

Ethnographic Methodologies and Reenactment Practices in Art

A study of Jeremy Deller's
The Battle of Orgreave

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IV

Abstract

In 1984, artist Jeremy Deller watched the bloody clash between miners and police at the Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire, UK, on national television. With the opinion that the miners were presented in contemporary media as more violent than they had actually been, Deller wanted to find out what exactly had happened that day. After undertaking three years of empirical research, Deller organized a traditional reenactment event on June 17th, 2001, enlisting veteran miners who had fought in the 1984 Battle of Orgreave as actors. Director Mike Figgis filmed the event. Deller later published a book with a recording and created an archive installation of his Orgreave project.

This thesis discusses how ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices are appropriated in Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*, which aims to investigate a key site of historical and cultural memory. The following set of questions have guided my research: In what way do the strategies deployed in Jeremy Deller's artistic project differ from ethnographic methodologies? Does Deller's project veer on the side of political activism rather than an ethnographic presentation? In what ways do artistic historical reenactments draw on and differ from the folk tradition of historical reenactments? What happens when historical and cultural memory is reenacted as an art project? How are ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices deployed and/or presented in Mike Figgis's film and Jeremy Deller's book and archive?

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1 Introduction

On June 17th, 2001, over 800 people gathered on the fields of Orgreave to reenact the Battle of Orgreave (see illustration 1). Amongst them were almost 200 ex-miners, who had fought in the Battle of Orgreave in 1984, family members, and a few ex-policemen¹. The remaining were reenactors from 46 different reenactment societies in the UK. Chanting “Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out” and “The Miners United will Never be Defeated”, the reenactors threw fake stones and drew fake blood. Unlike the original event seventeen years prior, no one was injured.

The Battle of Orgreave is the title of a series of confrontations in 1984 between picketing miners and police at the Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire, UK. After three weeks of clashes between miners and police at Orgreave, the confrontations peaked on June 18th, with the bloodiest clash yet experienced during the UK miners’ strike of 1984-85. As a young boy, artist Jeremy Deller saw the Battle of Orgreave on television, and he took the long held view that the miners were presented in contemporary media as more violent than they had actually been. Years later, Deller resurfaced this past event to give it a “post-mortem”. He writes, “... for years I wanted to find out what exactly happened on that day with a view to re-enacting or commemorating it in some way”². By using the reenactment³ format, Jeremy Deller hoped that the Battle of Orgreave would “... become part of the lineage of decisive battles in English History”⁴.

Deller grew up in England where reenactments have a long folk tradition. While undertaking research for *The Battle of Orgreave*, Deller noticed that there was little social and political narration present in the reenactments he saw. He also felt that the reenactors did not connect emotionally with the history. The focus was rather on portraying the timeline of the event and on wearing correct period-costumes. Consequently, Deller began organizing his reenactment, “... one that had taken place within living memory, that would be restaged in the actual place where it had happened, and involving many of the people who had been there the

¹ The reason why Jeremy Deller did not include more policemen from the original battle in the reenactment was that he was concerned that it might become a rematch and that someone might get injured. To that end, Deller enlisted some of the original miners to play the role of the police.

² Jeremy Deller, *The English Civil War Part II: Personal Accounts of the 1984-85 Miner’s Strike*, (London: Artangel, 2001), 7.

³ I have chosen to use “reenactment”/“reenactor” as opposed to “re-enactment”/“re-enactor”. Both are correct, yet I consider the hyphen in “re-enactment” as separating the repetition in the present from the enactment in the past. In my perspective, reenactments are not necessarily performances that are separate from past. Furthermore, “reenactment” in my opinion refers more clearly to the noun for the folk tradition, rather than solely to the verb of enacting again. When quoting, I use the way the author wrote it.

⁴ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

first time around”⁵. It took three years for the project to materialize and it is presented to the audience in four different manifestations: a traditional reenactment event, a published book with a recording, an archive, and a broadcast television documentary by film director Mike Figgis.

1.1 Thesis Question

This thesis discusses how ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices are appropriated in Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*, which aims to investigate a key site of historical and cultural memory. The following set of questions have guided my research:

- In what way do the strategies deployed in Jeremy Deller’s artistic project differ from ethnographic methodologies? Does Deller’s project veer on the side of political activism rather than an ethnographic presentation?
- In what ways do artistic historical reenactments draw on and differ from the folk tradition of historical reenactments? What happens when historical and cultural memory is reenacted as an art project?
- In light of the previous chapters of the analysis, how are ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices deployed and/or presented in Mike Figgis’s film and Jeremy Deller’s book and archive?

1.2 Research Material: Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*

The research material for analyzing Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave* has three formats: Mike Figgis’s film *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), Deller’s book *The English Civil War Part II* (2002) and Deller’s archive *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)* (2004).

In connection with Deller’s project, the London-based arts organization and producer of the project, Artangel, contacted the established British film director Mike Figgis (b.1948) to create a movie based on the reenactment. Figgis is particularly known for his Oscar-winning movie *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) with Nicholas Cage and Elisabeth Shue and *TimeCode* (2000). He is also a veteran of the radical theatre group ‘The People Show’. In an interview in 2009, Jeremy Deller stated that the making of the film provided the necessary funding for the reenactment: “The budget for the film made the re-enactment possible. But I

⁵ Jeremy Deller, *Joy in People*, (London: Hayward Publishing, 2012), 190.

also wanted the re-enactment to be documented properly, to be a proper documentation of a performance. The film would enable that. ... Without the film there'd have [been] no performance”⁶. Mike Figgis’s film can be viewed as both a documentary about the 1984 Battle of Orgreave and a documentary about the 2001 reenactment. The fusion of these forms of documentation fuses the past, as a historical record, and the present, as a reenactment-in-the-making. The film aired on UK’s Channel Four in 2002.

The same year, Jeremy Deller’s book, *The English Civil War Part II*, was published. The first part of the book covers the strike of 1984-85 and the Battle of Orgreave, including various personal accounts given by witnesses of the original battle, newspaper clippings, posters, letters, photographs and lyrics to songs written about the strike. The second part of the book covers the reenactment with an introduction by co-director at Artangel, Michael Morris, photographs taken of the reenactment by Martin Jenkinson, a newspaper clipping, a copy of the information sheet given to potential participants, further reading suggestions, and credits. A CD accompanies the book with sound recorded accounts of the original battle and union songs.

Art institutions usually use Figgis’s film for displaying Deller’s Orgreave project. However, Deller’s project, as an archive, was included in his 2012-2013 retrospective exhibition *Joy in People*. The archive was created in 2004 and was purchased by the Tate in 2005. Within the archive, Deller incorporates books, a timeline and memorabilia concerning the Miners’ Strike of 1984-85, artifacts about his reenactment project and his own book, and items concerning how reenactments became a folk tradition in the UK. Today, 12 years since the reenactment and almost 30 years since the original event, Deller’s Orgreave archive is helpful as it places Deller’s work and the original battle within a larger historical context.

1.3 Existing Research

The material mentioned in this section is a selection of existing research on the topics of art versus anthropology/ethnography, reenactment as an artistic practice, and on Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*. This material also functions as a theoretical foundation for analyzing the artist-as-ethnographer paradigm and reenactments as an artistic practice.

Two anthropologists in particular, who have written extensively on the topic of art and anthropology, are Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright. Their books and articles examine some of the similarities and differences between the methodologies and practices of

⁶ Sylvie Lin and Amy Cheng. “It Is What It Is. Interview with Jeremy Deller”, (May 7th, 2010) <http://sylvielin.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/it-is-what-it-is-interview-with-jeremy-deller/> (visited 02.02.2012).

anthropologists and artists.⁷ Anthropologist James Clifford analyzes the ethnographic practice and museum displays in his book, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (1988). He defines the role of the ethnographer and questions the ethnographer's authority to speak on the behalf of a community. He also highlights the complexity of the boundaries between the self and "the other" when living within the society one is researching. With reference to Clifford's research, art critic and historian Hal Foster writes in his text "The Artist as Ethnographer" (first published as a shorter version in 1995) about the ethnographic-turn in contemporary art, where artists are adopting the practice of the ethnographer. He is critical of this turn and states that with these works of art, "[f]ew principles of the ethnographic participant-observer are observed, let alone critiqued, and only limited engagement of the community is effected"⁸. Similarly, art historian Miwon Kwon discusses this shift in art in her article "Experience vs. Interpretation: Traces of Ethnography in the Works of Lan Tuazon and Nikki S. Lee" (2000). In her opinion, by adopting the methodology of the ethnographer, the artist may appropriate the "other" as a projection of himself. It thus becomes difficult to separate the "other" from the artist.

There are only a few articles written about reenactments as an artistic practice and they are for the most part written in connection with exhibitions. The most extensive overview I have read is *Life, Once More: Forms Of Reenactment In Contemporary Art (Performance Art)*. The book was published in connection with an exhibition at the Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, in 2005, and includes selected essays written by art critics, theorists and artists. The two articles I found most interesting in relation to this thesis were: "An Arena in Which to Reenact" by art historian Sven Lütticken and "Einmal ist keimnal: Observations on Reenactment" by art critic Jennifer Allen. In these articles the term "reenactment" is questioned and defined. Curator Robert Blackson's essay "Once More... With Feeling: Reenactment in Contemporary Art and Culture", written in connection with an exhibition at the Reg Vardy Gallery in 2006, is a useful overview of the various types of reenactments that have been made during the past decade. *Experience, Memory, Re-enactment* (2005), edited by curators Anke Bangma, Steven Rushton, and Florian Wüst in connection with a series of events at Piet Zwart Institute, and *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance* (2007), edited by curators Inke

⁷ See Arnd Schneider, "Uneasy Relationships: Contemporary Arts and Anthropology", *Journal of Material Culture* 1, (1996), 183-210, Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (ed.), *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*, (Oxford: Berg, 2010), and Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (ed.), *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

⁸ Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer" in *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century*, (The MIT Press, 1996), 196.

Arns and Gabriele Horn in connection with a travelling exhibition with the same name, have proved useful in understanding reenactment as an artistic practice.

The more in-depth research articles written about Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* are the following: "Recreating Chaos': Jeremy Deller's The Battle of Orgreave" (2005) by Katie Kitamura; Interpreting Jeremy Deller's "The Battle of Orgreave (*Visual Culture in Britain*, 2006) by Alice Correia; and "The Social Turn: Collaborations and it's Discontents" (*Artforum*, 2006) by Claire Bishop.

Author Katie Kitamura focuses on the psychological aspect of the reenactment and its relational aesthetics. Art historian Alice Correia's article is a comprehensive overview of the reenactment wherein she focuses on how a past event is transformed into a present day spectator experience. Correia questions whether viewing the work can have historical authenticity. She also highlights Deller as an "artist-ethnographer", tying in current debates concerning the ethics of collaborative and socially engaged practices. Also writing about collaborative practices in art, professor in contemporary art Claire Bishop criticizes Jeremy Deller's reenactment stating that:

... The Battle of Orgreave didn't seem to heal a wound so much as reopen it. Deller's event was both politically legible and utterly pointless: It summoned the experimental potency of political demonstrations but only to expose a wrong seventeen years too late. It gathered the people together to remember and replay a disastrous event, but this remembrance took place in circumstances more akin to a village fair, with a brass band, food stalls, and children running around.⁹

I will discuss this criticism both in relation to its authenticity as an ethnographic study and in relation to the methodology of the reenactment format as an artistic practice.

I have found only one master's degree dissertation on Jeremy Deller's reenactment: *"Failed and Fell: Fell to Fail": the narration of history in the works of Tacita Dean and Jeremy Deller* (2008) by Sara Mameni-Bushor at the University of British Columbia, Canada. What is interesting with this thesis is that it sheds light on the political situation in the UK during the time of the reenactment. As Mameni-Bushor states, "... by including the community in a participatory event, and by using state allocated Arts Council funds to organize it, the reenactment was keenly attentive to many New Labour policies..."¹⁰. Thus, Deller's project was in line with the New Labour Party's policy of cultural collaborations in poor neighborhoods in order to "contribute to neighborhood renewal".

⁹ Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaborations and it Discontents", *Artforum*, (February 2006), 182.

¹⁰ Sara Mameni-Bushor. *"Failed and Fell: Fell to Fail": the narration of history in the works of Tacita Dean and Jeremy Deller*, (Masters Dissertation, The University of British Columbia, 2008), 20.

1.4 Method and Structure of Analysis and Applied Theory

This thesis is a critical analysis of Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* project. It describes in detail the subject matter and the various elements that make up this project; it analyzes its dominant features and Deller's artistic practice in relation to relevant contexts and phenomena in contemporary art, more specifically, to the appropriation of ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices in artistic projects, linking theoretical and empirical research; it interprets how these practices and elements are used to reinforce the theme and meaning of the artwork; and finally, it provides an evaluation of how the scientific approach to folk practices (ethnography) and the folk practice of reenactments are appropriated in Deller's work in ways that differ from how these practices are normally deployed.

To experience Deller's work in the exhibition space, I traveled to Brussels to view the work at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre. During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet Deller and talk to him about his work. I have also been in contact with him via e-mail. Even though I did not experience the 2001 reenactment firsthand, I visited the site of reenactment, Orgreave, in 2012. Moreover, since Deller aimed to counter the 1984 mass media's portrayal of the miners, I undertook research at the Sheffield Archives and Local Studies Library, focusing on how the original battle and the miners were portrayed by mass media in June 1984.

Due to the complexity of Jeremy Deller's work, this thesis has approached the work in an interdisciplinary manner by incorporating theories and methods from, for instance, philosophy, psychology, film theory, semiotics, performance theory, archive theory and speech-act theory. The work is also approached from a hermeneutic perspective that does not limit its meanings to Deller's stated intentions, but emphasizes its ability to open for different interpretations depending on time, place and context.¹¹

The blurring of the lines between visual art, art history and anthropology has given rise to the term 'visual culture'. W. J. T. Mitchell argues that visual culture involves an

¹¹ For instance, philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, a key figure in the development of Hermeneutics, believes that when viewing a work of art the past is brought into unity with the understanding of the work in present. The mediation of the work, through a fusion of past and present, gives new meaning to the work in every new encounter. In other words, Gadamer views the process of interpretation as circular, which is referred to as the hermeneutical circle. His argument against the linear process of interpretation from no knowledge to all knowledge (for instance, Panofsky's iconology) is that he believes the viewer to begin the process with some pre-understanding. For Gadamer, interpretation is about achieving "an" interpretation of the work, not "the" interpretation. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Ontology of the Work of Art and its Hermeneutical Significance", in *Continental Aesthetics*, edited by R. Kearney and D. Rasmussen, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

... emphasis on the social field of the visual, the everyday processes of looking at others and being looked at. This complex field of visual reciprocity is not merely a by-product of social reality but actively constitutive of it. Vision is as important as language in mediating social relations, ...¹²

What is required now is an analysis of the image as a social object. Although Deller's work itself cannot categorically be defined as a cultural artifact, Deller incorporates cultural images and artifacts in his work and the work is produced/enacted in collaboration with and through the culture in which Deller works. This thesis, therefore, also employs visual culture as a theoretical and methodological backbone for its analysis. It analyzes the work from the perspective of how meaning is communicated in the work and to whom, how historical and cultural memory is mediated, and how the viewer interprets the work and experiences a sense of self and other. It looks at what is left out as much as what is included, and what is encoded in the arrangement and juxtaposition of the elements in Deller's archive and book and the sequences in his reenactment and in Figgis's film.

This thesis's analysis is divided into three sections. The first section analyzes the role of Jeremy Deller in the context of theories of art and anthropology/ethnography. During the 1980s and early 1990s, there was significant interest among artists in documenting or portraying marginal cultural identities and belief systems.¹³ Some artists (almost) took on the role of social anthropologists; others worked in collaboration with anthropologists. In discussing the borderline between art and anthropology, I have narrowed down the scope of this thesis by focusing specifically on ethnography. Ethnography is a branch of anthropology and is generally understood as a method of 'participant-observation'. It is a concept developed by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in the 1920s. He was a key figure in the development of the modern research techniques in anthropology by method of using observation in order to capture human lives and to gain knowledge about social dynamics, attitudes and beliefs. In the mid-1900s, the authority of the academic fieldworker was established. While anthropologists are concerned with understanding and representing the experience of others on a wider level¹⁴, ethnographers are focused on studying and collecting data about a specific group of people through participation and observation. They often spend a year or more in the

¹² William J. T., *Mitchell, What do pictures want?: the lives and loves of images*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 47.

¹³ Alice Correia, "Interpreting Jeremy Deller's 'The Battle of Orgreave'", *Visual Culture in Britain* 7, nr. 2, (Winter 2006), 108.

¹⁴ Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, "The Challenge of Practice", in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 16.

community of which they are studying. The majority of the applied theory in this chapter is based on existing research in the field of art versus anthropology/ethnography. I briefly approach the theory of “dialogical art”, described by art historian Grant H. Kester in *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2004). Kester’s theories are interesting in relation to Hal Foster. Both Foster and Kester write about artists who turn their attention toward marginal cultures in their art. While Foster focuses on the artist documenting, observing and participating in the activities of other cultures and presenting these cultures as a collection in the museum, Kester focuses on artworks where the interaction with another culture is the work itself. I consider Kester’s theories more relevant to Deller’s more recent work *It Is What It Is – Conversations on Iraq* than to *The Battle of Orgreave*. In *It Is What It Is* visitors to the museum were invited into a dialog with soldiers, refugees, artists and journalists concerning Iraq’s geography, history, government and art. Even though *The Battle of Orgreave* creates dialogue amongst participants and viewers of the reenactment as an integral part of the work itself, Kester’s definition of dialogical art is not representative of the Deller archive, book and Mike Figgis’s film since the space for direct conversation or other forms of exchange between the miners, reenactors, spectators and Deller no longer exists.

The second section of this thesis analyzes the use of a reenactment format as an artistic format and practice. In order to narrow down my analysis, I have chosen to focus on “historical reenactment” instead of the broader term “reenactment”. Hence, when writing about reenactments, I am, for the most part, referring to “historical reenactments”. The term “historical reenactment” is most frequently associated with recreations of historic battles throughout history, such as the American Civil War reenactments. In order to have a better understanding of the folk tradition, I travelled to Hastings in the UK and experienced the *Battle of Hastings Reenactment* firsthand. The term “historical reenactment” can be applied to various artworks, ranging from Nikolai Evreinov’s 1920 reenactment *The Storming of the Winter Palace*, where he restaged a crucial event during the Russian Revolution, to Rod Dickinson’s 2002 reenactment *The Milgram Experiment*. The evaluation of reenactment as an artistic practice in this thesis is strongly connected to reenactment theory, for instance by historian Alexander Cook, professor of German Vanessa Agnew and professor of geography David Lowenthal, and performance/performative theory by art historian RoseLee Goldberg, gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler and professors of performance studies Peggy Phelan and Diane Taylor. I also employ the theories of linguist and philosopher J. L. Austin to analyze how social memory is enacted through speech. Furthermore, I use cultural theorist

Mieke Bal's writings on narratology as a methodological framework in analyzing the narrative levels of Deller's reenactment. As Jeremy Deller's project aims to investigate a key site of historical and cultural memory, this thesis will further discuss Deller's reenactment in relation to Maurice Halbwachs's theories on collective memory. In his books *On Collective Memory* (1925) and *The Collective Memory* (1950), philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs writes that collective memory is not a given but socially constructed. He argues that collective memory differs from history in respect to its still continuous recollection of the past in the consciousness of the living and that every collective memory demands the support of a specific community. For Halbwachs, it is not the groups and institutions, such as the National Union of Mineworkers, that remember; it is the individuals in the group. As Halbwachs points out, "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember"¹⁵. Yet, these individuals draw on their social context in order to remember. Collective memory is kept alive through the maintenance of a common practice, for instance, through language, rituals, monuments and collections. The theories of Halbwachs's teacher, philosopher Henri Bergson, are also referenced. Even though Henri Bergson argues for a more individualistic philosophy of memory than his pupil Halbwachs, Bergson's theory of memory existing in the activation in the present has been influential for Halbwachs. In Bergson's view (*Matter and Memory* 1896), memory is not stored in the brain but in the duration of time, in the intersection between mind and matter, between the body and the space outside the body. He views the body as a conductor that receives and transmits movements, where the past survives in the motor mechanisms of an action itself or an automatic adaption to the circumstances. The theories of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud are also referenced as a contrast to Bergson's non-psychological notion of memory. Freud perceived the unconscious as the place where one stores the traces of life in transparent layers.¹⁶ In his chapter on "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through" (1914), Freud writes about the traumatic dimensions in memory and suggests that the encounter between the patient and analyst can result in the repetition of the past that the patient is unable to remember. Freud views the past as repeated through action rather than memory. The aim, in Freud's perspective, is to turn this compulsion of repetition into a motive for remembering, through transference of the memory from the patient to the analyst. Sigmund Freud's theories are relevant for this thesis even

¹⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated from French by F. J. Ditter, Jr. and V. Y. Ditter. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 48.

¹⁶ Mary Ann Doane, "Temporality, Storage, Legibility", in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time. Modernity, Contingency and the Archive*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), 63 – 76.

though a reenactment concerns itself with a conscious repetition, and not an unconscious mechanism driven by transference.

The third section of this thesis analyzes in what way ethnographic and reenactment practices are presented in Mike Figgis's film, and in Jeremy Deller's book and archive. Film theory and archive theory are employed extensively in analyzing these media. Film theorists David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's guide to studying film has been helpful and the theories of film critic and theorist Bill Nichols and professor of communication studies John Corner were vital in analyzing Figgis's film. Art historian Charles Merewether's book *The Archive. Documents of Contemporary Art* (2006) has given perspectives on how the archive format is employed as an artistic form and methodology.

1.5 Background Information

1.5.1 The Original Battle of Orgreave, 1984

The Battle of Orgreave represents much more than that which actually took place in Orgreave. For centuries, Great Britain's coal mining industry has been a large source of employment. For some communities, it was the main source. Beginning in the 1960s, the mining industry faced an insecure future, threatened by Edward Heath's and the Conservative Party's economic reconstruction of the productive systems. Between the 1960s and 1970s 43% of British mines were closed.¹⁷ As a result, the miners went on strike, with the backing of a powerful trade union, the National Union of Mineworkers (N.U.M.). The strikes were successful for the miners, and became factors that lead to Heath's resignation as Prime Minister in 1974.

