

**>>Video Chaos: Multilinear narrative structuration
in New Media video practice.**

Dissertation

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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>>Video Chaos

Dissertation

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>>Video Chaos: Multilinear narrative structuration in New Media video practice.

Abstract

The presentation of the thesis comprises the Dissertation component (66%) along with the Practice Component and the Practice Report (33%). In this *Video Chaos* dissertation, through an examination of current video practices, I note an emerging trend towards disseminating audio-visual content simultaneously in the form of poly-sequential narrative structures. I argue that this is a significant development within the video medium, and that this is an effect of video new media artist-practitioners' engagement with the relationships between art and technology. Two extensive case studies are investigated and, whilst a number of issues come to the fore in this research, exploring the issue of narrative structuration is the primary focus and exploration of this dissertation.

Video is a bastard medium, however narrowly defined.
- Sean Cubitt

Sean Cubitt, *Videography* (London: MacMillan 1993), 35.

>>Video Chaos

Introduction

From the outset, in this *Video Chaos* dissertation, through an examination of current video practices, I note an emerging trend towards disseminating audio-visual content simultaneously in the form of poly-sequential narrative structures. I argue that this is a significant development within the video medium, and as will be seen in the dissertation, this is an effect of video new media artist-practitioners' engagement with the relationships between art and technology. Whilst a number of issues come to the fore in this research, exploring the issues of narrative structuration will be the primary focus of this dissertation.

In the context of this research, poly-sequential narratives are defined as being formed by screening either multiple frames or screens of audio-visual content alongside each other in the same space. Over time, the viewer witnessing a number of varying narratives simultaneously engages with multiple perspectives of a subject.¹ Although this transformation is occurring across some film/video practices in art, media and new media, I argue that there are number of issues emerging in terms of articulating and determining these poly-sequential narrative structures. This proposition is informed by following the research objective to examine the changing conditions of video practice and theory in new media environments.

¹ Peter Weibel, "Narrated Theory: Multiple Projection and Multiple Narration (Past and Future)," in *New Screen Media: Cinema/Art/Narrative*, eds. Martin Rieser and Andrea Zapp (London: British Film Institute, 2002), 105-119.

Making the transition from film and television production to development of video content in new media instigated this research objective.

The book *Videography*² by Sean Cubitt is a significant starting point for examining previous research and theorisations in this area. Examining a broad range of more obscure types of video practice being produced up to the early 1990s provides Cubitt with ideas and ways of thinking which extend existing approaches towards the theorising of video practice. Importantly, this is because he is interested in expanding the types of discourse being produced on video practice and more broadly on electronic media practices.³ Likewise, analysing innovative examples of video practice in this research project provides ideas for understanding shifts currently occurring in both video practice and subsequently in the field of new media.

In addition to this, Cubitt demonstrates the transitive nature of video, a medium that takes on a wide variety of forms throughout society.⁴ This indicates that video, as a topic of research, is very broad and diverse. Hence, this research project follows a more specific line of inquiry in the length of this dissertation. A case study methodology is used to focus this research project and generate discussion on current video practices. Continuing this specialisation, the case studies are chosen from the new media categories of single-channel video and interactive video distributed on the Internet

In establishing an analytical framework to survey the case studies, Chapter 1, *Video Theory in New Media*, engages with existing theories on both video and new media as a field of study. A crucial feature of this chapter is to establish the broader contexts for this research. Another key objective is to position this research project in the new media field. The pursuit of these objectives starts with an analysis of the concept of theorising video. This leads to formulating a broad framework for video research in new media so connections can be made between theorising video and

² Sean Cubitt, *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

³ *Ibid*, xi-xix.

⁴ *Ibid*, xi-xix.

new media research. Overall, this chapter provides the background needed to move towards setting up a more specific analytical framework to survey the case studies.

Continuing this engagement with existing theory, Chapter 2, *Surveying Video Practice*, utilises established theories in arts and media studies to formulate an analytical framework for the case studies. This includes finding an analytical model that articulates difference in terms of what is 'new' in the video practices being surveyed. Having made a connection between video and media studies in the previous chapter, a starting point for determining this methodology is to look at the processes used to study media. This includes examining the different theoretical ideas developed by Marshall McLuhan and Raymond Williams. These theorists' ideas on medium and content begin to provide an analytical framework that can be applied in a new media context.

Consequently, the specific examination of the medium in a number of contemporary video practices demonstrates the way that the inherent characteristics of the technologies used have a direct effect on the structuring of the audio-visual content. Therefore, the case studies are chosen on the basis that they portray differing approaches towards the presentation of audio-visual content. The case studies, as emerging 'new' video and genres, are examples of video practice that are beginning to transform established audio-visual viewing conventions - as witnessed in most traditional cinema, television and music videos. In other words, these video works demand the development of different types of viewing literacies. The practitioners experiment with both the structuring of the video content and the way the audio-visual elements are integrated to create the resulting narrative form. Close examination of the case studies is found in Chapter 3, *eurovision*⁵ and Chapter 4, *Vogs*⁶. Also included in this examination are interviews conducted with each of the video producers (refer to interview transcripts).

⁵ Linda Wallace, *eurovision*, Betacam, single-channel video, 19 min. 30 sec. (March 2001).

⁶ Adrian Miles "videoblog:vog 2.0", video weblog website, <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/> (accessed April 10, 2002).

eurovision, the first case study, explores a territory between interactive video and single-channel video. Multiple streams of data streaming on the Internet into the browser window is a notion that artist Linda Wallace aims to translate into the single-channel video artwork. Using intermedia⁷ practices, a diverse range of media elements are layered together as multiple tracks of data to investigate a new form. In *eurovision*, film excerpts from Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) are combined in split-screen format with TV grabs from the 'Eurovision' song contest, archival documentary footage and original video-photos recorded by the artist. All these elements are composed into a magazine-style template of separate multiple frames that screen simultaneously. In contrast, the audio is a single computer music track fusing this mix of imagery.⁸ Using recombinant video aesthetics, Wallace rigorously explores the spatiality of the frame. Splitting the screen into multiple frames instigates an engagement with poly-sequential narrative structures.

vogs, the second case study, explore new forms of interactive video by integrating video, audio, text, and still images in the hypermedia environment of the Internet. Merging cinematic practices with hypertext constructs, the video practitioner Adrian Miles experiments with what he describes as a video version of weblogs. A text-based version of an online diary, weblogs utilise hypertext links to connect to other websites and information on the Internet. Using multiple tracks of audio-visual data, in the form of "micronarratives",⁹ Miles engages with interactive poly-sequential narrative structures. These narrative configurations are realised by the user integrating a complex mix of separate audio-visual tracks in the frame.

Central to this evaluation of the case studies is the formation of connections and associations with current and emerging new media theory. This process is achieved by analysing the case studies in a number of sequential steps. Surveying both the practice and theory produced by the practitioners, this analytical process starts with

⁷ Yvonne Speilmann, "Intermedia in Electronic Images", *Leonardo* Vol. 34 (2001): 59.

⁸ Seth Keen, "Artist Profile: Linda Wallace", *Mesh 17* Experimenta online journal (December 2004), <http://www.experimenta.org/mesh/>

⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Manchester University Press, 1984).

an examination of the way the video content is presented. This initial observation provides a framework to explore the motivations of the practitioners and subsequently the broader context of each video practice. Consequently, this provides the background needed to scrutinise the methods used to integrate the audio-visual elements into the resulting narrative structures. Overall, the aim is to formulate discussion on the social and cultural influences encouraging these types of creative engagements with video as a medium. These ideas and outcomes are discussed further in the conclusion.

Finally, as a composite thesis of theory and practice, the practice has examined the topic through the production of the audio-video installation *Sugartown* and three video works, *The Hazzards*, *Nodal Dialectics 1*, and *boomsplatbangwhack*. While these video works exist as discrete media artworks, they also operate as a type of practice process diary for working through the ideas explored in the written dissertation. Even though the video works are not meant to literally 'illustrate' those ideas, they nevertheless explore ways of integrating the theoretical concepts into my own art practice. In addition to this written dissertation, a 'Practice Report' documents the nature and development of the practice research undertaken during the course of the study.

Chapter 1:

Video Theory in New Media

1.1 Video, a Parasite

Firstly, it is important to point out that there is no 'video theory' as such. This is an argument that Sean Cubitt uses in the introduction of his book *Videography*.¹⁰ Scott McQuire also takes this position in his article "Video Theory"¹¹ in order to establish a framework for theorising video. This means that there is no pre-existing body of theory as in a conceptual totality. Cubitt, conscious of the difficulties involved in trying to frame a theory of video, states:

There is no video theory in the way that there is a body of knowledge called film theory or, rather differently, television studies. There never will be. Not being really a simple and discrete entity, video prevents the prerequisite for a theoretical approach: that is deciding upon an object you wish to know.¹²

Understanding this is important because it indicates that the theorising of video has to be seen as being part of other theories rather than being self-contained. However, there is plenty of theorising occurring around video, which Cubitt engages with in his writing.

Furthermore, Cubitt argues that because the term 'video' is used in many differing contexts, this makes the meaning of the word unclear. The word 'video' is used to

¹⁰ Cubitt, *Videography*.

¹¹ Scott McQuire, "Video Theory" 1999 Videor series on-line Globe Visual Arts, Issue 9, Published by Monash University, <http://www.monash.edu.au/visarts/globe/issue9/smtxt.html> (accessed 20 May, 2002).

¹² Cubitt, *Videography*, xvi.

differentiate video equipment from film equipment. 'Video' is used to describe post-production processes that utilise video technologies and describe a number of video formats. The list of video formats is constantly being increased with technological advancements - old formats are superseded by new formats but the word 'video' remains in the technical descriptions. 'Video' is a term synonymous with the video rental store; the VHS format is being replaced by the DVD format, but customers still refer to feature films in this context as videos. Therefore, the word 'video' can be used to describe many differing types of audio-visual genres from cinema to an aerobic instruction video. With screens being developed for many varying types of audio-visual output from mobile phones to public spaces like the Sydney underground, the word video is also used to describe what Cubitt refers to as "public playback". For example, digital technology increases the potential for the cross-media development of a television program like *Big Brother* to be distributed on a number of varying platforms including online streaming video on the Internet. Finally, the use of video technology in medical, education, military, scientific, surveillance and communication fields extends the use of the word in specific relationship to each of these contexts. Therefore, from the outset Cubitt proposes the term "video media" as a way to avoid this confusion and focus attention towards the concept of analysing video practices.¹³

So, the term 'video' in the context of this research project needs to be seen in relation to the study of video practices – that is, in the way that video technologies are used to produce cultural texts. 'Practice' comes to be identified as being an action or execution carried out on video technologies to meet a social requirement. Therefore, current video practice techniques are analysed to detect what types of social influences are causing video theory and practice to change in new media environments. Dealing with the diversity and breadth of video as a topic of study, my research focuses on an analysis of video practice within the field of new media. The term 'video' is therefore used to relate to video practice within that specific field.

In effect, the concept of "video media" is also used by Cubitt to draw attention towards the multi-faceted nature of video as a medium. Video crosses into many

¹³ Ibid, xi-xix.

territories and has a prolific number of varying forms. Cubitt argues that video, as a “bastard medium”, should not be considered as being a solitary, chaste medium. In fact video, porous by nature, pilfers techniques from all types of visual and audio practices.¹⁴ In addition, the growing accessibility of video technologies, to amateurs and artists, extends the ability to experiment with video as a ‘medium’. Therefore, new forms of video are constantly emerging due to advancing technology and its accessibility to artist-practitioners. This ongoing development also causes existing video forms to mutate and reshape into other forms. McQuire similarly identifies video as a “hybrid medium”. Like a parasite, video subsumes other media forms and constantly regurgitates different crossbreed versions of the original.¹⁵

To counteract the idea of trying to work with video as a distinct independent medium, Cubitt proposes the concept of video being a transitive medium that has a presence in many aspects of everyday life and communication. For this reason, Cubitt connects video theory with the study of both culture and media. It is on this premise that he proposes that video in cultural terms is “both a symptom of the societies in which it has emerged and is being used, and a tool in their further development.”¹⁶ Determining video as cultural practice places the study of video within what he calls the “cultural struggle”. Therefore, instead of trying to form an independent field of video study, Cubitt suggests that any discourse on video becomes a “strand of cultural studies or media studies.”¹⁷ But he insists, due to the complexity of video, that the ‘medium’ also “needs to be understood in close relation to art”.¹⁸

Having determined that video has integral connections with culture, media and art, Cubitt proposes that analytical methodologies used in these fields can be utilised to formulate a video theory. This approach is about making associations across a range of established fields of study. Cubitt maintains that:

¹⁴ Ibid, xv.

¹⁵ McQuire, “Video Theory”, 2.

¹⁶ Cubitt, *Videography*, xv-xvii.

¹⁷ Ibid, xvii.

¹⁸ Ibid, xviii.

Looking at ideas and histories of art, film, television and music allows us to think about video in terms of similarities and differences with each mode of practice.¹⁹

McQuire argues that the aim is to understand the diversity of the medium and the fluid connections video has with other creative practices, rather than focusing on the concept of video being uncontaminated like the more self-contained, defined visual arts medium of painting, for example.²⁰ Following this approach, this research explores how such connections can also be extended into new media practices.

1.2 New Media Research

The methodology proposed by Cubitt (and McQuire) shares similarities with a general approach towards new media research, where the aim is to make connections and associations across a variety of disciplines in order to produce research outcomes. Currently my research is situated in the field of new media where, due to the newness of the field and the rate of change, a recognised analytical framework is still in the process of being formulated. In the article "What is New Media Research?",²¹ Chris Chesher recognises this early stage of theoretical formulation as an asset because there are no deterministic ties to an established field of study. He proposes that research in new media integrates a broad range of disciplines. This analytical framework, he argues, suits the differing types of research possible in this field and opens up the potential for unusual outcomes. His proposal sets up a research methodology, which is about "finding connections between things that are most often considered different and unrelated."²² This is similar to the research methodology Cubitt uses to analyse video practice.

However, this research topic differs from Cubitt's analytical methodology in a number of ways. Firstly, there is a need to make new media research independent of other fields of study. Cubitt situates his research within the field of media studies. Chesher's evaluation of new media research, however, makes a connection with

¹⁹ Ibid, xviii.

²⁰ McQuire, "Video Theory", 4.

²¹ Chris Chesher, "What is New Media Research?" in *Politics of a Digital Present*, eds. Hugh Brown et al. (Melbourne: Fibreculture Publications, 2001).

²² Ibid, 228-229.

media studies but aims to promote a separate field of study. In general terms, his objective is to avoid the strict and limiting conventions that often become synonymous with established research disciplines. Instead, he proposes an open research methodology that encourages innovative outcomes that allow for the diversity of research topics emerging in the new media field, and advocates a collective approach towards new media research generally. His idea is to prevent research in this area operating under a number of varying titles and disappearing into an unrecognised zone of inquiry.²³

In addition to this, the authors Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly, in a book titled *New Media: A Critical Introduction*,²⁴ point out that in the last two decades “the world of media and communications began to look quite different”²⁵ and this distinct “difference” demanded the formation of new media studies. This transformation, they argue, needs to be examined independently, away from other traditional disciplines such as cinema and media studies.²⁶ Furthermore, a significant part of this change is the result of technological advancement and new media’s intense relationship with technology. In fact, a broader study needs to be conducted on the relationship between technology and society as a part of these dramatic changes. The authors point out that new media studies are a component of such an analysis. In other words, this field transpired due to wide-ranging transformations that started to occur right through society over the last four decades.²⁷ Lister et al. state that:

New media are caught up with and seen as part of these other kinds of change (cause and effect) and the sense of ‘new times’ and ‘new eras’, which follow in their wake. ...the emergence of ‘new media’...is seen as part of a much larger landscape of social, technological and cultural change; in short, as part of a new technoculture.²⁸

In examining the term “technoculture”, new media studies appears to emerge from a global social, cultural and technological upheaval which requires redefinition of

²³ Ibid, 229.

²⁴ Martin Lister et al., eds., *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003).

²⁵ Ibid, 10.

²⁶ Ibid, 10-11.

²⁷ Ibid, 10-11.

²⁸ Ibid, 11.

the cultural meaning of technology. This includes understanding the differing forms of media and art that are produced to disseminate culture. In the book *The Second Media Age*,²⁹ Mark Poster states that technological advancements provide the opportunity to redefine the exchange of ideas due to people being able to make and publish their own content. The convergence caused by technology breaks down the demarcations between different forms of media and the boundaries between professional and amateur.³⁰ Both technological and cultural developments become enmeshed within what comes to be called 'new media'. Therefore, Chesher insists that new media research should focus on examining new methods that are the result of the integration of both culture and technology.³¹ Following on from the ideas discussed above, the many significant advances in technology and the ways that video is used to produce content have instigated this inquiry. Therefore, this research project will examine how video practice can be analysed in relation to both technology and culture in new media.

1.3 New Media Technologies

As noted above, the evaluation of the relationship between society and technology is central to new media research. The use of new media technologies is an integral component of current video practice in new media. A practitioner works with technology in combination with art and media constructs. Hence, in order to conduct this research it is necessary to comprehend this relationship. Analysing this relationship within the context of new media raises the problem of a number of key approaches or perspectives about the nature of this relationship. The first approach

²⁹ Mark Poster, *The Second Media Age* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995).

³⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

³¹ Chesher, "What is New Media Research?", 228.

is that of 'technological determinism',³² a belief that technology evolves as a separate entity disconnected from society and that progress is solely the result of advances in technology. The opposing viewpoint is the concept that technology integrated into the fabric of society is always already affected by cultural, social, political and economic influences. This means technology, instead of being independent, is an entity that can be guided in terms of change and progress. Comprehending these two contrasting viewpoints has a considerable impact on the examination of current innovative video practices. A third position on the nature of this relationship understands it as complex and dynamic, and as the effect of the necessary interplay between technology and society.

In effect, the framing of this research relies on determining what constitutes change in the video practices analysed in the case studies. The objective is to work out what is 'new' in the video practices being examined. As Cubitt proposed earlier, connections and associations are made across different practices and theories to determine what could be considered as 'new'. Following this methodology, an analysis that only covers technological advancements to determine what is 'new' runs the risk of becoming extraneous and disconnected from actual practices. Chesher questions a research methodology that focuses solely on evaluating developments in technology. He is cautious about research that is tied to a specific technology.³³

A techno-centric approach closes off more than it opens up. If a new technology emerges or an old one mutates into something different, "Internet" researchers, for example, could fast become irrelevant.³⁴

For example, if weblogs are examined purely in terms of a technology, the research outcomes end up being a report on technological advancements. This type of

³² Daniel Chandler, "Technological or Media Determinism", University of Wales, Aberystwyth, website <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/tecdet/tecdet.html> (accessed 26th May, 2002). Scholars who study the history of communications technologies or media include historians of technology and of literacy, sociologists, economists, political scientists, anthropologists and technologists such as computer scientists. A central controversy concerns how far technology does or does not condition social change. Each commentator emphasizes different factors in technological change. No neat explanation is adequate and rigorous proof is difficult if not impossible.

³³ Chesher, "What is New Media Research?", 227.

³⁴ Ibid, 227.

analysis offers no connections with broader social and cultural influences, nor on the relationships between specific technologies and specific cultural practices. Chesher's argument is that new media research needs to make links with broader entities outside a purely technological analysis. Accordingly, in this research project the changing parameters of new media technologies are examined in terms of how they allow practitioners to explore new forms of creative expression and practices. New media technologies are not seen as being responsible for change, but rather as a developing tool to meet social needs.

By contrast, a technologically determinist approach would identify something 'new' as being driven solely by technology. This notion, according to Lister et al., has broader historical connections with "modernist" principles where the practical application of scientific advances equalled improvement in the world at large. Anything new has nothing but positive connotations and therefore all new technologies will improve daily life. This way of thinking has been transferred onto an age dominated by computers and information technology. Such a modernist approach has considerable influence, they argue, on the development of new media.³⁵ Phillip Roe points out that using technology to determine what is 'new' in new media does not allow for the discovery of factors that are instigated by social needs. He states:

If 'new' is taken instrumentally and technocentrically, in a linear progression of emerging/evolving technologies, it implies little more than a technologically determinist world whose forms and events are primarily designed by software and other technology corporations.³⁶

In his article, "That-which-new media studies-will-become", Roe argues that imaging technologies like photography are realised as part of an inclination to interpret the world around us in a certain way. This means the invention of a technology like photography occurs to meet certain social demands. This analogy in the context of this article is used to argue that new media studies are also being formulated in a

³⁵ Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, 11.

³⁶ Phillip Roe, "That-which-new media studies-will-become", *Fibreculture* online journal, Issue 2, 2003, http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue2/issue2_roe.html (accessed 12 October, 2004).

similar way.³⁷ Therefore, working with this premise, video practices are realised not due to technological advancements, but as part of an inclination to produce other ways of representing the world. Using Roe's argument, identifying something 'new' in new media is about discovering the "social desires" that instigate the development of certain technologies. This approach presents a different view on the relationship between technology and society.

According to Judy Wajcman we tend to accept new technologies without question. This lack of critical judgement, she argues, is prompted by the influences of 'technological determinism'. Analysing how technologies are produced, Wajcman draws attention to economic factors. Bottom-line costs play an enormous role in forming new technologies where maximising profits is a stronger determinant than the needs of the purchasers. Furthermore, this economic strategy often produces inferior technological options simply due to cost-saving measures. The fabrication and choice of technology shifts into an arena governed by political processes, setting up the potential for technology to be configured by society. In addition to this, Wajcman examines the way technology is configured. Firstly, she argues that generally new technological inventions are conceived by developing existing technologies. A clear example of this in new media is software updates, which merely extend the useability of the original software. Another example is how film editing influences the design of video non-linear editing software - the name 'bins' used in non-linear software comes from the cloth bin that was constructed to stop film strips from being scratched. Furthermore, Wajcman demonstrates the way technologies are integrated into the fabric of society by examining the perception of technology. A computer is an ineffective "physical object' without an operator. How operators use a computer as a tool for production and communication is what determines the technology. The social connection with computers is very evident in new media, where a person is required to develop a complex range of skills and literacies to operate software. Overall, Wajcman states that technology is "a form of social knowledge, practices and products."³⁸ Therefore, she argues that technology

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Judy Wajcman, "Technological A/genders: Technology, Culture and Class" in *Framing Technology: Society, Choice and Change*, eds. Leila Green and Roger Guinery (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1994), 3-9.

needs to be analysed in relation to the “social context” in which it is produced.³⁹ Differing video technologies, for example, may be analysed in relation to cinema, surveillance and military contexts. Overall, it can be inferred that technology is configured by society, and at the same time, technology has an impact on society. This complex and argued relationship between technology and society is also examined by Raymond Williams in his book *Television: technology and cultural form*. His argument is that in order to study a media form like television, technology needs to be viewed pragmatically in terms of how it is utilised. Television in this instance is seen as being brought into existence as a technology due to what he calls an “intention”. This means a technology like television is developed to fulfil certain “social needs.”⁴⁰ Williams states: “The technology would be seen, that is to say, as being looked for with certain purposes and practices already in mind.”⁴¹ A sharp contrast in comparison, he declares, to “technological determinist” principles, whereby television would be conceived purely due to the ongoing inquiries of technological experts. Television, once it was produced and used by consumers, would then formulate parameters that influence “social change”.⁴² Basically, under this premise, Williams points out that technologically determinist principles focus on technology as being made responsible for social change. This notion, he argues, overshadows any analysis of practice and the social needs that instigated the development of the technology in the first place. Finally, his argument is that television is devised as a technology to facilitate certain social requirements, which are realised through the development of practices that use that technology.⁴³ Following this viewpoint, video practices change not to meet technological advances, but the demands of changing social needs.

³⁹ Ibid, 3-14.

⁴⁰ Raymond Williams, *Television: technology and cultural form* (London: Routledge, 1974), 1-7.

⁴¹ Ibid, 7.

⁴² Ibid, 1-7.

⁴³ Ibid, 121-139.

1.4 Medium and Technology

The relationship between medium and technology also needs some clarification. The notion of 'medium' essentially emerges from McLuhan in the 1960s. For McLuhan, a medium is equivalent to a technology, a notion which suggests a technologically determinist orientation. Jim Andrews in an article titled "McLuhan Reconsidered"⁴⁴ provides a more recent viewpoint in terms of applying McLuhan's theories to the study of new media. Although Andrews defends McLuhan's theories, he does examine the criticism that McLuhan's ideas are technologically determinist. Andrews focuses on McLuhan's idea that media are technological "extensions of men" - that technologies actually add to our bodies either mentally or physically like an extra appendage. He states this notion of technology is important because of the way it introduced the idea that technology affects "individuals and their habitual modes of perception." An extreme example of this concept is the cinematic movie *The Terminator*⁴⁵ in which the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger becomes a type of cyborg – a cross between a robot and a human being. But Andrews argues that McLuhan proposed that although technologies change people, they do not actually transform people into a technology. A technology like the Internet, for example, offers the opportunity to broaden human visual and aural capacities. Therefore, the Internet, following McLuhan, is both a medium and a technology.

In fact, the concept of a medium effecting our sensory perceptions is demonstrated further in Mark Elsom-Cook's definition of the term. He proposes that all information is communicated through a sensory perception – "sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell",⁴⁶ which he calls modalities. A range of differing kinds of information can be received through each of these modalities. Using video as an example, we receive through sight and hearing varying kinds of vision and sound. The vision may include text, moving imagery and stills. The sound may include voice, music and sound effects. Elsom-Cook calls each of these differing types of audio-visual data

⁴⁴ Jim Andrews, "McLuhan Reconsidered" 28 July 1996, last Modified April 30, 1999 [online], available from <http://vispo.com/writings/essays/mcluhana.htm> (accessed 19 September 2003).

⁴⁵ James Cameron, Director, *The Terminator*, Feature Film, Duration 108 min., (1984).

⁴⁶ Mark Elsom-Cook, *Principles of Interactive Multimedia* (London: McGraw Hill, 2001).

“channels”. Video therefore utilises two modalities, sight and hearing, and a number of varying channels in different combinations to communicate cultural texts and content. A true medium, Elsom-Cook claims, develops a scenario where a multitude of channels are integrated in a way where they work together in unison. A specific example of this in the video production process is the sound mix, where voice, music and sound effects are integrated into one track so the viewer can comprehend them. Also, he argues that a medium is established through a process of convention. In the example of video, the receiver of the audio-visual content learns to develop, through gradual exposure to a specific media form, the viewing literacies needed to comprehend the content.⁴⁷ He therefore states that a ‘medium’ is:

A set of co-ordinated channels spanning one or more modality which have come, by convention, to be referred to as a unitary whole, and which possess a cross-channel of interpretation.⁴⁸

His definition makes a connection with McLuhan’s idea that a medium affects the way we perceive aural and visual content, but also Elsom-Cook draws attention to the idea of conventions being part of social paradigms. This is a notion that leads to Raymond Williams’s views on the relationship between medium and technology.

Contrary to McLuhan’s argument, Raymond Williams, who has also had a significant influence on the study of media, understands a medium as being directly connected to practice. He opposes the idea that a medium is a technology. Instead, he argues that when a technology is utilised in a specific way to convey meaning, the outcome of this engagement becomes a medium. Therefore, the medium of television is formed by utilising audio-visual technologies with the objective to convey meaning in a certain way. Lister et al. examine Williams’s concept of a medium by dividing the practice of photography into two distinct processes in order to point out the differences between technology and a medium. Firstly, they argue that there is a “photographic technology” - a specific technological process that has been devised to capture light and translate that light into visible images. They argue that using this technological process in the production of computers, for example,

⁴⁷ Ibid, 3-5.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 5.

demonstrates that photography in this instance is a technology not a medium. Instead, photography becomes a medium when photographic technologies are utilised to convey meaning. In this context, Lister et al. state: “the technology of photography is being used as a medium of communication, expression, representation or imaginative projection.”⁴⁹ Therefore, the technology becomes the tool in the production process of conveying an idea in the form of a photo. In other words, the reason for conducting the production process is not instigated by the technology. To sum up, photography becomes a medium through the development of specific types of practice techniques using photographic technologies. These practices, according to Williams, are determined by social and cultural influences, not technology.⁵⁰

Another important part of Williams’s analysis is the relationship between a medium and practice. In a section titled “From Medium to Social Practice”,⁵¹ he argues that there is a misunderstanding about what defines practice. Historically, a medium was viewed conceptually in two different ways. Firstly, the term ‘medium’ was used to describe early media forms that emerged as a means to convey information to a mass audience. The term in this context became synonymous with the term ‘media’ and is seen as being interchangeable with that term. Using my own example, television is a media form or a medium that is used to broadcast audio-visual content to an audience. Secondly, and around the same time, the term ‘medium’ was used to describe the raw material used by artists in painting. In these early stages, a ‘medium’ in this context was described as being “any liquid in which pigments could be mixed.”⁵² This understanding of the term, Williams argues, led to the notion of connecting more broadly the characteristics of raw materials with the specific practices used to produce artistic content. Williams states that:

The properties of the medium were abstracted as if they defined the practice, rather than being the means. This interpretation then suppressed the full sense of practice, which has always been defined as work on a material for a specific purpose within certain social conditions.⁵³

⁴⁹ Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, 83.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 83.

⁵¹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1977).

⁵² *Ibid*, 159.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 160.

This is an important point to be considered in the surveying of video practice, when this analysis focuses on the medium rather than the content. Finally, Williams's argument also leads towards connecting changes occurring in video practice with ongoing social needs.

Following the argument that video practice and technologies are shaped by social needs, the objective of this analysis is to detect patterns that indicate these varying types of social needs. Understanding these social directions will lead to a better comprehension of what is required in terms of both video practice and theory in new media environments. Overall, making connections with broader social and cultural influences creates an opportunity to comment on the broader field of new media.

In summary, this contextual framework begins to sketch an outline for my analysis of the following case studies. Video as a transitive medium is connected with the study of culture and media (1.1). The field of New Media is separated from other well-established disciplines, like Media Studies, for two key reasons. Firstly, due to the scale of change that has occurred culturally as part of technological advances, New Media demands a separate field of study. Secondly, as part of this demand for a separate field of study, there is the opportunity to develop an analytical framework that caters for the innovative and diverse outcomes occurring in New Media (1.2). Studying video practice in New Media therefore involves analysing new methods that emerge as the result of the integration of both technology and culture. In this analysis technology is not autonomous, isolated from society. Video practice is examined in terms of the way practitioners engage with both new media technologies and culture. The 'new' aspects of these video practices are methods that reflect not so much the advances in technology but the social desires being promulgated by society, both explicitly and implicitly (1.3, 1.4). Evaluating the changes that are occurring in video practice provides an insight into the types of social desires that are emerging as part of what Cubitt calls the ongoing "cultural struggle".

Chapter 2:

Surveying Video Practice

2.1 Medium and Content

From the outset, Marshall McLuhan, although controversial, is still seen as having a significant influence on the way Media is studied. In what was fast becoming a media saturated environment in the 1960s he focused attention away from thinking about the content of media to a consideration of the medium itself, a concept encapsulated in his famous quote “the medium is the message”.⁵⁴ In his book *Understanding Media*,⁵⁵ McLuhan uses a number of examples repeatedly to get this concept across, including a reference to Cubist painting. In this example, he discusses the way Cubist painters introduced a style of painting that was intended to encourage viewers to move beyond looking purely at the content in a painting. Instead of reproducing a scene using paint, these painters took up the challenge of representing a scene from a number of perspectives on the flat surface of the canvas. This process created a situation where the scene was being viewed from varied angles at the same time. McLuhan argues that this shifts the viewers’ perception from the content to a consideration of the painting technique which drew attention to the framing of the scene and its representedness. He states:

Is it not evident that the moment the sequence yields to the simultaneous, one is in the world of structure and of configuration?⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge, 1964), 7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

Abandoning a focus on reproducing a singular and totalising viewpoint that culminates in a point on the horizon plane, as in conventional modes of three-point perspective, the fragmented multivalent scene in a Cubist painting requires the viewer to shift their attention onto analysing the arrangement of the colour and form within the picture frame⁵⁷. Hence, the viewer is asked to think not about the content but painting as a medium. The painting technique, rather than the content, is recognised as having an effect on the viewer.

However, in proposing this concept McLuhan did cause some confusion about the role content plays in the analysis of media. In the book *Digital McLuhan*,⁵⁸ Paul Levinson examines this issue by imposing McLuhan's theories onto an era influenced by digital technologies. Levinson argues that McLuhan's concept "the medium is the message" was misconstrued as meaning that the content in media did not need to be analysed. But Levinson points out that a medium would not exist without an element of content.⁵⁹ In the Cubist period, Herbert Read argues, although many of the painters declared that they were not concerned with the content, they did nevertheless gravitate collectively towards imagery that had a direct relationship with their artistic lifestyle at that time. The people, objects and scenes they encountered became the content that they processed through their cubist style of painting.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Levinson points out that if a computer had no operating system and the varied types of software required to produce content, they would not "be anything other than an interesting piece of junk".⁶¹ McLuhan's aim was to make people aware of the characteristics of a medium and how those characteristics could structure the way content is perceived.

2.2 Video Feedback

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 13-14.

⁵⁸ Paul Levinson, *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

⁶⁰ Herbert Read, *A Concise History of Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson. first published 1959, reprinted 1969), 97.

⁶¹ Levinson, *Digital McLuhan*, 5.

