealist sanctioning of the 'fact,' in that the act (*Tat*), as a creative act directed towards the future, is liberated from the finished fact (*Tatsache*), since in the process of filmmaking the act is seen to produce the fact. This is a reversal of the customary temporal delimitations of documentary filmmaking whereby a re-visitation is a representation of facts in retrospect. In Herzog's documentaries, the deed often is in fact an act in another (namely the dramatic) sense. The status of any particular gesture, speech or action as either act or fact often remains ambiguous, and therefore assures a fluctuation, which concurs with what Friedrich Schlegel says about the oscillation in Romantic poetry between self-reference and object. In respect to Herzog's documentaries, this oscillation is between fiction and non-fiction.

This filmmaker of this *physical* cinema is generally either accused or lauded, depending on the context (he is criticized in Germany and praised in Anglo-American discourse), of being *meta-physical*, two attributes that might appear to be in contradiction. The assumption is that the meta-physical sides of Herzog's films, because of their purported interest in a 'deep truth,'<sup>xii</sup> consist in being about eternal truths and that they are universalising. About *Fata Morgana*, for instance, it has been written that 'Herzog has rejected fact in favour of imagery, which can express universality with so much more force than the statistic.'<sup>xiii</sup> Deleuze also maintained: 'Herzog is a metaphysician. He is the most

metaphysical of the German directors.<sup>xiv</sup> And yet, even Deleuze underestimates the physicality of Herzog's meta-physicality:

And when Herzog remarks that "*he who walks is defenceless*," we might say that the walker lacks any strength in comparison with cars and aeroplanes. But, there again, the remark was metaphysical.<sup>xv</sup>

Because he died before they became available, Deleuze could not have seen Herzog's documentaries that follow the endurance of long distance journeys made on foot, such as *Little Dieter needs To Fly* and *Juliane – Wings of Hope*. Nevertheless, Deleuze turns what for German critics was a reproach into a compliment and compares Herzog's meta-physicality with Bergson's, in the sense that what is meta-physical is that which stops being functional and starts *being*.<sup>xvi</sup> 'The walker is defenceless because he is he who is beginning to be, and never finishes being small.'<sup>xvii</sup> It is my contention that the interest of Herzog's documentaries should not be seen to lie in the spiritual in the sense of the supernatural or meta-physical, but as something earthly, with physical causes and effects. The image of Herzog as an idealist stands in contrast to the emphasis on the physical and practical in his documentaries, which is often relayed as the tension between the flights of his protagonists and their fall and struggle on the ground. His heroes are, as Thomas Elsaesser observed, 'Saints and holy fools that have no possibility of glory and power in this world, nor is there a next one.'<sup>xviii</sup>

Herzog proclaims that he seeks the 'ecstasy of truth,' and that 'you can only reach ecstasy by imagination, by fabrication and such things.'<sup>xix</sup> Even though the spirit of his documentaries resonates with Friedrich Schlegel's belief that reality is not enough, his documentaries refer to an excessive physicality, rather than defying existence in a divine truth which the Christian Schlegel advocated. Herzog's dismissal of metaphysics becomes apparent when with respect to hypnotising the actors for *Heart of Glass* (1976) he points out that 'It has nothing to do with metaphysics.'<sup>xx</sup> He sacked the hypnotist he had initially hired because he was 'too much into the supernatural aspects.'<sup>xxi</sup> Hypnosis for Herzog has more to do with transcending the human, than with an externally induced trance. This rejection of the supernatural is perhaps also why he had Klaus Kinski act as Nosferatu, who as a vampire is a supernatural character, but vulnerable and yearning to be a human.

There are two reoccurring themes in his documentaries, both quite literally earthbound: human flights that end up unceremoniously returning to the ground and religious rites practised in painful proximity to the ground. From the early *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* (1973) to *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997), *Wings of Hope* (1999) and

*The White Diamond* (2004), objects and people glide through the air or through space as well as through the water, like in *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005). Often the catalyst for making these documentaries was a trauma, in which some vehicle of flight and sign of cultural achievement is brought low, literally crashing to the jungle floor. *Bells from the Deep* (1993), *The Lord and the Laden* (1999), *Pilgrimage* (2001) and *Wheel of Time* (2003), form the other strand of films, in which Herzog follows spiritual travellers of diverse convictions, exploring the tension between belief and disbelief not only with respect to documentary, but also with regards to faith. Under the theme of pilgrimage, several of Herzog's documentaries explore the paradox of a spiritual journey realised through physical means: 'I had a physical curiosity to depict spirituality.'<sup>xxii</sup> Herzog thus works with apparently opposing conditions: the physical, mortal and finite on the one hand, and the invisible, spiritual and infinite on the other.

## 5.2 Appearance vs. Experience

Herzog's films are populated by long shots of landscapes, often taken from an aerial view. Alan Singer wrote about the long vista tracking shots in *Fata Morgana*:

[...] initially the land, seen from above, is devoid of familiar earthly particulars, sifted into abstraction by the tracking motion of the camera. [...] Rather than reminding us of the static vistas of the land that precede them (and thus denying any metaphorical relation to them), the tracking shots finally represent merely tracking shots.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Singer argues here for a representation that achieves textual purity, even medium specificity: 'The camera thus assumes priority over what it records.'<sup>xxiv</sup> He makes the point that the camera works as an instrument of mediation against the more widely held view that Herzog's images transcend their medium and that his films are about (the loss of) a meta-physical origin. Whereas I do not think that Herzog's images foreground the camera - even in his earlier documentaries without human protagonists such as *Fata Morgana* - I nevertheless agree that these images are not just transcendent vistas, but rather display a certain type of materialism. It is a materialism that does not emphasize its medium, but the experiences of the protagonists. Conventionally, however, these often aerial long shots have been referred to as 'absolute landscapes,'<sup>xxv</sup> as summed up by Tom Cheesman:

Herzog [...] uses images of natural scenery which are neither motivated by the point of view of character in a film, nor possess any denotative meaning.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The opinion that these images are outside the films' narrative is further maintained by Noël Carroll: 'The represented object has an aura of inexplicability, i.e. it is hard to articulate the

purposes, especially the narrative purposes.<sup>'xxvii</sup> He argues that the image is furthermore disconnected from the point-of-view of a character: 'We see instead from a non-causally directed point-of-view, which, in turn, raises a strong feeling of presence in us.'<sup>xxviii</sup> By contrast, I would like to suggest here that, especially in his later documentaries, these long shots of nature are not disconnected from the narrative and the commentary. Instead, through these distanced shots, Herzog often shows up the presence of the image now as being deceptive of the concrete, if already past experiences (which are hence now invisible). This Herzog arrives at by using narration as the conveyer of 'truth.'

Contrary to the contentions above, these abstract aerial images of landscape, when considered in relation to the narration in Herzog's documentaries, turn out to be more than purely camera-specific movements and independent of the narrative. Instead, the camera takes the place and the optical point-of-view its protagonists physically inhabited before the fall from appearance into experience, so to speak. When we see aerial shots from a plane onto the jungle in *Juliane – Wings of Hope*, we hear Juliane remembering that the jungle looked like broccoli as she crashed down with the plane. Similarly, Dieter's narration of his experiences as a pilot introduces a typically sublime Herzogian shot from the air flying over Vietnamese villages as they are bombed in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*:

'I was shot down over Laos in 1966 in the early phase of the Vietnam war. I never wanted to go to war. I only got into this, because I had one burning desire, and that was to fly. But that there were people out there who suffered and who died only became clear much later to me, when I was their prisoner.'<sup>xxix</sup>

Dieter's story of suffering counterpoints the beauty of the images. The protagonists are more reliable mediators than the abstract images. Herzog shows the image to be deceptive and counter-productive to understanding the practical determination his heroes and heroines had to have in order to survive. Over the second sublimely apocalyptic aerial shot a little later in the documentary, Herzog narrates:

'Up from the air, Vietnam didn't seem real at all. For Dengler, it was like a grid on a map. He had suddenly found himself not only a pilot, but a soldier caught up in a real war. But even though it was all very real, everything down there seemed to be so alien and so abstract. It all looked strange, like a distant, barbaric dream.'<sup>xxx</sup>

Making the link between the abstract overview and a dream, Herzog here merges an elevated position of active mastery with the passive experiencing of images in an unconscious state, thereby introducing another level of 'reality' - the dream - to the

opposition between the image and the narration. Herzog often narrates against appearance. The filmmaker does not even believe his own image:

I don't look at my own navel when I make movies. It's never a journey of self-discovery. To this day, I don't even know the colour of my own eyes. If I shave in the mirror, I evade my own gaze.<sup>xxxix</sup>

In Herzog's documentaries his narration, spoken against a deceptive image, reveals its treacherous substance. We can witness this in *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), when Brad Dourif's alien documentary presenter narrates to images of the Roswell UFO that 'while they were filming this here something invisible was seeping out'; or in *Lesson of Darkness*, shot after the first Gulf War, when Herzog narrates over aerial images of what looks like beautiful lakes:

'Everything that looks like water, is in actuality oil. Ponds and lakes are spread out all over the land. The oil is treacherous, because it reflects the sky. The oil is trying to disguise itself as water. This lake here as well, like everything else, is black oil.'

It is not against language, as Carroll, Gertrud Koch and others contend, that Herzog's films works (as will be elaborated later). On the contrary, in his documentaries, it is precisely on language that Herzog relies in his battle against the superficiality of nature and of images. This is especially prevalent in his images of nature and animals. In *Grizzly Man*, we see a cute bear tumbling around playfully in the water. Here Herzog again underlines the difference between the superficiality of appearance and the image's dangerous substance: 'What looks playful could be desperation. The bear is diving deep for some of the remaining salmon carcasses at the bottom of the lake.' The harsh implications of the cute image is that either the bear will die, or it will eat either its own or humans.

This gap between appearance and experience, relayed through the image and the narration, does not only apply to the difference between 'the Large and the Small,'<sup>xxxix</sup> as Deleuze described Herzog's cinema: the aerial overview and the study of detail on the ground. It also applies to the difference between how someone looks and how they might feel. This is exemplified in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* when Herzog's voice-over narration introduces Dieter to an image of him inconspicuously driving a car:

'Men are often haunted by things that happen to them in life especially in war or other periods of great intensity. Sometimes you see these men walking in the streets or driving in a car. Their lives seem to be normal but they are not.'<sup>xxxix</sup>

In his most recent documentaries, *The White Diamond* and *Grizzly Man*, Herzog takes his distrust of the image even further in that we are only told of the central image of the films.

In *The White Diamond* a remote-controlled camera is lowered into a canyon, in what so far has been an inaccessible cave behind a waterfall, to peer into the hidden nesting place of swifts. This image has never been taken and is the source of many stories and visualizations. However, after Herzog teases us by showing the camera filming the desired images, he then denies us access to the actualized image in favor of the mental picture. Furthermore, the crucial event in *Grizzly Man* - the death of the main protagonist - is relayed indirectly through language. When Timothy Treadwell and his girlfriend Amy Huguenard were killed, the lens cap was on the camera, although the sound was recorded. However, this time, we neither see the image nor hear direct sound. The event is mediated even one more step removed, as we only get to listen to the recounting of a story the coroner deduced from the tape and to Herzog's narrated experience of this audio-track. Again, the crucial event is narrated. We see the back of the filmmaker's head while he is listening to the sound of his protagonist being eaten, and hear him tell Jewel Palowak, Treadwell's former girlfriend, that: 'You must never listen to this tape. You must not keep it. You must destroy it.' The deaths of Treadwell and Huguenard remain invisible and inaudible. The images of the mythical cave and of the moment of death are not realized and thus also cannot be trivialized. In a bid to demonstrate the inaccessibility of a 'deeper truth' through 'external' images, Herzog withholds direct presentations or, if he does present images, it is to show them up as deceptive. Any external 'copy' of an image that has previously only been imagined can only be a poorer version of the mental image. Herzog denies us images, so that we can have (inner) visions.

It would seem tempting to read the contrast between appearance and experience - between the 'truth of accountants' and the 'deep truth' - at work in Herzog's documentaries as the Platonic distinction between inadequate appearance and the location of truth in ideal essence. However, for Plato, the ideal is an abstraction - an original template, the realization of which can only be a bad copy - whereas for Herzog, any abstraction runs against the exceptional singularity of experience. Both question appearance, but where Plato finds it too specific, Herzog finds it too abstract. In his documentaries, the essential experience cannot be represented by an image, the image is presented as an abstraction that is incapable of relaying the singular, physical experiences of the protagonists. Deleuze critiques the Platonic opposition of appearance and essence as one between a fallible, sensing subject and a knowing subject, emphasizing elsewhere the materiality of appearances, 'the cinema of the seer':<sup>xxxiv</sup>

I can thus say that the whole of classical philosophy from Plato onwards seemed to develop itself within the frame of a duality between sensible

appearances and intelligible essences. You can see clearly that this already implies a certain status of the subject. If I say that there are appearances and that there are essences, which are basically like the sensible and the intelligible, this implies a certain position of the knowing subject, namely: the very notion of appearance refers to a fundamental defect in the subject. A fundamental defect, namely: appearance is in the end the thing such as it appears to me by virtue of my subjective constitution which deforms it. The famous example of appearance: the stick in water appears broken to me. [...] It's Plato's theme: leave appearances to find essences.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Deleuze finds Plato's notion of appearance to be associated with delusion and therefore subjectivity to be negative in itself. Plato's subjectivity implies a distortion of 'objective' reality; Herzog, by contrast, presents the image as apparently objective in order to denounce it as superficial and incapable of representing the subjective 'deep truth'. The 'essences' of Herzog's documentaries are the subjective and physical experiences of his protagonists that cannot be abstracted from their concrete causal and narrative chains. In Herzog's documentaries, the immateriality of appearance is set against the materiality of experience. The fall from appearance into experience - from the sky to the earth - has even been made literal in Herzog's documentary revisits of the plane crash survivors in *Little Dieter needs to Fly* and *Juliane – Wings of Hope*.

### 5.2.1 The Invisibility of Experience

In Herzog's narration, it is not the metaphysical truth of an 'essence' of these images that he alludes to. Rather he describes the present - though it be invisible in the image - materiality of the place filmed; or he describes an experience for which this environment was the setting, but it being a past experience making it, too, invisible at the moment of filming. His documentaries are often revisits of the scenes of past events and with images spatially so distant that the concrete material identity of their objects escapes us, such as in the aerial shots. Experiences in Herzog's documentaries are mediated through non-visual means.

Noël Carroll argues that Herzog's films, especially his landscape vistas, evoke a sense of presence.<sup>xxxvi</sup> He names two conditions as premises for this 'experience of presence':<sup>xxxvii</sup> immediacy and inexplicability.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Whilst at least the second premise might apply to Herzog's fiction films, his documentaries are neither immediate nor inexplicable. Already the format of a revisit with a survivor that Herzog's documentaries often take, works against a sense of immediacy. Immediacy is neither evoked in Herzog's re-enactments

with Dieter and Juliane on the sites of their previous traumatic experiences, nor in the observations of the aftermath of the Gulf War in *Lessons of Darkness*, nor even in the awaiting of an event that declines to enter the stage, the elusive volcano eruption in *La Soufrière*. We also know that the films only exist because the heroes, including the filmmaker, have survived. Even in *Grizzly Man*, Herzog's first documentary made with 'found' footage by someone else, we get to know the nature of this particular 'revisit' from the start: the amateur filmmaker, who had shot the original footage, had been eaten by one of the subjects of his documentation. Likewise, any immediacy that might have been evident in a direct transmission of Steiner's ski-jumping accidents in the form of a televised sport event, is dissipated through slow motion in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*.

In *My Best Fiend* (1999), Herzog comments, while he is in the same space, on the now invisible events that happened in that space previously. In the Munich flat where his family by coincidence lived next to Klaus Kinski when Herzog was a boy, we see him now dramatically invoking young man Kinski's destructive effect on the materiality of the bathroom, as he speaks to the current owners of that flat:

'Wasn't there a door? [...] That's where we used to live [...] And this bath here was smaller of course, because our room reached up to here. And Kinski had locked himself in this bathroom for two days and two nights; for 48 hours. And in his fits of maniacal fury he smashed everything to smithereens: the bathtub, the toilet bowl, everything. You could sift it through a tennis racket.'<sup>xxxix</sup>

Standing in this large bathroom, its appliances all intact, Herzog talks 'against' the image of the flat as it is today, while he describes the layout of the flat as it was in the past. Here the visual image is congruent with the present: that is, Herzog is in fact talking 'against' the present when talking 'against' the image. It is distance, either in space like in the aerial shots, or in time, such as the invisibility of Kinski's rage in the current *misc-en-scene* of the flat in *My Best Fiend*, that allows deception. This disparity is made apparent by language. The difference between appearance and experience, which renders experience invisible and is often relayed elsewhere in his documentaries through the spatial distance of aerial shots, here renders past events invisible and is relayed through temporal distance. The past is only available as an internal image. However, the inaccessibility of experience through external images does not lead Herzog into the imaginary as it did Jean Rouch, but to a heightened emphasis of the concrete materiality and physicality of experiences. Herzog's stress on the visionary in his documentaries is not utopian like it is for his alter-egos Fitzcarraldo or Aguirre in his fiction films, but it exists in a dialectic with a

materialism of the concrete, or more precisely: a materialism of the *invisibly* concrete.

Carroll's 'experience of presence'<sup>xli</sup> seems to refer to the appearance of the image for the viewer, rather than its content, i.e. the experiences represented in, or perhaps rather by, the image. But as is argued here, the beauty of the image is not an untainted experience. Instead, the experience of the beautiful appearance of the image for the viewer – or the hero, such as Dieter, before his downfall – is consciously pitted against the concrete experience of the characters onscreen. Rather than Herzog's documentaries evoking an 'immediacy of experience'<sup>xlii</sup> or having an 'appearance of immediacy',<sup>xliii</sup> one should perhaps rather say that the images manifest an 'immediacy of appearance.'

In today's culture in which the depiction of subjective experiences dominates factual television and documentary film, it is vital to point out how experience is depicted differently in Herzog's documentaries. Herzog's 'cinema of experience', in a sense, is an acknowledgement of the impossibility of a shared experience. Perhaps prematurely in 1978 Giorgio Agamben claimed the destruction of experience in his book *Infancy and History. Essays on the Destruction of Experience*. He maintained that:

'For modern man's average day contains virtually nothing that can still be translated into experience. Neither reading the newspaper, with its abundance of news that is irretrievably remote from life, nor sitting for minutes on end at the wheel of his car in a traffic jam.'<sup>xliii</sup>

In his rant, that 'it is the non-translatability into experience that now makes everyday existence intolerable',<sup>xliv</sup> Agamben sounds like Herzog. Like Agamben, also Lyotard, in 1981, witnessed 'the decline of experience'<sup>xlv</sup> and, like Herzog, the dominance of facts:

'The *fact* is not an aspect of experience, it is what remains of reality once it has been murdered by the infinity of knowledges, disencumbered of its subjective envelope...'<sup>xlvi</sup>

Lyotard's facts are thus like Herzog's 'truth of accountants.' By presenting experiences as invisible, Herzog's documentaries realize the failure of documentary to depict the subjectivity of experience. This anti-representational aspect of Herzog's documentaries, which recognises conventional documentary reality as a limitation and 'expresses the constraints of its own mediation',<sup>xlvii</sup> is explored below in subchapter 5.2 as the documentary sublime.

### **5.2.2 From Anti-narrative Fiction to Narrative Documentary**

The 'absolute' images of landscapes that seemingly show Herzog's indifference to human narratives have also been used as examples for the resistance of his films against language.

Inexplicability, the indescribability of these experiences, is the second condition Carroll names for the apparent aesthetic of presence of Herzog's films.<sup>xlviii</sup> He asserts - with respect to Herzog's fiction and documentary films - that Herzog regards 'experience as the logical contrary of language.'<sup>xlix</sup> He finds that experience, for Herzog

[...] is identified by its purported inaccessibility to language. Somewhat extravagantly and tendentiously, these filmmakers regard experience as the logical contrary of language. Authentic experience is that which is left over undescribed or unexplained after language has done its work.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas Carroll finds Herzog's films generally to be about an 'opposition between language and experience,'<sup>li</sup> I argue that that in his documentaries language is the ally of physical experience and that the opposition is rather between the image and language. Contrary to Carroll's view that 'we are tempted to declare the effect of such landscapes or vistas to be inexpressible or indescribable,'<sup>lii</sup> I suggest that in many of his documentaries language is the ally of experience in that it allows the protagonists to counter the abstract image with stories of their physical experiences. Here it is appearance that is pitted against physicality, not language. In *Land of Silence and Darkness*, even language itself – the sign-language of the deaf-blind - is physical.

The abstracted landscape images in Herzog's documentaries such as *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, *Juliane - Wings of Hope*, *My Best Fiend* and *Land of Silence and Darkness* are presented as being unable to express the experience of the documentaries' protagonists. Whereas Herzog's documentaries mark experience as something singular that often cannot be shared or directly represented, such as the experiences of the deaf-blind in *Land of Silence and Darkness*, he and his protagonists nevertheless describe the effects of these experiences through language. What has been regarded by Carroll as a simple opposition in Herzog's films between language being bad and images being good, is challenged in his documentaries. Here it is often the image that lies and language - frequently Herzog's own narration - which tells the truth. The aerial landscape vistas that are said have no narrative function in his fiction films have also been used as examples for the documentary quality of Herzog's fiction films. These images have come to represent the anti-narrative stance of his fiction films through their apparent documentary quality. In his documentaries by contrast, these aerial shots are very much embedded in the protagonist's narrative. The images of nature are often countered in Herzog's documentaries with a narration that renders them inadequate as representations of those experiences. The image cannot capture the experiences that instead are relayed through language. The image itself, and the feeling, might be inexplicable, but the experiences are not. In contrast to Carroll's assessment of

inexplicable images with no purpose, I would say that the inaccessibility of the image *is* its purpose, especially in *Land of Silence and Darkness*. I suggest here that, while his fiction films support a resistance to language, his documentaries advocate a mistrust of the image.

Carroll finds that *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) 'is the Herzog film that most deeply explores the oppositions between language and experience.'<sup>liii</sup> The crucial point here is, that *Kaspar Hauser* is a fiction film. Herzog has frequently been classified as an anti-narrative filmmaker - a position he has explicitly identified himself at some stage: 'I don't think the cinema ought to subject itself to the imperatives of narration.'<sup>liv</sup> The protagonists of his fiction films are outside of conventional language and society, blocked in language and constrained in body movement. Herzog's fiction films actively resist unfolding in narrative terms:

[...] because there can be no narrative development in Herzog's nightmare of real exploitation and imaginary identification, the heroic characters he has created are usually more lasting than the stories in which they figure.<sup>lv</sup>

Herzog's films are seen to celebrate an existence outside of language and causal relations, as here by Kaja Silverman:

He [Kaspar Hauser] is outside of language and difference. Much later, after acceding to subjectivity, Kaspar describes his entry into the symbolic order as a "terrible fall"; a fall from plenitude into difference, from all-inclusiveness into a partitioned world. [...] Indeed, the film suggests that subjectivity is in effect the dominant cultural narrative, a narrative which it is incumbent upon each individual to live through to the end of a linear and causal fashion.<sup>lvi</sup>

I propose that these observations only apply to Herzog's fiction films, not to his documentaries. As Herzog's heroes, such as Kaspar Hauser, try to 'live up to' the 'symbolic' in his fiction films, they 'fall' into language, movement and death. As will further be elaborated below, Herzog's fiction films mirror in their narrative the notion that the world of fiction film itself is formed according to a Platonic ideal, in which his protagonists can only fail. His fiction films often end negatively, if not fatally, for his characters, after they try to follow a vision in their fictional world build from a script based in language: 'The theme of the film [*Kaspar Hauser*] is unmistakable - language is death.'<sup>lvii</sup> But while the 'fall' into narrative causality was terrible for the fictional hero Kaspar Hauser, it was exactly causal thinking that helped Dieter and Juliane survive the traumatic experiences depicted in Herzog's documentaries about them. Faced with the invisibility of materiality and the past, Herzog has fallen into narrative in his documentaries.

Herzog seeks out protagonists for his documentaries who have been in life-threatening situations, yet it is their 'down to earth' normality and unfazed practicality in dealing with their extreme circumstances which the films admire. Whereas Carroll's claim that Herzog 'clearly disdains the practical use of language,'<sup>lviii</sup> might hold true with respect to his fiction films, his documentary protagonists are very practical both with and without their language. In contrast to his fiction films, the concrete and physical experiences of Herzog's documentary survivors are relayed through the narration of the filmmaker and the protagonists themselves, who are often good storytellers, regardless of the language through which they communicate. In the documentary *Land of Silence and Darkness* for instance, the narration of the filmmaker is supplemented by the subtitled sign language of his protagonists. As the use of language and causal relations are deterritorialised - that is spread out and not hierarchically structured - we become aware of several languages, such as sign and verbal language, and causal linkages on various levels. In Herzog's documentaries, physicality is not in opposition or competition with language: even though the experiences referred to are physical, Herzog's documentaries make sense through narration. Herzog himself even seems to seek an experience outside language but so as to later speak about it. His conversation is peppered with jaw-dropping stories, frequently announced with: 'You would not believe it.' For instance he said when talking about filming *La Soufrière* under a live volcano, which had been given a '100%' chance of erupting imminently: 'I knew that if I was able to escape from this one alive then I would be able to joke about it afterwards.'<sup>lix</sup>

### 5.2.3 Physical Causalities

The emphasis on physical experiences in Herzog's films has usually been interpreted as a resistance to narrative irrespective of their fictional or documentary status, here by Thomas Elsaesser: 'Herzog's characters have a quality of bodily resistance to both narrative progress and the direct translation of thought into action.'<sup>lx</sup> In his fiction films, a causal link between signifier and referent is conventionally regarded to be blocked, and realized through inaccessibility and inarticulation with respect to language. Elsaesser furthermore writes:

One can venture that his exploration of the significance of body and gesture in relation to space or environment (here indeed is a direct affinity to German expressionism) ultimately conflicts with the logic of narrative, because what is important to Herzog – the dialectic of the physical irreducibility of gesture and its equally inescapable sign character – is not compatible with psychological

motivation or causality, because of the different density which gesture inscribes in the movement and the rhythm of a film.<sup>lxi</sup>

What Elsaesser has overlooked here is that there can be several levels of causal and non-causal relations. Just because narrative cinema is causal does not mean that causalities have to be narrative. Even if Herzog's documentaries are relayed through narration, their narrative is driven by physical and material causality.

Referential causality as well as indexical representation is generally employed to define documentary. An indexical trace implies a physical effect such as the imprint left by light on celluloid. It is in a direct, material relationship to its cause. This indexical bond between the referent and its representation is often taken to be a trait of documentary evidence. With respect to documentary, often the causality of the events referred to is equated with their indexical quality. The staging of an event is sometimes, and wrongly seen to exclude indexicality, for instance here by Steve Lipkin:

The description of docudramatic form offered here centers on how, distinct from conventional documentaries, docudramas replace indexical, "unstaged" images with a quasi-indexical narrative.<sup>lxii</sup>

The indexical bond applies, however, to both fiction and documentary alike: 'This indexical relationship is true of fictions as well as non-fictions.'<sup>lxiii</sup>

Indexicality plays a key role in authenticating the documentary image's claims to the historical real, but the authentication itself must come from elsewhere.<sup>lxiv</sup>

Indexicality and staging - or fiction film - do not exclude one another. On the contrary, many of the staged, fictional scenes of mock-documentaries, documentary dramas, as well as fiction films are filmed in a documentary realist style that highlights the images' indexicality through the style of documentary realism. Whereas it might be thought that documentary needs to be indexical, however, this indexical relation does not stop at what is immediately filmed, it can also be that the object filmed bears indexical traces. Herzog's documentaries do not necessarily pursue a direct aesthetics of presence or indexical trace, but displace the indexical bond between the representation and what it represents onto the relationship between the corporeal effect an event has left on the lives and bodies of his heroes. This relationship between an event and the corporeality of the protagonist is displayed for example when Dieter shows us the scars the tortures have left on his arms in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, or when Werner Herzog mentions the cactus spines that are still stuck in his knees in *Werner Herzog eats his Shoe*. When Reinhold Messner talks about the invisible lines his body leaves on the mountains he climbs in *The Dark Glow of the Mountains*, one could read this as an example of invisible indexicality:

‘I have the feeling every now and then that I write on one of those large rock faces that are three or four thousand meters high, like a teacher who writes on the blackboard with chalk. But I don’t just write lines, imaginary lines. I live those lines. I also have the feeling that those lines are still there, even if I’m the only one that can see them, feel them, because I lived them. But they’re there. And they stay for all time.’

Edward Branigan distinguishes indexicality as purely physical causality from narrative causality that involves a broader knowledge and judgments about the relative probability of events. He defines narrative causality pre-eminently as dependent on social conventions:

[...] the spectator’s ongoing causal connections among (like) descriptions that, in turn, liken events to one another, bringing them together. Finding connections using metaphor and language is preeminently a social act.<sup>lxv</sup>

In Herzog’s documentaries, by contrast, physical causalities are intimately linked with narrative causalities. The events referred to in Herzog documentaries of course are not probable at all. Indeed, they have been chosen by Herzog as a subject matter precisely for this reason. They take place outside of social conventions, or they demonstrate how modes of categorization or quantification are utterly inappropriate for the singularity of the events, such as in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*. Herzog’s documentaries show that causality can be singular and that the nonsensical can still depend on causal relations. In contrast to Edward Branigan’s definition of cause and effect as grounded on social conventions, I suggest here that Herzog’s documentaries point out the layered nature of causality. Irrationality and accidentality does not preclude causality. Whereas the causes of many of his protagonist’s actions are either voluntary and irrational, such as making a pilgrimage on one’s knees, or involuntary and accidental, such as being a victim of a plane crash, Herzog’s documentaries nevertheless relay the immediate causality of the physical. Causality in his documentaries is sought on the level of the singular and the detail of physical constraints instead of on the meta-level of social conventions or historical determinations.

#### **5.2.4 The Inversion of Documentary Causality**

For Herzog, representation does not only work in the one direction from the object to the image. Instead, he puts the emphasis rather on the movement from images to reality: real, living subjects are endangered by the lack of imagination materialised in images. When Herzog declares in *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* that ‘Our civilisation [...] is going to die out like dinosaurs if we don’t find adequate images,’ he turns around a common

understanding of the causal relationship between the represented and their representation: images and imagination have real consequences. Herzog's documentaries turn documentary from a re-presentation to a presentation, and thus turn Bill Nichols' assessment of documentary as a representation of reality on its head:

Documentary *re*-presents the historical world by making an indexical record of it; it *represents* the historical world by shaping this record from a distinctive perspective or point of view. The evidence of *re*-presentation supports the argument or perspective of the *representation*.<sup>lxvi</sup>

Herzog's documentaries, like most of the other documentaries discussed in this thesis, do not make an argument that support a representation – a claim that Nichols makes for documentary generally. Instead – like Herzog's and Sokurov's works considered here – they play with the order of representation. Herzog does not only declare a reversal in the causal order, which would place the referent (what is documented) first and the representation (the documentary) second, but physically demonstrates that images have real consequences. He had forced both reality and documentary into existence through promising to eat his shoe if the then unknown Errol Morris ever made his first documentary (which turned out to be *Gates of Heaven* (1978)). In *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* (1980) Herzog then turned real life into a stage act for the sake of a documentary. In making his documentary, Errol Morris in a sense 'caused' Herzog to eat his shoe. Furthermore, with respect to the physical act, the normal chronology of events is reversed. Whereas, usually, the fresh meat of an animal is used for food and the skin is dried to make leather and then shoes, Herzog has first worn the shoes and then eats them. The chronology of first eating and then wearing, of internalisation and of external usage, is reversed and thus de-functionalized. The director as protagonist, here of another director's documentary, in *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* has to walk on bare feet to get another pair of shoes because his are cooking.

Herzog explored walking as an impractical way of moving forward across vast distances with one's body, both extra-filmically and in his documentaries. He himself often would walk around something, like he did as a boy around the coast of Corsica or along the boundaries of Germany when it was still divided 'in order to hold it together.'<sup>lxvii</sup> In maintaining that for *Pilgrimage* 'images came barefoot' he connected the image and the body, the high and the low, the spiritual and the physical, heaven and the ground.<sup>lxviii</sup> It is these physical gestures (or figures of the Small, as Deleuze would have called them - or fragments according to Friedrich Schlegel) of crawling for long distances on knees that hold the boundaries of the documentary together. He also walked from Munich to Paris to

the German exile and expert on Expressionism, Lotte Eisner, to get her approval for his adaptation of an expressionist German film, *Nosferatu* (1979). Thus even in terms of the usually not corporeal activities of financing, producing and promoting a film, Herzog asserted a physical activity as the premise even for a fiction film to be circulated. Obviously, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the promise of this physical activity encouraged Errol Morris to make *Gates of Heaven* (1978) and helped in finding an audience for *Nosferatu*. When these physically materialized events are put into words, they take on a different character and become sensationalist. In addition to his documentaries, Herzog's own actions foreground the limits of representation, i.e, the inadequacy of the representation to what it purports to represent.

In another reversal of the conventional successive temporal order of documentary, in *La Soufrière* Herzog compares his impression of a town deserted in expectation of a volcanic eruption to a science-fictional, post-apocalyptic scenario. Thereby the facts manifested in the presence of filming are turned into a fictional future potentiality. Non-fiction thus becomes fiction, as was the case in *My Best Fiend* where the *misc-en-scène* and memories of Herzog's fiction films had become the material for a documentary. The full title of *La Soufrière: Waiting for an Unavoidable Catastrophe* already announces a paradox. The volcano fails to erupt. The catastrophe is avoided. The filmmaker of course must have escaped the inescapable catastrophe, since otherwise he would not have been able to make the film. The paradox lies in the failure even to self-destruct. By addressing *Lessons of Darkness* as a science fiction film instead of a documentary, Herzog again irreverently plays with the conventional temporal order of documentary and documented, and turns what usually would normally be a documentary of a closed past into a fictional future. Herzog keeps up this play between appearance and substance when he describes the images of *Lessons of Darkness*:

And of course, it [*Lessons of Darkness*] makes it clear at the beginning that we are in a science fiction film and not in a documentary. It makes it clear that we are on a planet in our solar system. I remember that the text says: 'vast mountain ranges enshrouded in mist.' [...] There is a long pan and you see a mountain range and you see this mist in the valleys. What it [the mountain range] actually was, it was tracks in the sand, not deeper than a foot deep. And because it was so hot, somehow fumes came out of the ground.

Mapped on this temporal reversal is the fact that the materiality of the depicted is only really comprehensible through language. It is through language that we know about the real, and ugly, substance of the beautiful images, that it is oil not water that we see. We

cannot perceive the truth; it has to be told. The internal image thereby corrects the visual one. Unlike in his fiction films, in his documentaries, Herzog relays truth through language. But of course, by claiming at the beginning of the documentary, that *Lessons of Darkness* is a science fiction film, the narration's subsequent assertions are put into doubt, even if they negate the impression made by the images and through their corrective function seem more truthful. In an original move, the documentary image is read as an invention, and ultimately the tension between the truth status of the language and that of the image is never finally resolved.

### 5.3 The Documentary Sublime

*Land of Silence and Darkness* has frequently been used as an example for Herzog's discontentment with language, since its protagonists are blind-deaf. By contrast, it is suggested here, that not only is Herzog's attitude to language (as exemplified by *Land of Silence and Darkness*) not one of discontent, but that the documentary even foregrounds language in the form of sign language. As such, the documentary actually works as an argument for the need for language and translation. Unusually this communication is realized through physical means. Extraordinarily here, touch 'speaks' for translation. Rather than the concern of Herzog's documentaries being with what is outside of language, therefore, it is with what is outside of the immediately visible: the documentary images nevertheless cannot express the physical experience itself. In *Land of Silence and Darkness* touch is set against vision, both as direct experience - through the sensuality of touch as the only reality of the deaf-blind - and as communication, i.e. the mediation through sign-language. At a certain point in the film a group of deaf-blind people board a small airplane together with their translator. They fly over a mountainscape, the visual spectacle of which evokes a sublime feeling for the viewer. The protagonists smile, as they communicate with each other in sign-language by touching each other's hands, which have to be found for them by the translator. But obviously, they cannot have any direct enjoyment of the view, which would be the reason for the excursion for the sighted. Gertrud Koch, when referring to this scene, criticises Herzog for marginalising the experience of his subjects through his choice of perspective and with the use of an elitist metaphor:

In this sequence, Herzog does not mediate what the seeing companion communicates to the others by tactile alphabet but only his own gaze over the majestic beauty of the sublime, the peaks above the clouds. Once again, Herzog is not concerned with the strong physical effect of flying, of the take-off, but uses the image as a metaphor: a metaphor of a rapture carried by music and

pictorial motif, not by the sensual experiences of the deaf-blind, whose blissful smiles now appear as inner radiance.<sup>lxix</sup>

This misses the point, however, as the importance of the scene is in its connection to a central issue that runs all the way through *Land of Silence and Darkness*, namely Herzog's concern to illuminate the paradox of documenting. It is the only scene in the film in which the communication between the deaf-blind through sign language remains untranslated through subtitles. This might be exactly in order to bring out the contrast between the imagery seen from above the clouds that we see and the experience of the deaf-blind, who cannot see it. The documentary is here not only making a point against the image as the sole form of experience - we see that the blind protagonists cannot see the landscape, and thus have no feeling of sublimity in relation to it - but also that *we* likewise cannot see what the blind protagonists 'see.' More generally, it suggests that we can never have the same experience as those who we film - or, by extension, of anyone else for that matter. When Koch maintains that Herzog is not concerned with the 'strong physical effect of flying, of the take-off, but uses the image as a metaphor' and criticizes Herzog for not repeating the experiences of the deaf-blind, she seems to forget that she is watching an audio-visual film.<sup>lxx</sup> A film obviously cannot recreate the physical effect of flying and depends on those two senses that are not available to the deaf-blind: seeing and hearing. It is not possible to convey the physical impact of flying in the plane merely through film. The deaf-blind, furthermore, can only relate to any image or sound metaphorically in the first place. Not only is seeing and hearing something abstract for the deaf-blind that has to be translated, but also it is difficult to communicate abstract concepts to children who have been deaf-blind since birth. This issue of abstraction is manifested when Fini Straubinger describes what she would paint, to represent her condition: 'The rocks that tear the waters stand for the depression the blind and deaf feel.' Koch also criticises the documentary for apparently lacking mediation:

[...] the auratic sequences of the film are unmistakably the subjective constructions and world views of Werner Herzog, who, [...] transposes the otherness of a sensual realm of experience hardly accessible to us into cultural modes of the aesthetically sublime.<sup>lxxi</sup>

On the contrary, the documentary makes the necessity of mediation very clear, since the deaf-blind can only communicate with the physical help of a translator, or at least someone who helps them find each other to then be able to communicate 'directly' with one another. We can only be told of the experience of the deaf-blind through translation and vice versa. We are made aware that we remain outside of the protagonist's world and of the limits of understanding, of mediation, of representation. Far from 'transposing the otherness' of the

deaf-blind into a visual aesthetic, the film posits the inadequacy of visual and aural representation as a document. Sight and sound, being the senses used to experience a film, make a documentary about the experiences of the deaf-blind a typically Herzogian paradoxical endeavour doomed to failure. Deleuze thus got Herzog wrong, when he wrote that ‘the ‘figures of the Small’, the ‘weaklings and idiots’<sup>lxxii</sup> ‘no longer have visions at their disposal but instead seem to be reduced to an elementary sense of touch, like the deaf mutes of *Land of Silence and Darkness*.’<sup>lxxiii</sup> The ‘deaf mutes’ in *Land of Silence and Darkness* are in fact ‘deaf blind’ and one could argue that all they can have is visions, as they cannot see ‘external’ images. In a unique combination of narration and matter, Herzog’s documentaries depict language – be that verbal, visual or through touch - as the path to the material and the physical. The documentary image shows us how it fails in the depiction of experience.

*Land of Silence and Darkness* can be read as an example for the *différend*, difference or dispute, as the Kantian sublime in the form that it has been redefined by Lyotard. The Kantian sublime as the immeasurably great - the absolute beyond all comparison - in Lyotard’s thought has become the *différend* as the incommensurability of phrases:

The Kantian sublime serves a reminder of the gulf that opens up - the ‘*différend*’ as Lyotard terms it – between truth-claims lacking any common measure of justice by which to resolve their dispute.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

The *différend* is a specific form of difference. Lyotard describes a *différend* as a conflict between at least two parties which cannot be resolved juridically because there is no ruling system of judgement applicable to both arguments. Even though there is no ‘grand narrative,’ which means that ‘a universal genre to of discourse to regulate’<sup>lxxv</sup> the conflict is absent, both ‘views’ are nevertheless legitimate. In *Land of Silence and Darkness*, there are no juridical conflicts as such, but an incommensurability between languages and non-languages of signs and images. Herzog’s fiction film *Where the Green Ants Dream*, is about the conflict between a mining company and the Aborigines whose land the company lays claim to. The Aborigines in the film cannot defend themselves because they ‘do not speak the same language’ - neither do they speak English (as their mother tongue) nor do they speak the language of state law. It is a film that has been used by literary scholars as a significant example of Lyotard’s *différend*.