When the Conservative Party returned to power in 1979, with Margaret Thatcher as leader, it continued its attempt to break the strength of the trade unions. Thatcher viewed the unions as undemocratic and as a hindrance in the privatization of Great Britain as a capitalist society. Her government's new energy politics favored gas and nuclear power, even though it was 130 % more expensive than coal fuel. Thatcher was reelected in 1983 and on March 1st 1984, the National Coal Board in Great Britain announced that it would close the still productive Cortonwood colliery. Its miners walked out in protest. By March 12th, half of the country's miners were on strike as a response to a National Coal Board plan to close 20 pits, which would result in the loss of about 20,000 mining jobs. Thus began what would become a

¹⁷ Correia, "Interpreting Jeremy Deller's "The Battle of Orgreave"", 95.

yearlong struggle between N.U.M. (National Union of Mineworkers) and the Margaret Thatcher government.

On May 28th, N.U.M. leader Arthur Scargill announced publicly for all picketers to go to the coking plant in Orgreave for a mass picket. By June 18th, almost 10,000 picketers¹⁸ had arrived at the coking plant from as far afield as South Wales and Scotland. Their intention was "... to invade the plant, and occupy the loading bay"¹⁹. 5,000 to 8,000 policemen²⁰ from 10 different counties, met the miners.

The violent confrontation on June 18th left 41 policemen and 28 miners injured²¹, and 93 picketers had been arrested. Of the 93 arrests, 79 of them were charged with riot, and thus ran the risk of a life sentence. Fortunately for the miners, none of the charges of riot were upheld in the Orgreave Riot Trial held at Sheffield Crown Court. Additionally, in 1991, the South Yorkshire police were found liable to pay £425,000 in compensation to 39 of the arrested miners.²² The miners did not however, succeed in saving the national coal industry, which has since been privatized. In the aftermath, many of the mining communities were met by social and economic downturn and many of the villages are now desolate. The power of the N.U.M. was weakened since the workforce it represented was much smaller, and its fall was a prime example of the long decline of trade unionism during this time.

1.5.2 Jeremy Deller

Jeremy Deller was born in 1966 in London, UK. He has an art history background, with a bachelor's degree from Courtauld Institute in London, which he completed in 1988. His specialization was in southern-European Baroque painting and sculpture. He continued at the University of Sussex, completing a master's degree in 1992. His thesis was on the iconography of Teddy Boys in 1950s London, under supervision of professor David Alan Mellor. Deller struggled with the academic nature of his courses.²³ Thus, after completing his MA, he enrolled in a silkscreen printing course at the London College of Printing, and began producing exhibition posters and editions.

¹⁸ No exact count exists.

¹⁹ David Douglass, "Orgreave: the strike and its background", in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 15.

²⁰ No exact count exists.

²¹ These numbers vary from account to account. Some miners had avoided going to the hospital in fear of being arrested and were therefore not included in the count.

²² Martin Wainwright, "Strikers relive Battle of Orgreave", *The Guardian*, (Monday 18 June 2001), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2001/jun/18/martinwainwright> (visited 10.09.2012).

²³ Exhibition information for "Joy in People" (2012) at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels.

His early works were low budget. For instance, in 1993, Deller printed the texts: “My Drug Shame” and “My Booze Hell” on two T-shirts and hung them next to each other on an outdoor clothes line (see illustration 2). They referred to the act of “airing your dirty laundry in public”. The same year, Deller held his exhibition *Open Bedroom*, which was a take on an “open studio” event (see illustration 3). When his parents left on a two-week holiday, Deller sent hand-written invitations to friends and a handful of individuals, whom he had met in art-related settings, to an art exhibition held at his parents’ house in Dulwich, UK. In the setting of a British middle-class home, his bedroom exhibition showed connections between different areas of culture and history, class structures, and pop music. Ten years passed before his parents ever knew that this exhibition had taken place in their own home.

Deller’s first collaborative work was *Acid Brass*. In 1996 the Bluecoat, Liverpool, commissioned Deller to produce *Acid Brass*. In collaboration with the Williams Fairey Brass Band from Stockport and composer Rodney Newton, Deller adapted a selection of acid house anthems for a brass band concert. Like the anti-authoritarian acid house music of the late 1980s and 1990s, brass bands played the tune of resistance on the picket lines during the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike. In connection with this work, Deller drew a flow chart that he later transformed into a large wall painting (see illustration 4). The flow chart *The History of the World* mapped out and connected the two seemingly unrelated types of music: traditional brass band music and acid house. Deller’s intention was to display potentially overlooked connections between different social groups, politics and popular culture.²⁴

After a residency at Artpace in San Antonio, Deller produced a mixed-media installation called *Memory Bucket* (2003), for which he won the 2004 Turner Prize (see illustration 5). It documented the people, nature and landscape in Texas, such as George W. Bush’s hometown of Crawford and the site of the massacre at the Branch Davidian ranch in Waco, where some survivors still live. The film concludes with an eight minute-long sequence of millions of bats leaving a cave. Deller’s work shows an interdisciplinary, contemporary approach to his setting by including its cultural history, art, and politics.

In connection with Manifesta5 (2004) in San Sebastian, Deller organized *A Social Parade*, a parade with local alternative societies and support groups through the streets of Donostia-San Sebastian. He later repeated the idea in Manchester with *Procession* (2009), bringing together social groups that did not normally interact (see illustration 6). In 2005, Deller’s collaborative work with Alan Kane, *Folk Archive*, opened in The Curve at the

²⁴ Deller, *Joy in People*, 11 – 13.

Barbican, London, and subsequently toured the UK. The work was begun in 1999 and they spent five years collecting and developing an archive of folk art from various communities and groups from across the UK (see illustration 7).

In 2009, Deller travelled across the US with his work *It Is What It Is: Conversation About Iraq*, commissioned by the New Museum and Creative Time. The exhibition contained a car that had been destroyed by a suicide bomber, photographs, and two maps. With the exhibition, Deller wanted to create a space for dialogue, where soldiers, refugees, artists and journalists were hired to communicate with the audience about Iraq and its geography, history, government and art. Deller himself did not participate in these discussions but travelled from New York to Los Angeles in an RV truck, together with the car wreckage from Iraq, an American soldier and an Iraqi civilian, stopping at various places in the US in order to continue discussions about Iraq with a broader public (see illustration 8). The work was not pro or con war. It was a reflection on the information that is fed from war, through the filtration of mass media and other sources.

Last year, at the age of 47, Deller opened his first retrospective exhibition *Joy in People* at the Hayward Gallery. It travelled to WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, Institute of Contemporary Art, Pennsylvania, and Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis. The exhibition showed some of Deller's most celebrated works, such as *The Battle of Orgreave*. Surprisingly, it also showed projects by Deller that had not materialized, such as his proposal for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, which was turned down (see illustration 9).

Through his various projects, Deller is engaged with social history and public events as a reflection on current politics. "The public world is my studio", he once said.²⁵ Yet, to a certain degree, the public world is also his exhibition space. The work he exhibits in the museum often illustrates the process or documentation of his work and additional information, rather than the work itself. Set outside the museum, his work often involves collaborations with different communities and social groups. As with *Social Parade* and *The Battle of Orgreave*, Deller often adopts folk practices as art practices, often for collective purposes.

Deller will be representing Britain at the upcoming Venice Biennale in 2013.

²⁵ Deller, *Joy in People*, 82.

2 The Borderline Between Art and Ethnography

*The modern division of art and ethnography into distinct institutions
has restricted the former's analytic power
and the latter's subversive vocation.*²⁶

- James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 1988

2.1 Introduction

In contemporary British art since the late 1980s, there has been a noticeable trend towards "... self-curated and site-specific installations and projects..."²⁷ and "... a more discursive and critical engagement with location and a greater sensibility to audience and historical narratives"²⁸, according to art historian Grant Pooke. Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* portrays the social and political ramifications of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's industrial actions. In collaboration with a mining community, the project reenacts an historical event in the form of a performance. Deller's reenactment work is also closely linked to what Grant H. Kester was witnessing in contemporary art when he wrote his book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* in 2004. According to Kester, contemporary artists "... defined their practice around the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities. Parting from the traditions of object making, these artists have adopted a performative, process-based approach. They are "context providers" rather than "content providers"..."²⁹. By using a reenactment format, the miners were given an agency in which their voices could be heard. Another interesting aspect, with regards to Deller's collaboration with a mining community, is how he appropriates ethnographic methodologies in his artistic project.

Many of Jeremy Deller's works can be seen as ethnographic projects, where he presents himself as an artist who collects, organizes and observes activities of a group of people. One example is *Folk Archive*, where Jeremy Deller, together with Alan Kane, collected and displayed an archive of popular British art and objects. Through collecting and

²⁶ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture, Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 12.

²⁷ Grant Pooke, *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 42.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁹ Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1. However, Grant H. Kester's theories on dialogical art or even Nicolas Bourriaud's theories on relational aesthetics are more relevant to Deller's more recent work *It Is What It Is – Conversations on Iraq* than the museum exhibition of *The Battle of Orgreave*. Even though *The Battle of Orgreave* reenactment can potentially create dialogue amongst participants and viewers of the reenactment, this form of direct dialogue between the participants and the viewers is not present in Deller archive, book and Mike Figgis's film. Moreover, it is not a given that dialogue was present between the participants and the viewers during the reenactment, since the viewers were placed behind roped barriers.

documenting the creative projects done by others, Deller and Kane created an ethnographic snapshot of contemporary society. In their book by the same name, they also highlight the predicament of the role of the artist between artist and anthropologist. In the authors' note, they wrote:

With Folk Archive we are treading a path between being artists and being anthropologists. As artists we engage in an optimistic journey of personal discovery (albeit often very close to home). As anthropologists, we hope we are describing something overlooked and worthy of attention as thoroughly as possible. For those interested in an anthropological approach, we must apologise for the rather too knowing misuse of the phrase 'archive' and an artistic casualness with details.³⁰

In connection with his Battle of Orgreave project, Jeremy Deller analyzes a culture, works on-site with a specific community, observes the people and understands their dialect. Thus, Jeremy Deller's work can be discussed in the context of theories of art and anthropology. The focus of this chapter will be on the complexities of artist venturing into the field of anthropology, and more specifically ethnography.

2.2 The Interdisciplinary Practice of Contemporary Art and Anthropology

During the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a significant increase in the number of artists preoccupied with documenting or portraying marginal cultural identities and belief systems³¹, and thus giving a voice to the otherwise unheard. Artists became increasingly interested in the field of anthropology, some in the role of an anthropologist, others in collaboration with anthropologists. This interdisciplinary between art and anthropology is also visible in universities offering a Ph.D. in Fine Arts, with anthropology as the field of research. Examples are the Royal College of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art in London.³² In parallel, art historians have been venturing into the academic field of anthropology and vice versa.

There are two anthropologists in particular who have written extensively on the borderline between art and anthropology, Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright. In an essay they collaborated on, "The Challenge of Practice", they examine some of the similarities and

³⁰ Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, *Folk Archive: Contemporary Popular Art from the UK*, (London: BookWorks, 2008), 2.

³¹ Correia, "Interpreting Jeremy Deller's 'The Battle of Orgreave'", 108.

³² Schneider, "Uneasy Relationships: Contemporary Arts and Anthropology", 197.

differences between the methodologies and practices of artists and anthropologists.³³ Contemporary art and anthropology are comparable³⁴ as both disciplines are made up of a range of diverse practices whose borders cannot be definitely traced; both disciplines have their own histories, canons of practice and their own academies and institutions; both are active in challenging their boundaries, but still involve broadly defined ways of working, regular spaces of exhibition, and set of expectations; and both disciplines have shared areas of interest and, increasingly, methodologies. There is, thus, a growing recognition and acceptance that these disciplines overlap. Differences between contemporary art and anthropology lie in their methods and systems of display and presentation strategies. Schneider and Wright view artists as *engaged*, as immersed in the socio-cultural context and having a social impact, while anthropologists are *dis-engaged*, studying objects and actions as if they were texts.³⁵ Furthermore, artists produce visual work, while anthropologists publish written text. Although visual anthropology has developed as a sub-discipline in anthropology, the visual "... remains largely a way of 'illustrating' textual material"³⁶. While anthropology uses DVDs and other technologies to enhance its visual practice, many anthropologists are resistant to this movement, which has developed into an *Iconophobia*³⁷, a dread of images and artworks. These anthropologists view images as distractions from the message of the anthropological study.

There are a variety of different examples of works that lie between the fields of art and anthropology. Take for instance, a book by David McAllester (a Native American ethnomusicologist) and Susan McAllester (a photographer), *Hogans: Navajo Houses and House Songs*. In their published book, Susan's photographs, depicting the homes of the Navajo were displayed along side translation of Navajo 'house songs' translated by David. This book can be viewed as a borderline between a visual and poetic rendering and an anthropological study.

Another example is a work by artist Susan Hiller. She was originally an anthropologist, but wanted to move beyond being a mere observer of other cultures and become a full participant.³⁸ In her work *Witnesses*, the audience is met with a vast amount of

³³ Schneider and Wright, "The Challenge of Practice", 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 – 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 and 24; also in Joseph Kosuth, "Artist as Anthropologist" (extracts), in *The Everyday: Documents of Contemporary Art*, edited by Stephen Johnstone, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2008), 183.

³⁶ Schneider and Wright, "The Challenge of Practice", 27.

³⁷ Schneider and Wright, "Between Art and Anthropology", in *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 1.

³⁸ Denise Robinson, "Encounter with the Work of Susan Hiller", in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, 72.

speakers hanging down from the ceiling. The speakers project voices of different people telling how they had seen an UFO. In contrast to anthropological research, there is no emphasis given to a specific source, reference or location. However, their stories were retrieved, selected and catalogued from the sites and archives the artist had visited.

These examples are very similar to Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*. In his book *The English Civil War Part II*, written in connection with the reenactment, Deller includes locals speaking and writing about the Battle of Orgreave and, like the McAllesters, he includes local songs. Like Susan Hiller, he has researched, selected and catalogued personal accounts from the sites and archives. In contrast to solely using text to present the reader with knowledge of a cultural event, the reader is to decipher the images and sounds as well. With Mike Figgis's observational filming of how history was researched and how the reenactment was rehearsed and enacted, the fields of art and anthropology are brought together. To borrow the words of Schneider and Wright when writing about Jeff Silva's *Balkan Rhapsody*, Mike Figgis's film is "... a deliberate collage of individual micro-moments that add up to a picture of the effects of the conflict"³⁹.

2.3 Artist as Ethnographer: A Participant-Observer in the Field

Ethnography is generally understood as a method of 'participant-observation', a concept developed by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in the 1920s. He was a key figure in the development of the modern research techniques by using observational methods in the field to capture the lives of others and to gain knowledge about social dynamics, attitudes and beliefs. In the mid-1900s, the authority of the academic fieldworker was established. While anthropologists are concerned with understanding and representing the experience of others on a wider level⁴⁰, ethnographers are focused on studying and collecting data about a specific group of people, often through participation and observation. They often spend a year or more in the community of which they are studying.

Anthropologist James Clifford viewed the ethnographic turn in contemporary art as involving a broad definition of ethnography, "... making inventories, carrying out 'fieldwork', using interviews, and engaging with anthropology's theorizations of cultural difference"⁴¹. He reveals the difficulty with defining ethnography as it:

³⁹ Schneider and Wright, "Between Art and Anthropology", 19.

⁴⁰ Schneider and Wright, "The Challenge of Practice", 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

... appears in several forms, traditional and innovative. As an academic practice it cannot be separated from anthropology. Seen more generally, it is simply diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture from a standpoint of participant observation. ... a state of being in culture while looking at culture, a form of personal and collective self-fashioning. This predicament ... responds to the twentieth century's unprecedented overlay of traditions. A modern "ethnography" of conjunctures, constantly moving between cultures, does not, like its Western alter ego "anthropology", aspire to survive the full range of human diversity or development. It is perpetually displaced, both regionally focused and broadly comparative, a form both of dwelling and of travel in a world where the two experiences are less and less distinct.⁴²

This is a rather diffuse description of an ethnographer. Could we all be ethnographers based on his description of ethnography as "... simple diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture from a standpoint of participant observation"? In her essay "Experience vs. Interpretation: Traces of Ethnography in the Works of Lan Tuazon and Nikki S. Lee", Miwon Kwon states that "We are all ethnographers"⁴³ based on James Clifford's description of ethnography. She also considers ethnography to "... suit the flux and partiality of our (post)modern life"⁴⁴.

An ethnographer's fieldwork is a prolonged stay within a particular culture, in order to gather firsthand raw material through participant observation and then publish the findings.⁴⁵ The ethnographer is to immerse him/herself in the culture, partake in the community's social activities, be trained in the latest analytical technique, and be able to communicate in the native language, without adding or altering any aspect of the society. An intentional alteration inflicted onto the society by the ethnographer, such as "... staging of a new ritual, the introduction of new concepts and ideas into the religion and philosophy of the host culture[,] would be perceived by anthropological community as grossly inappropriate."⁴⁶ However, through the communication between the ethnographer/artist and the host culture, it is impossible to prohibit influence altogether. According to artist Joseph Kosuth, artists are "... attempting to affect the culture while he is simultaneously learning from (and seeking the acceptance of) that same culture which is affecting him"⁴⁷. Moreover, artists can set out to change a community without being questioned or, to a certain degree, condemned and can challenge and critic the community and its hierarchy.

⁴² Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 9.

⁴³ Miwon Kwon, "Experience vs. Interpretation: Traces of Ethnography in the Works of Lan Tuazon and Nikki S. Lee", in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*. Vol. 4 De-,Dis-,Ex-, edited by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000), 74.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Schneider, "Uneasy Relationships: Contemporary Arts and Anthropology", 192.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 198.

⁴⁷ Kosuth, "Artist as Anthropologist" (extracts), 183.

The “ethnographic-turn” in art, according to Hal Foster, is the result of

... shifts remarked in minimalist art in the early 1960s through conceptual art, performance, body art, and site-specific art in the early 1970s. Soon the institution of art could no longer be described only in spatial terms (studio, gallery, museum and so on); it was also a discursive network of different practices and institutions, other subjectivities and communities. Nor could the observer of art be delimited only phenomenological: he or she was also a social subject defined in various languages and marked by difference (sexual, ethnic, and so on).⁴⁸

Foster’s paradigm, *the artist as ethnographer*, is structurally similar to Walter Benjamin’s author-producer model in its debate of hierarchies in society and in art, yet the subject has shifted from economic relations to cultural identity. Hal Foster is critical of the artist working as ethnographer. In his article, Foster is referring to a western artistic preoccupation with the combination of art history, cultural history and political history and he fears that artists as ethnographers cut them selves off from the critical benefits of an active engagement with history. For instance, if working with a project about AIDS: “... one must understand not only the discursive *breadth* [the horizontal axis] but also the historical *depth* [vertical axis]”⁴⁹. Ethnographers do account for the way in which the studied societies model or think about history, for instance the various modes of social memory enacted through language, rituals, myths, and political organization. In relation to Deller’s project, what needs to be considered is a twofold issue: 1) Deller’s own investment in various historical scenarios of an ethnographic study and 2) the way in which Deller’s work eventually opens for historical narration and/or modeling by the miners themselves through collaboration. Before analyzing these two issues, I would like to discuss who is the “other” in an ethnographic study.

2.4 Who is the “Other”?

Arnd Schneider highlights the history of art in appropriating the cultural “other” and “otherness”, stating that primitivism largely influenced the relationship between art and anthropology. The periods and artists he brings to light are Romanticism, Impressionism and Fauvism (for example, Paul Gauguin and Henri Matisse), and Expressionism (for example, Emil Node, Franz Marc, Oskar Kokoschka), and Pablo Picasso and African primivism.⁵⁰ In reference to philosopher and anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who wrote about the role of the artist and his/her place of art in society, Schneider states that “... the artist became figured

⁴⁸ Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer”, 184.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 202.

⁵⁰ Arnd Schneider, “Appropriations”, in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, 29.

as someone with privileged access to the primitive”⁵¹, something to which also the anthropologist has access. With this access, the artists can end up projecting political truth onto the “other”.

Classifying the miners as “the enemy within” and their actions as “mob violence” by Margaret Thatcher was a way of “othering” the miners from the rest of Britain. The right-wing press reinforced this image. Left-wing Jeremy Deller and Mike Figgis, on the other hand, challenged this negative image of the miners that the media had created, placing the miners perhaps on the other side of the spectrum: as victims. Art historian Alice Correia viewed Deller as “... proposing ... an ideological struggle between two polarized sections of British society, of neither of which was he a part”⁵². I disagree with Correia’s analysis here because in Deller’s case he merely intervenes in an existing struggle between the NUM and the Tory Government in a country he himself grew up in. Thus the miners cannot be viewed as the primitive “other” – as a different culture whose language and code would have to be learnt by the artist. In addition, through the participatory aspect of the reenactment on the part of the miners themselves, the miners are given a new form of agency in this situation rather than simply being the “objects” of Deller’s ethnographic display.

In 2001, the *Daily Express* reported that the majority of the ex-miners had refused to partake in the reenactment. Deller denied this by writing that he actually had to turn some away.⁵³ Compared with the 5000-10000 miners who participated at the original battle, the 200 participants at the reenactment is a low figure, between 2% and 4%, and this also includes the family members and policemen from the mining communities. However, there would have been chaos if Deller had engaged the same number of miners as at the original event. However, in the process of researching the battle of Orgreave, Deller does not interview the opposing side, for instance policemen, who do not come from mining families, or government officials. Instead he chooses a policeman who is also an ex-miner and from a mining family. This particular policeman’s account lies closer to the other witness-accounts. In the field of statistics, one is taught to cut out the outliers, the data that has an abnormal distance from the majority of data. However, this cropping is done after the research is undertaken and not in advance as is the case for Deller. Even though Deller crops the final image of the Battle of Orgreave by not interviewing the opposing side, one could argue that his project is an ethnographic study of the mining community of Orgreave, which involves only the miners

⁵¹ Schneider, “Appropriations”, 30.

⁵² Correia, “Interpreting Jeremy Deller’s ”The Battle of Orgreave””, 109.

⁵³ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 152 – 53.

and police from the same community. On the other hand, one could argue that, through this selection, the work presents a clear political motive: to oppose the politics of Margaret Thatcher, and thus, potentially move away from being an ethnographic study.