Take, for example, the video artwork *TV Buddha*⁶² by Nam June Paik, and the way this work displays a specific characteristic of video as a medium. In this gallery installation, a cast statue of a Buddha faces a video camera, which records an image of the Buddha. The Buddha stares at an image of itself on the monitor placed underneath the video camera. The content displayed on the screen is the unchanging image of the stone Buddha. The content in this work is minimal, focusing the attention of the viewer onto characteristics of the medium. This image recorded in real-time demonstrates the closed-circuit potential of video, where an image can be recorded and played back with only a slight time delay. McQuire names this characteristic “instantaneity”, and argues that this is one attribute of video that differentiates the medium from film, which requires lengthy processing before an image can be viewed. Discussing ways to theorise video, McQuire identifies this characteristic as being particular to video and a phenomenon that extends through artworks like *TV Buddha*. McQuire argues that Paik uses “instantaneity” to structure the way that the viewer perceives the content.⁶³ In a similar way that a scene is re-configured in the medium of Cubist painting, video is used to alter perceptions of time and space.

More concretely still, Paik drew attention to television as a medium by revealing the video technologies behind the content. Instead of re-contextualising content to make a comment on television as a media form, Paik chose to promote an awareness of television by working with the video technologies directly. Consequently, this artistic approach towards video caused Paik to be instrumental in establishing video as an art form. John Hanhardt’s statement on Paik’s video art reiterates this point:

He transformed the very instrumentality of the video medium through a process that expressed his deep insights into electronic technology and his understanding how to reconceive television, “to turn it inside out” and render something entirely new.⁶⁴

In *Magnet TV*,⁶⁵ this approach is demonstrated by the use of a magnetic device to disrupt and alter the video signal on a television set. The result of this interference

⁶² Edith Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video* (New York: Station Hill Arts, 1988), 76.

⁶³ McQuire, “Video Theory”, 5-8.

⁶⁴ John Hanhardt, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications 2000), 13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 115.

was displayed on the television screen in the form of minimal abstract patterns. Again, this minimal content focused the attention of the viewer onto the electronic signal and video as a medium. Continuing experimentation with this idea, Paik developed with a technician a video synthesizer device. The synthesizer, like the magnet, enabled him to manipulate the electronic signal of the original recorded images and demonstrate further the concept of television content merely being a broadcast electronic signal. Working with the technologies used to produce television, Paik explored the medium rather than the content.

2.3 Video Structures

An analysis of the above video examples from Paik begins to provide a framework to survey video practice in new media. These two works demonstrate a connection with the specific characteristics of video technologies and how these characteristics can be used to structure content. As McQuire pointed out, a characteristic like “instantaneity” becomes a defining attribute of video as a medium. In other words, the ability to utilise video feedback to present audio-visual content is what makes video distinct from the medium of film, for example. The notion that specific characteristics of a medium and subsequently the technologies used may effect the way content is structured, is more complex and diverse in new media practice. Differing software, along with the convergent nature of digital technologies, presents a broad, varied range of technical characteristics to comprehend as a part of analysing different video practices. For example, interactive video published on the Internet using QuickTime⁶⁶ software raises considerations not only of the video authoring, but also hypermedia⁶⁷ and networked environments. Comprehension of the characteristics of these technologies is needed in order to consider what effect

⁶⁶ QuickTime application, designed by Apple Computer Inc., <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/> (accessed 16th November, 2004).

⁶⁷ Hypermedia definition: <http://www.pcwebopaedia.com/TERM/H/hypermedia.html> (accessed 16th November, 2004.) An extension to hypertext that supports linking graphics, sound, and video elements in addition to text elements. The World Wide Web is a partial hypermedia system since it supports graphical hyperlinks and links to sound and video files. New hypermedia systems under development will allow objects in computer videos to be hyperlinked.

they may have on the structuring of the content and ultimately the practice of working with video on the Internet.

This leads to thinking about the 'form' in relationship to the way that content is structured in video work. Williams analyses the definition of 'form' and raises conflicting viewpoints on the differences between "form and content". One theoretical standpoint advocates a connection with social influences compared to a conflicting point of view that identified this difference as being determined purely by "aesthetic" evaluations.⁶⁸ Following the historical progression on the use of the term in the study of artworks, Williams proposes that this examination may focus on "the formation of a work, which requires a specific analysis of its elements in a particular organization."⁶⁹ In Cubist painting the process of presenting fragments of varying perspectives together, introduces a shift towards an analysis of form over content. The image is analysed by examining the way the content is arranged on the canvas. Analysing Picasso's Cubist painting, Read queries his progression towards monochromatic tones and the formation of planes based on "light and shade".⁷⁰ Read points out that Picasso defined his Cubist painting as "an art dealing primarily with forms, and when a form is realized, it is there to live its own life".⁷¹ This perspective influences the way video practice is examined in the case studies. Current video practices exhibited as video art and new media art are diverse and complex in terms of form.

For example, Finola Jones's video work *Artificially Constructed Habitats*⁷², exhibited in 2004 at the Canberra Contemporary Art Space, demonstrates this complexity. In brief, the essayist Maeve Connolly introduces this video installation "as urban vignettes, documenting fragments of human and animal behaviour."⁷³ Looking at the set-up of the installation the work includes 22 monitors grouped into seven clusters of varying monitor numbers, along with two large screen projections. This is

⁶⁸ Raymond Williams, *A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, first printed 1976, reprinted 1983), 137-140.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 139.

⁷⁰ Read, *A Concise History of Painting*, 74-79.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 78.

⁷² Finola Jones, *Artificially Constructed Habitats*, Canberra Contemporary Arts Space, 2004.

⁷³ Maeve Connolly, "Souvenirs of Spectacle", in *Artificially Constructed Habitats*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Lisa Byrne (Canberra: Canberra Contemporary Arts Space, 2004), 13.

a total of 23 channels of video. The audio consists of two channels of ambient sound distributed through the gallery on the same speakers but integrated across two amplifiers. This audio loop is not synched to any of the looping video imagery. Therefore, this audio has a separate and random relationship to the video imagery. In addition to this, two of the TV monitors emit another two channels of audio separately. On DVD format this audio is synched to the video and loops consistently in synch with the moving-imagery. The configuration of audio-video channels and the method of screening are often used to describe moving-image work. In the *Remembrance and the Moving Image*⁷⁴ exhibition at the Australia Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, each artist's video work is described in the catalogue in terms of the type of audio-video configuration. This also includes differentiating interactive video from linear screened works, where an active user is required instead of a passive viewer.

Another aspect to consider in *Artificially Constructed Habitats* is the cycle of the moving-imagery content, which on DVD format is looping continuously and again producing random relationships between each screen. Consequently, over the period of the install it will be unlikely that there will be the same configuration of moving-imagery at any one time across all the screens. This method of presentation is facilitated by the ability to loop using the DVD format as the distribution platform, a structural influence that was not available with analogue video without rewinding the tape format supplied. Finally, as a part of displaying the material across multiple screens, full-screen colour dividers are used to separate and locate each "vignette" within the simultaneous screening of all of the content. This use of full-screen solid colour creates an added visual resonance not only individually on each screen but also across all the screens. The moving-imagery within this multi-screen environment remains full-screen, meaning that the screen on each monitor is not split into frames. Instead, multiple monitors positioned in clusters create a split-screen effect. The artist Finola Jones envisaged this content screened in a multi-channel environment. She identified these structural elements as playing a significant role in the perception of the audio-visual content. The artist has

⁷⁴ Ross Gibson, ed., *Remembrance and the Moving Image* (Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2003).

consciously configured the arrangement of the screens so that the content has to be experienced in multiple perspectives. The point being made through using this example is that an examination of the structure of a video work provides ideas towards identifying new forms of video practice.

Another brief example of this concept is the audio-visual work *Familiar Circuits*,⁷⁵ exhibited at the Foreshore Space in Canberra. Video artist Michael Ashcroft uses a VJing software application called *Isadora*⁷⁶ to author the video content. This application, normally used for live performances, was installed in the space to run automatically over the period of the exhibition. The video presented as a three-channel installation did not loop like the locked-off DVD format discussed earlier. Instead, the video imagery passes through an array of patches⁷⁷ which are designed to alter the scene durations over the duration of the exhibition. Cycles of differing scene duration changes run concurrently on the three screens. These changes are controlled by using programming and offer effectively an infinite amount of multilinear visual combinations across the three screens, over the period of the exhibition. Similarly, the narrative structuration is locked-off as in Jones's use of multiple DVD loops. But in *Familiar Circuits*, the boundaries of each looping scene can be manipulated into a variation of structures that alter over time. *Isadora* as a video technology offers the potential to explore this method of presentation and subsequently use this type of structuring to affect how the content is interpreted. In conclusion, new video technologies provide opportunities to experiment with the way video is structured for presentation.

⁷⁵ Michael Ashcroft and Somaya Langley, *Familiar Circuits*, audio-visual installation, Foreshore Space, Canberra (October 26 - 29, 2004).

⁷⁶ Isadora definition, Application designer Troika Ranch, <http://www.troikaranch.org/isadora.html> (accessed 16th November 2004): Isadora is a graphic programming environment that provides interactive control over digital media, with special emphasis on the real-time manipulation of digital video. An Isadora program is created by linking together graphically represented building blocks, each of which performs a specific function: playing or manipulating digital video, capturing live video, looking for MIDI input, controlling a DV camera, etc. By linking the modules together you can create complex interactive relationships.

⁷⁷ Patch definition: <http://www.webopedia.com> A patch is an actual piece of object code that is inserted (patched into) an executable program.

Furthermore, determining how content is structured using video technologies raises a crucial issue with regards to this research project. For example, differing mediums like DVD and the Internet require the content to be structured differently. Interactive video as a form of hypermedia is a prime example of this paradigm. The conventional practice techniques of scripting used for film and television will not necessarily translate into the pre-production of interactive video content. Video practice therefore often involves the defining of new practice techniques that work with the differing structural configurations of new media platforms. The content is selected and configured in relation to these structural parameters. Paik's video art *TV Buddha* (discussed earlier) is a prime example of this process. This installation would not have the same resonance if another object had been used in place of the stone Buddha. McQuire, in examining the video characteristic of instantaneity, draws attention to the way the Buddha reiterates this characteristic:

The Buddha, who sought to keep himself free from all external impressions by immersing himself in mystic contemplation, is confronted by his own image.⁷⁸

Paik, interested in displaying the video characteristic of instantaneity to the viewer, selects the content to emphasise this attribute. Therefore, I propose that in the case studies the way video content is structured becomes the starting point for examination. The medium is being analysed rather than the content. This relates to the way Cubist painting is examined (as discussed earlier).

It follows then that the next two sections place the case studies in the context of surveying video practice. Introducing the case studies *eurovision* and the practice of *Vogging* in this chapter provides an insight into the motivations of the practitioners and subsequently their approach towards the structuring of the audio-visual content. Another aspect of these introductory sections is to point out the differences between the case studies in terms of what they provide this research project.

2.4 *eurovision*

⁷⁸ McQuire, "Video Theory", 8.

eurovision is a single-channel video produced by the artist Linda Wallace for gallery exhibition. Wallace has a diverse background in photography, cinematography, radio, journalism and publishing, experiences she brought together in the media company *machine hunger*, formed in 1995. This diversity, in combination with curating a range of international media arts exhibitions, informs her art practice, which has embraced the convergence of media and art in the medium of video. Her obsession with the transitive nature of video has successively involved short pieces and multi-monitor installations; large multi-screen public installations produced through *machine hunger*; digitally-composited single-channel video; and she is now returning to installation and public space works.⁷⁹ Wallace's developing focus on the simultaneous screening of mixed media forms using multiple screens or frames within the screen is transferred onto *eurovision*. The split-screen technique is gradually becoming more prevalent in television and cinema, like in the TV series *Spooks*⁸⁰ or the film *Timecode*⁸¹ for example, but few practitioners are applying more experimental approaches in terms of the narrative potential of this form of presentation (refer to Images 1,2 & 3).

A major influence on the structuring of the video content in *eurovision* is Wallace's interest in the Internet. This video project originated from the concept of the viewer being able to watch varying types of data being streamed off a server into a single frame. An alternative version of *eurovision* was authored as an interactive video onto a DVD but the artist prefers the work to be screened as a single-channel projection, where the user cannot break up the progression of the narrative. In a review, Anna Munster states:

⁷⁹ Linda Wallace, *Living Tomorrow* is a research project into the potential of narrative emergence. The work features a number of concurrent video streams drawn from a database of video fragments of various lengths. These are to be streamed at high resolution over the Dutch Gigaport network, which connects various cultural and academic institutions. <http://www.machinehunger.com.au/LivingTomorrow/essay.html>

⁸⁰ *Spooks*, Television Series, 60min., Producer, Andrew Woodhead (2004) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/spooks/> (accessed 22 November 2004).

⁸¹ Mike Figgis, Director, *Timecode*, Feature Film 35mm, Duration 97 min., Columbia Pictures (2000).

Confounding genre specification, and therefore implicitly resisting relegation to either digital or time-based media, it boldly announces its status as a linear version of an interactive project.⁸²

To some extent, a video monitor being used like a computer hooked into the network has contributed to the artist taking up a doctoral scholarship award with the Advanced Computational Systems Cooperative Research Centre at The Australian National University. This centre provided high-speed bandwidth access and the artist could develop “narrative structures or literary adaptations and software”⁸³ that extend the potentialities of these new technologies. In her PhD report on the production of *eurovision*, Wallace describes the narrative as being closer to an interactive narrative than a traditional linear narrative. She proposes that the narrative structure of *eurovision* uses and extends the fundamental structures of traditional linear narrative and also goes beyond what is the “commonly understood ‘interactive’ narrative experience, where each sequence takes us further on in the ‘classic’ narrative pattern.”⁸⁴

eurovision draws attention to the explorative potential of a video practice that falls between interactive video and traditional linear narrative video. This was a concept I had not considered when I set out on this research, the idea of a video practice where interactive narrative structures are developed on the surface of the screen. The predominant push when I started this research (at the end of the dotcom boom) was motivated by a rush to work with interactivity in a distribution mode like CD-Rom using complex software such as Macromedia Director.⁸⁵ Exploring interactive narrative structures on the screen in *eurovision* specifically involves the fragmentation of the screen, a practice technique Wallace stressed, in the interview, as being very under-explored. Wallace refers to the video works in the book *Stuff it:*

⁸² Anna Munster, “The Screen Divided” *RealTime* magazine, no. 53 (Feb/March 2003), 22.

⁸³ Linda Wallace (Producer *eurovision*), interview by Seth Keen (February 2004).

⁸⁴ Linda Wallace, “Report”, *Material Media: Artefacts of Digital Age* (PhD dissertation, School of Art, Australian National University, Canberra, Unpublished draft version, Nov. 2003), 51.

⁸⁵ Macromedia Director software definition: “multimedia tool for building rich content and applications for CDs, DVDs, kiosks, and the Internet.” <http://www.macromedia.com/> (accessed 5 June 2004).

*The Video Essay in the Digital Age*⁸⁶ as an example of the few video practitioners who are experimenting with the spatial dynamics of the screen. But this book does demonstrate in broader terms the continuing development of narrative structures in single-channel video production and how this progression is being influenced by both advancing digital video technology and the emergence of new media forms. This exploration is being led by the pursuit of an argument in the form of a visual essay. Wallace described her own narrative pursuits as being driven by a “strong argument... more conceptual means much more in the direction of conceptual art.”⁸⁷ This video practice is defined by the ability to integrate a complex mix of data into poly-sequential narrative structures.

2.5 *Vogging*

In contrast, the second case study focuses specifically on a practice called *Vogging*⁸⁸, a video genre invented and named by the practitioner Adrian Miles. *Vogging* is part of the emerging genre on the Internet called ‘videoblogs’. The weblog (or blogs) phenomenon originated on the Internet as a text based medium. In videoblogs, video replaces text as the principal medium. Miles teaches the theory and practice of hypermedia and interactive video in the Media Studies degree program at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). This video practice forms part of his academic research. Interested in investigating the potential of interactive video as an interactive medium, he uses weblogs as a framework to explore interactive video within the new media environment of the Internet. Therefore, *Vogging* is a form of hypermedia - a video media form that is influenced by interactivity and hypertextual multilinear structures. *eurovision*, in contrast, takes hypertextual multilinear concepts and transposes them back onto the linear structure of single-channel video (refer to Image 4).

⁸⁶ Ursula Biemann, ed., *Stuff it: The Video Essay in the Digital Age* (Zurich: Institute for Theory of Art and Design, 2004), 8.

⁸⁷ Wallace, interview, 2004.

⁸⁸ Adrian Miles video weblog website, “videoblog:vog 2.0”, <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/> (accessed April 10, 2002).

Also, it is important to understand Miles's objective to explore and research innovative approaches towards video in the field of new media. He aims to formulate and trial new audio-visual viewing conventions. In other words, a viewer that uses conventional cinematic and televisual viewing conventions will find it difficult to comprehend this video practice. As Miles is an academic in a Media Department, the vlogging practice offers the potential to explore audio-visual narrative structures that engage with the characteristics of a networked milieu. The practice outcomes are utilised for theoretical papers and as part of ongoing curriculum development. Miles also proposes as part of his digital video teaching that students learn three possible stages of production skills: the first covering traditional media skills in cinema and television; the second "re-purposing" older media forms for distribution on new platforms. Mark Pesce discusses the process of "re-purposing" in the paper "The New Reality for Producers"⁸⁹ and refers to this process as producing for "cross-media" platforms. The development of the *Lord of the Rings* cinema series is an example Pesce uses to demonstrate this point:

From day one, it was conceived of not just as a series of movies, but also as a series of games, DVDs, and other media properties. Both the production schedule and budget were designed to allow all of these projects, progressing simultaneously, to reinforce each other.⁹⁰

New media platforms can therefore provide wider distribution beyond the cinema screening and the rental video store. The third video production stage, Miles argues, is to create an education environment where students are encouraged to pursue the "development of new objects".⁹¹ He proposes that the role of education in new media is to take ideas to industry.⁹² These three areas of video practice demonstrate the expanding hybrid nature of video content and the convergence of audio-visual practices across old and new media forms.

⁸⁹ Mark Pesce, "The New Reality for Producers", paper delivered to the Screen Producers Association of Australia, 18 November 2003.
<http://www.aftrs.edu.au/index.cfm?objectid=10053694-2A54-23A3-6351F78418C0F0D5>
 (accessed 9th March 2004).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Miles, Interview, 11.

⁹² Ibid, 10 -11.

Furthermore, this case study on vlogging practice extends the analysis of multilinear narrative structuration in this research project. The open-ended nature of the Internet and Graphic User Interface (GUI) demand other narrative approaches compared to locked-off single-channel video works, like *eurovision*. Central to the multilinear characteristic of hypertext is the ability to construct relationships between multitudes of disparate forms of media. In vlogblogs, audio, moving-imagery, photos and text are linked together into multilinear structures that replicate the rhizomatic pathways of the Internet. The user mixes these varying separate media elements together into combinations authored by the video blogger. Therefore, in *eurovision* the multilinear structures are pre-composed and finalised or locked-off on the surface of the screen. In the vlogging practice the user initiates multiple connections across a multitude of audio-visual data as part of engaging with the GUI.

To sum up, the two case studies are chosen as part of investigating multilinear narrative structuration across both single-channel and interactive video. In terms of surveying video practice, as discussed earlier, the differing characteristics of the mediums being used have an effect on the narrative structuration process.

Chapter 3:

Case Study One

3.1 Introduction

eurovision was chosen as a case study because I was initially interested in the way *eurovision* uses the video compositing software (Adobe After Effects)⁹³ to achieve a complex split-screen presentation. Further, not many DV practitioners are experimenting in such a focused way with what is described in Wallace's accompanying PhD dissertation as "multiple streams into one frame".⁹⁴ Authored over a significant period of time, *eurovision* follows a meticulous approach towards working with the spatial and temporal dynamics of the frame. This very thorough experimentation is noted by Munster: "There are relatively few examples of rigorous investigations into the formal, technical possibilities and aesthetic implications of digital video."⁹⁵ In direct relation to this, *eurovision* also employs a recombinant video aesthetic to integrate a range of pre-existing media forms. This, in combination with splitting the screen, presents an integration process that differs from traditional linear editing. The resulting narrative challenged the methods I

⁹³ Adobe After Effects, <http://www.adobe.com/products/aftereffects/main.html> (accessed 6 June, 2004).

⁹⁴ Wallace "Report", *Material Media*, 50.

⁹⁵ Munster, "The Screen Divided", 22.

normally used to interpret most traditional cinema and television. *eurovision* is an example of innovative video practice, which demonstrates a number of new approaches towards using digital video technologies to present video content.

This chapter is broken into two main sections. The first section establishes a visual framework which examines the practice techniques applied to this particular video work. This includes looking at the re-use of existing media, the materiality of video as a range of formats and the integration methods used to present a diverse range of data within a single screen (3.2). The second section utilises this background to examine the motivations behind the narrative structuration (3.3). This examination covers three main concepts: firstly, the notion of an essayist approach towards narrative (3.4); secondly, the splitting of the screen and the way space is used to produce poly-sequential narrative structures (3.5); and finally, this narrative analysis culminates in the notion of a cultural shift towards new types of viewing literacies (3.6).

3.2 Recombinant Video

In an interview, Wallace talks about the way video constantly devours other media and new “technological developments.” It is the porous nature of the medium that prompts her to use video to re-use various media. In techniques which hark back to Guy Debord’s ‘detournement’ of the 1960s or the Scratch video of the 1980s, she re-uses and re-mixes images and text to re-contextualise the original sources in another form. Conceptually, Munster describes this remix as “offer[ing] a darker sense of a more alienated Europe.”⁹⁶ Wallace herself describes her work generally as being fixed on “the crisis articulated by Pop in the sixties.”⁹⁷ In effect, the pop culture art movement primarily from the 1950s to 60s demonstrates clearly the reuse of media material as part of producing an artwork. The early “Campbell’s Soup” screenprint series by the artist Andy Warhol is an early example of this idea.

⁹⁶ Munster, “The Screen Divided”, 22.

⁹⁷ Wallace, *testpattern*, 1.

A more direct example of media re-use is the 1963 *Saturday Disaster* screenprints of photos of a horrific car crash. A news photographer's photos are re-contextualised for arts exhibition⁹⁸ and extended by the way digital technologies allow easy access to the copying, reproduction, and creation of virtual imitations of the world around us. Overall, in *eurovision*, the remix brings together visual imagery from different eras and contexts, all integrated aurally with a single audio track of contemporary computer music. Chris Rose, writing about the artist's latest work *entanglements*⁹⁹, describes this process as the "re-use and manipulation of media (cinema, internet, analogue video, television) by digital video."¹⁰⁰

Wallace's motivation in relation to re-using media forms emerges from a keen interest in exploring and re-using existing media, an interest demonstrated in the title of her thesis accompanying her practice – *Material Media: Artifacts from a Digital Age*. The main argument of this thesis is that artists through their re-interpretation of existing media are causing a fundamental transformation in the "expression and the formal properties of the medium."¹⁰¹ Examining the historical development of film/video recombinant practices, Peter Weibel points out that a significant motivation for artists using this technique is the opportunity to critique media by re-using existing media. He also makes a connection between recombinant practices and splitting the screen. Dividing up the screen provided a method to produce associations across a mix of media forms.¹⁰² The proposal put forward by Wallace is that in re-using media, artists activate the potential to generate "something new".

Crucial to the narrative construction of *eurovision* is the remixing of a number of video formats. Two well-known feature films are structured around four different nationalities of song contestants from the 'Eurovision' TV series. Film excerpts from Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three*

⁹⁸ Ernst Beyeler ed., *Andy Warhol: Series and Singles* (Princeton: Yale Univ., April 1, 2001).

⁹⁹ Linda Wallace *entanglements*, DVD, 11min., 45 sec., (February 2004).

¹⁰⁰ Chris Rose, "entanglements", *testpattern*, ed. Linda Wallace (Australia Council for the Arts, February 2004), 3.

¹⁰¹ Wallace, "Introduction", *Material Media*, 2004, 1.

¹⁰² Peter Weibel, "Narrated Theory: Multiple Perspectives and Multiple Narration (Past and Future)", *New Screen Media Cinema/Art/Narrative*, eds. Martin Riesler and Andrea Zapp (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 49.

Things I Know About Her (1967) dominate the screen space alongside other smaller scale visual material. The film excerpts are captured from VHS tapes and the *eurovision* song contest excerpts are recorded off live television. This second and third generation source material is used in the final screened version. This includes archival documentary footage and original video-photos recorded by the artist. The video-photos, recorded while travelling in Europe, include transitional video sequences shot in a European train station. This element is highly compressed using the software After Effects and is one of the few recordings that is modified using visual effects. Predominantly in *eurovision* most of the varying formats represent the material as it has been captured. This means the data is not treated or changed with digital effects to hide the original format of each media form. Interested in the differing tonal qualities of video formats, the differing types of images offer resonance in terms of narrative construction and the transformation of context.¹⁰³ All of these varying formats digitised into the computer become one form of data, namely binary code, but the digitising process brings into this environment all the resonances of the original material. The artist states that: “The digital process doesn’t destroy the materiality of the source elements, instead their history is still their materiality – it is written all over them so to speak.”¹⁰⁴ In *eurovision* the computer becomes like a pot for cooking: each ingredient or differing media form is digitised into the system to see how it will effect the emerging content.

A powerful example of our understanding of how a format can influence narrative is in the film “Sex, Lies and Videotape”¹⁰⁵ by the director Steven Soderbergh (1989). The textual quality of home movie footage is used to develop a sense of intimacy and private connection with the viewer. The confessions of an actor in the film, recorded on handycam, develop a powerful resonance with the viewer through a domestic familiarity with this format. *eurovision* and the artist’s following work *entanglements* demonstrate the ability for video practitioners to work with the resonances of older historical media and new forms of video technologies. The military night vision video used in the Iraq war is recorded off television and reused

¹⁰³ Wallace, ed., *testpattern*, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Wallace, “Report”, *Material Media*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ Steven Soderbergh, Director, *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, Feature Film, 101 min. (August 1989).

in the artwork *entanglements*. This night vision video has a monochromatic high contrast green tonal quality. This video footage used countless times in 2003 Iraq war news broadcasts becomes identified with this event and with the technologies of war. The visual quality of this footage is used as a device to develop the terrorist theme of this video work. Instead of altering each media form with digital effects, the textuality of each media form is used for narrative effect.

In regards to the manipulation of pre-produced media forms, Manovich draws attention to the way that the original media source becomes irrelevant in a digital context. In cinema production “live-action footage” becomes what he calls a “raw material” that is produced to be altered using computer software. The concept is to use this material simply as data in a process which sets out to fabricate another form of reality not necessarily representative of the original source material. In addition, this “live-action footage” can be created entirely within a computer independent of any recording apparatus – the camera.¹⁰⁶ Therefore any “live-action footage,” regardless of the means of recording, is simply data that can be used to create content. Manovich notes that “the very distinction between creation and modification”¹⁰⁷ is no longer relevant in a digital environment. In a similar fashion any pre-produced media recorded and digitised into the computer for re-use takes on the same malleability as data produced for cinema production.

Therefore, sampling and remixing, with the advent of digital technologies, become the lingua franca of many new media practitioners. This quote from a declaration of principles put forward by the Cyberpunk arts collective titled “Cyber Dada Manifesto” reflects this concept: “DIGITISE THE WORLD. (A new life awaits you). TECHNOLOGY is speeding ahead...Take technology apart and see what it really is! Reuse everything!”¹⁰⁸ Following this idea, artists are sampling data from numerous

¹⁰⁶ Lev Manovich, “Cinema Redefined”, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2001), 300-307.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 302.

¹⁰⁸ Cyber Dada Manifesto <http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/cyberdada.html> (accessed 1st April 2004). The Cyberpunk Project (TCP) is a remotely available net of files about cyberpunk subculture, cyberpunk science fiction and general cyberculture in the form of free information. This is an open directory, hosting related documents and literate work.

places rather than producing original content. In an article titled “Ideas in the Mix,”¹⁰⁹ Bernard Schütze argues that we function in a “remix culture”. He writes:

*Mix, mix again, remix: copyleft, cut 'n' paste, digital jumble, cross-fade, dub, tweak the knob, drop the needle, spin, merge, morph, bootleg, pirate, plagiarize, enrich, sample, break down, reassemble, multiply input source, merge output, decompose, recompose, erase borders, remix again.¹¹⁰

But Schütze points out that there are distinct differences between how mass media organisations reuse media compared to artists. The “copyright” protected commercially orientated organisations merely regurgitate in a slightly different context what already exists. This is in contrast to artists who advocate a paradigm of, in Schütze’s words, “creative borrowing and sharing.” A part of this position he proposes is again to explore, and experiment towards the creation of something “new”.¹¹¹ *eurovision* is an example of this remixing spectacle and sits within this artistic framework of remixing.

3.3 Video Fusion

The first evidence of the video screen becoming an interface comparable to a browser window in *eurovision* is found in the notion of layouts used in desktop publishing. Historically, the Internet has developed from being a text-based medium into a multiple media form. Wallace explores a similar web-page aesthetic to position a combination of media forms within the screen frame. This frame design is described by Munster in terms of “formal experiments with the screen as a panel, almost an interface...”¹¹² A range of photos and moving-imagery elements are positioned together on a black background. Dealing with the screen like a grid, *eurovision* moves seamlessly from multiple frames of different sizes being positioned on the background with no overlaps, to images layered on top of each other, to the occasional surprising traditional full-screen frame. Visually this video

¹⁰⁹ Bernard Schütze, “ideas in the mix : the heap”, Notes on Recycling the Detritus of a Remixed Culture <http://www.horizonzero.ca/textsite/phprint.php> (accessed 24/05/04).

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 1.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 1.

¹¹² Munster, “The Screen Divided”, 22

work moves predominantly from a magazine style layout to the more recognisable multi-layered compositing effect of motion graphics. Following the concept of data being streamed into a browser window, Wallace deals with the integration of “multiple streams” of data in a linear time-based form. The technique of balancing this integration is identified as a key practice component by the artist, who writes, “the issues are around how to get the streams synchronized and in the right places within the frame.”¹¹³

Consequently, as Yvonne Speilmann has argued, as a single-channel video, *eurovision* is an “intermedia” practice rather than a multimedia, hypermedia or mixed media practice. Speilmann uses the feature film *Prospero Books*¹¹⁴ as an example of intermedia. In this cinematic work, the screen split into a number of frames combines a range of differing moving-image forms. In intermedia, Speilmann argues, an entirely new media form is created due to a process she names “transformation”, taking place between different forms of media. Analysing the effects that new technologies have on the integration of different media forms, Speilmann proposes that this “transformation” is what differentiates intermedia from other practices. In *eurovision* a moving-image film is placed beside an animated sequence of still photos within the same frame. This type of integration produces both a temporal and spatial relationship between these two different types of images. The bringing together of the distinct differences between these two media forms in the same space is what causes a “transformation” to take place. Speilmann proposes that this “transformation...becomes a structural category that expresses the ways these different elements are connected and merged into each other, thereby creating a new form.”¹¹⁵

Paradoxically, according to Speilmann, in multimedia the media forms are integrated but remain separate. An early Wagner opera is an example of this type off approach. Wagner in an article titled “Outlines of the Artwork of the Future”

¹¹³ Wallace, “Report”, *Material Media*, 51.

¹¹⁴ Peter Greenaway, Director, Feature Film, 124 min. (1991).

¹¹⁵ Yvonne Speilmann, “Intermedia in Electronic Images”, *Leonardo* online journal, Vol. 34, (2001), 59.

(1867),¹¹⁶ insisted that only the combination of all art forms would produce a full representation of “drama” on the operatic stage. The focus in this integration therefore is to develop “drama” as an art form. Therefore, each art form is subservient to this objective. In the mixed media example *Overdrive* (1963)¹¹⁷ by the painter Robert Rauschenberg, photographs are fused into an oil painting. Using silkscreen printing and oil painting techniques Rauschenberg brings these two media forms directly together. Speilmann proposes that the result is not a “transformation” like in intermedia, but “intertextuality”, where change occurs independently within the individual medium of painting. This means that painting as an artistic medium is changed by this combination - but an entirely new medium is not created. Similarly in hypermedia the focus is on the assembly of separate media forms, where the objective is not to alter the structure of each media form.¹¹⁸ Speilmann’s hypothesis on “transformation” occurring in intermedia points to this type of practice relying on a specific integration process that effectively utilises temporal and spatial dynamics to achieve this result.

It follows then that the resulting complex integration of aural and visual elements is drawn from Wallace’s previous experience with a diverse range of media. She noted how producing experimental radio programs and working in magazine design had an effect on the authoring of *eurovision*. In radio production the artist became very aware of the power that different types of audio elements bring to the final program. Voiceover or narration, for example, have a significant effect on a listener, becoming the dominating channel of information in an audio mix. In *eurovision* the artist, aware of the power of dialogue, uses minimal dialogue in the soundtrack for that reason. Text also tends to dominate the attention of the viewer. In *eurovision* the existing English subtitles are left as a powerful element on the film excerpts to help re-contextualise the original film footage. For Wallace, a viewer seeks this text out as a way of determining a reading of the work.¹¹⁹ This means that each channel of information (text, music, voiceover, moving-images, stills) is handled differently in

¹¹⁶ Richard Wagner “Outlines of the Artwork of the Future”, in *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, eds. Randall Packer and Ken Jordan (New York: Norton, 2001), 3-9.

¹¹⁷ Robert Raschenburg, “Overdrive” (1963), in *Pop Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard, (London: Thames and Hudson 1966), 162.