Any judgment that claims to have the last word on this case will necessarily victimize one side or the other side, since “the rules of the genre by which one judges are not those of the judged genre or genres of discourse.”<sup>lxxvi</sup>

Bill Readings, who presents this interpretation of the film, also sees the *différend* as

containing an inherent critique specifically of capitalism:

If capitalism is the hegemony of the economic genre, the rule of exchange, then political resistance consists of evoking the inexchangeable, since capitalism presumes that all objects are exchangeable because they speak the same language.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

The same film, however, has also been interpreted as Herzog's conservative resistance against the signifier by film scholars:

[...] the fact that *Where the Green Ants Dream* is a fiction film, makes it inevitable that the resistance of the Aborigines is itself a metaphorical representation of Herzog's larger project: to dramatize in his films the resistance of the signified, in relation to the cinematic signifier.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

Written at a time where it was regarded as politically progressive to foreground the cinematic signifier, Thomas Elsaesser here in effect points out what were seen to be the reactionary features of Herzog's films. Thus, whilst Herzog's films have often been interpreted as expressing a neo-colonialist exploitation in Film Studies, they have been used as a progressive example for Lyotard's *différend* in Postmodern Theory. In this interpretation, Herzog's films insist in incommensurability even as a means of resisting exchangeability in market society. *Land of Silence and Darkness*, I suggest here, 'bears witness to the *différend*,' the impossibility of sharing the same language.<sup>lxxix</sup> In contrast to Lyotard's conceptualization of the ethics of art, this however does not mean that Herzog's documentaries are anti-narrative. Sublimity in Film Studies has usually not been regarded as necessarily connected to the resistance of narrative, as it is in Lyotard's account of the modern sublime in art. In that vein, Alan Singer, in a book on Herzog, written for the academic film community, referred to 'the delusive idealism of sublimity that narrative has fashioned as the audience's refuge from historical consequences.'<sup>lxxx</sup> In this Film Studies context, the sublime is even considered the bedfellow of escapist Hollywood mainstream cinema rather than the experimental, materialist and anti-narrative cinema Lyotard had proposed in his essay 'Acinema.'<sup>lxxxi</sup> Lyotard's own anti-narrative output – his arguments against narrative and grand narrative in particular – is of course expressed through language. When Lyotard names silence, the most indeterminate rhetorical figure,<sup>lxxxii</sup> as a case of the sublime in speech and as a phrase in itself, Herzog's *Kaspar Hauser* would naturally be the perfect example. Lyotard's texts and Herzog's fiction films are about the inexpressible, but this nevertheless is contained in the expressive medium of fiction film. By contrast, Herzog's documentaries are narrative in content, but realize the impossibility to share the same language, or for images to express experience, through the way in which they are made. Where for Lyotard, the *différend* should 'bear witness to the

incommensurability between thought and the real world,<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Herzog's documentaries bear witness to the incommensurability between documentary and the real world: a Herzog documentary is 'a representation which makes us remark [on] its inadequacy,'<sup>lxxxiv</sup> in accordance with the Kantian sublime.<sup>lxxxv</sup> In a sense one could say that, whilst his fiction films indeed want to 'dramatize the resistance of the signified,' as Thomas Elsaesser had observed,<sup>lxxxvi</sup> what Herzog's documentaries foreground is – not the specificity of the film material, the cinematic signifier – but the documentary signifier.

According to Kant, the inadequacy of the imagination to comprehend an idea as a whole is what evokes the sensation of the sublime. Imagination for Kant denotes the capacity of the mind to present itself with images - *Vorstellungskraft*. According to Kant unlimited reason could conceive of the sublime, where limited imagination could not: 'The Sublime, then, is the sensation associated with the difference between the limited capacity of imagination and the unlimited one of reason.'<sup>lxxxvii</sup> By contrast, for the Romantic Schlegel, it was fantasy, an imaginative faculty, that was unlimited. Though the notion of the sublime is often thought to be congruent with Romanticism, Kant's rational Idealist account of the sublime differs from the irrational Idealism of the German Romantics, who maintained that, as Sebastian Gardner observed, 'aesthetic value is incomprehensible by reason.'<sup>lxxxviii</sup> For Kant, the practical belonged in the realm of reason, which could make sense of the sublime, whereas imagination could not: the sublime is judged 'in opposition to sensibility, but on behalf of the purposes of practical reason.'<sup>lxxxix</sup>

The contrast between appearance and experience outlined earlier can be read as equivalent to that between apprehension and comprehension in the Kantian sublime, i.e. the impossibility of matching the purely phenomenal appearance in the image, and the comprehension of the experience in the narration.<sup>xc</sup> The contra-punctual narration could be seen as the soundtrack of practical reason, which in for instance *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* conveys the pragmatics of the experience vis a vis the evocation of the sublime feeling through landscape vistas. There are often only moments of sublimity like this in a film, where the inadequacy of the medium becomes more obvious. Other scenes in the same film (in which we see Dieter giving a practical on-screen demonstration of his experiences) have no tension between 'apprehension' and 'comprehension.'

Many of the quintessential Herzogian landscape motifs seem to be an inventory of the images of nature Kant lists as evoking the sublime: overhanging rocks (*The Dark Glow of the Mountains*), clouds piled up in the sky (*Land of Silence and Darkness*), gushing

waterfalls (*The White Diamond*), volcanoes (*La Soufrière*). However, whereas for Kant, volcanoes need to be shown ‘in all their violence of destruction,’<sup>xci</sup> symptomatically Herzog avoids these direct images (as has been elaborated on before). The volcano never erupts in *La Soufrière*. His documentaries are about the anticipation or the reconstruction of a life-threatening situation, not about immediacy (as Carroll asserts) and exposing it voyeuristically. Herzog never directly depicts what is extreme about these dangerous situations the way in which many sensationalist reportages do, for example, show ‘hurricanes with their track of devastation,’<sup>xcii</sup> as Kant suggests. Even if Herzog shows life-threatening situations directly, they are mediated such as the crashes of the ski-jumpers in slow-motion in *The Great Ecstasy of the Woodcarver Steiner*.

What in the Kantian sublime is the inadequacy of the faculty of imagination, in the Herzogian sublime is the inadequacy of documentary, seen as a representation of reality. Conventional documentary contains imagination, rather than pointing out its own limitations by doing ‘violence to the imagination.’<sup>xciii</sup> Documentary usually does not conjure up a sublime feeling. Whereas the sublime ‘alludes to something which can’t be shown, or presented (as Kant wrote ‘*dargestellt*’),’<sup>xciv</sup> documentary is supposed to be about showing, and often illustrating something that has been comprehended previously. Traditional documentary thus offers much in the way of comprehension but perhaps at the expense of apprehension, whereas in the Kantian sublime it is apprehension that there is too much of and comprehension that is lacking, a relation that signals that there is a limit that is exceeded: ‘the sublime is that, the mere ability to think which, shows a faculty of mind surpassing every standard of Sense.’<sup>xcv</sup>

When in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* Herzog explains in the manner of a sports reporter in front of Steiner’s ski-jumps, that they exceed all parameters, then his narration suggests to us that what we witness is beyond understanding. Steiner’s jumps exceed the length of the Olympic ski-jumping hill. If he does jump as far as he could, he lands beyond the slope, which becomes life-threatening. He paradoxically has to jump less far than he has done in the past, in order to still qualify. Steiner’s jumps can be seen as an example of the mathematical sublime. ‘An object,’ Kant wrote, ‘is *monstrous* if by its size it destroys the purpose which constitutes the concept of it.’<sup>xcvi</sup> With respect to Steiner, the magnitude in question is that of the distance jumped. When he exceeds the Olympic measurements with his jumps, however, this is neither truly a force of nature, since he sets out to do so, though nor is the outcome wholly humanly controlled. As such, his actions are on the boundary of the Kantian sublime, or as Alan Singer writes: ‘on the threshold of

sublimity.<sup>xcvii</sup>

Kant's reflective judgment also factors in this. In contrast to determinant judgment, which 'subsumes the particular under it,' reflective judgment has to find the universal for the particular:

The reflective Judgment, which is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, requires on that account a principle that it cannot borrow from experience, because its function is to establish the unity of all empirical principles under higher ones, and hence to establish the possibility of their systematic subordination. Such a transcendental principle, then, the reflective Judgment can only give as a law from and to itself. It cannot derive from outside (because then it would be the determinant Judgment).<sup>xcviii</sup>

In reflective judgment, the particular example is there first and then a universal is constructed for it. Steiner's jumps would require reflective judgment, i.e. the category would have to be altered because of the singular case, but what he experiences is determinate judgement, which requires him to jump less far to remain in its boundaries and to still be able to be judged. As the above quotation demonstrates, Kant found reflective judgment to be developed from the particular in nature, not art.<sup>xcix</sup> He also maintained that since art has been determined by human agency, and that thus it must have purpose, it cannot evoke the sublime. Agency on part of what is looked at, ruled out the sublime for Kant:

I only remark that if the aesthetical judgment is *pure* [...] and is to be given as a completely suitable example of the critique of the *aesthetical* Judgment, we must not exhibit the sublime in products of art (e.g., buildings, pillars, etc.) where human purpose determines the form as well as the size; nor yet in things of nature the concepts of which bring with them a definite purpose (e.g. animals with a known natural destination); but in rude nature.<sup>c</sup>

For Kant a lack of purposive instrumentality constitutes aesthetic qualities such as the sublime and the beautiful. In contrast, Lyotard argued that the sublime and the principle of self-invention of reflective judgment can only be at work in and through art where it is outside of the laws of practical reason, 'which are deduced by argumentation.'<sup>ci</sup> Documentary, according to the documentary theorist Bill Nichols, is based on an argument; but if this were the case, according to Lyotard, it would not be able to evoke the sublime. Herzog's documentaries however – to complicate matters - do not put forward an argument, but they do display practical reasoning at the same time as purposelessness.<sup>cii</sup> With the exception of the expressionist film adaptation *Nosferatu*, Herzog avoids consciously planning a film with the aesthetics of a 'look:'

I have never allowed the word aesthetics on my set. And I do not discuss aesthetics with anyone. And I do not care about aesthetics at all. But I know at the end the film will have some kind of aesthetics.<sup>ciii</sup>

One could argue however, that, the lack of purposiveness in the experiences of his heroes and his own has aesthetic value in itself. The senselessness of Herzog's and his heroes' projects and experience could be interpreted as exhibiting a 'violation of purpose' as is the case with the Kantian sublime.<sup>civ</sup> Kant's aesthetics are constituted by a lack of purpose. By contrast, in Herzog's documentaries a lack of purpose creates an aesthetics of experience. (Herzog's diary written around the filming of *Fitzcarraldo* has even been published under the title *Die Eroberung des Nutzlosen; The Conquest of the Useless*). In his documentaries, for something to be without purpose, however, does not mean that it is without, material and physical, causality.

To reiterate: according to Kant, something is only art, if it is man made, and then it cannot evoke the sublime. He maintained, however, that 'if, as sometimes happens, in searching through a bog we come upon a bit of shaped wood, we do not say: this is a product of Nature, but, of Art.'<sup>cv</sup> Interestingly, in Werner Herzog's documentaries, the products of civilization often have been reduced to nature again before their aesthetic discovery through the documentary, which makes them seem to look as art. In *Juliane - Wings of Hope*, for example, nature as the site of the downfall of civilisation - literally in the form of the ruins of a plane crash - acts like a museum for the remnants of the protagonist's past, in which the no-longer-functional pieces of the wreck masquerade as jungle. Vice versa, Herzog has provocatively maintained that the jungle belongs in the museum. Juliane situates herself like an art critic next to the material fragments of her past. The jungle also becomes a stage in *Juliane - Wings of Hope*, when a fragment of the wreck fills the whole frame and an indigenous helper enters the scene in the jungle through the emergency exit. Herzog's testing of the boundaries of nature and art is, of course, in contrast to Kant's purism:

But in what we are accustomed to call Sublime there is nothing at all that leads to particular objective principles and forms of nature corresponding to them; so far from it that for the most part nature excites the Ideas of the sublime in its chaos or in its wildest and most irregular disorder and desolation, provided size and might are perceived. Hence, we see that the concept of the Sublime is not nearly so important or rich in consequences as the concept of the Beautiful.<sup>cvi</sup>

Kant, who at the time did not conceive that 'irregularity' and 'wildness' might be a 'principle' too, found the sublime less interesting than the beautiful, because the sublime

could not be objectified. Its resistance to objectification was, of course, precisely the reason why the sublime was generally regarded as more challenging than the beautiful in the 20th century. Herzog's documentaries challenge Kant's opposition between art and nature in the way in which they evoke the sensation of the sublime.

In the trajectory between nature and art, documentary film can be read as both: as a constructed work of art or as an indexical document of 'natural' behaviour. Whether Kant would have regarded documentary uncontrolled as nature or determined as art is debatable. Documentary could be interpreted as the copy of an excess that escapes the predetermination and the control of invention. It should not be wholly created by its author, but on some level a document of what is happening 'naturally,' even if the context is constructed or the reaction provoked, like in *cinéma vérité* or *Big Brother*. For fiction film, by contrast, what Derrida writes about the production art applies: 'the mastery of the human artist here operates with a view to an end, determining, defining, giving form.'<sup>cvi</sup> Fiction film aims for a determined and purposeful end product. This observation by Derrida was made with respect to art which Kant argued would be incapable of evoking the sublime:

In deciding on contours, giving boundaries to the form and the cise, this mastery measures and dominates. But the sublime, if there is any sublime, exists only by overflowing: it exceeds cise and good measure, it is no longer proportioned according to man and his determinations. There is thus no good example, no "suitable" example of the sublime in the products of human art.<sup>cvi</sup>

If Kant had had the option to consider fiction and documentary film in his delineations, presumably he would have counted fiction film as art and thus not able to induce the sublime. The 'uncontrolled' element of documentary might have been thought of by Kant as giving rise to the sublime feeling as – in the words of Howard Caygill – an 'uncontainable moment of excess.'<sup>cix</sup> For Kant, the undetermined and uncontrolled was to be found at its purest in nature. He wrote:

We may describe the Sublime thus: it is an object (of nature) *the representation of which determines the mind to think the unattainability of nature regarded as a presentation of Ideas.*<sup>cx</sup>

The representation of nature Kant talks about here is a mental image of self-reflective thought, rather than its externalization as a work of art. We instead may describe Herzog's documentary sublime thus: it is a filmed 'natural reality' *the representation of which determines the mind to think the unattainability of reality regarded as a presentation of Facts.*

Kant's phrase that reflective judgement 'cannot borrow from experience,'<sup>cxix</sup> epitomizes the singularity of the situations in Herzog's documentaries. These show us the limitations of our understanding possible through the medium of documentary with respect to a very particular, often physical, experience that cannot solely be grasped by the determinate judgement that is expository documentary commentary. The emphasis of his documentaries on such physically concrete singularities that I present here is in contrast to readings of Herzog's films by scholars in Germany, that merely see them as examples of German idealism seeking transcendence and using eternal images with elitist motivations (such as Gertrud Koch's interpretation of *Land of Silence and Darkness* discussed above). The physical per definition is not eternal or transcendental. It is finite and mutable. In the Anglo-American context, Herzog's fiction films have frequently been used as positive examples for the sublime.

Kant believed that 'the Sublime prepares us to esteem something highly even in opposition to our own (sensible) interests.'<sup>cxii</sup> This works against the pleasure principle:

The feeling of the Sublime is therefore a feeling of pain, arising from the want of accordance between the aesthetical estimation of magnitude formed by the Imagination and the estimation of the same formed by Reason.<sup>cxiii</sup>

Although what has been translated as 'pain' in some English language translations - '*Unlust*' in the German original - actually is more accurately rendered as 'displeasure,' thus making the sublime a different, and more physically masochistic, experience through the translation:

Die Qualität des Gefühls des Erhabenen ist, dass sie ein Gefühl der *Unlust* [my italics] über das ästhetische Beurteilungsvermögen ist [...].<sup>cxiv</sup>

Translated as:

The *quality* of the feeling of the Sublime is that it is a feeling of *pain* [my italics] in reference to the faculty by which we judge aesthetically of an object [...].<sup>cxv</sup>

Furthermore, the German term, *das Erhabene* (literally: 'The Elevated') contrasts with the prefix of the English term, the sub-lime, indicates a lower one: below the limit. Thus, the English experience of the sublime - involving pain rather than displeasure - seems far more physically painful than the German one of *das Erhabene*. In the English translation of *Truth in Painting* the German *das Erhabene* is translated, via Derrida's French of course, with the term 'superelevation,' and thus the connotation of elevation that the German term carries is stressed versus the English emphasis on being below:

[...] the feeling of the sublime, or let us say the *superelevated*. *Erhaben*, the sublime, is not only high, elevated, nor even very elevated. Very high, absolutely high, higher than any comparable height, more than comparative, a size not measurable in height, the sublime is *superelevation* beyond itself. In language, the *super-* is no longer sufficient for it. Its superelevation signifies beyond all elevation and not only a supplementary elevation.<sup>cxvi</sup>

The critique of the German commentators of *das Erhabene* in Herzog's films as a domineering position might have followed the German Kant, whereas scholars working in the English speaking context, also of German expatriots such as Thomas Elsaesser, see the notion of the sublime less as dominant elitism and instead have more often found masochistic tendencies.

The sublime feeling is an ambivalent one of dread and also pleasure, because it is experienced from a position of relative safety.<sup>cxvii</sup> Like the deaf-blind, apparently Kant 'had never seen a mountain in his life,'<sup>cxviii</sup> so his elaborations on feelings of the sublime when faced with the 'loneliness of an Alpine peak or the grandeur of an earthquake'<sup>cxix</sup> were his reactions to his mental image. (In a sense, he imagined his imagination to be limited.) The idea of the sublime perhaps then was conceived by Kant like a fiction film. In documentary, unlike in fiction, the filmmaker and the protagonists can be endangered by what they film. The self-reflexive impetus of the sublime is more contained in fiction film. Fiction film itself counters the idea of threat associated with lived physicality: actors have stunts doubles, or characters are computer generated. Since the dangerousness of the situation, the materiality of its referent, is only fictional, one could say that the threatening side of the sensation of the sublime in fiction film tends to lean more towards the pleasurable. The difference between appearance and experience in Herzog's documentaries can also be read as the difference between the audience experience of the sublime in the safety of pure images, in contrast to the traumatic experiences of those who were involved in the events on the ground and who are now onscreen.

It is not the landscapes themselves that are sublime, but the experience of the limitations of a documentary, or of the specific aerial shots, that make us experience an inadequacy of being able to imagine what concretely happened on the ground. Like a landscape, a film itself, or an image, cannot be sublime, just the sensation it evokes. As Kant determined, 'it is the state of mind produced by a certain representation with which the reflective Judgment is occupied, and not the Object, that is to be called sublime.'<sup>cxx</sup> Since the sublime is not to be found in the object, it cannot appear in the film either; if it did, it

would have become an object in the Kantian sense: 'Nothing therefore, which can be an object of the senses, is, considered on this basis, to be called sublime.'<sup>cxxi</sup> Despite Kant's contention that it is the subjectivity of the experience that marks the sublime, not the objective registering of an object - be that a landscape, an image or a film - Herzog's fiction films, or specific images from them, have frequently been used to illustrate the sublime. The title of Cynthia Freeland's article 'The Sublime in Cinema' - rather than 'The Sublime *of* Cinema' - exemplifies this tendency to use the images of nature in his fiction films as mere illustrations of the sublime.<sup>cxxii</sup> Freeland's account ignores the possible differences in references between documentary and fiction, and the degree to which documentary can be self-reflexive in its evocation of the sublime, but fiction film can not. By contrast, it is argued here that it is the sublime *of* documentary, not the sublime *in* documentary which makes us self-reflexively aware of the limitations of the genre.

Now it is important in the context of this thesis, to distinguish between a self-reflexive play with diverse levels of references and the limitations in and of the medium - which is supported here - and an elevated meta-position that towers above the ambivalences in the experience of the sublime. Using Herzog's fiction films as examples, Freeland shifts the Kantian sublime from an ambivalent feeling of simultaneous displeasure and pleasure, to a successive one; from sensual overload to cognitive reflection - a literally elevated 'shift from the perspective *within* the film to a perspective *about* the film' in her words.<sup>cxxiii</sup> Thereby the sense of being dwarfed and without the appropriate means of comprehending is turned into a palliative meta-perspective of only 'pleasurable reflection' or 'pleasurable cognition' without pain.<sup>cxxiv</sup> The shift from 'from dread to elevation' is stabilized in a hierarchical move from one to the other and turns a painful and overwhelming experience into one of intellectual cognition and pleasure.<sup>cxxv</sup> A confrontation with one's limits at the experience of the limitless is re-installed as a reflexive awareness of 'the power of the human artist to create.'<sup>cxxvi</sup> Reflection is equated with cognition as an intellectual exercise and describes 'a shift of emotions felt primarily within the film narrative to reflection about the film.'<sup>cxxvii</sup> The moment of reflection about oneself - or the medium - the self-reflection, is turned into reflection about the object. This is contrary to Kant's account of the sublime as a feeling that cannot be contained in an object.

One could argue that subjective documentary per se evokes a sublime feeling if it entails a failure of representation. However, not everything that fails to represent what it purports to automatically conjures up sublime emotions. And similarly, this does not mean that since what is documented eludes the grasp of the documentary, all documentary must be fiction.

On the contrary, only if there is a belief in the attempt, which is quite different to the suspension of disbelief required of the viewer of fiction, can failure be felt. The documentation of an inner world is never adequate. If the documentary is about an emotion, one could say that a representation can never live up to it. Thus to repeat this *in* the documentary is always doomed to be more of a failure than to repeat *through* the documentary. This process also affects the difference between Werner Herzog's fiction films and his documentaries. Herzog's documentaries have come to manifest the sublime more aptly than his fiction films, which only illustrate it.

The sublime of Herzog's documentaries does not lie in consciously making us aware of the materialities and functions of 'film as film' - 'a cognitive appreciation of the film as film'<sup>cxxviii</sup> as Freeland posits, but in how we experience the documentary's limitations and in how it moves between its ambiguous levels of reference. This is made apparent if we try to transfer the idea of 'film as film' to documentary. 'Documentary as documentary' does not make sense, because in order to document itself, it always already involves a referential step away from itself - unlike a 'film as film' which denotes film stripped of its referentiality to reveal its materiality. Whereas 'film as film' is about foregrounding the signifier and implies a sameness of referent and material, the notion of documentary initially is based on a separation between the document and what it documents. Thus, it conceptually involves at least two parties. Even if one asserts the film material to be a document of itself, this still fundamentally depends on a basic difference between material and document. And even then, a document does not make a documentary. Whereas the document depends on the indexical referentiality, which could also apply to fiction film as the document of its own making, documentary is not necessarily so direct. A film can, conceivably, be a document of itself, but not be a documentary of itself. Nothing, including film material, can be a documentary of itself, since a documentary already presupposes authorial intervention. This also applies to Jean-Louis Comolli's position that every image, regardless of it being in a fiction film or a documentary, documents what it films. His stance is that any fiction film, on the ontological level, is foremost a documentary about the actor's physique, e.g. Godard's *Contempt* is a documentary about Brigitte Bardot's body. It does not follow from this proposition, however, that any film is a self-referential documentary of itself. It relies on the visibly embodied experience of the actors and ignores invisible levels of referentiality. Experience is what links fiction and documentary here, but an embodied experience that is visible in the present: 'Experience as it is recorded together in bodies, looks and gestures.'<sup>cxxix</sup> Through the traces of experience that are visible in the present of filming, Comolli equates fiction and documentary: 'the experience of real

bodies passes into filmed bodies.<sup>cxxx</sup> Unlike Herzog, Comolli situates experience in the present of filming and reads this corporeal realism as the documentary aspect of all filming, including fiction. Herzog's documentaries, on the contrary, as well as questioning documentary realism, are based on corporeal experiences, that frequently resist their direct indexical imprint on film. Their physicality is often only referred to and not necessarily visible, and if it is visible, such as in *Pilgrimage*, it is a decontextualised experience for the viewer.

### 5.3.1 Herzog's Physical Turn of the Sublime

The sensation of the sublime is said to be accompanied by irony and pain. 'You will realise, painfully, that while your imagination is free, your capacities and your circumstances are limited,' Kant wrote.<sup>cxxxi</sup> Kant regarded this pain as a mental one. In many of Herzog's documentaries, by contrast, it is not merely the imagination that 'is confronted with its limit,' but the physical body. In *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*, as in many of Herzog's documentaries, it is not only the viewer's imagination that is confronted with its limit, as Kant maintained, but for the documentary protagonist something is physically and materially happening: Steiner physically endangers himself through his jumps. The pain is literally experienced by the protagonist, not just mentally and safely by the viewer in the Kantian sublime. This is Denise Riley's description of one effect of Romantic irony: 'To escape the bitterness of a crippling realisation of our limits required a deeply ironic detachment.'<sup>cxxxii</sup> If we substitute the word 'our' with 'documentary's' here, the formulation would be a good description of Herzog's documentaries: to escape the bitterness of a crippling realisation of *documentary's* limits requires a deeply ironic detachment. With Herzog, this is not only a bitter experience, but also a creative one, in which the crippling effect often is made literal.

The feeling of the sublime is bound up with the experience of mental movement: 'the mind feeling moved in the representation of the Sublime.'<sup>cxxxiii</sup> In what I call Herzog's 'athletic documentaries,' this division is deterritorialised. The crawling supplicants in *Pilgrimage*, as the 'addressees' of the sublime in the documentary, experience mental movement and physical stasis, but also physical pain, whilst the plights in the jungle for Dieter and Juliane were not at all experienced as sublime, since they were in real danger and movement. The pain that arises in the failure of the imagination to comprehend that Kant ascertains in the feeling of the sublime, is materialized in the physical pain of Herzog's documentary protagonists, especially in the ongoing, voluntarily sought pain of the pilgrims seeking a spiritual experience. In *Pilgrimage*, the supplicants worshipping what for them is

inaccessible, are evidently in pain, which is apparent from their bearing and is visible in their faces. The pain in the experience of the sublime in their case, who presumably are experiencing sublime feelings themselves, is a literal, bodily pain. In a sense here, the sublime feeling (not the *différend*) is witnessed by the viewer in the protagonist. Herzog's documentaries highlight the difference of the experience of aesthetic and of experience.

In the sublime of Herzog's documentaries, the pain is physically experienced by the protagonists. In fact, the physical itself can be said to evoke the sublime feeling as the mental faculties fail to comprehend the physical experiences, such as those of the deaf-blind in *Land of Silence and Darkness*. If the sublime is 'to approach matter in its alterity' (as Jacques Rancière paraphrases Lyotard's take on the Kantian sublime)<sup>cxxxiv</sup> then, corporeal experiences - even more so experiences at the limits of physical endurance - are matter that is not representable through film. Images cannot be visceral. Similarly, Herzog's frequent allusions in dialogue, that one 'would not believe' that something has happened, seek out the incomprehensible in imagination and as such a failure of the mental capacities to comprehend, a sort of sublime in language.

In Herzog's documentaries, a physical experience of pain takes centre stage, but always in the post-event 'safety' of survival – at least until Timothy Treadwell succeeds in his courtship of death and allows himself and his girlfriend to be eaten by a grizzly bear (*Grizzly Man*). Only with Treadwell, the painful and near-death experiences of survival of Herzog's protagonists (including the filmmaker himself in *La Soufriere*) had tipped over into the horror of consumed death. But then the footage was not Herzog's, and he excluded the moment of death from *Grizzly Man*. The most singular physical experience escaping imagination is of course death. The thought of death still overwhelms us, like that of untamed nature. Herzog's documentaries often seek its close proximity, but only from the side of death that still allows narration: the survivor's story. Death itself is beyond narration.

The physicality of Herzog's sublime exceeds Kant's disembodied sublime. For Kant, the subject as a mind survives as an eternal entity, even if the individual subject – the physical body - dies. According to Kant, 'we find a superiority to nature'<sup>cxxxv</sup> as rational beings, while its immensity makes 'us recognise our own [physical] impotence, considered as beings of nature.'<sup>cxxxvi</sup> He wrote about the dynamically sublime in nature:

[...] in the immensity of nature [...] we find our own limitation; [...] And so also the irresistibility of its might, while making us recognise our own

[physical] impotence, considered as beings of nature, discloses to us a faculty of judging independently of, and a superiority over, nature; on which is based a kind of self-preservation, entirely different from that which can be attacked and brought into danger by external nature. Thus, humanity in our person remains unhumiliated, though the individual might have to submit to this dominion.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

Kant excludes the physical since he regards this as a part of nature. Kant explicitly distances his aesthetic judgment – a formal one without sensuousness - of the sublime from the more physiologically experiencing Burckian sublime.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> Other German idealists too, such as Friedrich Schiller, posited the controlling of the physical through the mind. The body had to submit to an idea. Schiller's idealism celebrated the independence of the mind from the senses in his sublime 'which elevates us above the power of nature and releases us from every physical influence.'<sup>cxxxix</sup> The sensuous is aligned with beauty. The sublime allows for an escape from the sensuous world of – as Schiller saw it - the prison house of beauty.<sup>cxl</sup>

By contrast, the purpose of Herzog's documentaries often seems to be precisely to document how the protagonists, including the filmmaker, are 'brought into danger by external nature', as Kant would put it.<sup>cxli</sup> Even though also for Herzog man is different to nature or animal, the heroes of Herzog's 'athletic documentaries' struggle with and ultimately triumph over nature – at least before *Grizzly Man* - through an instinctual and physical pragmatism, not through the intellectual distance of cognition. In Herzog's documentaries, the conflict is between human physicality and nature, not between the disembodied mind and the mindless body. In Herzog's documentaries a subject/object division – and Kant's division of art versus nature - breaks down; where we *are* and we are *not* part of nature (quite literally in the incorporation of Timothy Treadwell by a grizzly in *Grizzly Man*).

### **5.3.2 The Sublime Experienced in the Documentary**

In *Pilgrimage* nameless worshippers stoically shuffle on their knees towards a goal we never see. The place where the affect is expressed - the pain in the faces and bodies of the pilgrims after having been on their knees for such a long time - is visually isolated from its aim and cause. The images in *Pilgrimage* never show us what the supplicants look at in ecstasy. The object of their emotions is invisible for us.<sup>cxlii</sup> Herzog has expressed this decontextualisation unambiguously in the extra-filmic context: 'It does not matter where we are. It does not matter at all. The film explicitly does not show whom they

venerate.<sup>cxliii</sup> This is similar to images in *Bells from the Deep* in which the audience watching a faith healer is filmed from behind his back. The documentary shows them looking at him, rather than showing the performer, who would normally be the focus of attention.<sup>cxliv</sup> With its focus on reactive emotions rather than on their source *Pilgrimage* values experience as a receptive mode of many, rather than of one. The importance of the viewer rather than the object is a feature of the sublime. According to Lyotard, the characteristic feature of the modern sublime is that the emphasis moved from the sender to the addressee, from the artist to the audience, from the authored text to the read text.<sup>cxlv</sup> The aesthetics of the modern sublime represent an appraisal shift, with respect to the artwork, from the intentions of the artist or filmmaker, to the experience of the viewer. Regarding Herzog's documentaries such as *Pilgrimage* however, the viewer experiencing the film is confronted with a work the major part of which is constituted by the experience of the documentary's protagonists. Lyotard's question with regards to the modern sublime: 'What is it to experience an affect proper to art?'<sup>cxlvi</sup> thus has been doubled as experience of documentary of experience *in* documentary. In *Pilgrimage*, the viewers of the video see the pilgrims in the video experience the sublime. What Herzog has done here - progressing from Kant and Lyotard - is to film the sensation of the sublime as the subjective experience within the object that is the documentary film. By putting the viewer into the object, *Pilgrimage* moves beyond the modern sublime. Whereas Kant situated the sensation of the sublime in front of nature, and Lyotard found it to be a reaction to art, *Pilgrimage* observes the reaction to a religious icon and what it represents. If it is the case that not what one looks at is sublime, but the experience of the looking subject; if not the object of worship, i.e. the representation of a divine power, is important, but the affect of the pilgrims, then in *Pilgrimage* the depiction of what is presumably the sensation of the sublime renders the focus of adulation (the icon and the God it represents) pale by comparison. It is the supplicant, and not the image of a meta-physical authority, who evokes the feeling of the sublime in the viewer of the work. *Pilgrimage* might even just show us ourselves, the viewers of his films, on the screen. By extension this could be read as meaning that we should not look at a Herzog film, as though by a god-like filmmaker. Like in *Bells from the Deep* and *Lord and the Laden* Herzog uses worship to question authority, even his own.

### 5.3.3 The Physical Challenges the Meta-Physical

As it is a documentary, we must assume that the pain we see is not only the mental one of the sublime, and that it is not merely a representation without physical reference, but that it has been literally experienced by the supplicants. In that sense, in *Pilgrimage* the physical expressions of pain are used to question the veneration of the meta-physical, i.e. the first

principle that ensures that everything else that follows holds true, be that a philosophical dictum or a supernatural force. The fact that the worldly or sacred focus of admiration is usually a single entity, and that the believers are multiple, further emphasises the humility of the supplicants' gesture in *Pilgrimage*. This celebration of self-effacing submission to a larger cause made commentators in Germany predictably and permanently suspicious of Herzog, who has been accused if not of being proto-fascistic,<sup>cxlvii</sup> then at least of being neo-romantic.<sup>cxlviii</sup> Romanticism is usually interpreted by these critics as conservative and regressive, and not as destabilising and playful as is suggested on these pages. Moreover, unlike in Fascism, where the goal for the parts is to be the same and substitutable in order to make up a unified whole the quality of which does not change through its parts, Herzog's focus on physical singularity escapes ideology as the determining factor. *Pilgrimage* values the singularity of each worshipper's physical repetition of prostration, each pilgrim being more than merely a repetition of the next. In this respect, *Pilgrimage* is rather Deleuzian, as is elaborated below.

To focus on reactions rather than actions has been conceptualized by Deleuze with regards to fiction film. (He did not, however, distinguish between fiction and documentary film, but between the actual and the virtual.)<sup>cxlix</sup> For Deleuze, modern cinema ceased to be the cinema of the agent, and instead is populated by seers.<sup>cl</sup> Deleuze describes aspects of the time-image here with respect to Neorealism:

Now, suppose a character finds himself in a situation, however ordinary or extraordinary, that's beyond any possible action, or to which he can't react. It's too powerful, or too painful, too beautiful [...] Take the foreign woman in Rossellini's *Stromboli*: [...] She doesn't know how to react, can't respond, it's too intense. [...] That, I think, is neorealism's great innovation: we no longer have much faith in being able to react upon situations or react to situations, but it doesn't make us all passive, it allows us to catch or reveal something intolerable, unbearable, even in the most everyday things.<sup>cli</sup>

Now, obviously *Pilgrimage* is not neo-realist. In the time-image, however, like in the experiencing of the sublime, the character is not an actively determining master of events or circumstances, but reacts to them or is even overwhelmed. Thus, being a reactive experience of awe, the sublime arguably shares similarities with Deleuze's time-image. The portrayal of reactions or passions is not merely a lack of action, but can be seen as a positive state in itself - as Deleuze argued above, and in a similar sense to that in which Lyotard maintained that silence was a phrase in itself.<sup>clii</sup> Although the time-image is - unlike Herzog's films - more concerned with an aesthetic of the medium, it presents

passions and reactions rather than the actions of the movement-image. Deleuze argued that action in film was, at least within the cinema of the ‘movement-image,’ merely a ‘movement of extension.’<sup>cliii</sup> He critiqued the submission of time to movement as ‘a commonsense time-space to increase the effectiveness of human action.’<sup>cliv</sup> Movement should be seen as a transformation and not just as a ‘translation in space.’<sup>clv</sup> The action-image and the affection-image are sub-categories of the movement image. Based mostly on Herzog’s fiction film output at the time, Deleuze classified Herzog films as action-images, a subdivision of the movement-image, which subordinates time to movement and represents all movement as a repetition of the same, original move. The action-image nevertheless should not be confused with just ‘action’ as a synonym with fast movement or the (Hollywood) action film. It is argued here, however, that movement in Herzog’s documentaries is quite distinct from the movement Deleuze regarded as befitting the functionality of the action-image schema, as it is a transforming movement which is utterly uncommon-sensical.<sup>clvi</sup> These movements are generated by the protagonists rather than by a film aesthetic, as is the case in Deleuze’s schema. I want to consider both the dynamics and implications of movement effected by the protagonists as part of a protagonist-based and deterritorialised reading of documentary that is advanced in this thesis. In Herzog’s images – action-images according to Deleuze - we nevertheless see reactive passions. In *Pilgrimage*, affect is not divorced from action, as we see the pain the supplicants subject themselves to in their faces, whilst they stoically continue to shuffle forwards on their knees. The experiencing reaction is caused by the action of moving. The affect of a person is induced by their own action of movement near immobility. Reaction and action are not separated in opposition. *Pilgrimage* can therefore be seen as an affection-image as well as an action-image.

#### **5.3.4 The Faceification of the Body**

In Deleuze’s affection-image: ‘The moving body has lost its movement of extension, and movement has become movement of expression.’<sup>clvii</sup> The affection-image is constituted by the focus on the emotions of an immobile subject in a close up - usually in a face: ‘The face converts external movements in space into movements of expression.’<sup>clviii</sup> Deleuze suggested that the face itself is a close-up of the body, but also that other units could act as a face, that is as a close-up. With respect to *Pilgrimage*, one could say that the whole body has become ‘faceified,’ that, even though the pilgrims suffer in medium shots, the whole body functions as a close up. Deleuze defines the affection-image as ‘a series of micro-movements on an immobilised plate of nerve.’<sup>clix</sup> The face is ‘a part of a body [that] has had to sacrifice most of its motoricity in order to become the support for organs of

reception.’<sup>clx</sup> Because it is the body that functions as the face, the immobilization is a conscious one in *Pilgrimage*. In Herzog’s documentaries of pilgrims, the obstacle that hinders the process is not natural, like the limits of the face are for large movements. Unlike in the face, where the micro-movements have no option other than to be dependent on a comparatively immobile context, in *Pilgrimage* the immobilisation is self-imposed. This artificially imposed repression of movement - crawling on one’s knees instead of walking - intensifies the effect of affect. In *Pilgrimage*, it is the resistance to movement, the crawling instead of walking, which heightens the affect, not a solely action-less immobilisation.

In distinction to his objections against reflection, understood as the conscious activity of ‘stepping back’ from a phenomenon so as to be able to produce a representation of it from a safe distance, a reflection ‘about’ something, Deleuze appreciates reflection in the form of the reactive facial expression of affect.<sup>clxi</sup> The ‘reflective or reflecting face’<sup>clxii</sup> is a face of admiration and wonder whose reflectivity depends on its immobility: ‘a face as receptive immobile surface, receptive plate of inscription, impassive suspense: it is a *reflecting and reflected unity*.’<sup>clxiii</sup> Due to its passive movement-blocking tendencies, Deleuze here uncharacteristically welcomes ‘reflection’ as well as ‘unity.’ This reflecting is not the conscious, intellectual activity - reflection as a cognitive activity that necessarily presumes a subject - which Deleuze is critical of in *Difference and Repetition*. In relation to the affection image, Deleuze talks about a subjectless reflection; about either simply physical reflection as in a mirror or, in a metaphorical sense, the way an emotion is said to be ‘reflected’ in a facial expression. He interprets reflection in terms of a reactive reception based in immobility that fosters affect: ‘It is this combination of a reflecting, immobile unity of intensive expressive movements which constitutes the affect.’<sup>clxiv</sup> Deleuze located the affection-image between the poles of admiration and desire, between a unified reflecting surface in which the face is unified within its outline, and intensive micro-movements, where the features are independent of their outline: the thinking face and the feeling face.<sup>clxv</sup> *Pilgrimage* quite literally combines the two poles of the affection-image: dispersed expressions (‘dispersed features taken globally’)<sup>clxvi</sup> are taken globally in ‘a minimum of movement for a maximum of unity.’ The editing together of the same activity of a minimum of movement – the facified, crawling body – from diverse locations in a documentary that suggests a unity of space and cause. Thus, it is also the decontextualisation of the images of the pained faces and bodies of the anonymous pilgrims that makes them into affection-images:

The close-up, in abstracting the face from its spatio-temporal coordinates and

personal markers, allows an affect (quality/power) to appear in itself, separated from its determinants.<sup>clxvii</sup>

Zizek paraphrased Deleuze in a manner which makes Deleuze's ahistorical position seem Romantic: 'The emergence of the New occurs when a work overcomes its historical context.'<sup>clxviii</sup> In respect of *Pilgrimage*, one could say that the New emerges, as the documentary overcomes its local context.

The exchangeability of the locations, however, does not reflect today's effortless global travel. On the contrary, Herzog's documentaries on pilgrims, *Bells from the Deep*, *The Lord and the Laden* (1999), *Pilgrimage* and *Wheel of Time* (2003), link movement with pain. Since the pilgrims move forward on their knees and in the slowest possible way, inter-national travel here means more immediate physical pain the longer the journey. This is similar to the director's own much reported pilgrimage from Munich to the film historian Lotte Eisner in Paris. Herzog travelled on foot though, not on his knees. In *Wheel of Time*, Herzog follows Buddhist Zen believers also moving forward on their knees. Zen poems too use de-contextualisation. Zizek compares them to Deleuze's notion of pure becoming:

And is not the ultimate example of the poetry of pure becoming the Zen poems that aim merely to render the fragility of the pure event extracted from its context?<sup>clxix</sup>

Herzog however, does not believe that the concept of documentary can include the notion of poetry. Because the gestures are edited into a grand gesture of humility that is entirely constructed in its unity, the presupposing fragmentation makes *Pilgrimage* a poem in Herzog's view, and excludes it from the category of documentary:

*Pilgrimage* is no documentary at all. It's more like a poem. When you speak about a Hölderlin poem where he describes a storm over the Alps or so, you wouldn't say that this is the weather report.<sup>clxx</sup>

This assessment of course supports a notion of documentary that excludes subjectivity. Herzog does not think he makes documentaries, since a documentary would be objective. However, Herzog's emphasis on an 'ecstatic truth', and his rejection of an 'accountant's truth', is surprisingly akin to the suggestion of a very different, didactic filmmaker who first outlined the notion of documentary in 1926:

[...] if only we could get away from the servile accumulation of fact and struck for the story which held the facts in living organic relationship together.<sup>clxxi</sup>

In his rejection of facts, John Grierson's dramatic truth of documentary without inverted commas is thus similar to Herzog's 'documentary' in inverted commas. (But in contrast to Grierson, Herzog wants to portray the struggling and exceptional, and not the functioning

typical.) In the ‘distinction between actuality and meaning’,<sup>clxxii</sup> made by Grierson and others such as Joris Ivens and Paul Strand, the part that is meaning would be cast by the nonsensical, (but nevertheless causal) in Herzog’s documentaries. Herzog lacks Grierson’s social mission and believes, unlike Grierson, in an ‘athletic cinema’ and not a disembodied one,<sup>clxxiii</sup> but still, he shares Grierson’s rejection of newsreel. Herzog’s insistence that an emotion cannot be reproduced in the format of rational language chimes with what Schlegel said about ‘documenting’ another physical experience, that of taste: ‘Notes to a poem are like anatomical lectures on a piece of roast beef.’<sup>clxxiv</sup> Like Schlegel’s anatomical lecture, Herzog’s example of the ‘weather report’, in its factuality, fails to register the ‘roast beef’ that is the ‘Hölderlin poem’ of *Pilgrimage*.