2.5 The Ethnographic Strategy and Site

The initial intention of Deller's work *The Battle of Orgreave* was to create a conversation amongst the veteran miners about what had happened in Orgreave seventeen years prior. For the most part, the newspapers were positive to the project, even though many of them saw it as a bizarre mix of village fête and bitter memories⁵⁴. Professor in contemporary art, Claire Bishop, is critical of Deller's work and writes:

...The Battle of Orgreave didn't seem to heal a wound so much as reopen it. Deller's event was both politically legible and utterly pointless: It summoned the experimental potency of political demonstrations but only to expose a wrong seventeen years too late. It gathered the people together to remember and replay a disastrous event, but this remembrance took place in circumstances more akin to a village fair, with a brass band, food stalls, and children running around. This contrast is particularly evident in the only video documentation of The Battle of Orgreave, which forms part of an hour long film by Mike Figgis, a Left-wing filmmaker who explicitly uses the work as a vehicle for his indictment of the Thatcher government.⁵⁵

It is easy to agree with Bishop's brutal criticism that Deller's work merely opens a wound rather than healing it. However, Deller himself reflects on this aspect by stating that he has no intention of healing any wounds and that it would involve more than an art project to do so.⁵⁶ Bishop's impression of Deller's work as a village fair is interesting in relation to Hal Foster's perspectives on ethnographic art projects. His concern is that in the process of ethnographic mapping and reviving an old site, one runs the risk that the site becomes a simulacrum, a theme park.⁵⁷ With the food stalls and other amusement park-like activities, the Deller's project could be seen as lacking in seriousness. While this aspect is clear in Figgis's film, where there is clearly a mix between laughter and resentment, the archive and book have a more austere mood. I will discuss Bishop's perspective further in the next chapter on reenactments, for is not the methodology of the reenactment medium relevant for investigation, alongside the mediation of the event?

⁵⁴ Artangel, "What the press said", http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2001/the_battle_of_orgreave/press_coverage/what_the_press_said (visited 20.11.2012)

⁵⁵ Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaborations and its Discontents", 182.

⁵⁶ Jeremy Deller in *A Mike Figgis film of Jeremy Deller's The Battle of Orgreave*, DVD. Directed by Mike Figgis, (London: Artangel, 2006).

⁵⁷ Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer", 197.

The project event does, in every way, shine a light on an event that perhaps many never knew had happened. Though difficult, ethnographical works can potentially recreate sites that have been forgotten. Take for instance a work by Nelbia Romero, *Beyond Words*. In her work, a traditional schoolroom in Uruguay has become a site of amnesia, a site where the native language of Guarani is forgotten and no longer uttered. In the classroom, she writes a few words in Guarani, to remind the viewer about the forgotten language. Ethnographic art projects can revive forgotten cultural sites and offer historical counter-memories⁵⁸ and make non-sites appear specific again. Through using the reenactment format in Deller's project, social memory is not only enacted through language and action, but through a folk ritual. Deller's book and archive also show an investment in various historical scenarios, raging from the political organization of the National Union of Mineworkers and The Women's Movement to the personal and private space of the miners in Orgreave. Deller is, in my opinion, displaying both a discursive *breadth* and historical *depth* beyond the specific 1984 event of the Battle of Orgreave and is actively engaging with history through a reenactment format.

2.6 Complexities of Collaboration

One particularly challenging aspect of ethnographic and collaborative art is the difficulty of depicting the represented community in a manner that is morally and ethically valid and that does not simply reflect the political ambitions of the museum, the sponsor, or the artist him/herself.

2.6.1 The Control of the Commissioner

When analyzing the collaborative movement in Britain, writer Owen Kelly began contemplating the politics of funding. In his opinion, the initial focus of collaborative work is not the community, since an increase in support from the community would not lead to an increase in funding. The project was instead for "... the agencies to whom we sell the reports and documentary evidence of our work"⁵⁹. In Deller's case, the agencies would be museums and television stations. So to pose the same question as art critic Lucy Lippard, "Who exploits

⁵⁸ Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer", 197.

⁵⁹ Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*, 139.

whom for what and why...?”⁶⁰. Was *The Battle of Orgreave* initiated to meet to strategic goals of the agencies?

The Battle of Orgreave was commissioned and produced by Artangel in association with Channel 4, UK, and was supported by the UK Arts Council. Artangel, a London based company, has a history of supporting artist-led, site-specific projects, which move beyond the ‘white cube gallery’. It supports works that explore broader ideas of identity, community and belonging. It does not consider itself as encouraging any particular types or forms of art or having any agenda for the commission⁶¹, yet Co-director James Lingwood acknowledges that as art frequently moves into broader contexts, sites and situations, interconnections emerge as the commissioned project develops.⁶²

Deller’s reenactment might be seen as having other motivations than simply being an attempt to change the media’s incorrect depiction of a historical event. The reenactment was in line with the New Labour Party’s policy of cultural collaborations in poor neighborhoods in order to “contribute to neighborhood renewal”. As Sara Mameni-Bushor states in her master’s thesis on Jeremy Deller, “... by including the community in a participatory event, and by using state allocated Arts Council funds to organize it, the reenactment was keenly attentive to many New Labour policies...”⁶³. In this respect, the reenactment can be seen as Left-wing activism against Right-wing politics, where the ex-miners become merely pawns.

2.6.2 The Danger of Self-Fashioning

The ethnographer, according to James Clifford, establishes an authority by presence, an account of “You are there ... because I was there”⁶⁴, through capturing and actively composing a snapshot of reality. But how does this presence result in an authoritative written account? According to Clifford, the written text by the ethnographer, which is a translation of his/her experience of a community, functions as a specific strategy of authority. “This strategy has classically involved an unquestioned claim to appear as the purveyor of truth in the text.”⁶⁵ A current and unresolved matter in ethnography is how an ethnographer or - with regards to the topic of this thesis - how an artist-ethnographer, can inhabit another person’s or culture’s mind. As anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski states his essay, “Argonauts”, from

⁶⁰ Lucy Lippard, “Farther Afield”, in *Between Art and Anthropology*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, 24.

⁶¹ Artangel Website, http://www.artangel.org.uk/about_us/artangel_interaction (visited 07.08.2011).

⁶² Pooke, *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction*, 43.

⁶³ Sara Mameni-Bushor, ““Failed and Fell: Fell to Fail””, 20.

⁶⁴ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

1922, the distance between the raw material findings in a community to the final authoritative published results by the ethnographer can be enormous.⁶⁶

Experiential research has long been thought of as a way to gain authoritative knowledge about a community, as it entails a participatory presence.⁶⁷ However, according to Clifford,

... neither the experience nor the interpretive activity of the scientific researcher can be considered innocent. It becomes necessary to conceive of ethnography not as the experience and interpretation of a circumscribed “other” reality, but rather as a constructive negotiation involving at least two, and usually more, conscious, politically significant subjects.⁶⁸

Fieldwork is composed of language events where there is no neutral place in the web of “I”s and “You”s. Thus, Clifford questions, “Who is actually the author of fieldnotes?”⁶⁹. Writing on ethnographic self-fashioning, Clifford states that “The best ethnographic fictions are, . . . , intricately truthful; but their facts, like all facts in the human sciences, are classified, contextualized, narrated, and intensified”⁷⁰.

The artist can critique the society which he are studying, whilst the ethnographer cannot. With artistic freedom, the artist is able to move beyond the more narrowly defined scientific frameworks of ethnography, interpreting and mediating culture in the process of making art. There is also a danger that the artist, like the ethnographer, takes upon himself the role of spokesman for a community, where the views of the community are portrayed through the artist, and thus placing himself within his own ethnographic study. This self-empowered position of the artist may be used to voice his/her own political and social opinion. While working with these projects, the artist, like the ethnographer, may experience difficulty with distinguishing between us-here-and-now versus them-there-and-then. This self-imposed “othering” of the artist, can lead to “self-absorption”⁷¹ rather than to increase social awareness.

Claire Bishop, in writing about artist egocentrism, states that artists work with participants to realize a project, instead of allowing the project to emerge through consensual collaboration.⁷² The artwork then becomes a reflection of the artist rather than the community with which the artist worked. Moreover, Lucy Lippard considers many ethnographic works as

⁶⁶ Bronislaw Malinowski quoted in Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 29.

⁶⁷ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 37.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 112 – 113.

⁷¹ Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer”, 180.

⁷² Bishop, “The Social Turn: Collaborations and it Discontents”, 180.

not being made for those of whom the artwork is about. There are artists who enter a community and communicate with but not within the community itself. Lippard admires those artists who “...don’t just explore but hang in, who stay and help expose and perhaps even help solve problems”⁷³.

At Documenta X in 1997, German conceptual artist Lothar Baumgarten exhibited *book work*, which consisted of over a hundred collaged pages of black and white photographs of the Yanomami people of Venezuela plastered directly onto the wall. The Documenta X catalogue referred to the work as “poetic anthropology”, placing it in both the field of art and anthropology. In Schneider’s and Wright’s opinion, Baumgarten’s use of photography places it close to the empirical research methods of ethnographers, while the site of display marks it as art.⁷⁴ Moreover, Baumgarten appropriated the ethnographic methodology of living within the tribe of which he was studying. Hal Foster considers Baumgarten’s work an example of self-fashioning, where the artist’s immersion in the space of the Yanomami places him within his own artwork. “The framer is also framed”⁷⁵, where the artwork is portraying the artist as much as it does the ‘other’.

Although Jeremy Deller retains authoritative control of the artwork as an initiator of the project, I would not define it as egocentric. Furthermore, with the use of the reenactment format, Deller’s project gives a dialogical space and an agency for everyone involved. This is also clear in Deller’s book and Figgis’s film. The miners and other veterans of the original battle are given the opportunity to narrate their own history of the past event. And the reenactment is modeled partly on their accounts. Yet, the inclusion of personal accounts and local songs may be a strategy, employed by the artist, to make the reenactment seem more accurate and legitimate. In addition, Jeremy Deller places himself within the event by providing the viewer with evidence of his presence, as a young boy watching the original event on TV, as an artist involved in the reenactment as captured in Mike Figgis’s film and as documented in photographs found in the archive. Furthermore, the *Sheffield Telegraph* notes that it was mostly people from cultural industries rather than the coal industry who were present at Deller’s 2001 reenactment.⁷⁶ Today, placed within the museum, the Orgreave project is more likely to be viewed by people from cultural industries than from coal mining industries. However, an ethnographic study is not *for* the community that is studied, but for the readers of the study. The same can be argued for Deller’s artistic project.

⁷³ Lippard, “Farther Afield”, 25.

⁷⁴ Schneider and Wright, “The Challenge of Practice”, 15.

⁷⁵ Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer”, 190.

⁷⁶ Ian Soutar, “Orgreave’s theatre of war”, *Sheffield Telegraph*, (Friday June 22, 2001), 10.

2.6.3 The Importance of Self-Reflexivity

Artist John Wynne, in his essay “Hearing Faces, Seeing Voices: Sound Art, Experimentalism and the Ethnographic Gaze”, warns against commodification of ethnicity and emphasizes the importance of being self-reflexive.⁷⁷ He quotes from Rosanna Hertz’s book *Reflexivity and Voice*:

To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment. By extension, the reflexive ethnographer does not simply report ‘facts’ or ‘truths’ but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experiences in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about ...⁷⁸

Wynne emphasizes the importance of allowing knowledge to emerge from within the community. Similar to the theories highlighted in the previous section, he warns against artist-ethnographers making a claim on the territory. Grant H. Kester points out that in community-based projects, it seems that the artist always moves from a higher position in society to the lower position of the host community as if “... the open door of identity swings in only one direction because it is generally the artist who has the cultural and the financial resources necessary to transgress such boundaries in the first place”⁷⁹. In this move, it is important for the artist to be self-reflexive in his interpretations. “... [I]t is near impossible to escape projecting stereotypes of the self as it is to view the other stereotypically ...”⁸⁰. As one travels, the perception of one’s own culture is no less mediated than the view of a foreign one. Arnd Schneider further states that however legitimate and valid the artist’s practice may be in representing the “other”, there remains a constant difference between the artist-ethnographer and the community that he/she is researching.⁸¹ This must be reflected upon. These differences are, for example, power, economics, politics, education, and demographics. The artist “... cannot presuppose the existence of a relationship as mere ‘equals’ but must take difference into account *ad initio*”⁸². The difference is always there and must be taken into account. If not, according to Clifford, it will lead to constructed domains of truth, serious

⁷⁷ John Wynne, “Hearing Faces, Seeing Voices: Sound Art, Experimentalism and the Ethnographic Gaze”, in *Between Art and Anthropology*, edited by A. Schneider and C. Wright, 49.

⁷⁸ Quote from Rosanna Hertz “Reflexivity and Voice” in John Wynne, “Hearing Faces, Seeing Voices”, 49 -50.

⁷⁹ Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*, 130.

⁸⁰ Renée Green in James Meyer, “Nomads: Figures of Travel in Contemporary Art”, in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*. Vol. 4 De-,Dis-,Ex-, edited by A. Coles, 22.

⁸¹ Schneider, “Uneasy Relationships: Contemporary Arts and Anthropology”, 185.

⁸² Schneider and Wright, “Between Art and Anthropology”, 5.

fictions.⁸³ In order to avoid the self-fashioning, highlighted in the previous section, the artist must reflect on his role in the project and his position in relation to the “other”.

As I have previously stated, Jeremy Deller is not separate from the subjects of his study to the same extent as an ethnographer. Deller grew up in England during the Miners’ Strike and speaks the same language as the miners. However, Deller is still not a part of the same community. The question is then: Does Deller reflect on his role in the project? In Mike Figgis’s film, Jeremy Deller is presented in an ongoing dialogue with the miners, and is thus not simply reporting his finding to the camera. When asked by Figgis how the reenactment is going, Deller answers reflectively, “It’s going interesting ... This is the first time we’ve actually got these two groups together, and it’s difficult to say what’s going to happen. Look at it ... I’m not in charge any more, really. As you would be in a real situation like this, you’d be a bit excited and a bit worried as well”⁸⁴. The topic of self-reflexivity will be further discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

2.7 Conclusion

Anthropology no longer monopolizes the study of human culture. Artists now use anthropology/ethnography as an artistic practice. As Lucy Lippard rightfully questions, “... art and anthropology, anthropology and art, can we tell them together? Can we tell them apart?”⁸⁵. Both disciplines are shifting and overlapping. Artists are moving into anthropology as anthropologists are moving in to visual praxis. Jeremy Deller and *The Battle of Orgreave*, is a perfect example of an artist working as an ethnographer. Firstly, he formulated a research proposal for Artangel. Secondly, he set up a hypothesis, that the miners were wrongfully depicted in the mass media in 1984. Thirdly, he conducted fieldwork in the form of interviews and a reenactment. Fourthly, he analyzed data such as newspaper clippings and archive research. And subsequently, he produced a film in 2001, published a book in 2002, and created an Orgreave archive in 2004.⁸⁶ Yet, his research is not only focused on the specific event. It presents the political and social situation in the community, and its rituals and language. Deller also opens up for historical narration and/or modeling by the miners themselves through collaboration. Through the appropriation of the scientific approach to folk

⁸³ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 9

⁸⁴ Jeremy Deller in Figgis, *A Mike Figgis film of Jeremy Deller’s The Battle of Orgreave*.

⁸⁵ Lippard, “Farther Afield”, 24.

⁸⁶ These steps are based on the traditional Ph.D. model for anthropological research in Schneider and Wright, “Between Art and Anthropology”, 11.

practices (ethnography) and the folk practice of reenactments, the miners are given an agency for dialogue. Yet, Deller's control of the project needs further analysis.

Whether Deller's project veers on the side of political activism more so than an ethnographic presentation is difficult to determine. As opposed to the ethnographer, the artist is free to depict other cultures without having his or her authority questioned. Thus, the artist is not confined to objectivity and is free to interpret human culture subjectively. In the example of Jeremy Deller's work, *The Battle of Orgreave*, his personal opinion is clear: the original uprising was wrongfully depicted in mass media. Thus, instead of presenting his project as a clear ethnographic study, Deller can be seen as employing the event a step further, in critiquing current politics and the presentation of demonstrators in mass media and by the government. In my opinion, the project appears as an ambivalent combination of an ethnographic study and political activism. However, presented as an art project and viewed by the people from the cultural industry, Deller's work may be perceived as neither.

3 Historical Reenactment as an Artistic Practice

*I hate to call it a hobby,
because it's so much more than that.
We're here to find the real answers,
to read between the lines in the history books,
and then share our experience with spectators.⁸⁷*
- A reenactor

3.1 Introduction

Triggered by an interest in “living history”⁸⁸, Jeremy Deller used a reenactment format in shedding new light on the 1984 confrontation in Orgreave. As stated in chapter 2 of this thesis, Claire Bishop criticized Jeremy Deller’s reenactment because: “It gathered the people together to remember and replay a disastrous event, but this remembrance took place in circumstances more akin to a village fair, with a brass band, food stalls, and children running around”⁸⁹. In order to understand what a historical reenactment entails, I traveled to Hastings, in Deller’s home country England, to experience *The Battle of Hastings Reenactment*.

Annually, travelers from across Great Britain and from overseas gather in Hastings for the reenactment of 1066 Battle of Hastings. The reenactment takes place on its original ground, a site now known as Battle, which lies on the outskirts of Hastings. The Battle of Hastings is one of the most important battles in English history. On the 14th of October in year 1066, Normans (from today’s France) invaded England, and King Harold of England rushed his men down to Hastings to meet the invading army. King Harold’s 5,000 men, weary from their battle against the men of Harald Hardrada and Tostig at Stamford Bridge one month prior, were met by William the Conqueror’s 15,000 men. William the Conqueror and the Normans eventually were able to break through the defensive wall created by the Anglo-Saxons, defeating their army, killing King Harold and his brothers, and thus winning the battle.

One day and 945 years later, and together with reenactors, history enthusiasts, students and families, I entered the battlefield where the Anglo-Saxons had fought the Normans. Along the path up to the battlefield were signs describing the battle. Thus, on arriving on the battlefield, I had somewhat of an understanding of the events as they had unfolded in 1066. On either side of the battlefield, there were two “living history” encampments, one for Norman reenactors and one for Anglo-Saxon reenactors. The reenactors resided there for the duration of the reenactment weekend, living as the men, women and children did in 1066.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Vanessa Agnew, “Introduction: What is Reenactment?”, *Criticism* 46, nr. 3, (2004), 330.

⁸⁸ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

⁸⁹ Bishop, “The Social Turn: Collaborations and its Discontents”, 182.

Fortunately, it did not rain that weekend, as their tents were made out of cotton. Next to the Anglo-Saxon encampment were period-shops. They sold weaponry, clothes, and accessories that were period-specific. Yet the shops indicated, on large posters, that they accept Visa and MasterCard. Additionally, the food stalls did not offer food in line with the 11th century diet, but instead offered sandwiches, burgers and ice cream made by modern means. The reenactment event aims to accurately represent the 11th century and the historic event of the Battle of Hasting; however, adapted to modern dietary desires and forms of payment.

The day was action-packed. Though the battle reenactment was the main attraction, the event offered other activities such as Norman falconry and cavalry display, weapons and archery display and tryouts, shield painting, musical entertainment of the 11th century, and various other activities for children. At 15:00, the reenactment began. We all gathered down at the main battlefield in anticipation. We saw the Normans coming up from the coast on their horses, ready for battle. The Anglo-Saxons were on foot and met the Normans on the top of the field. Both armies seemed to be of equal count and not the 1:3 ratio of the original battle between the Anglo-Saxons and Normans. The clashes began. From then on, it was difficult to follow what was really happening. From where I had positioned myself, it looked like a rugby pit. All the men were huddled together in a tug of war. Women stood on sidelines, handing water to the men. The Anglo-Saxons eventually began to fall and were carried to the back of the line, and (miraculously) raised again and fought onwards.

Whether one views historical reenactments as educational, or views it as an amusement park, they nevertheless attract thousands of visitors every year and keep the interest in history alive. England has vast numbers of reenactment societies across the country which reenact important events in English history, and one can even go so far as to state that reenactments are an English folk ritual. *The Battle of Hastings Reenactment* was both an educational recreation of a historic battle but also a village fair. For many families, it is a perfect annual weekend outing.

Based on my experience of *The Battle of Hastings Reenactment*, I have come to disagree with Claire Bishop's negative critique of Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*. Live music, food stalls and children running around are all part of a reenactment event. Moreover, like traditional reenactments, Jeremy Deller's reenactors wore authentic clothing and camped out on the grounds. With this in mind, what happens when historical and cultural memory is reenacted as an art project? Do they repeat the past, or do they replace the past? Furthermore, what can or cannot be reenacted and who is entitled to retell the past? Can reenactments lead to cultural

and historical understanding? Before attempting to answer these questions, I will further describe and compare reenactments as folk ritual and reenactments as an artistic format.

3.2 Historical Reenactment

A historical reenactment is a “retrospective travel”, as ‘re’ in reenactment denotes a return to something that has previously taken place, real or imagined. Performed usually by reenactment groups, reenactment incorporates different genres⁹⁰, from reproducing a historical genre, such as a medieval tournament or battle reenactments, to “living history” performances. Reenactments are also organized for museum exhibitions, television series, and film. The reenactment practice may be used in the interest of tourism and education, or on a more personal level. An aspect that is common for all these different forms of reenactment is “... a concern with personal experience, social relations and everyday life, and with conjectural and provisional interpretations of the past”⁹¹. One has also come to see reenactments used by artists as an artistic format.

In this section I will first highlight the general understanding of 1) reenactment as a folk practice, and 2) reenactment as an artistic practice. Afterwards, I will compare the two.

3.2.1 Historical Reenactment as a Folk Ritual

Historical reenactments can be seen as doing history, and as a form of heritage work.⁹² For instance, one of Norway’s largest hotel chains, De Historiske, offers walking-tours where one can “... follow in the footsteps of Emperor Wilhelm, King Oscar and Queen Wilhelmina”⁹³. Recently, one witnessed, on national television, Norway’s Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg retracing Amundsen’s route to the South Pole 100 years prior. This was to draw attention to Amundsen and his accomplishment.

The live reenactment of historic events has itself had a long history. Romans would restage battles to commemorate and celebrate past victories. Set in the Colosseum, these reenactments were often so violent that they resulted in several of the reenactors actually

⁹⁰ Agnew, “Introduction: What is Reenactment?”, 327; Simon During, “Mimic toil: Eighteenth-century preconditions for the modern historical re-enactment”, *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 313 – 4.

⁹¹ Vanessa Agnew, “History’s affective turn: Historical reenactment and its work in the present”, *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 300.