¹¹⁸ Speilmann, “Intermedia in Electronic Images”, 55-61.

¹¹⁹ Wallace, interview, 2004.

terms of how they may affect the overall mix and subsequently the viewer. Utilising experience in magazine design, the artist put a considerable amount of time into designing a template as a basis for fragmenting the screen. Wallace referred to this process as being similar to designing a layout grid for a periodical magazine. This involved thinking about the shape of the DV-Pal screen (720 x 576 pixels), the cinemascope shape of the Godard film, and the 35mm shape of the Bergman film. A template was created to develop consistency and continuity with the viewer, similar to a designer magazine layout. Techniques of defining patterns within the frame of the screen and using repetition are also influenced by 2-D print design. The main influences referred to by the artist are the screen-printing techniques developed by Andy Warhol and the work of the more recent Dutch print and web designer Meike Geritzen.¹²⁰ References to these varying media and art forms consequently have a significant effect on the final design of the interface in this video work.

3.4 Video Essay

Before exploring the concept of a video essay approach, it is important to understand what Wallace was trying to achieve with this work. In the interview she stressed an interest in experimenting with an abstract approach but also developing within this a substantial argument that the viewer follows as a narrative thread.¹²¹ *eurovision* takes on the form of a written essay where multiple threads are integrated in and alongside the main discussion, to extend the argument being pursued by the artist. Each of the frames within the screen contributes additional information and narratives towards an ongoing argument. This abstract approach allows the artist to experiment with another objective, which is to disrupt the traditional harmonious integration of sound and vision used predominantly as a suturing effect in cinema. Traditionally, the close integration of sound and vision is used to lead the audience as a group down a linear narrative path. In contrast to this, the aim of the disruption technique in *eurovision* is to create a diverse range of

¹²⁰ Wallace, "Report", *Material Media*.

¹²¹ Wallace, interview, 2004.

narrative readings. The artist talked about following a process that involved “opening up cracks in the surface...for people to travel down.”¹²² The objective of this process is to create opportunities for viewers to produce their own individual narrative interpretations.

Hence, Wallace described the narrative as being influenced by the form of a written essay.¹²³ Working with this narrative objective, I suggest that *eurovision* could be classified as a video essay, a genre described by Biemann as being “somewhere between documentary video and video art.”¹²⁴ The video essay genre, Biemann argues, caters for practitioners who are interested in examining “complex” associations around a question or inquiry. The genre allows practitioners to utilise a broad range of diverse material to explore in an organic fashion a way of thinking or critique. The ability to synthesise this material in a myriad of combinations is intensified in the digital environment.¹²⁵ The underlying theme of Biemann’s book examines how this synthesis is being altered by digital video:

One of the questions will be whether and how new technologies transform the previously analogue medium of video to become more dissociative, multi-perspective and hypertextual in the structuring of images and sounds.¹²⁶

Questioning our perception of media, Wallace examines in her practice the narrative potentialities of contemporary media forms along with how advancing digital video technology allows this narrative approach to be presented.

Currently, *eurovision* is an example of a video work that demonstrates a number of connections with the characteristics of the essayist style used by filmmakers in early film essays. In addition to this, *eurovision* is emblematic of the shift this style is making to meet the potentialities of advancing digital technology and the way information is being represented. Historically the essayist style emerged as a genre within film documentary in the early 1940s. The essayist style, Alter argues, was conceived to enable filmmakers to work in a more abstract and multifaceted manner

¹²² Wallace, interview, 2004.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Biemann, ed., *Stuff it.*, 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 8-11.

¹²⁶ Biemann, ed., *Stuff it.*, 9.

compared to the dominant precedent which involved presenting “facts and information” within a coherent linear storyline.¹²⁷ This style of documentary, which took a more distinct shape from the 1950s to the 1970s, rejected the notion that documentary had to necessarily provide “social” comment and be understood by a wider audience. This style provided a platform for individuals to put forward an idiosyncratic and personal perspective on a subject.¹²⁸ In *eurovision* and much of Wallace’s other work the artist predominantly explores issues around “representation and simulation” within the changing environment of media. This subject is highly complex – the type of subject that might be tackled in a conventional theoretical, written essay.

3.5 Screen Space

To construct the essayist visual style in this video example requires the creation of associations across and between differing visual information. Splitting the screen into multiple frames creates this dynamic, yet the split-screen technique is hardly a new phenomenon. Early examples of experimenting with large-scale simultaneous multi-projections are the Czech filmmakers like Emil Radok and Josef Svoboda (1958 –1969). Radok’s audio-visual screening *A Mirror of my Country* used a technique named “Polyekran”, which involved multiple projections and the use of audio to explore the dynamics of space and time. Vit Havranek describes this audio-visual work as an experiment with the sensory perceptions of the audience and an opportunity to project in unison a number of corresponding scenarios. Discussing this process more broadly, he writes that it is like the spectator experiencing “a magical feeling of entering several spheres at once”.¹²⁹ Havranek compares this notion to John Cage’s experimental audio work *Imaginary Landscape No. 4*, in which audio from 12 different radio channels are fused together into one

¹²⁷ Nora M. Alter, “Memory Essays”, in Biemann, ed., *Stuff it.*, 12-14.

¹²⁸ Kevin MacDonald and Mark Cousins, eds., *Imagining Reality* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 211.

¹²⁹ Vit Havranek, “Laterna Magika, Polyekran, Kinoatomat”, in *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary after Film*, eds. Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2003), 105-107.

audio exhibit. This is a process he believes is easily reproduced using the medium of video.¹³⁰

This type of approach progressed onto the single screen, as Peter Weibel demonstrates in looking at the way filmmakers began in the 1960s to explore new forms of representation, leading to the deconstruction of the technologies and processes used in the creation of traditional cinematic practices. Art practitioners were interested in extending the boundaries set by traditional cinema and consequently also investigated the use of the screen space. Breaking out of the screen conventions altogether, there was a move towards spatial considerations and different narrative structures. Weibel states:

Multiple projections of different films alongside one another, one on top of the other and in all spatial directions represented more than merely an invasion of space by the visual image. They were also an expression of multiple narrative perspectives.¹³¹

This movement, he suggests, was motivated by the social desire at that time to locate narrative structures more aligned with the way people experience the world. This is a disjointed and discursive process where, unlike linear narratives, there is often no beginning, middle or end. In tracing this focus on the development of poly-sequential narrative structures Weibel, in examining video artists in the 1990s, recognises that the re-configuring of space becomes an integral part of this narrative process.¹³²

This is also a concept taken up by the new media theorist Lev Manovich. In *eurovision*, film excerpts are combined with other time-based and stills imagery within the screen frame. This, in effect, is the union of cinematic linear narrative with other types of visual data within the same space. In the chapter titled “Spatial Narrative and Macrocinema”, Manovich questions the potential outcomes that may be possible when single-screen cinematic narrative is reframed and united with

¹³⁰ Ibid, 102-109.

¹³¹ Weibel, “Narrated Theory”, *New Screen Media*, 43.

¹³² Ibid, 42-49.

multiple images using digital technologies.¹³³ Prior to producing *eurovision*, the artist worked with multiple monitor video installations to experiment with space, but with the development of digital video technology has shifted this interest and experimentation within the single monitor screen. Operating within a completely digital environment with digitised data provides the potential to experiment with the splitting of the screen space. Manovich argues that the narrative potential of split-screen techniques and subsequently a focus on space is underdeveloped in that, historically, cultural movements dictated a shift away from spatial considerations. This concept is demonstrated in cinema, where there has been a predominant fixation on time. As a result cinema has tended to follow a full-screen paradigm.¹³⁴

In order to examine the result of experimenting with this union and re-configuring of the space on the screen, it is important to understand the differences between what Manovich describes as “spatial narrative” and “spatial montage”. In a conventional book or in most ‘Hollywood’ cinema the narrative unfolds step-by-step on the page or within the boundaries of the cinema screen. A painting that displays a number of sequences alongside each other is an example of a number of narratives operating within the one space. “Spatial narratives” occur simultaneously and can be witnessed in unison. “Spatial montage” occurs when time-based imagery is added into each of the frames alongside other visual information like still images and text. “Spatial Montage” can also occur when hyperlinks are used in an interactive work to introduce new frames or new data – like text, for example, into the browser window space. Hyperlinks act like edits in a sequential time-based edit: each link introduces a new frame, building up the fragmentation of the screen and developing new relationships with the frames already on the screen.¹³⁵ Manovich refers to the html work *My boyfriend came back from the war*¹³⁶ as an example of this type of “spatial montage”. The Russian Internet artist Olia Lialina describes this work as being driven by a desire to reproduce cinema on the Internet. She soon discovered through this endeavour that the unique parameters of a hypertextual and networked

¹³³ Manovich, “Spatial Montage and Macrocinema”, *The Language of New Media*, 324.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 323-324.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 322-326.

¹³⁶ Olia Lialina, *My boyfriend came back from the war*, <http://www.teleportacia.org/war/>

system had a significant effect on the concept of cinema in this setting.¹³⁷ Looking for a narrative approach that worked within this context caused Lialina to shift from a focus on time to more consideration of space. This notion is realised in the work where the browser window space becomes fragmented, as the user progresses through the narrative presented in each frame. Consequently, this focus on spatial considerations, Manovich argues, causes a shift in filmmaking practice where “the logic of replacement, characteristic of cinema, gives way to logic of addition and coexistence.”¹³⁸

These poly-sequential associations can be formed using both spatial and temporal montage. The spatial montage in a single-channel work operates within the space of the frame on the surface of the screen and in the form of material placed on top of each other. The ability to manipulate every pixel in that frame offers the opportunity to work with (to use the PhotoShop software terminology) ‘layers’ of visual and audio data. This concept of “layering” is discussed by Biemann:

New image and editing technologies have made it easy to stack an almost unlimited number of audio and video tracks one on top of another, with multiple images, titles, running texts and a complex sound mix competing for attention of the audience. Stuff it! Distill it! Stratify and compress it!¹³⁹

The development of working and thinking about the spatial dynamics in digital video practice, I suggest, is a key practice issue for both practitioners and educators. The focus is on developing competencies around how a broad mix of mediums can be integrated not only over the progression of time, but within the space of the frame in digital video.

The practice of juxtaposition within the frame in *eurovision* exemplifies what can be described as a fundamental shift in digital video practice. Compositing software combined with all the data being accessible in a computer database intensifies the tendency towards a process of fragmentation and the simultaneous union of multiple digital video data within the frame. The practitioner uses traditional

¹³⁷ Josephine Bosma, *Nettime* interview with Olia Lialina, (August 5, 1997)

<http://www.desk.nl/~nettime/> (accessed May 1, 2004)

¹³⁸ Manovich, “Spatial Montage and Macrocinema”, *The Language of New Media*, 324-326.

¹³⁹ Biemann, *Stuff it.*, 9.

sequential editing practices, spatial design and what I would call ‘mixing techniques’ to integrate these elements. In the mixing process the artist works with the scale of the image, repetition, looping, layering and temporal speed. Producing this type of narrative is described by Munster as a re-assembling process:

Narrative more generally can be seen to rest not upon linearity and singular viewpoint but on the layering, combination and texturing that different sequenced modules brings to events.¹⁴⁰

This mixing process is, I suggest, similar to the way multiple tracks are mixed together in computer music. Each frame is like a track in an audio mix, where it is given the appropriate balanced treatment to fit with the other elements as a whole. In the After Effects software each movie is represented as a separate track or layer, as in Photoshop. Overall, the focus shifts from determining a single cinematic edit (i.e. how the next shot will affect the shot before and the one to follow), to a focus on placement and associations between multiple elements within the screen.

3.6 Digital Literacies

Exploring the multi-linear narrative structures in *eurovision* draws attention to a major issue that is emerging in digital video practice – that of digital literacies and the possibilities of reading such texts. This issue, I suggest, is being driven by the coming together of multiple viewing literacies. The functionality of the computer and the hypertextual nature of the World Wide Web require the development of particular literacies that are pertinent to those environments. These types of literacies in combination with the established literacies of cinema and television produce in *eurovision* a hybrid narrative style. The poly-sequential narrative structures being developed in *eurovision* could be compared with the types of narrative structures being developed in interactive video practices. But in *eurovision* the multiple connections are taking place on the surface of the screen. Manovich argues that the potential to work with “spatial montage” using digital technologies alters the equilibrium between space and time. This means “spatial montage” takes

¹⁴⁰ Munster, “The Screen Divided”, 22.

on a much more prominent role, an equal role with “temporal montage” in the construction of narrative. The concept of “spatial montage” as a part of cinema language is being influenced, Manovich argues, by the design of the computer interface and computer coding like “object-orientated programming”.¹⁴¹ The “user” works constantly with the concept of co-existence and multiple associations occurring at the same time. In *eurovision* the narrative structure is described as being multi-directional – “It loops around, back, then forward, it doesn’t just give you more linear direction, but keeps making connections across the segments to build a horizontality of narrative construction (and diagonal) as well as vertically.”¹⁴² The artist, working with linear fragments of old films, develops a narrative structure that explores associations between multiple frames. Overall, the narrative structure of *eurovision* utilises two very different types of viewing literacies.

Consequently, the narrative style in *eurovision* has similarities with interactive narrative structures. In her previous work *lovehotel*,¹⁴³ Wallace describes the narrative process as being based on a dreamlike state. The spectator watching the work is able to cross fluidly back and forth from “one narrative stream to another”, creating a state of mind that Wallace refers to in terms of her practice as “creating an overall impression”.¹⁴⁴ There is an explicit and direct connection here with the narrative concept described in the article “Something to Imagine: Literature, Composition, and Interactive Fiction”, by Stuart Moulthrop and Nancy Kaplan.¹⁴⁵ In a classroom exercise, the teachers set students the task of analysing some “interactive hypertext” examples. The aim of the exercise was to get students to explore alternative associations with “literary texts”. Interactive writing examples were provided as a way to develop comparisons with stories published in books. The outcome of the exercise, the teachers argue, was a fundamental shift in the

¹⁴¹ Manovich, “Spatial Montage and Macrocinema”, *The Language of New Media*, 326.

¹⁴² Wallace, “eurovision report”, *Material Media*, 50.

¹⁴³ Linda Wallace, *lovehotel*, Betacam, single-channel video, 6 min., 45 sec., (May 2000).

¹⁴⁴ Wallace “lovehotel report”, *Material Media*, 30.

¹⁴⁵ Stuart Moulthrop and Nancy Kaplan, “Something to Imagine: Literature, Composition, and Interactive Fiction”, *Computers and Composition* 9(1), (November 1991): 7- 23.

http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ccjrn/Archives/v9/9_1_1_Moulthrop.html, (accessed January 14 2003).

understanding of classical narrative structure.¹⁴⁶ They back up this argument with a statement from one of the students, Andrew Sussman:

We have spent our whole lives reading stories for some kind of end, or some kind of completion or goal that is reached by the characters in the story...I realized this goal is not actually reached by the character it is rather reached by our own selves...[This completion] occurs when we have decided for ourselves that we can put down the story and be content with our interpretation of it. When we feel satisfied that we have gotten enough from the story.¹⁴⁷

The concept of forming an individual reading of this type of text can be related back to Wallace's aim to encourage each viewer to formulate their own narrative interpretations. This article also demonstrates the possible shift that is required in viewing literacies to interpret a video work like *eurovision*.

Furthermore, in the process of establishing a hybrid narrative, the artist is conscious about using the viewer's familiarity with established viewing literacies. The artist argues that, rather than presenting a completely unfamiliar narrative style to a viewer, it is important to utilise these familiarities. *eurovision* introduces new types of viewing literacies that need to be adjusted to in order to read and understand the work. The artist points out a major difference between linear cinematic narrative in comparison to the essay model: "the essay is very different from the film story, the essay is telling an argument whereas the film is telling a story".¹⁴⁸ This is an important point to grasp for a viewer who may be trying to piece together a story in the traditional familiar manner as presented in most cinema and television. But Wallace uses the familiarity of these ingrained viewing literacies as a device to develop this essay model. This means working with the need for viewers to feel secure in terms of following a conventional linear narrative. She described playing with this desire by taking the viewer away into new territory but always maintaining contact with an underlying familiar linear narrative.¹⁴⁹ This is a useful point to consider in regard to overcoming the issue of viewers' unfamiliarity with new hybrid narrative styles.

¹⁴⁶ Moulthrop and Kaplan, "Something to Imagine", 6-7.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁴⁸ Wallace, interview, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

In *eurovision*, the multi-layered mix of these varied mediums is mainly written in the post-production phase. The time that usually goes into scripting a work following the print literacy paradigm is now shifted by digital technologies into scripting in the DV medium itself within the post-production phase. The time taken to develop a feature film script in pre-production now shifts into working out the script in post-production – a process discussed by Wallace in her thesis.¹⁵⁰ This raises another practice issue where in a similar fashion to writing an essay, the production of digital video content in *eurovision* centres on determining an argument using imagery. The argument or concept is what provides a focus for the practitioner to write from in post-production. This notion, I suggest, shifts the focus of production towards more of an artistic practice where the outcome is determined by understanding the conceptual basis behind a work. This is in contrast to being reliant on a storyline or a blueprint in the form of a written literary script. Writing in the medium directly means the practitioner is now required to develop digital or multiliteracies as a part of refining this method of content development and the technique of integrating a mix of mediums.¹⁵¹ A specific part of these literacies is the concept of mixing discussed earlier, which provides a concluding point in this case study analysis.

¹⁵⁰ Wallace, “report: eurovision”, *Material Media*, 34-56.

¹⁵¹ Douglas Kellner, “New Media and New Literacies: Reconstructing Education for the New Millennium”, in *The New Media Handbook*, eds. Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (London: Sage, 2002). The article provides a more extended and comprehensive argument on this issue.

Chapter 4:

Case Study Two

4.1 Introduction

I chose the case study vlog titled *Collins Street* (2001)¹⁵² for two main reasons. Firstly, this practice, like *eurovision* (case study one), experiments with the fragmentation of the frame and the parallel screening of multiple visual images. However, the concept of working with multiple streams of data follows a different structure. In *Collins Street*, video, text, stills, audio narration, and atmospheric audio remain separate and are not mixed together into one channel of video. Hypertext links integrate the varying elements in *Collins Street*. Secondly, *Collins Street* demonstrates how a networked environment affects the integration of video content. The multilinear structure of hypertext and the Graphic User Interface (GUI) influence this integration process. An examination of these two aspects demonstrates a shift towards multilinear narratives and “spatial montage” in video practice.

In order to examine these two aspects the chapter is broken into three main sections. The first section establishes a visual and contextual framework on vlogs as a form of video practice (4.1, 4.2, 4.3). In the second section, the influences of film and television are examined to extend this contextual framework and demonstrate how established cultural codes affect the development of this new media video practice (4.3, 4.4). The third section focuses on a close analysis of vlogs as a video

¹⁵² Adrian Miles, *Collins Street Melbourne* (a documentary), 2 min., QuickTime, June 2001, videoblog:vog 2.0, <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/7.2001/collins.html> (accessed 6 November, 2003).

practice (4.5, 4.6). The fragmentation of the frame and the integration of multiple media forms is analysed in this section.

4.2 Collins Street

This first section breaks into two parts. Firstly, the vog example *Collins Street* is analysed, to provide a visual and aural perspective on this genre of practice. This includes identifying vogs as a form of hypermedia and demonstrating the difference between this case study and *eurovision* as an intermedia form. Secondly, a contextual framework is established by examining the relationship between weblogs and vogs, along with the objectives of the practitioner.

The complexity of the authoring used in the vog *Collins Street* provides a useful example for the theoretical analysis of vogs in this case study. *Collins Street* selected from the 'vlog' website streams onto the computer as a 'pop-up' QuickTime movie, separate from the website page. Clicking on the movie reveals a number of video sequences of Collins Street in Melbourne. These sequences split the frame into three separate vertical sections. Edited sequences of buildings, people and traffic offer three slightly different perspectives of the street, within the one frame. Each section is cut up into three smaller rectangular blocks, recognisable by fine black lines. This vog looks relatively simple on the visible surface, but in each section, there are a number of hotspots that randomly call up separate vision, text and audio tracks. Miles describes this work as consisting of:

Nine video tracks, three sound tracks, one sprite track, and a colour track. The sprite track, which is a fully scriptable track type in QuickTime, contains nine still images that are temporarily collaged over individual video panes, and the colour track is simply the movie's black background...As "Collins Street" (a downtown Melbourne street) plays the user can mouse over each of the video panes, and doing so 'triggers' the sprite track which turns on and displays for a pre-scripted duration a jpeg image which contains text. The same sprite track also controls which of the three simultaneous soundtracks is being heard, and its relative volume.¹⁵³

The user engaging with this vog triggers different audio tracks and reveals text behind each of the smaller rectangular blocks.

¹⁵³ Miles, "Softvideography", 14-15.

The sprite track, which utilizes animation key frames, controls the jpeg images.¹⁵⁴ A sentence is revealed behind the moving images: “quality of change is more important than quantity.” There are three audio tracks and each one is allocated to particular sections in the frame. Miles discusses in the first narration track the theoretical ideas behind this particular vog. In the second narration track Miles interviews “a colleague (...Adrian Danks)...about his experience of this particular street”.¹⁵⁵ The third audio track consists of on location atmospheric sounds from the street. Where the cursor is placed determines the predominance of each track and the volume level. In the very centre of each section, the audio is mixed evenly and therefore you hear a blend of all the tracks simultaneously. In his notes accompanying this vog, Miles describes this work as integrating “hypertext” concepts into “time-based media”. Providing the user with a number of choices, Miles aims for alternative interpretations of the work as a whole.¹⁵⁶

A key aspect to understanding *Collins Street* is to think of this vog as being like a “container” that holds an array of separate images and sounds that connect together. This is in comparison to viewing one-channel projection like cinema, where the entire content is presented on the screen. In this vog there are several sets of visual and aural information that the user has to activate. Vogs are a form of hypermedia. Hypertext and hypermedia are terms that generally have the same meaning, but hypermedia usually refers to content that contains a mix of media forms, while hypertext usually contains only textual elements. Hypermedia is a relatively open system where the user follows multilinear paths through a network. Speilmann describes hypermedia as a “universal medium” where due to digital technology all media forms combine as one medium. Hypermedia therefore exists as a “multidimensional structure”.¹⁵⁷ In *Collins Street*, the user produces their own variation of (sequences of) images and audio as part of engaging with the work.

¹⁵⁴ Sprite definition: Tim Cox ed., for Apple Computers, *QuickTime for the Web* (San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 2004). In a cel animation of a bouncing ball...each frame contains the whole image of the ball and background. With temporal compression each key frame contains the whole image, while the intermediate frames describe the differences from frame to frame using an algorithm.” 473. This means a variation of actions can be added into the moving image timeline.

¹⁵⁵ Miles, *Collins Street*, Vog.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Speilmann, “Intermedia in Electronic Images”, 59-60.

This vog, unlike some other vogs, contains no external hypertext links to other web pages, and therefore *Collins Street* is a self-contained network.

Furthermore, *Collins Street* presents a relatively simple hypermedia structure compared to other more complex approaches towards interactive video content where the aim is to provide an extensive database of audio-visual material in order to achieve an inexhaustible amount of narrative options.¹⁵⁸ *Collins Street* relies instead on multiple combinations of a limited amount of content. This differs from using complex branching paths and a large amount of video content as occurs in some earlier interactive video. This structure gives the user a large number of choices. The idea was to give the impression of an endless labyrinth. In a vog tutorial, Miles advocates that students learn how to determine “complex narrative” structures by forming multiple combinations with minimal units of content.¹⁵⁹ The limitations of video download speed and the time Internet users spend on one particular item influences the structure and duration of the narrative units. Within these constraints, therefore, Miles is interested in “micro-narratives”¹⁶⁰ that allow the user to engage with a vog in fragments. In this multilinear fragmented setting, vogs have no clearly defined “beginning and end”. Vogs follow the spontaneous immediate diary writing style of blogging. *Collins Street*, and vlogging overall, invoke a style of video practice that is immediate – this contrasts with the detailed compositional and integration process used to produce *eurovision*.

¹⁵⁸ Norman M Klein, “Bleeding Through: Layers of Los Angeles. 1920 –1986”, in *Future Cinema*, eds. Shaw and Weibel, 355.

¹⁵⁹ Miles, “Softvideography”, 21.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Klages, “Postmodernism Again” quote – “In place of these grand narratives, postmodern theorists like Lyotard propose sets of ‘micronarratives’—small stories, small theories, which might explain a certain set of phenomena, but which don’t make any claims to universal ‘truth’. Such micronarratives would have use value; they could arise from and be applied to specific situations, but none would claim to explain everything, or to explain all other theories, or to be the preferred or dominant framework through which any event could be understood. Postmodern micronarratives thus are multiple—there is one for every situation, rather than one narrative covering all situations— and they are necessarily different and largely incompatible; there’s no way to put all the micronarratives together to form one unified coherent idea of how the world, or human beings, operate.”
<http://www.colorado.edu/English/engl2010mk/pomo2.html> (accessed 17 October 2004).

4.3 Blogging

Blogging provides a useful framework to explore the convergence of hypertext with video; with vlogging Miles looks at an established new media practice on the Internet as a basis to explore a new mode of video practice. Vlogging originated for Miles from an avid interest in Weblogs. In a chapter titled “Defining Open Publishing”, Geert Lovink describes “weblogs (or blogs) as frequently updated websites run by individuals and linked to other blogs.”¹⁶¹ The weblog is designed to collate regular posts and acts like an online diary which has the facility to provide links to information on the Internet. Historically, in an article on blogging Torill Mortensen and Jill Walker describe weblogs as being personally edited websites that initially acted as a portal of links for users, usually around a particular subject or field of interest. The blogger develops through commentary (short written posts) a personal idiosyncratic point-of-view on their subject of interest. A focus on particular subjects with others then develops into the formation of blogging communities who link websites and engage in the process of swapping notes and commenting on particular ideas.¹⁶² Miles’s own personal blog¹⁶³ and vlog develop the growing blogging community, which focuses on using the medium to extend academic research and new media discourse. However, in the wider public domain, blogging is generally recognised as being informal personal online publishing that is used like an electronic diary to record daily thoughts.

Consequently, a criticism of blogging is that in the form of a personal diary the content is often banal or vain. *The world’s most boring weblog* is an extreme example of this idea, where the writer describes daily events like, “Having stared at the computer screen for too long, my eyes began to ache”.¹⁶⁴ Beyond this

¹⁶¹ Geert Lovink, “Defining Open Publishing”, *My First Recession* (Rotterdam: V2_Publishing/Nai Publishers 2003), 226.

¹⁶² Torill Mortensen & Jill Walker, Researching ICTs in Context “Blogging thoughts: personal publication as an online research tool.” [www.intermedia.uio.no/konferanser/skiikt-02/docs/Researching ICTs in context -Ch11-Mortensen-Walker.pdf](http://www.intermedia.uio.no/konferanser/skiikt-02/docs/Researching%20ICTs%20in%20context-Ch11-Mortensen-Walker.pdf).

¹⁶³ Adrian Miles, weblog website, *Vlog 2.1*, <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/vlog/> (accessed June 21, 2003).

¹⁶⁴ “The world’s most boring weblog: Welcome back to my dull and dreary life.” <http://www.20six.co.uk/weblogCategory/11lq778zixbfo> Sunday, August 8, 2004 (accessed September 8, 2004).

immediate perception, blogging has grown in popularity mainly due to the potential of peer-to-peer¹⁶⁵ networking. The private is made public and blogs turn into a powerful global publishing medium. An example of this is the way politicians in the United States promote their political position and raise funds using blogs.

Miles, facing this criticism of vanity publishing, argues that a weblog has the potential to develop a particular voice for the blogger. Using a text-based blog as a portal for informal and formal academic discussion, Miles has developed his own personal point-of-view in the public domain of the Internet. His academic research in this form promotes a wider discourse and community beyond academic journals. The vlog, an offshoot of this blog, utilises the opportunity to publish video content globally. Miles proposes that advances in video technology and the increasing ubiquity of the medium promote the exploration of a different type of video practice on the Internet.

In addition to this, an examination of the motivation behind other 'video weblog' practice reveals a collective interest in the invention of a new way of working with video. Miles describes blogs as the first native genre on the web that doesn't use the page as the defacto mode.¹⁶⁶ Electronic writing in this environment moves beyond the parameters of the page due to the ability to link to other information on the Internet. Miles is interested in the concept of exploring video as a "writing practice", and joins other practitioners who recognize the potential to use video as a form of electronic writing.

¹⁶⁵ Peer-to-peer definition: Generally, a peer-to-peer (or P2P) computer network refers to any network that does not have fixed clients and servers, but a number of *peer* nodes that function as both clients and servers to the other nodes on the network. This model of network arrangement is contrasted with the client-server model. Any node is able to initiate or complete any supported transaction. Peer nodes may differ in local configuration, processing speed, network bandwidth, and storage quantity. Popular examples of P2P are file-sharing networks. <http://www.free-definition.com/Peer-to-peer.html> (accessed September 18, 2004).

¹⁶⁶ Miles, Interview, 6.

This leads to the MIT Media Lab 'Interactive Cinema'¹⁶⁷ research group's work with 'video weblogs' as a project listed in their research initiatives. Asling Kelliher, the researcher working on 'video weblogs', focuses on the historical use of the diary to authenticate actions as part of substantiating a person's day-to-day existence. Interested in the accessibility and ubiquity of video production tools, Kelliher is working on "developing a software tool that will provide users with a functional and uncomplicated method for publishing their video content online."¹⁶⁸ The underlying idea here is to produce an application that sets in place a production method and aesthetic approach, which makes video as quick to work with as the written word.¹⁶⁹ A 'Wiki'¹⁷⁰ list group calling themselves the "VideoBlogging People"¹⁷¹ have made their website a portal for links to videoblog perspectives and technical tips along with a historical timeline¹⁷² on the development of video blogs that starts with invention of the "Picturephone".¹⁷³ They say their objective is to develop a "language of video". Understanding how this concept will evolve will rely on the careful examination of how blogging operates successfully on the Internet.

In this light, *Collins Street* excludes an important factor that makes blogging so successful in a hypertext environment. Blogging uses the network capabilities of the

¹⁶⁷ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab 'Interactive Cinema' Group, <http://www.media.mit.edu/research/ResearchPubWeb.pl?ID=28> Interactive Cinema reflects the longing of cinema to become something new, something more complex, and something more personal, as if in "conversation with an audience." The story-form, which has evolved through the ages, is now being reinvented by the digital revolution. Principal Investigator: Glorianna Davenport.

¹⁶⁸ Asling Kelliher, "video blogs :: audiovisceral + digital dialogues + roballet + ic :: 2002 – 2004" <http://web.media.mit.edu/~aisling/research.html> (accessed 7 July, 2004).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Wiki definition: A collaborative Web site comprised of the perpetual collective work of many authors. Similar to a blog in structure and logic, a wiki allows anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the Web site using a browser interface, including the work of previous authors. In contrast, a blog, typically authored by an individual, does not allow visitors to change the original posted material, only add comments to the original content. The term *wiki* refers to either the Web site or the software used to create the site. <http://isp.webopedia.com/TERM/W/wiki.html> (accessed 14 September, 2004).

¹⁷¹ "VideoBlogging: HomePage", <http://www.me-tv.org/wakka.php?wakka=HomePage> , (accessed 7 July, 2004).

¹⁷² "An Early Timeline Of VideoBlogging", The Picturephone, - The first Picturephone test system, built in 1956, was crude - it transmitted an image only once every two seconds <http://www.mtv.org/wakka.php?wakka=VideoBloggingTimeline&v=xok> (accessed 7 July, 2004).

¹⁷³ AT&T labs Research. <http://www.research.att.com/history/70picture.html> (accessed 7th July, 2004).

Internet, and transforms the diary format from a conventional printed form into a medium that utilises the Internet as a substantial database and provides the potential to establish networked communities. In relation to this, *Collins Street* does not connect outside of itself – this vlog is a self-contained object. Miles has experimented with this concept in the vlog titled *vog roll 2.0*¹⁷⁴ which vertically lines up a number of small video shots of video bloggers like a text blog roll. Each video has a hypertext link to each person's website and video blogs. But in the main, like other video weblog practitioners, his focus is mainly on the development of video writing practice. This is about making video quick to work with like written text. Miles's concentration on researching video as an interactive form in many ways causes a shift away from the 'peer-to-peer' attribute of blogging. This aspect may develop more over time and raises an interesting point in regard to using an existing successful new media practice as a guide for the development of a new video practice. Both the medium and the technology need to be considered as part of this development. Video as medium will necessarily dictate a different form of new media compared to blogging. This is as noted in my discussion of the relationship between older and new media forms.

4.4 Cultural Codes

In this second section, an examination of the influences of established cultural codes on the development of video practice extends this contextual framework on vogs. This leads into an analysis of traditional cinematic representation and the relationship between this practice and new media technologies. Comprehending this relationship and the negotiations that this practitioner makes in regard to these cultural codes provides some insights into the formation of this video practice. Furthermore, this background provides a framework to analyse the structural form of vogs.

¹⁷⁴ Adrian Miles, *vog roll 2.0* August 24, 2004, http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/vog_archive/2004_08.html (accessed 25 November, 2004).