### 5.3.5 Recontextualized Footage

In *Pilgrimage* the isolation of the gestures from their aim and their location through the framing, the editing and the substitution of on-site sound with music heightens their emotional impact. The refusal to contextualize is not only manifested visually in Herzog’s documentaries, but also in terms of the aural setting. Herzog left out any atmospheric or synchronous sound in *Pilgrimage* which instead features John Taverner’s music. *Pilgrimage* was produced for the BBC series *Sound on Film* that commissioned collaborations between composers and filmmakers. The elimination of any synchronous sound adds to the de-contextualisation of the actions and the erasure of documentary realism. The emphasis put on music can - just as working from the fragment, which here is the footage - be seen in the lineage of Early Romanticism. Already the Schlegels’ promoted music as the medium of expression that is furthest removed from representation. In *Pilgrimage*, the isolated affections gain more pathos as their de-contextualisation is extended beyond the image itself - in which the object of the protagonist’s gaze is excluded, and relegated to the immediate off-screen space. It extends to the fact that the locations of the depicted sites of pilgrimages are not specific in the first place.

In a further level of decontextualization, Herzog uses the same footage with diverse levels of staging in different documentaries. Apart from the immediate visual context, the locations are treated as interchangeable: images of people kneeling in Siberia introduce footage of supplicants on their knees in Mexico - a transition that is not made explicit. We do not know whether these people are worshipping the same object nor whether these are the same worshippers. Herzog first used this footage in *Bells from the Deep* in 1993 and then again in *Pilgrimage* in 2001. The images of people crawling over ice seem to depict pilgrims on a frozen Siberian lake searching for the mythical, sunken city of Kitezh -

already an activity the grounding in reality of which is questionable. They are apparently seeking a 'deeper truth' by attempting to peer through a transparent surface, in an activity where praying appears to be like looking. But Herzog has connected actions that only appear to be similar: on closer inspection, some of the Siberians turn out to be angling, not praying. In the extra-textual context, readers of Herzog's interviews will know that he employed drunks to crawl over the ice. Their motionlessness is due to stupor rather than religious meditation. However, this information itself is what Herzog like to refer to as: 'The accountant's truth', which he rejects as objective facts: 'The accountant's truth: he was completely drunk and fell asleep, and we had to wake him up at the end of the take.'<sup>clxxv</sup> Typical for Herzog's paradoxes, his example of 'the accountant's truth' is the attestation of a very un-accountant-like state of intoxication. These people are 'on thin ice,' as Herzog's inter-title put it. The director paid non-actors to re-enact an action based on imagination, that might or might not be an invention of the filmmaker - whereas the pilgrims in Mexico are real, but nevertheless also involved in an activity the cause and effect of which remain questionable. This scene condenses several aspects of Herzog's documentaries: not only is this an unannounced staged scene within a documentary, but it is edited together with activities that seem to be the same, but are only similar in appearance *and* Herzog has used it in different contexts in two different documentaries. Not only are the locations interchangeable, but also the actions.

In a way which will be explained below Herzog treats the footage 'found' in his own documentaries like Romantic fragments – and in this sense he is right to call *Pilgrimage* a poem. In yet another de-contextualising twist, Herzog has expressed an intention to edit footage from his various films together into a new film one day<sup>clxxvi</sup> but, as yet, has not re-used images in his fiction films, only from and in his documentaries. Because the referential impact of such re-contextualized footage allows a play with the authorship of footage as well as of the agency of the depicted actions, (which would not be possible if it had been acted for a fiction film) the interchange of footage between his documentaries is a much more rewarding strategy than doing the same with fiction film footage would be. Herzog's re-appropriation of his own documentary footage raises the question of documentary evidence: if it can be employed to stand for different actions in different contexts, what is their 'authenticity' in the first place? This question only gains weight if one initially considers the film to be documentary.

Herzog's repetition of footage 'found' in his own films questions authorship and agency, not only of the re-used documentary images, but also those of the represented gestures and

actions. As such, the images are not only copied from one documentary into another, but furthermore they depict gestures which in themselves are already repetitions of a universal 'original'. In *Pilgrimage* and *Bells from the Deep*, different subjects – children and adults – are shown repeating the gesture of crossing themselves in diverse forms of awareness. Whilst the adults more or less know what the symbolic gesture stands for the children merely repeat a physical movement without being fully aware of its referent. These images are therefore not merely 'assimilated into the circulating commodity of Herzog's filmic universe,'<sup>clxxvii</sup> where, as Kent Casper asserts, they feed into a circle of eternal return to sameness. Far from it: Herzog's usage of the same and similar images in slightly different contexts and within distinctions of the overall tone of the films betrays an open circular system and brings out the singularity of the individual and the action through a universal gesture.

The images of people crawling in *Bells from the Deep* and in *Pilgrimage* are not all versions of the same and thus substitutes of each other or metaphors for something else, as is the case in many documentaries using found footage. By the obvious omissions with respect to the object of their attention, and by re-contextualizing the images of genuine pilgrims with images of people actually engaged in the worldly pursuit of angling, these images create something singular through their repetition of the same footage in different filmic contexts. This is the distinction Deleuze makes between the 'generality of the particular,'<sup>clxxviii</sup> and 'repetition as universality of the singular:'<sup>clxxix</sup>

Generality expresses a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another. [...] Repetition as a conduct and as a point of view concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities.<sup>clxxx</sup>

The 'pilgrims' are not particulars exchangeable for a generality, but non-substitutable singulars. Through the unannounced, but perhaps still vaguely detectable equation of footage of different actions in different contexts as the same, this formal exchangeability actually makes the content singular. Similarly, *Lessons of Darkness* does not mention that it is about Kuwait at the time of the first Gulf War. Herzog separates documentary from the specific location and the particular temporality of actuality. However, the singularity of the experiences, with their often paradoxical and non-commonsensical causes and effects, is important in Herzog's documentaries. It is this singularity of experience that they depend upon, rather than on location and time as abstract conditions that are the same for all of us. It is in this sense that his documentaries can be regarded as Deleuzian.

## 5.4 Self-reflexive vs. Reflexive Irony

*'One should not joke about irony.'*<sup>clxxxi</sup> Friedrich Schlegel

The self-recognition of being overwhelmed in the experience in the sensation of the sublime often is accompanied by irony. The Romantic notion of irony – also called ‘poetic irony’ - was theorized by Friedrich Schlegel at the end of the 18th century.<sup>clxxxii</sup> Romantic irony is playfully self-reflexive and questions its own form. The irony of Herzog’s documentaries is like the Romantic irony in that it destabilized its referents. Schlegelian Romantic irony is intermittently ironic about the author, the object and the form of the work. The object and the subject are not strictly separated. In the following, Romantic is set against the knowing irony of found footage films and mock-documentaries that often relate a stable ‘truth’. In mock-documentary, the object distinct is from the subject that mocks. It is argued here, that mock-documentaries are merely reflexive and not self-reflexive. In contrast to mock-documentary’s stable irony, which reinforces a hierarchy of judgment, Herzog’s documentaries play with the levels of referentiality in the sense of Romantic irony. In comparison to other found footage documentaries, Herzog treats his documentaries such as *Pilgrimage* like a poetic Romantic fragment.

### 5.4.1 The Knowing Irony of Found Footage Documentary

The documentary theorist Bill Nichols lists irony as a subcategory of the reflexive mode (which symptomatically is called ‘reflexive’, and not self-reflexive):

A heightened awareness of tradition usually informs the ironic; it is burdened with an excess of knowledge and a deficiency of invention, especially in its postmodern phase.<sup>clxxxiii</sup>

Nichols uses ‘postmodern’ here in the negative Baudrillardian sense of relativism. I suggest here, that modern irony such as in the films of Jean-Luc Godard or so called ‘postmodern’ irony such as in Johan Grimonprez’s *Dial History* (1997) are not self-reflexive, but merely reflexive. The knowing irony Nichols describes is like rhetorical or Socratic irony and assumes a stable, unified position. Grimonprez’s found footage documentary *Dial History* fits Baudrillard’s conception of postmodern simulacra without a referent. In a compilation of found images of air terrorism, or ‘sky-jackings,’ murder and serious politics are posited on the same level as the fashion displayed in the ‘retro’ images

from the 1970s with air stewardesses in orange costumes and upbeat music. William Wees has called this an ‘appropriational’ use of images<sup>clxxxiv</sup> - one that is not concerned about their historical and local specificity of the found footage and thus matches Baudrillard’s notion of the postmodern world of representations of representations: ‘The context is the media, from which the quotations have been ripped and into which they are reinserted without regard for their “truth content.”’<sup>clxxxv</sup> Appropriation, writes Wees, lacking ‘deconstructive strategies and critical point of view,’ is accommodating and homogenizes.<sup>clxxxvi</sup> By contrast, Emile De Antonio only made his compilation documentaries, such as *Millhouse: a White Comedy* (1971) using footage of Richard Nixon’s appearances on television, *because* of the images’ historical referent. His documentaries argue against the original message of the images as superficial and laughable. *Dial History* on the other hand turns the seriousness of the original footage into a superficial procession of images. *Dial History* does not argue against the found images, but goes with an idea within the footage out of which it constructs another meaning. The new context the documentary creates is not a historical one, but is referring to other media images. In *Dial History*, superficiality works with shock – not because of the original message of terror in the footage, but rather because of the new contextualization of the appropriated images. Following a strategy of shock, the threat of death for sleek effect is utilized for an elegance of nihilism that – unlike Dieter in *Little Dieter needs to Fly* – flies in the face of the consequences of referentiality, so to speak. To play the disco tune *Do it, Do the Hustle* to images of planes crashing and exploding submits the images and their initial meaning to an anti-referential flight - anti-referential that is with respect to their initial meaning. In *Dial History*, not only is the footage found from diverse actuality television recordings on airplane hijackings, but also the music is quoted and the voice-over is taken from Don De Lillo’s novel *White Noise* and *Mao II*. Since the De Lillo quotes already comment on found footage, such as the Zapruder footage of the John F. Kennedy assassination, it is safe to say, that narration and sound dominate the meaning of the image.

#### **5.4.2 Herzog’s Found Footage as Romantic Fragment**

Since the most widespread form of irony is not meaning what is said – or in film, not meaning what is shown – and that the same text is read in a different context, it is symptomatic that the exemplary filmic ironic ‘texts’ are found footage films, where the image carries the original meaning which is then mocked. Notably therefore, the most popular form for the expression of irony in documentary has been through found footage. These found images in general already come removed from their object since by definition their first authors are not their secondary users. In this sense, one can understand the genre

of the mock-documentary as manifesting a distance towards what they mark as their closed object of appropriation: the ‘found genre’ of documentary. The fragmentary nature of found footage lends itself to ironic appropriation. Irony and parody for the Romantics depended on the fragmentary nature of the work, as Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy state:

The fragment, in this case, is the genre of the parody of the putting-into-work, or of the parodic putting-into-work, which inevitably refers back to “chaos” *also* as an exemplary Work [...]. By also affirming itself as a dramatization, fragmentation would thus refer, both parodically and seriously, to itself, to its own chaos as the genre of the Work.<sup>clxxxvii</sup>

However, the relation of the fragment to the work and its author differs considerably between Romantic irony and rhetorical irony. In Romantic irony, the fragmentation of the work is not stabilized by a coherent framework and subject-object division into author and text and the fragmentation of the work destabilises the notion of authorship and authenticity. The fragment is not submitted to its appropriator, but unsettles the film’s coherent subjectivity and the ‘argument’ of the film. In Romantic irony, the fragment destabilizes the notion of a stable authorship.

### **5.4.3 Romantic vs. Rhetorical Irony**

In contrast, rhetorical irony (such as that found in an Emilio De Antonio or in a Michael Moore documentary) made up either wholly or in parts of found footage, unifies. After the original message of the fragments themselves is unsettled, the parts are re-incorporated into the linear argument of the film and the filmmaker. The irony common in mock-documentary and found footage documentaries is not ironic about its secondary usage and authorship, only about its primary meaning and authorship. In what is often referred to as ‘postmodern irony,’ that employed in, for instance, the found footage documentary *Dial History*, the subject position of the author is stable.

Irony has often been determined through oppositional thinking. Nichols too only sees the use of irony in an oppositional scheme: ‘The ironist says one thing but means the opposite.’<sup>clxxxviii</sup> This opposition in film has to be negotiated in the image- and the soundtrack. Irony in film thus has conventionally been used and interpreted as a contrapuntal and negating device. Carl Plantinga writes:

*Roger and Me* undermines some of what it presents through ironic uses of the film technique, often including the juxtaposition of discordant images and music. For example, we hear the Beach Boys’ “Wouldn’t it Be Nice” while the

camera tracks by dilapidated Flint homes and businesses.<sup>clxxxix</sup>

For Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight, to parody means to explicitly mock an object distinct from the subject that mocks, such as ‘aspects of popular culture, particularly media culture.’<sup>cxxc</sup> This external parody they rightly see as the prevalent manifestation of mock-documentary. (Parody in the Romantic sense on the other hand, mocks intermittently the author, the object and the form of the work. The object and the subject are not strictly separated.) The different tropes of mock-documentaries Roscoe and Hight list in their book *Faking It: Mock-Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality* - parody, critique and hoax, and deconstruction - all depend on an often antagonistic distance towards their object. Irony here always has a negational slant and is not ironic about itself.

This negative irony prevents the infinite proliferation of meaning Schlegel postulated, since it only makes fun of the serious, but does not take seriously the fun, and as such is not infinitely and playfully self-reflexive. Herzog’s irony on the other hand is affirmative, serious and not at the expense of someone else. This aligns Herzog with Schlegel, who found that irony is in ‘the most holy earnest’<sup>cxci</sup> and maintained, that one should not joke about irony.<sup>cxcii</sup> One does not have to make an ironic gesture to be Romantically ironic. Herzog takes his subjects seriously and is solemn in his narration. Even his serious extra-filmic assertion that he does not understand irony can be read as another paradox of Romantic irony, for Schlegel ‘identifies irony as the form of paradox itself.’<sup>cxciiii</sup> Romantic irony illuminates the gap between what has been the ideal of the artist and what has really been achieved.<sup>cxciiv</sup> In contrast to the stable representation of a genre through mock-documentary, Friedrich Schlegel proposed that it is best ‘when a work itself is unsure of its genre.’<sup>cxciiv</sup> Romantic irony is anti-representational and throws the origin of representation into question. Like the delicate balance of factuality in Herzog’s documentaries such as *Bells from the Deep*, the irony advocated by Friedrich Schlegel is indeterminate. Romantic irony does not only reflect what it is about, but upon itself:

Poetry, theatre, any act of representation that includes itself and its very creation in what is represented fall into this category. The ironic representation itself partakes neither entirely of the representer nor of the represented, but rather oscillates entirely between the two, creating an effect that Schlegel likens to the infinite proliferation of images in two facing mirrors.<sup>cxciiv</sup>

By contrast, the rhetorical irony that often is evident in found footage and mock-documentaries unifies and stabilizes the position of the ‘ mocker’ and ‘finder.’ It excludes themselves from the equation and relies on that gap only with respect to the contradictions of others. The mock-documentary is a closed form which is why it agreeably fits with

fiction film as a container of referentiality. The irony in mock-documentary contains self-reflexivity in a formal reflexivity, that merely reflects the genre, but deflects from its own authorship. In contrast, there is no such finite position with Romantic irony. According to Schlegel:

[...] we wouldn't think much of an uncritical transcendental philosophy that doesn't represent the producer along with the product.<sup>cxcvii</sup>

The irony in mock-documentary does not turn the same look back onto itself as Romantic irony does. It is not self-reflexive. Similarly, mock-documentary's stable irony is not self-critical either, like the Romantic ironists with their 'positive negation.' Mock-documentary is merely a 'negative negation.' The way in which irony is used can indicate whether documentaries are reflexive about their own form - which mock-documentaries often are - or whether they are self-reflexive, which they are often not, i.e. they do not reflect the irony of their own coming into existence.

Doubt is fundamental to Romantic irony and also to Herzog's documentaries. By applying the notions of belief and disbelief to irony, Schlegel introduced verisimilitude, which is relevant to the classification of a work as documentary and an aspect of it that Herzog undoubtedly plays on. Schlegel maintains:

Socratic irony [...] contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication. [...] It is a very good sign when the harmonious bores are at a loss about how they should react to this continuous self-parody, when they fluctuate endlessly between belief and disbelief until they get dizzy, and take what is meant as a joke seriously and what is meant seriously as a joke.<sup>cxcviii</sup>

Schlegel's interpretation turns Socratic knowing irony, *eironeia*, into a 'self-parody,' thereby in effect creating Romantic irony (rather than following a Socratic one whereby the 'self' of the author is elusive and thus is not available for 'self-parody').

Socratic irony consisted in feigning ignorance while possessing knowledge. Quintilian defined irony as the trope in which a speaker substitutes for the proper expression of his thought an expression whose literal meaning is the opposite.<sup>cxci</sup> In both cases, irony is assumed to involve having some fully determinate thought that one chooses not to express directly.<sup>cc</sup> Socratic irony is distinct from merely rhetoric irony in that it insists 'that what we say must have *some* meaning.'<sup>cci</sup> Claire Colebrook found that 'Socrates must also be motivated by the desire to achieve the good for his interlocutors, and not just to win the

argument for his own sake.<sup>ccii</sup> Even Socrates' interrogative irony only questions others, not itself. Herzog, by contrast, does not want to expose any inadequacies of the protagonist's stories, even in his interviews. Instead he casts his interviewees as heroes. The interrogative stance and meta-position of Socratic irony therefore does not apply for Herzog's documentaries. The negativity of Socratic irony – the absence of a positive meaning – nevertheless does not mean that the figure of Socrates is absent. On the contrary, his interventions reinforce the role of the author as a 'genius' or 'personality.' Colebrook furthermore maintains that 'Socrates' genius was intimated rather than represented<sup>cciii</sup> and finds Socratic irony 'a sustained mode of personality.'<sup>cciv</sup>

[...] for in not saying what he means, Socrates is able to remain above and beyond any context or dialogue, creating an absence or negativity, and not just something that is hidden (Kierkegaard [1841] 1989).<sup>ccv</sup>

This absence of the initial author, who would have brought a positive meaning to his or her original footage, is overshadowed by the implicit personality of the appropriating filmmaker, who merely questions and negates the material. This might be the reason why the found footage documentary from the seventies onwards had become the staple and stable host of Socratic irony.

The criticism I perpetuate here, of the elevated stance of an elusive commentator whose own position and subjectivity is not made transparent, as is often the case in found footage documentaries and mock-documentaries, can be compared to the criticism of Socratic irony espoused by Søren Kierkegaard, below, and Derrida:<sup>ccvi</sup>

It was the same with regard to knowledge. It [irony] judged and denounced every scholarly position, was always passing judgment, was always on the judgment seat, but never investigated.<sup>ccvii</sup>

Kierkegaard however, also found Romantic irony to be 'judging and denouncing' and critiqued the Romantics for being critical and polemical.<sup>ccviii</sup> It is argued here, however, that even though the German Romantics took irony as a concept from Plato's Socrates, there are major differences, especially with respect to self-referentiality. Unlike the self-reflexive Romantic irony, Socratic irony does not thematize and critique its own subjectivity. Rather, as in expository documentary, the voice of God – or Socrates in this case - remains invisible and unquestionable. Socratic irony might question the foundations of knowledge elsewhere, but not its own. By contrast, subsequent to Schlegel's assertion that Romantic irony is not understood to be judgmental of - or polemical against - others without being self-critical (*Selbstpolemik*), this irony destabilises an elevated stance of critique into an affirmative creation:

Poetry can only be criticized by way of poetry. A critical judgment of an artistic production has no civil rights in the realm of art if it isn't itself a work of art, either in its substance, as a representation of a necessary impression in the state of becoming, or in the beauty of its form and open tone.<sup>ccix</sup>

This also distinguishes Romantic irony from satire.

Before the Romantic paradigm shift, irony was firmly based in rhetoric, as William Egginton observes:

Hegel is correct in attributing to Schlegel the romantic, and hence modern, notion of irony, a notion that must clearly be distinguished from its predecessors. Until its romantic adaptation, irony remained solidly in the field of rhetoric [...] the romantic version of irony graduates from being a mere tool of rhetoric and begins to signify an event or an entity of existential proportions.<sup>ccx</sup>

With respect to irony, documentary theory - and many documentaries - have remained in or returned to the pre-modern phase of rhetorical or pragmatic irony. Romantic irony differs from pragmatic irony (as exemplified by the philosophy of Richard Rorty) in that the former is deconstructive and the latter speaks from a position of Enlightenment.<sup>ccxi</sup> Even though the term 'sublime' was first used by a rhetorician, the real or invented author Longinus, he nevertheless used it as an indeterminate to destabilize didactics.<sup>ccxii</sup> In contrast to the destabilizing effect of Romantic irony manifest in Herzog's documentaries, the irony often at work in mock-documentaries and found-footage documentaries might be called pragmatic or rhetorical.

#### **5.4.4 Irony without Distance**

Although Herzog's narration often has a deadpan tone, his irony is not the knowing one about the 'ironic loss of reality,'<sup>ccxiii</sup> conventionally critiqued as a postmodernist meta-move that defies history.<sup>ccxiv</sup> The latter's 'ironic sophistication'<sup>ccxv</sup> keeps the speaker in safe distance from taking responsibility for his words, and the filmmaker from taking responsibility for his narrator. This removed irony has spawned many 'documentaries' from Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* (1983) to John Seergeant's *Blue Summer* (1998) and Patrick Keiller's *London* which are spoken by a narrator retelling or reading what someone else has said. Irony has frequently been defined through intellectual distance that prevents participation. As Michael Roth has remarked:

The trap of this move [from historical consciousness to ironical distance] to irony (the metamove) worked all too well, cutting off possibilities of

reconnecting historical consciousness to any public discourse at all. Ironic sophistication marks the distance that some intellectuals have been able to take on political issues outside the academic realm.<sup>ccxvi</sup>

Herzog's documentaries however are not in an 'ironist's cage.'<sup>ccxvii</sup> Ironic sophistication today is most likely not found in academia - as this quote from merely a decade ago maintains - but rather in culture and its products such as documentaries. In contrast to the above quotation, Herzog's documentaries are anti-intellectualist and participatory, without being pro-Enlightenment. And some are still ironic without being distanced. They are not ironic in the sense of a judgment that relates to a unified meta-discourse that merely relates to conscious judgment.

Romantic irony is not used as a distancing device, as other forms of irony are. The notion of irony as a technique that establishes distance goes back to the debates around early Russian documentary. The critic Victor Sklovsky preferred the usage of found footage, i.e. 'raw material', as a mode of examination to the direct observation of reality and newly filmed material of Dziga Vertov. Victor Shklovsky for instance argued that:

In art, it is most necessary to maintain the pathos of distance and not to tie oneself up too closely. It is necessary to maintain an ironic relationship to one's material and not allow it to get to you.<sup>ccxviii</sup>

However, there is a contradiction in Shklovsky's assertion. The combination of 'pathos' and 'distance' here turns the distancing into more than dry alienation. Rather than just making something conscious and accessible to reason, the 'pathos' he detects is highly emotional by definition.

Irony, however, is not only said to be distanced, but distance has even been equated with irony: 'In many ways then, we have to be ironic: capable of maintaining a distance from any single definition or context, quoting and repeating various voices from the past.'<sup>ccxix</sup> Hayden White purported that not only, obviously, we can read only history from a distance, but that this distance vis a vis the past is always ironic - as that which enables us to shift across quotes and periods and allows a different reading, as Claire Colebrook describes:

Hayden White (1973) argues that the very notion of modern history is essentially ironic: for the historian must *read* the past as if there were some meaning for the past not apparent to the past itself.<sup>ccxx</sup>

Usually the example given is that with the help of ironic distance, a serious and therefore not subversive original text such an ecstatic 'romantic' poem is liberated from its serious,

and therefore apparently uninteresting, initial meaning. As Claire Colebrook puts it: ‘only with some concept of irony is it possible to range across history.’<sup>ccxxi</sup> By contrast, it is argued here that negative irony assumes a stable and static position and actually prevents such ranging.

Those who emphasise the stability of irony value, or assume the value of, a politics directed towards community and unity. Those who celebrate the destabilising force of irony, insist that politics is the rejection, contestation or disruption of shared norms.<sup>ccxxii</sup>

Conversely, the rejection of norms can be directed towards some notion of a community of readers who share common codes and practices of interpretation too – even if the only commonality is the rejection of shared norms. In that way, nihilist irony can also be stabilizing. Because the audience is meant to recognize the intended simulation in Socratic irony, this presupposes a shared pattern of reading of the audience. In this ‘postmodern’ irony, the nihilism, which as Socratic irony pointed towards negation and absence, often served to reinforce meaning in the context of media and film. Addressed to an audience of the likeminded, much of the irony employed in found footage and mock-documentary has been rhetoric ‘within a stable and shared community of understanding’<sup>ccxxiii</sup> and could be seen as an example of irony that, according to Wayne Booth, ‘assumes, rather than disrupts, a common ground’<sup>ccxxiv</sup> such as in a Michael Moore or a Louis Theroux documentary. Thomas Docherty observed the unifying effect of irony with respect to Godard, where discrepancies between the enunciator and the utterance would be:

almost always entirely ironic: the discrepant elements are set against each other in a dialectical (montagist) opposition which implies, but never necessarily states, a unified presence or identity of sound and image elsewhere: the synthesizing, by an informed critical audience, of the film’s contradictions into an implied unification elsewhere and at another time. It is this which, in the final analysis, renders the films of Godard essentially ‘modern’ (or, in John Orr’s terms, “neo-modern”). They offer “the solace of good forms,”<sup>ccxxv</sup> even if they do not display such good form.<sup>ccxxvi</sup>

Mock-documentary follows the same route as Godardian reflexivity and docu-drama: conventional mock-documentary is spoken from a stable place. In contradistinction to Socratic irony, which is supposed to be recognized, the irony manifest in Herzog’s documentaries is not contained through re-cognition. Often the audience does not know, from the information available from the film itself, that a scene has been staged or a quote invented. Thus, Herzog still relies on extra-textual distribution of information about the ‘authenticity’ of his ‘documentaries’ as he did for his fiction films, even though as

documentaries they are supposed to be sufficient in their referentiality. But whereas the enactments in his fiction films seem to commend ‘authenticity’ through their involvement of efforts in excess of the illusion, such as the boat *really* being towed over the hill for the fictional *Fitzcarraldo*, in the extra-textual information about his documentaries he reveals their stylization as his documentaries put ‘authenticity’ into question.

‘Postmodern’ irony, in the Baudrillardian sense (which is modern in the Lyotardian sense) is unifying since it stabilises the position of the ironist who brings together all the fragments under one authorship. As such, it differs from Romantic irony that embraces the fragment’s state of potentiality and questions the authority of the author over their creation. If the author is in an elevated position of mastery, they and their work have stopped becoming in the ongoing process of creating. Claire Colebrook writes about Romantic irony: ‘Irony must recognize, that we can never overcome singular viewpoints and achieve a God-like position. We are always subjects of a cosmic joke.’<sup>ccxxvii</sup> Herzog of course has often assumed a God-like position for his fiction films. Despite having never before been in the jungle at the time he wrote the script for *Aguirre, Wrath of God*, his approach was one of: ‘I’m going to direct the jungle as well.’<sup>ccxxviii</sup> We can see the irony in Herzog’s work, because he tries to be God-like in the direction of his fiction films by choosing nearly impossible tasks in which he is close to failing. Since this irony is never contained through the smaller and more easily relayed units of language or little ironical gestures, but is only available in a larger contextualisation and with status ambiguities, his critics, who would presumably never take the Jesus impersonator in *Bells from the Deep* by his word, nevertheless take Herzog’s impersonation of God seriously. Tom Cheesman for instance complained, about a press conference for *Lessons of Darkness*, that Herzog’s remarks have ‘[...] lead to individual human beings, at present, feeling a certain resentment at the director’s arrogation of god-like powers.’<sup>ccxxix</sup> As Herzog filmed against nature, it was in the jungle where his failure at being God-like as a director became most apparent, and, especially in *Fitzcarraldo*, where nature most resisted his directions. The documentation of the extra-filmic events on set and the documentaries about his fiction films, as in *Burden of Dreams*, betray the failure to direct the jungle as something that he consciously sought with Sisyphean determination. However, this information is only available to us through the reflexive documentary ‘opening.’ The fiction films on their own only represent to us the end result. And this is even though the central character of the film essentially struggles through a parallel situation as his director - for Herzog as well as for Fitzcarraldo, pulling the boat over the hill was an almost unachievable endeavour.

#### 5.4.5 On Irony as Subjective and as Objective

The Romantic idea of objectivity differs from our contemporary understanding of the term. The difference in the Romantic conception of objectivity and subjectivity is important for comprehending Friedrich Schlegel's concept of Romantic irony. When we speak of objectivity with respect to documentary, we mean a referential relationship to the world. In contrast, when Schlegel talks about objectivity, such as in 'the objectivity of representation' in classic Greek art, he means a coherent and repeatable style of representation that does not necessarily entail a referential relation.<sup>ccxxx</sup> Objectivity for Schlegel was about the aesthetic organization of a work as a closed system,<sup>ccxxxii</sup> and was realized through formal unity and the comprehensiveness of interconnection.<sup>ccxxxii</sup> It showed itself in an artistic work, not in a scientific assessment. Objectivity was thus aligned with beauty as sufficient in itself rather than factuality. A work was beautiful when it displayed a 'beautiful organization.'<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> Thus, Schlegel's 'objectivity' has similarities with Kant's 'beautiful' (and Schlegel's 'subjectivity' with Kant's 'sublime.')

By contrast, if we think of objectivity with respect to documentary, we would not think of bringing up beauty as a criterion. This has also been observed by Michael Renov: 'Can it be that the documentary, long aligned (mistakenly in my view) with truth rather than beauty, has been considered immune to the threat of aestheticizing the horror?'<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> In the context of contemporary art, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe suggests a reading of beauty as subversive, instead of the sublime.<sup>ccxxxv</sup> On the contrary, we think of objectivity as scientifically proven and thus as far removed from any influence of the superficiality and irreverence of beauty as possible. To see objectivity manifested in poetry and art and defined through beauty, like Schlegel does, is thus quite distinct from contemporary thought. A similarly peculiar version of 'objectivity' that sounds twisted to our ears accustomed to scientific reasoning of evidence is the German Idealist Schelling's stance on objectivity as the externalisation of the unconscious in the artistic product - leaving philosophical production to be internal and subjective: 'Art renders objective what philosophy can only present subjectively.'<sup>ccxxxvi</sup>

Romantic irony was seen as a means of creating reality through subjectivity:

Romantic irony is thus to be identified, for better or for worse, with this outbreak of subjectivity, a rebellious impulse on the part of the literary artist to rise above the restrictions of reality.<sup>ccxxxvii</sup>

A question that has been addressed to Schlegel's Romantic irony from Literary Studies<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> could equally be addressed towards irony in documentary film: does irony follow the lead of subjectivity or of objectivity? The different interpretations of and

answers to this question preclude some later usages of irony in film. Some commentators have thought that Schlegel's turn from the Greek Classics as the model of objectivity to advocacy of the new Romantic art was a modernist move to subjectivity in art. Another interpretation was that he still followed an ideal of objectivity, albeit one situated in the individual stance of the author or artist.<sup>ccxxxix</sup> This interpretation could equally be applied to the found footage documentary *Millhouse: A White Comedy* (1971), for which Emile De Antonio took 'objective' television footage of Nixon to give it a new interpretation. This however, even though it was polemical, asserted a new objectivity. Similarly, even though one would regard Michael Moore's documentaries because of their polemics and of the filmmaker being in the film as subjective, what they actually do is 'unveil facts.' They reveal a hidden objectivity. Moore's Oscar acceptance speech for *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), which won best non-fiction film, expresses a belief that it is fiction that is subjective and inappropriate:

We live in a time when fictitious election results elect a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons.<sup>ccxli</sup>

Non-fiction has to be uncovered beneath the cover up by the powerful fiction or the fictions of the powerful. Non-fiction stands for truth here.

#### **5.4.6 Subjectivity vs. Documentary**

Herzog and Alexandr Sokurov, whose documentary installation has been discussed in Chapter IV, do not believe that a poetic film can be a documentary. Both do not think they make documentaries, since a documentary would be objective. Sokurov maintains that he can only be subjective and that therefore he cannot make documentaries: 'I believe that there is no true word in the films I make. Unfortunately, I am not capable of doing so. I am a very subjective person.'<sup>ccxli</sup> 'Truth' for Sokurov thus belongs to objective reality, and is not subjective. Even though Herzog finds 'truth' in subjectivity, he also denies that he makes documentaries because they are not objective. They thus support a conservative notion of documentary which excludes subjectivity. What Herzog implicitly suggests, and what has been contested in this thesis with the example of Herzog's documentaries and against his own assessment, is that style occludes referentiality. Subjectivity as autobiography did not have this problem of being accepted as a documentary when its subjectivity was identity-based and thereby apparently anchored in the referential world. In contrast, Kant, Romantic and, later, postmodern theorists such as Lyotard suggest, that there can *only* be reflexivity through subjectivity. Reflexive judgment in the Kantian sense is self-reflexive and subjective, as Lyotard writes:

[...] the principle of judgment can be found neither in the realm of theoretical

understanding nor in the realm of practical reason. It cannot be borrowed from any other authority save the faculty of judging itself [...] Such is the “subjectivity” of the principle: the faculty that exercises it is the same faculty that invents it.<sup>ccxlii</sup>

Like in Herzog’s documentaries, a new reality is created through subjectivity. Even though being poetic is not the same as being subjective, being subjective is not the same as being subjectivist, two terms that are often conflated - most prominently by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s mistaking of subjectivity for subjectivism, as Egginton points out:

[...] a thoroughly Hegelian interpretation of irony’s trajectory, [...] propagating the consequent thesis of irony as the literary sign of an emerging subjectivity, where subjectivity is understood as a philosophical embellishment of rampant subjectivism. [...] the term [subjectivity] suffers the weakness of failing to distinguish itself from mere “subjectivism.” For subjectivism, the heart of what Hegel criticises in the notion [of irony], is *not* what is at stake in Schlegel’s concept. [...] My purpose is to draw from this [...] general principles of irony, and to demonstrate that none of these can be understood as an expression of rampant subjectivism, but rather that in all cases the definition treats of a complex and balanced relation between subjective and objective poles.<sup>ccxliii</sup>

Hegel equates subjectivism and subjectivity as though something cannot be subjective and at the same time have value and be meaningful for more than one. Hegel’s confusion of subjectivity with subjectivism has been reiterated in the contemporary critique of postmodern subjectivity as relativist, for instance Lyotard’s notion of the *différend* as the incommensurability of phrases without a ‘grand narrative.’ Since the *différend* is a legislative version of the Kantian sublime in its bearing ‘witness to the incommensurability between thought and the real world,’<sup>ccxliv</sup> one could say that the contemporary critique of the postmodern subjectivity as relativist has repeated Hegel’s critique of Schlegel’s notion of subjectivity as subjectivist. Lyotard however disagreed with the assumption that postmodern works would be relativist. Relativist thinking does not take the differences between value systems seriously, but assumes that they are all equally valid. As Bill Reading explains:

The multiplicity of justices evoked by the heterogeneity of language games is [...] not a mere relativism, since it is regulated by a justice of multiplicity. This judgement is not an undifferentiated pluralism, rather it is based in the most rigorous respect for difference. This is a respect for differences *among* things, not relativism’s respect *for* things, which ultimately erases difference by making all things worthy of respect.<sup>ccxlv</sup>

Conversely, for Lyotard, it was the singularity of a judgment and respect for differences that was important, rather than the equation, for instance, of fact and fiction. Popular theories of postmodernism, however, often confuse Lyotard's standpoint with that of Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard argues that in the postmodern world there is no gap between a media image and the original event that is represented. Both must be regarded as real, but by implication, neither can be authentic. When Baudrillard's all-encompassing diffusion of difference is equated with Lyotard's emphasis on difference and united under the banner of 'postmodern relativism,'<sup>ccxlv</sup> this postmodern theory has itself been subject to a general 'blurring of boundaries' – a term often employed to describe contemporary relations between non-fiction and fiction. In their book on mock-documentary, Roscoe and Hight write: 'One of the consequences of the critique of 'truth' and 'reality' has been the blurring of traditional boundaries between document and drama, and between fact and fiction.'<sup>ccxlvii</sup> Just because we have discovered difference does not mean that all these differences are equal. A subjective perspective still can have a referential relationship towards the world. Mock-documentary in a sense employs irony for a hidden notion of objectivity as we understand it today. I argue here that mock-documentary submits all reality to a blur of fiction rather than allowing difference, whereas Herzog's documentaries such as *Land of Silence and Darkness* give voice and image to Lyotard's *différend* and *Bells from the Deep* to the singularities of non-fiction and fiction.

As it advances a democratic and deterritorialized use of the possibility of performance and invention, a Herzog documentary such as *Bells from the Deep* does not simply assume the meta-textual position of mock-documentary from whose perspective everything is faked to the same degree. A consequence of unifying the degrees of invention is that they become more consumable. This is what Roscoe and Hight inadvertently promote when they argue for the superiority of the mock-documentary:

We argue that an integral part of the "mock-docness" of a text is the extent to which it encourages audiences to acknowledge the reflexivity inherent to any appropriation of the documentary form. Much depends on the ability of viewers to recognize, acknowledge and appreciate the *fictional* nature of mock-documentary texts, and the typically parodic nature of the appropriation of factual codes and conventions.<sup>ccxlviii</sup>

In as much as it asserts that all is fiction, the reflexivity described above remains on a formal level. It only has an external relationship to what it is reflexive about. Mock-documentary stops short of being 'self-reflexive.'

### 5.4.7 Reality vs. Truth

'It was just staged, but staged for the purpose of a very deep truth.'<sup>ccxlix</sup> Herzog's terminology of a 'deeper truth' and 'essence' has often made him a sitting duck for anti-essentialist criticism. His insistence in a 'deep truth' has often been seen as essentialist, neo-romantic and metaphysical, all of which together in the German context made him the target of national-socialist accusations, since these traits had been appropriated by the Nazis. These critics draw an ideological line from the visual traditions of Caspar David Friedrich to the *Heimatfilm*, from the *Bergfilm* to *Triumph of the Will* (1935)<sup>cccl</sup> and from Faust and Hitler to the Kinski characters.<sup>cccli</sup> In the German ideological trajectory, disseminated in academic publications such as *The New German Critique*, Herzog is appraised through these historical precedents,<sup>ccclii</sup> and thus his Romanticism is seen as anti-modern (although Romanticism is seen as a precursor of modernism in Literary Studies.) Consequentially, and unlike in the Anglo-American context<sup>ccliii</sup> laughter for instance is not seen as an appropriate response to Herzog, thereby unfortunately fulfilling a German stereotype - here rather one of German Studies:

Recently I went to a theatre to watch *Aguirre* again on a large screen and was somewhat shocked to find that people in the audience laughed at parts of the film.<sup>cccliv</sup>

John E. Davidson's astonishment here relies on an articulated notion of irony. Whilst Herzog's films are serious in their deliverance, they can nevertheless be ironic. It is the serious form of Herzog's documentaries that takes one beyond what could be a merely superficial, knowing irony (supporting a pre-conceived 'truth' that could be summarized), to destabilising Romantic irony.