⁹² Stephen Gapps, *Performing the Past: A Cultural History of Historical Reenactments*, (PhD Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney, 2002), 25.

⁹³ De Historiske, <http://www.dehistoriske.com/fjord-hotel/> (visited 15.02.12).

being killed in the act.⁹⁴ I can imagine that this was a matter of authenticity - how can a reenactment be a true restaging of a battle if there are no causalities?

In the high Middle Ages, Christians believed that Jews were crucifying Christian boys to reenact the killing of Christ, according to historian Helmut Walser Smith. This belief resulted in violent acts by the Christians against Jews, not only as retribution for the killing of Christ in the past, but also for the reenactment in the present.⁹⁵ As Smith points out, it is thus "... tempting to argue that the ritually bounded reenactments kept the memory of the medieval devastations alive"⁹⁶. Similarly, in northern Philippines, Christian Filipinos reenact annually the crucifixion of Christ as a display of devotion. Nailed to their own crosses, they pray to the Lord for forgiveness, wealth and prosperity. One man was reported saying, "The first time I was nailed to a cross, I was terrified, but I prayed to Jesus to take the pain. Now I don't feel anything"⁹⁷. These reenactments attract thousands of spectators.

Over the course of the 20th century, reenactments have become increasingly industrialized and professionalized.⁹⁸ Reenactments of civil wars and other important battles attract tens of thousands of visitors and participants annually. It is a folk gathering, a family outing, or a recreational activity, where people gather together to experience a past event in the present. Reenactors, who are camped for the entire event, do not only reenact, but also relive it. They carefully study the costumes, lifestyles and languages of the era they are focused on. Today, the concept of reenactment is familiar to most of us, and appears in many cultural sites and activities. From Tolkien enthusiasts camping outside the cinema in home-made Lord of the Rings costumes, to crime scene analysts using reenactment to jog the memory of victims and witnesses. Anthropologists have also begun to show an interest in the reenactment format. The interdisciplinary meeting between Anthropology and Art, covered in the previous chapter of this thesis, and Anthropology and Performance Studies, has produced important insight into social dialogue and interaction.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Richard Grayson, Exhibition review of "History will repeat itself: strategies of re-enactment in contemporary (media) art and performance", *Art Monthly*, (February 2008), 28.

⁹⁵ Helmut Walser Smith, "Anti-semitic violence as re-enactment: An essay in cultural history", *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 338-9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 338.

⁹⁷ Manny Mogato, "Jesus' crucifixion re-enacted in Philippines", *ABS CBNnews*, (April, 22nd, 2011), www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/04/22/11/jesus-crucifixion-re-enacted-philippines (visited 05.01.2012).

⁹⁸ Steven Rushton, "Tweedledum and Tweedledee Resolved to Have a Battle", in *Experience, Memory, Re-enactment*, edited by A. Bangma, S. Rushton, and F. Wüst, (Frankfurt: Revolver, 2005), 5.

⁹⁹ See Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, (NY: PAJ, 1988).

3.2.2 Historical Reenactment as an Artistic Practice

Professor of performance studies, Peggy Phelan once wrote,

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. ... Performance occurs over time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks as "different".¹⁰⁰

Recently, a number of artists can be seen recreating, reenacting, and repeating past performances and historic events and thus challenging Phelan's statement. In the course of the past decade, one has been witness to a vast amount of art exhibitions with artists employing the reenactment format. In 2001, Kunst-Werke, Berlin, organized an exhibition, *A Little Bit of History Repeated*, with reenactments of past artistic performances from the sixties and seventies. The exhibition ranged from, Tracey Rose's remake of Vito Acconci's *Trademarks* 1970, to Tino Sehgal's take on John Baldessari's *I Am Making Art* 1971. In September 2003 at Paris's Ranelagh Theater, Yoko Ono reenacted her own *Cut Piece* as an expression of her hope for world peace.¹⁰¹ Also in 2003, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, hosted the exhibition *A Short History of Performance*, where artists reenacted their own performances. In 2005, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, showed their exhibition *Experience, Memory, Reenactment*, and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, showed *7 Easy Pieces*, where Marina Abramović reenacted seven past performances.

That same year, 2005, Witte De With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, hosted a large exhibition, *Life, Once More - Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art*, presenting a grand overview of reenactments in fine art which have been inspired by past events (historical and topical). It presented works by 23 artists, including *The Battle of Orgreave* by Jeremy Deller. In the following year, Reg Vardy Gallery hosted *Once More... With Feeling*, also including Deller's work; Massachusetts MOCA hosted *Ahistoric Occasion: Artists Making History*; Carnegie Art Center hosted *Now Again the Pat: Rewind, Replay, Resound*; and Edith Russ House hosted *Playback_Simulated Realities*. In 2007, the exhibition *History will repeat itself: strategies of re-enactment in contemporary (media) art and performance* opened at PHOENIX Halle Dortmund before traveling onwards to Kunst-Werke, Berlin, and Center for Contemporary Art Warsaw (2008). *History will repeat itself...*

¹⁰⁰ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, (London: Routledge, 1993), 146.

¹⁰¹ Jennifer Allen, "Einmal ist keinmal", in *Life, Once More: Forms Of Reenactment In Contemporary Art (Performance Art)*, edited by S. Lütticken, (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 2005), 211 – 212.

showed 22 artists who have been inspired by past events, including Nikolai Evreinov's reenactment *The Storming of the Winter Palace*, where he restaged a crucial event during the Russian Revolution. In 2009 to 2010 the exhibition *RE:akt! Reconstruction, Re-enactment, Re-reporting* was displayed at the National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest, Romania, the ŠKUC Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka, Croatia, and at Maribor Art Gallery - Rotovž Exhibition Salon, Slovenia.

These reenactments cannot together be defined as an artistic movement, nor can they really be collected under a single terminology. However, I will, for simplicity's sake, categorize them under two different titles: 1) artistic reenactments (reenactments of existing performance art or as autobiographical, performed by artists) and 2) artistic historical reenactments (reenactments of past historical events, organized by artists). In this chapter, I will focus on the latter reenactment format, *artistic historical reenactments*.

It is difficult to identify the route by which historical reenactment arose as an artistic practice. According to art historian RoseLee Goldberg, there is "... a long tradition of artists turning to live performance as one means among many of expressing their ideas..."¹⁰². Art historian Henry Sayre also wrote that in the seventies "... presence in art had shifted from art's object to art's audience, from the textual or plastic to the experiential"¹⁰³. In relation to reenactments, the past is brought back to life for the audience, in a kind of "pseudopresence".¹⁰⁴ They are set in real-life venues and not on theater stages, and thus reduce the alienation between the reenactor and the spectator. The spectators can even be considered as witnesses, placed within the same time-space as the reenactors.

Art critic Harold Rosenberg famously wrote in his article, "The American Action Painter",

At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act – rather than as a space in which to reproduce, redesign, analyze or "express" an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.¹⁰⁵

It can be argued that historical reenactments organized by artists are traditional historical paintings depicting battle scenes becoming a performance event, aligned with the contemporary movement in the 1950s from painting to performance. Although this argument

¹⁰² RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art- From Futurism to the Present*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 7.

¹⁰³ Henry Sayre, "The Object of Performance. Aesthetics in the seventies", *The Georgia Review* 37, nr. 1, (1983), 191.

¹⁰⁴ Susan Sontag in Sayre, "The Object of Performance. Aesthetics in the seventies", 191.

¹⁰⁵ Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters", *Art News* 51, nr. 8, (December 1952), 22.

can be employed, battle scenes in history paintings are generally allegorical. Reenactments, on the other hand, attempt realistic representations of actually living people.

By using the reenactment format, Deller was interested in seeing how far his idea could be taken, "... especially one that is on the face of it a contradiction in terms, 'a recreation of something that was essentially chaos'"¹⁰⁶. In reference to Stalin's famous quote: "You have a man, you have a problem", Deller wrote that, "... people are unpredictable, which is why it's so interesting losing control of a project, by working with people, rather than canvas or bronze"¹⁰⁷. And by employing the reenactment format in his work, the format moves from a folk tradition to art practice.

3.2.3 Comparison

Curator Inke Arns observed that artistic historical reenactments differ from historical reenactments since they are not nostalgic portrayals of the past.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Jeremy Deller explicitly declared he "... was not interested in a nostalgic interpretation of the strike"¹⁰⁹. However, the reenactment, Mike Figgis's film and Deller's book, all include contemporary folk songs and slogans from the original battle. These aspects are important for accuracy but they can be viewed as nostalgic portrayals of the past.

Historical reenactments are defined as performative restagings of a past event, in virtue of it being in the past.¹¹⁰ They attempt to visualize the unknown past and are often repeated more than once. Reenactors and spectators imagine and place themselves in a different time than the present, and may adopt an alter ego in doing so. The past is to a large degree viewed as singular and thus, does not run the risk of being confused with the reenactment. In artistic historical reenactments, on the other hand, the past is not viewed as singular and separate from the present. They are also performative restagings of a past event, however, they are often reenacted in view of their importance for the present¹¹¹. They are usually performed only once. It is never its original meaning that the artist wants to restore and relive, rather it is often a new reading of the past that the artist wants to portray. And this

¹⁰⁶ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

¹⁰⁷ Deller, *Joy in People*, 189.

¹⁰⁸ Inke Arns quoted in Pil and Galia Kollektiv, "Retro/Necro: From Beyond the Grave of the Politics of Re-Enactment", *Art Papers*, <http://www.kollektiv.co.uk/Art%20Papers%20feature/reenactment/retro-necro.htm> (visited 21.02.2012).

¹⁰⁹ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

¹¹⁰ Antonio Caronia, "Never Twice in the Same River: Representation, history and language in contemporary reenactment", (2009), http://naba.academia.edu/antoniocaronia/Papers/237749/RE_Akt_ (visited 21.02.2012).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

new meaning may be a critique of the past or the past used to critique present.¹¹² In doing so, the artist may manipulate and restructure memory, with the aim to create some kind of “effect”. Thus, one can say that artistic historical reenactments “... are not an affirmative confirmation of the past; rather, they are *questionings of the present* through reaching back to historical events that have etched themselves indelibly into the collective memory”¹¹³.

Artists tend to choose events from immediate history, such as the Milgram Experiment¹¹⁴ and the Battle of Orgreave. They are “... events that underpin, inform and shape our emerging understanding of contemporary reality”¹¹⁵. Jeremy Deller’s reenactment refers to an event that is still a sensitive subject in English history. It explores the social ramifications of the original event, such as the economic decline of Orgreave. The reenactment is also relevant today with reference to the violent clashes of the London protests in 2011 and Athens protests in 2011-12. As with the Battle of Orgreave, one can again question whether the media footages on television are true portrayals of protests. Reenactments can, furthermore, serve a political stance or promotion, for instance Deller and Figgis’s opposition to the politics of Thatcher. Jeremy Deller’s intention was to communicate that the original battle was misrepresented by mass media. Perhaps with the use of a reenactment, the work could target a larger audience and spread the “true”¹¹⁶ occurrence of that day in 1984, and Mike Figgis’s film acts as reinforcement.

However, placing historical folk reenactments in the realm of the past and the artistic historical reenactments in the present is too simplistic. The pageant ritual of reenactment during the 19th century was more than reliving the past in the past, but restructuring the past to meet the needs of the audience in the present.¹¹⁷ One has also witnessed historical reenactments using events from living memory as subjects and objects for their reenactments, such as the Vietnam War and World War II. In addition, some reenactors also use historical

¹¹² Caronia, “Never Twice in the Same River”.

¹¹³ Hartware MedienKunstVerein (HMKV), “Press release: History will repeat itself: strategies of re-enactment in contemporary (media) art and performance”, (2007), http://www.hmkv.de/dyn/_data/HWRI-PressKit-english.pdf (visited 24.02.2012)

¹¹⁴ In 1961, at the University of Yale, Stanley Milgram conducted an experiment “Obedience to Authority”, which aimed to analyze the crimes of National Socialism from a social-psychological perspective. The experiment tested people’s obedience to authority and their willingness to follow orders that would normally contradict their conscience. A scientist dressed in white asked these test persons to administer electric shocks to a third person, placed in the room next door, when they gave a false answer. During the experiment, the intensity of the shocks increased. Although, screams could be heard from the neighboring room, two thirds of them still carried on administering shocks. Since the scientist confirmed that he would take full responsibility of their actions, they followed his orders. In 2002, Rod Dickinson reenacted Milgram’s experiment.

¹¹⁵ Grayson, Exhibition review of “History will repeat itself”, 29.

¹¹⁶ I have placed the word “true” in quotation marks as the reenactment was a restaging of the original event and not the original event itself.

¹¹⁷ Rushton, “Tweedledum and Tweedeledee Resolved to Have a Battle”, 6.

reenactments as a means of expressing their view on contemporary politics they find difficult to express in other public arenas.

The topic of past and present is very interesting in relation reenactments. Where does their importance lie – in the past or in the present? And what kind of effect do they have on the present?

3.3 Time and Space: Conflating Past and Present

Reenactments re-contextualize the events to which they refer. This happens not only because reenactments take place at a completely different historical time, it is also due to the time-space allocated to a reenactment – an hour for *The Battle of Hastings*, or a half-day for *The Battle of Osgreave* – whereas the original events lasted much longer. In this respect, it can be argued that reenactments are more than restaging of the past, but are new events in themselves – taken out of its context, altered and performed by other bodies, within a different time-space.

The presence of the spectators as witnesses “... guarantees that something complete has taken place, even if the reenactment strays in its portrayal of the original event”¹¹⁸. Spectators are able to directly experience a historical event unfolding in real-time. In the attempt to immerse themselves in the reenactment, spectators seek to be at one with the past in the present. They may trust the images presented by the reenactments, viewing them as either factual or embodiments of lived and experienced memory, and turning a blind eye to the fact that the reenactment is not the original event. Thus, the spectators are asked to foster a “... visceral, emotional engagement with the past at the expense of a more analytical treatment”¹¹⁹.

Art historian Sven Lütticken stated, “If Williamsburg constantly reenacts (the eve of) the American Revolution, it does so in order to conserve and freeze it – that is, to turn the revolution into a stabilizing factor for the present”¹²⁰. However, artistic historical reenactments do not always want to make the past into a “stabilizing factor for the present”, they want the reenactment to *affect* the present. Though this might not always be achieved, and as Lütticken warned, “... one travels into the past as an historical tourist, only to return to the present unchanged; the theatrical equivalent of a time machine enables one to experience a

¹¹⁸ Allen, “Einmal ist keinmal”, 185.

¹¹⁹ Alexander Cook, “The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History”, *Criticism* 46, nr. 3, (Summer 2004), 490.

¹²⁰ Sven Lütticken, “An Arena in Which to Reenact”, in *Life, Once More: Forms Of Reenactment In Contemporary Art (Performance Art)*, edited by S. Lütticken, 47.

distant period without experiencing any temporal disorientation, without any risk of the past disrupting the present”¹²¹. In Deller’s reenactment the spectators are asked to agree with Deller’s counter-narrative and sympathy with the miners’ unfair treatment. To borrow the words of historian Alexander Cook points out, “While there is undoubtedly some value in this exercise, . . . , there is a legitimate question whether such an objective stands in tension with the critical distance that can be one of the greatest tools of historical investigation”¹²².

Even though artistic historical reenactments do not always affect the present to the extent that the artists may desire, they do shed new light on the past in the present.

3.4 Cultural and Historical Understanding

A reenactor once stated that, “I hate to call it a hobby, because it’s so much more than that. We’re here to find the real answers, to read between the lines in the history books, and then share our experience with spectators”¹²³. Can reenactments be seen as a research method in understanding of the past? In the opinion of several historians and cultural critics, reenactments cannot lead to a correct portrayal of the past, nor lead to a cultural understanding of the past.¹²⁴ They criticize reenactments to be “popular, unscholarly amateurism”, as “historical theme parks”, and the reenactors as “masculine, nostalgic ‘weekend warriors’”. Alexander Cook, on the other hand, clearly states that reenactments do “... not show us a spectacle of the past, but a spectacle of people attempting to explore the past. To this extent, its participants are effectively researchers – however limited their prior experience”¹²⁵.

Televised historical documentaries often employ the reenactment format. In these documentaries, the viewer often sees segments of a battle, performed by reenactors, accompanied by a narrator describing what is being shown. The sequence is juxtaposed with interviews with historians describing the battle further. As Cook wrote, these televised reenactments are to make history “come alive” for the viewer, and to teach the viewer about an historical event in a more accessible manner than using conventional methods of teaching about the past.¹²⁶ Cook viewed these televised reenactments as *investigative reenactment*, since they “... set out not to dramatize a past that is already known, but to learn something

¹²¹ Lütticken, “An Arena in Which to Reenact”, 42.

¹²² Cook, “The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment”, 490.

¹²³ Quoted in Agnew, “Introduction: What is Reenactment?”, 330.

¹²⁴ Gapps, *Performing the Past: A Cultural History of Historical Reenactments*, 14 – 16.

¹²⁵ Cook, “The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment”, 494.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 487.

new about the past through the activity of reenactment itself and to communicate those findings to a wider audience”¹²⁷. For example, in *Seven Wonders of the Industrial Revolution*, BBC teaches the viewer, through reenactment and narration, about seven events in history that changed the world.

The atmosphere of Deller’s reenactment may have been festive, but it nonetheless represents a desire for a serious portrayal of the past. Deller wanted to find real answers as to what happened leading up to and during the Battle of Orgreave. By translating the past into real space and real objects and people, Deller repeated an historical event found in archived documents to replace this ‘false’ memory presented by mass media. Since news media coverage on the 1984 strike were strongly influenced by the government, and the miners were characterized as “the enemy within”, Deller did not desire to use contemporary media reports for his project. Instead, he used the memories of the miners as a basis for the reenactment. However, the reenactment perhaps raises more questions than offers any answers.¹²⁸ For instance, how can one enact memory and what happens in the process of doing so? What is the difference between history and collective memory?

3.5 Memory

At the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in 1929, Thomas Edison and Francis Jehl reenacted the light bulb experiments. It was a “... work of memory. It memorializes past events by staging them in authentic settings. The presence of Edison, playing himself, imbued the opening act with personal integrity and authenticity”¹²⁹. Similarly, Jeremy Deller’s reenactment was a work of memory, for the reenactors and for the spectators. It was a way to jog people’s memories of what had happened in Orgreave 17 years earlier. The ex-miners, and others who had experienced the original battle, could be seen as investigating themselves, and their own past. The question is: how accurate is their memory? Furthermore, the difficulty in portraying collective memory is the risk of stereotyping, simplifying and altering the past, thereby discarding whatever does not fit into the existing preconception.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Cook, “The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment”, 487 – 8.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 495.

¹²⁹ Kerstin Barndt, “Fordist nostalgia: History and Experience at The Henry Ford”, *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 380 - 1.

¹³⁰ Marc Fehlmann, “As Greek as it gets: British attempts to recreate the Parthenon”, *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 354.

Like Hal Foster's assertion that "Art history cannot solve [the memory crisis] but only displace them, suspend them, or otherwise address them again and again"¹³¹, artists cannot solve "the memory crisis" but can reassess it through art. According to performance theorist Diane Taylor, performance is a collective, interactive act, which embodies culture and the individual and/or collective memory.¹³² However, one can debate to what extent a performance or a reenactment can transfer embodied memories from the past to the present. Rather than copying the past, performance conjures up past¹³³, past memories and emotions that may have been forgotten. For Taylor, it is less about historical accuracy, than embodying past-ness in performed behavior, such as gestures and attitudes.¹³⁴

A reenactment of a historical event can further result in creating new memories or even substituting memories of the actual event. For example, 10 years after filmmaker Steven Spielberg made *Schindler's List*, artist Omer Fast returned to the actual setting of the film: Plaszow concentration camp on the outskirts of Krakow, Poland. Some of the set design used in Spielberg's film still remained, and in Fast's footage from the camp it is difficult to distinguish the real from the Hollywood fake. Additionally, Fast met with elderly people in the neighborhood and interviewed them about how it had been to work as an extra in the Spielberg film. The interviews reveal that some of them mix up their memory of what had happened in 1940, and what had happened during the filming. This brings one to realize the different levels at work in Fast's double video projection: the historical base, Spielberg's film and Fast's own footage, and the differences between the real event and interpretations of the event. This artwork demonstrates "... how strongly media images shape and overlie our memories, and that films have assumed the function of monuments for collective memory"¹³⁵. Thus, a reenactment can not only create a space in which the past can be played out in the present, creating a connection between the two, but it also can erase the distance between the past and the present, and confuse one's memory of the past.¹³⁶ Fast problematizes the assumption that it is possible to make an objective recreation of an event, and how

¹³¹ Hal Foster, "Archives of Modern Art", *October* 99, (Winter 2002), 86.

¹³² Diane Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, (London: Duke University Press, 2003); Diane Taylor, "Performance and/as History", *The Drama Review* 50, nr. 1, (Spring, 2006), 67 – 86.

¹³³ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 32.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁵ Inke Arns and Gabriele Horn, *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance*, (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2007), 103.

¹³⁶ Gapps, *Performing the Past: A Cultural History of Historical Reenactments*, 14.

filmmakers, reenactors, and viewers can reconstruct memory as mediating and mediated subjects.¹³⁷

Philosopher Maurice Halbwachs distinguishes between individual and collective memory. He points out, “While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember”¹³⁸. Moreover, while the individual remembrances in a group are mutually supportive, the individual might remember the past more vividly than another member. Thus, the individual memory can be considered as a viewpoint on the collective memory and changes as the social setting changes.¹³⁹ He considers individual and collective memory as often intertwined and writes, “[w]e appeal to witnesses to corroborate or invalidate as well as supplement what we somehow know already about an event that in many other details remains obscure”¹⁴⁰. In other words, one seeks accounts that correlate with one’s own in order to give oneself confidence in a remembrance and the capacity for storing memory. This is evident in the dialogue between the miners in Figgis’s film, where the miners are supporting each other’s statements, and in the mass media coverage of the Scargill’s incident, where the miners are reported supporting Scargill’s remembrance of his being hit, and the police supporting Clements remembrance of Scargill falling. According to Halbwachs, all memory remains collective.¹⁴¹ He considers one to be never alone in one’s reflections (except in dreams); not in the sense that one is never physically alone, but in the sense that one brings with oneself experiences of the past, whether it is an experience with another person or through a novel.