Put succinctly, established media forms like traditional cinema and television have a significant influence over the progression of new video practices. A friction occurs between the domination of these older cultural conventions and defining this vlogging practice. This friction occurs when the existing cultural paradigms of cinema and television become a benchmark to develop video content on new media platforms. This benchmark frequently causes a misinterpretation of new media technologies and the resulting practice in many cases is a poor version of the older media form. Stuart Moulthrop looks back historically at comments made by Marshall McLuhan to draw attention to the development of content that attempts to transfer old media forms onto new media technologies:

As McLuhan observed, rapidly changing societies tend perversely to assign new technologies the work of old, producing oxymorons like “televised hearings,” “live recording,” or “electronic book[s].” These conceptual crossovers often represent unfortunate misunderstandings of new media.¹⁷⁵

Discussing these misappropriations with Miles in the interview, he pointed out that the companies that survived the dotcom crash in the late 1990s had a very clear understanding of the characteristics of the Internet and a networked environment.¹⁷⁶

The quest to make the Internet a version of television demonstrates this point. The technology journalist Leslie Walker discusses (in 2002) the race by the large computer conglomerates to reproduce TV on the Internet, and describes their quest as a desire to “create a Web version of TV.”¹⁷⁷ Walker examines the ongoing mission to produce the technology that will allow video streaming to achieve the same almost faultless real-time movement we see on TV or in the cinema. Walker, in reflecting on past failures and “mega-flops” by conglomerates who have come and gone, remains unsure if this “would-be-mass medium is ready for the masses.”¹⁷⁸ However, the race continues to create Internet TV. Apple computers, at

¹⁷⁵ Stuart Moulthrop, “Beyond the Electronic Book: A Critique of Hypertext Rhetoric” in *Hypertext '91 Proceedings*, eds. P.D. Stotts and R.K. Furuta (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 1991), 294.

¹⁷⁶ Miles, Interview, 4.

¹⁷⁷ Leslie Walker, Washington Post, July 2002, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/technology/columns/dotcom/>.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 2002.

their 2002 Developers Conference,¹⁷⁹ proudly compared an uncompressed QuickTime movie alongside their latest upgraded compressed version and asked the large audience to spot any differences in the video and audio quality. Apple is collaborating with other large technical corporations to develop an improved standard compression codec for streaming audio and video on the web. The aim for Microsoft and Apple separately is to achieve “unparalleled quality” when it comes to “streaming audio and video content on the web.”¹⁸⁰ This objective plays a significant role in the development of new media technologies and the direction of video practice.

Because of the domination of these cinematic and audio-visual conventions, the development of new media curriculum is also affected. In the Bachelor of Arts Multimedia program that I was involved in, the video course titled “Digital Moviemaking” used mainly cinematic conventions as a benchmark for the course content, even though in multimedia, video as a medium is utilised across a variety of platforms in combination with other mediums and (as discussed above) is often re-purposed for cross-media distribution. The result is a number of varying audio-visual forms that are both linear and interactive. Therefore, I suggest in the example of the Digital Moviemaking course discussed, that the video curriculum needs to be based on both old and new media video practices, within the context of a Multimedia degree program. Lovink, in an article titled “The Battle over New Media Education”,¹⁸¹ argues that the film and television industry is recognised as a benchmark for developing new media education programs in many tertiary institutes. This is because there is still the notion that students trained in new media will find positions in the film and television industry.¹⁸²

Similarly, the cultural influences of older media affect the interpretation of new media technologies. The comprehension of the proprietary software QuickTime used to produce vogs is evidence of this factor. Understanding this software as

¹⁷⁹ Apple Developers Conference, San Jose, California, 2002.

<http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2002/apr/15wwdc.html>

¹⁸⁰ Apple Computers website, <http://www.apple.com/> (accessed June 2002).

¹⁸¹ Lovink, “The Battle over New Media Education”, *My First Recession*.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 173.

simply being a movie player reflects this dependence. A web-surfer viewing a QuickTime movie, downloaded from the World Wide Web onto their desktop, could easily mistake QuickTime as a computer version of a VCR player. Examining the introduction of video being screened on a computer, Manovich describes QuickTime as a technology “that turned the computer into a film projector”.¹⁸³ This could be an acceptable way to analyse this transition but alternatively QuickTime is more than a “film projector” or VCR player. The *Webmonkey*¹⁸⁴ website describes QuickTime not only as a “video compression tool” but also a comprehensive “multimedia platform”. The Apple website explains how QuickTime can handle “over 200 digital media capabilities and components”.¹⁸⁵ This software accepts a large number of media formats in their original form and can publish these natively from a server to the web. QuickTime operates not only as audio-visual player but also as a media publisher in “networked environments”. Furthermore, multimedia authoring, audio, publishing, third party plug-ins, media skins, interactivity, streaming, and compression form part of the development of this software.¹⁸⁶ The point here is not to promote Apple or this software, but use it as an example to show how older media cultural values can often inhibit the understanding of new media technologies.

The appropriation of older cultural values is analysed further by Vivian Sobchack in the article “Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of QuickTime” (2000)¹⁸⁷ Why QuickTime movies were ever called “movies” is challenged by Sobchack, who refers to Manovich’s theory that “the language of cultural interfaces is largely made up from elements of other, already familiar cultural forms”.¹⁸⁸ The point that Manovich makes is that the interfaces we engage with on the computer are not defined by technology alone, but are instead determined by cultural codes. They evolve not due to the demands of technology via a technologically determinist

¹⁸³ Manovich, “The New Language of Cinema”, *The Language of New Media*, 313.

¹⁸⁴ *Webmonkey*

http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/01/42/index4a_page2.html?tw=multimedia

¹⁸⁵ Apple QuickTime <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/whyq> (accessed September 10, 2002).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Vivian Sobchack, “Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of QuickTime”, in *The Digital Millennium Film Journal* No. 34 (Fall 1999): 3.

<http://mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ34/VivianSobchack.html>

¹⁸⁸ Manovich, “The Language of Cultural Interfaces”, *The Language of New Media*, 71.

perspective, but due to social needs. In order to understand changes in communication styles and formats, recognized cultural forms (like cinema) are used as benchmarks to establish meaning. In this example, the cultural conventions of cinema provide a way to understand the new media software QuickTime. The word “movies” represents the specific functionality and particular principles associated with cinema paradigms. These metaphors may help with understanding a new medium, Sobchack suggests, but they can also create a degree of “blindness” in relation to understanding the distinct attributes of that medium. This may hold back the way in which the medium progresses or is used. Sobchack prefers the term “memory boxes” rather than “movies”, arguing that QuickTime as an authoring architecture offers the potential, like the computer database, to store a variety of data types. Writing about single-channel video streamed off the web in 1999, Sobchack pre-emptes the potential of QuickTime as interactive “containers” (or miniature databases).¹⁸⁹

In order to counteract the boundaries that older media conventions impose, Manovich argues, for the term ‘object’ to deal with the complexity of convergence and promote the development of new practices not necessarily tied to a specific category. ‘Object’ is a useful term for new media content, he claims, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the diversity of new media content produced crosses all areas of practice in pure and hybrid forms. Therefore, there is a need for a term that allows for a variety of hybrid forms that often have crossovers with aspects of art, design and media. Secondly, there is a historical connection with the methodologies set up by the “avant-garde artists of the 1920s”.¹⁹⁰ The philosophy of these artists towards producing art as ‘objects’ provides a perspective for the production of new media content. Referring to the “laboratory experimentation” that took place in this period, Manovich proposes that new media provides the potential to explore innovative practices using technology. These artists in essence used this term to break down the demarcation of genres in order to produce new types of content and subsequently the influences of established art and media forms. The term ‘object’ from Manovich’s perspective provides a way to avoid this confusion or necessity to

¹⁸⁹ Sobchack, “Nostalgia for a Digital Object”.

¹⁹⁰ Manovich, “The Terms: Language, Object, Representation”, *The Language of New Media*, 15.

be specific about categories. Thirdly, due to the hybrid nature of new media practices there is often a problem in categorizing content. For example, Chris Chesher's paper titled "Dis>play: Is this a game? Or is it art?" explores the blurring of classification that can occur between commercial software computer games and art that use the same technologies.¹⁹¹ Finally, a recognisable term sets up a framework to represent the underlying ideologies of the new media field.¹⁹² In conclusion, Manovich's exploration of a term that describes new media practice is another example of the significant influences of established media conventions.

In fact, the more familiar a form of media becomes, the more influence this form has on the development of new media. Weibel and Shaw share similar frustrations with Miles on the dominating conventions of traditional cinema. They argue that the supremacy of traditional cinema disadvantages the development of "cinematic representation" using new technologies. Weibel insists that new technologies and the creation of "platforms", like the Internet for example, offer opportunities to experiment with the traditional notion of cinema.¹⁹³ The model of traditional cinema, Shaw argues, is restricting the development of these varying directions: "despite cinema's heritage of technological and creative diversity, it is Hollywood that has come to define its dominant forms of production and distribution, its technological apparatus and narrative forms."¹⁹⁴ This argument connects directly with Miles's observation that any modifications in practice "generally maintain cinema and television as a specific cultural institution, so what has been affected are the means and processes of production, but not the form itself."¹⁹⁵ These practitioners are examining the parameters of new technologies to guide their practice rather than relying solely on existing cultural conventions. Similarly, this interest motivates Sobchack's article on QuickTime.

¹⁹¹ Chris Chesher, "Dis>play: Is this a game? Or is it art?" Full Screen presentation National Gallery Australia http://www.nga.gov.au/fullscreen/details/dis_paper.cf (2004).

¹⁹² Manovich, "The Terms: Language, Object, Representation", *The Language of New Media*, 14-15.

¹⁹³ Shaw and Weibel, eds., *Future Cinema*, 16-17.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Miles, "Softvideography", 1.

Sobchack's analysis of the motivations behind full screen, high-resolution video on the Internet demonstrates this motivation. Referring to the cinema theorist Andre Bazin, she argues that the underlying principle of the creators of cinema was to reproduce what we see of the world, as it exists, with our naked eye.¹⁹⁶ This is a flawlessly reconstructed artifice of the world around us, a principle that still dominates any "technical discoveries" filmmakers create as part of producing cinema. Miles expresses frustration with the way film and TV practitioners want to hang onto "full screen, full motion and absolutely full user control".¹⁹⁷ Sobchack examines instead the present characteristics of streaming QuickTime movies and acknowledges the existence of a new resulting form which has developed due to the limitations of Internet technologies. The current real-time playback faults in QuickTime movie streaming are celebrated, the "...gaps, gasps, starts, and repetitions",¹⁹⁸ the "miniature" frame sizes. She laments the eventual demise of present video streaming technology due to the aim to advance technology to meeting this older representational precedent.

The examination of these relationships between the development of new technologies and cinematic representation feature in the book *Future Cinema*. This large collection of new modes of cinematic practice represents examples that Weibel argues are "not inspired by "total cinema" in Andre Bazin's sense of a total representation and mechanical reproduction of reality."¹⁹⁹ Miles's vlogging, along with practices collated together in *Future Cinema*, eventuate because the practitioners are interested in discovering new ways of perceiving cinema. Weibel argues that these practitioners aim to:

Deconstruct the total apparatus of cinema, to transform the cinematic apparatus, and create new technologies that allow different psychic mechanisms, that subjugate subjects in the cinema, that allow different relations between the spectator and the screen different representations/constructions of reality and subjects, a critical relation to representation.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Andre Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema", *What is Cinema*, Trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 17.

¹⁹⁷ Miles, Interview, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Sobchack, "Nostalgia for a Digital Object", 2.

¹⁹⁹ Shaw and Weibel, eds., *Future Cinema*, 17.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

The basis of this argument centres on the notion that developments in traditional cinematic practice are due to alterations occurring in what Weibel calls the “cinematic apparatus”. A simplistic historical analogy that demonstrates how a change in the “cinematic apparatus” can affect content is when cinema shifted from mute sound to integrated vision and audio. Miles sets himself the task of defining a video practice that emerges due to what he describes as “utilising available technologies”.²⁰¹ In conclusion, both Miles and the editors of *Future Cinema* argue that film and video practice is influenced by the attributes of new media technologies.

4.5 Screen Collage

This third section connects the specific attributes of hypertext and the Graphic User Interface (GUI) with the construction of this emerging video practice. It begins with a visual survey of the fragmentation of the frame occurring in *Collins Street*, which leads into an analysis of the role hypertext and the GUI play in determining a “multilinear” video form (4.5, 4.6). The objective is to provide some insights into the methods of integration used in hypermedia compared to intermedia. A comparison between the integration techniques used in *eurovision* compared to *Collins Street* extends this analysis. Overall, the objective of this section is to make connections with some of the points raised in case study one.

In *Collins Street*, the frame is sliced up, and fragments into multiple frames. Even though the scale of this QuickTime movie is small within the computer window, the visual information scales down even further due to this fragmentation. The video shots of *Collins Street* convey a multi-perspective impression of the street, not through conventional full-screen video, but by screening a number of small frames simultaneously. As in *eurovision*, the representation of the visual elements takes on a form of “spatial montage” (discussed in case study one), where the emphasis shifts from the concept of cause and effect in temporal montage to a focus on

²⁰¹ Charles Green, ed., *2004, Exhibition Catalogue* (Melbourne: Australia Centre for the Moving Image and National Gallery Victoria, 2004), 171.

associations between separate images. Editing and temporal montage operate within the fragments, but the term 'montage' in this context becomes problematic, as Miles points out in one of the voice-over tracks – “What is montage when you have a multi-linear video system?”²⁰² Miles experiments with the relationships between these separate elements within the frame, exploring the concept where “montage is collapsing into collage”.²⁰³ To understand the notion of collage in this context, it is helpful to firstly consider what is meant by “multilinear”.

In effect, Miles argues, the major reason why the form of video is not explored is that there is limited experimentation beyond one-channel, full-screen film and television practice. Miles states that the core of this issue centres on the perception “that video for software designers, users, consumers is still conceived as a linear, time-based object, that consists principally of an image and a sound track.”²⁰⁴ Instead, Miles uses the potentialities of a hypertext environment and the functionality of the GUI to experiment with video as a multilinear form. The screen fractures into multiple windows that operate simultaneously. Multiple images and sound tracks remain separate or mix together depending on where the user ‘mouses’ within the frame. The content is the result of adapting video as a form into multilinear hypertext and GUI. Central to this multilinear nature of hypertext is the ability to construct relationships between multitudes of disparate forms of media. George Landow presents this concept in the article “Hypertext as Collage Writing”,²⁰⁵ where he states that this type of structure consists of:

Text composed as lexias (blocks of words, moving or static images, or sounds) linked electronically by multiple paths, chains, or trails in an open-ended web. Since readers can take different paths through such bodies of information, hypertext is therefore properly described as multisequential or multilinear rather than as nonlinear writing.²⁰⁶

²⁰² Miles, *Collins Street*, Vog.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Miles, “Softvideography”, 2.

²⁰⁵ George Landow, “Hypertext as Collage-Writing”, in *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media*, ed. Peter Lunefeld (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 150-170.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 153.

In the context of a writing practice, Bolter describes hypertext as a form of writing, which breaks down the sequential “hierarchical” process used in writing for print. He argues that writing in a multilinear fashion provides the opportunity to develop a networked structure. Bolter illustrates a version of “electronic hypertext” by describing how a book, for example, is sliced into a multitude of meaningful sentences. The process of creating multilinear associations between these sentences forms a “network” of meaning. This networking process is not limited to electronic forms like the Internet. The use of indexing in printed books also follows a similar non-hierarchy, making random associations between different subject ideas. The difference, Bolter argues, is that “digital technology” offers more potential to develop this multilinear approach and how the end result is displayed to the user.²⁰⁷ Another important part of this multilinear display in the context of vogs is the Graphical User Interface (GUI).

The GUI is central to the multilinear display of vogs on the computer screen. Manovich, in examining the Human Computer Interface (HCI), explains a major difference between the computer screen and the conventional television screen. He claims that whereas the latter provides a framed view into a defined area of visual and aural material, the GUI also offers functions whereby the user can manipulate both space and time.²⁰⁸ Miles, analysing writing in an electronic environment, points out the potentiality of this difference:

This means that content spaces are no longer pages but screens, they can be multiple, variable in size, altered by the user, and that content can now be presented, and not only written, in multilinear and multisequential ways.²⁰⁹

Miles argues that this defies the notion of pursuing a progressive sequential order that is contained within a single full-screen frame like in most cinema and television. The user instead works with a multitude of media forms simultaneously and therefore develops literacies around this type of functionality (as discussed in the previous case study). Manovich proposes that the computer screen relies not on a single frame that takes up the entire screen surface, but on a number of frames

²⁰⁷ David Bolter, “Hypertext and the Remediation of Print”, in *Writing Space*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 32-36.

²⁰⁸ Manovich, “The Language of Cultural Interfaces”, in *The Language of New Media*, 88-93.

²⁰⁹ Miles, “Softvideography”, 5.

positioned within the boundaries of the frame. This promotes a reliance on viewing multiple frames concurrently.²¹⁰

Therefore, the resulting fragmentation of the frame in *Collins Street* is in effect a form of 'collage' which emulates the influences of the GUI, rather than controlled montage. Landow describes collage historically as a cutting and pasting technique that combines different media forms and found objects (in the example of Cubist works) together mainly in the form of static paintings. He proposes that hypertext writing uses similar collage properties to Cubist painting, whereby in the process of "juxtaposition, appropriation, assemblage, and concatenation"²¹¹, associations form between differing elements. In the electronic environment of hypertext, each element is a node and links between such nodes create associations. The ability to use links to initiate these collage properties provides the opportunity to use both collage and montage in *Collins Street*. Furthermore, Landow claims that any screen that is capable of displaying a number of windows provides a setting for the creation of collage. On the computer, therefore, visual and aural data can be collaged together as well as text.²¹² In summary, the fragmenting of the frame in *Collins Street* works with montage in the form of edited moving-imagery in combination with collage.

4.6 Hypermedia Video

Another factor that affects this fragmentation and the combining of different images and sounds in *Collins Street* is the integration methodologies of hypermedia. In short, hypermedia uses hyperlinks to integrate plain text, video, audio, and still images into, in most, cases a non-linear narrative structure. In *Collins Street*, a networked multilinear structure provides the opportunity to keep these varying elements separate compared to the final mixed process used in one-channel video.

²¹⁰ Manovich, "The Language of Cultural Interfaces", in *The Language of New Media*, 94-103.

²¹¹ Landow, "Hypertext as Collage-Writing", 57.

²¹² Ibid, 55-63.

Speilmann argues that the main objective in hypermedia is to determine how to retrieve these separate elements. The differences between each form of media are not the main priority in the integration process as it is in intermedia.²¹³ In the intermedia work *eurovision*, Wallace spent a significant amount of time balancing the differences of each media form to produce the final audio-visual result. The integration of the each varying element is based on a careful consideration of scale, repetition, composition and audio level. The prominence of an element in terms of what the viewer will gravitate towards to understand the narrative is also evaluated as part of this integration process. In an article on hypertext, Moulthrop points out that media forms like television favour one modality, in this case sight, in order to achieve an integration which will be understood by the viewer. This concept also applies to other media forms, such as radio, where audio and subsequently hearing is the predominating modality. He proposes that hypertext, due to the historical relationship it has with “literature”, relies instead on a similar interpretation process in combination with sensory “perception”. *Collins Street* is an audio-visual form of hypermedia that favours associations between separate images and sounds rather than one modality. Miles argues that, “hypertext can be viewed as a post-cinematic writing practice in its combination of meaningful units (shots and nodes) and their possible relations (edits and links.)”²¹⁴ Following this objective results in a different type of integration compared to intermedia.

Collins Street as a form of hypermedia demonstrates a different form of integration compared to *eurovision*. The audio tracks running simultaneously often compete with each other, making it hard to understand the individual narration tracks. This contrasts with the careful mixing of multiple audio tracks in television to produce a coherent outcome for the viewer. The audio tracks generally share equal importance amongst each other, which contradicts a conventional television mix where one element is required to dominate the narrative. The other audio tracks mixed behind the narration focus on communicating the spoken word clearly to the viewer. In this vlog, the user can choose uneven mixes of all the audio or each track separately. Mousing disrupts the time-based video fragments running

²¹³ Speilmann, “Intermedia in Electronic Images”, 59-60.

²¹⁴ Miles, “Softvideography”, 3.

simultaneously, along with activating sections of text that appear through the video imagery. The interactive authoring makes it very difficult to read this text. This seems to signify the practitioner's intent, which is for the user to engage with parts rather than the whole. The user instigates the integration of the separate media forms. The user has to learn how to integrate the most understandable configuration by engaging with varying combinations using the mouse. Overall, the integration of the varying elements fractures the video space. Miles in an audio track describes the vog as being a "sketch"²¹⁵ where the idea is not to spend time on the carefully constructed integration that normally goes into audio-video production. In effect, Miles experiments with multiple combinations of the media forms he has assembled. He configures these combinations to engage the user in the integration of the separate media forms.

To conclude this case study analysis, *Collins Street* is a form of video practice that experiments with the specificities of new media technologies to determine a video form that reflects the cultural codes emerging on the Internet; a shift towards viewing literacies of concomitant and multiple simultaneous associations, as discussed in case study one. Both *Collins Street* and *eurovision* in their own ways negotiate the growing importance of space in the construction of narrative using video. Both also negotiate the redefinition of narrative as a multisequential structure. A key difference is that *eurovision* constructs this type of narrative for a passive viewer compared to an active user in *Collins Street*. In *eurovision* the concept of multiple streams of data in the browser window is transferred from the Internet onto one-channel video. Through a process of intermedia, transformations are created not by interactive links but by the differences between the media forms. The focus is on layering these differences together to control the sensory perception of the viewer and guide them in the formation of associations. In *Collins Street*, however, the focus is on the assembly and linking of separate elements into a structure that involves the user in the process of making associations. These different responses towards the integration of multiple elements begin to provide some insights into approaches towards digital video practice in new media.

²¹⁵ Adrian Miles, "vogma", *videoblog: vog* <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/manifesto/>, 6 December 2000 (accessed 8th July 2004).

Conclusion

The Garden of the Forking Paths was the chaotic novel itself. The phrase ‘the various future but not at all’ suggested to me the bifurcating in time, not in space. Rereading the whole work confirmed this theory. In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of others. In the almost unfathomable Ts’ui Pen, he chooses - simultaneously - all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in turn branch out and bifurcate in other times.

-- Luis Borges²¹⁶

A German Spy, Yu Tsen, the narrator in the story, plans to murder Steven Albert – a man he selected randomly from the phone book. Albert has spent much of his life examining an incomprehensible novel written by Yu Tsen’s ancestor, Ts’ui Pen. Albert has taken on the difficult task of deciphering what he perceives as being a “chaotic novel” – a fictional story by the real life writer Luis Borges. Albert seeks a method of analysis that brings some type of order to the narrative structure. In this example, the term ‘chaos’ is used to describe Albert’s confusion – he is not able to make sense of the narrative based on the narrative conventions he already knows. Therefore, he examines the novel like a puzzle in order to determine an analytical method that will enable him to make sense of the narrative.

In relation to the video work analysed in the case studies, both Wallace and Miles investigate narrative structures that push towards establishing new conventions in terms of video practice within new media. Their video narratives at this point appear to be chaotic because these new conventions are still in the process of being formed. Therefore, the task for them and other video practitioners is to locate a form of order that can be deciphered or read by viewers.

²¹⁶ Luis Borges, “The Garden of the Forking Paths”, in *Ficciones*, ed. Anthony Kerrigan (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 98.

Paradoxically, the editors of the book *New Screen Media Cinema/Art/Narrative*²¹⁷ propose that there is currently a “narrative chaos” in the broader field of new media and specifically in relation to audio-visual practices. They assert that practitioners exploring new narrative structures that work across the intersection of both art and technology are creating this chaos. They open this book with a quote from the fiction writer Kurt Vonnegut who, writing about the construction of narrative in his novels, boldly claims that he “will bring chaos to order”. Instead of there being a main protagonist, all characters will be equally significant in his stories. Following his hypothesis, the reader has to make order out of the chaos that he writes. Vonnegut implies that it is necessary to deconstruct established conventions so that people can be shifted towards comprehending new narrative conventions.²¹⁸ Such a notion gestures towards the difficult negotiations necessary to the establishment of new video genres. Video practitioners devising new narrative structures negotiate both the formation of some type of order along with being prepared to let go of established ideas and conventions – often including what they understand to be the concept of ‘order’.

In effect the writing of Borges, and particularly the story *The Garden of the Forking Paths*, are also used by Carlos Basualdo to argue for a move towards a multilinear method of exhibiting contemporary art. Basualdo, writing in the catalogue for the international *Documenta11_Platform 5* contemporary art exhibition, reveals a method of exhibiting that allows multiple connections to occur simultaneously. Dealing with a large-scale exhibition with a broad range of artistic mediums along with artworks from around the globe, he is interested in breaking away from “linear” and “chronological” exhibiting methods. However, at the same time he is cautious of, as he states, “replacing a linear order for chaotic informality, the free co-existence of everything with everything”.²¹⁹ Instead he argues that through a careful process of planning and organisation, a sense of reasoning can be maintained. Ultimately, his goal is to create a multifaceted and complicated narrative structure

²¹⁷ Riesler and Zapp eds., “An Age of Narrative Chaos”, *New Screen Media Cinema/Art/Narrative*, xxv.

²¹⁸ Ibid, xxv-xxvii.

²¹⁹ Carlos Basualdo, “The Encyclopedia of Babel”, in *Documenta11_Platform 5*, Exhibition Catalogue, eds. Heike Ander and Nadja Rothner (Kassel, Museum Fridericianum Veranstaltungen-GmbH, 2002).

that is still comprehensible.²²⁰ In short, he demonstrates through his argument the need to locate and formulate multilinear structures that maintain a form of meaning for the viewer. Basualdo's referral to this type of curatorial approach provides another example culturally of the desire to investigate other narrative forms – in this case a multilinear form.

Similarly, Nick Montfort refers to Borges and the *The Garden of the Forking Paths* in connection with narrative developments in new media. Specifically, this is in connection with the formation of hypertext narrative structures. Montfort suggests that within this short story Borges explains the concept that a novel “can be read in multiple ways.”²²¹ This explanation is brought to the reader by Albert's efforts to make order out of narrative chaos. This notion of reading a novel in a multilinear way Montfort compares with the narrative structure of the hypertext novel, claiming that Borges conceived this narrative form before the creation of computers. Borges's multilinear approach towards narrative, Montfort argues, has acted as a guide for many new media practitioners to configure hypertext narratives.²²² Borges's early writing points, I suggest, towards the notion of a narrative form that is “yet to come” – that is still reaching towards its fulfilment as a form.

Thus, Wallace and Miles could be seen as being caught up in what Douglas Kellner describes as a shift towards the formation of “multiliteracies or multiple literacies” (3.6). In the article, “New Media and New Literacies: Reconstructing Education for the New Millennium”,²²³ Kellner argues for the re-development of conventional literacy foundations in order to meet the demands of change brought about by technology and new media. Contained within this argument is a focus on the development of these new literacies to meet the requirements of hypertext platforms like the Internet. He states that:

²²⁰ Ibid, 56-62.

²²¹ Nick Montfort, Introduction to “The Garden of the Forking Paths”, in *The New Media Reader*, eds. Noah Wadrip and Nick Montfort (Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 29.

²²² Ibid, 29-30.

²²³ Kellner, “New Media and New Literacies”, *The New Media Handbook*.

As technological convergence develops apace, one needs to combine the skills of critical media literacy and new forms of multiple literacies to access and master the new multimedia hypertext environments.²²⁴

In terms of working with hypertext constructs Wallace, in *eurovision*, produces a “linear version of an interactive project”²²⁵ as part of an aim to create a single-channel version of a number of frames streaming into the video screen - like an Internet browser window. Miles, stating that “video can be treated as hypertext”,²²⁶ merges cinematic practices with hypertext constructs (4.1). Both of these video practitioners explore, in line with Montfort’s notion of the hypertext novel and Borges’s story *The Garden of the Forking Paths*, the potential to read video narratives in a multilinear way. To sum up, the exploration of multilinear narrative structures in the case study video practices could be seen as being one part of the development of ‘multiple literacies’ in the broader field of new media.

At the outset in this *Video Chaos* dissertation, I asserted that the examination of current video practices would demonstrate an emerging trend towards disseminating audio-visual content simultaneously in the form of multilinear narrative structures. Consequently, I argued that this trend has caused significant development within video as a medium and, as seen in the case studies, is an effect of video new media artist-practitioners’ engagement with the relationships between art and technology. For these reasons, whilst a number of issues have come to the fore in this research, exploring the issues of narrative structuration has been the primary focus of this dissertation.

It follows, then, that a key issue that arises is determining a narrative structuration process that meets the social demand for the multiple simultaneous distribution of video content. Video as a “bastard medium” permits practitioners to fuse a mixed bag of mediums into multilinear narrative structures. But, as discussed, a significant issue is determining narratives that can be unraveled by the viewer - multilinear narratives that do not fall into chaos. So, a major contribution towards the outcome of this research is identifying the narrative structuration processes that begin to

²²⁴ Ibid, 96.

²²⁵ Munster, “eurovision”, *testpattern*, 10.

²²⁶ Miles, “Softvideography”, 13.

emerge as a result of examining the case studies. The following final analysis therefore makes connections with practice approaches in the case studies that begin to provide ideas for further research in this area. The following ideas also begin to provide a framework that may be applicable towards my own practice and teaching video in new media education.

A starting point is being clear about the form of media being worked with and the differences between intermedia and hypermedia. The analysis of *eurovision* as an intermedia form revealed that the narrative structuring follows different requirements compared to the *vogs* practice (4.6). In intermedia, as Spielmann argued, a mix of media are combined at the interface in a way that causes a “transformation” to occur, which subsequently produces a new form of media. Jurgen Heinrichs and Spielmann state:

Whereas intertextuality explores text-to-text relationships, *intermediality* addresses the merger and transformation of elements of differing media.²²⁷

An objective of intermedia, Spielmann claims, is to question existing media forms. This is an objective Wallace achieves by following a precise and calculated integration process that primarily draws attention, in this example, to cinema and televisual forms. Heinrichs and Spielmann state that:

Intermedia self-reflexively reveals the form of the medium itself: it draws attention to its mixed nature from multiple perspectives.²²⁸

To sum up then, the narrative aim in hypermedia, according to Spielmann, also follows a “multiple perspective” paradigm. But the objective in hypermedia is to create links between separate media forms through multilinear narrative structures.²²⁹ In *vogs* the focus is on linking data together rather than making an intermedia “transformation” occur on the surface of the screen. These differing

²²⁷ Jurgen Heinrichs and Yvonne Spielmann, eds., “Editorial”, *Convergence: The Journal of Research into Media Technologies*, Winter 2002, Volume 8, Number 4, Special Issue; What is Intermedia, (University of Luton Press), 5.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 5-7.

objectives denote a different approach towards the structure of multilinear narrative in *eurovision* compared to the hypermedia *vogs* practice.

Another factor is determining the specific attributes of the mediums being worked with and how these may restrict or enhance a multilinear narrative approach, a factor that is often blinded by the desire to reproduce existing media forms on other platforms (4.4). In Miles's *vogs* manifesto he stresses that "A vog is not streaming video (this is not the reinvention of television)."²³⁰ A vog is not merely a TV program streamed off the web, a vog is interactive and utilises the attributes of a networked online environment. In an interview, Miles explained the importance of understanding the specific attributes of a medium and how these attributes play a crucial role in the production of content and subsequently in narrative structuration.²³¹ Using the Digital Video Disc (DVD) format as an example he points out that a:

DVD is a publication medium, the materiality of the DVD – what it affords us as filmmakers is fundamentally different to what TV or Cinema affords...rather than treating it as a publication medium or distribution medium – think of it as an authoring medium...to put it in a very simple way, what is the grammar of the medium?²³²

In regards to new media practice, Miles suggests that a key objective is to develop a thorough understanding of the "technologies" being used – an engagement in his *vogs* practice that intersects across both art and technology.²³³ *Blogs* are a successful genre on the Internet and used as an example to develop an understanding of the specific characteristics of the Internet (4.3). *Vogs* as a genre of video practice demonstrate the practitioner's understanding of the characteristics of video and the Internet. Through what he calls "sketches", Miles explores potential multilinear narrative structures that reflect and work within the parameters of these two mediums.

²³⁰ Adrian Miles, weblog website, Vlog 2.1, <http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/vlog/> (accessed January 21, 2005).

²³¹ Miles, Interview, 3.

²³² *Ibid*, 3.

²³³ *Ibid*, 10.

The next significant stage is verifying and recognising the type of multilinear narrative structures that may be applicable to both the mediums being used and the attributes of those mediums. In essence this is an analytical inquiry that comprises an extension of this research project. In direct relation to the case studies, *eurovision*, I assert, follows an open structure in which Wallace aims to promote a diverse range of readings for each viewer. Therefore, associations across the multiple frames on the screen are open and complex. But at the same time the closed structure of the Bergman and Godard films provide a connection back to a conventional known narrative structure (3.4). A similar open approach is noted in Finola Jones's video work, *Artificially Constructed Habitats*, where multitude screens positioned in varying clusters are used to increase and fragment associations across the material presented (2.3). An example that could be seen as being a closed structure is a diptych or triptych painting, whereby the viewer is asked to view all the paintings as a whole. In many cases this is left to right in a chronological progression. The vog *Collins Street* in essence uses a triptych composition to display a number of perspectives of Collins Street concurrently. If the interactivity is not engaged with in *Collins Street*, the narrative structure could be seen as being relatively closed. But mousing over the work fractures this simplicity and produces more complex arrangements of vision and audio. In *eurovision*, complexity is created on the surface of the screen in what is a fixed single-channel work. Overall, these types of observations begin to recognise the complex and varied types of narrative structuration that are possible.