In contrast to readings of Herzog's films as essentialist, I would like to suggest here that the textuality of some of Herzog's documentaries is actually quite Derridian. Derrida was critical of the limiting force of a context as an external category, and he argued for a reading of context as text, rather than something imposed on a text from the outside.<sup>ccclv</sup> This is to say he advanced a mode of reading that is plural and differential, rather than the application of a pre-given set of historical events that lie outside the text. Filmmakers such as the anthropologist Jean Rouch, who maintained that 'fiction is the only way to penetrate reality',<sup>ccclvi</sup> psychoanalysts such as Jacques Lacan and documentary theorists such as Michael Renov have argued that the path of truth leads through fiction. Lacan's dictum that all truth 'declares itself in a structure of fiction'<sup>ccclvii</sup> has frequently been interpreted as meaning that there is no difference between representations of fiction and non-fiction. The

stance that documentary is fiction has been taken up by the psychoanalytic strand of documentary theory. Alisa Lebow for instance argues that ‘documentary is itself already a fake’<sup>cclviii</sup> and that mock-documentary and documentary are therefore the same.<sup>cclix</sup> Renov maintains that documentary is a representation, like fiction film, because it depends on the same audio-visual choices: ‘The itinerary of a truth’s passage [...] for the documentary is, thus, qualitatively akin to fiction.’<sup>cclx</sup> He argues for ‘a “truth” of the text’, that is similar in fiction and in non-fiction. By contrast, in ‘Le Facteur de la Vérité,’ Derrida criticises Lacan for asserting a ‘truth of fiction.’<sup>cclxi</sup> He argues that Lacan employed what André Gide called a ‘superior realism,’ that would merely use fiction to bring out truth:

Truth governs this element from its origin or its telos, which finally coordinates this concept of literary fiction with a highly classical interpretation of mimesis: a detour toward the truth, more truth in the fictive representation than in reality.<sup>cclxii</sup>

Derrida thus reproaches Lacan for conveying the message of the superiority of the signifier - the ‘structure of fiction’<sup>cclxiii</sup> - as a transparent, deep truth:

In truth, the truth inhabits fiction as the master of the house, as the law of the house, as the economy of fiction. The truth executes the economy of fiction, directs, organizes, and makes possible fiction: “It is that truth, let us note, which makes the very existence of fiction possible.” (Lacan, S, p.40)<sup>cclxiv</sup>

Derrida cites Lacan here, maintaining that, against Lacan’s apparent logic of the signifier, his text is only an illustration of a truth. Derrida argues that, even though the Lacanian text purports the (pre)dominance of the medium, his ‘text is in the service of truth’<sup>cclxv</sup> and that Lacan does not differentiate between the various layers of fictionality, but reduces them all to the same level: ‘Lacan never asks what distinguishes one literary fiction from another.’<sup>cclxvi</sup> Derrida critiques Lacan for erecting an opposition between bad reality and good truth:

Once one has distinguished, as does the entire philosophical tradition, between truth and reality, it immediately follows that the truth “declares itself in a structure of fiction.” Lacan insists a great deal on the opposition truth/reality.<sup>cclxvii</sup>

Herzog’s distinction between surface fact - or reality - and deep truth seems to follow the distinction between reality and truth that, according to Derrida, Lacan insists on:

Cinema, like poetry, is inherently able to present a number of dimensions much deeper than the level of so-called truth that we find in *Cinéma Vérité* and even reality itself.<sup>cclxviii</sup> [...] By making a clear distinction between “fact” and “truth”

in my films, I am able to penetrate into a deeper stratum of truth [...]. In other words, I start to invent and play with the “facts” as we know them. Through invention, through imagination, through fabrication, I become more truthful.<sup>cclxix</sup>

Since the 1970s, Herzog has taken a stance against observational documentary as too superficial to show a ‘deeper truth’.<sup>cclxx</sup> In his *Minnesota Declaration* he again declares:<sup>cclxxi</sup>

1. By dint of declaration the so-called *Cinéma Vérité* is devoid of *vérité* [truth]. It reaches a merely superficial truth, the truth of accountants.<sup>cclxxii</sup>
4. Fact creates norms, and truth illumination.
5. There are deeper strata of truth in cinema, and there is such a thing as poetic, ecstatic truth. It is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization.

The declaration – like his documentaries – otherwise destabilizes the form it assumes, i.e. that of a manifesto. In non-sensical, playful paragraphs, which are impossible to follow, Herzog sounds reminiscent of Friedrich Schlegel in his *Fragments*:

10. The moon is dull. Mother Nature doesn’t call, doesn’t speak to you, although a glacier eventually farts. And don’t you listen to the Song of Life.<sup>cclxxiii</sup>

In contrast to how essentialist Herzog’s statement of a ‘deep truth’ might sound, I would argue that the facts vs truth contention in a Herzog documentary such as *Bells from the Deep* is not merely an illustration of one truth that only employs fiction to bring it out. Even though Herzog calls it a ‘deep truth’, this is not static and eternal, but found in the play between the dimensions of fiction and non-fiction. The ‘truths’ in Herzog’s documentaries such as *Bells from the Deep* allow for more dimensions, since they are not entirely relayed through a structure of fiction. Herzog’s truth is a fluctuating and multi-layered one, that allows for different degrees of truth and levels of referentiality at the same time.

The achievement of Herzog’s documentaries - even though their heroes, including the filmmaker himself, are great storytellers - lies not in the stories, but in the oscillation of truth-value through and around them. The sites of fluctuation - the ‘deep truth’ – are independent of the story. The stories in Herzog’s documentaries are not examples for a truth of fiction, as they were for Lacan. In other words, the layeredness of fiction and non-fiction in his documentaries is not repeatable through the form of content.

#### 5.4.8 Lacanian Mock-documentary

Mock-documentary, by contrast, appears to be following Lacan's opposition between truth and reality. The 'truth of fiction' that Derrida criticizes Lacan for is similar to the overriding fictionality of a mock-documentary that utilizes the style of documentary realism. The ironic mode used in a mock-documentary is often a form of control through mimesis. It asserts an authority by being especially precise in its repetition of the representation of reality. Mock-documentary has to be sure of its own genre and the genre it mimicks and is ironic about. 'Mocking' itself is already a reaction, a parody of set conventions. It is guided by the form it mocks, for example that of a documentary. Herzog's documentaries, however, do not refer to another form, or consciously want to subvert or 'deconstruct' it. Herzog's documentaries 'mock,' but not exclusively and the mockery is not announced and not contained through continuity. Consequentially, they throw the opposition of the truth of fiction vs 'documentary truth' into imbalance.

The decision to assign mock-documentary solely to fiction effectively eliminates the paradoxical dimension of irony. Irony prevents self-reflexivity when it becomes a meta-form and only a rhetorical device. When the reflexivity of a film manifests itself by taking a superior meta-approach to the previous level, for instance when what we first thought to be a documentary turns out to be fiction - such as in mock-documentaries - it can be compared to the making conscious of a previously unconscious state of repressed knowledge. Both representations feed into the same, 'objective' knowledge<sup>cclxxiv</sup> that suppresses a panoply of truths and a polysemic conception of meaning.

Even though at some stage there was a fabrication, this artifice can produce a new and complex referential situation. Truth should not be confused with referentiality. Just because something is or is not true, does not mean that it does not exist. The 'truth' of Herzog's documentary text has got more scope for referential tensions than either the truth of fiction or of conventional documentary. Even though Herzog contests the category of 'documentary,' I argue here for an inclusion of his documentaries in that genre. The belief in the documentary status of a film, i.e. its verisimilitude, is necessary to experience the fluctuation in referentiality.

With Herzog, the creating of reality and the mocking of it make up a two way process. He not only mocks an apparently closed reality, but also asserts a reality through a fictional impulse. His documentaries are serious in asserting a reality through a fictional impulse,

while simultaneously mocking that reality. This process can be seen at its most obvious and least physical in *My Best Fiend* when Herzog re-visits the sites of his fiction films as a documentary filmmaker and documents the material reality that was caused by the creation of fiction. The tension between somebody 'out there' and the film text only occurs if one does not assume that all texts, including documentaries, are fictions. On the other hand, fiction filmmakers have utilized the notion of documentary to import a 'truth out there.' The externalisation of documentary is founded on similar assumptions as the externalisation of 'truth.' A notion frequently entertained by fiction filmmakers is that of the 'truth' of their characters. Quentin Tarantino for instance argued that it would 'be a lie,' if his characters would not use the word 'nigger' frequently in *Pulp Fiction*, since this would be 'the truth' of 'the reality out there' because 'there are guys out there who talk exactly like that.'<sup>cclxxv</sup> Contrary to the common denominator about fiction film - that it is creative - Tarantino's line of thought here is a conservative one that subserviently imports 'truth' as a fixed essence from a 'reality out there' into fiction. Thus even though the model truth is conceptualized as imported from reality, or as externalised, this is not achieved in a realist manner of resembling appearances, but fiction film here follows a Platonic set-up through internalizing the essence of the character. Herzog, by contrast, fictionalises in documentary together with the subject of the experience, thus allowing to creatively change, even to the point of parody. His condensed synthesized parodies of Dieter's experience in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* thus display a much more open approach than Tarantino's parodic types.

#### **5.4.9 Reflective Judgment vs. Reflexive Documentary**

The knowing 'indexing' of mock-documentaries as fiction ultimately curtails the oscillation between levels of reference and genres - non-fiction and fiction, original and repetition, the finite and the infinite. Mock-documentary ultimately is a closed - albeit often amusing - statement rather than a realisation of doubt. This is what distinguishes the rhetorical irony of the now generic mock-documentary from the Romantic irony in Herzog's documentaries; and it is the reason why Zak Penn's *Incident at Loch Ness* - even though it is complex and funny - in my opinion less successful than *Bells from the Deep*, and not really Herzogian. The Romantic oscillation, which in *Incident at Loch Ness* ultimately comes down on the side of fiction, is infinitely kept open Herzog's own documentaries such as *Bells from the Deep*. On the basis of the example of Herzog's documentaries, I argue here against the abstract decision that documentary is a fiction like any other. This position erases the difference between for example an inability or failure to represent and the mocking of it - a distinction Romantic irony made whilst fluctuating

between both. In mocking, the particularity of the detail is submitted to the judging instance. This is determinate judgment (as has been elaborated previously, Kant's determinant judgment 'subsumes the particular under it.'<sup>cclxxvi</sup> Reflective judgment on the other hand has to find the universal for the particular).<sup>cclxxvii</sup> If, in order to decide if something is documentary or fiction we invoke a predetermined category, this would be determinant judgment according to Kant:

Such a transcendental principle, then, the reflective Judgment can only give as a law from and to itself. It cannot derive from outside (because then it would be the determinant Judgment).<sup>cclxxviii</sup>

In reflective judgment, the singular, the example, is there first and then a universal has to be constructed for it. Derrida sums up the difference between Kant's determinate and reflective judgement as follows:

I will recall it [the distinction between reflective and determinant judgment] in its poorest generality. The faculty of judgment *in general* allows one to think the particular as contained under the general (rule, principle, law). When the generality is given first, the operation of judgment subsumes and *determines* the particular. It is determinant (*bestimmend*), it specifies, narrows down, comprehends, tightens. In the contrary hypothesis, the *reflective* judgment (*reflektierend*) has only the particular at its disposal and must climb back up to, return toward generality: the example (this is what matters to us here) is here given prior to the law and, in its very uniqueness as example, allows one to discover that law. Common scientific or logical discourse proceeds by determinant judgments.<sup>cclxxix</sup>

However, while Kant's reflective judgement is self-reflexive and self-inventing, reflective documentary is not necessarily self-reflexive. In as much as it asserts that all is fiction, mock-documentary's reflexivity remains on a formal level. It only has an external relationship to what it is reflexive about. The rhetorical irony in mock-documentary reflects the genre, but deflects from its own authorship. Mock-documentaries are reflexive about their own form, but they do not reflect the ironies of their own coming into existence and therefore stop short of being 'self-reflexive'. In mocking, the particularity of the detail is submitted to the judging instance (like in Kant's determinant judgment.)<sup>cclxxx</sup>

Herzog's films and their heroes are ironic about themselves.<sup>cclxxxi</sup> But even though Herzog's protagonists explain and demonstrate their past encounters towards the camera in what Thomas Waugh would call a presentational performance, they are not themselves consciously reflexive - a presupposition Waugh makes for a reflexive documentary.<sup>cclxxxii</sup>

Herzog's documentaries thus do not make conscious what was unconscious - a strategy pertaining to the Enlightenment, at odds with Romantic and Deleuzian thought and often employed in found footage film. Even without conscious reflexivity or judgment, Herzog's documentaries manifest reflexivity in the sense of Kant's reflexive judgment. In contrast, mock- or found footage documentaries that are overtly reflexive in their style or commentary fit Kant's determinate judgment, not the reflexive one. When Bill Nichols notes that 'neither the rock group [in *This is Spinal Tap*] nor the witch [in *The Blair Witch Project*] had any existence whatsoever prior to the production of these films,'<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> the decision as to whether the film is a mock-documentary or a documentary is binary as it depends on and is contained by the status of their protagonists. The particular is subsumed under the determination that the whole film is a fake. No stages of gestation of - or resistances to - invention are accounted for. Mock-documentary works backwards from the concept and determinate judgment - it might unsettle the notion of documentary as non-fiction, but it is settled in its judgment.

#### 5.4.10 'Poetry of Poetry' vs 'Mirrors within Mirrors'

As previously mentioned, Friedrich Schlegel suggests that Romantic poetry, 'can also – more than any other form – hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self interest, on the wings of poetic reflection.'<sup>cclxxxiv</sup> To these words, however, he adds that it can 'raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors.'<sup>cclxxxv</sup> The popular metaphor of a mirror within mirrors (that in Chapter II. on *The Children of Golzow* has been discussed as Lenin's mechanical reflection) was also used by Schlegel to outline the notion of Romantic poetry. Romantic reflection continues to be referred to as infinite reflection and has probably made Schlegel's notion 'poetry of poetry' the victim of his own mirror metaphor. Eggington for example writes:

Irony in Schlegel's sense, then, is art that has become conscious of itself and, by dint of this consciousness, infinitely self-reflexive. It is, to use the famous phrase, poetry of poetry or, to draw an analogy, metatheatre, theatre in which the actors play characters who in turn are actors playing characters.<sup>cclxxxvi</sup>

The metaphoric imagery of Schlegel and his interpreters here is reductive: to brush 'poetry of poetry' with the same figurative stroke as a meta-position, which enlinking it to 'meta-theatre' is tantamount to, is to equate the fragmentary and destabilising tenor of the former with the elevated and dominating position of the latter. Whereas a meta-position has the power to undo each preceding level and to superimpose its new paradigm (like in a conventional mock-documentary), 'poetry of poetry', rather than operating in this

hierarchical way, undermines any textual meta-position because of its fragmentary nature. However, Schlegel does not really advance a formal self-mirroring, and actually objected to infinite reflection as empty formalism in which the same image is infinitely contained in an ‘endless row of mirrors.’<sup>cclxxxvii</sup> This would only lead ‘to an eternal self-mirroring, to an infinite series of mirror-images which always contain only one and the same thing and nothing new.’<sup>cclxxxviii</sup> Instead, he suggested reflection in interaction with the material and even with theory: ‘In all its descriptions, this poetry should describe itself, and always be simultaneously poetry and the poetry of poetry.’<sup>cclxxxix</sup> It is his suggestion of a ‘poetry of poetry’, not his image of infinite regress, that is appropriate for evoking the oscillation between different degrees of non-fiction and fiction in Herzog’s documentaries. In *Bells from the Deep*, whether a scene has been staged, is kept open on various levels of possibility. Here the image of infinite reflection would be too definite and mechanical, and sidelines human agency. The film does not assert a final interpretation and keeps the decision about its truth value suspended infinitely.

Self-reflection as the infinite regress of superficial self-mirroring was later also criticized by Kierkegaard with an argument that could easily be levelled against apparently ‘postmodern’ relativist irony: ‘Because reflection was continuously reflecting about reflection, thinking went astray, and every step it advanced led further and further, of course, from any content.’<sup>ccxc</sup> Kierkegaard critiqued that Romantic irony in its ideal of infinite becoming, would just remain in a circle of negation and never be able to reach a point of affirmation.<sup>ccxci</sup> If every work is merely an approach, then nothing can ever be fully affirmed.<sup>ccxcii</sup> Kierkegaard would later follow up the containing effect of reflection in *Crisis in the Life of an Actress* when he said that when a performance displaying reflectivity is acknowledged by a reflecting viewer this amounts to nothing new: ‘understanding between reflection and reflection is quits. There remains no incommensurability, the account balances.’<sup>ccxciii</sup>

If reflection A is the performer, and reflection B approaches to admire, what does that mean? It means to show that he has understood A completely. If he has succeeded, then A replies, “Yes, so it is. I know that perfectly well myself.”<sup>ccxciv</sup>

Thus, reflection would be a conservative repetition of the Same. Deleuze followed Kierkegaard in this observation. As such he persuasively critiqued ‘infinite representation (the concept) which conserves all the negative finally to deliver difference up to the identical.’<sup>ccxcv</sup> Here Deleuze equates infinite representation with the concept. But he does

not only compare and condemn infinity, representation, and the concept, but also memory in one swipe: ‘Infinite representation is a memory which conserves.’<sup>ccxcvi</sup> Repetition as an effect of infinite regress only works as a containing element here. Deleuze is wary of the infinite as well as of the finite, since both can be the ground for representation. Like Kierkegaard, he suspects that the infinite relies on reason:

The ground or sufficient reason is nothing but a means of allowing the identical to rule over infinity itself, and allowing the continuity of resemblance, the relation of analogy and the opposition of predicates to invade infinity.<sup>ccxcvii</sup>

The relation of Deleuze’s notion of the copy of the copy to that simulacrum is equivalent to that of Schlegel’s ‘mirror within mirrors’ to his ‘poetry of poetry’. Like Deleuze’s simulacrum, ‘poetry of poetry’ includes a difference within itself.

#### **5.4.11 Third Level Reflection**

According to the early Romantics, most notably Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, thinking and reflection are identified with one another.<sup>ccxcviii</sup> In a ‘thinking that reflects on itself in self-consciousness’<sup>ccxcix</sup> this is achieved intuitively and not through reason: ‘the Romantics saw in the reflective nature of thinking a warrant for its intuitive character.’<sup>ccc</sup> Herzog’s rejection of observational cinema’s truth as merely the superficial ‘truth of accountants’ could be seen in the light of Novalis’ assertion that there can be no knowledge of objects or of anything outside oneself; there can be no knowledge without self-knowledge.<sup>ccci</sup> Romantic self-reflection is not based on distance or observation, since even natural things are understood to reflect other beings and are thus not distinct objects. Everything is reflected in and connected with everything else. Knowledge of an object as a distinct entity therefore designates ‘an absence of relation:’ ‘There is in fact no knowledge of an object by a subject.’<sup>cccii</sup> This stance on perception as being inseparable from embodied knowledge, is echoed around a century later by Henri Bergson, who found that ‘The objects which surround my body reflect its possible action upon them.’<sup>ccciii</sup> For Bergson, reflection was thus not consciously and actively initiated by a subject, but agency is turned into a reaction to the reflecting object. A precursor to the ‘downcast eyes’<sup>ccciv</sup> of modernism and Bergson’s perception through matter, knowledge for the early Romantics was as immediate as perception and did not need an external image. However, whereas for the Romantics perception was through natural objects, Bergson linked it directly to the body. He wrote about physical experience as an image from within:

Yet there is one of them [images], which is distinct from all the others, in that I do not know it only from without by perceptions, but from within by affections: it is my body.<sup>cccv</sup>

Although Bergson's notion of his body as an image is actually far removed from the action based physicality featured in Herzog's documentaries, both are concerned with physicality that escapes representation and with being simultaneously subject and object: 'My body, an object destined to move other objects, is, then, a centre of action; it cannot give birth to a representation.'<sup>cccvi</sup> What aligns Herzog with the German Romantics and Bergson is an emphasis on matter outside of representation. Herzog's enthusiasm for physicality, however, is not on that level congruent with the Romantic's emphasis on the fragment and the incomplete. The physical cannot be incomplete, but it also cannot be complete. It is through his emphasis on the physical nonetheless, that Herzog displaces the subject-object division of conventional documentary by other means than through decontextualized footage fragments.

Physicality and reflection are generally seen to be exclusive. Physicality is understood to be matter and reflection is thinking. For the early Romantics however, the first level of thinking without reflection was matter and the second level, the unmediated reflection, 'the thinking of thinking,' was the matter's form.<sup>cccvii</sup> The self-knowledge on the second level then, is formal reflection: 'This thinking of thinking is identified with the knowledge of thinking.'<sup>cccviii</sup> This has earned Fichte the reproach from both Schlegel and Kierkegaard that what he promotes is merely empty form. Kierkegaard's critique of Romantic irony for its apparent mirror reflection, however, seems to be based on a misunderstanding, as Helmut Prang ascertains.<sup>cccix</sup> In his dismissal of Romantic irony as merely as infinitely negating – similar to Socratic irony - he apparently missed the qualitative difference that Romantic third level reflection generates and mistook it for second level reflection. Schlegel too took a stance against reflection on the second level as merely formal. It is the third level of reflection which is consonant with Romantic irony. On the third level, the 'thinking of the thinking of the thinking' as Benjamin put it,<sup>cccx</sup> is where reflectivity becomes ambiguous. On this level, knowledge is not any more 'about' and distinct from perception, but both are immediate. In Novalis' theory, the perceived reflects the perceiver 'on the basis of a partly material interpenetration of subject and object.'<sup>cccxi</sup> This is exemplified in his suggestion that 'the star appears in the telescope and penetrates it.'<sup>cccxii</sup> (Reflection is theorized as mutual to the object and the subject. The subject experiences itself as the object of its own reflection: 'no knowledge is possible without the self-knowledge of what it is to be known.'<sup>cccxiii</sup> This valuing of 'self-knowledge in the things observed'<sup>cccxiv</sup> emancipates the object of observation, but does not suggest a comprehensive self-representation, as is often the case for instance in documentary interviews. Nevertheless the proposition that through watching someone or something, they would

gain self-recognition,<sup>cccxv</sup> finds its successor in the reasoning behind Reality-TV programming such as *Big Brother* or *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here*.) Benjamin referred to Novalis' theory of 'natural observation' as 'ironic observation,'<sup>cccxvi</sup> because it is not based on looking at something as an external object, but instead the observer and the observed become identical. Romantic observation is ironic because it does not want to know or observe from the outside. Rather, it observes through being its own object. At the same time, the object only becomes determined as such by being an object of knowledge:

For knowledge, according to the basic principle of knowledge of objects, is a process that first makes what is to be known into that *as* which it is known.<sup>cccxvii</sup>

Early Romanticism thus fostered subjectivity by making the object into the subject and vice versa. Herzog's claim made to his interviewer in *Burden of Dreams* that 'these are not only my dreams. My belief is, that all these dreams are yours as well'<sup>cccxviii</sup> could be read as this mutual overlap of subject and object. Here this superimposition is doubly secured since Herzog is the object of the interview, but the interviewer is the subject of Herzog's statement. Furthermore, by Herzog's inserting himself and his fiction films as the object of his documentary in *My Best Fiend*, instead of an external view on himself filming, he in effect turns uninvolved outsiders into his interviewees, thereby separating the quest for knowledge from the filmmaker and unusually turning the filmmaker into the object of someone else's quest for knowledge. Schlegel's idea of reflectivity as not only applying to thought - of art and philosophy as one practise - is relevant for a notion of documentary that is not merely externally commenting.

As has been explained above, the second level of 'original' reflection was placed in opposition to the third level of mediated reflection by Schlegel. According to Walter Benjamin on Schlegel, 'simple absolute reflection [is to] be distinguished from its opposite, simple original reflection.'<sup>cccxix</sup> What the Romantics called absolute reflection dissolves the lower level of the contained form of reflection on the second level.<sup>cccxx</sup> With regards to film, the second level would be a merely formal 'filming of filming,' where the mechanical reflection actually is still optical and perception and knowledge are separate. On the third level however, the 'reflecting on' - or 'speaking about' to use a verbal image from Trinh T. Minh-Ha's terminology - of the second level has become a mutually determining 'reflecting through.' Reflection on the third level is not an empty formal exercise in infinite regress, but produces new substances.

Romantic reflection, though at first sight based on a model of successive and thus

hierarchical progress, does not aim at an overview whereby the latest is the most authoritative version - such as in 'Russian doll' narratives in films like John McNaughton's *Wild Things* (1998) where the most recent revelation discounts all previous narratives - since every prior reflection is made 'into the object of a subsequent reflection.'<sup>cccxxi</sup> Instead, it is based on a mutual influencing through multiple connections: 'The infinity of reflection, for Schlegel and Novalis, is not an infinity of continuous advance but of an infinity of connectedness.'<sup>cccxxii</sup> observed Walter Benjamin. In this limitless interconnection, 'every reflection is immediate in itself.' This infinitude of connections prefigures what Deleuze later would call 'deterritorialization.' On this third level of reflection, fiction and non-fiction are deterritorialized, and their status is fluctuating ambiguously.

#### **5.4.12 The German Romantics and Actuality**

Herzog's documentaries are Romantic in the sense that - unlike conventional mock-documentary - they take a polemical distance to the notion of mimesis and assert their creative freedom. Even Claude Lanzmann's anti-representational stance can be traced back to Romanticism, albeit whereas he maintains that the suffering of the Holocaust cannot be understood or represented, Friedrich Schlegel argued that it is the ideal that cannot be shown.<sup>cccxxiii</sup> Whilst Lanzmann claims that reality has exceeded all representations in a negative sense, Schlegel contended that both reality and representation always falls short of the powers of imagination. The filmmaker and the theorist both point to the limits of representation: for Lanzmann it cannot measure up to the negative and for Schlegel it cannot compare with the positive. In their preference of the virtual over the actual, as Deleuze would have said, Romantic theorists would have been against any conventional notion of documentary. Schlegel regarded any realisation as limiting the infinite play of imagination. Materialisation per se would be inferior to its previous ideal, because purely by existing it has already restricted its possibilities.<sup>cccxxiv</sup> That reality does not live up to an ideal for the Romantics, however, should not to be read as Platonic, because the Romantic imagination is infinite and thus would have made too capricious an ideal for Plato. The ideal of Romantic poetry would exceed its representation and its theorization. Schlegel did not want art, or poetry, to lose itself in representation.<sup>cccxxv</sup> In its stance against actualisation, Romantic theory was anti-essentialist and anti-representational. Any actual manifestation, be it in the form of reality, a product or just as an articulation, would contradict the generative principle of imagination and would therefore be limiting. The creative act was preferable to the product. Romantic poetry was always to be in the process of becoming and never be to be finished.<sup>cccxxvi</sup> Thus, considered from this perspective, film

itself as a manifestation is already a limitation.

Rather than resolving a dialectical stand-off into a reconciliation as Hegel did, Schlegel advocated leaving the tension of irony in a perpetual state of becoming that is never complete:

An idea is a concept perfected to the point of irony, an absolute synthesis of absolute antitheses, the continual self-creating interchange of two conflicting thoughts. An ideal is at once idea and fact.<sup>cccxxvii</sup>

Herzog can be understood to have followed his ideals in his fiction films with Klaus Kinski. In the documentary *My Best Fiend*, Herzog looks at the material traces of his fictional ideas in a 'self-creating interchange' - like Romantic poetry - only that here it is between fiction and documentary.<sup>cccxxviii</sup> By the time of this documentary re-visitation of his fiction film sites, the 'ideal is at once idea and fact,' as Schlegel would have written.<sup>cccxxix</sup> Thus, Herzog has turned the Romantic fluctuation confined to poetry into one between materialist documentary and idealist fiction; between the production of a material reality through filming and the representation of an idea. Herzog's documentaries have manifested their own physical materiality out of visions and fictional ideas like Romantic poetry. Though it is not physical, it 'creates its own material' at which point 'the idea has no longer any significance,' as Schlegel advises.<sup>cccxxx</sup>

Like the Romantics, Herzog has frequently been criticised for ahistoricism. Kierkegaard criticised the Romantic theorist Fichte for a timeless stance of irony that rejects all actuality:

But this infinity of thought in Fichte is [...] an infinity without any content.

[...] he advanced an idealism beside which any actuality turned pale.<sup>cccxxxi</sup>

Kierkegaard refers here to Fichte's formal reflection on the second level that documentary theory has called formal reflexivity. It comes before the oscillating third level Schlegel names as Romantic irony, and which Fichte describes as such:

[The] action of freedom, through which the form turns into the form of the form as its content and returns into itself, is called "reflection."<sup>cccxxxii</sup>

Kierkegaard (retrospectively, since obviously this was beyond the scope of his time) emerges as an unlikely supporter of actuality documentary as an affirmative text. Against the infinite oscillation of Romantic irony Kierkegaard suggested an irony based on finitude, which would respect historical actuality. Kierkegaard found that Romantic irony, 'not only denies a specific historical moment, but but any historical reality,'<sup>cccxxxiii</sup> according to Prang, since it would create itself out of itself. This early stance of

Kierkegaard's writing follows in the line of Hegel's complaint that a purely self-reflecting process without either historical situating or concrete sensuous beauty would lead to empty abstraction:

Irony's misrelation to actuality [historical actuality] is already sufficiently intimated by the essentially critical stance of irony. [...] But criticism as a rule precludes sympathy.<sup>cccxxxiv</sup>

Before he parted with Hegel, Kierkegaard here critiqued that the timeless stance of irony does not account for the choices of the individual in actual history: 'In a twinkling, all history was turned into myth – poetry – legend – fairy tale.'<sup>cccxxxv</sup> In the same stroke as with its timelessness then, Kierkegaard criticised the fictionalising effect of irony. This is in line with Derrida's critique of Lacan's truth of fiction and in accord with the stance purported in this chapter which distinguishes the ironic 'truth' in Herzog's serious documentaries from the non-ironic truth behind the ironic mock-documentary. The accusation of ahistoricity levelled against Romantic theory is also sometimes addressed at the philosopher or critic personally, for comparing for instance Romantic with contemporary theory (the philosophical approach has been criticized as unhistorical):

The most influential critique of the philosophical or "romantic" reading is that of Anthony Close, who argues that the attempt to "accommodate" the novel [*Don Quijote*] to "modern stereotypes and preoccupations" involves a willful ahistoricism on the part of the critic.<sup>cccxxxvi</sup>

Herzog is against philosophical abstraction, but has also been criticised for ahistoricism. Herzog's films are said to betray 'a certain kind of (modernist) ironic reflexivity, but one that is resolutely ahistorical.'<sup>cccxxxvii</sup> This reproach of ahistoricity against Herzog's films follows in the tradition of that of timelessness against the German Romantics. By contrast, I argue that whereas Herzog rejects an authority of actuality, he nevertheless in these documentaries follows a cause-and-effect chain that acknowledges a historical order, albeit that some of this 'history' is invented. In contrast to the conventional reading of Herzog's films as ahistorical, Alan Singer makes Herzog an advocate of time, narrative and history and argues that:

Despite the riddling imagery of his films, Herzog is emphatically not a transcendental philosopher but rather a narrative artist committed to history as a vital form of cultural production.<sup>cccxxxviii</sup>

Herzog is indeed a narrative filmmaker, but one who does not feel obliged to represent the culture of a locale or the locale of a culture. He does abstract from history and geography, such as in *Pilgrimage*, for example. But he does this with a very concrete, physical focus and not in a purely metaphysical manner. That, as Singer says, 'history for Herzog is

manifestly a condition to be reckoned with rationally, not a nightmare to be sweated out<sup>cccxxxix</sup> does not exclude sweating outside of history. Whereas Herzog rejects an authority of actuality, in documentaries such as *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* he still follows a cause-and-effect chain that acknowledges a chronology. Through his refusal to contextualize and resistance to subsuming the singular as a particular under the generality of history, as Deleuze would phrase it, Herzog presents causalities without history. Herzog's documentaries show historical context as too abstract for the concrete experiences depicted.

#### 5.4.13 Metaphors Materialized

For Herzog the ideal is relayed through the physical and the material (in contrast to Schlegel). Whereas another director would have constructed a make-believe studio set, Herzog had to pull an actual ship over a real hill in the real jungle for his central metaphor in *Fitzcarraldo*; 'Herzog's filmmaking is both an act of allegorizing and of literalising a particular situation,' as Thomas Elsaesser wrote.<sup>cccxi</sup> In the spirit of this close linkage between metaphor and material, Herzog has taken the Romantic fall into fragmentation literally in his documentaries, and sought out plane crashes and ski-jumping accidents. Through this materialization of metaphors, Herzog's documentaries subvert Romantic irony, which in its own historical period, prior to the age of the film, could only be expressed primarily through literature. As language per se is metaphorical, it always already amplifies the 'rift between the actual and the ideal.'<sup>cccxi</sup> Since the German Romantics in their primary form of expression, literature, worked through language, its representations necessarily stood for something else and thus were symbolic, allegorical and metaphoric. The limitation of language and its failure to be literal is reflected in the theories of Romanticism. Romantic irony is typically read as a trope of literary theory and therefore through the limited possibilities in the opposition between the metaphor and literary writing.

The ideas of ground and foundation, for example, rely on spatial metaphors, while the notion of the literal can only be thought through the concept of writing, literariness and script.<sup>cccxlii</sup>

Rather than merely confronting the instability of language with ironic speech and literary poetry, Herzog's documentaries manifest the instability of documentary reality. Through the materially and physically literal, supported by the heightened referentiality and indexicality of documentary film, his documentaries exceed the literariness of literature and broaden the degree of fluctuation between levels of referentiality, an option which the Romantics did not have available at the time. In Herzog's documentaries, physicality is not

contained through a metaphor.

With respect to their physicality and their emphasis on the practical, Herzog's documentaries are not Romantic. As Herzog already found in 1977: 'I am not a "German Romantic" as they called me in *Playboy*. [...] I am physical.'<sup>cccxl</sup> The German Romantics 'all felt an aversion towards rationalism and practicality.'<sup>cccxliv</sup> By contrast, Herzog's documentary heroes survive because they are pragmatic. Physicality was a quality that the Romantics attributed to Classicism and considered mainly externally in aesthetical terms. The poeticism of the Romantics was supposed to be spiritual.<sup>cccxlv</sup> Whereas for Friedrich Schlegel, the mind produced physical energy,<sup>cccxlv</sup> in Herzog's documentaries the physical generates mental energy and an aesthetics. In this sense, Herzog challenges German Romanticism with his poetry of the physical.

## 5.5 Herzog's Visions Between the Indexical and the Mental

Werner Herzog is frequently referred to as a 'visionary filmmaker.' Herzog describes how, so as to keep them as unconscious as possible, he tries to write his fiction films by jotting his visions down as fast as he can. But since he regards his visions as no more than images already there in everyone's mind, he is thereby just copying them down:

I have never written much longer than a week on a screen-play, because I do not want to think when I write. I just want to write down what I see and what I hear as if I were in a movie theatre and see a whole film: how quickly can I follow up and describe it? It is almost like the work of someone who copies a book. I copy from a screen, as if I was already sitting in a theatre and I see it.<sup>cccxlvii</sup>

I would like to suggest here that following a vision has entirely different connotations in the conception of Herzog's fiction films than in his documentaries. Whereas Herzog regards his fiction films as copies of a vision (which for him is already a copy of a pre-existing original), his documentaries point to the gap between external documentation and internal images. Herzog's fiction films repeat in their diegeses the fact that the world of fiction film itself is built according to a Platonic idea(l), in which the characters can only fail. His fiction films, after having submitted *Kaspar Hauser* (1974), *Stroszek* (1976), *Aguirre* (1972) and *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) to his vision and after having constructed their world from a script based on language, generally end negatively. As his fictional characters try to adjust their reality to their vision, they become embroiled in a circular structure - a repetition of the Same - that ends in failure or death. Still, Herzog does not seek

resemblance to a preconceived model visually and rejects his fictional images being governed by the template of a storyboard:

For my entire career as a director, I have avoided filming in studios. [...] The world of the studio rarely offers any surprises to the director; in part, because you run only into people you have paid to be there. [...] One other thing I never do – that inevitably destroys the spontaneity needed on a film set – is to storyboard the action. [...] storyboards remain the instruments of cowards who do not trust their own imagination and who are slaves of a matrix.<sup>cccxlviii</sup>

Thus, while Herzog avoids the studio and the storyboard because they merely foster repetitions of themselves and rejects being a slave to a visual matrix, he does submit his fictional characters to a vision that they can only fail to realize.

By contrast, Herzog's documentary heroes do not have to submit to an idea emanating from the symbolic or language, but rather to their own experiences. Whilst the scripts for his fiction films are similar to Platonic models that seek identity, his documentaries point to the evanescent nature of the external image. *Wheel of Time* (2001) follows pilgrims to the making of a Buddhist sand mandala. This is the temporary representation of an internal image, which will be erased again at the end of the ritual. In the film, the Dalai Lama expresses Herzog's documentary mantra: 'The main thing is visualisation, not an external image'. Against images of Buddhist monks, who are blindfolded to symbolise that one cannot see the true nature of reality, Herzog narrates deadpan: 'the culminating spiritual event, invisible to our camera, thus comes to an end'. The mental images in Herzog's documentaries point to the limits, and hence inappropriateness, of seeking resemblance through external documentation.

### **5.5.1 Believing in Documentary?**

In his documentaries, Herzog often presents potential fakes without identifying them as such. In *Bells from the Deep*, we see a gentle bearded and long-haired man dressed in a long red gown who holds his hands in gestures reminiscent of Jesus in a Renaissance painting. His arms are extended and he blesses us, his audience, by touching the frame of the image. Here the question arises as to whether the social actor is faking being Jesus or whether Jesus is not already an imposter. Is the documentary inventing scenes of worship or are the ways we worship already invented? By virtue of depicting religious representatives as potential fakes, also 'real' religion and its icons seem fake. We are made to question on which level the depicted acts in the name of religion are documented or staged. Thus, Herzog not only alludes to staging in documentary, a gesture not uncommon

especially in recent documentary practice, but also to the staging of religion and the invention of God. The Romantic theorist Friedrich Schlegel wrote:

If every infinite individual is God, then there are as many Gods as there are ideals. And further, the relation of the true artist and the true human being to his ideals is absolutely religious. The man for whom this inner divine service is the end and occupation of all his life is a priest, and this is how everyone can and should become a priest.<sup>cccxlx</sup>

Schlegel was the son of a protestant priest and had converted to Catholicism in the second half of his life. He wrote this fragment to advance self-reflexive art as the path to religion. In this instance, the way in which the eventually atheist Herzog - who also had converted to Catholicism earlier in his life - uses a Schlegelian theme (the potential divinity of everyone) to question religion and documentary simultaneously is what makes his work subvert German Romanticism. Instead of the elevation of man through creativity and Creation, the documentary raises the issue of the invention of Creation and the documentary film artist as Creator. When Friedrich Schlegel defined Romantic poetry as that which can, 'more than any other form – hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self interest, on the wings of poetic reflection,'<sup>ccccl</sup> he was writing about the reflection between the artist and his or her subject. In contrast to Schlegel's ultimate religious faith though, *Bells from the Deep* destabilizes religion through representation. In *Bells from the Deep*, either God is the represented and Jesus his representative, or Jesus is the represented and a mere human represents him. The figure of Jesus in *Bells from the Deep* is suspended between iconicity and mockery, between representation and its negation, between fiction and non-fiction.

### **5.5.2 The Documentary Fantastic**

By showing what is most likely a Jesus impersonator, *Bells from the Deep* indirectly thematizes the issue of a documentary impersonation and the 'impersonation' of documentary. We are never quite sure in *Bells from the Deep* if what we see is a fake or a real representative of God, a fake or a 'real' miracle. By 'documenting' 'Jesus' and 'miracles,' *Bells from the Deep* highlights the importance of belief vis a vis an ambiguously interpretable reality. This also puts the notion of visible evidence with respect to documentary in question and alludes to documentary itself as an issue of faith. Hence, we are made to acknowledge that we too are believers, albeit of the film's documentary status. We cannot know from the 'evidence' presented to us whether something is a miracle, in which case the notion of documentary applies, or a fake, in which case it would be fiction. This formation is comparable to the tension Tzvetan Todorov describes for the

Fantastic in fiction between the super-natural and the natural. This tension here would translate as being between Godly acts and human actors or between a documentary about the super-natural, and a fictional and thus natural trick.<sup>cccli</sup> Whereas often in Herzog's fiction films we are not sure if what we see is a dream or a hallucination with an internal cause - such as in *Aguirre, Wrath of God* when the protagonists see a boat in a tree - in his documentaries the element that disqualifies the tension of the Fantastic is manifested externally: in *Bells from the Deep* we wonder if a faith healer, for example, is a trick or an illusion. (Symptomatically, *My Best Fiend*, Herzog's re-incarnation of his fiction film sets as a documentary - begins with his main actor, Klaus Kinski, apparently *not* playing a role on stage in front of a student audience in the 1970s and insisting that he is Jesus. Later in the documentary, Herzog proudly tells us that Kinski believed that he was not just playing a role.)

### **5.5.3 'Jesus,' the Documentary Subject with the Voice of God**

Usually the voice of the filmmaker in an expository documentary is read as that of universal man; this is metaphorically described as the 'voice of God'. Expository narration has been criticised vehemently for this objectifying tendency of turning the filmmaker's opinions into the 'voice of God'. Herzog's documentaries, by contrast, have frequently come under fire for causing the same effect by opposite means: here *not* to provide an explanation has been regarded as patronising. In *Bells from the Deep*, the protagonists' voices, when they are not simply left untranslated, are dubbed by the filmmaker's own voice. His voice, however, is too heavily German accented to count as universal and to be taken as the 'voice of God', even if he dubs a 'Jesus' who purports that Jesus and God are one and especially so since there is anyway little expository narration. Herzog consciously emphasises this resistance against a universal language by often recording a German and an English version with his actors for the fiction films as well as with his German documentary protagonists. Here, Herzog's expressed intention to make visible and 'articulate images that sit deeply inside us,'<sup>ccclii</sup> - universal and timeless - stands in contrast to the locatable origin of the filmmaker's voice and his obsessive pursuing of material details and their effects. The unexpected causal chains thereby unravelled are too obscure to be something that we always knew. The tension between a universal image or gesture and the individual application, between an explanatory, 'objective' commentary and the singular accent is another variation of the negotiation between the meta-physical and the physical in Herzog's documentaries.

In addition, in *Bells from the Deep* (as in many of Herzog's documentaries) we are not being introduced into a setting, but merely confronted with it. This is underlined by Herzog's customary frontal presentation of his protagonists who look straight into the camera. In the first scene of the film, two Mongolians posing languidly break unexpectedly into song. As with the beautiful watery surfaces in *Lessons of Darkness* that turn out to be oil, appearance is again shown to have fooled us when the more feminine looking of the pair opens her (or his) mouth to produce the deep and coarse sound of throat-singing. Similarly, we are not lead into the next scene by any explanation, but confronted with a ritualistic chant that remains untranslated. In the absence of contextualization, with only inter-titles connecting the assemblage of various spiritual representatives and their followers, and with the filmmaker's narration not being acceptable as a universal, God-like voice, the often quite outlandish claims of the documentary subjects - about, for instance, their identity - stand without correction and thus gain more weight. In *Bells from the Deep* it is the documentary subject literally, and not metaphorically the documentary filmmaker, who might be speaking with the voice of God. Instead of providing us with an acceptable unified perspective, the outrageousness of the voice of expository documentary effacing itself in favour of the words of a man purporting to be Jesus, and as such possibly literally speaking with the voice of God, makes us question to what extent the 'voice of God' in our heads, in the utterances of the protagonists or in those of the filmmaker might be an invention.