Halbwachs’s chapter on historical and collective memory is especially interesting in relation to Deller’s work. Deller viewed the original event through mass media and did not experience it firsthand himself. He is dependent on others’ memories in order to repeat. “But it remains borrowed memory, not (his) own.”¹⁴² The event has deeply influenced the communities and the people who have experienced it firsthand. While historical memory, according to Halbwachs, represents the past as discontinuous and abstracted, the collective memory of one’s own life represents a greater continuity.¹⁴³ Although the Battle of Orgreave is an historical event, Deller’s project rests on “living memory” of the miners. Halbwachs

¹³⁷ Rushton, “Tweedledum and Tweedeledee Resolved to Have a Battle”, 8 – 10.

¹³⁸ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 48.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴² Adaption of Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 51.

¹⁴³ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 52.

does not define the term “history” as a chronological sequence of events and dates but rather how the event differs from other events and how it reflects a society.¹⁴⁴

Wars alter the life of a group, according to Halbwachs. The experience of a war become image fragments in the mind of the individual, where some of the images are more easily retrievable than others. He argues that based on these series of images in the consciousness, the individual creates an artificial and collective site, external to the personal, which results in a collective history. The experiences of grandparents leave marks on the lives of future generations, resulting in what Halbwachs calls “The living bond of generations”.¹⁴⁵ The memory of an individual consists not only of facts, but attitudes from the past.¹⁴⁶ For Halbwachs, general history, written in books, begins when social memory has begun fading and there arises a need to preserve remembrance of it. The only means to do so is to write it in the form of a narrative. Yet, if social living memory still exists, there is no point in containing it in written accounts. The living memory of the past changes and renews itself over time.¹⁴⁷ Thus, collective memory differs from history in respect to its still continuous recollection of the past in the consciousness of the living and every collective memory demands the support of a specific community.¹⁴⁸ Traveling through Sheffield County, I met many people along the way who had either been striking miners themselves during the 1980s or had a father, brother, grandfather, or son, who had been. It has affected generations. Deller presents the past in written and recorded accounts, yet has left it in the form of an archive, where the traces of the past can be renewed to create new accounts. The accounts also present new traces from the present-day society in addition to the already existing traces from 1984. By watching Mike Figgis’s film and studying Deller’s reenactment, book and archive, the viewer will notice aspects of the past in the habits of the miners and in the appearance of Orgreave. Through using the veteran miners and family members, the reenactment is in closer contact with the past, and the past is woven into the personal experience of the present. Perhaps the living memory of the reenactment results in a better understanding of the past than a written account of the past.

Even though Henri Bergson¹⁴⁹ argues for a more individualistic philosophy of memory than his pupil Halbwachs, Bergson’s theory of memory existing in the activation in the

¹⁴⁴ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 57.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 78 – 79.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 80 and 84.

¹⁴⁹ All references to Bergson are from: Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, translated by N. M. Paul & W. S. Palmer, (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

present has been influential for Halbwachs. Bergson argues for a non-psychological notion of memory, where the brain is not a storehouse of recollection or images. Instead memory lies in the intersection between mind and matter, between the body and the space outside the body. He writes, “Itself an image, the body cannot store up images, since it forms a part of the images; and this is why it is a chimerical enterprise to seek to localize past or even present perceptions in the brain: they are not in it; it is the brain that is in them”¹⁵⁰. For Bergson, pure memory and pure recollection are something other than the function of the brain. It is a progression from placing oneself in the past and moving through the various layers of the conscious before materializing a perception in the present. He views the body as a conductor that receives and transmits movements, where the past survives in the motor mechanisms of an action itself or an automatic adaptation to the circumstances. Bergson defines this as habit-memory, where memory is built up through repetition of past action. These memories do not strictly represent the past, but utilize it for the purpose of the present. For instance, in the process of learning a verse by heart, which moves towards a non-reflective and mechanical repetition, or in the instantaneous recognition of an object. Bergson views the past also surviving in independent recollections where the mind applies the past to the present, and defines this as the memory of reading, which is built up of memory-images from a specific historical event. Here, Bergson also uses the example of memorizing a verse but from a different perspective: The remembrance of the lesson of learning the verse, which is a dated fact that cannot be repeated. The lesson has already been learned.¹⁵¹ In this respect, one recognizes an object through association to other past images, thus relating the past memory to the present perception.

In contrast to Bergson’s ontology, Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, deals with the psychological notion of memory. Freud perceived the unconscious as the place where one stores the traces of life in transparent layers.¹⁵² In Freud’s chapter on “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through”, Freud writes about the traumatic dimensions in memory and views remembering and repeating as two different psychoanalytic techniques. Remembering is a hypnosis treatment carried out in the laboratory in which “[t]he patient puts himself back into an earlier situation, which he seemed never to confuse with the present one,

¹⁵⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 151.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 78 – 79.

¹⁵² Mary Ann Doane, “Temporality, Storage, Legibility”, in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time. Modernity, Contingency and the Archive*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), 63 – 76.

and gave an account of the mental processes belonging to it”¹⁵³. Repeating, on the other hand, is an analytical treatment of conjuring up a part of real life, and to study what is already present yet unknown to the patient. Seen in light of reenactments, if one considers the distinction between historical reenactments as being in the past and the artistic historical reenactments as in the present, the two forms of reenactment practices correlate with the two treatments illustrated by Freud. In historical reenactments, reenactors place themselves in a past time and give an account that belongs to this time. Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*, on the other hand, lives in the present mind of the ex-miners, and can conjure up the unknown through the “art of interpretation”. Further, Freud suggests that the encounter between the patient and analyst can result in the repetition of the past that the patient is unable to remember. Freud views the past as repeated through action rather than memory. In other words, he considers these repetitions as similar to the experiencing of the past as if for the first time. It is not the memory of the past but a new experience of it that awakens a memory of the past event. He writes, “... the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed but *acts* it out. He reproduced it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it.”¹⁵⁴ He repeats, for instance, his personality traits. A patient, who does not remember that he was defiant towards his parent’s authority, may act it out towards the doctor.¹⁵⁵ Likewise ex-miners express themselves physically, in Figgis’s film and Deller’s reenactment and thereby can conjure up embodied memories of the past, which the miners no longer remember. The aim, in Freud’s perspective, is to turn this compulsion of repetition into a motive for remembering, through transference of the memory from the patient to the analyst and on other aspects of the current situation. This transference creates a new artificial site, which lies between the “illness” (the repetition that has become part of his personal trait) and real life setting (the present).¹⁵⁶ And to understand the personal trait, one must trace back from the present to the past.¹⁵⁷ Though the original battle of Orgreave was an event of the past, it still has a force today. It is imbedded in the ex-miners. Although the reenactment is scripted, the ex-miners were given total freedom to act out the past as they saw it. Their only restrictions were alcohol and violence, no beer drinking that day and only imitation stone throwing.

¹⁵³ Sigmund Freud, “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through” (1914), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Vol. 12, edited by James Strachey, (London: Hogarth Press, 2001), 148.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 151-2.

When writing about his experience of the Gettysburg reenactment, Christopher Hitchens stated, “Those who can’t forgive the past are condemned, not without pathos, to reenact it”¹⁵⁸. Similarly, Judith Butler wrote, “No one has ever worked through an injury without repeating it. ... There is no possibility of not repeating”¹⁵⁹. Thus, the citizens of Orgreave were perhaps doomed to repeat the injuries inflicted on them by the British police and the Thatcher government 17 years prior. According to Diane Taylor¹⁶⁰, performance can help people cope with past trauma. Trauma, like performance, is characterized by the nature for its “repeats”. Both are always in situ and depended on live, participatory acts. While traumatic events may be transmittable from the past and be enacted in the present, it is inseparable from the subject who suffers it.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, reenactment might offer a way of understanding memories of traumatic events and help the viewer understand them in the present.¹⁶² Whether or not the Battle of Orgreave was experienced as a traumatic event varies most likely from person to person. Nonetheless, the Battle of Orgreave is still part of the present for the ex-miners and their families. Thus, it is difficult for them to be able to achieve any critical distance to the event and to evaluate their memories objectively.

3.6 Ethics and Authority

Writing about Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List*, Mieke Bal states that although the horrors of the Holocaust cannot be accurately represented, there an acute desire to make sure it is remembered.¹⁶³ Reenactments bring to life memories one may want or try to forget, as forms of entertainment. However, are there any restrictions on what can be reenacted and by whom?

The past is a ‘foreign country’ that is culturally inaccessible for the reenactor, according to David Lowenthal.¹⁶⁴ The reenactor (as for the ethnographer) merely tours, stages and describes the past on behalf of the spectator. Similarly, Vanessa Agnew critiques reenactors for their failure to view their practices as mediations and interpretations of the past, and that they approach historical sources as factual historical literature, flattening out the

¹⁵⁸ Christopher Hitchens, “Rebel Ghosts”, *Vanity Fair* 467, (July 1999), 34.

¹⁵⁹ Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, 102.

¹⁶⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 165 – 67.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 167 – 68.

¹⁶² Taylor, “Performance and/as History”, 68.

¹⁶³ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3. ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 44.

¹⁶⁴ David Lowenthal in Agnew, “History’s affective turn”, 304.

multilayered narratives of history.¹⁶⁵ In *The Idea of History*, historian Robin G. Collingwood categorized reenactment as the historian undergoing the identical thought processes and actions of the historical person who the historian is studying. Yet Collingwood recognized that “[t]he historian not only re-enacts past thought, he re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge...”¹⁶⁶. On the assumption that people act and think differently, it seems unlikely that one can fully recover or reconstruct the history from the past, in the present. Similarly, Alexander Cook wrote, “We can never be *Them*”¹⁶⁷. There is no psychological link between the original historical actors and the modern day reenactors mimicking the former. But what happens when people from the original event replay themselves, as in Deller’s reenactment? Does that not circumvent this problem? Yet, even though *They are Them* in this case, *They* might not be able to achieve the critical distance in order to analytically interpret the past.

Filmmaker Paul Greengrass wrote and directed a film about one of planes that had been hijacked during the September 11th attacks, *United 93*. In real-time, the film recounts the series of events that had taken place on the plane. It was made in cooperation with many of the victims’ families. The script was partly improvised, based on face-to-face interviews between the actors and the families. Greengrass employed a mixture of professional actors (though relatively unknown for a Hollywood movie), actual airplane personnel, and people who had been involved in the original event. Through the authenticity of employing these people, the film is perhaps given a counter-authority. In this respect, Deller’s portrayal can be seen as gaining a powerful force through the figure of authority (the ex-miners), which can be considered as lacking in historical reenactments. The question that still remains is to what extent Deller controls the reenactment.

Whether it is to glorify the past or recover marginalized voices, reenactments, as with ethnographers, exert power over the communities the reenactment concerns. Deller’s counter-narrative questions the truth of the narrative presented by BBC, at the same time as it claims truth for its own narrative. In so doing, it operates within the same logic as it critiques, becoming a counter-biased account. Covered by mass media in 2001/2002, the Battle of Orgreave becomes yet again a media event; in the form of a documentary by Mike Figgis shown on Channel Four and as news articles and critiques of Deller’s reenactment.

¹⁶⁵ Agnew, “Introduction: What is Reenactment?”, 332.

¹⁶⁶ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1946), 215.

¹⁶⁷ Cook, “The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History”, 489.

3.7 Beyond the Visual

Speech is an important aspect for the authenticity of a particular experience. As an American Civil War reenactor suggested: “There’s much more to historical accuracy than what’s visible”¹⁶⁸. In this reference, it would be interesting to consider words, not as cultural codes, but as speech-acts. As theorist Judith Butler wrote, “... *speaking is itself a bodily act*”¹⁶⁹. Similarly, in the words of novelist and professor Toni Morrison, “Oppressive language does more than represent violence, it is violence”¹⁷⁰. Language is not always a mere representation of violence; it can enact its own violence.

Philosopher and linguist John L. Austin focused on the performative function of communication – *how one can do things with words*. He was the first to propose a category of utterances as performative speech acts. These utterances “do” something, for instance in the acceptance of a marriage vow, one replies: “I do”, which subsequently seals the marriage contract. In Austin’s opinion, performative utterances do not ‘describe’ or constate anything at all, they are not ‘true or false’. He viewed there being a performative dimension that is inherent in language, stating that “... issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something”¹⁷¹. This led him to introduce the category of “speech acts” which he separated into “locutionary” (the act *of* simply saying something), “illocutionary” (the immediate act *in* saying something, which has a certain (conventional) force), and “perlocutionary” (performance of an act *by* saying something, which has a certain effect on others, such as convincing or persuading someone else).¹⁷² The circumstances of the utterance must be appropriate for a “total speech situation”: “My ‘action’ was ‘void’ or ‘without effect’ because I was not a proper person, had not the ‘capacity’, to perform it”¹⁷³. By employing the miners to reenact themselves, the appropriate “total speech situation” is achieved. And with reference to the theories of J. L. Austin, emphasis can be placed on what reenactments *do*, and their performative dimension and effect, rather than what reenactments *describe*. For instance, the miners reenacting the slogan “The Miners United will Never be Defeated” enacts the collective unity of the miners. Thus, reenactments are built up by a set of utterances that create an event, rather than merely describe a past event. Redoing one’s vows is not a repetition, but rather a new event.

¹⁶⁸ Gapps, *Performing the Past: A Cultural History of Historical Reenactments*, 5.

¹⁶⁹ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 10.

¹⁷⁰ Toni Morrison quoted in Smith, “Anti-semitic violence as re-enactment: An essay in cultural history”, 348.

¹⁷¹ John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 6 – 7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 109, 121, 95.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 23.

Lawyer Mari Matsuda, furthermore, considered speech acts able to not only reflect social domination but also enact domination.¹⁷⁴ Through speech, the social structure and the position of dominance for the speaker can be reestablished. This form of speech, as Judith Butler categorizes as hate speech, does not describe or produce as a consequence but is an illocutionary act where the very words spoken are a performance of the injury itself.¹⁷⁵ And the injury is a social injury. Can this theory shed light on illocutionary acts in Deller's project? Is there an already established authority that renders speech illocutionary? In 1984, Margret Thatcher referred to the miners as the "enemy from within" on national television. Her forceful words can be considered as illocutionary, since it enforced a position of dominance over the miners and classified them as outsiders, grouped under one entity "the enemy". In Mike Figgis's film, Thatcher's words are replayed. If authority renders speech illocutionary, then Thatcher's speech reinvokes this position of dominance. However, this position of domination is not a given but itself enacted. Thus, there is a risk of a circular argument here, arguing that both the authority of Thatcher makes speech performative, and performance itself produces this authority.

With reference to hate speech, how do illocutionary acts differ from perlocutionary acts? Illocutionary acts are performed through uttered words, while perlocutionary acts are performed as a consequence of uttered words. The latter are not in themselves actions and the actions are outside of the temporal space of the word, but in the future. But cannot hate speech be both illocutionary and perlocutionary? In case of Thatcher, her speech can also be seen as perlocutionary, resulting in a negative view of the miners and the violent acts inflicted upon them by the police. However, a politician, like Thatcher, can also experience a statement having an effect other than what was intended. Deller's reenactment project opens up for reflection on the power of language.

3.8 Mediation and Sampling

A historical reenactment is a fragment of history made into a performance. And in so doing, the unpredictable, chaotic original event becomes a conscious, controlled and well-defined reenactment. In contrast to the original event, the reenactment has a plot and knows how the event will unfold. But what is the relationship between the original event and the reenactment? Can one really claim that reenactments "... recreate the experience of the original event, allowing participants and audience to relive a history as it really was, or wie es

¹⁷⁴ Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, 18.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

eigentlich gewesen in Ranke's famous phrase? [For my very own eyes]"¹⁷⁶. According to art critic Domenico Quaranta, reenactments do not reproduce history, but rather take a mediated sample from history:

The fact that our experience of history is by and large mediated, which on one hand increases our desire for "real events", and on the other has got us accustomed to reliving the same events over and over, simply by pressing "replay"." In other words reenactment is actually the art form par excellence in a society where mediation has triumphed completely over direct experience, and has stealthily taken over everyday life.¹⁷⁷

Reenactments are based on a specific historic event, an iconographic moment, with a desire to present history as it really was. However, in their portrayal of the past, there are always historical inaccuracies to be found. Plot changes occur to make the reenactment more compelling to the spectators. Some reenactments are even organized with the very desire to change the past. For example, a war known as a German victory may be reenacted as a British victory.¹⁷⁸ Selections of actions in history are pieced together forming a new presentation of the past, and in that process, aspects/actions may be ignored. Alexander Cook viewed reenactments as covering only parts of a historic event and resulting in "[t]he final product become[ing] a negotiation between the captured footage and the historical record in which the danger is that justice is done to neither"¹⁷⁹.

History is also largely mediated before it even becomes a reenactment. A description of an event will never be identical to the event to which it refers – it is rather an abstract of the event.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, as art critic Nicolas Bourriaud stated, "We never read a book the way its author would like us to. ... we construct our own sentences ... thereby reappropriating ourselves"¹⁸¹. History books, personal accounts, paintings, show the author/artist engaged in earlier forms of reenactment themselves.¹⁸² Even if reenactment implies the direct replication of an event, it always remains a projection of the reenactor/artist's own attitude to the past.

There is both a horizontal and vertical dimension to Deller's work. It is horizontal in the passage of time, and vertical in the layers of memory and mediation. The sources used by

¹⁷⁶ Harry Liebersohn, "Reliving an age of heroes with Patrick O'Brian", *Rethinking History* 11, nr. 3, (2007), 447.

¹⁷⁷ Domenico Quaranta, "Re:akt! Things that Happen Twice", (2009), http://milano.academia.edu/DomenicoQuaranta/Papers/256195/RE_Akt_ (visited 21.02.2012).

¹⁷⁸ Lütticken, "An Arena in Which to Reenact", 39.

¹⁷⁹ Cook, "The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History", 490.

¹⁸⁰ Sayre, "The Object of Performance. Aesthetics in the seventies", 195.

¹⁸¹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, 2nd ed. (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002) danm.ucsc.edu/~dustin/library/Bourriaud-Postproduction.pdf, 18. (visited 01.03.2012).

¹⁸² Agnew, "Introduction: What is Reenactment?", 332.

Deller in his reenactment of the Battle of Orgreave were in themselves mediated, a form of reenactment themselves. Deller's reenactment was based on interviews, written accounts by ex-miners, and his own experience of the historical event of 1984. In studying the vertical dimension of the reenactment, I will adopt Mieke Bal's version of narratology.

3.9 Levels of a Narrative: Fabula, Story, and Image/Text

Mieke Bal distinguishes three levels in a narrative: fabula, story, and text. The material of a fabula consists of events ("the transition from one state to another"), actors ("agents that perform actions"), time and location.¹⁸³ A fabula is a "... series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors"¹⁸⁴. A story is the ordering of the elements of the fabula into a certain sequence and from a certain angle, and the arrangement of the elements "... in relation to one another is such that they can produce the effect desired, be this convincing, moving, disgusting, or aesthetic"¹⁸⁵. Through focalization, the fabula is thus 'colored' with subjectivity.¹⁸⁶ A narrative text is a story that is conveyed to recipients through a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, etc.¹⁸⁷ There can be many narrative texts and images of the same story as people all perceive and remember differently. Additionally, "[i]n narrative visual images and in film, motivation also plays a part. Attempts to make paintings fit the expectations of what the object should look like indicate a concern for descriptive plausibility"¹⁸⁸.

The fabula is the various elements from history, the events of leading up to and during the Battle of Orgreave, Margaret Thatcher's economic changes, the miners' uproar, and the miners' wives mobilization. Together with ex-miners and reenactors, Jeremy Deller then orders the elements of the fabula into a story. It is shown from an angle that is favorable to the ex-miners. The story, in turn, is presented as narrative accounts in Deller's book *The English Civil War Part II*, a reenactment, and a film by Mike Figgis. There is a sequence in the event and in the reenactment, but Mike Figgis's film shows the layering of memories. Figgis used both embedded "texts" in the form of accounts and retroversion (flashbacks), freezing the time of the reenactment and breaking up the chronology of the reenactment. There are several embedded narrative layers in Mike Figgis's film, however, the primary layer is the Battle of

¹⁸³ Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 6 and 8.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

Orgreave reenactment. Other descriptive/narrative accounts are embedded, along with how the reenactment took shape. They all explain or resemble the same story and are important for the overall narrative.

In Deller's work the actors of the fabula are also featured as focalizers, characters, and narrators. The miners and Deller aspire towards an aim. They tell the viewer/reader what had "actually" happened. The reenactment visually "tells" what happened, as one thought perhaps BBC visually told what had happened. Two opposed reactions to a similar visual event. The ex-miners, together with Deller and the reenactors, form a description and portrayal of the original miners and police. And these characters may be 'colored' by the reenactors' point of view, and may be stereotypical.¹⁸⁹ The same applies to BBC's journalistic portrayal. The build-up of the character also depends on the reader/viewer and whether it fits with one's pre-assumptions. Furthermore, some parts of the fabula are given little attention in the story. Here time is skipped. Thatcher, who played an important role in the fabula as an opponent, is not included as a character in Deller's reenactment. Consequently, the fabula is longer than the story-time in the reenactment.¹⁹⁰

With different versions of the event, the end result may end up completely different from its original. In ordering the chaotic events of the past, there may be alterations in the chronology. According to Bal, the translation from the elements in a story into images is not a one-to-one transposition, but a visual working-through of the important aspects of a story.¹⁹¹

3.10 Conclusion: An Epilogue to the Experience/An Epilogue to the Artwork

Deller's reenactment has become part of the original event's own history, "... an epilogue to the experience"¹⁹². It does not restore history but rather replaces the original past, the past that had been portrayed falsely by mass media, with the desire that the Battle of Orgreave "... become[s] part of the lineage of decisive battles in English History"¹⁹³. Captured by film director Mike Figgis and photographer Martin Jenkinson, the reenactment becomes not only a reproduction of the past by presenting new images of the past, but also a reproduction of itself - it is a reproduction of the reenactment.

¹⁸⁹ Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 121.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 99 – 100.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁹² Adam E. Mendelsohn, "Be Here Now", *Art Monthly* 300, (October 2006), 13.