A prime example of this open and closed approach towards narrative structure was reiterated in a lecture given by Ross Gibson. Covering a topic titled "The Risk of the Dramatic Database",²³⁴ Gibson claims that narrative in cinema, printed on film, presents a closed or locked-off structure that is broken by interactivity and a medium like the Internet. Mediums like the Internet for example, he argues, demand open-ended narratives. In the construction of vogs, Miles encourages his students

²³⁴ Ross Gibson, "The Risk of the Dramatic Database", *New Media Lecture Series* (Centre for New Media Arts, The Australian National University and The National Museum of Australia, September 3, 2004). Gibson discusses the social, psychological and aesthetic conditions that have given rise to new cultural forms like dynamic databases, multimedia engines and adaptive algorithms.

to utilise the multilinearity of a hypertext structure – to create narrative structures that allow for several audio tracks to run concurrently, and still being coherent if the user moves at any moment from one to another.²³⁵ This type of multilinear narrative requires an open structure that allows for alterations to occur as part of the user engaging with the work. When Gibson was queried about the type of theoretical references that are available to provide guidelines for structuring open-ended narratives, he referred to Garden theory: the varied techniques used to design and sustain gardens by different cultures, he claims, provide some insights into how to combine multiple elements together in new media. This is an example of the appropriations of rules and systems to another form, and yet to be fully formulated in relation to multilinear narratives.

Another significant factor that emerged as a part of configuring the multilinear narrative structures in the case studies is a focus on both time and space. Firstly, Borges's concept of time in the story *The Garden of the Forking Paths*²³⁶ draws attention to the different moments in time being presented concurrently. Janet Murray argues that time in the novel, within this short story by Borges, is not fixed. Time instead forks in a number of directions and presents the potential for a number of time periods to exist simultaneously.²³⁷ This is a notion in evidence in Albert's explanation that "the various future but not at all' suggested to me the bifurcating in time, not in space."²³⁸ Both Wallace and Miles explore the simultaneous display of differing time periods within the screen space. In *eurovison* a number of time periods are placed alongside each other using photos, film and video. In the vlog *Collins Street*, unless a number of cameras recorded video all at the same time, the varying shots of Collins Street in Melbourne are recorded at different times. The collection of varying shots are then placed alongside each other and run concurrently. In contrast, a flashback in a full-screen feature film is unable to be viewed alongside another time period. Hence, in a split-screen video work the potential to present a number of time periods concurrently becomes an integral component of the multilinear narrative structure.

²³⁵ Miles, Interview, 9.

²³⁶ Borges, "The Garden of the Forking Paths", *Ficciones*, 1962.

²³⁷ Janet H. Murray, *Hamlet of the Holodeck; The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 31.

²³⁸ Borges, "The Garden of the Forking Paths", *Ficciones*, 98.

The temporal structure of a time-based narrative in many cases influences the spatial composition and subsequently the overall narrative structure. In other words, a conventional and known narrative structure becomes a starting point to determine the multilinear structure. In the production of *eurovision*, Wallace experimented for some time to work out a framework for the narrative structure (3.3). In the final result Wallace uses the feature film excerpts as the pivotal and major visual element to build both the spatial and temporal narrative around. The other major narrative influence is the Eurovision song contestants' performances. The four contestants, of four different nationalities, provide breaks to section the overall video work into four parts. In the vlog *Collins Street*, a complex number of audio-visual elements are hyperlinked into a simple time-based visual narrative. The video images basically capture the part of one day at the Collins Street location. This video material is then sliced up and fragmented with other video shots, but overall the viewer watches events occurring on Collins Street from a number of different perspectives. A number of Miles's other blogs often utilise one recorded video shot (a moment in time) which allows for the complex introduction of other media forms using hyperlinks (4.2). A final example is the feature film *Timecode*. In a split-screen of four frames the director, Mike Figgis, displays action that is recorded in one take from four different perspectives. The audience, dealing with a complex audio edit that moves them from one frame to another and watching four frames of moving-imagery simultaneously, are given one chronological time period to comprehend. The narrative structure of the time-based material plays a crucial role in the spatial composition and the overall multilinear narrative structuration.

So the use of space becomes a predominant aspect of multilinear narrative structures, the notion being that space and time have equal importance in the configuration of new media narratives (3.5). Also presented in this section was the Manovich argument that a number of time-based narratives presented beside each other produce an effect that he calls "spatial montage". In hypermedia, links produce the same effect in static visual material by introducing new elements into the frame. The use of space brings a new dimension to defining narrative structures. He states that "the logic of replacement, characteristic of cinema, gives

way to a logic of addition and coexistence.”²³⁹ These two defining attributes are evident in both of the case studies. In *eurovision* there is an emphasis on “co-existence”, whereby templates are devised to configure the compositional layout of elements alongside each other in the frame. The composition, the configuration of the frames in the screen space, is combined with temporal editing to produce the final narrative structure. In the vlog *Collins Street*, in addition to defining the composition of the multiple frames, a key factor is configuring the introduction of other elements into the screen space using hyperlinks – in this case text and a number of audio tracks. Spatial composition is combined with hyperlinks which, as Miles suggests, are equivalent in function to cinematic edits.²⁴⁰ Overall, in differing ways these video practitioners work, as Manovich also argued, with both the temporal attribute of “replacement” along with the spatial attributes of “addition and coexistence.”

The conclusion to be drawn from this research project is that there are a number of issues associated with determining multilinear narratives and structures in new media video. In a broader context, there is a social and cultural gravitation towards the presentation of new cultural texts and content in the form of poly-sequential structures. The New Media field evolves and develops to meet this demand for new types of “multiliteracies”. Consequently, the immediate challenge, as demonstrated in the case studies, is determining multilinear narratives and structures that begin to transform established audio-visual viewing conventions and develop the concept of multiliteracies. But the concept of multiliteracies in many ways only becomes fully known when specific literacy conventions are reached and established – a notion that makes it difficult to define a narrative structuration process in any complete way in advance.

Furthermore, intersections are required across both cultural constructs and video technologies in order to meet the demand for new types of content. In this scenario, the varying available technologies are the tools in the process of production. However, the constant advancement of video technologies opens up a plethora of

²³⁹ Manovich, 325.

²⁴⁰ Miles, “Softvideography”, 3.

multilinear narrative options. These structural options change along with advances in technology and the prospective ways that those technologies can be used.

Also, technological advancements may often be instigated by financial and political motives, along with the influences of established cultural conventions. Such ideological investments often confuse the development of a narrative structuration process that is attempting to express emerging social desires. In other words, the production of any type of cultural text is both constrained and liberated by the forces that are at work on it, including both commercial and political motives as part of broader social developments. However, it is through the very struggle for such expression that new forms emerge.

Finally, as demonstrated in the case studies, the configuration of multilinear narrative structures shifts from a focus on 'narration' itself to a process that relies on the formation and linking of varying elements of data. The new media video practitioner working with the computational potentiality of digital technologies engages with the possible structural configurations that fit within the parameters of the technologies being used. Perhaps this engagement may lead to audio-visual chaos or eventually to varying types of recognisable viewing conventions. The novelist and critic Norman Klein reiterates this notion:

We must become structuralists again, not postmoderns. We can do this...All forms of narrative should be put up to question; all forms of identity in story. Beginnings, middles, and ends should be re-evaluated. Nothing that is taken for granted should be ignored. We start from scratch, but with sensory and political realities of the moment. Be a trifle clumsy, be a trifle risky. Trust your ability to get lost in order to find something.²⁴¹

End.

²⁴¹ Norman Klein, "Inside the Stomach of the Dragon: The Victory of the Entertainment Economy", in *Eyebeam Journal: Dissecting Art and Culture* (January 2005), http://www.eyebeam.org/reblog/journal/archives/2005/01/inside_the_stomach_of_the_dragon.html.

>>Video Chaos

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Image 3 - eurovision



Image 4 - Collins Street, Vog

Case Study One - Interview

Video practice: *eurovision*

Date: January 2004

Location: Brisbane

Interviewee: Linda Wallace

Interviewer: Seth Keen

LW I was watching when you were talking, this work is what I'm doing now in video, it's really a progression from what I was doing in the mid '90's, which was multiple monitor. It was the only way to get a number of different ... well when I started in analogue, if you look at some of the very early works from 1984; I was already working with multiple narratives there. I had a sound track that was doing one narrative and I was only working on the level that you could present something in the sound and something in the visual that was slightly different and what you'd get in the centre was like a ruptured space that people could go anywhere with. And, they'd get clues presented to them in the sound and in the picture and because they were often disjunctive - sometimes they're parallel, sometimes quite disjunctive - there was this space in between like a crack, a fault line in between those two elements, the sound and the image. And it was in that space or crack that opened up, where everything wasn't just synched - there was a lot of space. In that space it was like what you were reading from the book the other day, opening up kind of cracks in the surface through which other things could move, elements could move.

SK Like you were saying...could enter the screen...with material?

LW I guess - I don't know, a lot of the work from then was, as it is now for people sitting in a theatre space, a big space, with screening they're surrounded by sound - a cinematic experience. Essentially that's what I'm working with even though a lot of the work is installation, but essentially most of this work is still in the film distribution mode and it's shown at festivals and so that's pretty powerful. But, rather than doing what cinema does, which is a synched narrative with the sound track and visual following each other in close parallel, what I'm doing is rupturing that all the time to open potential spaces for people to travel down. And, what I'm trying to do with those ruptures is set up a kind of maximum scenario where everybody who's in the audience, say there's 100 people sitting in that theatre - and that was very much on my mind in my early work - everyone's walking into that space, with a whole different life experience and different set of conditions in their mind and a different set of references. And no two people are going to travel on the same pathway when they see the work. And rather than, say commercial cinema would try to homogenise that audience and make them all travel down ... it would push them in certain directions very clearly through the use of synched sound and synched image or synching those two tracks. What I was really trying to do very early on, was open the space of possibility so that you could get 100 different stories, if 100 different people are in the audience - there are 100 different stories to come out, 100 plus.

SK Hence the kind of overall impression.

LW Yes - however, in fact, it is highly orchestrated and highly nucleated at the same

time as trying to do that, so there's a tension between - but where as commercial cinema might be trying to barrel people down one direction, I'm kind of taking them in a direction but keep on taking them out as well - setting up vectors out and then forward in a kind of classic narrative direction. So, *eurovision* really comes from that, it's just an elaborate intensification, of what I've always been doing, and when I think about say, the early '80's, I was working in radio and also trained in cinematography and that's when I was 23 - I was already really in the two different head spaces very much ...Like, I wasn't making music, I was making sound radio.

SK Radio leaves room for a kind of impression.

LW ...and very much, when you're in the radio station you're aware that there may be thousands of people listening - because this was 4ZZZ up here and I'd done a lot of experimental radio. Late at night there were all sorts of people listening, and they'd ring up and you'd get a sense of you'd played something and it would really affect certain people. People would ring up and say 'I love that, because it reminded me of X - the sound of this ... so it really developed very early on, an idea that different things speak to different people, and there's a huge creative space in that.

SK So that's what you're looking for, a kind of a space that isn't as homogenised, it's much more open to interpretations. But at the same time, I think Anna Munster talks about a lot of work in this area being very disjunctive, which is what's interesting about 'eurovision' it still manages to have some sort of coherence.

LW I'm really interested in that tension.

SK That's where the work goes in - to work in a frame that brings it back to some point.

LW It's always coming back and that may be structurally...well it comes back to a classic narrative in a way, but it's not classic narrative, but it always comes back to a narrative progression of ideas, a linear progression of ideas. In the new work there is a beginning and an end, even though in the new work what I'm doing is really mucking with the idea of climax, because I bring the climax in ... the sound guy, he's done this and I think it really works. We've brought the climax in just after halfway and then it doesn't finish, it just keeps going off - it's more like a multiple orgasm. It's what we've come up with.... a friend of mine looked at it the other day and said 'what's wrong with the sound track, you get the climax here and then you think it's going to end and it just keeps going'. It struck me - well that's what Shane and I have to work on, rather than in the section where it should be ending we'll just make it even bigger - kind of turn it to the side - take it out to the side, which is enhanced through the picture which all goes into that 3D stuff. So, coming back to narrative, I mean there's a lot of different ways you can do linear narrative, you can do beginning and end.

SK Isn't that kind of what you determine as being linear narrative...it is reasonably open?

LW Yes, but it does have a beginning and an end, there is a beginning and an end in this. In *eurovision* to my mind... essentially I started off with *eurovision* to make an interactive book, or the idea of an interactive book, interactive video, DVD - that you could see in any order and that was the idea - that you could see it in any order. I really wasn't making it for a single screen work, but in the end it turned out to be a single

screen work and I prefer it to be a single screen work, and, in fact it does have an order, and that's the order we see it in. And there is a resolution and we see it in the last frame where the woman is walking through the streets of Paris saying 'I felt at one with the world' - and then I've added 'and then - and then what?' And that's the conclusion of the work - and it does have a conclusion even though it may not appear to.

The same with the new work *entanglements* - it's now doing this thing with the climax, really through the sound, but he must have seen it in the image and it's a new challenge because it's an installation loop work. So people are literally entering at any point - but there's going to be a beginning and an end, which is really playing with the idea of ends. You don't get the end when you think you're going to get it. It goes off into another realm and then pulls back and there is quite a clear end - it all goes to black and then there'll be an end.

SK Thinking about the sense of that idea that quite often you'd work to a well developed script for documentary or cinema. How do you actually script this kind of project - like 'eurovision' - particularly thinking about how you used to work with video as well - how you might work with it now in a digital sense?

LW When you say 'you' work with a script, I've never really worked with a script in that sense. I've trained in film, but I was only really marginal to the whole film process.....

LW The question about scripting?

SK That's fine - if you haven't worked in that way.

LW Not in the classic industry, I have done a lot of editing and writing and all those works make arguments at some level. When I make them, say with *eurovision*, well it grew as I worked on it, whereas *Love Hotel* was more mapped out because I had the book and I had to select pieces from the book - her massive text. So, I selected pieces that would be on the sound track and then I selected pieces that would be as graphic elements, and parallel to that I selected images. And I already had images that I'd shot in Japan - so it's a massive kind of selection process, if anything, that work was really about selection.

SK So when you say - this one grew - how would you describe that - what's 'growing'?

LW First I wasn't even going to use these films, I was just using them for tests. I was going to be shooting all my own stuff and I had a vague idea of what I was going to be doing, and I talk about this in my studio report. I was going to shoot this medieval camp site - someone being taken away from the fire...I talk about the 'stalker', she was really getting to me...I was using this medieval time as our time, making that analogy. I was using these films for tests and it started to get more and more interesting and I started using the Bergman just because it had all the flagellation. And I thought I just wanted to look at that, and then I thought - why go and shoot something when it's all here and I can cut this up and this will be a really interesting exercise just to see at a deeper level how these films are put together, how they did it - what they were doing. And so I got to know these films really well, what Goddard was doing - and that's the digital environment, it really allows that and that's the first time I realised that about the digital environment, about its database aspect as well which Lev talks about. To actually cut

up the films and be able to see them in a different way - deconstruct them live, really see what they're doing - so Goddard's always doing hard cuts, Bergman's doing dissolves between the shots. The Bergman camera moves quite a lot, the Goddard camera doesn't move - and then there are the compositional issues, that the Goddard's rectangular, the Bergman's much more square. And then what do you do with that in the power frame - so that's when the compositional elements become so... how to make the narrative work in the compositional elements and what's inside the shot.

SK So just to recap - you said the database with the digital gave you something different - gave you the chance to play with it as the material is running in front of you.

LW Yes, to pull apart those films into their component pieces and see how they're put together, and then to start in a really manageable and convenient way to put them back together and re-combine them. And then, not only in Media 100 which was what I was working in, pull it all into after effects - it was a really fluid environment for re-combining materials.

SK So, in some ways with 'Love Hotel' and this one, you were working with material that has been taken from a script in a print literacy sense and made into a film or into work from a book, and you're actually taking that work...

LW I don't think the Goddard was ever a book.

SK ...based on a script that was written - then he's filmed it...

LW I wonder.... I wonder....

SK Whether he's kind of worked as he goes.

LW I wonder.... I think the Bergman was definitely scripted, but *Love Hotel* was transcribed on the internet, most of it except the journal entries - but a lot of it's live internet chat-room so that's actually another dimension.

SK In a way you're working with material that already has a kind of narrative or script - then you're fragmenting, breaking it up and re-positioning it, that's the idea under there isn't it.

LW in the Goddard and the Bergman, yes in *eurovision* - but in *Love Hotel* it's the narrative that I started with in Francesca's text. It was very broken up to start with, it was numerous different forms of writing - the live transcript, the email dialogue with the lovers and then there's the journal entries. So three very distinct types of writing and some direct documentary, a real, authentic 'as it happened event', and then this dialogue reflection on what was happening. So, her books certainly are classic narrative - no beginning and end outside of 'the relationship went like this' and 'started like this' and then we'd see it.

SK So rather than trying to make that direct split from pretty much centre, probably something else is going on when you start getting into the fragmenting of the frame - beyond that initial idea you were talking about, how you re-work with the material that exists. Something else happens to it again when you start seeing how you're going to present it in the frame and what's going to go with what.

LW Yes, and it's coming back to what I was talking about before, about the sound track in early work, the sound track and the picture making new lines out, lines of flight - a kind of Deleuzian take. Lines that open up space where people can flee into and take whatever they need in there from their own minds, and take whatever they need from the image of the sound and go on some other path even momentarily. So it tries to set out maximum momentary lines out, in a way coming back to the sound image destruction from 1984. All of that comes into *eurovision*, with just putting multiple elements in the frame and doing similar things to what I was doing nearly twenty years ago - just in a different way and a more accelerated and intense way. So that you have an image up here say, the coffee scene and the images from the Louvre, the Russian space footage down here and then the sound track which is this music which is a kind of live jazz scene. There's a lot of space in that image to go wherever you want, so that's what I was working with.... to make it compositionally interesting but also set up the maximum amount of pathways.

But the work itself - *eurovision*, I tried to make it an interactive experience. I don't like it being seen as an interactive, I don't think it works very well because when people see it they're like 'oh, have I seen this one, have I been there' when they hit the interface and see these four 'eurovision' song contestants. They don't know if they've seen France or Germany or what - it fractures the experience too much; I don't actually want them to have that level of consciousness about having to watch it. I want them to just sit back and relax so that they can enter some space and not have to be thinking 'do I go down there' - it's too rationed. I'm trying to operate on a more irrational, surreal, dream kind of level. But they're not random connections that I'm setting up, they are to some extent but they all move the narrative forward in particular ways. It's highly manipulated and controlled actually, even though it doesn't appear to be.

SK Lets look at fragmenting the frame then. Just before that - what about the feeling of actually working in the medium, like actual writing in the medium, finding this kind of aesthetic combination within the frame. I guess you do that in editing - you find how it goes together, but it feels like it's a slightly different process?

LW You mean because it's compositing?

SK Because it's compositing - that idea that you're almost editing within the screen - it's not about the cut, it's about what's the basis of this whole idea of fragmentation on the screen or multiple screens.

LW Inside the screen?

SK There's edits going on in these pieces, but it's kind of a different montage/collage effect when you look at them in unison as a viewer.

LW Yes and this very much comes out... I can look at the early '90's - what I was seeing with multiple monitor installation works. This was what I was investigating then; setting up four VHF tapes and just going 'press/play' and four different ones all come up on different monitors. And, because they're all different lengths - the actual tapes - as they went into repeats you got a totally different story all the time and I was really interested in that. And, you look at these they're like one single stream - these are all streams, they're just in repeat, so I could be pressing 'play' and it's all the same. It's all very similar to those multi monitor installations in fact.

SK... but you put it into one frame...

LW... and then at a certain point it cuts - I make it cut and there is a cut in the image, not in this sequence because it's all just a copy, but in the other sequences there are standard cuts inside the longer sequences.

SK... you mean frames within the frame...

LW There's no cut here, but if we move to the next section there are standard cuts, which you do in Media 100. These, are just 'no cuts' this is all after-effect this sequence, but these are built into Media 100, and that's just stills.

SK So did you find it difficult finding the way that that could combine within the one frame? Was that a bit of a journey to go from those multiple screens - get it into one frame and get the effect that you were looking for?

LW I started working with it inside the screen as soon as I could with digital technology, but I didn't have the means to - I had to rely on operators and pay them a fortune, they charged a fortune for the use of their studio and their time. And then you'd set up - spend the whole day setting up, work overnight to do the renders, and there'd be 2 minutes of something - and then if it wasn't right you'd have to do it again that night, and it might take six hours for a 1 minute thing and so I couldn't really get in and do it. I needed my own equipment, which was when I bought the whole Media 100 set up in 1996, but I didn't start using it until '98 when I started my PhD.

SK In essence, because the screen was being broken up in the past - like in the '70's, even in film I think they had multiple screens but...

LW In analogue you can break up the screen through resolves, you can bring up certain things. In *four girls*, the first work I did in 1984, I had stuff going on all over the place inside the screen.

SK But what you're talking about was the kind of diversity or experimentation of trying things of looking for different combinations - was very difficult?

LW It was limited because I didn't have the technology myself, so soon as I got my own gear and the time, and someone paid me through the PhD scholarship, *Love Hotel* took one and a half years to make and this took not quite a year - 10 months - so that's a very special time. I was 24 hours on it; I was living in my studio - so I really think they are big factors for very basic research, having money and having the means.

SK But the technology got to the point where you can start...

LW... and the technology was at a level - because then it was all digital, but the Media 100 is of course analogue to digital.

SK So that process of finding the combination between multiple streaming in the one frame, can you talk about that - getting to that point of finding the position that you were satisfied with....

LW Starting with the multiple monitors I was doing the stuff with the operators - all I

could really do was one piece called *Invocation*, it had a lot of nice renders and text running along the bottom, but it was pretty basic and unless you've got an operator who's really good and committed, you're never going to get your real vision. So, it's really important to get the time and space. So, in '98 I didn't know where *Love Hotel* was going. When you see it you can see I started in a really formal way and because I'd done a lot of magazine stuff in between those installations and starting on *Love Hotel*, it was very magazine style because I'd been working in text and magazine production. I'd gone back into that to make money.

SK *You're talking print...*

LW Yes, standard magazines - my headspace was very magazine, but I think it's very print orientated if you look at these works they're actually very print orientated. They look like magazine layouts, to some extent I find *eurovision* has a visual quality that's like a book - like a coffee table book or contemporary magazine that can have a lot of white space around it.

SK... *you've got one here, and two here and lots of black up here.*

LW Yes, like a gorgeous, expensive book.

SK *Like a magazine layout but the images are moving.*

LW Yes, and that's because between the installation work, I'd done a lot of magazine production, but not as a graphic designer as an editor and a journalist but I'm working with graphic designers all the time. It's almost bringing these other media into what I'm doing however unconsciously, so between doing multiple monitor installation and this work I was in magazine land and I think I brought that graphic quality to *Love Hotel* and *eurovision*. You can see where I started working with these bands and if you look at *Love Hotel* it's cut into four and text is streaming out, and that's a really text heavy work. Whereas what I'm doing now is not very heavy at all and I think it came out of that magazine experience, and I think that continues on to here. So, I'm trying at some level - not really consciously - but I can see the print element.

SK *So, what do you think having time based or moving image adds to that or extends that?*

LW Yes, I think that's interesting.

SK *Or that ability to dissolve or layer - which we wouldn't get in print - you've got another thing going on...*

LW Yes, say this red band - this is a design trick I learned in high school - my high school art teacher said 'when you're making books maybe you want to have an element that continues like a red line'. I've got a book that I made when I was 16 that's got a line running through it at every page and I've used that here, the same red line runs through it. So *eurovision* is much more coded and formal than *Love Hotel* - *Love Hotel* really broke out of its bonds - or bands - a beginning and an end and it then cuts to full screen. So, I can use all these elements but then I can cut to full screen as well and have nothing, and just have a normal image and screen as well, suddenly when

you do that you get incredible interest. If you think of *Love Hotel*, there's a moment in it where it goes just full screen, very minimal image - and that's like a crescendo.

SK Almost like a close-up...

LW Yes, you use the complexity to absolute minimum for the same kind of impact and narrative progression of ideas.

SK That's interesting - so the magazine idea comes in...

LW Magazine and classic film techniques.

Look at this - this carries on, this element is set up... it's working with red and the blue; she's got a blue bag, and then carrying on there, setting up continuity even though we're changing both elements. But some things stay continuous and that gives us a narrative flow, and then into the next shot - she's still there, the red line's still there - when the boy comes in here, and now there, that's come back, that's what we had before, that elements still there, that makes it flow really smoothly.

SK So rather than a narrative flow in a sense of what your listening to or following in a story sense; it's actually the images as well.

LW All those things are operating together, it's not one or the other, you've got narrative flow inside the semiotic content of the images plus it's being enhanced, or paralled, or blown apart by the graphic elements and by the way it's been put together. So if you really look at that sequence there, the one we're just on, there's all those elements working together... this guy he comes back in, in the next shot, the flying guy...

SK They're being used to tie it together in order to progress it or to have a thread or threads...

LW ... or then blow it apart. Setting up all these threads that then can be manipulated in various ways.

SK So in essence you're using images to do that - using lots of different aspects, but that's where images are being used specifically.

LW Images and classic design elements - like vector lines.

SK Even the red line you're talking about comes back again - it's a kind of familiarity that connects that sequence with the next sequence.

LW Yes and compositional issues - the rectangle being placed at that particular point, you'll find in the last section the rectangular shape is the same throughout because the red line's the same, then when the rectangle comes back it's in the same place so it's familiar. So it's like we're watching, and a template is set-up into which various things come in and out and we're familiar with the template so we don't get shocked and go 'Oh, it's all new', every time'. It lulls you into this place where you can relax and let these things come in and out.

SK So you're looking for a consistency as well - through the piece - by having that.

LW Very consistent. In the various sections of *eurovision* set up here with the bands along the bottom, and that's consistent through a section to a point and then it breaks. You can map this - I can draw it and I do - I draw it and I do time lines.

SK And see what is going to stay and what's going to go, elements start to lose, stay or change...

LW ...and then break into full frame...

SK Did you have to do that kind of planning - on paper - little sketches

LW Yes, this is the Christian cross, it's the only time it breaks from a modernist grid and this shot breaks into a Christian grid... and it's very much so - the graphic design is talking about the image we're getting, all the other set ups are a bit off the third.

SK So there's quite a distinct relationship between all the elements in this page, whereas in another page there might be connections, but they're not as literal.

LW... not as literal, yes.

SK...almost like monotone all around - one colour or one concept. Like, this is the same image all fragmented.

LW Very simple - relatively simple. So nice - so dramatic.

SK Do you find with the composition that you're still going to have a central element, because I found watching it there was point you made me watch and then you flipped out to the other stuff - take the eye to the main place like in a painting.

LW Yes, the eye of the mind - because everyone's fine with text, so wherever the text is tends to be the central image that people are watching.

SK So just on that note, you were talking about how you want to create gaps and have different impressions so you know that the audience is always looking for that story - or some sort of understanding.

LW I think they always follow a voice over and they read text. A voice over with one person speaking has an authority that I don't necessarily like, but I realised through *Love Hotel* that people really want to follow the sound and authority of that. I think that's number one - in the last work there are no voices in it, in the new work there's only sound - there's hardly any text, so they're really flung into another world.

SK So you can play with those ideas - that you know what people kind of slip into out of habit.

LW Out of habit - yes - acculturation - because the documentary always would classically have the voice over.

SK So just going back into fragmenting the frame - you commented that not a lot of people are working in that way.

LW If we look at that book *Stuff It*, and if we look at all the images that are portrayed there - if we assume they are representative of the works, there's only one, Ursula, who's actually doing anything inside a frame, and that's just a line of text over a full frame. I find that really incredible, isn't anybody working in after-effects, haven't they discovered it... And yet we look at television, and we look at so many other things and it's all fractured - there's all this literacy, sophisticated literacy in the community in terms of reading broken-up frame. But very few artists, if that book is representative.... are actually working on that. Going to *Transmediale*, I was nominated for an image award for a reason suppose - out of 600 works - in that I am doing that and a lot of other artists aren't doing that.

SK Can you clarify 'working within the frame'.

LW I mean cutting up the frame, like we've been talking about, most people are just doing full frame cuts, classic film and not really...

SK Fragmenting?

LW I wonder if that's like what I've just talked about - say I was working in print and doing all those things, in Australia you end up doing all sorts of things just to survive because there's so few people, and that multi-skills you. Say - in Europe - I don't think you end up doing so many things. If you're a video artist you can just be a video artist and never have to do magazine production to make a living because it's such a cushy world over there. So in a way, maybe being in Australia enhances our ability to move across media really fluidly.

SK Also like fragmenting the frame - as you say you see it in magazines all the time but in a sense in video or cinema it's not something we see a lot.

LW No, you see it on television and it may be a games thing - it's not very balanced on television either.

SK On that note how do you feel things like the Internet or other media type applications may affect playing with the frame in a linear sense.

LW Well CD-ROMs - we're doing that, I've looked at a lot of those but never made any, but as a curator I spent a lot of time looking at them and playing them.

SK Looking at the frame, like as an interface.

LW Yes, building up the frame, and the Internet of course is all full of interactive possibilities inside the frame. So it's not very like standard television it's probably much more like interactive CD-ROM stuff, hypertext stuff, without being interactive.

SK Can you elaborate on how you connect it to hypertext or its application or interactivity?

LW You know, the classic CD-ROMs where you can button on to various things inside the frame and something happens.

SK Like a menu kind of thing...

LW When you work - there's lots of different ways you can go - all the classic CD-ROMs work where they set out multiple narratives inside the frame, but then you've got to click through to get to somewhere, whereas I'm doing it without the clicks.

SK So in a way when you come to a menu or interface for those works it's very fragmented and there are bits everywhere. So you're kind of taking that similar concept to moving image where you can actually deal with lots of different things going on in the frame and choose where you go.

LW Yes, you choose, as the artist you choose where people go, because no-one gets to choose anything, except...

SK I mean just when you look at the screen as a viewer, when it's dealing with the web or anything, it's constantly moving around all the different elements and deciding where to sit...

LW Yes, it's enhancing it I think even with the web, a lot of classic web people if they saw a web page with a lot of different directions they'd call that bad design. There's a kind of desire on the part of established orthodoxy not to let people have too many choices, not to let them roam, to force them down paths. And I think what I'm trying to do in my work is open up paths, open up as many paths as possible and yet still give a satisfying linear narrative experience. So kind of push the boundaries of opening up paths as much as possible but still give the comfort of the linear narrative, so people get to the end of something and they feel like they've experienced something or seen something.

SK So even though you've got the page, in a sense you're directing the viewer or user to a focal point and the other elements will be influencing that even though they're there, and you could almost consider them a slight distraction they're still integrated toward something that you're aiming for.

LW They're the satellite idea, in the set-up with *eurovision* there's this space - it sets up things that come in later, so it's setting up narrative trajectories, which the whole piece is working on. So, you've got the coffee scene, I call it 'the coffee cup scene', - you've got the naked women in the Louvre, it's a Turkish bath scene - but they're naked women none the less and it's like 'oh what's going on there', all these beautiful breasts and stuff, because that's classically what's excluded, a bit taboo. We never get to look at that except in fine art render, like the history of fine art in the nude - and women never get to look at that either, they can't look at women. It's not for men exclusively, it's women looking at other women as well.... but, and here's this piece here - the coffee scene's all about men and women and their relation as told through a man. And then there's the science - but it's Russian not American - so immediately we're in another power block, we're in Europe, and even in Europe, Russia was side, they never thought of Russia as part of Europe. Whereas, from Australia, Russia was just part of Europe at some level even though it was communist. It's not America.

SK So that's why you talk about that kind of overall impression, or the idea of the dream - you have this main thing, but other things that are almost subliminal in the sense of how they affect that...

LW It's just like writing an essay. If you're telling the history of something, telling an historic story, you're always bringing in 'and then there was the influence of this' on positive events. Say if you're writing the history of the Islamic world, you could plot the history of how many sultans there were and what chronological order they came in - and then coming up on the side there was the rise of Europe, and here was the changing technology of vote power. And so to tell the story - you're always going off to the side and pulling in elements. There's a main story but there's always ancillary things, I'm choosing certain things - one, because I've got them - and at a certain practical level I look at what I've got and make something out of the images that I've got.

SK But that's quite exciting in a more complex way because with the single screen you don't really get that option so much do you? You don't get that option to have things almost going alongside.

LW Yes, and to shape them through their sizing and their placing, you give them weight.

SK Also what's occurring is you almost get that track idea - you could call them streams coming into a frame, but they could all be different tracks and its sound, and this image is a little bit smaller so that sounds further back, and this one's further forward - so it's like a mix.

LW Yes, it's mixing.

SK...images in the frame - much more like that idea of bringing sounds together and which one...

LW Yes, yes - a perfect analogy. It is like sound mixing - go back to radio, the start of radio and making sound. Not classic radio, because it was always midnight to 3.00a.m. but the sound loop stuff. The guy I'm working with now, doing the sound, is someone who I used to play around with in sound in 1981, and he did the sound for *entanglements* and *eurovision* - and that's Shane.