#### **5.5.4 Herzog's 'Jesus' as Deleuze's Simulacrum**

Even though the rejection of objective knowledge and the dismissal of evidence that Herzog maintains is also part of theology, he challenges the Christian belief that God 'cannot be an object of knowledge'<sup>cccliii</sup> by confronting us with a manifestation of the word made flesh; the word made documentary. A traditional definition of documentary is that of a copy (of the world) that is best if it resembles the original as closely as possible. Therein one might think lies an intrinsic Platonism. For Plato, according to Deleuze, copies are 'secondary processors' that seek to resemble.<sup>cccliv</sup> Unlike documentary images which are often said to have an external relationship to their object (John Caughie for instance regards the documentary gaze is an external one onto a passive object),<sup>ccclv</sup> Plato's copies have an internal relation to their idea: 'The copy truly resembles something only to the degree that it resembles the idea of that thing.'<sup>ccclvi</sup> Their resemblance is founded on an internal relation to a model;<sup>ccclvii</sup> on an Idea and an ideal (of an object), not on an external image. In this internal relation, Plato's resembling copies part from the copy that is the indexical documentary image. The process of building a world as a copy of an ideal model

makes fiction film much more Platonic than documentary. Since it produces images according to an idea, fiction film is working in the line of Platonic 'identity of the model.'<sup>ccclviii</sup> The shaping of a fiction film according to a script would be like Plato's model which, as Deleuze finds, has a circular structure like myth: 'It permits the construction of a model according to which different pretenders can be judged.'<sup>ccclix</sup> For Plato, the world is a bad copy of a good idea. This would be the case for a fiction film director who values his control over the world he creates in the image of his script, like, for example, Alfred Hitchcock, more than a director who seeks with his material (that is his actors) to transform the original script, like, for instance, John Cassavetes. Herzog's fiction films are like Plato's models seeking resemblance.

Regardless as to whether the copy's relation to the original is external and indexical, or internal and abstract, Plato's notions of copy and model are based on resemblance and identity. As Deleuze maintains: 'if copies or icons are good images and are well-founded, it is because they are endowed with resemblance.'<sup>ccclx</sup> He criticises Platonism for 'assuring the triumph of the copies over simulacra'<sup>ccclxi</sup> and thus repressing the play of difference. In contrast, in his 'reversal of Platonism,' he suggests the simulacrum as a 'copy' 'built on dissimilarity'<sup>ccclxii</sup> and liberated from representing and resembling.<sup>ccclxiii</sup> Plato and Baudrillard, on the other hand, are critical of images being mistaken for their referent. The difference between Deleuze's and Baudrillard's simulacrum is that Baudrillard is nostalgic about the loss of the original, whereas Deleuze makes the simulacrum the new 'original': 'History itself is or was only an immense model of simulation.'<sup>ccclxiv</sup> The simulacrum as a repetition with a difference, according to Deleuze, is not merely the copy of a copy, since this process would still be based on resemblance:

If we say of the simulacrum that it is a copy of a copy, an infinitely degraded icon, an infinitely loose resemblance, we then miss the essential, that is, the difference in nature between simulacrum and copy [...]. The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance.<sup>ccclxv</sup>

Baudrillard seems to see in the simulacrum merely the 'copy of a copy that Deleuze challenges, but fails to find the qualitative difference that Deleuze finds:

The artificial and the simulacrum are not the same thing. They are even opposed to each other. The artificial is always a copy of a copy, which should be pushed to the point where it changes its nature and is reversed into the simulacrum.<sup>ccclxvi</sup>

The artificial here, the copy of the copy, can be compared to the infinite reflectivity of a

mirror within mirrors. I would even like to argue here that the relation of Deleuze's notion of the copy of the copy to the simulacrum is equivalent to that between Schlegel's image of 'mirror within mirrors' and the much more appropriate 'poetry of poetry' by the Romantic theorist, as has been outlined previously. Poetry of poetry includes difference within itself.

In establishing the difference between a dutiful copy of a copy, the artificial (which follows the path of resemblance), and the simulacrum (as the image that diverts from being a faithful copy and affirms difference), Deleuze writes the following:

God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost the resemblance while maintaining the image. We have become simulacra. We have forsaken moral existence in order to enter into aesthetic existence.<sup>ccclxvii</sup>

'Jesus' in *Bells from the Deep* does not function like the Sophists - the unworthy pretenders - for Plato, but like the Sophists for Deleuze: 'the Sophist himself is the being of the simulacrum,'<sup>ccclxviii</sup> because he 'places into question the very notions of copy and model.'<sup>ccclxix</sup> Like the simulacrum, as something that is part of a series that cannot be traced to an original beginning, Herzog's 'Jesus' cannot be referred back to an original Jesus, because he is most likely a pretender.

[...] by simulacrum we should not understand a simple imitation but rather the act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned. The simulacrum is the instance which includes a difference within itself, such as (at least) two divergent series on which it plays, all resemblance is abolished so that one can no longer point to the existence of an original and a copy.<sup>ccclxx</sup>

If we were to rewrite this observation by Deleuze with respect to *Bells from the Deep*, it would be in the following way: Herzog's documentaries are not simple documentations, but rather the very idea of a privileged position is challenged and overturned. The image of Herzog's 'Jesus' includes difference in itself as it plays on the series of the original God, his representative on earth, and a possibly bad copy of that representative.

For Plato, the resemblance between the original and the copy is spiritual and internal, since it follows an Idea.<sup>ccclxxi</sup> In contrast, Herzog's documentaries have separated spirituality from internality. In *Bells from the Deep* Herzog, in documentary (the apparent medium of resemblance) invokes both the simulacral representations of Jesus on the one hand and a resemblance to an original God on the other. As a result, the documentary suggests that the effect of the simulacrum might be as good as the effect of the copy bearing the resemblance to the original. In *Bells from the Deep*, through the possibility that the

representatives of God are actors, we are made to consider the possibility that God is an act, a fiction.

Herzog's documentaries negotiate the terrain between copy and simulacrum. Whereas Herzog's fiction films can be seen as copies of copies, the artificial in Herzog's documentaries, the stylization of the apparently natural through for instance 'copying', or, documentary re-enactment, moves beyond what Deleuze called 'artificial' - the copy of a copy - and includes difference. Herzog maintains that the re-enactments in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* are not merely copies based on resemblance, but stylized and partly invented:

And it is not re-enactment as you would see on television these days. This is usually done in a very stupid way and I think this is a different form of this. Not so much re-enactment, there is possibly one exception where he is taken away by his captors and even that is highly stylized and partially invented.<sup>ccclxxii</sup>

Deleuze referred to the simulacrum as 'a mirage.'<sup>ccclxxiii</sup> Coincidentally, Herzog literally sought out mirages in *Fata Morgana*:

This was the motif of *Fata Morgana*: to capture things that are not real, not even actually there. In the desert you can actually film mirages. Of course, you cannot film hallucinations which appear only inside your own mind, but mirages are something completely different. A mirage is a mirror reflection of an object that does actually exist and that you can see, even though you cannot actually touch it.<sup>ccclxxiv</sup>

Alan Singer describes how *Fata Morgana* strays from the path of resemblance with an original:

Perhaps the strangeness of the land represented by the tracking shots will reveal its coded resemblance to the lost particulars of the world imaged in long shots. But the obtrusive length of these tracking shots finally compels us to reconcile ourselves to the lost particulars of sand, wind, winding road, as irreducible blurs, radiating perspectives, and geometrical symmetries. There is no return to an original motionless moment wherein what we saw in static long shots and what we see in fluid tracking shots is recognizably the same thing. The earthly and the heavenly will be neither analogised nor allegorised to our satisfaction.<sup>ccclxxv</sup>

Herzog's documenting of a mirage maps out the terrain his documentaries trace between copy and simulacrum. Deleuze's simulacrum becomes a new 'original' with Herzog's mirage, materialized as a film image. But it becomes this, in a sense, as a copy - the documentary film image - of a simulacrum. The documentation of a fake or a mirage

manifests a new 'Creation' in this act of copying. Herzog's documentaries realize filming itself as producing a physical image: to manifest a material grounding of an evanescent source; to literally see what is literally not there; to give a mental image or an optical illusion its indexical trace. In *Fata Morgana* the physical element of what Herzog called 'athletic cinema' is the documentary film image of a mirage.

The reading of Herzog's documentary images as simulacra of 'our visions' which is suggested here, differs from the reading of simulacra as superficial and being in opposition to 'referential depth and subjective interiority,'<sup>ccclxxvi</sup> as advanced by Roland Barthes and critiqued by Jean Baudrillard. The simulacra in, for instance, pop art, 'release the image [and the author] from any deep meaning into simulacral surface,'<sup>ccclxxvii</sup> as Hal Foster paraphrases Barthes. The latter advanced a notion of the simulacrum against the referential that fosters a process of de-authoring and de-subjectifying.<sup>ccclxxviii</sup> This interpretation of the subject and the author as only a signifier displays an 'embrace of boredom, repetition, domination,'<sup>ccclxxix</sup> as Foster put it when writing about Andy Warhol. Warhol wanted this repetition to be emotionally distanced and without affect: 'I don't want it to be essentially the same – I want it to be *exactly* the same. Because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel.'<sup>ccclxxx</sup> Repetition in this interpretation is used as a defence against affect,<sup>ccclxxxi</sup> which is quite unlike in Herzog's documentaries. In contrast to Deleuze and Warhol, the play with repetition and difference for Herzog is not equivalent to a rejection of subjectivity. Whereas for Deleuze 'simulacra are appearances without any ground or foundation,'<sup>ccclxxxii</sup> Herzog wants to 'rescue the referent'<sup>ccclxxxiii</sup> - as Thomas Elsaeser phrased it - if only to have it available for the tension between levels of reference. In this respect, Herzog's documentaries can be seen as in line with German Romanticism. In contrast to a retrospective interpretation of Romanticism as seeking 'authenticity, integrity and spontaneity,'<sup>ccclxxxiv</sup> the Romantic theorist August Wilhelm Schlegel, (the brother of Friedrich) criticized a fetishization of originality: 'Hardly any literature other than ours can exhibit so many monstrosities born of a mania for originality.'<sup>ccclxxxv</sup> The appreciation of the fake in German Romanticism can be understood as another way of heightening subjectivity. Here subjectivity introduces difference into repetition. The chasm between the original and the imitation, or perhaps even the failing to be like the original, can be read as evoking a sublime feeling, like the one between the finite observer and the infinite landscape:

It is a sublime taste always to like things better when they've been raised to the second power. For example, copies of imitations, critiques of reviews, addenda

to additions, commentaries on notes [...].<sup>ccclxxxvi</sup>

Judging by such remarks of August Wilhelm Schlegel, the German Romantics preferred a simulacrum to the copy. The sublime, then, would have been evoked by the simulacrum.

With respect to Herzog documentaries, this process has yet another added layer, since it does not only involve the artist creating an artificial image following a mental picture based on an external image, but the documentary filmmaker documenting external images following an inner vision. The German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich 'copied' a mental image following an external one. He painted his landscapes in a closed room only from memory:

Close your eyes so that your picture will first appear before your mind's eye.

Then bring to the light of day what you first saw in the inner darkness, and let it be reflected back into the minds of others.<sup>ccclxxxvii</sup>

With Herzog, 'the conflict between the spiritual and the material world,'<sup>ccclxxxviii</sup> as described by William Vaughan in relation to Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea*, is not only represented wholly artificially through painting, but is materialized in documentary.

## **5.6 From Repetition of the Same in Fiction to Affirmative Repetition in Documentary**

The non-fictional reality of Herzog's fiction films has a negative image. His fiction films have been criticized for precise correspondences between the events that figure in the diegetic and the events that figure in the extra-diegetic, non-fictional reality of filming on the set, to the extent that we are dealing with one and the same event. Both Fitzcarraldo (the character) and Herzog (his director) had a boat pulled over a hill - the same boat, as it happens, in the same action, of which the first is the diegetic, fictional author and other the extra-diegetic, real author. Not only this, but the filmmaker has been criticised - perhaps understandably - for exploiting his non-actor protagonists in the process of filming, and that this is precisely analogous to the way in which native workers are frequently represented as being mistreated in the stories of Herzog's films. His way of directing fiction film has frequently been interpreted, and reproached, for being a repetition of the exploitation it depicts; for the negative repetitions of his fiction films in their extra-diegetic reality.<sup>ccclxxxix</sup> The treatment of the non-actors is said to be exploitative, although the films take a stance against the mistreatment of the characters. It is as though the oft remarked upon documentary quality of his fiction films requires a re-enactment of the filmic events on the set; as though in order to show exploitation, it has to be not only shown diegetically,

but be realized extra-diegetically. For instance when in *Where the Green Ants Dream* the local Aborigines try to defend themselves from being moved from their land by a mining company, Thomas Elsaesser observes that this diegetic event, which is being criticised in the film, is in effect repeated in Herzog's extra-diegetic staging for the film, in the very way he 'moves the Aborigines before his camera.'<sup>cccxc</sup> Here it is evidently not the actions of the protagonists in the film that are repeated, but the nature of Herzog's direction that repeats the autocratic attitude of the mining company. It intensifies the distance between the Aborigines and the institutions, be it the film team or the company. Tom Cheesman describes how this intensification in the repetition usually is only read in a negative way: 'Herzog's use of such people is commonly seen as ethically problematic to the extent that he neglects to declare his own interests subordinate to theirs.'<sup>cccxi</sup> By contrast, one could understand Herzog to be focusing on the very distance within the exploitative relationship and thus to be 'baring the device' of exploitation. Herzog bears witness to difference, rather than pretend a universal reality where artistic production is shared and experience is democratic:

Herzog's use of cinematographically 'primitive' techniques (especially the static, frontal full shot of a person gazing into the camera) allows him to "let his characters know that they perform, and that their performance has a gravity beyond tragedy."<sup>cccxcii</sup>

Difference is foregrounded, rather than concealed. Because his protagonist's performance in his fiction films is contained within the latter's single level of represented reality, the intricacy of Herzog's conscious rejection of ethnographic sensitivity, which would otherwise divert his story, was often not comprehensible for the film audience. With respect to his fiction films, Herzog was criticized because it was argued that the 'originals' should be protected from change. The accusation was that already by acting they would cease to be themselves.<sup>cccxciii</sup> Taking a stance against ethnographic observation, which would assimilate contingent behaviour to an abiding essence, Herzog asked them to apply their way of acting to something they do not usually do. Through the separation of their manner from their normal practices, being from action, actualities opened up into potentialities, thereby making their 'essence' into a 'transferable skill:'

I don't feel like doing a documentary on the Campas [a Peruvian tribe employed to act in *Fitzcarraldo*]. It should not end up as an ethnographic film. I also stylize them and I have them in the film as they probably are not precisely in their normal life. They do things they would normally not do. They act in that film. And that interests me even more. Yet, they have an authenticity of their culture and their behaviour, of their movement, of their language in

it.<sup>cccxciv</sup>

This use of non-actors who do not know what it means to perform as a means to fit into 'normal' life, but are confident and find meaning in a performance demarcated as such, is similar to the mentally disabled Bruno S. performing as a street musician in *Stroszek*. In contrast to his being incompetent at 'being himself' in what is the normal life of the diegesis, where he is forced to 'act' in order to fit into it, he is competent in performing as a musician. In contrast to his failure to 'act normal,' Bruno S. is competent in performing as an act. In his film *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999) Harmonie Korine's attempt to be 'Herzogian' - by using mentally disabled non-actors and actors acting mentally disabled characters, as well as using Herzog himself as an actor - was counterproductive as he did the opposite with Herzog to what Herzog did with the Campas. In *Julien Donkey-Boy*, Herzog is a character within the diegesis, but he mainly says things one would imagine Herzog, the German director who is tough with his actors, to say. For example giving his 'son' a cold shower he shouts at him: 'Don't shiver! A winner does not shiver.' By having Herzog enact what are presumed to be his own actions and directions, Korine overemphasises the signifier and freezes potentialities into mannerisms. That is to say, Herzog playing 'himself' is a repetition of the same; the 'director' as a character has become a static form that prevents any change through acting. By doing this Korine thereby ends up with an utterly un-Herzogian film even though Herzog is in it and says 'Herzogian' things.

When Herzog's fiction film *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* is criticised as a neo-colonialist 'repetition of the conquistadores' adventures in the actual production of the picture,<sup>cccxcv</sup> this repetition is not only explicitly criticized as negative, but it would seem implicitly marked as an unconscious one, only to be revealed externally by the documentarist or critic. What is described as a repetition is not granted any difference. In this understanding, the secondary status of documentary, like that of the critic, secures its higher position over fiction. In this critic's approach to *Aguirre*, documentary's access to 'how things really are' presupposes a parasitical relation to fiction, albeit in respect of its production. This dualism between fiction and non-fiction always made it easy for critics to attack the former on the grounds of the latter, valuing the truth of non-fiction over that of fiction - even if the non-fiction film is about a fiction film, such as Les Blank's *Burden of Dreams* about Herzog's filming of *Fitzcarraldo*:

[...] the director's [Herzog's] understanding of a historical truth stands in the way of any ironies. This is left to Les Blank's extra-diegetic material.<sup>cccxcvi</sup>

Contrary to other interpreters, who found Herzog's films either ironic<sup>cccxcvii</sup> or

ahistorical<sup>cccxcviii</sup> or both,<sup>cccxcix</sup> John A. Davidson quoted here finds Herzog neither ahistorical nor ironic. Herzog, the author of the fiction film, as an interviewee in Blank's documentary is presented here as a representative of one-dimensional statements - because his seriousness is not granted the possibility of being ironic in the context. The documentary about the making of the fiction film is credited with irony just by virtue of being an appropriation – in this case of the fiction filmmaker by the documentary filmmaker. Diffusing the above hierarchy, judgment of non-fiction over fiction, is the deferral of authorship caused by the fact that the documentary filmmaker, Les Blank, had been hired by his subject, Herzog. (Furthermore, another subject of the documentary, Herzog's actor Klaus Kinski, complained that Blank missed the important scenes. In his autobiography Kinski comes out as an unlikely supporter of documentary authenticity and observational cinema:

He's [Les Blank] supposed to shoot a flick about Herzog, but this chow hound is so lazy that he sleeps through everything. If ever, by some chance, he happens to be in the right place at the right time, he dawdles and dawdles until his camera is finally attached to his tripod - and by then it's too late. He never uses a hand-held camera.<sup>cd</sup>

But since Herzog, as a key figure who appears within that autobiography, purports it to be largely fictional, so potentially would the account be - which implies the documentary about his filming a fiction film was not authentic. The inclusion of the extra-textual into the reading of a film opens up diverse stages of performing. Herzog recalls that, with the actor's consent, he provoked Kinski into having a fit before the filming started, so that he would be less theatrical for the fiction film. Kinski also remembers how he staged quarrels: 'I keep hoping that he'll attack me.'<sup>cdi</sup> Here, the theatricality – albeit provoked - nevertheless would belong in the realm of non-fiction, since it is not invented. For people who know each other's reactions it can be a repeated drama in which they give each other cues, while it would be a documentary for an observing filmteam. Herzog consequently finds that his fiction films with Kinski were documentaries about Kinski.<sup>cdii</sup> As I have argued earlier however, the documentary aspect of a fiction film should be called a document rather than a documentary.

### **5.6.1 Bearing Witness to Indifference**

William Van Wert too compared Herzog's documentaries favourably to his fiction films. He argues that the reason why his documentaries are less problematic is because the staging in his documentaries is 'more subtle, more obscured:'

The very same inclinations that have gotten him into trouble in the fiction films

(hypnotizing actors in *Heart of Glass*; the repeated use of former asylum inmate Bruno S. in *Kaspar Hauser* and *Stroszek*; the strained manipulations of native Indians in *Aguirre* and *Fitzcarraldo*) are much less problematic in the documentary form, where the question of manipulation is more subtle, more obscured, because Herzog himself often “acts” in these films as interviewer, filmmaker or engage spectator.<sup>cdiii</sup>

There are indeed manipulations in Herzog’s documentaries, but these in-themselves are not more hidden than in the fiction films; on the contrary, they are more open and even implicitly thematized. The dilemma of Herzog’s fiction films set in environments outside Western civilisations, of potentially exploiting indigenous peoples for the film’s purposes (or the ‘originals’ for the copy) is in his documentaries now problematized through filming the staging itself, rather its result, namely the fiction. What was problematic in Herzog’s fiction films that take place in the jungle (presenting nature and those who meld into it as exhibits – for instance in *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* by portraying the Indians as invisible extensions of the jungle and therefore to depict them as inaccessible and beyond understanding)<sup>cdiv</sup> - is foregrounded as a dynamic constellation in his documentaries, especially in the documentaries set in the jungle, *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* and *Juliane - Wings of Hope*. This even though the natives who stand in for Dieter’s torturers in the re-enactment of what he suffered at their hands are used as mute backdrops, like a mute Greek chorus in a play they obviously do not know, and even though they are abstracted and functionalized as representatives of a nation that might not even be theirs. The contrast between the animated protagonist, Dieter, and the indifferent statue-like quality of the indigenous extras marks the juxtaposition of agencies and the difference between what they are - not really a part of the plot and not in control - and what they stand in for - the once very much active and in control bad guys. They are indeed not his torturers. The buck of agency, as it were, has been passed on to Dieter as he arranges them to repeat for the camera the tortures which he had endured. In *My Best Fiend* Herzog similarly treats fellow German compatriots - the ‘indigenous’ present owners of the flat in Munich he once coincidentally shared in his youth with Klaus Kinski – like the natives in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*. As outsiders to his story, they are temporarily made into mute, statue-like players as well as into Herzog’s on-screen audience for his dramatic descriptions of past events in the re-visitation on the documentary set.

In *Grizzly Man*, the blank stare of the grizzly is in a sense a continuation in Herzog’s documentary oeuvre of the blank looks in the frontal shots of detached locals in many of his documentaries (*Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, *Bells from the Deep* or *The Dark Glow of the*

*Mountain*) or of the deaf-blind in *Land of Silence and Darkness*. In *Grizzly Man*, Herzog focuses on the blank stare of the animal as different to us in its indifference. In *March of the Penguins* (Luc Jacquet, 2005) too, there are close-ups of the animals' eyes stare. However, although Morgan Freeman provides a sentimental narration, this cannot distract from the fact that penguin eyes look even more alien to us, than bear eyes. Presumably in order to avoid the audience realising this difference, the close-ups of the penguin's eyes are kept very short. Instead, the film focuses on their 'cute' shuffling, an attribute that can be easier anthropomorphized. Timothy Treadwell would probably have liked *March of the Penguins*, since the film also equates humans with animals. Herzog by contrast, does not domesticate the real into an image, or the bear into anthropomorphization. In Timothy Treadwell's footage of bears and foxes, Herzog found an example of difference between animal and man comparable to the one that he often emphasizes between humans. The bears do not 'speak' the same language as the humans that feature in or that watch the film, like the blind-deaf in *Land of Silence and Darkness*, whose experiences cannot be conveyed through the audio-visual medium.

Van Wert, who otherwise acknowledges differences between Herzog's fiction and documentary film production, argues 'that language itself is the main character in Werner Herzog's films, especially in his documentaries.'<sup>cdv</sup> He asserts, however, that in both his documentaries and his fiction films there is the same rejection of language, and preference for silence and music, and he takes as indicative of this, for example, that silent protagonists populate both forms.<sup>cdvi</sup> In actual fact this is not true - Herzog's documentary protagonists are articulate storytellers. Dieter, Juliane and the Buddhist monks are all good examples, as is Fini Straubinger in *Land of Silence and Darkness*; even if she is blind-deaf and therefore her verbal enunciation is not standard, it detracts not from her articulacy. Furthermore, Van Wert purports that the 'pattern of artificial repetitions' of verbal phrases in *Last Words* 'makes a devalued mockery of language.'<sup>cdvii</sup> In his reading, repetition is only there to mock language in an oppositional manner. When the development of Herzog's documentaries is observed, however, it is clear that they have moved away from the more formal, Brechtian 'mockery' - either through repetitions in editing in *Fata Morgana* or in language in *Last Words* - towards a deeper and more complex play through re-enactments that are not just textual. Herzog's documentaries have come to take repetition seriously.

### **5.6.2 Expressive Artifice in Nature**

Herzog's documentaries *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* and *Juliane – Wings of Hope* trace the aftermath of an accident that intervenes in the plans of the protagonists in the form of a

plane crash and the fall into the form of nature most distant from civilisation and culture, the jungle. In Herzog's fiction films set in the jungle, such as *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) or *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), on the other hand, his protagonists do not fly, and thus do not experience the visual abstraction that such technology creates when nature is seen from the sky. Whereas the 'fall' of the protagonists in the documentaries is both metaphorical and literal, i.e. is both an hubristic and physical fall, in the fiction films with Kinski the 'fall' is purely metaphorical, a fall from culture into nature. Now filmmaking (and much more so fiction filmmaking, because of the greater the efforts that go into constructing a new 'reality') often requires a lot of physical input, at least behind the scenes for the crew. Thus, one would assume that in the extremely physically testing environment of the jungle, the acting in front of the camera would appropriately express the pure physical effort necessary to survive this environment. This physicality, however, is not visible in the fiction films shot in the jungle: the physical limit experiences only took place behind the camera and we only know of them through the extra-filmic discourse. It is nonetheless remarkable that the physicality is not visible in the films, as Herzog says he finds filmmaking an inherently athletic activity.<sup>cdviii</sup> The representation of nature and culture are reversed in these films in which the jungle has become a stage.

The manner in which Herzog's protagonists situate themselves in relation to nature, and act in it, is another way in which the difference between his fiction and documentary films manifests itself. In his documentaries, they entered into a causal relationship with nature in order to survive. In his fiction films, nature merely provides a backdrop for their attempts at spreading the dominion of culture. As Thomas Elsaesser expressed it: 'his heroes do not interact with the landscape nor project themselves and their action into it; they remain in opposition, cut off from it.'<sup>cdix</sup> Kinski's performance as Aguirre or Cobra Verde is static with exteriorised emotions, declamatory and with grand gestures. This would make his acting expressionistic, if it were not for the *mise-en-scène*, which is as far from being expressionistic and artificial as is possible. Expressionist acting is about the exteriorization of emotions. A gesture should have emotional power of its own, and not be naturalistic; without reference to real life models or a natural context. The Expressionists stipulated that one must detach oneself from nature in order to strive to isolate an object's 'most expressive expression.'<sup>cdx</sup> Herzog's main actor acts against the nature around him and thereby isolates himself. In a sense, Herzog manages to fuse, but also to play off against each other the two artistic movements Germany remains famous for, namely German Romanticism and German Expressionism, thereby making their incompatibility clear. The hero is confronted with infinite nature, experiencing the limits of what remains outside of

his control, but acts as though he were on the painted set of an expressionist film where everything is controlled artifice. The fact of the actor treating nature as a mere backdrop has been remarked upon by the director: 'The really important thing for him [Kinski] was the camouflage jungle outfit that Yves-Saint Laurent hand-tailored for him.'<sup>cdxi</sup>

Whereas Kinski treated the jungle as a stage for expressionism and designer costumes, another highly cultural and artificial form, he apparently treated the civilised space of the attic in a Munich flat he once shared with Herzog's family as though it was a wilderness. Herzog recounts a story in *My Best Fiend*, in which he conjures up images of a naked Kinski living for free, i.e. 'wild', in this attic which he kitted out with leaves from trees. In another inversion of nature and culture, Herzog tells us in *My Best Fiend* that Kinski suggested that the actor's face could be seen as landscape. Furthermore, nature in Herzog's films has been referred to as an actor.<sup>cdxii</sup> Symptomatically, in Herzog's adaptation of Murnau's expressionistic film *Nosferatu*, Kinski did not play the supernatural and invulnerable vampire in an expressionistic manner corresponding to the artificiality of the original film, but as humane and suffering. In some of Herzog's fiction films, the spaces of old derelict buildings look like a stage, which is why Kinski as Woyzek in civilisation is better suited to them than Kinski as Cobra Verde in Ghana. And the volcanic rocks in the fog in the documentary *La Soufrière* could be paper maché and be placed on a stage with artificial fog. Herzog 'makes no difference between a jungle or a desert setting for his films and the stage of an opera house'<sup>cdxiii</sup> - as he does not between documentary and fiction film. But 'nature,' like documentary, by definition is not supposed to be staged.

### 5.6.3 Between Documenting Fiction and Inventing Documentary

Fiction usually means that the referent does not exist, i.e. it is invented. By establishing a concrete referent in the way in which, for instance, the fiction film *Fitzcarraldo* was made, however, Herzog has asserted a reality as an effect of fiction. To document that reality with his own documentary was then the second step. The stories of the pre-filmic and post-filmic around Herzog's films – usually centred on physical limit situations, such as his walk on foot from Munich to Paris to seek Lotte Eisner's approval for *Nosferatu* or the real pulling of a boat over a mountain for *Fitzcarraldo* - are more widely known than those of the fiction films themselves. The fiction films became more famous for their extra-filmic references than for their filmic qualities, especially *Fitzcarraldo*. The filming of it was documented in *The Burden of Dreams* and *Land of Bitterness and Pride*, here reviewed by the *Guardian* critic Derek Malcolm:

It seemed to me that just as Les Blank's *Burden Of Dreams*, a documentary

about the horrors of making Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*, was better than the film itself, a movie about the filming of *Everest* might be even more fascinating than the finished product.<sup>cdxiv</sup>

For the meaning of a physical gesture to have its ultimate impact on film, the viewer must believe it is real. In order to throw the veracity of the documentary events into doubt, there first has to be a foundation of belief established. Using the documentary mode meant that the extra-textual question, to what extent the fictional events were really true, could be explored from within Herzog's documentary films.

After others had made documentaries about his fiction films, Herzog himself assumed this task in *My Best Fiend*, thereby inserting himself into an open circular structure of creation and documentation. A documentary about the production of a fiction film is conventionally an observation of a creation - even possibly as a mirror reflection. Conversely, *My Best Fiend* is, and is about, the creation of a documentary following fiction. In *My Best Fiend* Herzog turns the relation between fiction and documentary - a trauma and its examination - into a self-reflexive one as his own protagonist. Although they are artificial creations, his fiction films have nevertheless become a part of our shared memory. The external uncovering of a truth about an object, the documentary, is hence converted into a self-reflexive play, thereby transforming the polarity between external documentation and visionary fiction into an open circle. By speaking in his documentary *My Best Fiend* about his fiction films, Herzog turns the division between an extra-textual commentary on the one hand, and creation as an internal process on the other, into a self-reflexive practice that combines both the external and internal perspectives. (Herzog's directors persona now fluctuates between the textual and the extra-textual now even more, since he not only comments on his fiction films in his documentaries, such as in *My Best Fiend*, but also on the DVD audio commentary. Tellingly though *My Best Fiend*, the documentary about his fiction films, does not have this additional audio-commentary.)

As elaborated previously, the self-reflexivity in Herzog's documentaries distinguishes itself from a reflexivity that involves judgement from a consciously distanced intellectual position. Formal reflexivity is built on a hierarchical structure that declares what it reflects upon to be on a lower level, imposing its new paradigm on it. In contrast to the Romantic model of reflection, it suggests a meta-perspective that has the power to negate the previous level and install its own higher 'reality.' As the previous perspective is declared redundant and an external relationship toward it is established, the question arises as to how *self*-reflexive a film of this sort remains. In contrast, in Herzog's documentaries there

is no transcendence to the ultimate 'truth' of a meta-level. Even though his protagonists (including himself) narrate, language is not used to make an external judgment that separates subject and object. Instead, in Herzog's documentaries the words of the protagonists constitute a repetition of their own actions and experiences, by which they in turn have been constituted - they oscillate self-reflexively between doing and describing.

#### **5.6.4 From Fiction as a Deadly Circle to Documentary as Eternal Return**

From early on Herzog's documentaries have frequently been equated with his fiction films, not only by critics but by the filmmaker himself, who, as one critic has written, 'can talk in an interview about fictive and actual people as though they were all real to the same degree.'<sup>cdxv</sup> This comparison was based more often on the apparent documentary quality of his fiction films, rather than on the stylization of his documentaries. Even though the director himself does not distinguish between his fiction and his documentary films on the basis that everything is staged, this thesis argues that there is a discernibly different dynamic at work in his documentaries than in his fiction films. In addition this difference holds true not only for his documentaries, but also between his fiction films set in the jungle and those set in civilisation. In Herzog's fiction films the subjects either make as huge a gesture as possible against physical constraints, like Cobra Verde who failed to pull a large boat alone, or they are outside of language and movement, like Kaspar Hauser, who could neither walk nor talk when he was freed in his teens from the imprisonment that he has known from birth. His documentary protagonists on the other hand, including the filmmaker himself, are remarkable storytellers and are outstandingly adept at physically negotiating the environs of their challenging situations. And they have survived their stories: whereas both his fiction and documentary films frequently depict crashes or failure, the heroes of his documentaries - Steiner, Dieter, Juliane and indeed Werner - have survived their traumatic encounters. Until *Grizzly Man*, Herzog's fiction film heroes failed and his documentary heroes survived. The first documentary hero to have died is Timothy Treadwell. I would argue that this is because he believed too much in fiction.

In his fiction films, 'the typical Herzogian protagonist is overcome by mightier elements.'<sup>cdxvi</sup> The 'mightier elements' Herzog and his protagonists have been overcome by are his fiction films. Herzog is a survivor of his fiction films. In both formats, the characters face, and instigate, repetitions in their broad life trajectories, but in the fictional set-up these are tragic repetitions of the Same. The beaten, both in the sense of 'down beaten' and 'beaten up,' and disenfranchised hero Bruno S. of Herzog's fiction film *Stroszek*, leaves a history of foster homes and mental institutions behind for apparent

‘freedom’ in the outside world. Instead, he finds himself bullied and abused, and has to flee Germany with his friends for the alleged land of golden opportunities, America. Now penniless and without friends, on the run in a foreign country where he cannot speak the language, his predicament worsens with every step. At the end of the film having entered vicious circle with nowhere to go, he rigs a truck he has stolen to drive around in circles on an empty forecourt and boards a ski-lift - which also goes around in circles - to kill himself. Whilst he does this, we see a live dancing chicken in an arcade slot machine he has switched on. It too vainly continues to go round in circles pecking for imaginary corn and cannot be switched off. A vehicle without a driver going in circles also features in *Signs of Life, Even Dwarfs Started Small* and *Fata Morgana*. The circle in Herzog’s films is widely interpreted as ‘a symbol for society.’<sup>cdxvii</sup> What are supposed to be representations of universal progress – cars and North America – are rendered dystopian symbols as they turn out to be repressive and mechanical figures of a repetition of the same. The repetitions in Herzog’s fiction films are repressive and external: they are at first imposed and lead to the death of the protagonist in the end when he tries to actively repeat. In this way, they correspond to Freud’s death drive.

### 5.6.5 Negative Repetitions in Fiction

In a diagnosis of narrative structures of Herzog films, Kent Casper accurately observed that ‘For Stroszek, Aguirre, Woyzek, Harker, and Bruno, “action” is illusory in the sense of some teleological or linear movement, and is invariably revealed to be futile, circular, a downward spiral.’<sup>cdxviii</sup> Casper constructs a negative circle of the same, from idealism to existentialism to nihilism, but fails to note that all these characters are from Herzog’s fiction films.<sup>cdxix</sup> He attributes the same trajectory to Herzog’s fiction films as well as his documentaries, deriving from ‘an endlessly deferred end, from an “imminent” catastrophe/theophany.’<sup>cdxx</sup> Likewise, even though Thomas Elsaesser maintained that the ‘fine line between the pleasure of recognition and the tedium of repetition is, in cinema, often a matter of genre,’<sup>cdxxi</sup> he did not recognise a distinction between a fatal repetition in Herzog’s fiction films and a pleasurable repetition in his documentaries:

For Herzog an event is never open toward development or a future: it has its end inscribed in its beginning, for the first shot already tells it all, and there is very little suspense or dramatic tension between characters.<sup>cdxxii</sup>

But, as demonstrated here, this assertion does not hold for his documentaries, which rather generate suspense and dramatic tension.

Fiction film, in its most pristine form, is bare repetition of the same.<sup>cdxxiii</sup> It repeats merely

what has been thought before. This is made apparent in the difference of the repetitions in Herzog's fiction films and in his documentaries. The repetitions in his fiction films are marked as negative - they usually end in death or tragedy. Even though Fitzcarraldo finally realizes the theatre he set out to erect in the jungle, his journey ends in a negative circle. One could even say that *because* he had a goal, he had to fail. Whereas the compulsion to repeat in Herzog's fiction films ends in death as 'the realization of identity and self-presence'<sup>cdxxiv</sup> as Thomas Elsaesser describes it, the repetition after a near-death experience for the documentaries takes on a forward movement. However, the image in Herzog's documentaries marks survival. (Even in *Grizzly Man*, the image only shows us the living protagonist, and consciously avoids the image or sound of the moment of death.) Even though Dieter has sought death, as the opening quote of *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* suggests, death has escaped him, or rather vice versa. By involving documentary, the deadly circularity of fiction film as a closed representational structure is liberated from its negativity. What is the confining circle in Herzog's fiction films is the eternal return in his documentaries: the first repetition is without, the other with difference. In Herzog's documentary *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, it is not a repetition - in the sense of a representation of a concept - of something that has resulted from a creative process, as in the realisation of a script; nor is it a mere repetition of a fact, which is not thought to be creative in the first place, as in conventional documentary re-enactment. On the contrary, on Herzog's documentaries, the repetitions themselves are creative.

Whereas the repetitions in Herzog's fiction films are the superficial repetitions of the identical that Deleuze speaks of, the re-enactments and re-visitations in his documentaries are 'a dynamic repetition [...] of an always variable past' that includes difference: 'One is negative and by default, the other is positive and by excess.'<sup>cdxxv</sup> Whilst the repetition in his fiction films often assumes a circular form that is imposed within the diegesis, in his documentaries, the repetitions – unlike the original events - are consciously voluntary. The following observation by Deleuze thus applies well to the distinction between Herzog's fiction and documentary films:

There is a tragic and a comic repetition. Indeed, repetition always appears twice, once in the tragic destiny and once in the comic aspect.<sup>cdxxvi</sup>

With respect to the fiction film characters Stroszek and Kaspar Hauser, as well as Fitzcarraldo and Aguirre, the repetitions are tragic. With respect to the documentary hero Dieter, the first repetition - him becoming a bomber pilot having been the victim of a bomber - was tragic, but the second, the documentary re-enactment of what he has endured, is comic. The abbreviation from this pattern, Timothy Treadwell, first appeared as

a comic hero in his own footage and became tragic as he believed too much in fiction and tried to erase the difference between him and his non-human context.

In *Juliane – Wings of Hope*, Herzog narrates: ‘During the preproduction of this film it took us 3 unsuccessful expeditions to find it [the wreckage of the plane].’ and ‘Sometimes it took us hours to advance a mere 300 feet.’ Herzog's documentary film project repeats stoically the tragic difficulties the survivor had. Thomas Elsaesser wrote about *Fitzcarraldo*: ‘The production and its difficulties somehow became the real event of which the film when it finally appeared seemed in a sense merely the record.’<sup>cdxxvii</sup> The repetition of the documentaries, retracing the steps of the crash survivors in the jungle, ‘make[s] something new of repetition itself,’ this being one of the propositions Deleuze lists for repetition with a difference.<sup>cdxxviii</sup> Returning back into the jungle, Juliane tries to make sense of the unexplainable by breaking it down into rational, positivist segments. Not unlike Claude Lanzman who insists on the logistic details of the traumatic events of the Shoah, she tries out detailed reasons for why she might have been the only one of the 92 passengers to have survived the fall from the plane. She steps back emotionally to be able to give narrative and causal explanations for her otherwise senseless plight. Of course unlike Lanzman, she tells only of her singular experience, which is an accidental one and not one that has been decided by fellow humans. Neither the accident nor the survival made any sense. Making sense here would mean, to invent sense, since it is not there in the first place. Making sense is already an act of invention; thus a documentary is already creative by trying to make sense in the face of the unimaginable. Actively welcoming the unnecessary – which in Herzog’s case is to say difficult – is a creative act. Herzog’s documentaries ‘do more than record events: they invent them.’<sup>cdxxix</sup>

Towards the end of *Juliane –Wings of Hope*, Herzog narrates: ‘She wants to resurrect the whole thing, but it dawns on her that nothing can be reversed.’ Even though Herzog speaks here for narrative closure, this is not a circular structure that leads back to the same beginning, like the fatal circle of his fiction films. The documentary does not end with her death or downfall, but starts with her survival. The affirmative heroes and heroines (Juliane was his first female documentary protagonist) of his latest documentaries do repeat, but with a difference. Whilst the ‘overreachers’ in his fiction films try to shape the world according to an idea in the Platonic sense, his documentaries follow their heroes in the shaping of their own dream life. Their ‘real,’ nightly dreams, however, were often invented by Herzog for his documentary protagonists such as Dieter in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* or Fini Straubinger in *Land of Silence and Darkness*. The protagonists of his documentaries

have apparently reconciled themselves to the repetitions in their everyday lives, like Dieter, who opens and closes doors repeatedly - like a fort-da game within the pleasure principle - to assure himself that he is now able to do what he could not do as a prisoner. This repetition, however, has been staged by Herzog, who nevertheless argues he is emphasizing Dieter's 'truth.' What started out as a repetition that brought Dieter close to death - he repeated what had been done to him by becoming a pilot and then got shot down - nevertheless ended as a 'success story.'