¹⁹³ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

Staged in the present, historical events can be felt and experienced through a reenactment, rather than simply understood. “The goal, then, is not merely to create an annual “live” event but an event that is alive for the people currently living in the town.”¹⁹⁴ Historical reenactments are performed annually, and this ritualistic aspect keeps the event alive. In this way, the live presence of the reenactment is connected to the living past of the event. Jeremy Deller’s reenactment was, however, performed only once. It is Figgis’s film that is shown when Deller’s reenactment is exhibited in the museum, resulting in a flat, screen-based representation as the destiny of Deller’s reenactment.¹⁹⁵ Once placed within its context in Orgreave, the reenactment is now isolated and placed out of its context, and reduced to a museum object in the museum. The reenactment becomes itself a historical event/object. It is a part of the archive and a part of the past, stored on a DVD.

¹⁹⁴ Taylor, “Performance and/as History”, 80.

¹⁹⁵ Lütticken, “An Arena in Which to Reenact”, 51.

4 Analysis of *The Battle of Orgreave*

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters of this thesis, I have discussed how Jeremy Deller appropriates ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices in his Orgreave project. As already mentioned, Deller's project was not only a live reenactment but a film, *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), by Mike Figgis, a published book, *The English Civil War Part II: Personal Accounts of the 1984–85 Miners' Strike* (2002), as well as an archive, *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)* (2004), both by Deller. In this chapter, I will further study the presentation of Jeremy Deller's Orgreave project in the museum space. The project consisted of a film and an archive. Within the archive, Deller incorporated his book. I will further analyze how ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices are employed in the different formats and how the Battle of Orgreave is communicated to the viewer.

4.2 Reenactment and Ethnography in Mike Figgis's Film

Documentary film is the Siamese twin of reenactment, according to Steven Ruston.¹⁹⁶ One year after Jeremy Deller's reenactment on June 17th, 2001, Mike Figgis's film aired on UK's Channel 4. As mentioned previously, Figgis's film can be viewed as both a documentary about the 1984 Battle of Orgreave and a documentary about the 2001 reenactment. The fusion of these forms of documentation fuses the past, as a historical record, and the present, as a reenactment-in-the-making.

In this section I will look at how the documentary presents the 1984 Battle of Orgreave, with focus on reenactment and ethnographic practices. What happens when the camera is introduced? Is Mike Figgis's film a form of political activism, or an ethnographic analysis in order to teach the viewer about the 1984 Battle of Orgreave? Firstly, I will analyze the technical components of the film. I will also highlight the first and last scenes in the film.

¹⁹⁶ Rushton, "Playing Dead", in, *Experience, Memory, Re-enactment*, edited by A. Bangma, S. Rushton, and F. Wüst, 93.

4.2.1 The Technical Components

The 63:09 minute-long film guides the viewer through the reenactment procedure, beginning with an introduction meeting held by reenactment expert Howard Giles and ending with the reenactment event itself. The film is visually busy and breaks into 200 scenes¹⁹⁷, including a high frequency of photographic flashbacks to the original battle interspersed with live action documentation of the reenacted battle.

The film has thirty-seven photographic flashbacks to the original 1984 battle. The photographs function, for the most part, as an addition to what being said. All, except for three, are in black-and-white with green borders. The color of the photographs seems arbitrary. Nineteen of the photographs are introduced with a camera shutter sound, as a means of placing emphasis on these images and to single out elements from the live action of the original battle. Two of the photographs are shown so quickly that one must stop the film in order to see them properly. These photographs are integrated into and correlate with the live action footage of the reenactment. For instance, a 1984 photograph of a miner lying on the hood of a car and being hit by policeman intersects the live 2001 reenactment of the same scene. These two photographs, thus, reflect the visual basis of the reenactment.

There are ten segments with live action documentation of the reenacted battle, specified by the caption "Re-enactment" written in red letters on the screen. Unlike the photographic flashbacks to the original event, the live footage does not correlate with what is being said in the film. They function more as a foreshadowing to the reenactment event to come. The live footage can also be a means of maintaining the attention of the viewer through action. The reenactment footage contains extensive movement within the shots; yet, the action never fully builds up. There is no dramatic feeling when the horses and the police are charging. They are not filmed coming directly at us, an effect the Lumière Brothers used in their films. In their films, the audience experienced crowds of people or trains coming directly at them. Martin Jenkinson, on the other hand, employed this strategy when photographing the reenactment.

Nine of the live action footages are in color, while one is in black-and-white with a green border around it. The black-and-white reenactment footage is itself a form of reenactment, although here at the level of mediation: it repeats the sequence of editing of the BBC footage from 1984, showing miners throwing stones followed by mounted police charging. Why the original footage was not shown instead of the reenactment may be a self-

¹⁹⁷ The basis for the count of 200 sequences is the number of times the film changes location (including the flashbacks and reenactment footage).

reflexive move on the part of the filmmaker, who is not just “documenting”, but also reenacting a media event through a repetition of the media’s own means and strategies. Segments from the reenactment rehearsal also appear occasionally, but are not marked with the caption “Re-enactment”.

The Battle of Orgreave, with its rather straightforward documentary format, contrasts with Mike Figgis’s early and highly experimental film *Timecode* (2000). *Timecode* consists of four continuous 90-minute takes, divided into four panels. The viewer can choose which panel he/she wishes to focus on, but the sound directs the viewer’s attention nevertheless. Yet, similar to Figgis’s film *Timecode*, *The Battle of Orgreave* reflects several narratives at the same time and it is up to the viewer to undertake the final editing. Moreover, similar to his films *Hotel* and *Timecode*, Mike Figgis employs shifting hand-held camera views in *The Battle of Orgreave*, varying from close-ups, off-frame, frog’s view, and bird’s view. These shifts happen continuously and do not seem to contain any specific pattern. The camera views also shift perspective, filming from both the miners’ and police’s perspective. It is perhaps a self-reflexive move as a critique of the way mass media only filmed the police’s point of view during the 1984 battle.

While there are shifting camera angles during the reenactment, all the witness account segments are delivered from a static position in a room. The composition of this basic shot rarely changes throughout the speaking, although there are cutaways to illustrative material and close-ups of the interviewees. These accounts are reminiscent of witness testimonies given at trials. Figgis is “... putting the past into the witness box to tell its story of what happened while we, the readers or viewers, attend, noting the point of view or line of argument ... as we arrive at a judgment”¹⁹⁸.

The mood of the film is a mix of bitter memories and laughter. It seems rather odd that Mike Figgis includes scenes of veteran miners making fun of a reenactor, whom they call Spartacus. This may just be a scene for the cameras; however, the issue that arises here, in my opinion, is that it can be associated with a scene from the reenactment where a miner polishes a policeman’s boot and places a NUM sticker on his helmet and thereby mocking the police. Yet, this connection may be in order to emphasize the perspective that the miners had come to Orgreave peacefully with a laidback mentality, and not with the intention of violence. The perspective is unclear. Furthermore, a reenactor is recorded saying, in a worried tone, that

¹⁹⁸ Adaptation of Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 70.

there are some scary stories coming to light about the reenactment, where some miners do not know when enough is enough.

The soundtrack of Mike Figgis's film consists of a mixture of dialogue, sounds heard at the reenactment such as shouting, chanting by the miners, banging of police shields, helicopters, rock being thrown, and both live and recorded music. The music is a mix of brass band music, which was played on the 1984 picket line and at the 2001 reenactment event, and music composed by Mike Figgis and his son, composer Arlen Figgis. The rhythm of the music incorporates the rhythm created by the banging of police shields and the galloping horse, and thereby, reinforces the actions taking place in the reenactment. Mike Figgis is also a composer and often bases movement and rhythm of his film on his compositions.

4.2.2 The Opening Scenes

The film opens with a short series of footage from the reenactment. On the fields of Orgreave, June 17th, 2001, one sees crowds of picketers kicking and hurling themselves at police shields that are protecting the police. The picketers appear violent and the cameraman, who is filming amidst the clashes, is dodging the missiles as they are being thrown. Jeremy Deller is quoted saying that he remembers these iconic moments of riot, which immediately evokes the presentation of the Battle of Orgreave as a riot by the Conservative newspapers of 1984 and by Margaret Thatcher. Deller refers to the use of mounted police in the original battle, yet Mike Figgis does not provide the viewer with any visual illustration of these charges. At this point the viewer is unaware of the extent to which horse charges had been employed by the police and how it affected the battle.

According to Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield at the time of the original battle, the BBC reversed the sequence of events of the Battle of Orgreave, shown on their 1984 news broadcast. The BBC portrayed the picket as a riot where “[t]he police didn’t give any ground and on the front line they handed out as much physical punishment as they received. *Eventually* the senior officer ordered in the mounted police”¹⁹⁹. It showed many miners throwing bottles and bricks first and thereafter the mounted police charging in retaliation. In actual fact it had been the other way around. In 1991, BBC published a letter of apology stating,

¹⁹⁹ Guy Cumberbatch et al., *Television and the Miner’s Strike*, (Broadcasting research Unit, 1986), 72 – 73. Italics added.

The BBC acknowledged some years ago that it made a mistake over the sequence of events at Orgreave. We accept without question that it was serious, but emphasized that it was a mistake made in the haste of putting the news together. The end result was that the editor inadvertently reversed the occurrence of the actions of the police and the pickets.²⁰⁰

Jeremy Deller's aim with his project was to recapture the Battle of Orgreave as it really occurred, where the miners had not come to Orgreave that day to riot but to protest against losing their jobs. These perspectives are also to be found in Mike Figgis's film, but in the beginning of the film it is uncertain which side the film will take. Why Mike Figgis edits the first scenes in this sequence is difficult to understand. However, the equation of the filmmaker's eye with the lens of the camera can be a critical analysis of the TV crew during the original event, depicting the control the cameraman has in shaping one's perception of reality by means of editing and visual perspectives. Whether this is Mike Figgis's intention is uncertain, however, the opening scenes can result in the viewer reflecting on the images presented by mass media.

4.2.3 Final Scene

The narrative of the reenactment ends with images of miners lying injured on the ground. They had been defeated. Yet, despite this defeat, a girl is seen singing "The Miners United will Never be Defeated". This is extremely nostalgic, perhaps even an attempt to celebrate the community of the miners, despite the undeniable losses that this community endured as a result of the strike. The songs, such as this one, create togetherness for the miners. By participating in both the film and the reenactment, the veteran miners experienced yet again the strong sense of collective identity, as they had done in the 1984. Even though the union has since lost its power, its cultural and historical memory lives on.

4.2.4 A Movement Towards Direct Observational Filming

Before the introduction of lightweight filming equipment, "documentary" footage from current events was obtained by employing professional actors to reconstruct the event within the space of the production studio.²⁰¹ Similarly, the reenactment format was used in Jeremy Deller's project and subsequently Mike Figgis's film to visualize a past event for the viewer. This was necessary since neither of them was present in Orgreave in 1984, and the use of a reenactment allowed them to recapture the event. Yet, in Mike Figgis's film, the use of the

²⁰⁰ Figgis, *A Mike Figgis film of Jeremy Deller's The Battle of Orgreave*.

²⁰¹ John Corner, *The art of record. A critical introduction to documentary*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 31.

reenactment format can be viewed not only as a tool for visualizing the past but also as the main subject of the film. The whole film leads up to the reenactment event on June 17th 2001, from the introduction meeting held in Barnsley, the bus ride to the reenactment site, rehearsals and finally the reenactment. Thus, the reenactment is employed in two distinct ways, the first is to fill in the gaps of the past and the second is to present an ongoing event. The witnesses of the original event become actors in the reenactment, while Jeremy Deller and the spectators of the reenactment, together with the reenactors, become actors in the film, resulting in a double staging of the reenactment within the film. This results in constant uncertainty about what was being staged and what was filmed spontaneously.

When the hand-held camera was introduced to the British market in the 1960s, filmmakers could capture an event as it was happening in front of them rather than having to recreate it later. The filmmaker became a direct observer. According to film theorist Bill Nichols, “Observational documentary de-emphasizes persuasion to give us a sense of what it was like to *be* in a given situation”²⁰². The concept of the filmmaker being a “fly-on-the-wall” has also been referred to as *cinéma vérité*. For example in 1968 Granada Television aired its *World in Action* program “The Demonstration”²⁰³, edited by Dai Vaughan. It showed direct footage from an Anti-Vietnam demonstration in Grosvenor Square London, outside the US Embassy, on March 16th, 1968. The protest began peacefully but violence eventually erupted between the police and the protestors. The footage from the confrontation is about 10-minutes long without sound. The sequence combined 1) camera shots placing the viewer within the crowd, 2) mid-range camera shots portraying specific incidents (scuffles, arrests, the throwing of smoke-bombs) and 3) long-range camera shots taken from the top of adjacent buildings. Thus, there is a movement between micro views of the event to macro views of the scale of the event. The segment also includes the build-up of the event and its aftermath. Although Figgis film is not filmed amidst the miners and police during the original 1984 battle, the observational rawness of the *World in Action* footage can all be related to Figgis’s film when analyzing his segments from the reenactment. The camera shots vary in a similar way. Some of the hand-held camera work is shaky and demonstrates the difficulty of the cameramen trying to follow or anticipate the live action, where the moves are not rehearsed in detail. It reflects the chaos of the real battle and how it may have been for the TV crews that day. The audience is given the sense of being located amidst the reenactors and ex-miners as they clash, or hiding behind police shield as rocks are being thrown. At one point, the viewer sees

²⁰² Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 116.

²⁰³ Corner, *The art of record*, 45.

the arm of the cameraman stretched out across the camera frame in order to protect himself from the horse in front. In addition, mid-range and long-range camera shots are employed to both allow the viewer to see specific arrests and the scale of the event. Shots are also filmed from within houses in the town to give the impression of how it was to witness the event in 1984.

Although *cinéma vérité* is supposed to be a direct portrayal of an event, one does not know to what extent behavior has been modified due to the presence of cameras and of editing.²⁰⁴ As I wrote in chapter two of this thesis, Mike Figgis's film is "... a deliberate collage of individual micro-moments that add up to a picture of the effects of the conflict"²⁰⁵. However, one does not know to what extent the accounts and reenactment in Figgis's film are modified by the miners themselves or by Figgis. As Ken Wyatt, an ambulance driver during the original Battle of Orgreave, says to the participants of the reenactment: "Let's put on a good show for those who experienced the original event and for the cameras". One cannot even be sure whether the footage from the reenactment is a direct recording, or if it is directed. Nevertheless, similar to traditional documentaries, Mike Figgis's film is a mix of mass media images, *vérité* footage from the reenactment, and interviews.

4.2.5 The Ethnographic Participant-Observer Model

Instead of merely observing the event, Mike Figgis participates in the situation that he is filming. Figgis includes directly solicited information, reflection and commentary given by witnesses of the original battle, and thus, fits into the same ethnographer participant-observer model this thesis has applied to Deller's practice. Similar to British documentary filmmaker Paul Rotha's criteria for documentary film, Mike Figgis's film portrays "... the voice of the people speaking from the homes and the factories and fields of the people"²⁰⁶.

There are two fundamentally different notions about collaborative relationships between the filmmaker and the subjects represented in documentary film, according to anthropologist Jay Ruby.²⁰⁷ These two notions are to be found in the works by filmmakers Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty. Vertov viewed the filmmaker as the dominant figure, presenting the point-of-view of the filmmaker rather than the represented other, while

²⁰⁴ Corner, *The art of record*, 45 – 46.

²⁰⁵ Schneider and Wright, "Between Art and Anthropology", 19.

²⁰⁶ Paul Rotha, "Some Principles of Documentary (1935)" in D. Petrie and R. Kruger (eds.), *A Paul Rotha Reader*, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 156.

²⁰⁷ Jay Ruby, "Speaking For, Speaking About, Speaking With, or Speaking Alongside: An Anthropological and Documentary Dilemma", *Journal of film and Video* 44, n. 1/2, International Issues (Spring and Summer 1992), 43 – 44.

Flaherty viewed the filmmaker as the collaborate figure, working together with the represented other to present their point-of-view. Flaherty's opinion is closer to that of the ethnographic approach highlighted in chapter two of this thesis. Is Mike Figgis film made in collaboration with the miners?

It was Artangel who funded the film and hired Figgis. Deller organized the project together with producer Michael Morris and Howard Giles and similar to the ethnographer, Deller spent a long period researching and interviewing the miners. Deller appears in the film, amidst the crowd of miners during the rehearsals and in dialogue with the miners, and does not seem to hold any power over the miners. The viewer sees the miners actively participating in the reenactment/film. Through the use of on-camera interviews, the miners have been given the authority to represent themselves and tell their own stories about the original Battle of Orgreave. As Deller says in the film, "It's going to take more than an art project to heal wounds. ... [This is] about confronting something and not being afraid to look at it again and discuss it." The testimonies reveal that memory amongst the veteran miners and police is contradictory, such as the opinion that the police had employed men from the army.

The viewer is, however, not privy to who is interviewing and the questions asked.²⁰⁸ Moreover, through editing, Mike Figgis creates dialogue between the different accounts, which are often dramatized through footage from the reenactment and photographs from the original 1984 battle. Again, there is an uncertainty whether the interviews are used to illustrate the photographic and reenactment flashbacks, or if the images are used to supplement the interviews. All the elements become information which the viewer has to interpret.

Even though the interviewees for the most part do not look directly into the camera, the viewer has the feeling of being present in the room, not communicating but listening to the conversation, through the immediacy of observation by the cameraman. The feeling of participation is stronger when miners are interviewed during the reenactment. The viewer becomes a participant-observer located within the space of dialogue between two or more miners engaged in conversation.²⁰⁹ Unlike the veteran accounts given in the private homes, these conversations appear to be spontaneous. The interviews often show anger towards Margaret Thatcher or pain for having lost their livelihood.

²⁰⁸ Except for two instances during the rehearsal of the reenactment. A man, who is probably Mike Figgis, asks Howard Giles and Jeremy Deller questions off-screen.

²⁰⁹ Here I am moving closer to Kester's theory of dialogical art and away from my theory that Deller's work is not dialogical in the exhibition space. Yet, the "participant-observer" role of the viewer in the film does not result in a direct communication between the participants and the viewer, but it is a film technique of reducing the space between the participants and the viewers.

The film is the product of many individuals working together, represented in the credits. In this case, it literally, took a village to make a film. Curiously though, Arthur Scargill, the leader of the NUM, is hardly mentioned in the film, nor is the reenactor playing him. Without Scargill there would not have been a mass picket at Orgreave. Yet, Deller experienced that newspapers, such as the *Daily Express* and *The Star*, restaged the arrest of Scargill for their articles. This arrest did not happen in the original event on June 18th 1984, or in the reenactment on June 17th 2001. It is ironic that the journalist who covered the 2001 event for the *Daily Express* was also the one who produced the biased account of the original 1984 event. With the Conservative newspaper's reenactment of Deller's reenactment, it becomes apparent the importance for the newspaper to portray the defeat of Scargill, regardless of whether it occurred or not.

Mike Figgis's film displays support for the local police by the mining community. "Our coppers were aright, it were the Met", one miner says in the film. Yet, it is interesting to note that even though the local police may not have been violent, they contributed to the negative portrayal of the miners, as revealed in a BBC documentary on October 22nd, 2012. According to the BBC documentary *Inside Out*, senior South Yorkshire police officers altered the witness statements of their junior officers with the aim of convicting the miners of riot. Police Constable Steven Hill stated during the trial that many of his statements had been narrated for him. The BBC documentary revealed that thirty-one officers from four different forces had signed statements containing the same exact phrase: "As we stood there in the line, a continuous stream of missiles came from the pickets into the police line. There were no shields being used at this point"²¹⁰.

While ethnographers strive for an objective portrayal of cultures, filmmakers and artists are not bound by the same ethical codes. In this respect, it is vital to acknowledge that, even though Figgis gives the impression of meaning being created through the dialogue of the miners and other participants in the reenactment, the accounts are filtered through Figgis and from his perspective. Like the artist-ethnographer, the filmmaker-ethnographer can manipulate the perception of different cultures. A consequence of this, as with the artist-ethnographer paradigm, is that the film can reflect the film director's ideologies. Documentary film, like mass media, is also rhetorically persuasive as it can shape public perception.

²¹⁰ Toby Foster, "Inside Out", *BBC*, (October 22nd, 2012). (Seen on television 22.10.2012).

The participatory involvement of the veterans in the film is not merely an aesthetic portrait of a mining community and a revival of memory but an activist attempt by Deller and Figgis to engage the audience in social and political awareness and to transform one's view of demonstrators. Currently in Britain, according to Deller, one is seen as a rioter when one demonstrates. In 1984-85, when the miners turned up on the picket lines, they were automatically seen as rioters, and the media and Government labeled them as such. Yet, the miners, like anyone else, have the right to protest, Deller states in Mike Figgis's film. Later on in the film, Deller shows little faith in the government if a similar type of demonstration should arise again, and according to a veteran miner, it will. Although the miners now have other professions, there is still a large working-class, the miner states. The film is thus not only a reflection of a community and a past event, but of a social and political issue of the present.

4.2.6 The Voice of Persuasion

Bill Nichols states that there are two forms of arguments in a documentary²¹¹: 1) A perspective, which is an argument implied through "... selection and arrangement of evidence", and 2) A commentary, which is an argument stated "... by the filmmaker or social actor recruited to the film". In Figgis's film, a perspective argumentation is formed through collective memory of the miners who had picketed in Orgreave in 1984. Yet Figgis himself does not offer any commentary, nor does he employ a narrator in the film. The reason for this may be in order to avoid a position of dominance and to give the viewer the impression that those who experienced the original battle are narrating the film. Figgis's perspective is presented through the editing.

Linking back to John L. Austin's "illocutionary" speech act (the immediate act *in* saying something, which has a certain (conventional) force), and "perlocutionary" speech act (performance of an act *by* saying something, which has a certain effect on others, such as convincing or persuading someone else)²¹², presented in chapter three of this thesis, Margaret Thatcher used the power of speech to persuade the audience that the miners were the enemies within. As illustrated by the Oscar winning film *Iron Lady*, Laurence Olivier had arranged for Thatcher to receive lessons from a speech pathologist at the Royal National Theatre to achieve a lower pitched, and authoritative tone. In Mike Figgis's film, he incorporates

²¹¹ Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 126.

²¹² Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109, 121, 95.

segments from television and radio stations where Thatcher defines the actions of the miners as violent and as acts of intimidation. These segments are what the public heard in their homes in 1984. Her authoritative “official talk” in Figgis’s film of 2002 is in contrast to the miners’ “everyday talk”. They speak in their local dialect, which is at times difficult to understand. Thatcher has a cooler and more controlled form of communication while the miners have uncontrolled and emotional speech. At one point during the film, a miner faces the camera and says, “If you are watching this Mrs. Thatcher, thank you for the future of my children”, followed by another miner, “If you are watching this Mrs. Thatcher, drop dead.” This is the only direct address in the film, and the most powerful. The viewer is in the position of Margaret Thatcher, yet instead of Thatcher receiving this address, the viewer is. Is the viewer perhaps at fault for believing in the mass media’s portrayal of the miners and thus siding with Thatcher? Is the viewer also the villain of this story? It was the British population who led the Tory Government into a second term.