SK So that's where it goes into whole new territory because you do have that opportunity - like you're listening to radio and there's a main narration going on, but there's another sound that's kind of adding to that - the feel of that, that conversation. So now all of sudden more than the one screen as you say, you can have those other elements around that idea - happening simultaneously.

LW Yes, and when you plant into that... the thing with text and voice over - voice in the sound track, if you look into images arranged around the space, round the frame, and sound in a particular mix - just those elements, and then add a text track you suddenly greatly alter the balance because people look to text and they want authority from text. And then if you add a voice-over that's really going all the way it's 'oh, a voice over - I'll just listen to that and it will tell me the truth'. So, when you add those elements into that fine balance you've got to add them really carefully so that they don't over-determine

the work. So you've got to push them back somehow - keep them in their place - they're really powerful elements. And I'm learning about that more and more to the point where, in this work there's no voice and so really I want the images and other things to start speaking.

SK So again that's that kind of mixing idea, you're mixing it together like you would with sound - but those two things are really powerful.

LW And they are powerful because of the way they've been used in the culture - but also the voice is very powerful.

SK... and then your sound track on top of that, your music. Then your actual music for your background sounds is another element again - it has to integrate the whole thing doesn't it?

LW Yes.... Working out of it but not so consciously, and I just do it unconsciously - it comes from so many years of working in so many different media. Radio announcing - the minute as an announcer you'd speak, you knew that everything changed. If you had a soundscape, you'd set up and then you spoke into that and everything changed because it's very different - the voice of authority kicks in.

SK Can you talk about the idea of multiple streams into a frame, that's the difference to a magazine isn't it? It's actually a moving image that's almost streaming - frame within a frame.

LW Which is a web analogy. As I wrote in the thesis - because I was on a high bandwidth in Canada, in computer science because of the great conditions at the network I was working out of I really got into looking into streaming there and thinking about the multiple streams in the frame - which isn't really able to be done very well now. But if you look at all of these elements, particularly in this first one, this is like classic multiple streams - so then it's a composition issue and what you stream down.

SK So like in a browser window - say you had 3 videos to choose from, you can have pop-ups, you've got different frames appearing with moving images on a website giving you that idea of fragmenting happening straight away - multiple streaming.

LW Yes ... Yes

SK It's usually singular, due to bandwidth.

LW Exactly - but we're moving towards an era of very high bandwidth, so we need to develop narrative structures, literacy structures or literacy adaptations and software to be able to develop and push it. If we could do this as a streaming it would be very interesting and I'm sure it's possible.

SK When you say develop a new narrative and new literacy do you mean how you deal with multiple things going on at once?

LW and push that in certain directions, and use it as an artist because it's got so much potential.

SK Learning the weight that you can integrate that multiplicity, simultaneously running in parallel - lots of different elements beyond just the cinema idea of one image and sound track.

LW It's so full - what you can do. Like just there we had the white woman here and the black woman in the background, just the presence of the black woman only for a second but it suddenly alters everything if you see it, if you're aware of it. It's worth looking at *eurovision* very closely like this - it's very nice to see it as a DVD because the minute you see the black woman - like this is Turkey - there's the black woman, there's the Moor - and that's the fear of Europe, always has been - the black.

SK And this one is still - that one's not moving is it?

LW No, just a series of stills that dissolve into each other.

SK And this one's more historical - strong historical things going on here.

LW Using speed as well in the dissolves, this is playing real time, this is a slow set of dissolves, this is whatever it is and it's a repeat - so they're entering the brain in very different ways. This one we see normally, this one is slowed down where each time you glance up there's something changed. What's going on, you hardly even notice, it's like all these are operating at different... well they're playing real time but they're in repeat so that makes them weird. So that's another element - speed, inside those elements. There are so many different things to play with.

SK Not only the combination of the sizing and the composition within the frame, but in a time based sense.

LW But you can slow them down - speed them up.

SK Repetition - looping - this one's running at normal speed, at the speed it was recorded at?

LW We know that - because people are doing things at normal speed.

SK In a temporal sense you've got different time approaches going on in the same frame as well.

LW You can do that to enhance or to work against various elements - this is deep time, 1850 or something, this is 1950 space footage, and this is 1957 film.

SK So you're playing with time again in an historical sense.

LW And you can either enhance that or work against it - but you can play with it.

SK And so do you think that the reason people aren't possibly going for this work within the frame is actually because of trying to find how you combine it - like in a way that's where all the work has gone into this - getting it to work.

LW Yes, and that comes from I really think, 20 years of constant news media...

SK *Oh, yes - for you.*

LW and there's not that many people who have that kind of experience, I think there's something about Australia that allows that - and that's a real strength.

SK *And do you think a lot of people have shied away from it because you've got that pressure of an audience wanting that sort of cinematic experience.*

LW Yes, and film festivals, there's more money for film, there's more possibility for film - it can maybe get on television and you'd get money. Whereas there's hardly any money in new media - so you'd have to be mad to go into it.

SK *Sometimes you feel like you'll get excited about it going way out here in the sense of difference, and then it goes into a hiatus because they go 'it's all too much - it doesn't make any sense'. So it's kind of like about perseverance and actual openness about finding how it can work. Are you still tapping into those ideas of how 'I'm still very much used to watching television or cinema'? That's still there, isn't it?*

LW Because that's what makes it work, to connect to people it has to have some connection to what they're looking at or what they're used to, and then you can take it from that. But, the next work is all television - well everyone's watching television.

SK *So you're using those literacies in a sense, those familiarities....*

LW And then pushing them, and I think I'd continue that, I'm not really conscious of that - but when I talk about it I realise it's quite important - I'm not so far out of the realm.

SK *So you're starting with the essence of 'that's in there somewhere' but then you push it a bit and push it a bit.*

LW Yes, and make it unfamiliar.

SK *And maybe it's changing - people dealing with browsing and websites.*

LW People are so ready for new things, but they never get it - that's just the established order, it doesn't want them to go any further.

SK *Is that for the reason that people can't equate it to the familiar.*

LW Commercial television treats people like idiots. My brother works on *Hot Property*, I asked why didn't he introduce an architect into it and have the architect talking about a house each week because there's a lot of people like me who end up watching *Hot Property* just because they're watching television and they then follow the emotional stories. But, if you had something a little bit high-ended you'd get more audience - he said 'yes, but the people I work for think everyone's a complete idiot'. Commercial television is always talking right down to people.

SK *What do you think about overall impression - I find it really interesting because I think that's where interactivity is really interesting. It's not necessarily about linear narrative, it's about creating - you choose, like you come away with an impression. Like you said with your 'eurovision' piece you didn't like that idea where someone only gets*

two pieces. But in an interactive work - I'd get it and I'd go to this corner and you'd get it and you'd go to that corner and that corner. To me it's more about an impression - it's the impression that sits round the theme or concept.

LW Yes, yes. I think what I want to do is work even more at an abstract level. The new work is quite abstract in a way but it really makes an argument, it's making a very strong argument. It's told through quite an abstract mode, but to me it's making a real point - it's making a very highly sophisticated argument but through totally abstract means. That's the direction I want to go in, I want to actually not do just so much impression but do really strong argument, but use really different means to make those strong arguments. Use visual/conceptual means - so it's much more going in the realm of a conceptual artist and abstract art to make those really significant points - like Kasimir Malevich was making the point with white on white/black on black.

SK ... that resistance to doing more work within the frame - or working more in a way that's away from the single frame that's telling you where you're going and what it means.

LW Like commercial television.

SK ...or cinema. People coming back to that idea of actually just taking in an impression, putting it together...It's like you look at a painting - and it's the feeling of the painting or the impression of the painting, it might not necessarily be very concrete.

LW Yes. First of all you have to break the habit of commercial film and commercial television. So immediately you have to break that - when people watch it they have to very quickly get out of their expectations of commercial cinema because they can't see it.

SK Or won't be able to stomach it either...

LW And then through that creating some other level they can sink down into and enter and be enveloped by it, and then maybe you can start a very hardcore logical narrative. But first of all you have to break that expectation, and I think that's where I'm at now and this work stays in the realm of impression. It's very dream like, it's still very complex and it's very politically complex - it's deeply about geo- politics although it's not that on the surface, but to me that's what it's dealing with. It's interesting, that distinction between impression and classic narrative which forms an argument but I guess the essay is very different to the film story because the essay is making an argument, the film story's telling a story at an emotional level.

SK So that's what you're talking about working towards, in an essay sense - where there's an argument in there.

LW I'm really interested that people make an emotional connection - when you see it you'll see it's a very emotional work. But, it appears to be abstract so I'm interested in that...How to get an emotional response through very abstract means.

SK...an argument across, and an emotional response.

LW Yes. Which isn't the classic logical argument, it doesn't have an emotional aspect. But also with the new work it's to do with that thing that all these works are about, particularly the new work, the crisis of representation simulation. And that's what we were talking about last night in terms of television, and you can read this work in that way to.

SK in your thesis you talk about the digital idea that all material becomes data, and how this probably changes the practice.

LW Oh yes - that's the materiality issue.

SK Of the mediums - yes. In a way there are different sort of mediums in here, but I think as you said in your thesis - you can still see the materiality whether it's film or video.

LW Yes, yes...That's one thing I became really aware of, particularly in this work. But I've always worked with different media, like in the thesis I talk about other works that I did, one in 1985 which used Super 8 and video and VHS video, and it used those three different images in three different cities, so the media was talking about the city at some levels. So before I even put it together I was already setting up the differences of the cities through the texture of the images - so Brisbane was shot on VHS and Sydney was on video; and Melbourne was on Super 8 because Melbourne speaks to Super 8 film through the image quality of the city; and Brisbane at that time in the early '80's, spoke to domestic VHS. I was doing that for a long time. I used to work in a colour film laboratory and I was running 35mm sound film through my stills camera and seeing what I got - like using shooting stock and running high contrast timing stock through the stills camera using 35mm film. And so I was really interested very early on in that stuff - the materiality of the media itself and in what you could do to enhance the image through the texture of the media. And that's why I'm interested in Flusser, and in this last work it's a lot to do with the apparatus of capture.

SK So the materiality - even though it becomes visual data, the materiality of the medium is still very evident?

LW And you can work to enhance that or you can work to diminish that - I'm interested in both, and that's another element in this. And we've talked about the composition, the semiotic meaning of each of the images and what referential system it speaks to and calls into being or invokes - and how all those things work together. And the different time scale - the slow down or speed up or whatever of the image. But another thing that's going on is the image texture of these three elements, one's taken off television, a BBC documentary; one's taken off a really old VHS film borrowed from the film library with all its screeches and everything; and one's a digital still, taken in the Louvre and scaled down very small. Each one has its own quality, and each one has its own universe in a way. So the digital image here was taken on the same camera in the Louvre in Paris - of late 19th century paintings - even just there in those images that's a whole story, and then there's a whole story attached to this in its image quality, in the texture and the actual stuff of it. You put that stuff into a digital environment and then it's all data, and then it's already ghosted through with its history, its material history - like archaeology.

SK So in essence, even though it can all become digital data in the same frame, you're still interested in its essence or its materiality within that frame and how it works against each other - alongside each other.

LW And that's another thing you've got to play with in this environment - all that as well - the materiality of the source material.

SK So also the idea that quite often where digital technology is used you might have something that will show on VHS and there's this thing 'let's try to make it look like film', change the materiality of it to meet a high definition or a certain kind of look. Whereas what interests you is the source of it or its materiality in the first place, how it affects the content.

LW Yes to leave it like it is, lots of glitches coming through here. I was sitting with Chris one night in Canberra when *eurovision* came on the television - he said 'let's tape it, here's an old tape' and we just whacked it in and taped it, it was his thing, his words - and suddenly a work gets born that features this material - I'm quite interested in that, working with the means at hand, working with the material that you find at hand and then building something that people like. I'm amazed that through those elements, that combination of elements, I managed to put some kind of story together - and that was the challenge - how could I build a story out of this set of elements that I wanted to work with. And maybe I'd let another element come in or maybe I wouldn't ... abandon some elements, bring in some others and decide those parameters and then construct something which works as some kind of narrative from those elements.

SK So even though that's a really varied mix of things, it can sort of come together - in some sort of form.

LW Yes, because of people's desire to make a narrative as well, everyone will go along with it. So you've got that working on your side as well. People - they sit in the theatre, they see something start and then it ends, and they're happy that it appears to be whole - whether it is or not.

SK So the comment that the 'material becomes data'...

LW It all becomes data - I mean it's digitised isn't it? And that was confronting, that's why a lot of filmmakers don't want to muck with this stuff. They want to hold onto film editing or whatever - people didn't want to go to digital editing initially, you remember all the resistance to it; they didn't want to shoot on digital camera.

SK So what's your response to it becoming data?

LW Work with it. I'm just working with it because it opens up a lot of possibilities.

SK Together?

LW Yes, I can enhance its other materialities while dealing with the fact that's it's all just data. It kind of came as a shock, I hadn't quite articulated the fact that it all becomes data - I know it's really obvious, but for somebody who's been working with so many media for so long ...

SK It would have been quite separate...

LW And you've seen the progression of all those media - from Super 8 and from 16mm. It's very personal, most people wouldn't find that an issue but for me having been working in video and film, the digital environment is a radical environment to work in - radically new and becoming more so. Like you talked about all the software being integrated into after affects and then DVD software - so they're becoming so much more sophisticated, and that's very exciting.

SK So in a similar way to data, they all kind of integrate or they crossover.

LW More and more, and having now worked with a system that I purchased in '96, and now I'm on this new system, there's a lot of changes just in the systems, well that's 8 years, but what's it going to be like in another 8 years. Imagine.

SK That ease of bringing so many different things together simultaneously.

LW Yes, but still we don't forget history, we don't forget each of these different media that go in - they have their own universe. So *eurovision* is very much about remembering the universe of the Bergman film, and the Jean Luc Goddard, and the Space footage - and what those were like and these were their records. Because this films made in 1967 and I want it to hold something of 1967 when I bring it into the digital environment, I want to treat it with respect, I don't want to strip it of its historic moment - I'm not trying to do that.

SK So the remediation of all these works for you is about acknowledging their history even though you're re-creating them in your own interpretation.

LW Yes, yes, very much so and that plays out in that all the shots are complete, they're not cut up - they're cut, but I don't cut into these shots, I don't overlay them at all, I don't mess with them. I started to with those big frames because it looked good - when I started off I wasn't going to do that. There's only one point where I cut something together in the Goddard, or maybe it's two or maybe it's only at the end. It looks as if it's a cut from him because I've set up this thing with taking pure shots or sequences out of Goddard and not falsely putting two together that didn't belong together in the original film. I do that at the end, I put two shots together that didn't belong together - and that's my point, I'm making my own...and then, and then...at the end.

SK In your thesis you brought up Clement Greenberg and the idea of...

LW After I read that stuff at your place - it was good - and then I went much further into Greenburg.

SK What was your argument in a digital sense?

LW The same issue remains - that materiality is an issue. Truth to materials is an issue, but where it was for a single media it now is in the digital environment and you can use it or not, like it all becomes data in the digital environment and that's its essential materiality. But you can enhance or not and there's no right or wrong, that's the problem with the Greenbergian modernist material argument - that it's set up a dogma, so that video became all about the essentials of video. That's all very well but

this is video too - I've put it to DVD - but you can keep a contract to truth of materials because that in itself is quite a strong idea, and work with it in this environment. And there's no contradiction to bring in all the different elements that are in *eurovision* and enhance their materiality and not try and hide them or play with them, or make fake old film filters or whatever. Whatever you do you're still working with materiality in the digital environment.

SK So what's your point in the sense of video then?

LW the purists may say video has to be full frame, and you get that feeling from that book that video *is* full frame. If you look at all the images from that book video is in full frame - you think well that must be a quality of video - but of course it's not a quality of video, you can do all of this, and this is still video.

SK So in a way are we looking at video as data - and then it's the materiality of data, the essence of data as a concept maybe rather than just video.

LW Yes, in this environment because this is all digital video. This data - it's not really video anymore - it's just data.

SK What is the essence of data?

LW In this piece the elements are coming in - it's now just data, but it came in as analogue VHS, and this came in as digital stills - and they have a different look, the colours are different. You'll never get this colour, this is panavision - you could never get these colours, these greens - its film, and clearly film. So I just want to keep that - but it's still data.

SK So there's two things going on - there's the materiality of the source material and also an essence of the concept of data, once it becomes data the two come together - and then playing with those two. Which is why you say you felt as though you had to be kind of pure to the film, but then you started to play with it - broke your rule on that a little bit.

LW A little bit. But that was only a rule for this work, that's where I started out, but then I thought 'Oh maybe I could use these stills' - it was a bit of a wicked idea, cutting up Goddard. But then my rule was 'Oh, I'll just keep them really intact and be really respectful'. But towards the end of the process I was really enjoying doing this kind of thing - but I didn't do much of it.

SK So it's quite strong when it happens?

LW Yes, that makes them strong because they don't happen very often. There's the narrative there; and this is the conclusion; this is the argument; this is stuff, stills that I showed in Paris; this is the French Metro map...

SK You've got the same mood on the small ones as the large one - that's a blown up version of that?

LW Yes the same mood - that's black and white, the colour that it is, is yellow with the colour drained out of it. They're not all the same, they're different sections of the same map.

SK You're playing with the text there, but it's a map?

LW Yes, so this is contemporary Paris with the Metro and she's wandering through Paris, and then this is Brussels - but it's to do with the EU and a lot of things.

SK Working with different compositions, working with different shapes - but that's really based around the freedom of magazine layout?

LW Yes, *eurovision* was very much based on hard lines; it's very modernist, very hard lines - Mondrian. *Love Hotel's* not, it's all blooming out, blooms out of the centre all the time - it started hardline and linear, it started vertical and horizontal, but then it started blooming and bleeding everywhere, which was really nice to work with, all feathered.

SK OK, and pattern and repetition? You talked about Andy Warhol and a Dutch designer, but that's again working in print form and layout form.

LW Yes. Her work was a repeat; she just really did a repeat in a very nice way.

SK Which is sort of very kind of Internet ...

LW Yes. Icon based, I'm not interested in icon based repeat I was just interested in video repeat, also video wall stuff. I did all this video wall work - well one big project on a video wall - which was fantastic. And that was a commercial project where I really got into the repeat and understanding what you could do with the repeat. We had a bank of about 20 monitors on the wall, I had a really nice project with Digital Equipment Corporation at Diamond Head, I could do all the work and then just - boomf. And that's like the analogue version of after affects in a way, when you see the new work it's really like a video wall.

SK You're attempting to achieve the same thing but with different technologies?

LW Yes. They kind of melt into each other, I've always really liked video walls and videos in public spaces. I had a video wall at Seibert - a big project - they had control but I could programme it to a certain extent, I could play with it.

SK Could you talk about the idea of the screen as an interface?

LW I haven't really followed that up, I haven't related any of that stuff to Deleuze's work on cinema. It's an interesting thing to do but I haven't thought that through, just the basic lines of flight idea - like cracks in the surface become chasms you can climb into.

SK Just talking about you having been a video practitioner for quite a while - the kinds of shifts that you feel working in video.

LW In the pure essence of it, for me all these other mediums feed into it - like technological development really seeps into video. The next work is a lot to do with the visualisation technology of war, and that's all seeping into video practice - the fact that

we can get images of satellite phones and video phones and those new phones now that take images. They're going to affect my practice, I'm probably going to want to get one of those phones - just the whole idea of sending pictures is really radical. David Cox had one yesterday, it's like an alien object, I didn't want my picture taken I don't want to be captured by that new technology. However of course I'm fascinated by it, I want to use it, it's the texture and that type of thing- so I think my next work might feature one of those phones and the images taken on those phones.

SK That's a stills image?

LW Yes, because they're low resolution. That whole idea of taking pictures wherever you are, it's a really interesting idea, and then sending them over the phone line instantly. So for me that will bleed into my practice, as well all those new war based technologies of visualising things - the next work will feature this.

SK In a video sense - a kind of proliferation of the different way it's being used, the materiality of each of those ways?

LW Yes, each one has its own texture. We begin to recognise those, like we know the Iraq war night vision - it's that green vision - we all know that now, we see it and it enters our 'imaginary', so I'm interested in that. It enters as warfare imagery but we start to see it in our everyday life, so I'm very interested in apparatus of capture - what Flusser would call apparatus of capture.

SK How does that affect practice do you think, are there lots of different forms or sources of material that come under the umbrella of video for a start?

LW What's video - I don't know what video is; it's a kind of outmoded term. Like this is a digital camera I've got here, it's a digital video stream whereas the old style magnetic camera is totally different.

SK That's one form, any other forms in the sense of change of practice?

LW I think what I said about the conceptual thing is really interesting - about presenting quite hard-core... in a more abstract way. I don't know, I just want to go in all different directions; I really want to go into 3D image and maybe virtual space. I want to work on big screens and public space. I might want to work in more documentary style, like do closer adaptations of text works - find a book and adapt it. I'd love to make a feature - I reckon a feature would be great.

SK Within that you're still very interested in working within a frame in different ways - that's where you're heading as well is it? On that note where do you feel you can take that? Obviously, as you said, there are an endless number of options when you do this where you're heading. What's dragging you on in that direction - fracturing the frame?

LW Inside the frame?

SK Fragmenting the frame, playing with the way that you deal with moving image inside the frame.

LW It would be interesting to do that in a feature environment, a longer piece - to see if that's possible. Because when people watch a feature they want to feel that what they're watching is unfolding in real time. So if you start to bring side elements in - there's been a few films that try and deal with that - what happens with time, do you present it as real time or as different time, different parallel time frames. That would be a research challenge.

SK So temporality is quite important?

LW Yes if I was in feature film land - if I went into that and I was working inside the frame in a feature film which was carrying a narrative story. I'd like to make a sci-fi feature film really, and then the genre lends itself to a whole lot of dimensions in time actually inside the frame. Probably it is just a question of choosing the right genre to work with within the habits and expectations of the genre, but move them around quite a lot. I'd really like to do that - I think that creates a lot of possibilities.

SK That's a kind of temporal thing, but what about in a spatial sense - you've done this kind of lineal grid with fragmentation, do you see other forms of multiple streams feeding into a frame?

LW It's a triptych the next work, *entanglements*, so it's all three. It's installed in a space that's got curtains hanging so that it looks like a window. The projector projects onto the curtains down the side so the frame's cut into two panels and then the exception is in the centre that forms like a window. So it sets up like a room and you don't know whether you're inside or outside - it's about setting up this spatial theme.

SK So you start seeing templates appear - the time consuming nature of dealing with the elements - you'd eventually end up having templates in a way wouldn't you?

LW And devising which one's going to work for which work. Yes, it keeps breaking the template, but it's definitely in the last work - it's a triptych set up.

SK It's almost like magazine layout isn't it, where magazine gets a certain style and sticks with it and it becomes a kind of template or base structure.

LW It makes doing the work more efficient and you can set up a frame, I set up a set of black lines - I can copy papers' black lines onto every frame so that it's the same. It should be the same structure, so that every time its cut it doesn't jump it should stay in its form. I set it up just with the lines so that it's smooth and doesn't jump around - that sets up a continuity in the same way my red line might have done in *eurovision*. Now in this one I'm using this triptych frame that stays in place throughout all the cuts, so that I break from it and I can come back to it quite easily and I can do dissolves and they're all nicely dissolved. So it's a very practical thing to do to move around a cut and do your dissolves.

SK It's like a framework or structure then?

LW In this work it's really apparent. I don't know whether I'll keep doing that but it works out in this work. I'd like to do more scenes and get more into after affects and build more vectographic scenes and put different elements into the scene. I'm really interested in Indian and Chinese composition, that would have a frame and would have

things that were far away and things that were a bit closer, all at the same level that operate on the vertical - so they have a lot of spatial themes in the same way as Indian miniatures...

SK Like theatre?

LW Yes I want to do more things like that

SK But under all that is always how those elements work together, how do you find that kind of integration - no matter whether you're playing with space or time?

LW How they resolve - set up your visual challenges and make them resolve, make them work somehow as a pleasurable experience and that tell some kind of story or present some kind of argument. I want to keep changing all the time so none of these works look the same - *Love Hotel*, *eurovision* and the latest, *entanglements* - they're all different.

SK But that idea of combination of elements obviously runs through all three and that's where you keep experimenting in slightly different ways in each work - you drop text in or drop narrative in like this last one, just working with fewer elements or in a different way?

LW Yes, it's gone more into the realm of an abstract. I'm really interested in getting quite abstract too, I want to go in lots of different directions. Real life gets in the way of practice so you've got to carve out a space to work in. Think of all the stuff that's going on just to make the work and then you have to show the work - although it's great to show the work. But it does take your mind away and it sets up a lot of difficulties - I've got to get down there, I can't take the work I'd really like to because I have to use the money for babysitting - life gets in the way. It would be nice to just have a very settled studio life, but then you get a lot of inspiration through change.

SK And sometimes through the limitations as well, they push you in certain directions.

LW Yes also limited by what I think people will cope with - thinking of the audience.

End.

Case Study Two - Interview

Video practice: *Vogs*
Date: November 2003
Location: Melbourne
Interviewee: Adrian Miles
Interviewer: Seth Keen

SK What are vogs?

AM Vogs are video blogs and when I thought about making vogs I decided that vogs had certain properties and qualities - surreal, time-based, personal, linked to other bits of the network, other writers...I decided that a video blog needed to have some of those properties. Vogs needed to be more than just a blog with embedded video so I started experimenting with the sort of things you can do with video online – adding text tracks, various forms of interactivity etc.

SK Was there a transition from vogs to blogs?

AM I started one blog, it died. I didn't see the relevance in the early days. My reaction was quite biased - thought they were a strange form of vanity publishing. I still probably think that quite a bit actually... But then I realised, because I was very interested in exploring interactive video, that I could actually put the two together. That is where I got the idea of video blogging. Yes, blogging came first, then I thought about what it would mean to put video in a blog.

When I first started I invented a rule, which I broke within a week - any individual vog had to be made in an hour because just like a blog post it can take five minutes or a really impressive one maybe can take a couple of hours... I didn't want them to take weeks or days or hours of work – they are not supposed to be necessarily a polished or sophisticated object. Vogs were supposed to be from the hip, but still have interactivity. If I stick to a standard template, which I have done every now and then, they are fairly quick to produce and I can make a fairly complex one within two hours. But most times when I try something new it is trial and error, which can take a lot longer.

Basically a vog is a desktop based interactive and is delivered on the network, all the works are short and tend to run for about two minutes - not intended to be essays, all though the form can be used for other sorts of things. The model for vogs, I think, is close to television advertising - there are adverts on TV that do, and can, tell sophisticated narratives in 30 seconds and they are sophisticated narratives often with amazing production values. Most of my works aren't particularly narrative based but I am interested in what I call micro-narratives, this is one of the ways that I think about bandwidth. Bandwidth online is not just about connection speed it is about time - realistically people who are going to look at your work only have a few minutes. It is about what can you do in 3 minutes rather than in longer durations. One of the reasons blogs work is because generally the entries are short and most people focus on 3-4 blogs that interest them...

SK You spoke earlier about how someone suggested that your vogs are an art form. Did your vogging start off as more of a communication form coming from blogs?

AM These days I am not sure what they are...I quite regularly get asked to submit them for exhibition and they get shown as new media art pieces. But since I came into this as an academic they were theoretical pieces, explorations - proof of concepts of what interactive video might be, then they started becoming more creative or rather more aesthetic. But, at some point somebody said to me 'no these are artworks' and I resisted that quite strongly, I am not an artist, I am an academic. But, you know over the course of the last year, I have recognised that some of them are explicitly, aesthetic objects. The works are getting more interesting because the works are about exploring theory and practice, and that theory both is a creative practice as much as a critical practice and practice is as much a pragmatic practice as it is an aesthetic practice.

SK How would you describe them in terms of a video practice?

AM I can tell you how I do them and how they relate to a traditional film practice. All the technology I use is largely domestic so they are shot on a single-chip video camera, these days I would happily update to a 3-chip semi-professional camera because I would appreciate the better content quality I would get in terms of image and sound quality. Everything is captured, edited, compressed on an apple power book, nothing special about that these days. I do use professional compression codecs - traditionally I have been using Sorrenson 3 Pro codec which is around 400US dollars, although I will probably shortly move straight to Mpeg4 because I like that Mpeg4 is an open standard.

SK Does this mean you are more interested in the accessibility of desktop level hardware and software?

AM Not necessarily. The example I often use here is desktop publishing. In 1985 along came the first Apple Mac and all of sudden we had wizzy wig computer design, you could buy a laser printer at an exorbitant cost - but prior to that moment to do your own printing design required an investment of possibly a hundred thousand dollars. It was a revolution in what we understood as getting words onto paper. Now we can do the same with video, with a domestic camera and domestic computer you can shoot, edit, compress and distribute your work - that revolution hasn't happened yet... It is entirely feasible and quite easy to shoot your home movies on your domestic camera... plug it into your computer capture it, do an edit, add titles, add a soundtrack and put it out on tape or on DVD or compress it and put it online... But, at the moment there doesn't appear to be a lot of this going on... or if there is I haven't seen it yet, the possibilities are there for guerrilla filmmaking, independent filmmaking, no-budget filmmaking... It is not just about publishing back onto to tape, DVD's or TV. If we add the internet onto this, which is about networks and peer to peer communication, then I think we are sitting on the threshold of a very interesting moment where people could be making their own video-audio based narratives and sending them around the world in the same way that blogs have let people write their own personal narratives and send them all around the world whether it is academic, personal, political, whatever... It is using the network as a distribution space but also as an authorial space with ease of

access if you like... But for me the thing that has to be remembered is I don't want it to just be about shooting, editing and distributing - I want a little thing added in which is about thinking, about what we can now add with interactivity so that we're making different video objects. I guess creatively and theoretically I am interested in the network side of things, but also I am interested in what it actually means to think of video as an interactive object.

Coming back to your question, there is no reason why I can't scale up to professional level hardware and software in the same way you can run desktop publishing software on your laptop. For example a lot of principles I am exploring I think could translate to DVD and I would quite like to work at a much higher quality level with DVD. There are some interesting things being done in DVD because of the scripting, but it is a little bit like the position with interactive video online. The main model of DVD authoring is largely to disseminate existing content - add a second sound track and chapter markers... It is quite hard to get students just to stop thinking about making a 30-minute movie, which we then put on DVD. Instead let's start from the principle that the medium of publication is DVD, so how are you going to narrate a story that can consist of six different sections - let's call them chapters. We can script it so it can play in any order for example, instead of treating DVD's as a publication medium - what it means is we are now treating DVDs as the original medium of distribution, so chapter markers now become something else... Students and film professionals have trouble with that...

SK Are you suggesting that you start from the distribution end and think about how this is going to effect practice? For example, with vogs you start by thinking about the influences of the network?

AM I don't see it as a distribution end, it is rather that any medium you work in has formal qualities attached to it and they ought to intrinsically affect that medium. The page, for example in hardcopy publishing, has a fixed dimension which is inevitable so you have a beginning, middle and an end... If we still wrote on scrolls that you unrolled in time and were horizontal, we would have quite a different conception of beginning, middle and end. The materiality of the page or what we understand writing to be could be thought of differently depending on the affordances of the medium.

So if we move, for example, to DVD. DVD is a publication medium, the materiality of the DVD - what it affords us as filmmakers is fundamentally different to what TV or cinema affords. So my point is that rather than treating it as a publication or distribution medium - think of it as your authoring medium. What are the material conditions of your DVD? Let's explore those, either formally or creatively, or both or if you like... to put it in a very simple way, what is the grammar of this medium? The example I have used for filmmakers - who just still don't get it because they will get upset because they don't have full screen motion, etc. - I say imagine it is 1919 and you're working with black and white film, no sound, and you come along and say 'well I refuse to work in this medium because it is black and white, it is a rectangle and there is no sound' - well lots of people probably said that but they are all forgotten... It is the people who came along and said 'What can we do with this?' - who invented the grammar of cinema and great artworks and great commercial works. Instead of saying no, it's saying yes. Bandwidth is a constraint, but that doesn't mean we can't work with it... we have to work out what its

affordances are... we can't work with it the same in relation to DVD.

SK With vogs you are experimenting with those limitations...you write about resistance in your blog.

AM Yes, it is the resistance in the medium; you can't have art without resistance. But one of the great myths particularly from students and from lots of other people who don't know much about new media is that they think there is no resistance that you can do anything, but you can't. You know for someone who works in the field, is a theoretician in the field, I am tired of essays or proposals that all start with an apology that one day when we all have instant bandwidth we will be able to do this...

SK That kind of modernist idea that technology is about progress... you mean like in Gene Youngblood's articles on video...?

AM It's just a fantasy. Yes, ok one day we might have better streaming technology for video, but I am quite pragmatic about these things, it is what can we do now... we can actually do a lot now.

SK You write about video being TV on the web. The approach seems to be to look back as a way to determine how to use current media technologies, rather than thinking about the limitations of those new media technologies, as they exist now.

AM I think that is what a lot of other people do – the existing practice, say in film and TV is to look to TV or the cinema - full screen, full motion and absolutely full user control. When you go the cinema you give up 14 dollars and contractually you give yourself over to 90 minutes in a darkened auditorium, and the film, or the company, or the director, assumes ownership of that space or the entire screen for example. They control the values they bring to electronic work and they want to maintain that control. They are really unwilling to let that go - one of the biggest complaints filmmakers will make is about bandwidth, they can't get full screen, full motion. It is the same with creative writers; they just don't understand hypertext because they are extraordinarily unwilling to give away control. They don't like people not being able to get to the end, or for it not to be a fixed ending or all those sorts of things, so what happens is these practitioners are largely defining new media practice. It is a bit like they look backwards and use that to define what they can do in contemporary practice. I am saying we can use some of that sure, but these are the affordances and this is what works on the network, it is peer-to-peer communication. All those websites in the dotcom business where they set up stuff which was not peer to peer they are all gone, the ones that worked really well recognised about distributed ownership, distributed content, distributed processes. That is why google still works well, not because it is a good search engine but because they understand the affordances of the network...