Herzog's fiction films demonstrate through their diegesis Lacan's dictum that 'alienation not only begins in the imaginary, the imaginary is somehow alienating in its very essence.'<sup>cdxxx</sup> As Richard Boothby observed, 'Lacan's treatment of the death instinct is closely bound up with his concept of alienation.'<sup>cdxxxii</sup> If one wants to mould nature or reality in one's image - like the Kinski characters deluded by grandeur in the jungle-fiction films, *Aguirre* and *Fitzcarraldo* - one will fail. Equally, if one is forced to mould oneself in the image of a symbolic 'reality' - like the fictional underachievers, *Stroszeck* or *Kaspar Hauser*<sup>cdxxxiii</sup> - one must fail: 'a failed submission to and failed rebellion against the symbolic order.'<sup>cdxxxiii</sup> If the model for repetition lies outside oneself - one will fail. As Thomas Elsaesser observed: 'what unites the super-human and the sub-human is that both are failures in a single dialectic.'<sup>cdxxxiv</sup> Only if one repeats what one has done before is there a future. Only then, can one survive. Herzog's documentaries about surviving in the face of death are not manifestations of alienation. 'Liberate the will from everything which binds it by making repetition the very object of willing'<sup>cdxxxv</sup> demands Deleuze, following Nietzsche. A tip he probably gave to Dieter and Werner. Even though Herzog seeks to be close to limit or death experiences, and seeks protagonists seeking them, his emphasis on the physical prevents alienation. The actual physicality of the event, or the physical reality, is what escapes fiction, as this always imagined. An actor usually does not really have to endure what we see him or her undergoing. If we see them dying, that does not, of course, mean that they really died. The drive towards death through repetitions of the same in Herzog's fiction films exemplifies the Freudian death drive, in which 'repetition is in essence symbolic.'<sup>cdxxxvi</sup> Not only is death symbolic in film - we cannot document the experience of death - but Herzog's fiction films imply that death or failure is imbricated in the structure of fiction. We can only conceive of death as fiction; it cannot be documented.

The return as a circle, or metaphorical loop as Žižek calls it,<sup>cdxxxvii</sup> reinforces narrative closure. As in *film noir*, in which, as he noted, 'the ultimate lesson of it is that when we put all the pieces together, the message that awaits us is 'death': it is possible to (re)construct

one's story only when one faces death.<sup>'cdxxxviii</sup> Michael Renov wrote, tracing the 'new subjectivity' in documentary back to Lacan, that:

Much of contemporary theory since Jacques Lacan has presumed the mutually defining (even "circulatory") character of the subject and its other ("we depend on the field of the Other, which was there long before we came into the world, and whose circulating structures determine us as subjects").<sup>'cdxxxix</sup>

Whereas Lacan and Žižek support the figure of the circle, however, for Deleuze the circle itself is deadly. He saw only sameness and generality circulated: a circle or a spiral belongs to the order of generality, where one term can be substituted by another.<sup>'cdxli</sup> For Deleuze, Freud's death drive was the repetition of the same or an 'eternal return as cycle or circulation, as being-similar and being-equal – in short, as natural animal certitude and as sensible law of nature.'<sup>'cdxlii</sup> For example, one manifestation of the circle, the cycle, Deleuze found in the seasons of nature. He opposes 'repetition to the laws of nature.'<sup>'cdxliii</sup> 'According to the laws of nature, repetition is impossible,'<sup>'cdxliv</sup> since it is constantly changing. Instead of cyclical and natural repetition, he suggests willed repetition – such as Herzog's re-visitations of nature. Herzog's films trace human interactions with, or rather struggles against, nature not as a 'soft' cyclical, organic mutation, but as a violent clash.

### 5.6.6 Death Drive into Fiction

Freud maintained that the death drive was a conservative principle that sought to return to the immobile beginning of inorganic matter, pertaining to 'a model of a wholly physical or material repetition.'<sup>'cdxlv</sup> For Freud, repetition was a negative principle based on repression that aimed at death. The death drive did not take into account experience.<sup>'cdxlv</sup> Deleuze, on the other hand, following Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, shifts the concept of repetition from a negative, backwards moving trajectory to a positive, forward one. He critiques Freud's notion of the death drive as the 'law of "inertia" inherent in organic life', the 'desire to return to the primitive conceived as a condition of stasis.'<sup>'cdxlvi</sup>

The Freudian conception of the death drive, understood as a return to inanimate matter, remains inseparable from the positing of an ultimate term, the model of material and bare repetition and the conflictual dualism between life and death.<sup>'cdxlvii</sup>

While Deleuze finds the physical and material to be inanimate, for Herzog, the physical is athletic and animate. The return to an immobile origin is precisely what has been said about Herzog's films – indiscriminately whether they be fiction or documentary and in spite of what Alan Singer rightly repudiates with respect to Herzog's documentary *Fata Morgana*: 'there is no return to an original motionless moment.'<sup>'cdxlviii</sup> Whereas for Freud

the *Todestrieb* was based in an inanimate materiality, Deleuze separates the death drive from materialism: ‘Death has nothing to do with a material model.’<sup>cdxlix</sup>

Death does not appear in the objective model of an indifferent inanimate matter to which the living world would “return”; it is present in the living form of a subjective and differentiated experience endowed with its prototype.<sup>cdl</sup>

My point with respect to Herzog is, however, that his documentaries are materialist - not, in the sense of Freudian materialism, which implies a return to formless matter, nor in the sense that they ‘return’ to their own materiality as formalist and experimental film is often thought to. They are materialist in the sense that they are *concrete and particularising*, and in as much as they enter into causal relations, which may or may not be narrative; being materialistic here means being physical in the sense of embodiment and the capacity (or not) for movement. Unlike for Deleuze for whom materialism leads to a ‘reduction of death to an objective determination of matter...’<sup>cdli</sup> - in terms of the laws of physics, not physicality - being materialistic with respect to Herzog’s documentaries means being singular and subjective and differentiated. Deleuze critiques materialism and subjectivity in one fell swoop: ‘The traditional theory of the compulsion to repeat in psychoanalysis remains essentially realist, materialist and subjective or individualist.’<sup>cdlii</sup> He finds the notion of subjectivity to be essentialist and based in a repetition of identity. For Kierkegaard however, only the individual could turn an abstract, ‘essentialist’ idea into something new through repetition – a process he called ‘becoming subjective’. In Herzog’s documentaries’ physical repetition is affirmative and in contrast to the static materialism of the Freudian death drive.

The death drive, with the immobile state it leads to, has similar connotations for Deleuze as ‘representation’ itself. A representation is a return to, and the repetition of, that which it represents. Deleuze and Guattari critique psychoanalysis for first undoing objective representation to then resettle singularities as ‘figures of a subjective universal libido.’<sup>cdliii</sup> Subjectivity for Deleuze and Guattari, far from corresponding to singularities, is steeped in abstraction and representation: ‘subjective abstract desire as represented in the privatised family.’<sup>cdliv</sup> They further point out a historical progression of representation from objective to subjective.<sup>cdlv</sup> This observation one could broadly map onto the development of documentary from expository and objective to ‘new subjectivities.’<sup>cdlvi</sup> In contrast to the subjectivity that Deleuze’s and Guattari mapped as oedipal and abstract, Herzog’s heroes exist outside of sexuality and oedipal family structures; and where there is a family, such as for the monks in *Wheel of Time*, it is an artificial one of believers in the same religion. The subjective experiences of the heroes and heroines portrayed in Herzog’s films are

excessively singular in their physicality. Freud's repetition - based on the *Todestrieb* - in being oriented backward as a return to an inanimate state of sameness, followed the now outmoded recapitulation theory of developmental history, whereby the development of the individual repeats the history of the genus: ontogenesis repeats phylogeny.<sup>cdlvii</sup> Herzog's fiction films follow this Freudian trajectory of repetition, which led to a return to the same, to the inorganic stasis. His documentaries, on the other hand, are constituted by a Deleuzian difference through repetition. The ontogenesis of the Herzogian oeuvre - his development from mainly making fiction films to mainly shooting documentaries - recapitulates the phylogeny of Freud's death drive to Deleuze's affirmative repetition.

One could furthermore argue that the drive beyond the Freudian pleasure principle, aiming to return to a state of inorganic inertia, is congruent with non-narrativity. This would mean that, instead of *narrativity* having a conservative tendency to stability, as it has traditionally been regarded in film theory since the 1970s, *non-narrativity* is the stable end to which we return (which is a central tenet of Freud's theory of the death drive). Thus, also in this aspect, Herzog's fiction films seem to follow the Freudian death drive, with the tendency of the characters in his fiction films to be outside of language and movement (as exemplified by *Kaspar Hauser*). Freud, in Deleuze's interpretation, upholds the model of a 'brute repetition,'<sup>cdlviii</sup> a conservative repetition,<sup>cdlix</sup> or in Freud's words:

[...] in fact they [the death drives] are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new. [...] It must be an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous path along which development leads.<sup>cdlx</sup>

In a similar trajectory to the one Freud describes here, Herzog's visions, on which his fiction films are based, have been realized - that is made into an image via a script - only to lead the visualized characters back into narrative non-existence. His documentaries (up until *The White Diamond* and *Grizzly Man*) on the other hand start where his fiction films end: with the escape from death. *Little Dieter needs to Fly* begins with this quotation from the Old Testament:

“*And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*” Revelation 9:6<sup>cdlxi</sup>

This is followed by Dieter in a tattoo shop, where he points out the differences between the vision he had had during a near-death experience and a drawing pinned on the wall of the shop depicting death as a cloaked skeleton riding in a horse-drawn coach:

‘It was somewhat different. In fact, there was a big difference. You have to understand, I was just crawling along. I had one day to live. I was on my knees

and I was hallucinating. And then this enormous door opened up. Lots of horses kept galloping out. And it wasn't death riding those horses, it was the angels. I had this vision. Death didn't want me. Death didn't really want me.<sup>cdlxii</sup>

Here, again, we have a vision that has been realized. But, once again, the image is misleading and Dieter corrects it by describing what he had seen: where the death figure appears in the drawing, angels appeared in his vision. Images are only 'wrong' in Herzog's documentaries where they are then corrected through language. In the fiction films the images must be 'right,' since they have their source in the film-maker's own inner vision, which he transforms into a script, and on the basis of which the image is then created. The fiction film image is thus a copy of his vision in a Platonic sense. Yet, precisely their 'rightness,' that is their adequacy to the visions they represent, make the images repetitions of the Same that end in death. In the fiction films, there is firstly a vision that functions like a concept that represses difference in the Deleuzian sense. Then according to that vision, Herzog produces an image. Consequently, his fictional works are not embroiled in the conflict between image and language that takes place in the documentaries. Images and language in the creation of the fiction films emanate from the same place: they follow a single line of creation in as much as they all come from the script and ultimately Herzog's vision, even if this author believes that his visions are universal images. The documentary subjects of *Little Dieter Needs To Fly* and *Juliane – Wings of Hope*, on the other hand, were not the authors of the images they saw and of the actions they were made to take part in. They had no control over what they saw and what happened to them. The films retain this difference in the detailed retracing of their experience.

In several of his documentaries, namely *Fata Morgana*, *La Soufrière* and *Lessons of Darkness*, Herzog seeks out places which are devoid of human agents, or where his protagonists had been previously deprived of their agency through an external, involuntarily experienced event, such as a plane crash for Dieter and Juliane or a sport accident for Steiner. In *La Soufrière*, faced with an absence of people and moving objects, Herzog's commentary names what is missing in the images: 'This is the pier devoid of ships.' A travelling shot in a factual programme often indicates that the film team have just travelled to the location and do not know where to stop with the camera because it would require more time getting acquainted with the place. It thus often glosses over the shortcomings of a hurried documentary direction as a short cut from the distance, as it does not show us its object closer and more slowly. Here, the travelling shot is an indicator of the emptiness of a reportage rather than of the city it portrays. In *La Soufrière* however, the

object of the travelling shot is literally empty. *La Soufrière* is not an empty portrait of a city, but a portrait of an empty city.

### 5.6.7 Dead Reality in Romanticism

In the following account of German Romantic philosophy - articulated by Schelling as a 'struggle between the ideal and the real'<sup>cdlxiii</sup> - 'reality' is determined through death, which is associated with closure as well as with physical limitations:

Perhaps the principal philosophical structure of romanticism was enunciated by Schelling in his description of existence as an eternal tension between the idea - undetermined, the essence of human freedom, the expression of desire, of a reaching beyond the here and now – and reality – the dead, physical limits of a contingently determined world.<sup>cdlxiv</sup>

Unlike Plato's ideal 'idea,' to which reality could not live up, the 'idea' for Schelling was a flexible force usually suppressed by 'reality.' For him, 'reality' was not seen as mediated by an art form. Nor was reality seen as in turn affected by art as Herzog sees images being capable of doing. Whilst Schlegel merged art (poetry) and philosophy into one practise,<sup>cdlxv</sup> for want of the medium of documentary film existing at the time, the Romantics eluded any close referential link existing between 'reality' and art (like documentary.) Schelling's categorization of 'reality' is determined by what Freud would later refer to as the death drive. Schelling's account of the tension between the idea and a restrictive reality stands in contrast to the notion of reality that arises in the experience of limitations shown in Herzog's documentaries, where it is opened up and transformed, rather than it leading to immobilisation and finitude. There death is separated from the boundaries of the physical body. It is only by seeking our physical boundaries and realising our possibilities that can we escape death, like Dieter in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* and Juliane in *Juliane – Wings of Hope*; that we can live - and film. In Herzog's documentaries, the seeking of experiences on the physical limit does not follow the notion of the Freudian death drive towards the inanimate. In his films, death is assigned the place that it has in our lives: it belongs into the realm of fiction. The reaching beyond is not pursued through an ideal, but through practice. Herzog's visionary quality, which some falsely regard as idealist,<sup>cdlxvi</sup> is thus not about a struggle between the ideal and the real, but about the idea as bringing about the real through struggle.

Friedrich Schlegel theorized the circle as a form that turns back on itself.<sup>cdlxvii</sup> He endorsed the circular structure as internally infinite and eternally becoming and 'continuously fluctuating between self-destruction and self-creation.'<sup>cdlxviii</sup> Universality for Schlegel was

not closed off as enlightened judgment, but instead submitted to a ‘continuous chain of inner revolutions.’<sup>cdlxix</sup> This ‘fluctuating between self-destruction and self-creation’ is frequently associated with Schlegels’ conception of Romantic poetry, but if we look at the full quote, we see that this fluctuation was also critiqued by the Schlegels:

Naïve is what is or seems to be natural, individual, or classical to the point of irony, or else to the point of continuously fluctuating between self-creation and self-destruction.<sup>cdlxx</sup>

August Wilhelm Schlegel, here paraphrased by Friedrich, saw this fluctuation as exhausting:

W. [August Wilhelm Schlegel] said of a young philosopher: he has a theory ovarium in the brain and, like a hen, lays a theory every day; and that’s his only possible time of rest in his continual movement of self-creation and self-destruction – which could be a tiresome maneuver.<sup>cdlxxi</sup>

### 5.6.8 Grizzly Fiction

Herzog’s documentary images until *Grizzly Man* have followed survival. Only then, the path of the circle shifted again from deadly fiction to survivor documentary to deadly documentary. After Dieter Dengler’s death in 2001, a coda was added to the US DVD of *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997). This new postscript turns the affirmative forward look of the previous version into the closed retrospection of a conventional documentary and the documentary about a survivor into an obituary. It does so through a patriotic gesture: ‘Dieter Dengler died February 7, 2001. He was buried with full military honours at Arlington National Cemetery.’ The German Dieter Dengler was buried as an American soldier. Only the US version has this patriotic postscript. This coda manifests a turn from the positive trajectories of Herzog’s survivor documentaries to the revisits of sites where the referenced heroes found their death in *The White Diamond* (2004) and *Grizzly Man* (2005). With *The White Diamond*, the positive trajectory of Herzog’s documentaries shifted in that it was a film mourning the death of a friend of the main protagonist, not a documentary about a survivor. Ironically, the dead referenced hero of *The White Diamond* was also called Dieter. Whereas previously, Herzog’s films were about protagonists who have narrowly escaped death (Woodcarver Steiner, Reinhold Messmer, Juliane, Dieter Dengler, Werner Herzog) *Grizzly Man* was made using footage filmed by a now dead man.

Timothy Treadwell (the ‘Grizzly Man’), like the actor Klaus Kinski of several Herzog’s fiction films, is another capricious, blond actor cast into the wilderness of a Herzogian film

set, a parallel Herzog himself draws in the documentary; only that, unlike Kinski, Treadwell ended up in a Herzog film posthumously. The more famous Herzog became, the more his protagonists grew to be noticeably self-conscious in their performance. They would also increasingly seek him out as their director, as was the case with Graham Dorrington for *The White Diamond* or Jewel Palowak for *Grizzly Man*. In a sense, Treadwell could only be an authentic Herzogian hero because he did not know that he would end up being so. Treadwell had already created his fiction - and his death - in reality, before Herzog entered the scene. Graham Dorrington is thus much less successful as a Herzogian protagonist than Treadwell, because he is so intent on acting for what he perceives to be his director's formula of limit-testing, which ultimately does not turn out to be self-destructive. Perhaps by now, only a protagonist who is dead by the time he becomes a Herzogian hero can deliver the most 'authentic self-stylization'. Maybe the constant state of disbelief with respect to the fact that his heroes so far have survived so many trials has triggered a death wish for his protagonists in Herzog's audiences. Perhaps *Grizzly Man* is regarded as his best film for years, because finally a Herzogian hero has died, and this is what we have secretly waited for.

Treadwell is the first Herzogian documentary hero who has failed, because he believed in fiction – that of his own invented persona and that of the disneyfied bears. Similar to his compatriots Kaspar Hauser or Stroszek in Herzog's fiction films - who die when they try to enter the symbolic - his fatal mistake lies in his retreat into the imaginary, into a childhood fiction, the regressive path of the Freudian death drive. Herzog's fiction film heroes fail and his documentary heroes survive, but the documentary hero Treadwell died because he believed in fiction. With regards to the main protagonist in *Grizzly Man*, the transition from a fictional to a real stage had already taken place before Herzog entered the scene. Treadwell himself had brought fiction into reality. When he could not get any fictional roles, Treadwell invented himself as a fictional character in reality. After being rejected for what became Woody Harrelson's role of a bar keeper in the television series *Cheers*, he started playing a role in real life. He invented a fictional surname, adopted an imaginary accent and invented a new personal history and the persona of the bear protector. Herzog, of course, is very aware of this self-stylization, and narrates: 'With himself as the central character he began to draft his own movie.' Treadwell even met his former partner Jewel Palowak, the producer of *Grizzly Man* and co-founder of the charity 'Grizzly People', in an already fictionalized space, a themed restaurant based on Gulliver's Travels. When interviewed by Herzog she wears bear earrings, another form of fictionalizing the bears. The fictionalization of reality here goes hand in hand with the anthropomorphization of the

animals. In the same ways as the life of Dieter Dengler being played by Christian Bale in *Rescue Dawn* (2006), again a fiction film will be made out of a Herzog documentary hero completing a circle from the manifestation of a fantasy in reality to the fiction of this realization. Timothy Treadwell will finally be part of a fiction film, only not as an actor, but as a character, possibly played by Leonardo Di Caprio.

Nature, especially 'wild', uncivilized nature such as the jungle or the desert is a frequent setting of both Herzog's documentary and his fiction films. Documentary and nature conventionally are both signifiers of authenticity. The division between the human and the non-human is often implicitly likened with the opposition between fiction and non-fiction. An animal is supposed to be authentic, and therefore non-fictional. In this relationship between human and nature or animal, the subject-object relation is clear: the latter is the object. Projecting anthropomorphisms onto an animal fictionalizes the non-fictional. In *Grizzly Man*, fiction itself – Treadwell's grizzly fiction - is shown to be anthropomorphic. Only non-fiction allows bearing witness to difference, to bring up the term Lyotard used to describe the modern sublime. Repressing this difference eventually leads back to the Freudian model of the death drive; it leads to regression and death. In contrast to Treadwell's expressed intention to become (like) a bear, he regressed to his childhood self. In his new persona as the apparent protector of bears, Treadwell in fact protected his childhood fantasy. In his courtly love of the grizzlies, until the moment Treadwell involuntarily sacrificed himself and his girlfriend, he denied them their difference. Even though Treadwell's desire to become a grizzly would seem to indicate that he perceives the bears to be different to him, he relates to the wild animals as though they are just another version of the same fluffy toy bear he brought to camp with him from childhood and gives them names such as Mr Chocolate, The Grinch, Sergeant Brown, Aunt Melissa, Mickey. (Given that most of us have seen more cuddly toy bears than real ones, this reduction of difference is hard to shake.) In one scene filmed by Treadwell, two huge grizzlies fight one another violently, ripping out fur, and they still look cute. It is difficult not to see them as fluffy toys come to life. Even Treadwell's demise sounds like a fairy tale version of *Little Red Riding Hood* ending up in the stomach of a bear. In a chain of incorporating difference, the bear seemed to retaliate to Treadwell's anthropomorphization of him with a perhaps too literal containing of otherness. Treadwell's journey is a tragic form of the circle from treating the Grizzlies as though they would be humans in bear costumes, as one witness perceptively observed, to being inside a grizzly (although now not in a human form any more). Treadwell has become another example of the physical manifestation of an abstract image (such as pulling a ship over the mountain for his central metaphor in

Fitzcarraldo) in Herzog's documentaries. From wanting to be like a grizzly, he has become a person in a bear in a rather too literal sense.

## 5.7 Re-enactment as Repetition

In *Little Dieter needs To Fly* we are told that in his life Dieter had actively re-enacted what happened to him as a victim: he was bombed as a child and then became a pilot. Having become a bomber, he is shot down over Vietnam and endures an odyssey of tortures. Dieter wanted to master trauma through repeating it to take the place of the victimizer, only to escape into the next trauma and its repetitions, and ends up re-enacting his victimization for a documentary. In a chain of displacements in life and documentary, the 'originals' have been re-enacted: the bomber bombing Little Dieter had been acted out by the grown up Dieter in life, and in the film, the mute Vietnamese look-alikes serve as stand-ins for the Vietnamese soldiers of the past who tortured him. Dieter then directs the extras who act as his capturers in the re-enactment of his experiences, but he in turn has been directed by the documentary filmmaker. In the film, Dieter is led with tied hands through the jungle by his captors and suddenly stops, saying: 'Oh, this is getting too close to home' – indicating that this re-enactment is bringing back traumatic emotions. Asked how the re-enactments of Dieter arranging Vietnamese bystanders to act as his former torturers came about, Herzog answered:

Werner Herzog: The people who take him captive in the film were just people who drove by. We would have breakfast at a little bus stop, where there were some little huts where you would have a soup and some rice and some tea. And at this place when we had breakfast, a pick-up truck with 10 or 11 forest workers drove by and stopped. And I asked them to participate in the film. And they said: 'Well, we can't stop our work' and I said that, 'Come one, I pay you much better than your work pays you.' You are all on sick-leave today. And they went with me. I have no idea what their names were. We barely could communicate with each other. I didn't speak their language, nor did they speak any English or German or whatever. And it was of course all staged.

SP: Yes, in the film it is Dieter arranging them but then it was you who...

WH: ... arranged Dieter to do it. Yes. There is a good moment of it, you see, of very fine acting. All of a sudden he turns with this really perturbed look towards the camera and he says: Oh, oh,...

SP: ... 'it's getting too close'...

WH: ... 'too close to home', yes – but, as we shot it in two languages, he said

the same thing in the German language again. So what the hell was going on there? In other words, it was just staged, but staged for the purpose of a very deep truth.<sup>cdlxxii</sup>

So whereas the viewer understands that Dieter is playing along with the re-enactment in the documentary, there is yet a second layer: what appears to be Dieter's traumatised reaction to the re-enactment is actually part of the staging. 'Running like this might chase the demons away' Dieter says optimistically whilst running with the documentary team through the jungle again, as he perhaps wanted to 'chase the demons' of getting bombed away by becoming a pilot. Herzog's often controversial production of his fiction films lead to similar traumatic experiences for the filmmaker as those he searched for in his documentary protagonists. In the documentary *My Best Fiend*, the director featured as his own hero and survivor, not of plane crashes, but of clashes with his main actor Klaus Kinski. Herzog himself has been described as chasing the demons of his fiction films away by filming documentaries: 'the documentaries can be seen as frenetic therapy, safe exorcisms of his personal demons'<sup>cdlxxiii</sup> William Van Wert sees Herzog's documentary work as a therapeutic exorcism of his fiction films. The question he does not discuss however, is how the alleged 'therapy' of the traumatised filmmaker through filming negotiates the 'therapy' of his traumatised protagonists through being filmed:

Almost always the question of Herzog's sanity arises around the fiction films, against which the documentaries can be seen as frenetic therapy, safe exorcism of his personal demons.<sup>cdlxxiv</sup>

Coincidentally, demons are also invoked by Nietzsche, albeit allegorical and external ones:

It has to be an encounter with demons – as in Nietzsche's encounter with the demon who offers him the fateful and fatal task of undergoing the thought-experiment of eternal return, of taking up and passing on the gift and task of the overhuman.<sup>cdlxxv</sup>

A sudden accident or attack is the trigger for trauma. As such, there is no 'traumatic experience,' because in the repetition, the victim is overcome by the event and cannot remember it. Repetition of this clinical trauma is only ever involuntary and negative, either a repetition of the same in the form of a nightmare that besieges the trauma victim at night,<sup>cdlxxvi</sup> or in the form of an involuntary compulsion. Since the traumatic is a missed encounter with the real, it has to be repeated and cannot be represented. This kind of repetition of a trauma that is not representable (as it remains unconscious) differs from Dieter's repetitions which are conscious. Herzog's documentary heroes are beyond the clinical form of trauma which takes place outside of time and causal relations. In Herzog's documentaries, the repetitions are not traumatic, but voluntary re-encounters with old

demons. (They can still be physically painful, however, such as that of the pilgrims crawling on their knees in *Pilgrimage* and *Wheel of Time*.)

By contrast, there are situations - in the 'participatory' documentary *Chronicle of a Summer* for instance, or in psychotherapy for that matter – where the subject is provoked into a loss of control. Control, however, in *Chronicle of a Summer*, was left to the filmmaker. One of its directors, Jean Rouch, later took a stance against the 'working through' of problems in documentary - against, that is, the use of documentary as a form of therapy. With regard to the experience of filming *Chronicle of a Summer*, he described how he found the catalytic effect that the filming had on the protagonists' life initially therapeutic, but then also irresponsible, since 'therapy' stops with filming:

[...] the cinema became for these people a pretext to try and resolve problems that they were not able to resolve without the camera.<sup>cdlxxvii</sup>

Now, this extremely strange game we were playing, may also be extremely dangerous. When you have people play out this psycho-drama which engages their whole existence, what happens when there is no more film? I've thought about this often, and I don't think we have the right to do this. Really, I believe that we don't have the right! Because when you begin such a thing, giving people not only the possibility to express a character hidden within them which has not heretofore been revealed, but also *to live out that character* – well, life doesn't just stop when the film does! It goes on!<sup>cdlxxviii</sup>

[...] it is very dangerous because *you* become a kind of Prometheus creating creatures for whom you alone are responsible!<sup>cdlxxix</sup>

Documentary's traditional positioning towards events had been one of visitation or re-visitation, presupposing closure of the event. For example, Robert Rosen emphasizes the notion that documentary film has a 'natural' historicity due to the temporal delay inherent in film as a medium of indexical trace.<sup>cdlxxx</sup> History is dependent on the event closed; 'sense can be made because the event is over.'<sup>cdlxxxi</sup> This making sense is known as history. John Caughie also suggests the 'documentary gaze' is directed onto a closed scene, where the temporal 'looking back' correlates with a spatial 'looking from the outside' onto the event.<sup>cdlxxxii</sup> He has promulgated the latter view, when he distinguished a 'documentary gaze,' that is 'the fascination with which the documentary camera appropriates its object and renders it passive,'<sup>cdlxxxiii</sup> from the 'dramatic look', an 'active look which is exchanged between agents of the drama.'<sup>cdlxxxiv</sup> Even though Caughie does not argue that there are no dramatic looks in documentary, he nevertheless makes a clean split between internal drama and external documentary: 'the documentary gaze stands outside, exploiting the

“objectivity” of the camera to constitute its object as “document”<sup>cdlxxxv</sup> – and between a passive object of documentary and an active subject in fiction. The distinction between being the patient of action and its agent is thus mapped onto the distinction between the two different modes of filmmaking, documentary and fiction. In my opinion, Caughie reduces documentary to a rhetorical form and sets it up as a strawman: ‘The rhetoric of documentary, the fixed and fixing look, constitutes its object – the community, the social environment, the working class – as simply there, unproblematic, always already complete, “extras.”’<sup>cdlxxxvi</sup> Even though his points apply to the drama-documentaries he writes about, in taking the traits of one kind of documentary, namely the expository documentary, as characteristic of all, Caughie turns a species into the genus and makes an unbalanced generalisation about all documentaries. Televised projects such as *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) prove this assertion to be wrong: ‘The class which, in Marxist terms, is meant to be the subject of history appears in television history as the object of a gaze.’<sup>cdlxxxvii</sup>

Documentary thus is considered safe where it comments on a finished process, but unsafe where it initiates events, as it does in the ‘participatory’ approach of *Chronicle of a Summer*. The solution for Rouch after *Chronicle of a Summer* from then on was to have non-actors play fictional, self-created characters, as he had done in *Moi, un Noir* (1958) so that ‘when that story is finished, the whole fiction is terminated.’<sup>cdlxxxviii</sup> Fiction is closed with the work.

James Blue: ‘You think, then, a fiction story with a definite end to it will permit the non-actor to reveal himself without involving his private life to a point where the role is prolonged indefinitely?’

Jean Rouch: ‘I think that’s the solution, personally.’<sup>cdlxxxix</sup>

So how can one keep the process of reality creation open without acting irresponsibly? A re-enactment gives the protagonist some kind of boundaries to hold on to, the safety of repetition, since the event itself has already happened and is in a sense closed, in contrast to the psycho-dramatic opening of the non-actor to all possibilities as in *Chronicle of a Summer*. In fact, it is through the re-enactment that the protagonist gains control (over his story and over the representation of him or herself) – even if this is directed by the filmmaker, as Herzog did with Dieter’s acted ‘traumatised reaction.’ In contrast to the exploration of a loss of control in *Chronicle of a Summer*, in Herzog’s documentary re-enactments, the control is shared between director and protagonist. Re-enactments by the same people who experienced the events in the first place take into consideration the ‘agency of representation.’<sup>cdxc</sup> Through the artificiality of the re-enactment, filming is not confused with therapy. It is, however, still a repetition by the same person who

experienced the traumatic events, and neither imagined, as by Rouch's non-actors, nor a real event acted by actors, as in documentary-drama. Rouch, like Herzog, does not see much difference between documentary and fiction:

For me, as an ethnographer and filmmaker, there is almost no boundary between documentary films and films of fiction. The cinema, the art of the double, is already the transition from the real world to the imaginary world.<sup>cdxci</sup>

The difference between the approach of the two directors, however, is that Rouch situates the 'origin' of both fiction and documentary in the imaginary, whereas with Herzog, the opposite is the case, as he grounds the invented in the physical. Even though the physically extreme situations his subjects had been exposed to were traumatic, Herzog's emphasis on the necessity of imagination is not about the reality of phantasy in a psychoanalytic manner.

### **5.7.1 Documentary: Copy without Repetition?**

Unacknowledged repetition asked for by the filmmaker usually rules out that a work is regarded as a documentary. It is suggested here that the definition of documentary is a paradoxical one of copy without repetition. Documentary in the strict sense has been defined by the exclusion of invention and the prohibition of repetitions, such as reconstructions and re-enactments, unless they are marked as such. Thus, documentary occupies a strange place as a copy without repetition in terms of agency. From this point of view, which is that of the television network codes on documentary,<sup>cdxcii</sup> repetition rules out the possibility of a film being regarded as documentary, because it is perceived to be the mechanism that makes a behaviour self-conscious. For fiction film, repetition - of the idea and in rehearsal - is conscious. For documentary the other hand, consciously instigated repetition rules out a film's documentary status. As long as a work is referred to as documentary, it has to separate the new, the difference, of the repetition as the fictional supplement from the original. In documentary re-enactments toeing the line of the television codes, repetition produces either mimesis, or typical substitutes of 'extreme resemblance or perfect equivalence,' as Deleuze would put it.<sup>cdxciii</sup> This would be a repetition of the Same.

The *Independent Television Commission*, which regulates British television, asserts in the section of its Code that deals with 'dramatised reconstructions' within factual programmes: 'Whenever a reconstruction is used in a documentary, current affairs or news programme it should be labelled so that the viewer is not misled.'<sup>cdxciv</sup> Brian Winston rightfully argues

that it would be impossible to always acknowledge a re-enactment or a reconstruction as such.<sup>cdxcv</sup> He ponders the possible consequences of the ITC Code:

Clearly the Commission did not intend that every shot be constantly labelled – ‘as it happened’ on the action, ‘shot to be cut’, ‘filmed before’, ‘filmed afterwards’, ‘digital space image’, ‘trained animal’, ‘reconstructed on the basis of prior witness’ ... ‘imagined’ ... ‘based on this year’s Booker prize-winning novel.’<sup>cdxcvi</sup>

Under this ruling what had been defined as documentary film practise by John Grierson would be accused as creating a falsity. When he developed the notion of ‘the creative treatment of actuality’ together with the documentary idea, Grierson inscribed the question of how much creativity can actuality take right into the very conception of documentary. He did not advocate employing professional actors nor was it technically possible at the time to observe non-actors in their ‘natural environment.’ Instead, he suggested to use an ‘original (or native) actor’ who would re-enact their everyday movements using ‘spontaneous gestures.’<sup>cdxcvii</sup> Today we perceive re-enactment and spontaneity to be a contradiction. Grierson however, believed in an idealist philosophy that separated the real as ‘abstract and general’ from the phenomenal as empirical and particular, as Ian Aitken explains.<sup>cdxcviii</sup> Since the real was abstract and general, it could therefore be re-produced.

Here one needs to discriminate between repetitions clearly marked as re-enactments and often played by actors, such as for instance in *Crimewatch*, and between a repetition of an experience by the protagonists themselves, like in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, *Juliane – Wings of Hope* and Jeremy Deller’s *Battle of Orgreave*. Herzog uses the term ‘re-enactment’ for the television friendly repetitions of an experience contained by an actor and labelled as such, arguing however for a re-enactment by the protagonist. Herzog criticises a re-enacting that is purified by a neat separation of the re-enactor from the experience. Instead, he argues - here with respect to *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* - for the importance of the identity of the person who involuntarily and passively experienced the event with the person who re-enacts it:

The German television network wanted me to film re-enactments of the events Dieter was talking about, this stupid thing you can see on television worldwide. I hate this kind of stuff so much and thought it better that Dieter do it all himself.<sup>cdxcix</sup>

About the re-enactments in *Juliane – Wings of Hope* Herzog said:

Again, the television executives wanted re-enactments of her experiences. They certainly never expected me to take Juliane herself back to the jungle. But by

doing this, and by tying Dieter Dengler up and walking him through the trails where he almost perished thirty years before, we ended up ploughing a deeper reality.<sup>d</sup>

The acknowledged re-enactments of factual television would have relegated these into the safe terrain of a documentary which delivers closed, objectified knowledge, even if it is about a subjective experience. They would have separated the 'I' and the representation, as Deleuze describes:

Consciousness establishes between the I and the representation a relation much more profound than that which appears in the expression "I have a representation": it relates the representation to the I as if to a free faculty which does not allow itself to be confined within any one of its products, but for which each product is already thought and recognised as past [...] When the consciousness of knowledge or the working through of memory is missing, the knowledge in itself is only the repetition of its object: it is played, that is to say repeated, enacted instead of being known. Repetition here appears as the unconscious of the free concept, of knowledge or of memory, the unconscious of representation. It fell to Freud to assign the natural reason for such blockage: repression or resistance, which makes repetition itself a veritable "constraint," a "compulsion."<sup>di</sup>

What Deleuze criticizes here is Freud's negative account of repetition as involuntary and unconscious. The aim for Freud is to become conscious of what we do in order to avoid repeating it or to remember in order to be able to forget.<sup>dii</sup> We can only leave behind us what we have remembered. 'The neurotic repeats instead of remembering,' as Freud discovered.<sup>diii</sup> He aimed at a conscious 'I' that has mastered its representation. In Freud's negative repetition, 'conceptual identity or Sameness of representation is invoked to account for repetition.'<sup>diiiv</sup> With respect to documentary, a Deleuzian might argue that the ultimately negative stance of psychoanalysis on repetition<sup>diiiv</sup> was in line with the television codes, perpetuating a mode of documentary which relegates re-enactments to the past and to knowledge. But however much Deleuze criticized psychoanalysis for perpetuating a repetition of the same, a repetition that follows from repression and which is in need of a cure, he also acknowledged repetition *as* cure: the dramatic repetition that takes place in the artificial situation of the psychotherapy as a positive example of repetition through transference:

If repetition makes us ill, it also heals us; if it enchains and destroys us, it also frees us, testifying in both cases to its "demonic" power. All cure is a voyage to the bottom of repetition.<sup>dvi</sup>

Repetition is one of the guiding principles in psychoanalysis. The problems the patient has in reality are repeated in the artificial psychoanalytic situation through transference.<sup>dvii</sup> In the analyst's practice, the representation of reality is only possible through repetition. Of course, the filming of the repetitions in a therapy session does not go against the broadcasting codes of documentary, as long as this is merely observation by the film team.<sup>dviii</sup> Only if the repetition is asked for by the director of the film, rather than by the psycho-drama instructor or the therapist, and this remains unmarked, it goes against the television rules on documentary. Deleuze accepted that Freud did not only regard repetition as negative:

Freud noted from the beginning that in order to stop repeating, it was not enough to remember in the abstract (without affect), nor to form a concept in general, nor even to represent the repressed event in all its particularity: it was necessary to seek out the memory there where it was, to install oneself directly in the past in order to accomplish a living connection between the knowledge and the resistance, the representation and the blockage.<sup>dix</sup>

With respect to documentary, if this were taken as the goal of Deleuze's suggestion it would mean that rather than representing an event consciously from the outside, for instance through expository narration or contained in televisual re-enactments, the participants concerned should re-enact it.

To reiterate: the difference, thus, between non-fiction and fiction is in how and what is repeated. Whereas fiction is the controlled 'repetition of the same,' non-fiction and documentary are supposed to be without repetition. The difference between documentary and fiction film can even be compared with that between the creative repetition of which Kierkegaard and Deleuze wrote, on the one hand, and Kierkegaard's concept of recollection, which is equivalent to Deleuze's repetition without difference:

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards.<sup>dx</sup>

Fiction film could therefore be a recollection in the sense that it is a retrospective manifestation of a previously thought idea. One could even call the improvisations on the fiction film set 'documentary,' since they diverge from the initial script. Historical documentary can also be recollection, given that the relationship of non-observational documentary film to temporality has traditionally been regarded as that of looking back on a closed event. This pastness constitutes a gap between the 'we' of the viewer and the filmmaker, and 'they' of the depicted, a condition presumed necessary for historiography.

In its close alliance with history and the past, documentary film's position *to* the past *in* the past has, in a sense, been one of impotent witness - an observer that is impotent against what it reports and purports about the past.<sup>dx1</sup> In pre-cinematic times, Friedrich Nietzsche described the relationship to the past as a paralyzing one that restricts even the person whose past it is to the position of a passive witness. He regarded the will as a prisoner of the past. Therefore, he suggested an affirmative stance to any past act or event thereby changing the 'it was so' into a 'that's how I wanted it!' What Kierkegaard called 'recollection' was 'memory' for Deleuze: 'Oppose repetition not only to the generalities of habit but also to the particularities of memory.'<sup>dx2</sup> Whereas habit or memory usually prevents an affirmative repetition, nevertheless an affirmation of habit is possible and repetition once again can be creative: 'for it is perhaps habit which manages to "draw" something new from a repetition contemplated from without.'<sup>dx3</sup>

Whereas a fiction film is the endpoint of a process that started in the imaginary, a documentary re-enactment of a concrete and finished event can be the start of a new process, a 'forward recollection.' A re-enactment of experience is a repetition by the same person of the same event or action, repetition here allowing for more difference because of an initial identity. Because the protagonists re-enact their own experience, rather than someone else's, they subvert identity in a sense much more than, for instance, an external enactment by an actor would. In documentaries such as in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* or in *The Battle of Orgreave* the active repetition Deleuze and Kierkegaard speak of moves documentary beyond the identity of experience. Repetition in documentary re-enactment can liberate by shifting experience from containment in recollection, or memory, to a forward movement for the protagonist: 'Therefore repetition, if it is possible, makes a man happy, whereas recollection makes him unhappy.'<sup>dx4</sup> Re-enactments by the same protagonists who have experienced the events in the first place, such as in the *Battle of Orgreave*, challenge the return of representation through documentary that has taken place in recent years.

Re-enacting can thus be a repetition that moves beyond the identity of the action. Deleuze used acting as an example for the kind of repetition that creates difference:

Theatre is real movement, and it extracts real movement from all the arts it employs. This is what we are told: this movement, the essence and the interiority of movement, is not opposition, not mediation, but repetition.<sup>dx5</sup>

This, however, would not be the repetition through acting required for, for instance, documentary-drama. The repetitions in re-enactments for docu-dramas, such as *Cathy*

*Come Home*, or a drama-documentary, are those of substitutes for a generality featuring typical examples and the telescoping of events, or composite characters. On the contrary, as Deleuze maintained: 'it is rather a matter of acting, of making repetition as such a novelty.'<sup>dxvi</sup>

[...] to the extent that history is theatre, then repetition, along with the tragic and the comic within repetition, forms a condition of movement under which the "actors" of the "heroes" produce something effectively new in history.) The theatre of repetition is opposed to the theatre of representation, just as movement is opposed to concept and to representation [...]<sup>dxvii</sup>

James Naremore appropriately begins his book on *Acting in the Cinema*, by basing the difference between documentary and fiction on acting. He maps out how the focus on a character's reflexive acting cancels out the reflexive moves of a film, by describing a scene which could have been from the self-reflexive documentary *The Man With The Movie Camera* - were it not for the appearance of someone acting with expressive intent. Here, a character's self-reflexivity is opposed to that of a film:

[...] the documentary material would be cut together with scenes of the filmmakers at work, producing a conflict between the camera as recording instrument and the camera as instrument of semiosis. But almost from the beginning something went wrong. To be precise, an actor got in the way.<sup>dxviii</sup>

Next to Charlie Chaplin in *Kid's Auto Race* are social actors: 'Several faces are smiling shyly, glancing sidelong at the camera with the tense pose of people who are trying to ignore it.'<sup>dxix</sup> The reactions of the bystanders are depicted here as merely defensive and blocked by their authenticity. Any movement would already be acting. Naremore distinguishes between 'everybody' having an 'everyday response, provoked by the camera or caught unawares,' and Chaplin's 'clever professional mimesis, staged for the camera.'<sup>dx</sup> Even though he finds that 'everyone plays a role,' Naremore decides that 'this theatrical transformation happens in the exchange between a performer and an audience.'<sup>dxxi</sup> This assessment, however, is only geared towards one stage. Even though Naremore admits that there are various kinds of performances, he nevertheless only allows for one theatrical 'frame' and one context. It is my belief that more than one stage must be taken into consideration when interpreting the relations between the different protagonists and agents within a documentary. When considering the physical cinema of Herzog, a protagonist based, deterritorialised interpretation allows for an account beyond visual representation.