As Thatcher may have persuaded the viewer in 1984, Figgis’s emotional accounts of the miners and their family members may persuade the viewer to see the opposite. Following Aristotle’s rhetoric of the “art of moving souls”, the accounts in Figgis’s film become more and more emotional. For instance, ex-policeman and ex-miner Mac McLoughlin states in the film, “One of the reasons I joined the police was that I wanted to do something for the community I came from. Thanks to Margaret, I did. [pause] I helped to destroy it”. In my opinion, the rhetorical effect of the interviews is to reinforce sentimental identification with the miners, who had fought to protect their livelihood. The viewer feels pity for the miners, as victims of the power of the police and of the government. Mike Figgis’s reference to Thatcher’s statement about the miners as the enemy within and the reference to the editing of BBC’s newsreel engage the viewer actively in considering the paradoxes of the mass media, political institutions and oneself.

4.2.7 Viewing Space

Mike Figgis’s film is exhibited to audiences removed both in place and time from the context of its production. The film is no longer located on the fields of Orgreave, but in the gallery space. As displayed at WIELS, the film is shown in loop in an inner room of Deller’s Orgreave Archive. For the most part, especially at group exhibitions, Mike Figgis’s film represents Deller’s project on its own, without the adjoining archive. This is perhaps problematic because it is presented as Jeremy Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*, while it

actually is Mike Figgis's version. Moreover, viewing the film in the gallery space, one would perhaps only see a segment of the film, rather than the whole 63 minutes, and thus not gain a complete understanding of the 1984 battle or Deller's 2001 project.

The film was also shown on British national television and can now be viewed in the comfort of one's own home. This results in different perceptions of Mike Figgis's film. On Channel Four it might have been viewed in relation to other news coverage or TV documentaries, in the museum it might be viewed as artwork-in-the-making or documentation of a performance, and on DVD it might be viewed as a fusion of these two perspectives. Having read history books on the Battle of Orgreave, visited the area, and having seen the film countless times, I view the film differently than a general audience might. To use the words of Lina Khatib, professor in media arts, the "... film both frames and is being shaped by social experience"²¹³.

Authors Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl²¹⁴ write in their book *The Greenroom* that the use of the documentary format in art, like the reenactment format, aims to reflect the impact of the past or current political and economic upheaval. Figgis's film mirrors the past injustice to the miners during the Battle of Orgreave, at the same time as it reflects on current politics and the judicial idea that "everyone has the right to protest" in order to reframe public attitudes concerning demonstrations and demonstrators.

However, in my perspective, the film is not purely a product of activism, nor is it purely an ethnographic study. It provides new insight into the original battle and the collective memory of the miners, aspects the 1984 mass media did not show. The film weaves together social and political reality and the memory of the past. As with an ethnographical artwork, the documentary film can alter the reality that it's set out to represent. Whether it does so or not, it nevertheless underscores the complexity of memory and complete knowledge about a historic event. It enriches one's understanding of the complexities of representing political demonstrations and the emotions of having to fight for one's own livelihood.

²¹³ Lina Khatib, "Documentary, History and Reality: Reflections on Jean Chamoun's Tal al-Zaatar", in *Truth or Dare: Art & Documentary*, edited by G. Pearce and C. McLaughlin, (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007), 50.

²¹⁴ Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl, "Introduction. Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art." in *The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art #1*, edited by M. Lind and H. Steyerl, (Berlin: Sternberg Press and New York: Center for Curatorial Studies and Hessel Museum of Art, 2008), 11 – 26.

4.3 Jeremy Deller's Book: A Collection of Living Cultural Memory

While Deller's reenactment recreated half the day of June 18th, 1984, Figgis's film included the entire 2001 reenactment, including rehearsals and prior interviews. Deller's book, *The English Civil War Part II*, on the other hand, addresses the whole miners' strike of 1984 – 85. Although Deller's book is part of Deller's Orgreave Archive, I will study the book separately. Similar to Figgis's film, the book can be purchased separately, and be read in the comfort of one's own home.

Jeremy Deller's book *The English Civil War Part II* presents itself as a collection of personal accounts. In book form, it communicates both an aesthetic and informational portrayal of the 1984 battle and 2001 reenactment. It contains both verbal and written witness accounts and pages from the diary of a miner, juxtaposed by images from the 2001 reenactment and the 1984 – 85 miners' strike, newspaper clippings, and copies of official documents. Many of the photographs in the book were used in Figgis's film. In the book, one meets many of the same witnesses as those in the film, such as ex-miner and historian David Douglass, miner's wife Stephanie Gregory, and ex-policeman and ex-miner Mac McLoughlin. David Douglass' interview with Jeremy Deller, published in the book, is to a large extent similar to Douglass' account in Mike Figgis's film. In the book, one is privy to who asked the questions and which questions were asked. Douglass does, however, supplement the text when speaking in the film, and the sequence of the editing is not true to the sequence of the interview portrayed in the book.

The book assists the viewer in obtaining greater knowledge about the impact of the strike. It is easily understandable that the strike impacted the community economically and that the pit community changed completely with the closing of the pit, but one needs more information than what is presented in Figgis's film to understand how the strike affected the community itself. In this section, I will study how Deller's book communicates the UK Miners' Strike to the viewer/reader.

4.3.1 Collective Identities/Individual Living Memory

In comparison to traditional history books, Deller's book is not presented as a conclusive history book, nor is it a conclusive ethnographic study. It is rather a publication of the ethnographic research undertaken leading up to the reenactment, and documentation of the reenactment in the form of photographs. Here, the various accounts do not function as

presentations of the reenactment, but exist in dialogue with it. Through the accounts in the book, one reflects on how the media represented collective identities. During the strike, the miners were presented as a collective group, as the enemy, without being portrayed as individuals. In the same way, the film weaves together the various accounts into one collective memory of the event. Even though the book is also a collection of various accounts, it presents living voice of the individual on the CD and living memory of the individual in the book.

4.3.2 The Impact Within a Community

The book also reveals the dynamics within the community. What is interesting is that although the strike led to a strong sense of community, which one witnesses through the folk songs and group photographs in the book, there was also bitterness within the community. It was not just a conflict on a political level, between the NUM and the Tory Government; it became a battle within the mining community, between the striking miners and the scabs (the miners who choose to continue to work), between the striking miners and the police from the same community, and between the striking miners and their wives.

A text by miner Johnny Wood about the importance of picketing is supplemented with a photograph that clearly indicates the hatred the striking miners had for the scabs. One sees a house on which someone has spray painted the text “A Scabs House” on the window and “Scab” and Swastika on the door.²¹⁵ This bitterness towards the scabs is also visible in Figgis’s film. According to a journalist for *The Observer* during the strike, Jonathan Foster, one impression that endures from the strike is that “[t]he individual is weak and vulnerable, and the individual who casts himself adrift can expect no mercy”²¹⁶. The referenced individuals were the miners who did not strike or who had returned to work. They were excluded from the society in which they lived. They were laughed at, beaten up, and ridiculed. Former miner Malcolm Bray’s diary juxtaposes Foster’s text. Above an article regarding a working miner who was beaten up for returning to work, Bray writes “The cretin (scab) begged for public sympathy and sold his self respect”²¹⁷. The logic behind the worker’s union was that they were to operate as a united front and those who chose not to fight were considered as rivals of the union. None of the 1984 scabs participated in Deller’s reenactment.

²¹⁵ Jeremy Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 76.

²¹⁶ Jonathan Foster, “Intimidation”, in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 106.

²¹⁷ Malcolm Bray in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 102.

Ambulance driver Ken Wyatt, who figures also in Figgis film, writes that the ambulances were stationed solely behind police ranks, which Wyatt believed could potentially ruin their neutral reputations.²¹⁸ Living in a mining community, Wyatt wanted to show support to the miners by joining them on the picket lines. Policeman Mac McLoughlin also viewed his role as a policeman during the strike as problematic. He had grown up in a mining family in a mining community and had to face some of his childhood friends on the picket lines. A vital point McLoughlin makes, in relation to times of war and unrest, is that the violence committed by the police (and the miners) has to be viewed in the context of the time. In his opinion, the police were merely pawns in Thatcher's political power struggle.²¹⁹ Much of McLoughlin's account is exactly what he states in the film. Yet, one does not know whether he was interviewed first and then wrote the account, whether his account functioned as a basis for the interview, or whether he was interviewed at all. His text is supplemented with a newspaper article stating that South Yorkshire Police Committee chairman, Councilor George Moores, had compared the police to "Nazi stormtroopers". The article is juxtaposed with a photograph of an injured policeman. Above and below the photograph, former miner Malcolm Bray has written "Justice to a Stormtrooper", and thus employing Moores' comparison.²²⁰ On the one hand, the juxtaposition of McLoughlin's text and Malcolm Bray's diary could be a way of comparing McLoughlin to a "Nazi stormtrooper". It does, however, contradict a statement in the film by a miner that the local police were "alright". On the other hand, the juxtaposition could be a way of supplementing McLoughlin's own reflection on the role of the police during the strike.

According to Stephanie Gregory, a miner's wife, many marriages broke up after the strike, including her own. She writes, "The strike was not only about [her] husband or the other striking miners, but also about [herself], and about so many other women"²²¹, an aspect which the film does not highlight. She became a member of the organizations Women's Support Group and Women Against Pit Closures and was politically and socially involved, speaking at local Trade Union meetings, organizing food supplies to the striking miners, raising money for the striking families, and speaking with the press. And this she did alongside her regular job as a teacher and taking care of the home. Her text reflects what the traditional working class values were at the time: "The man was the breadwinner and the

²¹⁸ Ken Wyatt, "Orgreave: on and off duty", in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 93.

²¹⁹ Mac McLoughlin, "A former policeman's testimony", in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 67.

²²⁰ Malcolm Bray in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 56.

²²¹ Stephanie Gregory, "The Women's movement", in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 33.

wife's place was at home"²²². Women's rights organizations during this period created tension in the family lives of the miners.

4.3.3 Documenting the Reenactment

Reenactment expert Howard Giles, also seen in Figgis's film, gives a detailed description of the three phases of the original Battle of Orgreave. Phase one was the clash on the fields of Orgreave, where police sent in mounted police after some rocks had been thrown. Phase two began after the mid-day break. The miners were driven back and into the town by short-shield advances and mounted police. During phase three, Clement launched limited charges, followed by miners throwing missiles. Clement finally ordered a general advance, driving the miners further into the village, and sent 20 mounted police down the road with batons drawn. This resulted in miners running away. Those who were caught were beaten. The description of the three phases is supplemented with black-and-white photographs and a map of Orgreave. The buildup of the 1984 battle described by Giles represented the script of the reenactment, which performed phases two and three. There is also a photograph of miners and police reenactors together checking the script.²²³ Included, there is a contact sheet of photographs taken by Martin Jenkinson during the 1984 battle.²²⁴ It shows the sequence of events up until what appears to be the mid-day break. It is not indicated why there are X's next to some of the photographs, but the photographs do show police attacking the miners.

According to Giles, "Accurately recounting The Battle of Orgreave is almost as difficult as reconstructing other, more ancient fights. Memories fade and 'veterans' have different perspectives on timings and the order in which things happened"²²⁵. This makes the reader aware of the complexities of employing subjective memory as the foundation for reconstructing the past. Juxtaposed to Giles' text is a formal witness account by Clement, where he states that shortly after Scargill arrived at 8am, the throwing of the missiles had increased to such an extent that Clement had to employ the long shield squad to protect the police. This is in contrast to Giles' account. Giles writes that only a few missiles had been thrown at 8am, and that Scargill did not arrive until after 9.25am. However, Giles had not been present in Orgreave that day.

²²² Gregory, "The Women's movement", 38.

²²³ Ibid., 30.

²²⁴ Ibid., 30 – 31.

²²⁵ Howard Giles, "The Battle of Orgreave from a tactical point of view", in Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 25.

The reenactment section of the book includes a series of photographs from the reenactment, taken by Martin Jenkinson. The twenty-three photographs capture the battle from the perspective of both sides and are arranged in the correct sequence of events, but the time between the shots vary. Some are seconds apart, while others are several minutes. The majority of the photographs are in color, except for the first two.

4.3.4 The Introduction and The Conclusion

In the introduction to his book, Deller writes that his primary mission was to find out what actually happened in Orgreave on June 18th, 1984. He "... wanted the reenactment of The Battle of Orgreave to become part of the lineage of decisive battles in English History"²²⁶. Deller writes that he did not want a nostalgic portrayal of the past, but the final scene in Figgis's film can be viewed as very nostalgic. Moreover, the book does not highlight to the same extent what I consider to be the vital point in Figgis's film – the legal idea that "everyone has the right to protest". The only direct reference to this view is in a hand-written response by Deller to a newspaper article printed in the book's credits section. According to an article by the *Daily Express*, the Battle of Orgreave witnessed "... the last cavalry charge in British history", to which Deller responds: the use of mounted charges has in fact been used since, for instance at the Poll Tax Riots in 1990.²²⁷

The book concludes with a drawing by a young boy.²²⁸ It depicts miners throwing stones and mounted police charging. I am not sure whether it is a drawing of the reenactment or an attempt to illustrate the past 1984 battle, or whether it by a local or a visitor of the reenactment event. Either way, similar to his work *Folk Archive*, Deller here incorporates an artifact from the location in which he is working.

²²⁶ Deller, *The English Civil War Part II*, 7.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 152-3.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

4.4 Defining Jeremy Deller's Archive

Art institutions usually use Figgis's film for displaying Deller's Orgreave project. However, the archival version of the project was included in his 2012-2013 retrospective exhibition (see illustrations 10 - 13). The archive is titled *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*. In this section I will describe how the archive was presented to the museum visitor and discuss it in relation to other archival displays.

4.4.1 Archive as an Artistic Format/Methodology

"Archives contain paperwork that no longer circulates in the bureaucracy, paperwork that has lapsed and become garbage"²²⁹, according to art and literary historian Sven Spieker. While this refers to a more traditional archive, which had a legal and administrative function, archives have over the course of time also become important sources for historical research. By the end of the nineteenth century, archives contained a hybrid of public administration and historical documents²³⁰, located in a physical place. With the advent of new media technologies, archives developed into containing not only written documents but also other media, such as films, photographs, and sound recordings. New technologies, such as the Internet, have also made it easier to access the archives and ultimately facilitated the ability to store archives online. With this facilitation, a general interest in the concept and principles of archives and archival practices has developed.

Since the 1960s, artists have been turning to archives to reassess past material and events and to integrate them into the present, in new contexts and locations. By examining or incorporating archival elements in their art, artists have the possibility to document and study history, develop new archives or conceptualize how cultural memory and historical knowledge is stored and retrieved. One example of an artist working with objects found in archives is Susan Hiller.²³¹ At the Freud Museum in 1994, Susan Hiller used archaeological collecting boxes to display personal mementos and artifacts. The use of these boxes is referential to both her previous profession as an anthropologist and to Freud's archaeology metaphor, where he compares the profession of the archaeologist with his profession of "working through" the layers of the unconscious. Susan Hiller is interested in objects as

²²⁹ Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: art from bureaucracy*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), ix.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, xii.

²³¹ Susan Hiller, "Working Through Objects", in *The Archive. Documents of Contemporary Art*, edited by C. Merewether, (London: Whitechapel and The MIT Press, 2006), 41 – 48.

mnemonic devices, and in her installation she works “through” these objects to locate their cultural meaning.²³²

Another example is The Atlas Group, an artist collective led by artist Walid Raad. The group’s works with sound, text and image-materials are based on mixing archival materials with materials from contemporary Lebanon and fictional materials produced by the members of the group. These works are exhibited in gallery spaces and published on the group’s website. Similarly, with his works *Folk Archive* and *The Orgreave Archive*, Deller collects and researches archival objects from contemporary England. Both works are presented in an installation and a book format. *Folk Archive* has also been made available online, allowing easy access for the viewer and the ability to immerse oneself in the work. Deller’s *Folk Archive* is no longer merely located in a physical location, but is “one click away” via the interface of one’s computer.²³³

4.4.2 Three References in Deller’s Archive

During the year 1996 and 1999, artist Renée Green²³⁴ created her installation *Partially Buried in Three Parts* (1996 – 1999). The first part weaves together the three historical references from 1970: Robert Smithson’s *Partially Buried Woodshed*, the Kent State shootings, and her own personal account from having grown up in Ohio during this time. The work does not provide any explicit political message but rather explores the process of reinterpreting the past and technologies of memory. In the same way as Green, Jeremy Deller’s archive contains three historical references: the Miners’ Strike of 1984-85, the development of reenactments in the UK, and a specific reenactment. Jeremy Deller’s archive is not a passive archive, nor is it a documentation/proof of a reenactment turned into a traditional aesthetic display. It reflects the process of the project; for instance, the various personal and factual research material concerning the original strike, elements used as props in the reenactment, and information on the process of the reenactment itself. The archive has a function beyond being a documentation of a performance event and thus reveals a self-reflexive dimension in Deller’s work.

²³² Charles Merewether, “Introduction: Art and the Archive”, in *The Archive. Documents of Contemporary Art*, edited by C. Merewether, 10.

²³³ See The British Council’s website/collection: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/folkarchive/folk.html>

²³⁴ Renée Green, “Survival: Ruminations on Archival Lacunae”, in *The Archive. Documents of Contemporary Art*, edited by C. Merewether, 49-50.

This section will analyze how these three references are represented in the archive. In order to do so, I will arrange its documents according to their original reference, whether it is to the historical event, the folk tradition, or the reenactment.

4.4.2.1 A Historic Event

Within the archive are two shelves containing books about the miner's strike of 1984-85 and a CD-player containing the oral testimonies of the miners (the same CD that accompanies Deller's book). With this material, the viewer is placed in either the position of a student, reading history books, or an ethnographer, in front of raw material in form of oral histories. Between the two shelves, there is a stencil painting of a miner being escorted by four riot police (see illustration 10). The image depicts the imbalance between the two sides of the original battle in terms of equipment. The miner is bare-chested, while the policemen are in full riot gear wearing helmets and carrying batons. The helmets cover the faces of the police so the viewer's attention is on the miner. He is injured but smiling, perhaps a reflection on the miner's pride of fighting for his job.

The two adjacent walls are covered with a timeline spanning the period from February 1979 to March 1985 (see illustration 11). The elements in the timeline create snapshots of the past resulting in the viewer having to fill in the blanks of the timeline. The majority of the dates are correct, but there are a couple of inconsistencies. The timeline lists Arthur Scargill as calling for a mass picket at Orgreave on June 7th. In fact Scargill had called for a mass picket at Orgreave already ten days prior, on May 27th.²³⁵ On June 7th, he called for more miners to join the picketers at Orgreave. Furthermore, the Battle of Orgreave is not clearly communicated to the viewer. It appears as if it only lasted one day, June 18th, but in fact it lasted for three weeks, beginning on March 28th and culminating on June 18th. Deller writes that June 18th was the 100th day of the strike, but it was in fact the 99th.

In addition to the timeline, Deller includes various memorabilia, such as a "Cole not Dole" sticker, a police shield, and a jeans jacket with pins from the different places a miner had picketed. The jeans jacket is juxtaposed with entries in the timeline: one stating that the miners were offered a £650 bonus for returning to work and another stating that those who kept on striking would lose £16 a week in benefits. As displayed by the many pins on the jacket, this miner kept on striking despite the incentives presented by the National Coal Board. Deller also incorporates newspaper articles, posters and photographs in the timeline. For instance, a

²³⁵ Isabel O'Keefe, "2,000 join picket", *The Star*, (Monday May 28th, 1984), 1.

poster aiming to increase the support of the union is juxtaposed with an entry in the timeline informing that on January 7th, 1985, 1,200 miners had return to work. Like Deller's book, the timeline includes elements made by the locals. One can see a framed photograph of a wall with "Scargill No. 1" spray-painted on it, placed high on the exhibition wall as a celebration of the NUM leader, Arthur Scargill. There is also a painting by a miner's son. Thereby, the timeline presents not only a factual presentation of the past but is mixed with personal effects and fictive imagery in the attempt to communicate and visualize the importance of the strike and its community.

The newspaper articles that Deller chose to include in the exhibition were national newspapers: *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror*. *The Times* supported the Conservative party at the time of the original battle and up until the 2001 election²³⁶; *The Guardian* was a Labour Party paper during the miners' strike; and tabloid newspapers *Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror* were Labour-supportive during the strike²³⁷ but became very hostile to the miners as the strike progressed. *The Times* and *Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror* are newspapers Deller in essence wanted to counter and exclude from his reenactment project. Yet, when included in the archive, the newspapers' articles continue to be read by the viewer. Furthermore, if the aim is to portray how certain newspapers chose a side, backing either the police or the miners, I consider there to be other articles that better portray the misrepresentation of the miners, such as *Daily Express*, *The Sun* and *The Economist*. On June 19th, 1984, *Daily Express* and *The Sun* published a column each illustrating the newspaper's opinion. According to the *Daily Express*, it is time to fight back against Scargill, the miners' strike, and their violence shown on TV. It emphasizes that the strike was costing the taxpayers, the general public, a lot of money.²³⁸ Under the heading "The Sun says No tears for Scargill."²³⁹ *The Sun* writes that it does not feel sorry for Scargill and "... salutes the police for their resolute behaviour during disgusting provocation by miners at Orgreave yesterday". *The Economist* writes on June 23rd, 1984, and under the heading "From picket to riot"²⁴⁰, "Arthur Scargill organized a riot, joined the front line, and got a bloody nose of his own". The text is juxtaposed with a photograph of Scargill being helped by two ambulance men, with the rather patronizing caption: "Poor old Arthur". While

²³⁶ BBC, "The politics of UK newspapers", (Wednesday, 30 September 2009). http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/8282189.stm (visited 12.12.2012).

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ *The Guardian*, "History of the Guardian", <http://www.guardian.co.uk/gnm-archive/2002/jun/06/1?intcmp=239> (visited 10.12.2012).

²³⁹ *The Sun*, "The Sun says No tears for Scargill", (Tuesday June 19th, 1984), 6.