SK Do you see there being any production limitations between the domestic desktop level and higher end equipment?

AM Many of my students use domestic level equipment? I want them to learn that they can make compelling content on a zero budget. I like to remove the mystification of the technology they will be using - iMovie, iDVD for example - the

software that comes with the apple operating system.

People don't need to learn how to drive Final Cut Pro, what they need to learn is literacies in multimedia narratives, computers, the network - if they learn those literacies then I guess I feel like the rest falls into place. Learning how to use a camera is a generic skill, the problem that happens in a lot of media studies teaching is students are using Canon XLR or whatever they are using, and they learn how to drive that specific camera and as soon as they get a different camera they are looking for the white balance and they can't find it... But, if they learn the basic principles about white balance on a video camera this means they can work with any model of camera and work towards understanding how to capture data with a video camera... This is one of the things pedagogically we are interested in doing is teaching literacy skills – it is about being literate enough around that technology to know how to find that button or menu item, rather than saying it is a different camera.

SK Do you have the same sort of approach towards software?

AM Yes, which is why in first year we are using domestic software because we want students to learn that under the edit menu is copy/paste, cut works, in every single program in exactly the same way, from the free software to the ten thousand dollar applications ... I see those sorts of literacies coming first.

SK What specific social condition instigated your vlog practice?

AM The vlogs started out as research but an interesting example of what influenced this practice is what I noticed when I taught overseas. I was teaching a lot of students from the developing world, Africa and Latin America, they were all documentary filmmakers and they were in Norway. They loved the fact that downstairs they had access to avid final cut pro-suites and really good quality equipment – they were having a ball. But, one of the things I tried to teach them was to understand that when they went back to their home countries - if they were interested in what I was teaching them, then basically they could go almost anywhere in their country and make content... or let other people make content or distribute it... they didn't get that. I said to them do you want to walk back to your high school and go guys we need an Avid, a 3-chip camera, a manfrotto tripod - realistically our budget is going to be 50-60,000 US dollars'...or do you want to go back and say I have brought my domestic video camera - or the school has already got one - or I have brought my laptop with me and we are going to use some free domestic software so we can make and distribute your documentaries. Soon as I said this, all these developing world students said we understand it is about accessibility. One of the things I am really interested in is not a million people coming to look at my content, it is about a million people making their own content and putting it up there in the same way that blogs are put up there... You don't go and read all the blogs that are out there - you find a few that you like, but what I like about blogs is that all these people become writers in quite interesting ways. This is the cultural, social, political, and economic nature behind producing vlogs. We have the technology now so what might we do with it? The Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov had this essay...

SK Is that the idea of publishing news all the time using film...

AM Yes. He wrote that in 1922 - when I first read the essay - this was a year before I was doing vogs... I thought, this guy is amazing, what he is imaging here is CNN - so he invented CNN in the 1920s - but now I realise that what he was imaging is vogs or audio blogs.

SK Is this all in line with what many of your colleagues advocate, the idea of more diversity in media publishing...the ability to publish outside the mainstream media.

AM Yes, but there is a tricky tension with what is just vanity publishing. This is one of the most common critiques of some of the online chats that have gone on about video blogs. People think of the idea of sitting and watching the blogger talking to camera for 30 minutes. Who would want to watch? I agree, but I struggle with the idea that this is the defaultist model or the only model - that this is going to be this amazing form of vanity publishing, we are all going to become news anchors because that is all we want to be... Some blogs are awful I agree, but I am interested in blogging because there are blogs where people develop voices. You may have noticed this in my vlogging practice, which is now three years old - my blogging has changed quite a lot over those three years. I have developed a voice and a way of using this technology that is probably idiosyncratic and distinctive. My work has been largely saying did you know you can do this in QuickTime (QT). Most people don't know, and I am saying if you had these tools what would you make, and I am interested in trying to get people to make their own stuff.

SK It is also about an exposure of the process for me, doing this case study it is one of the few where I have so much access to the process behind the work - theoretical, practical and technical. Information I would never see in a journal article for example...

SK What is the key differences in your vlog practice compared to more conventional video practices like broadcast TV? What do you see as the major differences or changes occurring in video practice? An example I see in your vlogging is the concept of writing or scripting directly in video.

AM The writing I guess for me has two different parts, when I talk about writerly video or if I talk about Roland Barthes. The one very literal way to make interactive works is the level of coding required when you have to script code - you have to embed tags for a web page, that is a form of writing that in any interactive work is fundamental. If you move into DVD authoring in any substantive way there is some basic scripting, or even in flash art it is all about action scripts - it is fundamental to anyone wanting to work in the field. If you are a producer or director you need to be able to talk to a programmer or whoever is doing your scripting, you need some literacy in programming or writing code. I will use a film example, the director may not know how to be a Director of Photography (DOP) they may not know film stocks, lenses, etc. but they are literate enough to talk to the DOP and say this is what I want... The DOP can interpret that and they can have a conversation... they can understand each other there is literacy there... It is the same in interactive work. If you are a director of a project and you are working with the programmer you can't just think 'I don't need to know anything about this', because you need to

collaborate, you need to know it is all scriptable and scriptable means this - so that is one form of writing.

SK What has interested me about your vogs is the concept of writing in the medium, writing in video, or the video camera becomes the pen...

AM Yes. But I don't mean like the camera style notion of the 1960s where you just walk around and use the camera. What I mean is in vogs, if we treat the computer as a medium of publication. Once we treat the computer and the computer screen as both our writing and publishing space, in theory the rules change about what video is as an object. A really simple example is frames per second - fps - these come from the analogue mechanical world either as tape through video heads or film through a sprocket head. This has nothing to do with digital video because once video is on a computer screen it has nothing to do with fps, but we keep fps to measure all sorts of things to do with digital video. For example, in QuickTime and probably in some other environments now... if I take a still image and put it over one minute of sound track and only treat the computer as my authoring and publishing medium, it will just take that one image and just say hold it on screen for one minute. But if I was working in a video editing environment it would draw that image 24 times a second for a minute, a frame for every second. I would end up with this enormous file that just can't go on the network unless I compress the file significantly. For example, working in QT and only QuickTime as my authoring environment, I can put that still image over one minute of sound - instead of having to redraw that image 24 frames per second for a minute I just have to hold it there and play the soundtrack and that is what it does... so all of a sudden you actually stream video data over a network simply by using slide shows. A non-linear editing program will assume that there will be an outcome at the end of the edit which will require a frame rate, so it will re-draw that image 24 times per second because it is either going to go to a video tape format or film which is what is required for those mediums, but on a computer screen you only have to draw it once and hold it there.

It is a bit like non-linear editing systems still need to assume that the delivery medium is going to be analogue - video tape/film - which are still the privileged forms of delivery so they have to work to the fps system. When we edit in a non-linear system you may have A and B video rolls and several sound tracks and several other video tracks for compositing and titling ... basically this set up is to let us build a final compile... but when we go to publish this we tend to burn all that down and we think of it at the end of the day as delivering something with an image track and soundtrack. But, if we think of the computer again as the publishing medium we can actually keep the six video tracks and the six soundtracks in the finished work and they can be simultaneous, they can be all sorts of things. This is one of things that I think about with soft video. Imagine you are working in Final Cut Pro (FCP) and if we work in a soft video way, each of those tracks doesn't have to be burnt down to an image and sound track... instead they become more like shots, or we can think about them like shots. That means in the final product all of them are available, or not available, which means each object can be scripted.

SK You have identified that software design is also affected by earlier media forms. Non-linear editing software for video editing is generally shaped from the cinema film desk and bins model.

AM The same thing happened in desktop publishing. The web comes along in 1991, the predominate defacto model of publishing web pages pretty much came from print culture. Blogs are pretty much the first native genre on the web that doesn't use the page as the defacto mode. The page size doesn't determine a blog page... the blog is based on date, it is the first time that a predominately text based form of publishing on the web, has certainly in the popular domain, moved away from thinking that it is more or less a bit like pages.

Blogs started say five years ago, lets say 1998, so it took seven years of the internet for blogs to arrive on the internet, and that is 12-15 years after the rise of desktop publishing, for our paradigm to be able to shift that way. So, we are doing fantastic stuff with non-linear editing but it will be several years before someone realises that we can do it differently.

SK Putting a broader overview on this are many of these issues arising from the need to move from print, literacies, constructs, towards digital or multi literacies.

AM The same thing does need to happen in audio-visual practice. At the moment even though we are exploring a lot of different approaches we are still very grounded in the very traditional notion of what it means to be literate in the technologies of production and reception. It doesn't mean they are going to go away we will still have books. It is not an argument to say that we will not have television and cinema anymore, of course we will ... but just as we have books, brochures, pamphlets, we also have websites and blogs we are going to have TV, video, DVD, interactive TV, but also some other objects will arise.

SK the concept of thinking in video related to writing in the medium, thinking in the form could be done with the tracks...

AM In each track in QT... say you have a 2 minute movie and it is made up of nine tracks, those 9 video tracks do not have to be 2 minutes - one video track can be there for the first 30 seconds the last video track can be there for last 30 seconds the way I think about each track is as independent objects in the movie. Because it is QT every single track can be scripted so they can be visible, or not visible, they can be transparent, or not transparent. There can be many properties attached to each track so that you can think of your video as not just being an image track and a sound track that goes from A to B but being more like a box. Inside the box we have nine bits of video – it still has a timeline because it is time-based but we have these bits, and all these bits are available to be turned off, to appear in different parts of the screen - then it becomes a writing practice in the same way I might describe I am an editor in film. I have the trim bin, I edit, and I decide that this bit joins that bit... But, once we move into soft video now we can make those edits incredibly variable, subject to whatever you like... what the user does do, what the user doesn't do. The other way I would refer to this is Lev Manovich's idea that each QT movie and each track is a database. He thinks quite literally 'this is a database' - I also think it is about every QT movie being made up for example, of 9 tracks as a database – each track is a database object, it can be queried or called up. When you think of it this way you are writing with those objects - that is what I mean about writing with video, it is not like editing, and I make this fixed thing and then I publish it. It is like I have this database object that may or may not appear,

and the rules I could invent to say it should or should not appear - that is what I mean about writing with the medium...

SK in your vogs you advocate the idea of avoiding menus, buttons or an interface design on the vogs. You seem to look for a more random approach in your authoring.

AM Not so much random from my point of view. In my voggng practice I am not interested in putting in buttons or menus. In the early days of the web links you were always signaled - right click here to go home, probably with an arrow and a picture of a house and it would blink. Where as now we are link literate enough to know that if the mouse changes or it underlines, it is enough that there is a link... it will do something. We don't feel the need to have an icon, a text descriptor; there is an assumption in links in text that we are link literate. I guess part of my dogmatic argument is if we are going to call video interactive you must be able to interact with video...if it calls itself interactive video then moving the mouse around it should achieve something.

SK These things change because literacies start to develop - like web literacies evolve and effect design considerations?

AM Yes, exactly. The number of sites I have seen which call themselves interactive video, which consist of a link to a single linear piece of video - why they call that interactive video is beyond me...

SK You describe new video vernaculars emerging in your blogging, on your voggng.

AM It is a bit like we can have some video with three simultaneous soundtracks for example; they are all available depending on where you mouse. Then what do we narrate with that? That is the question...

SK When you say what would you narrate, what do you mean in a linear narrative sense?

AM When I say this to some filmmakers, they say you can do that in DVD, and I say no you can't do that in DVD. In DVD you decide to listen to soundtrack one and you listen to that soundtrack from start to finish, here, if I mouse over that person I hear something different while it is still, we don't stop, we don't pause. Imagine you are filming a cafe scene, when you mouse over that table that is the conversation you hear... imagine if you click on that table you then get taken to a different bit of video but you could also script it so that table could take you to something different again... If you clicked in the first minute you might go to this sequence, if you clicked in the second minute you might go to this sequence. Now what would you narrate? We now have quite genuinely multi-linear, multi-sequential, multi-soundtrack, interactive video works. Which isn't about watching a video to the end, you need to click to go to the next part of the branching tree - mouse around the real-time moving image... there are completely different variations...

When I show the Collins Street vog to people they don't get it. Imagine you have a doctor talking to a patient, you hear what the doctor says - mouse over the patient -

you hear what the patient thinks the doctor is saying. Mouse somewhere else and you hear what the conversation should be, so you can model doctor patient relationships for medical students.

By new vernaculars, I mean in the same way that we have film vernaculars; you know we have POV, we have reverse angles, we have cutaways, an established grammar. Most people when they come to video online they go - it is flat linear, etc., so it's a really simple exercise - and again Chris Marker is good here in *Letter From Siberia* - he has the same footage with three different commentaries. In a vlog we can have the three commentaries available simultaneously depending where you mouse for example - and that is a simple example. The point is that if I say to a student for example - 'we are going to take 30 seconds of image, I want you to work out three different narrative soundtracks that work, and all must work, and must work if you change half way through'. Straight away you have to confront what multi-linearity really means or what multi-sequentially really means, because instead of just breaking up into little nodes and reassembling shot A to shot B, what we are saying is no - it becomes much more pluralist than that...

SK You reference collage and montage in your writing on vlogs...

AM Part of that comes I guess from...well Lev Manovich has spoken about the same sort of concepts as well, although I do it slightly differently, I regard vlogs as desktop computer practice. I think the native environment of the contemporary computer screen is of multiple windows so that's the collage thing - it is overlapping windows, of course they change in time, the content of each window changes or you close a window. I think of that as multi-linear practice, it is not an aesthetic practice; it is how we use computers. It is a little bit like the native aesthetic that screen space is about overlapping windows - collage that changes in time. In the vlogs I have taken that as a formal aesthetic quality. A lot of vlogs will fracture the space of the video into multiple panes; all will use multiple panes in one work to load different content because it is about collage and montage. The collage happens on the computer desktop, the montage when it gets closed is usually defined by the user but not always...the system crashes, applications close by themselves, pop-up windows appear and disappear, there is certain randomness or machine instrumentality.

It is the same when I first started titling - it was partly introducing more noise to the image by slicing the video up into nine you are actually artificially introducing noise, it is a way of concealing lack of bandwidth. It is also a deliberate strategy from that point of view, hiding the fact that the vlog is running at only one frame a second. Personally I quite like noisy stuff, in some of the vlogs I compress stuff very hard deliberately, it is extremely pixelated and has artifacts that are quite a deliberate strategy on my behalf. But there are people who are currently making vlogs and they're producing very beautiful images, I look at their work and it just looks awesome. I probably can't do that - just me realising that I don't have that aesthetic.

Fragmenting or fracturing in relation to blogs - blogs have this whole practice, they can be long posts or short posts or posts that don't make sense by themselves, you have to have been reading what has been going on in that blog for the last week, etc... When we work in network environments there is as much value accrued to

the relationship between parts as the parts themselves, so in a blog the authority of a blog is as much in the links in and out of, as is what is written in the blog.

SK How do the new media technologies that you use shape your practice?

AM The simple answer I would give to that is that what I am interested in is trying to become literate enough in what the technologies allow...and using that to inform what is possible in my own practice. In film and TV they know what their existing technologies allow them to do... they try and bring that to the medium. What I am interested in trying to work out is for example that QT is a fully scriptable environment; I am thinking what are the implications of that... I am quite computer literate and network literate and that this probably is the main thing that informs how I work with vogs. I used Storyspace a lot, a stand alone authoring system. I strongly see my understanding of QT as coming from my experience of story space, story space is a node-based system, the content space may or may not be used, may or may not be read, may not be found by a reader. It is about the literacy of what it means to be multi-linear or hypertextual that is the model that I am bringing to my video practice. I am actually bringing quite a different notion to video practice. It is not like I have come from film first – I have done film studies and media studies and made video, but I am actually coming theoretically I think, in terms of practice from more of a hypertextual model. I am applying these principles onto video practice.

SK As a hypothetical model, say you had a class of students sitting in front of you and a lot had come from film or video practice...what would be the broad strokes you would put down in front of them if they were starting to produce vogs, streaming video, or video for new media environments...

AM I would get them to write a list of what the formal properties of these existing media are for film or video...partly because most people haven't actually formalised these properties– for example that the image is rectangular, there is an image track and sound track, that editing consists of this sort of practice. With a lens we can do certain things, when we deliver we deliver on when it is broadcast, the delivery formats we use, etc... Then I would make a similar list for what it means to work in a desktop-networked environment. Then, I would get them to think about the list of the video-film formalities...you know, we don't go around saying 'it is only a rectangle, I only work in a circle' - we actually accept those as constraints that enable our art so we have rules of composition that are devised from a rectangular frame...An example I will give to students is that you want to film in my office and you wanted to do a shot but when you get there you realise you can't do it because the wall is in the way. You don't all throw up your hands in despair and decide you can't do it, you know that you need to somehow mediate that and compromise... You treat it as a positive constraint, you realise that you have to adapt to the pragmatic conditions of production. When you move to the network these are the pragmatic conditions of production, so instead of fighting against them... how do we, if you like, endorse them? How do we work with bandwidth constraints?... that you can't have an image this big, but you can have theoretically multiple soundtracks, you can have this, that and the other. So let's treat those as positives and then think about what sort of objects you could make.

SK In essence you have identified that an understanding in change of practice is very much about identifying the possibilities of what you are working with...it is about understanding specificity of the medium...

AM Yes, utterly. I think in our existing practices of say film, TV, radio, we understand the specificities of the medium, they mature, they have been around a long time we know they are time-based. We know there are certain genres that work, we can still experiment with that but there are all these assumptions we bring to it unconsciously...because we have all grown up listening to the TV, radio, etc. One of things I would do is try to make those explicit, that there are a lot of things that we do in TV or radio that are the product of the constraints of the technology. For example, it is linear and time-based, we have to have intros and outs, we have to have cutaways. Often in my teaching I set really nasty constraints, they have to learn that it is not a free for all... I would largely define creativity as the ability to work successfully within constraints. If you are a painter you have paint and a surface usually and there are all sorts of material aspects that go with that...being a good painter is understanding those constraints. On top of that you get into representation and anti-representation and there all sorts of things that go on but at the end of the day there are fundamental constraints. Instead of thinking it inhibits us, lets think about ways that it might liberate us to use a romantic notion, that is what I would do with students.

I am not into using the Internet to reproduce existing practices. I don't mind that people do, I do mind when people do and they call it something new and they don't realise it is not new at all... they are doing the same thing in a new environment. But my particular interest both in hypertext and now in the vlogging is that these technological environments have new affordances that allow us to write and make different sorts of objects

AM At the end of the first year they have basic literacies, they know how to shoot video, capture video, edit video, same with sound, same with still image, put it in on CD, put it on the web, put it on DVD. In the first year we want everybody to be able to do that with sound and image - they have these literacies about tracks, layering, compositing in a really fundamental sense. You know in Photoshop we are going to do an exercise with layers and that is where they are going to learn about layers in a digital environment. When they move into after effects they already have the idea of layers, you don't have to re-teach that, they can composite images out of layers, you can treat each layer as an independent object, we can add noise to this one and clean up this one... Straight away their literacy about what that means is here, and about after effects - here is how it works.

Industry doesn't really care at the end of the day if you're an avid expert or after effects expert, what they want to know is that you have got the generic competencies and the ability to teach yourself. They will retrain you if they want more generic skills and that is what we are trying to do here. In the second year we are now introducing a compulsory subject, which I teach, which is based on something like vogs. In first year they do generic stuff then in the second year they say 'I am doing TV or radio', then we appoint this other subject that gets rid of the boxes or breaks down the walls around each media type. In this subject you're going to bring your Radio/TV knowledge, but now we are going to make sure you learn that they are not separate things, we want to make works which are going to

integrate across these different areas. Maybe they will make vogs or something similar.

Convergence has happened even though not in the way it was designed. If you listen to the ABC radio for example, a program on Foreign Correspondent, I heard the voice version on Sunday morning on radio national, then I heard a segment on PM yesterday and it is on the website. So it has turned up in four different formats and it might appear as an ABC educational DVD one day. We want them to understand multi-purposing and have some competencies there but I want them also to learn that there is another side to convergence... I want them to also learn about this...working in an environment where we make new sorts of objects using image/sound/text. So one model is say the ABC/ BBC model - you are a journalist you go and get content, that content produces a text track which becomes a transcript which gets published, we take the image and sound track and that becomes a TV story, we take the soundtrack and that becomes a radio story. The other way we think of convergence is that we now make objects that take text which isn't necessarily the transcription, it could be other text and we take image and we take vision and sound...and we make something with that which can only be delivered online...

There are two different ways of thinking about what this technology offers – what I want is graduates that think about re-purposing to deliver to existing media forms, and the other is about inventing new objects. Imagine we have journalism in this school; it would be really nice to work with journalism students and staff. They have a web journal and that is conservative, it does not have to be CCN dot online - let's not see it as a newspaper, let's invent a new kind of news publication. In terms of pedagogy I believe if we can do something like that well, then industry will come to us and say that is fantastic we want your graduates. Train leadership and innovation and as soon as you suggest that, they say 'you can't teach that because industry doesn't do that' - I suggest that often industry doesn't know what they are doing with the technology, or they're just putting newspapers on the web. Let's reinvent the wheel and then invite them in and show them...

We did one project years ago in radio in QT. We just used a QT soundtrack and we put a href in there so as it plays it automatically loads web pages. We did this about 4-5 years ago and that was a model of digital radio broadcasting, you listen to the audio stream and these web pages load above ads, visual information, etc. That project got shown at some big radio show in the UK by one of our radio lecturers and some BBC guy came up and said that is fantastic, that is better than the stuff we are doing... If we innovate then industry will come to us, lets invent what industry practice should be, if we do that then jobs will fall out of the trees.

SK in your notes on vogging you discuss the relationship between the text and image, or cablegrams, for example...

AM I am an academic and also work with images. What I am interested in is something that brings the two together. I don't want the text just to be a mirror of the image, I want some tension or noise between the two because I think text is a discrete object in its own right as is the image. One of the early myths, particularly in pedagogy but in a lot of new media content, is the assumption that because we can now put sound or video inside something that the gap between text and image

can now be dissolved...we can now make a website that actually has the pictures, the paintings, inside the site. Say I am a fine art teacher, look we can now make a website where we have the paintings there and the students can write about it and that is true and that is fantastic...

SK In a comparative sense is that like the idea that you can put a picture into a book...and now with digital technologies you can bring any medium like sound or video into a written document?

AM Yes, and that is really good, I don't have a problem with that but I think, for example in cinema studies, we can now put video inside your essays which is a major paradigm shift potentially yet to be explored properly. You put the video in first you don't write your essay then put it in as an illustration, you put it in at the start and it is there the whole time you are writing. One of the biggest outcomes, particularly for students when they do this, is to learn that text can never be equated to the image and vice versa. One of the ironic outcomes in bringing the two into the same space is to make visible the difference - as they write to the film they increasingly realise words are different and they can never write enough that is somehow going to make the writing equal to the moving image. All of a sudden they realise they are different things. Then you say 'ok, if they are different things what is the role of writing in relation to image'.

Writing always comes first...let's reverse it, let's make an essay, which is only pictures. What I am really interested in, in terms of new media practice and pedagogy is that there is so much stuff, even when we take out multimedia, new media titles. And there are a lot of essays you will read about celebrating this kind of thing, that now we can put images with words, but ninety nine times out of a hundred the text is privileged and the image is used to illustrate the text. They have still kept that very traditional divide between the text and the image.

An example of the possibilities if you work with the image first – imagine the opening of *The Searchers* and it plays as a movie, but I annotate the image all over the place. It is a vlog, it is an essay vlog - you might mouse over Ethan, John Wayne is in the distance, you mouse over him and some text appears that is say at 30 seconds, then you mouse over him at 2 minutes and some different text appears...maybe you mouse over him then five images appear with the same character represented but at different points in the film and mousing over those might conceptualise this in relation to the opening. I am writing an essay that is driven by the film image a completely different practice as far as I am concerned but how would you think about that, how would you do it?

End

Seth Keen, "Profile: Linda Wallace, *Mesh* 17, Experimenta online journal, October 2004, <http://www.experimenta.org/mesh/>

PROFILE: LINDA WALLACE

: : Seth Keen

Linda Wallace has a diverse background in photography, cinematography, radio, journalism and publishing, experiences she brought together in the media company *machine hunger* formed in 1995. This diversity, in combination with curating a range of international media arts exhibitions, informs her art practice. Consequently, Wallace has embraced the convergence of media and art in the medium of video. Her obsession with the transitive nature of video has successively involved short pieces and multi-monitor installations; large multi-screen public installations produced through *machine hunger*; digitally-composited single-channel video; and is now returning to installation and public space works. The single-channel video works *eurovision* (2001) and *entanglements* (2004) are examples of a video style that explores the narrative territory between interactive video and documentary essay. A broad range of media elements are layered together as multiple tracks of data to investigate a new form. This technique is used to question an era of media saturation and the technological expansion of video.

In *eurovision*, film excerpts from Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) are combined in split-screen format with TV grabs from the 'Eurovision' song contest, archival documentary footage and original video-photos recorded by the artist. All these elements are composed into a magazine-style template of separate multiple frames that screen simultaneously. In contrast, the audio is a single computer music track fusing this mix of imagery.

entanglements continues this exploration of frame fragmentation, the screen becoming a grid through which multiple streams of mixed images are pushed at the viewer. Television news excerpts from Palestine, Pine Gap, the Iraq War and the Moscow theatre siege are set into multiple frames that consume and slice up the whole of the screen, which becomes a videowall of symmetrically repeated and mirrored television bites occasionally broken with the more familiar full screen image. A singular composed soundtrack silences the television audio, while a cloned newsreader repeated in a bank of frames speaks but is never heard.

In an interview Wallace talks about the way video constantly devours other media and new "technological developments." It is the porous nature of the medium that prompts her to use video to re-use media. In techniques which hark back to Guy Debord's 'détournement' of the 1960s or the Scratch video of the 1980s, she re-uses and re-mixes images and text to recontextualise the original sources in another form. Interested in the differing tonal qualities of video formats, emerging video technologies are used to explore the "textuality" of the medium, such as the green monochromatic tonal quality of military night vision cameras in *entanglements*. Each type of video image offers differing resonance in terms of narrative construction and the transformation of context.

As a recombinant video practitioner, Wallace also explores with rigour the spatiality of the frame. Splitting the screen into multiple frames instigates an engagement with multi-linear narratives. [1] Described by Wallace as a “linear version of an interactive project”, *eurovision* emulates the viewer and user experiences on the Internet. Lev Manovich argues that computer operators working with numerous fragments of information are constantly engaging with the concept of multiple simultaneous associations. [2] This notion is translated into *eurovision* and *entanglements*. Engaging with new media technologies and cultural paradigms, this video work extends a shift towards the orientation of space as part of converged media and art. Wallace is currently extending these spatial explorations as an artist in residence at Montevideo Time Based Arts in Amsterdam. *Living Tomorrow* uses multiple streams of video, sourced and compiled from an array of video fragments lodged on a server, and projects these streams into a public space. This work examines rule-based and random narrative construction and the resultant materiality of high-resolution video over networks. The outcome becomes part of what she has called “architectural media space”.

NOTES:*

1. Peter Weibel, "Narrated Theory: Multiple Projection and Multiple Narration (Past and Future)." In Martin Rieser and Andrea Zapp, eds., *New Screen Media: Cinema/Art/Narrative*, London: British Film Institute, 2002. pp. 105-19
2. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, pp. 322-326.

Seth Keen is a lecturer, researcher and artist, based in the Centre for New Media Arts (CNMA) at The Australian National University, Canberra. He is currently completing a Master of Arts (by Thesis), through the University of Technology, Sydney, focusing on the changing conditions of video practice and theory in new media environments.

**>>Video Chaos: Multilinear narrative structuration
in New Media video practice.**

Practice Report

Seth Keen

Thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Technology, Sydney
2005

Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

>>Video Chaos

Practice Report

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>>Video Chaos

Practice Report

Abstract

The presentation of the thesis comprises the Dissertation component (66%) along with the Practice Component and the Practice Report (33%). The Practice Report documents the nature and development of the research undertaken during the course of the study. The culmination of the Practice Component takes the form of an exhibition and archiving of video works from June 2003 to the date of submission, January 2005.

The Practice Component has been based in the following locations and used resources from Central Queensland University (Bundaberg campus), and The Australian National University, Centre for New Media Arts in Canberra. The practice has examined the topic through the production of the audio-video installation *Sugartown* and three video works *The Hazzards*, *Nodal Dialectics 1* and *boomsplatbangwhack*. While these video works exist as discrete media artworks, they also operate as a type of practice process diary for working through the ideas explored in the written dissertation. Even though the video works are not meant to literally 'illustrate' those ideas, they nevertheless explore ways of integrating the theoretical concepts into my own research practice. In this *Video Chaos* dissertation, through an examination of current video practices, I note an emerging trend towards disseminating audio-visual content simultaneously in the form of poly-sequential narrative structures. I argue that this is a significant development within the video medium, and that this is an effect of video new media artist-practitioners' engagement with the relationships between art and technology. Two extensive case studies are investigated and, whilst a number of issues come to the fore in this research, exploring the issue of narrative structuration is the primary focus and exploration of this dissertation.

>>Video Chaos

Practice Report

1.1 Introduction

The MA (by Thesis) project *Video Chaos* was undertaken from March 2001 to January 2005 at the Media Arts and Production Department in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). This report on the practice component is divided into a number of sections. Firstly, there is an overview of the relationship between the theory and practice in this research project. This is followed by brief evaluations of the audio-video installation *Sugartown* and three video works *The Hazzards*, *Nodal Dialectics 1* and *boomsplatbangwhack*. Each of these video projects will be discussed in relation to the way they extend ideas discussed in the written dissertation. In addition to this the audio-video installation *Sugartown* and the video work *boomsplatbangwhack* have supporting documentation and photos covering a description of each gallery installation along with the artist's statements.

Next, it is important to understand the influences that the locations have had on the development of the practice. The research project *Video Chaos* started while I was in a lecturing position at the Bundaberg campus of Central Queensland University (CQU), a regional university situated in an unusual and often overlooked part of the South East Queensland coast; a region just south of Rockhampton; an area that

Ross Gibson has named the “Badlands.”¹ Taking up the challenge of researching a new media topic from a regional location, I decided to utilise my previous experience in project management and creative collaboration. This expertise enabled me to form creative networks with professional colleagues and local communities. The audio-video installation *Sugartown* and the two video works, *The Hazzards* and *boomsplatbangwhack*, result from direct engagement with the people and resources at the location. Significantly, the *Bundaberg Media Research Group* (BMRG) was formed to encourage cross-discipline collaborations – as stated on the BMRG website:

...to develop and encourage media and media arts activities and projects (both practical and research based), especially with local communities on campus and within the Wide-bay Burnett and other regional areas.²

As a result audio-video installation *Sugartown* and the video works *The Hazzards* and *boomsplatbangwhack*, integrate both my own research objectives and the practicalities required to meet the parameters of the distribution outlets. On my relocation in 2004 to a lecturing position at The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, the other video project, *Nodal Dialectics 1*, was finalised with new creative networks at that location.

1.2 Examination Materials

The practice component will be presented on one DVD disc. The DVD will contain the single-channel video works *The Hazzards*, *Nodal Dialectics 1* and *boomsplatbangwhack*.

¹ Ross Gibson, *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2002).

² Helen Ester and Phillip Roe, coordinators *Bundaberg Media Research Group*, http://despair.cqu.edu.au/bmrg/bmrg_about.shtml (accessed 2 December 2004).

1.3 Overview

From the outset, the practice component submitted is the result of a research practice process. Part of a non-traditional thesis, the practice component is utilised to work through both the theoretical and practical analysis. Therefore, all the resulting video works explore and extend the research problem and argument posed in the written dissertation. The video works examine an emerging trend towards disseminating audio-visual content simultaneously in the form of multilinear narrative structures. Whilst a number of issues come to the fore in this research, exploring the issues of narrative structuration is the primary focus of the practice component in this research project. Consequently, experimentation in these video works follows the theoretical ideas produced in the case study analysis and aspects of the narrative structuration process discussed in the Conclusion.

All the video works, therefore, examine a number of the narrative structuration processes. Firstly, as single-channel video works, they explore the territory between interactive and conventional cinematic/televisual genres. Working with intermedia and hypermedia audio-visual constructs, they are bridging works between potential interactive and established single-channel genres. Using mainly digital non-linear editing and compositing software, these video works explore technological developments and subsequently the specific attributes of digital video as a medium. Each video work experiments with the notion of closed and open multilinear narrative structures, along with the simultaneous display of multiple audio-visual elements. Integral to all of these works is an exploration of the concept of time, a notion that is examined by working with different time-periods concurrently and the temporal narrative structures of full-screen audio-visual material. Finally, all the practice incorporates differing approaches toward space and the spatial dimensions of the screen. This includes aspects associated with the concept of “spatial montage” (3.5 Screen Space). Overall, the practice component of this research project is influenced by the case study analysis.

1.4 *Sugartown* installation

Bundaberg Arts Centre, Queensland 16 July - 6 August, 2003

Sugartown is an audio-visual installation that was installed as part of a group exhibition focusing on the elderly local Bundaberg Artists Charles and Sheena Hazzard. The show was described by the local ABC radio journalist Lachie Campbell:

They say that art reflects life, and the old adage could not be more true in the case of Charles and Sheena Hazzard. For over fifty years the Wide Bay couple have been at the forefront of the artistic movement in the region, and have always used their lives, surroundings and family as inspiration for their works. To mark their contribution to art in the Wide Bay, a joint retrospective of their works, along with a collection of their family 8mm films, and a slide show has been put on display at the Bundaberg Arts Centre.³

The gallery exhibition is one part of an archival project, initially supported by the Regional Centre of the Arts (RCOTA). The 7.5 hours of 8mm film was transferred to digital video, with the aim to archive the footage with Screensound Australia.

My own research interest in this archive project is motivated by a number of reasons. Beginning to examine *vogs* as a case study, I was intrigued by the way the Hazzards had used an 8mm film camera like a writing instrument to record visually, daily events over a 30-year period. The work in the gallery exhibition is titled, "A film diary of family, community and art in Bundaberg". Their use of the camera in a contemporary sense is a version of a 'filmblog'. The artist's statement in the gallery reiterated this notion:

Sugartown is an unique historical 8mm film record of life in Bundaberg, a regional town in Queensland. *Sugartown* is unusual as the viewer is privy to a local family's life unfolding over three decades, from the 1950s-80s. This film diary of events is made unique by the filmmakers who in their words have a 'deadly compulsion' for artistic creativity. We see not only their family journeying through life but also their long-term commitment to art in the community. As painters and model-makers we witness their outdoor painting excursions, exhibitions and float building for the annual sugar harvest festivals.

³ Lachie Campbell, "Sugartown - an art history of the Hazzards" ABC Radio Wide Bay, Queensland Thursday, 10 July 2003 <http://www.abc.net.au/widebay/stories/s898343.htm> (accessed 1 December 2004).

The viewer is left with a vivid impression of life in the Bundaberg region during this era. There is also an opportunity to share in many intimate and familiar moments in the life of Charles and Sheena Hazzard's family.⁴

Another point of interest was the way the Hazzards adopted a multimedia approach towards using a number of artistic mediums – film, photo slides, and drawing – to realise their finished work in painting. They seemed to move back and forth with fluidity, across all these mediums. Finally, in collaborating on an archival project, I was interested in how audio interviews, location atmospheric audio and composed audio could be integrated into a final video work. In addition to this, the 8mm film recorded with no audio demanded a different approach that experimented with the integration of these varying elements. Initially, I was determined to explore a video form that did not rely on the traditional single-channel output with a single mixed and synched audio track.

Hence, in terms of this research, the aim was to begin experimenting with all of these elements as separate entities that could be combined into differing narrative structures by the viewer, a notion that follows the hypermedia processes whereby varying media forms remain separate but are integrated using hyperlinks (4.6 Hypermedia Video). But in this example, the viewer creates the links by choosing which audio to place with moving-imagery at any one time. The multilinear narrative therefore utilises a relatively open-ended structure - instead of providing a locked-off cinematic experience as pointed out by Gibson in the Conclusion.

Initially, a number of varying audio-visual elements were combined as individual objects. The video element was left mute and edited down from the original source footage to the duration of 49:26 mins. Exhibited on DVD format, this was designed to loop continuously. Instead of pursuing a narrative outcome that followed a traditional documentary narrative process, I decided to make the edit chronological rather than thematic. I was interested in treating the source material like data in a database along with keeping the diary – “filmblog” recording process of the artists. Hence, the gallery exhibition edit is a cut-down version of the 30 years of recording.

⁴ Seth Keen, *Sugartown*, Artist's statement, Bundaberg Arts Centre, Queensland, 16 July - 6 August, 2003.

Seth took the seven and a half hours of footage and made a 50-minute silent film, stringing together the artists' biggest influences and inspirations over their career, while at the same time laying down an unofficial history of the Wide Bay seen through the eyes and cameras of Charles and Sheena Hazzard.⁵

The edit also seeks to maintain the spontaneity and film qualities of the original recorded film. In conclusion, the approach was motivated by an opportunity to let the demands of the material dictate the process.

Audio Composition

Utilising the installed audio system in the gallery space, a looping ambient audio track was composed by the audio artist Jonathan Pagliano, around atmospheric sounds from the locations that Charles and Sheena had inhabited over the period of the filming. In addition to this, an audio interview was conducted with Charles and Sheena Hazzard. The interview audio was looped on a sound system and listened to using headphones within proximity of the screened video imagery. The final audio element was a rehearsed live musical performance by Jonathan Pagliano and Ben Pena, planned for opening night and subsequently recorded live for the final archiving (refer to Image 1).

In summary, the opportunity to present the audio and video material separately as an installation provided ideas towards the second stage of the project – a single-channel DVD archive version with mixed audio.

1.5 *The Hazzards*

The viewing audience affects the final integration of audio and video in *The Hazzards* video work. As an archive research project, *The Hazzards* will be viewed in the regional community of Bundaberg and in city archives. The audience will cover a wide range of age groups and have differing audio-visual viewing literacies. Therefore, the multilinear narrative structure of this video work needs to connect with established cinematic and televisual viewing conventions. But at the same

⁵ Campbell, "Sugartown - an art history of the Hazzards", 2003.

time, there is an opportunity to explore a multilinear narrative structure that begins to break down these established conventions (as discussed in the Conclusion).

In addition to this, the following single-channel video is designed as a prototype to be viewed finally as a full-screen, three-channel projection in a cinema or gallery environment. Working with a split-screen format, the single-channel version provides an opportunity to experiment with the audio composition for this type of presentation. The audio track can be taken from this version and used in the projection space.

A starting point is a narrative structure that potentially offers each viewer the ability to be involved in the construction of the narrative in a number of different ways, along with being able to make connections with familiar narrative conventions - thus, an open-ended structure that connects back to the original closed full-screen chronological order of the first edit. Again, the temporal narrative structure of the original affects both the spatial and temporal multilinear narrative structure (as discussed in the Conclusion). Working with the hypertext concept of viewing multiple time-periods concurrently, in *The Hazzards*, different parts of the three decades of recorded material are displayed alongside each other. The main protagonist and narrator, Nicholas Hazzard, in some instances is seen as a child, teenager and adult simultaneously, a temporal effect that is created by using “spatial montage” (3.5 Screen Space).

The next stage of the “spatial montage” process involved working out the number of multiple frames and the composition of those frames within the screen. A quadrant of four frames proved to be too busy for the viewer, while a diptych did not provide enough of an open-ended structure. A triptych layout with all the images alongside each other provided a combination that could be viewed simultaneously. The use of a “spatial montage” approach meant that very little of the first 50-minute edit was lost in the final work.

Audio Composition

The final stage was the composition of the audio, with the audio artist Tarquin Manek. Again, with the viewing audience in mind, the audio needed to be kept relatively simple to allow the viewer to cope with three moving-images running concurrently. An interview was done with the youngest boy of the family, Nicholas Hazzard, who proved to be a popular subject in a lot of the filming done by his parents, Charles and Sheena Hazzard. The interview was then edited and lined up on three audio tracks stacked on top of each other. With the audio interview overlapping in a number of places, edit decisions had to be made across the three audio tracks so only one track played interview material at any one time. The interview grabs are edited to direct the viewer onto a certain frames and subsequently individual scenes. A panning right and left technique is also used to aid this type of viewing style.

An objective of the audio composition was to integrate the spatial layout of the multiple frames. A starting point included creating a sense of location and the original domestic context of the footage and recording. Nicholas, travelling back from his home in Sydney for his parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary, did an interview to the images in the Bundaberg location. Utilising the 8mm film mute record of the original images, we decided to focus the audio composition around the family projected screenings that the Hazzards had run regularly over the years in their lounge room. Therefore, an audio record of a film projector provides background atmosphere and the music is recorded from Tarquin's old family organ. In conclusion, the aim was to work with Nicholas's relaxed interview response to the imagery (an informal intimate response within the family home), along with exploring the concept of fragments of memory that are presented out of chronological order.

Finally, the mix of interview, atmosphere and music are used to tie the whole work together. Often this audio is designed to work across all three frames and also direct attention to particular scenes. In summary, a "spatial montage" approach shifted considerable emphasis onto the audio edit. At the same time, the visual layout followed a simplistic compositional approach similar to the layout used in the

vog, *Collins Street* (as discussed in the Conclusion). Overall, the narrative structuration of *The Hazzards* demonstrates the potential to develop multilinear narratives that extend cinematic and televisual viewing conventions.

1.6 Nodal Dialectics 1

Nodal Dialectics 1 is an experimental single-channel video work that explores the concept of integrating multiple perspectives of a moving action simultaneously. A number of streams of video data are integrated within the frame of the screen at the same time. Four recorded angles of an action (the front, back and the two sides) are layered on top of each other using the compositing software After Effects. The process initially is to locate a unified integration of these multiple perspectives where a number of camera angles are synched together to run simultaneously in one screen. The initial foundation track is then used as a loop, to explore the fragmentation of the original image and subsequently a reconfiguration of a multi-perspective viewpoint.

Moreover, *Nodal Dialectics 1* is a bridging work between intermedia and hypermedia. Multiple perspectives of the same action are viewed concurrently, a notion which simulates in a simplistic way the concept of a hypertext novel where the user could choose to follow different versions of the same scene. Also, *Nodal Dialectics 1* takes up the challenge that Miles poses to students in relation to a vogs practice. As written in Chapter 4, "Miles advocates that students learn how to determine 'complex narrative' structures by forming multiple combinations with minimal units of content." *Nodal Dialectics 1* explores complex combinations of a multiple perspective viewpoint by utilising techniques from Cubist painting (2.1 Medium and Content, 3.2 Recombinant Video). Therefore, a key objective is to explore hypertextual narrative structures within the single-channel format. A part of this exploration is referencing the idea of multipletracks of video being streamed into the screen frame, a process that emulates aspects of Wallace's approach towards *eurovision* and the concept of multiple video tracks being streamed into a browser window of the Internet (2.4 *eurovision*).

In short, the concept and consequently the content are influenced by ideas presented by Paul Virilio on the notion of “perspective”.⁶ He argues that vision is affected by the earth’s pull towards the sun rather than the known concept of following lines of sight to a point on the horizon. The perspective conventions established by artists in the 1400s, he proposes, do not take into consideration the way a NASA space shuttle leaves the earth into space. Promoting a reversal of thinking, he proposes that a space shuttle “falls upwards” - the space shuttle defying the pull of gravity drops into the atmosphere. Combining “arse over heels!” sensibility⁷ with Cubist approaches towards perspective informs this video work (2.1 Medium and Content). The aim is to begin to explore with space and time Virilio’s concept of perspective.

From the outset, the form of this video work is influenced by a number of factors. The Futurist painters’ fascination with the depiction of movement is translated onto the medium of video using digital technologies, following Giacomo Balla’s exploration of movement in the painting *Leash in Motion*⁸ and *Abstract Speed*⁹. A second factor is the theoretical evaluation by Michael Rush, on connections between Cubism and the filmmaking of Sergei Eisenstein. Rush states that:

Eisenstein’s dynamic images, accomplished by varying camera angles and sophisticated montage editing, owe much to the fragmented shapes of Cubism, in which multiple views of reality (seen simultaneously as if from above and from the side in repetitive layerings) allowed for multiple understandings of reality.¹⁰

Thus, in *Nodal Dialectics 1*, the concept of recording an action from different positions is applied onto the space of the screen using compositing. This methodology utilises the layering and the spatial dynamics of the screen used in the composited video work *eurovision* (3.3 Video Fusion). By contrast, Eisenstein utilises temporal montage to edit together differing viewpoints of an action.

⁶ Paul Virilio, *Open Sky* (London: Verso, 1997).

⁷ *Ibid*, 1-35.

⁸ Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames and Hudson 1977), 64.

⁹ *Ibid*, 68.

¹⁰ Michael Rush, *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 19.

Indeed, the compositing of movement over the top of each other is an approach that the Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov pursued with the medium of film in the 1920s. Parts of the film *Man with a Movie Camera*¹¹ demonstrate this practice method. Vertov utilised the distinct characteristics of film and cinema technologies to realise a specific form of cinematic representation. Interested in the kinetics of an action, Vertov aimed to produce a moving-image experience that captured the essence of a specific motion within the spatial confines of the screen.¹² Using video as the principal medium, a similar aesthetic approach is followed in *Nodal Dialectics 1*. To sum up, the key objective was to explore both spatial concepts and the notion of a number of perspectives being viewed concurrently.

Audio Composition

Finally, the audio composition follows a number of key factors. Working with the audio artist Simon Ross, the underlying audio loop is designed around four tracks of audio, a structural process that is similar to the four video perspectives of the climbing action. Working with multiple streams of data which become abstracted, the audio does not follow the conventional synch to vision paradigm. Instead, the audio is influenced by the conceptual qualities of the video work. Initially, the key audio loop undergoes temporal speed changes that match the variations in speed of the key video loop. Then to match the visual abstraction of the four video streams or multi-perspective viewpoint, the key audio loop is layered over the top of itself using an audio delay effect. The layering technique progresses into the audio composition being stripped out as the visual abstract effect simplifies into graphic lines and shapes. Overall, the audio composition reflects an approach that has to follow not just one stream of vision, but multiple concurrent streams of vision.

¹¹ Dziga Vertov, Director, *The Man with a Movie Camera*, VUFKU 1929.

¹² Dziga Vertov and Annette Michelson, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (University of California Press Reissue edition 1995) 6-11.

1.7 *boomsplatbangwhack*

A national touring group exhibition (13 venues), WA, NSW, QLD including Queensland Museum, Brisbane, August 2004 - August 2006.

boomsplatbangwhack is a single-channel video in a curated group exhibition that is touring nationally. The exhibition, as the curator states: “presents a number of artists’ views on the impact and influence of the Baby Boomer generation; the people; the objects and events facing the ageing Baby Boomer population.¹³” The video as part of this baby boomers theme is authored to integrate into a period set designed in collaboration with the Bundaberg Arts Centre. The screening device is an original old 70s TV set (refer to image 2). Authored onto DVD format, the video (1:50 mins.) loops continuously.

The *boomsplatbangwhack* video concept is developed to engage specifically with the experiences of people living in regional Australia and the educational nature of the exhibition program. The following artist’s statement explains the conceptual approach towards the Baby Boomer theme:

The artwork *boomsplatbangwhack* takes up the theme of ‘onomatopoeia’, a term used to describe words that imitate sounds associated with an action. Boom, splat, whack and bang are part of a plethora of words that have been invented to describe an array of actions. The word, ‘boom’ for example is used to describe a loud deep reverberating sound or an explosion and has many alternative versions: BA-DOOM, BA-DOO MMM, BADABOOM, BOOM-KA-BOOM, BOOMM, BOOOM, BOO OMM, BOOOOOM, BRA-KOOOM, BRAAAAM, BTOOOM, BUDOOOM, FTOOM, FWZAAM, KA-BOOM, KA-BOO OMM, KA-BOO OMMM, KA-BOO OOM...

Onomatopoeia has been used in this exhibition as a form of protest against the cultural construct of “generationalism”. This is the placement of people into generational groups like ‘Baby Boomers’ and ‘Gen-Xers’, based on demographics. Mark Davis in the book ‘Gangland’ (1997) argues that this type of classification is used to create distance - a gap between generations. In addition to this, the ‘Baby Boomers’ use this demarcation to protect their own position, maintain monopolies and ultimately avoid having to deal with the issues of a fast changing society. ‘Baby Boomers’, by being defined into a specific generation group, are able to shift blame often onto younger generations.

¹³ Shelley Pisani ed., Arts Centre Coordinator *Boom Baby Boom* catalogue (The Bundaberg Arts Centre, 2004).

Taking up this position, I was attracted to these playful comic routines, performed by the 'Reilly family', in the regional Queensland town of Stanthorpe. Recorded on 8mm film in the early 1980s, this family provides their own interpretation of popular culture at that time. With a family of nine children, there is no shortage of willing cast to perform or act as an audience. Verging on the ridiculous, these unassuming routines represent the petty unsubstantiated nature of the need to classify and segregate generations.¹⁴

Firstly, *boomsplatbangwhack* is an example of the re-use of media or recombinant video practices (3.2 Recombinant Video). The original source material could be classified as domestic footage recorded on 8mm film. The film footage is recontextualised to meet the conceptual requirements of the artwork. But unlike the case study *eurovision*, there is no use of other media forms. *boomsplatbangwhack* is solely made up of the video excerpts in the form of multiple frames. Therefore, the aim of this video work is not to explore an intermedia “transformation” process (3.3 Video Fusion). The objective instead is to explore the concept of “spatial montage” (3.5 Screen Space) and screen compositional layouts towards both interactive and cinematic/televisual genres. The layout of the multiple frames is a mixed version of both the case studies in terms of the multiple frames being placed apart and on top of each other. Therefore, the composition of the multiple frames experiments with notions of collage used in the vogs practice (4.5 Screen Collage).

Consequently, the video work in relation to the research project experiments with both spatial and temporal montage in the screen space. The temporal narrative of the original full-screen 8mm film is altered when the material is taken into the split-screen format. Splitting the screen space into five frames, the same video track is repeated in each of the frames. But the start points of each track are staggered across the five frames within the screen so varying scenes can be viewed simultaneously. The staggering of the loops is configured so that five different scenes are displayed alongside each other concurrently. Following the split-screen technique used in the case study video works *eurovision* and *Collins Street*, *boomsplatbangwhack* explores the concept of “spatial montage” within the screen space.

¹⁴ Ibid, 8.

Also, an open-ended narrative structure is explored in order to fragment the scenes into smaller sequential units or actions. The objective following the conceptual idea of protest and banality was to break down audio-visual viewing conventions. Exhibited in a video art context on a TV set, the aim was to create a viewing experience that pushed the boundaries of conventional television viewing but also provided a narrative structure that focused the viewers' attention on actions in each of the scenes. The viewer chooses their own way to view the narrative - either settling on one frame throughout the duration of the loop or moving across the frames and taking in fragments of each of the scenes. Overall, the spatial arrangement reflects a comic book type layout.

The compositional layout of the multiple frames is influenced by the temporal montage structure of the original 8mm film source material. The original footage is recorded as separate scenes over the same time-period. The spatial configuration and subsequently the multilinear narrative structure are influenced by the temporal narrative structure of the separate scenes or skits. Therefore, the multilinear narrative structure is broken up into narrative units based around each individual skit. These narrative units had an instrumental effect on the layout of the multiple frames within the screen space and the staggering of the loops within the overall running time of the video work.

Audio Composition

Working with the audio artist Jonathan Stephens and the voice of Larry Sitsky, the audio track is composed to integrate the visual elements across the multiple frames, but also shift aural and visual emphasis onto actions within each frame. Overall, the audio composition is designed to draw attention onto these individual actions and subsequently the 'onomatopoeia' motion graphics.

End.

>>Video Chaos

Practice Report

Bibliography

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Keen, Seth. *Sugartown*, Artist's statement. Bundaberg Arts Centre, Queensland, 16 July - 6 August, 2003.

Pisani, Shelley ed. Arts Centre Coordinator *Boom Baby Boom* catalogue. The Bundaberg Arts Centre, 2004.

Rush, Michael. *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Tisdall, Caroline and Angelo Bozzolla. *Futurism*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.

Virilio, Paul. *Open Sky*. London: Verso, 1997.

Vertov, Dziga, Director. *The Man with a Movie Camera*. VUFKU, 1929.

Vertov, Dziga and Annette Michelson. *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. University of California Press Reissue edition, 1995.



Image 1: *SugarTown* installation



Practice Credits

Sugartown

Original 8mm film

Charles and Sheena Hazzard

Co-Producers

Seth Keen

Karl Neuenfeldt

Director/Video Editor

Seth Keen

Audio Composition/Mix

Jonathan Pagliano

Live Audio Performance

Jonathan Pagliano

Ben Pena

Assistant Video Editor

Jonathan Pagliano

Location Audio

Karl Neuenfeldt

Jonathan Pagliano

Special Thanks

Charles and Sheena Hazzard

Professor Alex Grady

Bundaberg Media Research Group

Central Queensland University

(Bundaberg Campus)

The Hazzards

Original 8mm film

Charles and Sheena Hazzard

Narrator

Nicholas Hazzard

Co-Producers

Seth Keen

Karl Neuenfeldt

Director/Video Editor

Seth Keen

Audio Composition/Mix

Tarquin Manek

Assistant Video Editor

Jonathan Pagliano

Location Audio

Karl Neuenfeldt

Jonathan Pagliano

Special Thanks

Charles and Sheena Hazzard

Professor Alex Grady

Bundaberg Media Research Group

Central Queensland University

(Bundaberg Campus)

Nodal Dialectics 1

Director/Video Record and Composition
Seth Keen

Audio Composition/Mix
Simon Ross

Performer
Justine Reilly

boomsplatbangwhack

Director/Video Composition
Seth Keen

Audio Composition/Mix
Jonathan Stephens

Voice
Larry Sitsky

Postal Address:
Telephone (work):
Mobile:
Email:



Education/Qualifications

- 2002-05 Candidate in research **Master of Arts** (by Thesis)
University of Technology, Sydney, (*expected submission 01/2005*)
Department: Media Arts and Production (RTS funding)
2002-03 Supervisor: Associate Professor Dr Norie Neumark (UTS)
2003-05 Supervisor: Chris Caines (UTS) Co-Supervisors: Dr Phillip Roe (CQU), Dr Catherine Summer-Hayes (ANU)
- 2000-02 **Graduate Certificate in Film and Video** University of Technology, Sydney,
Media Arts and Production
- 2000-01 **Certificate IV. Desktop and Interactive Video Production**
Computer Graphics College, Sydney, (A Grade Pass)
- 1993 **Auckland University** (PT) BA English, (1 subject) N.Z. Literature
- 1985-87 **Graphic Design Certificate** Auckland University of Technology, Awarded
Most Outstanding Student
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Teaching experience

Associate Lecturer (Level A)

- 2004-05 **The Australian National University** Centre for New Media Arts, Faculty of Arts. Coordinator Digital Video Major, BA(Digital Arts), Lecturer 2nd, 3rd year undergraduates, Supervisor Honours, Supervisor and Lecturer postgraduate coursework MA(New Media Arts)
- 2002-04 **Central Queensland University** Faculty of Informatics and Communication, (Multimedia)BA. Course Coordinator 1st year and 3rd year multimedia courses. Responsibilities included managing online education systems, moderating, supervising students and tutors across ten campuses both nationally and internationally. Lecturer Multimedia 1st year and digital video production 3rd year.

External assessment

- 2004 **The University of Auckland**, Faculty of Arts, Master of Creative and Performance Arts, Assessor: Documentary and Short Film

Certificate IV teaching

- 2001 **Computer Graphics College** Teacher, (Sydney), Video for Multimedia and the Internet, Premiere non-linear editing
- 2001 **P.O.E.T.** (Sydney) Digital Video Production. A portable classroom set up to work with an urban indigenous community at La Perouse in Sydney.
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Research

- 2002-05 **Master of Arts** (by Thesis) Composite thesis of theory and practice
Research topic: *Video Chaos* - The changing conditions of video practice
and theory in new media environments.
- 2004 **Contributing editor**, *underthesun*, ANU, Faculty of Arts. A collaborative
weblog with focus on precursors and contemporary developments - in both
the theory and practice of digital arts, New Media Art forms and web genres.
<http://underthesun.anu.edu.au/weblogs/underthesun/>
- 2003 -04 **RMIT critical weblog network**. A network of researchers operating
individual weblogs to develop theory and practice in new media.
<http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/~keen/>

Group exhibitions/screenings

- 2004-05 **boomsplatbangwhack** (single-channel DVD) 2 min. loop. A national touring
group exhibition (13 venues), WA, NSW, QLD including Queensland
Museum, Brisbane. Bundaberg Arts Centre.
- 2003 **Sugartown** Producer (single-channel DVD) 50 mins. August 2003,
Bundaberg Arts Centre. A 8mm film diary of family, community and art
events in Bundaberg from 1950s-1980s. Regional Committee for
the Arts (RCOTA)
- 2001-02 **Sightless Vision** (Beta), Experimental video, international competition,
Screened dLux media arts - d>art01, Sydney Film Festival

Scholarships

- 2002 **Apple Staff Scholarship**, Worldwide Developers Conference 2002, Silicon
Valley, San Jose USA (Awarded \$5,000)
- 2000-01 **Computer Graphics College** (Sydney), Interactive Video Scholarship,
(Awarded \$10,000)

Publications

- October 2004 **Mesh 17** - online experimenta media arts magazine that explores critical
issues and theoretical frameworks for new media arts. Artist profile on Linda
Wallace, <http://www.experimenta.org/mesh/>
- June 2004 Review **Realtime** magazine June 2004, David McDowell, *The Passenger*,
Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 26 March- 1 May 2004

Conferences

- 2004 Electrofringe: "Replicate/Automate/Infiltrate" – Honours student on UWS uni-
lateral panel discussions.
- 2003 Fibreculture "fibre-power" – Powerhouse, Brisbane
- 2003 Melbourne DAC, International Arts and Culture – RMIT
- 2002 Fibreculture, "Networks of Excellence" – MCA, Sydney

Mailing lists/memberships

- 2002-04 Fibreculture - information technology, internet studies and new media
criticism and debate <http://www.fibreculture.org/>
- 2002-04 Empyre facilitates - new media arts criticism
<http://www.subtle.net/empyre/>
- 2002-04 ANAT (Australian Network for Art and Technology) - connections and
collaborations across art, culture, science and technology.
- 2002-04 Experimenta - news, events and opportunities in new media arts.

Professional development

External consultancies

- 2003-04 **Island Footprints** Executive Producer, 1 x *Hindsight* documentary, 60 mins. ABC Radio National and 6 x 4 mins. ABC Radio Wide Bay. This is a story about survival, family, faith, and the South Sea Islanders' long struggle for recognition in the Wide Bay Burnett region of South-East Queensland. Produced by BMRG. (ABC funding \$8,050)
- 2002-04 Bundaberg Media Research Group (BMRG), A founding member involved in the formation of this initiative to develop and encourage media and media arts activities and projects especially with local communities in the Wide Bay Burnett region. <http://despair.cqu.edu.au/bmrg/index.shtml>
- 1996-97 Moving Image Centre, Board Member, (Auckland), Arts foundation funded annually by the N.Z. Arts Council to promote short film and multimedia.

Software training

- 2003 AFTRS DVD Authoring (Melbourne)
- 2002 AFTRS After Effects Desktop Video Compositing (QUT Brisbane)
AFTRS Final Cut Pro non-linear editing workshop (Brisbane)
- 2001 Computer Graphics College, (Sydney) – Adobe After Effects, Macromedia Flash, QuickTime, QuickTime VR, Video for Multimedia/Internet, Multimedia sound editing, 3-D Graphics and Animation, Adobe Premiere, Integrating and implementing streaming content for the Internet

Film/video workshops

- 1998 Documentary research, proposal and scriptwriting AFTRS (Melbourne)
- 1996 Theatresports improvisation and acting course – Unitech (Auckland)
- 1996 Low Budget Feature Writing, NZ Writers Guild, Michael Brindley
- 1994 Writing in Pictures seminar, NZ Writers Guild, Paul Thompson –AFTRS
- 1993 16mm Short filmmaking Workshops – New Zealand Arts Council
- 1991 Australian Documentary Conference – ANU Canberra.
- 1991 Acting for film workshops, Vicki Yiannoustsos (Auckland)
- 1988 Acting and directing, Theatre Summer School – NZ Theatre Assoc.

Film/video productions

Cinema

- 2001-02 **Big Earn** Co-writer, Director, (Sydney), Script development funding NZFC. Writer David Snell, Script Adviser Marguerite Bunce (Funding NZ\$1,500).
- 2001 **Honey** Director, Co-Producer, (Melbourne, Auckland, Sydney)
12-minutes, 35mm short drama film funded by New Zealand Film Commission. Writer Christine Rogers, Script Advisor Andrew Bovell. Screened: NZ International Film Festival 2002, HOF Hamburg International Film Festival 2002, TV broadcast – TVNZ Arts program, TV3, Studio Universal Spain (Funding NZ\$48,000).
- 1997 **The Love Letter** Writer, Director, Producer
16mm film. 5-minutes. Short drama film funded by N.Z. Arts Council. Screened International N.Z. Film Festival 1997, St. Kilda Film Festival 1998 (Funding NZ\$15,000).

Television documentaries

- 2001 **Are You My Father** Director, Camera, (Sydney segments), Frame-Up Films, 46 mins. Prime-time documentary for TVNZ
- 1999 **Risk** Associate Producer (Melbourne – Queenstown, N.Z.) D-Network/Orana Films. A prime-time documentary-drama on the psychology of extreme sports. Broadcast TV3 and ABC.
- 1995-96 **Godzone Sheep** Writer, Researcher, Director, Greenstone Pictures. 46 mins. A prime-time documentary on New Zealand art and craft interpretations of sheep. Broadcast TVNZ (Funding NZ\$150,000).
- 1994 **Live to Work** Writer, Researcher, Director, Zee Films, 46 mins. A prime-time documentary on the Japanese work ethic in New Zealand. Production completed in Japan and N.Z. Broadcast TVNZ, (Funding NZ\$150,000).
- 1991-94 **First Hand Productions** Producer (permanent role), Documentary unit commissioned by TVNZ. Responsible for producing primetime and half-hour documentaries for a series on everyday New Zealanders. Writer, Researcher, Camera, Editor, and Director on every production.
- At Risk** 46 mins. A 14-year old Polynesian teenager living on the streets.
- Suzy** 46 mins. A prime-time documentary that examines orthodox and alternative cancer treatments.
- The Two Minute Silence** Half-hour documentary on the smallest N.Z. daily newspaper.
- Surviving on the Benefit** Half-hour documentary on a family totally dependent on welfare housing and benefits.
- Gumboots and Tutus** Half-hour documentary on performing arts competitions for children.
- Out of Work** Half-hour documentary on a middle class family facing redundancy.
- Just to Back a Winner** Half-hour documentary on a group of city TAB punters.

Television factual programs

- 1999-00 **SBS Television** Researcher, Writer, Director, (Sydney) *Fusions*, 5-minute programs for a broadcast series on multicultural arts.
- A Beautiful Life** The story of an Iranian immigrant.
- Migamarra** Didgeridoo – Shakuhachi bamboo flute duet.
- Malkosh** Indian raga based fusion group.
- Migration Medley** Richard Vella the composer.
- Rinne** Satsuki improvising on the Koto as part of the group Warratah.
- SBS Television** Researcher, Writer, Director, Camera, Sound, *Men's Business*, 5-min. pilots for a series on men's issues.
- Laid Off** Dave a textile mechanic loses his job after 15 years.
- Paid Pleasure** Saul a male sex worker.

Television comedy

- 1997 **Pio's Place** Researcher, Field Director, (permanent role), Pipi Productions. Half-hour Maori comedy series produced weekly for TV3
- Ask Dwayne** Director Kidz TV. Comedy sketches for TV3 children's series

Music video

- 1997 **Elevator** Director, Producer, 16mm film, 4mins. N.Z. Arts Council, Pagan Records (Funding NZ\$5000)

Television commercials

1997 **Republic Films** Assistant Director, Director, 16mm film TVCs
Ogilvy and Mather Advertising Director, 16mm film, TVCs
Southern Stars Director, Producer, Magic Promotions, 30 sec TVC
animation and radio commercial

Corporate Videos

2000 **Dragon** Director, Heartbeat, (Sydney), Social research video on attitudes
towards heroine addicts.
1997 **Mimic** Director, (Auckland), 15 mins. Ogilvy and Mather Advertising
1994 **Auckland 2000** Camera, Sound, Editor, First Hand Productions, for
Auckland City Council

Film/television and theatre positions

1997-99 **D-Network** (Melbourne), Producer, (permanent role), American backed
company specializing in the global development and production of factual
programming.
1999-00 **Keep Abreast** Assistant Production, Art Director, Sunroom Film and TV,
Education video for the Sydney Breast Cancer Institute.
1999-00 **New Zealand** Researcher, (Melbourne), Kestrel Films, Documentary on
touring N.Z. for Readers Digest.
1995 **Mysterious Islands** 3rd Assistant Director, Tasman Productions. Drama
series for Canadian Television.
1994 **Obsessions** Researcher, Wireless Productions, Prime-time documentary on
eccentric collectors. Broadcast TV3.
1994 **Playing Possum** Writer, Researcher Zee Films. Prime-time documentary on
the sociological impact of possums. Broadcast TV3 (Funding NZ\$150,000).
1989-90 **The Returning** 2nd Assistant Director, Echo Pictures, Feature film for
international cinema release.
1989 **Hotshotz** Art Dept. Assistant, Impact Television, Children's drama series for
TVNZ.
1989 **Theatrelab** Director's Assistant, Stage Manager, Graphic Designer,
Photographer, Maidment Theatre. Four plays N.Z. Arts Council funding

Graphic Design

1988 Windsor Jennings (London), Graphic Designer, Visualiser, (permanent role),
High quality packaging and print design studio.
1988 Repco Merchants (Auckland), Studio Manager, (permanent role), High
volume print production studio. Responsible for managing four staff, art
directing, design, coordinating print production and monitoring accounts.
1987 Creative Source (Auckland), Art Director, (permanent role), Advertising
agency with print, radio and television accounts.
1987 Copywriting Course and Agency Placements, (London)