Acting, in Naremore, is confined as representation. It has thus no material impact and is outside of practical causalities, i.e. nothing concrete can be result from fictional acting.

Acting in the representational sense of the word, as in make-believe or pretending, excludes acting in the productive sense of the word. By contrast, I argue here that a documentary acting, a re-enacting, encourages a different material and emotional reality.

### 5.7.2 Excursion: Experience vs. Opposition in *The Battle of Orgreave*

*The Battle of Orgreave* is a re-enactment of the clashes between the police and the miners during their strike in 1984, which famously ended in the breaking of the unions by the ruling Tory government. It was an art project by the artist and ‘event creator’<sup>dxxii</sup> Jeremy Deller, who hired a re-enactment director, Howard Giles, to stage the battle scenes with the former miners, which were then in turn filmed by the film director Mike Figgis. The project thus had three directors. Previously Deller had orchestrated events with ‘one part of society getting superimposed onto another’<sup>dxxiii</sup> such as a brass band playing house tunes for *Acid Brass* (1997/1998) - also a repetition that introduces difference.

Re-enactments of history commonly display typical crafts and objects in an outdoor, but nevertheless theatrical set-up. These re-enactments are referred to as Living History. Such shows are made for consumption and are motivated by curiosity. When the historical re-enactments are not merely about the ‘fun’ of the participants, they stand in the tradition of 19th century imperial culture which sought to render the ‘world-as-exhibition.’<sup>dxxiv</sup> The world is represented like a museum, ‘an enframed totality, something that forms a structure or a system,’ like ‘a picture set up before the subject.’<sup>dxxv</sup> Even if Living History re-enactments are for the participants themselves - who are of course not the ones who have experienced the re-enacted events - they are done in the spirit of preservation and collecting,<sup>dxxvi</sup> not to foster change. Battle re-enactments thus traditionally have been conducted for the pleasure of the audience and even reinforced an ‘imperial inflected panoramic perception,’<sup>dxxvii</sup> as Kirsten Whissel describes:

[...] the very artificiality of the battle re-enactment provided pleasurable means of knowing and ‘seeing’ imperial history that documentary actualities could not.<sup>dxxviii</sup>

Richard Abel wrote on French films from the turn-of-the-last-century that: ‘the difference between recording a current public event as it was happening and reconstructing a past (or even present) historical event in a studio’ was relatively insignificant. More important

[...] was that a representation of the “historical” differed from a representation of the “purely fictive” or imaginary – which meant that referential differences mattered more than differences in modes of representation.’<sup>dxxix</sup>

In other words, whether it was a re-construction or an indexical trace of actuality was not important, only the idea mattered; that it was a representation of a past that really

happened.

Although it has become conventional to perceive the re-enactment as a genre that mimicked the actuality, historical evidence suggests that the battle re-enactment strongly informed turn-of-the-century notions of what war would look like to a (camera or individual) ‘witness’ on the battlefield. In turn, a kind of paradox ensued: to seem most ‘real’, the turn-of-the-century actuality had to aspire to achieve “reality effects” that had already been established by the (live and film) battle re-enactment.<sup>dxxx</sup>

Here, re-enactments serve to make documentary representations conform to previously formed audience expectations. For a conventional historical re-enactment, a sense of remoteness from the past is important; the best scenario being that the represented has ceased to exist outside of its representation. The attractions of such an event are the ‘many long-extinct crafts and skills’<sup>dxxx</sup> and it is usually motivated by the distance the re-enactor has to the past, both in time and by the fact that it is someone else’s experience.

Unlike in traditional historical re-enactments that display activities in shows made for distanced consumption and overview, *The Battle of Orgreave* was re-staged for the participants, who were also the original protagonists, and who were only augmented by ‘professional’ amateur battle re-enactors played a mere supporting role. Whereas the re-enactors of Living History events only relate to someone else’s assumed past experience, Deller’s protagonists repeat their own past. As such, not the representation of activities was sought, but the exploration of a process and the mixed feelings of the re-enactors. How does one document a battle or a fight or a quarrel? How many parties can be allowed in a documentary about a ‘battle’ for it still to be committed? And are they situated ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ of us? These ideas are particularly important with respect to Margaret Thatcher’s phrase of ‘the enemy within’, with which the prime minister at the time described the miners. In *The Battle of Orgreave* the former miners re-enact the same events they took part in, though some this time as policemen. By placing some protagonists in the role of their past adversaries, the one-dimensional image of ‘the enemy’ is replaced by an investigation of how the role affects the non-actor. The re-enactments not only put the event on film, but back into the participants’ reality, which then again is represented on film. The artist tells of his motivation: ‘I wanted the re-enactment of *The Battle of Orgreave* to become part of the lineage of decisive battles in English History.’<sup>dxxxii</sup> So here a documentary attempts to write history (in contrast to inventing history through its narration, like e.g. Patrick Keiller’s *London* ).

*The Battle of Orgreave* displaces the often oppositional structure of committed documentary. Its subject matter shares many similarities with Eisenstein's *Strike*. Both films portray a 'battle' between strikers and police, even down to the graphic opposition of the latter, on horseback, beating the former with truncheons: oppressed workers strike; it comes to a violent confrontation between the workers and the state orchestrated by the ruling class and company owners; the workers are defeated by the police. Both films differ, however, in the way the oppositions are manifested. Unlike in *Strike*, the oppositional parties in *The Battle of Orgreave* are not represented as unified. In contrast to Eisenstein's representative types, the film and the protagonists can explore their ambivalences through the practise of re-enactment. *The Battle of Orgreave* does not only account for one perspective of the miners against the police. The oppositions are shifted from being represented in separate entities to an exploration of the 'enemy within.' A miner acting as a policeman, when interviewed in the middle of a battle re-enactment, says that he feels very frightened. That interviews with the participants were even conducted while the interviewees are re-enacting, adds to the dissolving of an opposition of mind and body, containment in history and change through experience. In contrast to the employment of the re-enactments in *Strike* as metaphors of oppositions (i.e. good vs bad, proletariat vs bourgeoisie, young vs old, mass vs individual, men vs women), the re-enactments in *The Battle of Orgreave* are not used as a means for abstraction. Here, historical re-enactment does not put abstraction via a type into the experience of the viewer, but an experience is re-invoked and maybe even changed by being repeated by the same person who experienced it in the first place. Unlike Jane Gaines' notion of *political mimesis*, which follows up the expectation that documentary should effect social change and suggests that it never actually has, *The Battle of Orgreave* has reversed the process: since the object of the documentary is the experience of the protagonists while they are playing themselves, documentary has effected change. *The Battle of Orgreave* does not represent the event, but explores the effects of the re-enactments.

As has been mentioned before, 'experience' with respect to the cinema usually has been theorized in terms of the audience and the experience of cinema.<sup>dxxxiii</sup> Gaines examination of the experience of the bathos of *political mimesis*, too, is about the identification of the audience, rather than that of the documentary protagonist. Whilst, perhaps due to the emotional subject matter, both *Strike* and *The Battle of Orgreave* display elements of moral judgment, *Strike* clearly employs and exploits moral engagement for didactic purposes. In *The Battle of Orgreave* on the other hand, through re-enactments, foregrounds and explores the function of these emotions by isolating them. This repetition of a fervent emotion

arising out of strong convictions – in this case political ones - is quite different from taking on external elements such as the language, gestures and masks, Deleuze describes below:

[...] in the theatre of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link it directly with nature and history, with a language which speaks before words, with gestures which develop before organized bodies, with masks before faces, with spectres and phantoms before characters.<sup>dxxxiv</sup>

Whereas Deleuze here refers to external features that are being repeated, in *The Battle of Orgreave*, it is not an external form, but an emotion that is repeated. In the repetition of the emotion, here, content is given form. The emotion that is being repeated was not only itself unified, as passionate feelings tend to be, but – unlike language, gestures, masks and phantoms – it was also uniting subjects. The evocation of pathos or ‘the production of affect in and through the image of struggle,’<sup>dxxxv</sup> in what Gaines referred to as *political mimesis* with respect to the audience, here is explicitly explored with respect to the participants. Through the artificial evocation of past emotions in the re-enactments, the documentary foregrounds and explores the function of these emotions. Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau maintain in a text of committed theory:

We all three are committed to radical forms of democracy that seek to understand the process of representation by which political representation proceeds, the problem of identification – and its necessary failures – by which political mobilization takes place.<sup>dxxxvi</sup>

In *The Battle of Orgreave*, mobilization takes place without representation or identity. But what is the object of this identification? Whereas Butler, Laclau and Žižek refer to a model of representation, it is argued here that it is not only an external, referential entity, such as a profession or a class, with which the political subject identifies, but that it can also be an emotion that is sought in the search for identification. Re-enactment here makes an emotion the ‘object’ of the documentary without abstracting and externalising it. Tracey Emin’s statement that ‘it doesn’t matter whether it’s true or honest. It’s about an emotion’<sup>dxxxvii</sup> suggests a shift in the conception of documentary that accounts for the reality of emotions, even though Emin’s stance has frequently and inappropriately been dismissed as naïve, as is discussed in Chapter III.

*The Battle of Orgreave* in a sense implicitly critiques a conservative notion of performance: if something can be performed artificially, how closed off is that performed essence? *The Battle of Orgreave* marks a situation where the notion of performance is quite different from that of re-enactment, two terms often employed synonymously. The re-

enactments in *The Battle of Orgreave* are the inverse of Butler's 'parodic performance,' here glossed by Ernesto Laclau: 'a parodic performance means the creation of a distance between the action actually performed and the rule being enacted.'<sup>dxviii</sup> Whereas the performance is about an outward movement vis a vis the societal rules (rules of the symbolic), in *The Battle of Orgreave* it is not an imposed rule that is re-enacted, but one's own experiences. The re-enacting by the miners is not done from a position of distance towards their emotions or actions.

Butler, Laclau and Žižek suggest that 'Since identification is not reducible to identity, it is important to consider the incommensurability or gap between them.'<sup>dxix</sup> *The Battle of Orgreave*, through the re-enactments, produces what they argue for. It considers the gap between identification and identity, separating one from the other. After the miners had lost their identity through having lost their jobs and their context, they could temporarily explore their identifications through the simultaneous artificiality and emotionality of Deller's project. Diana Fuss writes:

Identification is a process that keeps identity at a distance, that prevents identity from ever approximating the status of an ontologically given, even as it makes possible the formation of an illusion of identity as immediate, secure and totalizable.<sup>dxl</sup>

Through the repetition of experience, *The Battle of Orgreave* introduces difference in the equation of 'self-sameness.'

Type-casting and stereotyping are a common reproach made against re-enactments. The documentary director could perhaps legitimise the covert repetition of an action more easily, if it seemed as though the repetition was frequently carried out by the person concerned, if it recurred routinely; in other words, if was *typical* for this person's life: 'Could you just do this again, like you always do it?' Kilborn and Izod criticise re-enactment in documentary for its propensity to generalise:

Because it permits re-enactments, the expository mode is at risk of overdependence on stereotypes. So too are drama-documentary and reality programming [...] The disadvantages of working to stereotypes clearly include the risk of, if not of falsifying outright the specific events filmed, then of betraying its particularity. There is an associated consequence of featuring restaged material, [...] namely, that it readily permits generalisation.<sup>dxli</sup>

So here we have a critique of re-enactment as suppressing particularity. This would apply to *Strike*, but not to *The Battle of Orgreave*. In contrast to the limitations that constrain

documentary protagonists' repetition of their own experiences elsewhere on television, here re-enactments are not there to represent. By focussing on the experience of the re-enactment rather than the re-enactment of experience, Deller's 'civil war' project makes the re-enactment itself the subject and moves documentary away from representation. Re-enacting here carries the unified acting of the same in fiction film and conventional documentary re-enactment beyond representation.

### 5.7.3 Artist vs. Filmmaker

*The Battle of Orgreave* links the representation of oppositions with the role of the director(s); this is not only a documentary about workers and the police, but about re-enactors and directors. Through the introduction of multiple directors and the exploration of protagonists' subjectivity through re-enactments, *The Battle of Orgreave* re-maps Eisenstein's oppositional relationship between protagonists and director, or miners and police. As here we have an artist working with documentary, one would think that a notion of the *auteur* would be reinforced, and that all activity would be traced back to an even more controlling hand or overseeing eye. Rather than represent a dialectic that ends in synthesis with the director assuming the role of a dictator such as for *Strike*, however, in *The Battle of Orgreave* the artist withdraws his control once the event has been initiated and hands the representation over to the film director:

[...] with *Orgreave* I happily lost control of that project to the point where it's not really mine any more, if indeed it ever was. .... [the miners] are having a laugh winding up the re-enactors and playing off the image of miners that the re-enactors received from the media.<sup>dxlii</sup>

That the miners experience the re-enactments in different ways and are mixed in with contracted veteran re-enactors further breaks up a unified perspective. The re-negotiation of the artistic and directorial authorship at work in *The Battle of Orgreave* can be seen by the fact that it is considered as an art project by Jeremy Deller in the art context, and regarded as a film by Mike Figgis in the film context. That Mike Figgis is usually listed as the director of *The Battle of Orgreave* throws light on the domain of art and film and the hierarchies of direction, which still follows the Eisensteinian model. Whereas Dave Beech argues that Deller should not have passed on his authorial control to the re-enactment director and the film director, because they would 'render its version of "history" decidedly "from above,"<sup>dxliii</sup> this does not take into account that *The Battle of Orgreave* implicitly thematizes a conservative notion of re-enacting and of directing. The re-negotiation of these activities could only be achieved by the external position of an artist as an 'event creator', who then – unlike the film director – is able to leave the event again. The artist –

usually the auteurial figure – here undermines the institution of the classic film director, who is described by David Rodowick below in terms of the representational cinema he or she produces:

Classical cinema is for the most part social democratic regardless of its nation of origin or its political ideology. Its goal is to represent the masses or "the people." They may be oppressed or in the process of liberation, alienated or awakened, but representation is nonetheless their right. That they are representable as a collective image, and that their political self-consciousness is also renderable in images, are both givens.<sup>dxliv</sup>

That the way in which the representations are produced affects the representations themselves can be observed in *The Battle of Orgreave*. The union's leader, Arthur Scargill, did not call a democratic ballot of the miners he represented to decide whether to continue the strike and instead imposed the decision that it should carry on. Scargill's 'direction' in a sense then was more like Eisenstein's and the question of democratic leadership of the miners at the time is answered in the direction of this documentary.

Unfortunately, in his more recent work, *Memory Bucket* (2003), for which he received the Turner Prize, Deller's approach - as he articulates it himself - has been much more about the 'authentic experience' of original characters, rather than an active re-appropriation and transformation of this experience. This change is reflected in the fact that Deller now says of *The Battle of Orgreave*, that 'I admit that I lost control'<sup>dxlv</sup> - relating to the loss of control as a negative development, rather than one which is sought for. This feeds into the trend in the art context of bringing back a conservative notion of the authority of the authentic into documentary, as outlined in Chapter III on Tracey Emin. Whereas his previous work in Britain was motivated by the personal and the political, and was often pursued from a fan perspective, in his most recent work Deller seeks 'authenticity' from outside, from an external position that finds representative types in a country where he is a tourist, America.

When looking at the theme of how experience is treated in documentary, *The Battle of Orgreave* rewards us if we consider not only the experience of the spectator, but that of the protagonists as well. It manifests the notion of deterritorialization with respect to the protagonists' experience and directing in documentary. This is in line with my suggestions with respect to Werner Herzog's documentaries, namely a deterritorialised reading of non-fiction and fiction – i.e. not merely looking at a film as a whole of either non-fiction or fiction.

#### 5.7.4 Towards a Protagonist Based Interpretation of Documentary

At this stage, I would like to propose acknowledging the process by which a documentary comes in to being. In contrast to the way fiction film is usually interpreted, I suggest here a move away from looking at a documentary with the perspective either of the filmmaker-author, or of the spectator, receiver, viewer, or reader, in favour of a reading that gives attention to the protagonists' experiences. The perspective of the protagonists permits an exploration of possible directions and influences involved other than only the film director's. From a documentary protagonist's perspective, one can then account for the differences between the various roles or personae the protagonist fills. A protagonist, for instance, who does a job for a particular company, acts in a docu-soap about that company for both the television program as well as for the company. From the protagonist's perspective, therefore, one can account for the differences between firstly a person's actions as an employee who is directed by a company, and secondly the fact that person is at the same time a 'character' making themselves available to be filmed by the documentary filmteam.

The apparently progressive modes of documentary, the broad categories of observational (considered progressive in the 1960s), participatory (progressive from the 1960s onwards) or even performative documentary (progressive in the 1990s), are not enough to allow for the polysemic interweavings of multiple directions by the film director, the company director, the institution, society, etc. Interaction, participation and performativity are commonly defined with respect to the filmmaker(s) or programme makers, and do not account for the different contexts in which the documentary protagonists are already 'acting' in and responding to. Even a fiction film actor is not employed in more than one fiction film at the same time in the same images as they appear before the director's camera.

Pierre Bourdieu has criticised the idea of 'participant observation,' a practice that anthropologists brought into documentary filmmaking, for being a contradiction in terms. Talking and observing stops one from acting from within a situation.<sup>dxlvi</sup> 'The status of an observer who withdraws from the situation to observe implies an epistemological, but also a social break.'<sup>dxlvii</sup> The standard anthropological practice of participant observation is an oxymoron: 'If words have meaning, then there cannot be a discourse of action: there is only discourse which states action'<sup>dxlviii</sup> – just as in expository documentary. By contrast, Alexandr Sokurov's *Elegy of a Voyage*, for instance, observes the filmmaker's inability to

participate even in his own life or film. Herzog also moves in the opposite direction of 'participatory observation.' His documentaries often consciously present not only his protagonists as exhibits rather than as participants, but also the filmmaker himself as an outsider: 'I came to it as an outsider without any profound knowledge of Buddhism.'<sup>dxlix</sup> In a similar way to that on which the documentary subjects come to the filming, Herzog comes to his subjects' worlds as an outsider. Whereas for Bourdieu the notion of 'participation' itself is emancipatory however, Deleuze critiques it as being Platonic in that it always already presupposes being secondary to what one participates in: 'to participate is, at best, to rank second.'<sup>dli</sup>

To participate means to have part in, to have after, to have in the second place.

What possesses in first place is the ground itself.<sup>dlii</sup>

And whilst Deleuze critiqued the representation of action as a movement that subordinates time, Bourdieu sees action as being blocked through being represented. Bourdieu cites Nietzsche for support for his critique of observation as blocking action:

The anthropologist's situation reminds us of the truth of the relationship that every observer has with the action he states and analyses, namely the insurmountable break with action and the world, with the imminent ends of collective action.<sup>dliii</sup>

Nietzsche bemoaned the fact that Kant's influence meant too much focus was put on the spectator, though he then only has the artist as the second party in this division – excluding other participants:

Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the "spectator," and unconsciously introduced the "spectator" into the concept "beautiful."<sup>dliiii</sup>

Whereas Nietzsche accuses Kant of emphasising the viewing subject instead of the artist, both philosophers apparently nevertheless separate the 'process of production from the product.'<sup>dliiv</sup> In the specific case of documentary however, the artist first has to have been an observer of what is in front of the camera, and in the second instance of the product, the documentary film. With respect to documentary, the process of production relies on the protagonists' participation, be it only allowing him- or herself to be depicted.

Performative documentary as well is tied to a totalizing context. To only look at the performative moment with respect to the film text ignores the many other contexts and referential relations of impact. Derrida criticised that performatives depend on a unified context, which gives the performative utterance its force; that:

[...] the long list of “infelicities” of variable type which might affect the event of the performative always returns to an element of what Austin calls the total context.<sup>dlv</sup>

With respect to the performative in film – rather than speech – the context Austin speaks of, does not depend on conventions, such as that of a marriage ceremony, to have an impact. The term ‘performative’ is taken from the philosopher J. L. Austin’s speech act theory with which he initiated the interest in performative utterances. Performative utterances are speech acts that perform an action like saying ‘I hereby name this ship Titanic’ whilst smashing a bottle on it in a public appearance. A performative act is the naming, not a description of it. The act of speaking itself is the referent, not something external that it refers to. Performative utterances ‘do things with words.’ Performative documentaries ‘do things with filming.’ Austin parted utterances into performatives and constatives. Contrary to the performative utterance, a constative utterance describes, asserts or states a fact. A constative utterance is in a secondary relationship to what it documents – like an expository documentary. A performative utterance does not summarize. Performative documentaries themselves are often difficult to summarize, due to their layers of referentiality.<sup>dlvi</sup> Often however, the performative is only a momentary movement in a documentary. Constative utterances can be judged as true or false, performatives cannot. Performativity in documentary helped the genre to move away from a univocal assertion of truth over what is deemed false. A constative utterance could also be comparable to a documentary that acts as a window to the world and disguises its own process of production, such as *Direct Cinema* or documentaries following a realist agenda. The power of performative speech is dependent on the institutional context it is uttered in, like the power of the ‘I do’ is dependent on the institution of marriage. If someone says ‘I do’ in a fictional context, the utterance has no performative force. In a performative documentary, the context is not that of an external institution or convention. However, usually the performative moment has its effect in the contextual frame that is the documentary film itself. The performative gesture is only effective in a documentary context. It has no effect in a fiction film. If we apply Judith Butler’s argument that gender is inscribed by performative acts rather than by anatomical sex ‘that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality’<sup>dlvii</sup> to film, we could say – using Butler’s phrasing - that documentary ‘has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.’ Because the performative moment manifests itself only in the film text however, it is argued here that it depends on the filmmaker and as such again reinforces auteurism - otherwise it would only be a performing subject or a performer. By aligning the performance of the

director with the performativity of the film - 'Moore and thereby the film',<sup>dlviii</sup> - Stella Bruzzi for instance equates an agent's (human or humanoid) actions with textual activities. This would mean that the filmmaker belongs to 'form' the same way as the text, thereby reinstalling a one-level authority. Using Peter Wollen's seventies blueprint of the fiction film auteur which distinguishes between 'the filmmaker' inside and the filmmaker outside the text, Bruzzi advances the argument that the documentary-filmmaker is a 'subject constructed on screen.'<sup>dlx</sup> With respect to self-reflexive documentary, in this line of thought there is no difference between the performativity of a film and the modernist notion of textuality.

Leftist - and Deleuzian - reviews repeatedly argue that there is difference in every repetition, that the rule - or the role - is conservative and that a transformation per se is subversive. Ernesto Laclau for instances writes:

Rules are bent or transformed when they are implemented. The Derridian notion of 'iteration', the Wittgensteinian notion of 'applying a rule' – even Butler's notion of 'parodic performances' – presuppose the possibility of this bending or transformation.<sup>dlx</sup>

And Homi Bhabha as paraphrased by Alisa Lebow in her argument for mock-documentary:

Bhabha reminds us that mimesis always entails excess. No mimesis or adequation is ever complete. At least in order for it to be effective, it must always produce its "slippage, its excess, its difference."<sup>dlxi</sup>

By contrast, I suggest here that documentaries, especially as television programmes, have utilized alienation, mimesis and repetition and that it can be exactly this difference which sells the film or the programme, as has been elaborated on in Chapter II on *The Children of Golzow*. Having changed the 'rule' to a 'role', when the documentary presenter Louis Theroux adopts a position for instance, he is in fact doing a 'parodic performance' as someone else - a porn actor, wrestler or swinger - but not to the emancipatory ends Judith Butler had in mind. Neither is the role subverted into a new model, nor does the presenter in acting as though he would play the part forge a new form to be aspired to.

I propose here to include the moments of direction and interactivity on more minor levels, which would allow one to dispense with the dualism between the documentary director and the subject(s) as object(s). The deterritorialisation of this division between subject and object also allows for a multitude of causalities. A reading of documentary as not merely a hierarchical relation between the filmmaker and the portrayed, but as direction and interaction between subjects and subjects (such as between the protagonists themselves or

between the protagonists onscreen and the implied protagonists) is thus encouraged in this thesis. Following from this is a deterritorialization of the question of whether a film is non-fiction or fiction. This reading then allows the inclusion of different levels of referentialities rather than suggesting a whole work is either one or the other.

### **5.7.5 Conclusion**

The theme running through this thesis – highlighting the difference between modernist, distanced reflection and a self-reflection encouraging the destabilisation of truth value, agency and authorship - has been explored in this chapter as the difference between the stable irony of mock-documentary and the Romantic irony of Herzog's documentaries. I have compared this kind of manifestation of irony that is not at the expense of someone else to the sympathetic and self-reflexive criticism at work in the 'socialist documentary interviews' discussed in Chapter II. Herzog's 'athletic documentaries' manifest a new approach to reality through a self-reflexive process that is not merely a secondary critique of an existing status. Herzog's documentaries are unique in their combination of the concrete and the visionary; the physical and the spiritual. This chapter suggested Friedrich Schlegel's notion of poetry of poetry as fundamental to reading Herzog's sometimes poetic documentaries and maintained that Schlegel's 'poetry of poetry' should not merely be seen as a 'mirror in a mirror', and instead compares this Romantic notion to Deleuze's simulacrum. It featured another critique of the popular metaphor of infinite mirror reflection already conducted in different ways in Chapter II as mechanical reflection with respect to Lenin and in Chapter III as the negative reflection in the reception of Tracey Emin's autobiographical art as personal biography. This extra-textual negotiation of Emin's autobiography in reviews about her art also merits comparison with the - albeit positive - reception of the extra-filmic activities of Herzog as they are taken up in other discourses (films, interviews and academic and critical texts). Increasingly, the extra-textual of Herzog's oeuvre has become the textual.

This chapter furthermore proposed to account for the varieties in truth levels of Herzog documentaries by reading them in a Derridean manner that suggests that there is not only truth as fiction or the truth of fiction; and that mock-documentary is Lacanian. I interpreted some of Herzog's documentaries through Immanuel Kant's reflective judgment and mock-documentary through his determinate judgment. As elsewhere in this thesis, this chapter encourages a deterritorialised reading of documentary – here with respect to 'truth.' It moreover suggested that while Herzog's fiction films follow a trajectory similar to that of the Freudian death drive (the repetitions for and in his fiction films are repressive and

regressive in their production and deadly in their diegeses) that the repetitions of his documentaries are affirmative and write a Deleuzian difference into documentary re-enactment. In his essay 'Beyond the Limits: Werner Herzog's Metaphysical Realism,'<sup>dlxii</sup> Paul Arthur maintains that Herzog's documentaries are metaphysical and realistic. Instead, I argue here that they are about the physical and the singular; furthermore, that they challenge documentary realism not only in terms of truth values - with invented quotes and rehearsed re-enactments - but also aesthetically by explicitly taking images and sound out of their realist contexts. The activities of Herzog's characters in a specific context are particular and cannot be abstracted into either realism or sublimity. This decontextualization has been compared to the emphasis on the fragmentary in Romantic poetry.

<sup>i</sup> Werner Herzog, in Guido Bachman, 'The Man on the Volcano,' *Film Quarterly* 7, Fall 1977, p. 4.

<sup>ii</sup> 'In documentaries as well as fiction films (an always slippery distinction in his work) [...]' Kent Casper, 'Herzog's Apocalypse as Eternal Return: The Circularity of *La Soufriere*,' in Terri Ginsberg and Kirsten M. Thompson (eds.), *Perspectives on German Cinema*, New York: C.K. Hall & Co., 1996, p. 526.

<sup>iii</sup> Werner Herzog, in Silke Panse, unpublished interview, London: Charlotte Hotel, 11.3.2001.

<sup>iv</sup> Werner Herzog, in Paul Cronin (ed.), *Herzog on Herzog*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002, p. 106.

<sup>v</sup> Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

<sup>vi</sup> Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000.

<sup>vii</sup> Vivian Sobchack, 'What My Fingers Knew: The Cinematic Subject or Vision in the Flesh,' 2000, <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/5/fingers.html>.

<sup>viii</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Der Historiker als rückwärts gewandter Prophet*, Leipzig: Reclam, 1991.

<sup>ix</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 51.

<sup>x</sup> Timothy Corrigan, 'The Original Tradition: Hypnotic Space in Herzog's The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser' in Timothy Corrigan (ed.), *Werner Herzog. Between Mirage and History*, New York: Methuen, 1986, p. 124.

<sup>xi</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings, Vol.1, 1913-1926*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 128.

<sup>xii</sup> Herzog, in Panse.

<sup>xiii</sup> Peter Lloyd, Monogram 5, in *The Other Cinema*, London: The Other Cinema, 1975, p. 31.

<sup>xiv</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, London: Athlone Press, 1992, p. 185.

<sup>xv</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 185.

<sup>xvi</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 185.

<sup>xvii</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 185.

<sup>xviii</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989, p. 224.

<sup>xix</sup> Werner Herzog, 'Q&A,' BBC Four, *Storyville*, 27 March 2003, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/documentaries/storyville/ask-herzog.shtml>

<sup>xx</sup> Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 130.

<sup>xxi</sup> Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 129.

<sup>xxii</sup> Herzog, *Storyville*.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Alan Singer, 'Comprehending Appearances: Werner Herzog's Ironic Sublime,' in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 187.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 187.

<sup>xxv</sup> Peter W. Janssen, 'innen/außen/innen: Funktionen von Landschaft und Raum' in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, Reihe Film 9, Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1976, p. 70.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Tom Cheesman, 'Apokalypse Nein Danke: The Fall of Werner Herzog,' in Colin Riordan (ed.), *Green Thought in German Culture*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997, p. 292.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Noël Carroll, 'Herzog, Presence, and Paradox,' *Persistence of Vision*, No. 2, Fall 1985, p. 31.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Noël Carroll, 'Herzog, Presence, and Paradox,' in *Interpreting the Moving Image*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 293.

<sup>xxix</sup> Dieter Dengler narrating in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997).

<sup>xxx</sup> Werner Herzog's narration in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997).

- xxx<sup>i</sup> Ian Johns, 'Exit, Pursued by a Bear and an Auteur. Life's Crazy Obsessives are Raw Material for Werner Herzog,' *The Times*, 2.2.2006, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,14931-2020286,00.html>
- xxx<sup>ii</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 184.
- xxx<sup>iii</sup> Werner Herzog's narration in *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997).
- xxx<sup>iv</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, London: Athlone Press, 1989, p. 2.
- xxx<sup>v</sup> Gilles Deleuze, lecture 'Cours Vincennes: Synthesis and Time' 14.3.1978, <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=66&groupe=Kant&langue=2>, downloaded 14.11.2005.
- xxx<sup>vi</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 288.
- xxx<sup>vii</sup> Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 31.
- xxx<sup>viii</sup> Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 30.
- xxx<sup>ix</sup> Herzog narrating in *My Best Fiend* (1999).
- xl Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 31.
- xli Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 30.
- xlii Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 30.
- xliii Georgio Agamben, *Infancy and History. Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, London and New York: Verso, 1993 (first published 1978), p. 13.
- xliv Georgio Agamben, *Infancy and History. Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, p.14.
- lv Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Assassination of Experience by Painting – Monory*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 1998, p. 86.
- lv<sup>i</sup> Lyotard, *The Assassination of Experience*, p. 227.
- lv<sup>ii</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 186.
- lv<sup>iii</sup> Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 31.
- lv<sup>ix</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 287.
- l<sup>i</sup> Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 31.
- l<sup>ii</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 237.
- l<sup>iii</sup> Carroll, *Persistence of Vision*, p. 31.
- l<sup>iiii</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 289.
- lv S. Mizrahi, 'Interview with Werner Herzog,' production handout, (unpaginated)1984, cited by Thomas Elsaesser, 'An Anthropologist's Eye: Where the Green Ants Dream' in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 139.
- lv Thomas Elsaesser, 'Hyper-, Retro- or Counter-Cinema: European Cinema and Third Cinema between Hollywood and Art Cinema' in J. King, A. López, M. Alvarado (eds.) *Mediating Two Worlds - Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*, BFI Publishing, London, 1993, p. 131.
- lv<sup>i</sup> Kaja Silverman, 'Kaspar Hauser's "Terrible Fall" into Narrative,' *New German Critique*, No 24-25, Fall/Winter 1981-82, p. 74.
- lv<sup>ii</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 289.
- lv<sup>iii</sup> Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*, p. 288.
- lix Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 150.
- lx Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 141.
- lxi Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 140.
- lxii Steve Lipkin, 'Defining Docudrama: In the Name of the Father, Schindler's List, and JFK', in Alan Rosenthal (ed.), *Why Docudrama? Fact-Fiction on Film and TV*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999, p. 370.
- lxiii Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 36.
- lxiv Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.153.
- lxv Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 203.
- lxvi Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001, pp. 36-37.
- lxvii Werner Herzog on *NDR Talkshow*, Norddeutsche rRundfunk, FRG, 13.1.2002.
- lxviii Herzog introducing *Pilgrimage* (2001) at *Sound on Film*, Barbican Centre, London, 2001.
- lxix Gertrud Koch, 'Blindness as Insight: Visions of the Unseen in *Land of Silence and Darkness*', in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, pp. 78-79.
- lxx Koch, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 79.
- lxxi Koch, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 79.
- lxxii Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 184.
- lxxiii Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 185.
- lxxiv Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, p.151.
- lxxv Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. xii.
- lxxvi Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, p.181,

- citing Lyotard, *The Differend*, p. xi.
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> Readings, *Introducing Lyotard*.
- <sup>lxxviii</sup> Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 150.
- <sup>lxxix</sup> Lyotard, *The Differend*, p. xiii.
- <sup>lxxx</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 185.
- <sup>lxxx1</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, 'Acinema,' in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, Oxford and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1989, pp. 169-180.
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' *Paragraph*, Vol. 6, October 1985, p. 6.
- <sup>lxxxiii</sup> Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 7.
- <sup>lxxxiv</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, (translated with an introduction by J. H. Bernard), Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2000, p. 112.
- <sup>lxxxv</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 186.
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 150.
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> Brad Prager, 'Kant in Caspar David Friedrich's Frames,' *Art History* 25 (1), February 2002, p. 75.
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 326.
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 134.
- <sup>xc</sup> These Kantian terms have already been described more in depth in Chapter IV.
- <sup>xc1</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 125.
- <sup>xcii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 125.
- <sup>xciii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 103.
- <sup>xciv</sup> Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 1.
- <sup>xcv</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 110.
- <sup>xcvi</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 112.
- <sup>xcvii</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 184.
- <sup>xcviii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17-18.
- <sup>xcix</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17-18.
- <sup>c</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 113.
- <sup>ci</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 3.
- <sup>cii</sup> The title of Herzog's diaries is: *The Conquest of the Futile* [*Die Eroberung des Nutzlosen*, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2004].
- <sup>ciii</sup> Herzog, in Panse. See also Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p.108.
- <sup>civ</sup> J. H. Bernard, 'Editor's Introduction,' in Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. xxi.
- <sup>cv</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 183.
- <sup>cvi</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 104.
- <sup>cvi</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 122.
- <sup>cvi</sup> Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, p.121.
- <sup>cix</sup> Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, p. 380.
- <sup>cx</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 134.
- <sup>cx1</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17-18.
- <sup>cxii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 134.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 119.
- <sup>cxiv</sup> Immanuel Kant, § 27 *Kritik der Urteils kraft* [The Critique of Judgment], Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004.
- <sup>cxv</sup> Kant, § 27 *Critique of Judgment*, p. 122.
- <sup>cxvi</sup> Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, p. 122-123.
- <sup>cxvii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 112.
- <sup>cxviii</sup> J. H. Bernard, in Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. xxiii.
- <sup>cxix</sup> J. H. Bernard, in Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. xxiii.
- <sup>cx</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 110.
- <sup>cxxi</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 109.
- <sup>cxii</sup> Freeland expresses this literally: 'I would like to provide an illustration of the details of the Kantian analysis of the sublime as it might apply to films.' Cynthia A. Freeland, 'The Sublime in Cinema' in Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999, p. 71.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> Freeland, in Plantinga and Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views*, p. 73.
- <sup>cxiv</sup> Freeland, in Plantinga and Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views*, p. 73.
- <sup>cxv</sup> Freeland, in Plantinga and Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views*, p. 73.
- <sup>cxvi</sup> Cynthia A. Freeland, 'Explaining the Uncanny in the Double Life of Véronique,' *Film and Philosophy*, special issue on horror, Summer 2001, p. 42.
- <sup>cxvii</sup> Freeland, in Plantinga and Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views*, p. 73-74.
- <sup>cxviii</sup> Freeland, in Plantinga and Smith (eds.), *Passionate Views*, p. 75.

- <sup>cxxix</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli, *DOX: Documentary Film Quarterly*, Winter 1994, cited in 'French Documentary Cinema: Programme 11, 1980's The Socialist Republic,' programme notes, *NFT*, London, 2004.
- <sup>cxxx</sup> Comolli, *DOX*, 1994, cited on *NFT* notes.
- <sup>cxxxi</sup> Denise Riley, *The Words of Selves. Identification, Solidarity, Irony*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 148.
- <sup>cxxxii</sup> Riley, *Words of Selves*, p. 148.
- <sup>cxxxiii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 120.
- <sup>cxxxiv</sup> Jacques Rancière, 'The Sublime from Lyotard to Schiller. Two Readings of Kant and their Political Significance,' *Radical Philosophy* 126, July/August 2004, p. 8.
- <sup>cxxxv</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 125.
- <sup>cxxxvi</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 125-126.
- <sup>cxxxvii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 125-126.
- <sup>cxxxviii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 147.
- <sup>cxxxix</sup> Friedrich Schiller, 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry' and 'On the Sublime', New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966, p. 197.
- <sup>cxli</sup> Friedrich Schiller, 'Über das Erhabene' in Friedrich Schiller, *Vom Pathetischen zum Erhabenen*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1970, p. 90.
- <sup>cxlii</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 125-126.
- <sup>cxliii</sup> This focus on the audience in the image rather than on the star is not meant as a social commentary, however, such as in American social photography of the Fifties. In the photo 'Movie Premiere, Hollywood' (1955-56) Robert Frank for instance reversed social divisions by leaving the celebrity on the red carpet out of focus and instead focussing on the masses behind the cordon.
- <sup>cxliiii</sup> Werner Herzog, interview before *Pilgrimage* (2001), part of the series 'Sound on Film,' BBC2, March 2001.
- <sup>cxliv</sup> In a similar vein, in the documentary *A Miracle* (Poland/Germany, 1998) the Polish filmmaker Stanislaw Mucha asked passers-by what they can make out in a far away window and only shows the observers, but never what they see. Their interpretations of what they think they see vary enormously from impossibly detailed descriptions of a holy scene around the Virgin Mary to truncated ones like: 'an ear.' Regardless to how the viewers' descriptions of the same object at the same time and from the same position differ, they nevertheless agree that what they see is a miracle. *A Miracle* points out the pressure to interpret an undefined image as a religious one, thereby showing religion to be determined/based on fantasy. In *Look at this Face* (UdSSR, 1966) by Pavel Kogan too the affectations in the faces of the museum visitors looking at Leonardo Da Vinci's *Madonna* in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg are more important for the camera than the work of art.
- <sup>cxlv</sup> Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 5.
- <sup>cxlvi</sup> Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 9.
- <sup>cxlvii</sup> Kent Casper for instance generalises in his critique of Herzog's films in a manner typical for German discourse of the late twentieth century by equating any aestheticisation of pain with fascism: 'When that reality is figured as catastrophe or apocalypse, it amounts to an aestheticizing of horror – for a modern German "after Auschwitz", a highly charged and problematic undertaking that can hardly avoid complicity with fascistic ideology.' Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 528.
- <sup>cxlviii</sup> Gertrud Koch upholds an, in my view, dated opposition of good avant-garde textuality versus bad spirituality, which is based on a reductive interpretation of German Romanticism as proto-fascistic, because of its emphasis on the irrational: 'my argument aims to show what separates Herzog from the aesthetic avant-garde with whom is often mistakenly associated, and to indicate which aspects of his work let him flicker in the spectrum of neo-romantic regression.' Koch, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p.75.
- <sup>cxlix</sup> Laura Marks, 'Signs of the Time. Deleuze, Peirce, and the Documentary Image' in Gregory Flaxman (ed.), *The Brain is the Screen*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 194.
- <sup>cl</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 2.
- <sup>cli</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 51.
- <sup>clii</sup> Lyotard, *Differend*.
- <sup>cliii</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 87.
- <sup>cliv</sup> Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, New York and London: Routledge, 2003, p. 66.
- <sup>clv</sup> Henri Bergson, cited in Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p. 23-24.
- <sup>clvi</sup> Today's action cinema such as *The Matrix* does not unify its movements under a commonsensical notion of time. In contrast to Deleuze's schema progressing from classic movement-image to the modern time-image, modern action cinema would probably not count as a movement-image for Deleuze.
- <sup>clvii</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 87.
- <sup>clviii</sup> Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p. 76.
- <sup>clix</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 87.
- <sup>clx</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 87.
- <sup>clxi</sup> Deleuze's negative stance towards reflection is elaborated in the thesis' introduction.

- clxii Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, cited in Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p. 77.
- clxiii Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 87.
- clxiv Deleuze goes on to argue that the reflecting unity raising 'all the parts to itself' is that of a thinking face. This does not apply to *Pilgrimage*. He gives Griffith's close-ups as an example and it is here that we have to part with Deleuze. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, pp. 87-88.
- clxv Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 88.
- clxvi Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 88.
- clxvii Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p. 78.
- clxviii Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and the Consequences*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 11.
- clxix Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, p. 10.
- clxx Herzog, in Panse.
- clxxi John Grierson in Forsyth Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, New York: Praeger, 1966, p. 290.
- clxxii Phillip Rosen, 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts,' in *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, note 4, p. 233.
- clxxiii Bill Nichols maintained that in the Griersonian model 'the corporeal I who speaks dissolves itself into a disembodied, depersonalised, institutional discourse of power and knowledge.' Bill Nichols, "'Getting to Know You ...': Knowledge, Power, and the Body," in Michael Renov (ed.), *Theorizing Documentary*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993, p. 6.
- clxxiv Friedrich Schlegel, (§40) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 23.
- clxxv Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 252.
- clxxvi Herzog, in Panse.
- clxxvii Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 531.
- clxxviii 'Generality, as generality of the particular, thus stands opposed to repetition as universality of the singular.' Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London: The Athlone Press, 1994, p. 1.
- clxxix Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 1.
- clxxx Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 1.
- clxxxi My translation of: 'Mit der Ironie ist durchaus nicht zu scherzen.' Friedrich Schlegel, 'Über die Unverständlichkeit,' in Ernst Behler, Jean-Jacques Anstett, Hans Eichner (eds.), *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, Zweiter Band, Erste Abteilung, 'Charakteristiken und Kritiken I (1796-1801),' München, Paderborn, Wien: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh and Zürich; Thomas Verlag, 1967, p. 370.
- clxxxii See Claire Colebrook, 'Romantic Irony' in *Irony*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 47-71.
- clxxxiii Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p. 73.
- clxxxiv William C. Wees, 'Found Footage and Questions of Representation' in Cecilia Hausheer and Christoph Settele (eds.), *Found Footage Film*, Luzern: Viper/Zyklop Verlag, 1992, p. 39.
- clxxxv Wees, in Hausheer and Settele (eds.), *Found Footage Film*, p. 51.
- clxxxvi Wees, in Hausheer and Settele (eds.), *Found Footage Film*, p. 45.
- clxxxvii Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, New York: State University of New York, 1988, p. 50.
- clxxxviii Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p. 73.
- clxxxix Carl R. Plantinga, *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 167.
- cx Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight, *Faking It: Mock-Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001, p. 160.
- cxci Friedrich Schlegel, 'Über Goethe's Meister' (1798), in *Schriften zur Literatur*, München: Hanser Verlag, 1970, p. 266, cited in Charles Larmore, 'Hölderlin and Novalis', in Karl Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 157.
- cxcii Friedrich Schlegel, in Behler et al (eds.), *Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, p. 370.
- cxciiii 'Schlegel identifies irony as the form of paradox itself.' William Eggington, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality', *Modern Language Notes* 117, 2002, p. 1046.
- cxciiv 'Grade aus dem Sinn für das Unendliche, das weit erhaben ist über jedes menschliche Werk, erwächst die Ironie.' Paul Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1941, p. 19.
- cxci v Schlegel, (§324) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 24.
- cxci vi William Eggington, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality', p. 1047.
- cxci vii Schlegel, (§238) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 50-51.
- cxci viii Friedrich Schlegel, (§108) 'Critical Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 13.
- cxci x Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, Cambridge, Mass., London: Harvard University Press, p. IX.2.
- cc Larmore, in Ameriks (ed.), *German Idealism*, p. 156.
- cci Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 26.

- ccii Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 28.
- cciii Claire Colebrook, (undated teaching material on web), [http://www.englit.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergrd/english\\_lit\\_2/Handouts/cmc\\_irony.htm](http://www.englit.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergrd/english_lit_2/Handouts/cmc_irony.htm)
- cciv Colebrook, <http://www.englit.ed.ac.uk/irony>.
- ccv Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual References to Socrates*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, paraphrased by Claire Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 29.
- ccvi See Colebrook, *Irony*, p.30.
- ccvii Kierkegaard, *Concept of Irony*, p. 278.
- ccviii Kierkegaard, *Concept of Irony*, p. 278.
- ccix Schlegel, (§117) 'Critical Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 14.
- ccx Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality', p. 1045.
- ccxi N. Ahlers, 'Richard Rorty and Romanticism: an Unread Chapter in the History of Irony?,' *Arcadia*, 37 (2): 2002, pp. 304-326.
- ccxii Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 5.
- ccxiii John Rajchman, 'Unhappy Returns, John Rajman on the Po-Mo Decade,' *Artforum*, April 2003, p. 64.
- ccxiv Michael Roth, *The Ironist's Cage : Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History*, New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 3.
- ccxv Roth, *Ironist's Cage*, p. 3.
- ccxvi Roth, *Ironist's Cage*, p. 3.
- ccxvii Roth, *Ironist's Cage*, p. 3.
- ccxviii Victor Shklovsky, *Gamburskii Schet* [The Hamburg Reckoning], Moscow, 1990, p. 218, cited in Mikhail Yampolsky, 'Reality at Second Hand', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 11, No.2, 1991, p. 163, note13.
- ccxix Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 3.
- ccxx Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 3.
- ccxxi Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 3.
- ccxxii Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 45.
- ccxxiii Claire Colebrook commenting on Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 41.
- ccxxiv Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 44.
- ccxxv Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 81.
- ccxxvi Thomas Docherty, *Alterities. Criticism, History, Representation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 153-154.
- ccxxvii Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 50.
- ccxxviii Werner Herzog in 'Werner Herzog on Aguirre, *Wrath of God*,' *Film Four*, 13 March 2004.
- ccxxix This was at the press conference for *Lessons of Darkness* at the Berlin Film Festival 1992. Cheesman, in Riordan (ed.), *German Culture*, p. 291.
- ccxxx Friedrich Schlegel cited in Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Die Romantische Ironie in Theorie und Gestaltung*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1960, p. 10-11.
- ccxxxi Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 11.
- ccxxxii Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 11.
- ccxxxiii Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 11.
- ccxxxiv Michael Renov, as yet unpublished paper 'Historical Discourses of the Unimaginable: Peter Forgacs' *The Maelstrom*, at the *Visible Evidence 8* conference, in Utrecht, 2000.
- ccxxxv Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime*, New York: Allworth Press, 1999.
- ccxxxvi Andrew Bowie (commenting on F.W.J. Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism), 'German Idealism and the Arts,' in Ameriks (ed.), *German Idealism*, p. 246.
- ccxxxvii Charles I. Glicksberg, *The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 5, cited by Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1045.
- ccxxxviii 'Diese in der Romantik Forschung vornehmlich und immer wieder gestellte Frage lautet dahin, ob das von Schlegel proklamierte Prinzip der Ironie ein Prinzip der Subjektivität oder Objektivität bedeute.' Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 9.
- ccxxxix Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 9, note 2.
- ccxl Michael Moore's Oscar acceptance speech for *Bowling for Columbine* (2002).
- ccxli Paul Schrader, "'The History of an Artist's soul is a very sad History" - Aleksandra Sokurov Interview', *Film Comment*, Volume 33, No.6, November/December 1997.
- ccxlii Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, p. 3.
- ccxliiii Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' pp. 1045-1046.
- ccxliv Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant Garde,' p. 7.
- ccxlv Readings, *Introducing Lyotard*, p. 125.
- ccxlv Roscoe and Hight, *Faking It*, p. 29.

- ccxlvii Roscoe and Hight, *Faking It*, p. 29.
- ccxlviii Roscoe and Hight, *Faking It*, p.67.
- ccxlix Herzog, in Panse.
- ccl ‘All of these approaches not only soft-peddle the neocolonialist representations within their films and in their production, but also scrupulously avoid readings revolving around the notion that Herzog’s work deals with the German legacy of National Socialism.’ John E. Davidson, ‘As Others Put Plays upon the Stage: Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,’ *New German Critique*, No.60, Fall 1993, p. 119.
- ccli ‘[R]epresentations of doomed Faustian (or Hitlerian) heroes in struggle against the hostility of external and human nature (his Kinski characters).’ Cheesman, in Riordan (ed.), *German Culture*, p. 289.
- cclii See for example Davidson, ‘Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,’ p. 121: ‘Herzog both plays up and disrupts the sense that we are either in Friedrich’s realm of overawed subjectivity, or in a safe mountain *Heimat*, or accompanying Riefenstahl’s descent from the clouds with the Führer.’
- ccliii See for example Cronin, *Herzog*, p.148: ‘I have always found *La Soufriere*, filmed on a Caribbean island about to explode, one of your most entertaining films.’
- ccliv Davidson, ‘Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,’ pp. 127-128.
- cclv Jacques Derrida, ‘Signature Event Context,’ in Jonathan Culler (ed. and introd.), *Deconstruction: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, Volume I*, London, England: Routledge, 2003, pp. 222-44.
- cclvi Brian Winston on *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) in Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real. The Griersonian Documentary and its Legitimisations*, London: BFI Publishing, 1995.
- cclvii Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966, p. 742, cited in Jacques Derrida, ‘La Facteur de la Vérité’ in Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 467.
- cclviii Alisa Lebow, ‘Faking What?: Making a Mockery of Documentary,’ in Alexandra Juhasz and Jesse Lerner (eds.), *F is for Phoney. Fake Documentary and Truth’s Undoing*, Visible Evidence Series, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p. 223.
- cclix Alisa Lebow, conference paper, ‘Faking What?: Making a Mockery of Documentary’ on the panel ‘F is for Phony: The Fake Documentary,’ *Visible Evidence 10* conference, Marseille, 2002, p. 14.
- cclx Michael Renov, ‘Introduction: The Truth about Non-Fiction’ in Renov (ed.), *Theorising Documentary*, p. 7.
- cclxi Derrida, ‘Le Facteur de la Vérité’, p. 427.
- cclxii Derrida, ‘La Facteur de la Vérité’, pp. 467-468.
- cclxiii Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 742, cited in Derrida, ‘La Facteur de la Vérité’, p. 467.
- cclxiv Derrida, ‘Le Facteur de la Vérité’, p. 426.
- cclxv Derrida, ‘Le Facteur de la Vérité’, p. 426.
- cclxvi Derrida, ‘Le Facteur de la Vérité’, p. 427.
- cclxvii Derrida, ‘Le facteur de la Vérité,’ pp. 467-468.
- cclxviii Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 239.
- cclxix Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 240.
- cclxx Werner Herzog, my translation: ‘I hate *Cinema Verité* and would like to be its grave-digger one day. It is merely the vulgar, primitive layer of truth.’ Werner Herzog, in Hans Günther Pflaum, ‘Interview,’ in Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (eds.), *Werner Herzog*, Reihe Film 22, Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979, p. 71.
- cclxxi Werner Herzog, ‘Minnesota Declaration: Truth and Fact in Documentary Cinema,’ (confusingly also sometimes referred to as ‘Lessons of Darkness’, like Herzog’s documentary), Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, Minnesota April 30, 1999, [http://www.wernerherzog.com/main/de/html/news/Minnesota\\_Declaration.htm](http://www.wernerherzog.com/main/de/html/news/Minnesota_Declaration.htm)
- cclxxii Herzog here mistakes the participatory and provocative French Cinéma Vérité - where the filmmakers and their camera act as catalysts to induce reactions from the protagonists - for the observational American Direct Cinema with a self-effacing filmteam who even opposed interviews. Paul Cronin repeats this confusion in *Herzog on Herzog*: ‘Cinéma Vérité [cinema truth] is the name given to the work of filmmakers [Frederick Wiseman, Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker, Robert Drew, Jean Rouch, etc.] who emerged primarily in the United States and France in the late 1950s.’ Cronin, *Herzog*, p. 271, ft. 2. Herzog and Cronin escape the ironic slant of *vérité* as used by Rouch, namely that of a truth that can never be achieved.
- cclxxiii Herzog, ‘Minnesota Declaration.’
- cclxxiv Deleuze elaborates this point with respect to the repetition of the ‘extradiegetic,’ ‘objective’ knowledge the audience has in advance of the character in a theatre play; a knowledge that is underlying everything, but is initially repressed so that the character can discover it: ‘the unknown knowledge must be represented as bathing the whole scene, impregnating all the elements of play and comprising in itself all the powers of mind and nature, but at the same time the hero cannot represent it to himself – on the contrary, he must enact it, play it and repeat it until the acute moment that Aristotle called “recognition.”’ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.15.
- cclxxv Quentin Tarantino interviewed for *Film’ 98*, presented by Barry Norman, BBC1.16.3.1998

- cclxxvi Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17.
- cclxxvii Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17.
- cclxxviii Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17-18.
- cclxxix Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, p. 51.
- cclxxx Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 17.
- cclxxxi 'What gives the stance its ironic twist is that, as indicated, his heroes are aware of failure from the outset.' Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, p. 224.
- cclxxxii Thomas Waugh, "'Acting to Play Oneself": Notes on Performance in Documentary', in *Making Visible the Invisible: an Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting*, N.J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1990, pp. 64-91.
- cclxxxiii Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 23.
- cclxxxiv Schlegel, (§116) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 32.
- cclxxxv Schlegel, (§116) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 32.
- cclxxxvi Eggington, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1047.
- cclxxxvii Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenäums-Fragment 116' in Wolfdietrich Raschm (ed.), *Kritische Schriften*, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1964), p. 39.
- cclxxxviii Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1804 bis 1806*, p. 38 cited in Benjamin in 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, pp. 131-132.
- cclxxxix Friedrich Schlegel, (§238) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p.50-51.
- ccxc Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p. 272.
- ccxci Søren Kierkegaard, *Über den Begriff der Ironie mit ständiger Rücksicht auf Sokrates* [The Concept of Irony with Continual References to Socrates], Munich und Berlin: Wilhelm Rüttemeyer, 1929, p. 270, cited in Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 220.
- ccxcii 'Jedes einzelne Produkt ist nur eine Annäherung.' Kierkegaard, *Ironie*, p. 267, cited in Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 442.
- ccxciii Søren Kierkegaard, *Crisis in the Life of an Actress and Other Essays on Drama* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 112.
- ccxciv Kierkegaard, *Crisis in the Life of an Actress and Other Essays on Drama*, p. 112.
- ccxcv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 53
- ccxcvi Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 53.
- ccxcvii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 264.
- ccxcviii Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 121.
- ccxcix Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 120.
- ccc Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 121.
- ccci Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, pp. 145-146.
- cccii Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 146.
- ccciii Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 21.
- ccciv Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Berkely; Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993
- cccv Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 17.
- cccvii Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 20.
- cccviii Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 127.
- cccviii Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 127.
- cccix Helmut Prang, *Die Romantische Ironie*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972, p. 83.
- cccix Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 127.
- cccxi Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 147.
- cccxi Novalis in J. Minor (ed.), *Schriften [Works]*, Jena, 1907, p.563, cited in Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 147.
- cccxi Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 147.
- cccxi Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 148.

- <sup>cccxv</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 148.
- <sup>cccxvi</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 148.
- <sup>cccxvii</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 148.
- <sup>cccxviii</sup> Werner Herzog in *Burden of Dreams* (Les Blank, US 1982).
- <sup>cccxix</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 129.
- <sup>cccxx</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 129.
- <sup>cccxxi</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 123.
- <sup>cccxxii</sup> Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 126.
- <sup>cccxxiii</sup> 'The ideal cannot be looked at.' My translation of: 'Das Ideal läßt sich nicht anschauen.' Friedrich Schlegel (reference not given) cited in Georg Wellenberger, 'Der Unernst des Unendlichen: die Poetologie der Romantik und ihre Umsetzung durch E.T.A. Hoffmann', *Marburger Studien zur Literatur*, Band 3, Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1986, p. 64.
- <sup>cccxxiv</sup> Schlegel (reference not given) cited in Wellenberger, 'Der Unernst des Unendlichen,' p. 64.
- <sup>cccxxv</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, 'Fragmente: Progressive Universalpoesie,' in Herbert Uerlings (ed.), *Theorie der Romantik*, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2000, p. 79.
- <sup>cccxxvi</sup> '... das ist ihr eigentliches Wesen, daß sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann. Sie kann durch keine Theorie erschöpft werden.' Schlegel, 'Fragmente: Progressive Universalpoesie,' in Uerlings (ed.), *Theorie der Romantik*, p. 80.
- <sup>cccxxvii</sup> Schlegel, (§121) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 33.
- <sup>cccxxviii</sup> Schlegel, (§121) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 33.
- <sup>cccxxix</sup> Schlegel, (§121) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 33.
- <sup>cccxxx</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1804 bis 1806* [Philosophical Lectures, 1804 – 1806], Bonn, 1906, p. 63, cited in Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 149.
- <sup>cccxxxi</sup> Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p. 273.
- <sup>cccxxxii</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke* [Complete Works] (Berlin, 1845-1846), Vol. 1, p. 67, cited in Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,' in Bullock and Jennings (eds.), *Benjamin*, p. 122.
- <sup>cccxxxiii</sup> Prang, *Die Romantische Irony*, p. 83.
- <sup>cccxxxiv</sup> Kierkegaard wrote this in his dissertation. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p. 276. He would later would distance himself from Hegel: 'What a Hegelian fool I was!,' p. 453.
- <sup>cccxxxv</sup> Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p. 277.
- <sup>cccxxxvi</sup> Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1041.
- <sup>cccxxxvii</sup> Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, pp. 526-527.
- <sup>cccxxxviii</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 184.
- <sup>cccxxxix</sup> Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 184.
- <sup>cccxl</sup> Elsaesser, 'Hyper-, Retro- or Counter-Cinema,' p. 130.
- <sup>cccxli</sup> Roger Cardinal, *German Romantics in Context*, London: Studio Vista, Cassell & Collier Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1975, p. 28.
- <sup>cccxlii</sup> Colebrook, *Irony*, p. 51.
- <sup>cccxliii</sup> Herzog, in Bachman, 'The Man on the Volcano,' p. 4.
- <sup>cccxliv</sup> Frank Mitchell, *German Romanticism Redefined*, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, p. 38.
- <sup>cccxlv</sup> The older Friedrich Schlegel himself was severely criticised when his physique expanded after his conversion to Catholicism.
- <sup>cccxlvi</sup> 'Die physische Lebenskraft der reinen Schönheit, welche die sinnliche Erscheinung des Geistigen veranläßt.' Schlegel, *Historiker als Prophet*, p. 95.
- <sup>cccxlvii</sup> Herzog, in Panse.
- <sup>cccxlviii</sup> Herzog, in Cronin, *Herzog*, p. 104.
- <sup>cccxliv</sup> Schlegel, (§406) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 82.
- <sup>ccccl</sup> Schlegel, (§116) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 32.
- <sup>ccccli</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- <sup>cccclii</sup> Herzog, in Bachman, 'The Man on the Volcano.'
- <sup>ccccliii</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1974, p. 13.

- cccliv Gilles Deleuze, 'Plato and the Simulacrum' in Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 256.
- ccclv John Caughie, *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 111.
- ccclvi Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 257.
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- ccclx Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 257.
- ccclxi Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 257.
- ccclxii Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 256.
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- ccclxiv Jean Baudrillard, 'The Year 2000 has already happened,' in Arthur and Marilouise Kroker (eds.), *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 41, cited in Alan Liu, 'Remembering the Spruce Goose: Historicism, Postmodernism, Romanticism,' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Spring 2003, pp. 263-278.
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- ccclxvi Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 265.
- ccclxvii Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 257.
- ccclxviii Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 256.
- ccclxix Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 256.
- ccclxx Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 69.
- ccclxxi Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 257.
- ccclxxii Herzog, in Panse.
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- ccclxxiv Herzog, in Cronin (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 49.
- ccclxxv Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 187.
- ccclxxvi Hal Foster, *Return of the Real: The Avant-garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), 1996, p. 128
- ccclxxvii Foster, *Return of the Real*, p. 128
- ccclxxviii Roland Barthes, 'That Old Thing, Art' in Paul Taylor (ed.), *Post-Pop*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989, pp. 25-26.
- ccclxxix Foster, *Return of the Real*, p. 131.
- ccclxxx Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol's 60s*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, p. 50, cited in Hal Foster, *Return of the Real*, p. 131.
- ccclxxxi Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, p. 50 cited in Foster, *Return of the Real*, p. 131.
- ccclxxxii Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge), 2002, p. 6.
- ccclxxxiii Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*.
- ccclxxxiv Duncan Heath and June Boreham, *Introducing Romanticism*, Cambridge: Icon and Totem Books, 1999, p. 5.
- ccclxxxv August Wilhelm Schlegel in Friedrich Schlegel, (§197) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 44.
- ccclxxxvi August Wilhelm Schlegel in Friedrich Schlegel, (§406) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 31.
- ccclxxxvii Caspar David Friedrich in Lorenz Eitner (ed.), *Neoclassicism and Romanticism: Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970, p. 53.
- ccclxxxviii William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 465, cited in Frank Mitchell, *German Romanticism Redefined*, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, p. 137, note 40.
- ccclxxxix 'Like Aguirre, the point when Herzog succeeds is the point at which he must necessarily fail: the West tries to distance itself from his tactics and his depictions, because they unabashedly encat and depict the violence of the West.' Davidson, 'Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,' p. 119.
- cccxc Elsaesser, 'Hyper-, Retro- or Counter-Cinema,' p. 131, and Elsaesser, Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 149.
- cccxcxi Cheesman, in Riordan (ed.), *German Culture*, p. 289.
- cccxcii Cheesman, in Riordan (ed.), *German Culture*, p. 289, citing Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 156.
- cccxciii 'Thus in Aguirre, the stylized filming of the "natives," as well as of the European women and the jungle, seeks to empty them of life, to establish them as the "others" of civilization [...]. Davidson, 'Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,' p. 125.
- cccxciv Werner Herzog in *Burden of Dreams* (Les Blank, US 1982), the documentary about the making of his fiction film *Fitzcarraldo* (1982).

- cccxcv Davidson, 'Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,' p. 104.
- cccxcvi Davidson, 'Aguirre, Neocolonialism, and the New German Cinema,' p. 105.
- cccxcviii Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*.
- cccxcviii Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 532.
- cccxcix Brigitte Peuker, 'In Quest of the Sublime,' in Klaus Phillips (ed.), *New German Filmmakers: From Oberhausen through the 1970s*, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1984, pp.168-194.
- cd Klaus Kinski, *Kinski Uncut*, London: Bloomsbury, 1996, p. 301.
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- cdii A.G. Basoli, 'The Wrath of Klaus Kinski: An Interview with Werner Herzog,' *Cineaste*, Vol.24, No.4, 1999, p. 34.
- cdiii William Van Wert, 'Last Words: Observations on a New Language,' in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p.5 2.
- cdiv Lutz Koepnick, 'Colonial Forrestry, Sylvan Politics in Werner Herzog's *Aguirre* and *Fitzcarraldo*,' *New German Critique*, Vol. 20, Fall 1993, pp. 140-141.
- cdv William Van Wert, 'Last Words: Observations on a New Language,' in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 55.
- cdvi 'Herzog populates both fiction and documentaries with these silent characters.' Van Wert, 'Last Words: Observations on a New Language,' in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*.
- cdvii Van Wert, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 56.
- cdviii Herzog, in Panse.
- cdix Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 149.
- cdx Lotte Eisner cited in Bela Balazs' *Der sichtbare Mensch*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001, p. 11.
- cdxi Herzog, in Panse.
- cdxii Koepnick, 'Werner Herzog's *Aguirre* and *Fitzcarraldo*,' p. 135.
- cdxiii Werner Herzog, *The Guardian Lecture*, London: National Film Theatre, 7 April 1988, cited in Elsaesser, 'Hyper-, Retro- or Counter-Cinema,' p. 132.
- cdxiv Derek Malcolm, 'Pass the Popcorn: Francs for everything,' *The Guardian*, 19 March 1998, p. 9.
- cdxv ' [...] so hat Herzog häufig Beobachtungen, Begegnungen, Erfahrungen und Material zu und aus seinen Dokumentarfilmen in die Spielfilme eingebracht, so daß sich bei ihm die Gattungsgrenze zwischen Dokumentation und Fiktion zu verwischen beginnt. Herzog legt auf diese Abgrenzung auch keinen Wert und kann in einem Interview über fiktive und tatsächlichen Personen seiner Filme reden, als wären sie alle gleich wirklich.' See Jürgen Theobaldy, 'Fahrten ins Ungeheure,' in Jansen and Schütte (eds.), *Herzog*, p. 34.
- cdxvi Eric Rentschler, 'How American Is It? The U.S. as Image and Imaginary in German Film,' *Persistence of Vision*, 2, Fall 1985, p. 10.
- cdxvii Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image*.
- cdxviii Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 531.
- cdxix Bruno S. had his personal name as his role name in Stroszek, which is also the name of another character in *Signs of Life* (1968).
- cdxx Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 527.
- cdxxi Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 135.
- cdxxii Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 141.
- cdxxiii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 16.
- cdxxiv Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life. The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 104.
- cdxxv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 287.
- cdxxvi Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 15.
- cdxxvii Elsaesser, 'Hyper-, Retro- or Counter-Cinema,' p. 135.
- cdxxviii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- cdxxix Van Wert, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 71.
- cdxxx Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire. Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud*, New York and London: Routledge, 1991, p. 21.
- cdxxxii Boothby, *Death and Desire*, p. 21.
- cdxxxiii Deleuze separated Herzog's protagonists into two camps: overachievers in the SAS (situation-action-situation) schema of the large action-image, who follow a vision; and underachievers in the ASA (action-situation-action) schema of the small action-image, who only have touch available. This division does not distinguish between documentary and fictional action. As I am arguing here, Herzog's films merit a closer look at the differences, beginning with the fact that the initial 'action' part of the underachiever film *Kaspar Hauser* (with the hero having been kept tied up in a dark room for many years of his life) would have been 'inaction.' Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, pp. 184-185.
- cdxxxiiii Elsaesser, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 134.
- cdxxxv Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, p. 221.
- cdxxxvi Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- cdxxxvii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 16.
- cdxxxviii Slavoj Zizek, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Ask Lacan, but were too Afraid to ask Hitchcock*,

- London: Verso, 1992, p. 260.
- cdxxviii Zizek, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Ask Lacan*, p. 259.
- cdxxxix Michael Renov, 'The Subject in History. The New Autobiography in Film and Video', *Afterimage*, Summer 1989, p. 4, citing Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977, p. 246.
- cdxli Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 1.
- cdxlii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- cdxliii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- cdxliv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- cdxlv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 17.
- cdxlv Eugene Holland, 'Infinite Subjective Representation and The Perversion of Death,' *Angelaki*, Volume 5, No. 2, August 2000, p. 88.
- cdxlvii Pearson, *Germinal Life*, p. 107-108.
- cdxlviii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 103-104.
- cdxlviii Singer, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 187.
- cdxlix Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 109.
- cdli Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 112.
- cdli Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 111.
- cdlii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 104.
- cdliii Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 2000, p. 304.
- cdliv Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 304.
- cdlv 'Capitalism indeed implies the collapse of the great objective determinate representations [...] but it does not thereby escape the world of representation, It merely performs a vast conversion of this world, by attributing to it the new form of an infinite subjective representation.' Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 303. (This is actually quite a Jamesonian critique by Deleuze and Guattari that sees postmodernism as relative.)
- cdlvi Michael Renov, 'New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-Representation in the Post-Verité Age,' in Diane Waldman and Janet Walker (eds.), *Feminism and Documentary*, Visible Evidence 5, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 84-94.
- cdlvii Pearson, *Germinal Life*, p. 10.
- cdlviii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 17.
- cdlix Pearson, *Germinal Life*, p. 108-109.
- cdlx Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) in Freud, *On Metapsychology*, Vol. 11 of the Penguin Freud Library, Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin, 1991, p. 310, cited in Pearson, *Germinal Life*, p. 109.
- cdlxi This quote appears at the beginning of *Little Dieter Needs To Fly* (1997).
- cdlxii Dieter in *Little Dieter Needs To Fly* (1997).
- cdlxiii Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1065.
- cdlxiv Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1046.
- cdlxv Egginton, 'Cervantes, Romantic Irony and the Making of Reality,' p. 1047.
- cdlxvi 'Herzog's existentialist idealism,' Casper, in Ginsberg and Thompson (eds.), *German Cinema*, p. 526.
- cdlxvii Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 41.
- cdlxviii Schlegel, (§ 51) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 24.
- cdlxix Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Romantische Ironie*, p. 40.
- cdlxx Schlegel, (§ 51) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 24.
- cdlxxi August Wilhelm Schlegel in Friedrich Schlegel, (§269) 'Athenaeum Fragments,' in Schlegel, *Fragments*, p. 55.
- cdlxxii Herzog, in Panse.
- cdlxxiii Van Wert, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 52.
- cdlxxiv Van Wert, in Corrigan (ed.), *Herzog*, p. 53.
- cdlxxv The passage Pearson is alluding to is to be found in section 335, Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pearson, *Germinal Life*, p. 89.
- cdlxxvi 'It is this lack of direct experience that thus becomes the basis of repetition of the traumatic nightmare.' Cathy Caruth paraphrases Freud in 'Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival,' in Michael Rossington and Anne Whithead (eds.), *Between The Psyche and the Polis. Refiguring History in Literature and Theory*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, p. 80.
- cdlxxvii Jean Rouch, in James Blue, 'Jean Rouch in Conversation with James Blue,' *Film Comment* 1964, 4 (2-3), p. 85.
- cdlxxviii Rouch, 'Jean Rouch in Conversation,' p. 85.
- cdlxxix Rouch, 'Jean Rouch in Conversation,' p. 85.
- cdlxxx Rosen, *Change Mummified*, p. 227.

- cdlxxxix Rosen, *Change Mummified*, p. 232.
- cdlxxxii Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 111.
- cdlxxxiii Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 111.
- cdlxxxiv Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 111.
- cdlxxxv Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 111.
- cdlxxxvi Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 112.
- cdlxxxvii Caughie, *Television Drama*, p. 112.
- cdlxxxviii Rouch, 'Jean Rouch in Conversation,' p. 86.
- cdlxxxix Rouch, 'Jean Rouch in Conversation,' p. 86.
- cdxc See Nichols, "'Getting to Know You ...': Knowledge, Power, and the Body,' in Renov (ed.), *Theorizing Documentary*, p. 175.
- cdxci Jean Rouch in Enrico Fulchignoni, 'Ciné-Ethnography' [Interview with Rouch], Steven Feld (ed.), *Jean Rouch. Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 185.
- cdxcii Brian Winston, 'The Codes of Documentary' in *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*, London: BFI Publishing, 2000, p. 12.
- cdxciii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 2.
- cdxciv Winston, *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*, p. 12.
- cdxcv Winston, *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*, pp. 12-13.
- cdxcvi Winston, *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*, p. 12.
- cdxcvii John Grierson, 'First Principles of Documentary' in Kevin MacDonald and Mark Cousins (eds.), *Imagining Reality. The Faber Book of Documentary*, London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998, p. 97.
- cdxcviii Ian Aitken, *Film and Reform: John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 24, cited in Winston, *Claiming the Real*, p. 12.
- cdxcix Herzog, in Cronin, *Herzog*, p. 267.
- d Herzog, in Cronin, *Herzog*, p.271.
- di Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 14.
- dii See Elizabeth Cowie, 'Traumatic Memories of Remembering and Forgetting,' in Michael Rossington and Anne Whithead (eds.), *Between The Psyche and the Polis. Refiguring History in Literature and Theory*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, pp. 191-204. See also Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 14-15. Deleuze here quotes from Sigmund Freud, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through' in Sigmund Freud, *Volume XII* (1911-1913), London: The Hogarth Press, 1958.
- diii Robert Appignanesi, *Freud For Beginners*, London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1986, p. 110.
- div Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 15.
- dv But Deleuze also argues what first seems to be the opposite two pages later, i.e. that 'Freud was never satisfied with such a negative schema, in which repetition is explained by amnesia.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 16.
- dvi Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 19.
- dvii Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 54.
- dviii Examples on British television would be filmed therapy sessions in *Talking Cure*, (BBC2, 1999) or for instance acting classes conducted as psycho-drama in *Reality Check* (C4, 2003).
- dxix Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 18-19.
- dx Kierkegaard, *Repetition: An Essay in Experimental Psychology*, New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1964, p. 33.
- dxii In his rewriting of the eternal return, Deleuze refers especially to the section 'Of Redemption' in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, transl. R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961, in Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.305, note 4: '[...] in a certain sense one can see Zarathustra's moral test of repetition as competing with Kant. The eternal return says: whatever you will, will it in such a manner that you also will its eternal return.' See also Dave Robinson, *Nietzsche and Postmodernism*, Duxford, Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd., 1999, p. 32: 'The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze famously suggested that the myth is a Nietzschean version of Kant's Categorical Imperative ("Never perform an action you would not be willing to see endlessly repeated").'
- dxiii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 7.
- dxiiii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 7. Filmic examples of this would be Chantal Ackerman's *Blow Up My Town* (1968) or even in Lynne Ramsay's *Morvern Callar* (2002).
- dxiv Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, p. 33.
- dxv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 10.
- dxvi Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 6.
- dxvii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 10.
- dxviii James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1988, p. 9.
- dxix Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, p. 11.
- dxix Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, p. 14.
- dxxi Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, p. 4.

- dxixii Jeremy Deller, *The English Civil War Part II. Personal Accounts of the 1984-1985 Miners' Strike*, London: Artangel Publishing, 2001.
- dxixiii Will Bradley, 'The Uses of Literacy,' *Afterall*, Pilot Issue 1998/1999, p. 10.
- dxixxiv See Timothy Mitchell, *Art and Science in German Landscape Painting, 1770-1840*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- dxixxv See Mitchell, *Art and Science in German Landscape Painting*.
- dxixxvi Even the names of re-enactment societies point out that the main goal is preservation, such as the American Infantry Preservation Society (*A.I.P.S.*). In the television programme *Outside: A.I.P.S.* the British re-enactors of the Vietnam war repeatedly compared their obsession with Vietnam war memorabilia with collecting stamps. *Outside: A.I.P.S.*, Channel 4 6.8.2003.
- dxixxvii Kirsten Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History: the Battle Re-enactment at the Turn of the Century, from Buffalo Bill's Wild West to the Early Cinema,' *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 22, No.3, 2002, p. 225.
- dxixxviii Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History', p. 226.
- dxixxix Richard Abel, *The Ciné goes to Town: French Cinema 1896 – 1914*, Berkeley and London: University of California Press: 1998, p. 92, cited in Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History,' p. 229.
- dxixxx Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History', p. 226-227.
- dxixxxi Neil Bell, 'Re-enactor Roundup: History and Recreation: Re-enactment and Living History in Britain 2002,' in *History Today*, April 2002, p. 56.
- dxixxxii Deller, 'Foreword,' *The English Civil War Part II.*, p. 6.
- dxixxxiii See Paul Smith, 'Our Written Experience of the Cinema: An Interview with Jean Louis Schefer,' *ENclitic*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 1982, pp. 39-43.
- dxixxxiv Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 10.
- dxixxxv Jane Gaines, 'Political Mimesis,' in Jane Gaines and Michael Renov (eds.), *Collecting Visual Evidence*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 1999.
- dxixxxvi Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, London and New York: Verso, 2000, p. 4.
- dxixxxvii Tracey Emin in *Cool Britannia*, Channel 4, 26 June 1997.
- dxixxxviii Butler, Laclau, and Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, p. 78.
- dxixxxix Butler, Laclau, and Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, p. 1.
- dxl Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers*, New York and London: Routledge, 1995, p. 2.
- dxli Richard Kilborn and John Izod, *An Introduction to Television Documentary: Confronting Reality*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. 61-62.
- dxlii John Slyce, 'Jeremy Deller. Fables of Reconstruction,' *Flash Art*, Volume 36, No.228, Jan-Feb 2003, p. 77.
- dxliiii Dave Beech, "'The Reign of Workers and Peasants will never end: Politics and Politicisation, Art and the Politics of Political Art,' *Third Text*, Vol. 16, Issue 4, 2002, p. 396.
- dxliv D.N. Rodowick, 'Fabulation: Towards a Minor Cinema' [webtext], abridged from Chapter Six of *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Duke University Press, 1997, <http://www.thing.at/immedia/sehen/ds03rod.htm>.
- dxlv Jeremy Deller in conversation with Greg Hilty, Oxford: Modern Art Oxford, 23.4.2004.
- dxlvi Pierre Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, p. 32.
- dxlvii Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 33.
- dxlviii Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 33.
- dxlix Herzog, *Storyville*.
- dl Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 255. The connection between the sense of 'participation' meant when we speak about re-enactments, for instance, is different to Deleuze's use of the term. When Deleuze uses it he is alluding to a metaphysical concept of the relation of beings to Being, so the connection being drawn here is indirect.
- dli Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 62.
- dlii Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 33.
- dliiii Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, transl. by W. Kaufmann and R.J. Holingdale, New York: Vintage Books, 1969, pp. 103-104, cited in Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 34
- dliv Selim Kemal, *Kant and Fine Art*, London: Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 59.
- dlv Derrida, 'Signature Event Context,' in Culler (ed. and introd.), *Deconstruction*.
- dlvi Abbas Kiarostami's *Close-Up* for instance is a case in point, even though it is in large parts a re-enactment of past performative movements rather than a performative documentary that only takes place in the present of filming.
- dlvii Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London : Routledge, 1990.
- dlviii Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 156.
- dlvix Bruzzi, *New Documentary*, p. 172.

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<sup>dlx</sup> Ernesto Laclau, 'Constructing Universality,' in Butler, Laclau, and Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, p. 284.

<sup>dlxi</sup> Lebow is paraphrasing Homi Bhabha 'Of Mimicry and Man,' in Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture*, New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 86. Lebow, in Juhasz and Lerner (eds.), *F is for Phoney*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>dlxii</sup> Paul Arthur, 'Beyond the Limits: Werner Herzog's Metaphysical Realism', *Film Comment*, Vol. 41, Issue 4, July/August 2005, pp. 42-47.

## 6

### Conclusion

*Anthropology wants to be a discourse on man. It assumes, as such, the empirical discourse of man, in which the one who speaks and that which one speaks are separated. Reflection is on one side and being on the other.<sup>1</sup>*

Gilles Deleuze

In its examination of the movements of self-reflexivity, this thesis began by finding the boundaries of subjectivity to be mutable in the changing wider social and political context. The thesis trajectory increasingly moved inwards in its negotiation of the subject/object relations with respect to self-reflexivity in documentary. As it explored the different boundaries between self and documentary, it moved from the self-reflexive filmmakers as part of a collective in the first chapter to the limits of documentary representation (when faced with the limits of physical experiences) in Werner Herzog's documentaries in the last chapter. The balance between reflexivity and self-reflexivity tips over into physicality in the last chapter on Herzog's 'athletic documentary', as that apparently furthest removed from intellectual reflection. Herzog's documentaries fundamentally unsettle the notion of externally documenting through the question of how physical experience can be portrayed 'from the outside.' This thesis furthermore argued that Herzog's documentaries do not only challenge the traditional subject/object division of documentary, but implicitly the relationship between documentary and its object, academia and its subject, theory and practice.

In the sensation of the sublime we should 'find our own limitation,'<sup>2</sup> as Kant argues – or at least explore the limitations of a genre such as documentary – and not merely register a point. With his physical version of the sublime, Herzog's documentaries move beyond Kant to an emphasizing of the concrete physical experiences of his protagonists. The ability to experience the sensation of the sublime depends on the distance from the presented events: one should be neither be too close nor too far away. Of interest in this thesis is how self-reflexive this distance is (explored in Chapter IV with regards to the distance the filmmaker Alexandr Sokurov took to his own self-reflexive work). This thesis argued that the distance this director assumes to his own documentary and to documentary reality emphasizes

subjectivity. Other examples given of ways that subjectivity is emphasized are doubt – as is the case in *Elegy of a Voyage* – or the introduction of difference through repetition using documentary re-enactment.

Between what is regarded as the self and what is regarded as a reflexive movement there is often an instance of judgment. Questions of judgment are discussed in Chapter I. on *The Children of Golzow* when competitive comparison fostered self-reflexivity and encouraged a documentary subject to judge himself as an object in competition after the change from socialism to a market economy. This thesis argued with respect to Tracey Emin, that external, biographical judgment valued reflexivity over self-reflexivity and with respect to Herzog's documentaries that they seek out protagonists in situations that remit a Kantian reflective judgment.

In recent decades, there has been a constant move from documentary objectivity to subjectivity. I furthermore explored how the changing perceptions of subjectivity and objectivity are manifested in the specific works examined. This thesis has not offered uncritical support to subjectivity in documentary, however, and we have seen how subjectivity has been critiqued from Lenin to Deleuze. The theoretical trajectory of this thesis may seem astonishingly long, but then the step from Marx to Romantic Irony is not such a wide one, since Marx was a student of August Schlegel. What this thesis demonstrates is that the notions of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity,' if not subjective, are such that their usage can vary to such a degree that what subjective is for one is objective for the other. The different conceptualization of both notions in state socialism and market economy have been elaborated specifically in Chapter II using the positive example of collective subjectivity in the previously socialist serial *The Children of Golzow*.

I also advocated a take on documentary beyond the subject-object division. Throughout, this thesis argued against a distanced reflexivity. In contrast to the image of infinite regress in the mirror metaphor, and the modernist model of reflection, the works that were looked at here provide examples of reflexivity where the boundary between self and work are not particularly clear-cut. Using the model of reflection of the early German Romantics, this thesis has shown examples of documentaries where the self-reflexive process has changed its object by reflecting upon it. Whereas Walter Benjamin used Friedrich Schlegel's notion of

Romantic reflection as a template for art criticism, I have used it as a tool to look at documentary. Benjamin had developed the notion of an ‘immanent critique,’ where ‘the subject of reflection is, at bottom, the artistic entity itself, and the experiment consists not in any reflecting on an entity, [...], but in the enfolding of reflection, [...] in an entity.’<sup>3</sup> Concurrent with the notion of Romantic irony and Novalis’ ironic observation, this thesis supported a critical oscillation between subject and object, between document and what is documented.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, ‘Review of Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence*’ in Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, (translated with an introduction by J. H. Bernard), Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2000, p. 125

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism,’ in Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings, Vol.1, 1913-1926*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1996, p.151.

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