²⁴⁰ *The Economist*, "From picket to riot", (Saturday, June 23rd. 1984), 25.

the newspapers included in Deller's timeline weigh the different perspectives of what happened to Arthur Scargill – whether he was hit by a police shield or whether he tripped and fell - *The Economist* leans clearly towards the “serves-him-right” opinion. Furthermore, *The Economist* views the police as having done well in their dealing with the situation. Policemen are humans, the articles states, who under the circumstance let themselves be provoked. I consider these articles to illustrate the media's backing of the Tory Government more clearly.

On the last wall there is a map showing the location of the different cooking plants in the UK, similar to those found in history books (see illustration 13). Two of the three display cases include material from the original battle of 1984. The one contains various present day photographs from the coking plant at Orgreave and a map of Orgreave indicating the movements on June 18th, 1984, to illustrate the impact of the strike on not only the people but also the town itself. The other display case contains transcripts of audio recordings made in June 18th, 1984 by television crews, which revealed false testimony by the police, according to Deller.

In his Orgreave archive, Deller determined what was to be included and what is left out. Although Deller included transcripts by television crews, he choose not to include the police video from the original event, which is considered to be the only unmediated footage of the original Battle of Orgreave.

The Orgreave Archive allows the audience to read through and decipher a lot of data and information. Even though the strike is presented as a timeline and thereby organizing the material, it does demand that one goes deeper into the elements to understand them and to understand the history of the UK Miners' Strike of 1984-85. Elements found in the archive are not themselves narrative; yet with Deller's hand-written notes, Deller gives them a historical narrative, perhaps even beyond the initial context. For instance with regard to the police shields (see illustration 12), Deller explains that the use of shields during the Miners' Strike was inspired by Roman army tactics. He continues on to state that there were only four walkie-talkies between 5000 men at Orgreave. Deller does not specify who used them, the police or the miners. If it was the police, it is contradictory to Deller's argument that the police were using sophisticated battle tactics against the miners. He writes further that a reenactor had been in Orgreave in 1984 whilst serving for the army. Thereby, Deller does not only explain to the viewer the shield's original use, but provides another aspect concerning the Battle of Orgreave. Deller's notes are useful for the viewer in understanding the various elements in the archive, yet in my opinion, the notes also result in Deller's archive not being a

“true” archive of the Battle of Orgreave. The elements are not fragments of the past, archival objects, but are given a narrative by Deller in the present.

Materials in an archive serve as evidence of a past and can act as memory aids for the future. They can be used to recall and relive past experiences or act as a proxy for those who did not experience the past event. As archivist Angelika Menna-Haritz writes, “Archives do not store memory. But they offer the possibility to create memory. Their function is that of amnesia prevention.”²⁴¹ With his Orgreave archive, Deller is appropriating traces from the past for the interest of the present-day viewer, or the future-day viewer.

4.4.2.2 A Folk Tradition

In Tate Modern’s description of Deller’s work, it writes that within the archive there is a monitor showing a recording of the “World in Action” program of the Battle of Orgreave.²⁴² At WIELS, this monitor is replaced with a monitor showing clips from events performed by various historical reenactment groups. The monitor is juxtaposed with a text by Howard Giles on the history of reenactments and their development since 1960. According to Giles, reenactments originated in the US to commemorate the American Civil War, which then spread to England. UK’s first modern reenactment group is The Sealed Knots, formed in 1967. Reenactments in the US have continued to grow in popularity and by 1998 around 25,000 “troops” participated in the annual recreation of the Battle of Gettysburg. The history of reenactments in England continues in one of the display cases, in which two flyers with information about the American Civil War Society (performed in England) and various images are presented. According to the flyers, The American War Society is the largest American Civil War Society in Britain, with over 800 members from all over the country. It reenacts events, scenes, and battles from the American Civil War (1861 – 65), and its venues are all over Northern England, Wales, and the Midlands. They equip themselves with blank-firing black powder muskets and other authentic firearms and uniforms of the period to provide an historical experience of mid-19th Century America. The American Civil War is commemorated in the UK because armies during the American Civil War were descendants of British colonists and the UK contributed over 45,000 participants to the battle, as well as arms and war material. In the same display case, there are a “The Battle of Orgreave” flyer for

²⁴¹ Angelika Menne-Haritz, “Access – the reformulation of an archival paradigm”, *Archival Science* 1 (2001), 59.

²⁴² Tate Modern, Jeremy Deller. *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*, 2001. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/deller-the-battle-of-orgreave-archive-an-injury-to-one-is-an-injury-to-all-t12185/text-summary> (visited 07.01.2013).

the 2001 reenactment (thereby connecting Deller's reenactment with the traditional reenactments), an English Heritage flyer on the Highlights of the Year, and a recruitment flyer for the 17th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was an infantry regiment raised in Virginia for service in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War.

Although these elements, pieced together, can educate the viewer about reenactments as a folk tradition in England, it does not explicitly explain why Deller used this format as an artistic practice in his Orgreave project. Yet, with the incorporation of folk artifacts and memorabilia in the timeline and living oral accounts on the CD, the viewer is able to make a link between the collective memory of mining communities and a British folk tradition in repeating and reliving the past collectively. Similar to self-reflexivity in modernist painting's focus on medium-specificity, such as "the shape of the support", color and brushstrokes, but foremost of all, "the flatness"²⁴³, Deller's archive opens for reflection on the formats and media used in this specific project and the ethnographic practice of documenting cultural memory through interaction and research.

4.4.2.3 A Reenactment

The link between the folk tradition of reenactments and Deller's reenactment becomes clearer when singling out the elements that are specifically connected to Deller's reenactment. Upon entering the exhibition room, one is met by a mock-historical poster made by Deller in 1995. It announces what was then a make-believe event: "The Sealed Knot... Reenacting the bloody Battle of Orgreave, The King's Mounted Troops versus The Northern Rebellious Barebacks", featuring a cast of thousands. It is titled *The English Civil War (Part II)*, and is misleadingly listed as being supported by English Heritage. However, with the support of Artangel some years later, the poster became a reality with *The Battle of Orgreave*. It also depicts the history behind Deller's reenactment. Already in 1995 he had begun planning the reenactment event.

One of the monitors shows police training at the Police Riot Training Center in Lancashire, where Deller went together with Howard Giles as a part of the research undertaken for the project. The video opens for reflection on how police are trained for confrontations with demonstrations, today and in connection with the Miners' Strike. Presented on the same wall as the monitor depicting historical battle reenactments, the riot training video could be an attempt to show similarities between current police tactics and historical army tactics.

²⁴³ Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960-5), in C. Harrison and P. Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 775 – 9.

In one of the display cases there is a bulk of applications Deller received from various people wanting to partake in the reenactment. There is also a printed document of how the reenactment was to be organized, which had been sent out to the locals of Orgreave. Deller supplements these items with hand-written comments. In another display case there are photographs taken during the reenactment of the reenactors and veteran miners. One of the photographs is a group shot of Jeremy Deller together with the veteran miners, on which someone has written, "Well done Jeremy". This photograph, together with Deller's hand-written notes, can be considered as a method of writing himself into the archive, and subsequently into the history, and thereby self-promotional. However, it can also be considered as self-reflexive. He is, after all, the initiator of the reenactment, and it would be equally problematic if his presence, his interpretations, and his interaction with the participants were excluded from the archive.

4.4.3 A Display of Ethnographic Research?

Together these three historical references have morphed into a hybrid archive based on facts and personal artifacts, where personal biographies, art and folk history, and collective political history overlap. Sven Spieker once wrote that an archive occupies a position "... between order and chaos, between organization and disorder, between the presence of the voice and the muteness of objects".²⁴⁴ Deller's archive is an attempt to store the traces and the process of his project and the Battle of Orgreave, and to counter the traces left by police testimonies and newspaper articles. Like other archival material, the accounts and material in Deller's archive will continue to exist as time passes. Although Deller himself defines the work as an archive, it is not an archive in a traditional manner. Even though the archivist determines an archive's contents, archives usually consist of primary and unpublished sources. In Deller's archive, there are published books and Deller's own interpretations of the objects, offering a counter-archival approach to the historical material and challenging the power of an official archive. It also moves beyond being an archive of documentation/proof of the past.

The aesthetic consideration of the room is that it is systematically organized, presenting material used by Deller in researching his project. Can the archive then be viewed as a display of ethnographic research? The archive reflects the community with which Deller worked and displays the discursive breadth of Deller's research: how social memory is

²⁴⁴ Spieker, *The Big Archive: art from bureaucracy*, xiii.

enacted through language, rituals, politics and art. Yet, the room does not include Deller's field notes detailing the behavior of the miners to the same extent as an ethnographer, nor does it reflect the vast amount of material Deller must have accumulated over the course of three years. Moreover, it presents England on a macro level, more akin to historical-educational displays in museums. It contains a timeline spanning the period of the UK Miners' Strike 1984-85, a section for further reading, a graphic presentation of the various collieries in the UK during the period, and video documentation from riot training and reenactment societies. The three display cases look like school desks and the immediate assumption was that this room was intended for educational purposes: to educate the viewer on the history of the Miners' Strike.

4.5 Conclusion: Exhibiting Cultural and Historical Memory

When writing about Renée Green's work *Import/Export Funk*, art critic Jan Verwoert writes that her work "... replaces an aesthetics of the sublime with what could be called a *pragmatism of the personal*"²⁴⁵. The same can be said for Deller's Orgreave project. Through the archive, the book and the film, the work "... portrays the making of history as an embodied practice"²⁴⁶. Deller allows the veterans, who were denied or chose not to tell their stories in the press in 1984, to participate in communicating the history of the UK Miners' Strike. Through the selection and organization of oral and written accounts, the history of Battle of Orgreave and the UK Miners' Strike is written, and a collective memory is formed. And the mode of the work is both personal and pragmatic.²⁴⁷ It is personal because the reenactment resulted in dialogue amongst the veteran miners and personal accounts were communicated to the viewer/listener. It is pragmatic because the viewer becomes a student, studying the elements presented in the archive. The elements are dependent on the viewer to allow enough time to view them. As Verwoert writes, "By choosing to interact with the research archive the viewers become interested users of history"²⁴⁸.

Mike Figgis's film opens up for reflection on how news stations filmed the original event by the filmmaker himself reenacting the editing of the BBC news segment and by filming from the perspective of the police while the miners are throwing stones. The presentation of Deller's book as a collection of various written and oral accounts by the

²⁴⁵ Jan Verwoert, "Research and Display. Transformations of the Documentary Practice in Recent Art" in *The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art #1*, edited by M. Lind and H. Steyerl, 193.

²⁴⁶ Adaptation of Verwoert, "Research and Display", 193.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 194.

miners, rather than a written history of the Miners' Strike by Deller, may be a conscious attempt to avoid the ethnographer/historian's mediation of history and societies through the written word. The discreet elements of Deller's archive further maintain the gaps of the event. Just like Renée Green's *Partially Buried in Three Parts*, Deller's archive is located in between spaces, between the traces of an event and the narrative given to the event by handwritten notes. The archive also opens for reflection on the formats and media used in this specific project and on how the archive functions as a technologies of memory. According to professor in modern culture and media, Philip Rosen, "A perfect historian would be out of time, able to be present in at least two different times simultaneously – past and present"²⁴⁹.

With the mediation of the past in the present, in the form of a reenactment, archive, book and film, the past is brought into the present. Set in the space of the museum, the site of history is given a new site. It is no longer located on the fields of Orgreave but a site that lies between personal living memory and collective history. The archive is a hybrid of these two sites where the past becomes part of the viewer's present. The work is not a reflection of the past as the past, as is usual for history books, historical documentaries and historical reenactments, but it is a mediation of past traces for the importance of the present and the future. The project is not presented as a final "product" in the museum.

Exhibited together, the 2001 reenactment event and the 1984 Battle of Orgreave are woven together in the film, book and archive. Although all three formats address the same subject, their temporalities differ. The film focuses on the 2001 reenactment event, including the information meeting and rehearsals. Intercepting the sequence of the reenactment event are oral accounts by veteran miners and police about the 1984 Battle of Orgreave. Deller's book is not limited to the 1984 Battle of Orgreave but is instead a collection of written and oral accounts about the Miners' Strike 1984-85. The book presents photographs of the 2001 reenactment as documentation of an event. The archive also spans the entire Miners' Strike, but is intertwined with background information on reenactments in the UK and how Deller's 2001 reenactment was organized. The archive reflects the process behind the reenactment project rather than a mere documentation of it.

During the reenactment the viewer is a part of the event itself, in the role of a witness. Although the installation format of the Orgreave exhibition does place the viewer within the archive, listening to the recorded accounts and being able to read the books provided, the remaining material in the archive does not allow interaction. The other elements are museum

²⁴⁹ Philip Rosen quoted in Spieker, *The Big Archive: art from bureaucracy*, 24.

“do not touch” objects and are confined within display cases or behind plexi-glass. The viewer is not longer able to physically interact with this material. Furthermore, to understand the material the viewer must obtain a critical distance to the archive. Even though Mike Figgis’s film delivers a large amount of information, the participatory effect of the hand-held cameras gives the viewer a feeling of being within the reenactment. Together, the book, archive and film provide the viewer with not only a reflection on original battle, but also a reflection the Orgreave project – how it was organized and researched and the media and formats used.

Deller’s role in the project is complex. He can be seen as an ethnographer, researching a community and its history and presenting his research material in the form of a book, an archive, and a performance event. He also writes himself into the event and the community he is portraying by including himself in his book and his Orgreave archive. He is also a witness/observer/participant in the reenactment and in Figgis’s film and thus becomes part of the Battle of Orgreave. Deller can also be viewed as an activist within the event he is portraying. Deller’s political stance becomes clearer with Deller’s few statements about today’s politics in the film and the titles used for Deller’s book and archive. The book is entitled *The English Civil War Part II*, enforcing the perspective that Margaret Thatcher’s deployment of the police and the media against the miners made the strike into a civil war launched against the miners by the Government. The archive is titled *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*, referring to the popular slogan of the Industrial Workers of the World: “An Injury to One is an Injury to All”, which in turn echoes the slogan “The Miners United will Never be Defeated”, used during the UK Miners’ Strike of 1984-85.²⁵⁰ The difference between these two slogans is that with the former the workers stand united, and with the latter the miners stand alone. By appropriating the former slogan as the archive’s title, Deller reintroduces the political message of solidarity between unions. Thereby, Deller places his project closer to political activism than an ethnographic study.

²⁵⁰ Tate Modern, Jeremy Deller. *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*, 2001.

5 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has shown how ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices are appropriated by Jeremy Deller in order to investigate a key site of historical and cultural memory: the Battle of Orgreave (1984). When considering Jeremy Deller as an ethnographer, it is interesting to note that Deller is not solely a participant-observer of this particular English mining community. He also employs an English folk tradition while undertaking his research. By organizing a reenactment of the Battle of Orgreave, he sheds new light on a political and social event in English history and creates an arena/agency in which the miners can act out their living memories. Unlike the ethnographer, who mediates his findings and presents his research conclusion in written form, Deller allows the community to speak for themselves and he displays his research process rather than a final conclusion. The reenactment gives them an opportunity to express how their lives had been affected, both politically and socially. By employing the reenactment format, the format moves from a folk tradition to an artistic practice.

This thesis has, therefore, analyzed what happens in the process of enacting historical and cultural memory as an artwork. It explains how, with the reenactment format, a historical event can come to life, generate emotions, and give a deeper understanding of history. Moreover, the engagement with historical memory can be seen as a “replacement” of the past that was never accessible before. Contrary to traditional historical reenactments, there is no one original past in Deller’s project but various memories of the past, which are accessed through strategies such as ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices. The employment of veterans in the reenactment circumvents the challenge reenactors experience when reenacting a past figure. Reenactors can never fully reenact past figures because *They* can never be *Them*, but in Deller’s case *They* are *Them*. Furthermore, Deller’s reenactment does not only reflect what the veterans remember, but the past reenacted through their personal traits or, in the case of the family members, the traits that have left a mark on them through generations.

Jeremy Deller does not only counter mass media’s portrayal of the miners through written text, but visually through a reenactment, film and archive installation. His multimedia installation, together with Mike Figgis’s film in the adjoining room, portrays various temporalities and multiple versions from the same site of historical and cultural memory. Deller’s work thus challenges the singularity of a live event, whether it is the original 1984 battle or the 2001 reenactment. Instead of presenting the past as a final product in the museum

or a final ethnographic conclusion, the project is presented to the viewer as a display of an artistic process, and thus, opens up for reflection on the difficulty of representing a *final* documentation of living memory/historical event. By employing ethnographic methodologies and reenactment practices, the work is successful in the way that it emphasizes the aspect of ‘living’ in the term ‘living history’ by visualizing how the event is still fresh in the minds of those who had experienced the original battle. Deller’s incentive for the reenactment was to create a new discussion among the local miners about a past uprising; however, it appears as though his archive was merely a visual device for exhibition use only. When exhibited, the work becomes a static portrayal of the live event of the reenactment and the living memory of the historical event. Elements found in an archive have the potential of being mediated over and over again; however, placed within the museum collection, its accessibility is limited. It is Mike Figgis’s film and Deller’s book that is accessible to the majority.

With regard to the possible risk of ethnographic self-fashioning, I do not view Deller as projecting himself onto the community or that the work could be perceived as self-promotional. I consider Deller to be self-reflexive concerning this matter. For him the work was to be portrayed through the miners, rather than through his mediation of their accounts. Yet, when analyzing the project on exhibition in a museum, it contained elements that could be considered as self-promotional/self-fashioning. Deller’s exhibition shows the framer as framed. Deller is featured in the archive and book through hand-written notes and in a group photograph with the miners. Moreover, Figgis’s film portrays Deller standing amidst and commenting on the reenactment event and explaining to the viewer how he himself had experienced the original event. He can, therefore, be viewed as “writing” himself into the history and community he is portraying. However, this can also be considered as a self-reflexive act, where Deller shows his investment in the project as part of its construction.

Unlike historical reenactments and ethnographic projects, *The Battle of Orgreave* reenactment was not only a means to revive the past as the past or to describe a specific community, but also to critique contemporary politics. In Figgis’s film, Deller displays mistrust to not only the Thatcher Government but also the current Blair Government, questioning the government’s portrayal and treatment of demonstrations and enforcing the legal idea that “everyone has the right to protest”. The Thatcher Government left visible scars on the mining communities in the UK. The time to protest against Thatcher is not over – it is still current and enacted in Deller’s project. In other words, the reenactment of the Battle of Orgreave enacts the political activism of the miners in the present. Thus, this thesis has also discussed whether Deller’s project veers on the side of political activism more so than an

ethnographic presentation.

Orgreave is not a neutral place. It is already charged with historical and cultural memory and politics. Thus, placing the reenactment in Orgreave and employing ex-miners to reenact the political event will result in a political portrayal of the battle whether it is intended or not. However, placed within the white walls of the gallery space and as a work in the Tate's art collection, Deller's work is further removed from its origin, the battlefields of Orgreave and its miners. As an artwork, it may have limited its potential of being perceived as a political statement.

In my opinion, the project appears as an ambivalent combination of a political statement and an ethnographic study. Deller's artistic historical reenactment contains multiple mediations, which are all forms of self-reflexive devices. On the one hand, these devices relate to ethnographic methodologies. On the other hand, these devices open for more activist behavior on the part of the artist within a framework that still gives new audiences a certain room for interpretation and agency in relation to the materials. Deller can be viewed as an activist employing the folk tradition of reenactments and an ethnographic practice of participant-observer in order to study a community and to communicate a social and political injustice. However, presented as an art project and viewed by the people from the cultural industry, Deller's work may be perceived as neither an ethnographic study nor political activism. It may even be perceived as lacking in visual aesthetics, and thus functioning poorly within the exhibition space. Yet, even though this may be the case, Deller's project does reflect a discursive breadth and historical depth. Deller enters the past through various media and employs various technologies of memory, presenting the viewer with not only a live performance of a historical event, but a book, an archive and a film. He does not only reflect the community, but a network of economics, politics and social structures. And in so doing, he fluctuates between macro and micro levels: between the Miners' Strike and the Battle of Orgreave, between a folk tradition of historical reenactments in the UK and a specific artistic historical reenactment, between national media and individual voices of a community, between history and collective living memory, and between the public and the private.

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Tate Modern Podcast. Association of Art Historians Annual Conference 2008 - Jeremy Deller, 1:01:28

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Exhibition information for "Joy in People" (2012) at WIELS, Brussels.

Illustrations

Illustration 1: Jeremy Deller, *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001. Reenactment. © Jeremy Deller, Martin Jenkinson. Photo: Martin Jenkinson. Courtesy: Jeremy Deller.

Illustration 2: Jeremy Deller, *My Drug Shame* and *My Booze Hell*, 1993. Printed t-shirts. © Jeremy Deller. Source: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, www.camstl.org.

Illustration 3: Restaging of Jeremy Deller, *Open Bedroom*, 1993. Installation view. © Jeremy Deller. Source: WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, www.wiels.org.

Illustration 4: Jeremy Deller, *Acid Brass / The History of the World*, 1997 – 2004. Wall painting. © Jeremy Deller, The Cranford Collection. Source: Tate Britain, www.tate.org.uk.

Illustration 5: Jeremy Deller, *Memory Bucket*, 2003. Still image. © Jeremy Deller. Source: Jeremy Deller, www.jeremydeller.org.

Illustration 6: Jeremy Deller. *Procession*, 2009. Parade. © Jeremy Deller. Source: Jeremy Deller, www.jeremydeller.org.

Illustration 7: Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, *Folk Archive*, 2005. Photograph. © Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, British Council Collection. Source: Jeremy Deller, www.jeremydeller.org.

Illustration 8: Jeremy Deller, *It Is What It Is: Conversation About Iraq*, 2009. Car wreckage. © Jeremy Deller, Imperial War Museum's Collection. Source: Jeremy Deller, www.jeremydeller.org.

Illustration 9: Jeremy Deller, *Proposal for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square: 'The Spoils of War (Memorial for an unknown civilian)'*, 2008. Car wreckage. © Jeremy Deller, James O. Jenkins. Photo: James O. Jenkins. Source: Jeremy Deller, www.jeremydeller.org.

Illustrations 10 - 13: Jeremy Deller, *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*, 2004. Installation view. © Jeremy Deller, Tate Britain. Photo: Sandra Lorentzen, at Jeremy Deller's retrospective exhibition at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels.