

Pre-research Conundrums

BY KERSTI GRUNDITZ BRENNAN

I started my PhD-education after twenty years of professional film editing and documentary film directing. My initial research questions stemmed from creative problems that had surfaced in editing phases throughout my career. I had started to see patterns larger than each film's issues, which sparked my interest in pursuing more formal research. I wrote the original version of this text during the first year of my PhD-education. It was in Swedish, a bit longer, and the original title was translated to Attempts at Cinematic Seduction with Varied Success Rates. Both in the original and in this edited version I give concrete and detailed examples from films I had worked on prior to the PhD. In the essay I also frame the concrete problems in relation to the questions/patterns I had discerned, providing insight into my experiential background for the queries of this research project. The films I refer to are created during a 12-year span from 2009 to 2017.



Marie's Attitude – or drama?

We have been working with the documentary for nearly six years and I have spent hours, days, years building the narrative towards this particular ending – the farewell performance of a ballerina. The main character of the film, principal dancer Marie Lindqvist, has put off the inevitable end of a dance career for several seasons during the time the cinematographer and I have been following her with the camera. She finally decides to dance one of the successful roles of her career in a performance that will be her farewell to the stage and to her audience. It is sold out. We film the days prior. We are there on performance day with two cameras. We follow her all day – her preparations, the preparations for the after party, the flowers arriving and filling up the stage entrance lobby. She goes into her part, dances at the height of her artistry and the packed house gives her a standing ovation that never wants to end.

We have footage of the stage, of the audience, from the wings, in the dressing room during intermission – everything. It turns into an explosive ending. Through the film, we've built up a sense of her inner pressure and now it's all released in a long and cathartic final scene.

The film is almost finished. However, a couple of days before the final sound mix, I learn that the rights to show the majority of the footage of the film's climactic final scene have not been cleared. The estate of the choreographer will not grant us permission to show the choreography, the set design, or the costumes of the performance.

My mind short circuits. I am so angry I am shaking. I feel deceived, used, and cheated on my behalf and behalf of Marie Lindqvist. My rage is like a wall that rises and separates my ability to see past the problem and any potential solution.

I have already fulfilled my contract as the director and editor and delivered a film ready for the final sound mix. Part of me wants to just leave the whole project. But I am the one who has gained the main character's trust and to tell her that after all these years there will be no film, feels like a real betrayal. I also face the moral dilemma that if there is no film, the producer will have to declare

personal bankruptcy. Her private company has signed all delivery agreements with financiers, and she will personally be held liable for repayment if she doesn't fulfill them. Of course, I could leave it to someone else to solve the problem, but with the same result – betrayal of the main character whose life now will be told by someone she didn't invite into it and probable bankruptcy for the producer who would have to put up a lot of money for a new person to learn the material enough to make a film that can be released.

It takes weeks for me to calm down enough to even watch the film with these new conditions in mind. Once I've watched it, I let the film run in my head and make mental notes about everything that hints towards the ending, everything that is resolved in the final scene that I now have to remove. I wonder if there are alternate dramaturgies, but the ones I can envision all require a complete reedit – every scene, the whole story – and I am still not sure any of these alternate dramaturgies are even possible to create.

I start going over what the final scene contains other than the actual performance that we can't show. Among the most important things are a few lines from an interview about how Marie regards the relationship between herself and the role she is dancing. She says that she doesn't go into a role, that she is herself on stage. Since early in the process, I had thought of this as a kind of conclusion of the film. The words are heard as Marie's voice-over footage of her preparing for the performance we can't show. Since this is a documentary film there are limits to how much I can replace footage from a particular event with something else without losing credibility. I am about to throw the baby out with the bath water – Marie's defining statement with her final performance. Something makes me go back to the sound clip's origin. It is an interview in her dressing room as she is putting on stage makeup, recorded with sound and image. The situation around the interview where we discussed this has long been deselected as a scene for the film.

When I start watching the interview and not only listening to the sound, I realize I could edit a short scene where Marie talks about her relationship to the roles she dances, and that scene could be the start of my film instead of the end. With its missing farewell performance, the new ending is still a compromise I will never feel happy with. It makes the film, as a whole, feel incomplete on some level. But by making an opening scene that emphasizes that she is herself when she is on stage, the film's beginning becomes better than it was.

So, what is this about? That external obstacles push me to go beyond my first choice? In that case, what do those obstacles do to layer and deepen my choices?

In this case, I can see the added obstacles drawing out both intuitive and unusual solutions, such as realizing that the perspective that Marie expressed as a conclusion of the film could just as well be the starting point of it. The obstacles call for reflections I might not have spent time on otherwise. I'm forced to prioritize and evaluate what I have done to re-imagine what's possible given the last-minute restrictions.

With some perspective, I can see both my accumulated knowledge and some new insights revealed through the crisis. With less experience I might have thought that I had the time and resources to create a new dramaturgy by re-editing the whole film. Less experience might also have resulted in the opposite – that I would not trust myself to see the forest for the trees and therefore would have given up before even starting to adapt to the new conditions.

My interest in what I want the film to do has not changed, even though my material has limitations to its use. I want the film to entice the viewer to engage with the story and the cinematic experience on physical, emotional, and intellectual levels. This enticement is based on trust and with the viewers full consent, as opposed to emotional manipulation.

I turn to a very specific set of experiences of mine to evaluate the filmed material's potential and what story can be told with it. When I look at what's in the film I first edited with the new conditions in mind, I make a kind of inventory not only of the content but also of what perspectives and preconceived notions are present in the filmed material. From this new vantage point – looking to find a different storyline than the planned one that ends with the big farewell performance – I see very clearly how it is filmed, what is present in each image, what situations are portrayed, and what is deselected already beforehand. Each take breathes the director's, i.e., mine, and the cinematographer's choices and preferences, conscious and unconscious, towards what is happening in front of the camera.

When I first started working as an editor I was often tasked with 'saving' a film. It was the kind of editing that was about molding something out of the material other than what was obvious to make the film more interesting or coherent. It often worked. I learned that there are many different stories and angles that can come out of the same material. When I started as assistant professor of film editing at Stockholm University of the Arts, I looked over the published texts about the film editing program and the editing profession. A recurring description that I can sympathize with as an artistic stance, but don't entirely agree with was that 'the editor's best tool is to listen to the material'. My concerns with this are that it implies that embedded in the filmed material, there is one optimal story or angle to reveal through the editing. My experience from 'saving' films tells me there often are several different potential angles, and that editing is more about developing

and processing the ideas that inspired the filming rather than about excising ‘the’ idea from the filmed material. On the other hand – the narrower the perspectives that ruled the filming, the fewer the angles or directions there are to take in the editing. And no matter how good you are at ‘saving’, you can’t make the source material into whatever you want it to be, simply by how you edit it.

With the footage shot for the film about Marie, there are definitely limitations to how many ways it can be interpreted. As the director, I know that Marie will soon end her dance career when I initiated this film project. My interest in what that means to her and how she is handling it colors every question I ask and every choice I make about what to film. It also brings a certain nostalgia to how the camera captures her world. My own ambiguity towards the ballet world, with its hierarchies and dated depictions of women, also permeates the choices of what situations to film and how to film them. I regard everything Marie does with admiration for her dedication, but from the unspoken perspective of not quite understanding her choice to put all that dedication into classical ballet. Her final performance – both the role she interpreted, what she made of it, and how it was received – made her dedication to ballet understandable to me and answered the questions evoked by my skepticism. If the final performance was the dramaturgical conclusion of the film’s storyline, the tension created by my nearly imperceptible skepticism contributed a forward motion towards that particular end, bringing narrative closure¹ to the film.

[1] Narrative closure is further described by Noel Carroll. (2009)

When I try to find a dramaturgy that doesn’t end with the final performance and watch the material with that in mind, I can see other stories that could be edited from what we’ve filmed. However, they would be a lot more about my views on the ballet world than about hers. That is not the story she has agreed to participate in nor the one our financiers have backed. The resources needed to make a massive reedit are not there and I don’t know if I can find another story important enough to make a film about.



The film I finally edit, *Marie's Attitude*, (Grunditz Brennan 2017) opens at the film festival Dance on Camera in New York in February 2017. It has a stronger beginning but an ending that never rises above a compromise; giving the viewer a glimpse of her world, her artistry, and her dedication, but leaving an aftertaste that's a bit tepid as if something is missing.

What stays with me as a potential research question is; what if I had exposed more of my attitude through the editing? In both versions – with and without the final performance – Marie is the narrator through a voice track edited from interviews with her. That narration, combined with the naturalism constructed through the editing, gives the appearance that this is her story about reality as it is.

Throughout the history of film studies, there has been a vivid discourse on how film images relate to what was in front of the camera. Early on the question was posed: Is film an art form, or is it just a technical representation of reality, a lens to see reality through? (Choi 2009, 312) For a long time it has been settled that film can be art and that the filmmaker leaves artistic imprints in the film and with the film; that the artistic choices happen on many levels – in the framing and angles, in the script, the directing, the action and acting, in the relationships between image and sound and in how the editing shapes all these choices over time and in what order. But to what degree do I, as a filmmaker (particularly a documentary filmmaker), need to be aware that film can be perceived less as a piece of art and more as a time machine that shows something that actually happened.

I have struggled with these kinds of questions with almost all documentaries I have edited. If I/the filmmaker² have an idea about why it is important to make this particular film, I (like I assume most filmmakers) want the audience to be interested enough to watch the entire film. I also want the people who were filmed to recognize themselves and accept how they are portrayed, despite someone else telling their story. Often, these two wishes are in opposition to each other.

Through the years I have gotten pretty good at making a film move forward by creating what Noel Carroll – referring to David Hume and Roland Barthes – describes as cinematic storytelling that strives for narrative closure. (Carroll 2009, 210) By choosing to include certain statements, framings, situations, and reactions and editing them in a particular order, I (the filmmaker/editor) tell the viewer that what I have chosen are the important details in something in the larger context outside of what the film shows. By timing, shaping the rhythm, and creating contrast, I can produce an expectation in the viewer to gain insight in this larger context by gradually revealing how all the details are connected. Or if some detail is left hanging or unexplained, I can use the tension that it creates as an aspect of the cinematic experience.

As a filmmaker and especially in an editing capacity, I make myself the viewer's proxy in chiseling the story over the time that eventually becomes the film's duration. And regardless of whether I make the film for myself or a big audience, I want to invite the viewer's curiosity and engagement with the story.

[2] In this text, the *filmmaker* is to be understood as the collective who have the main influence on the film in question, e.g., the director, the producer, the cinematographer, the editor.

Sometimes I catch myself losing my footing as I skew the choices to achieve a larger dynamic range and thereby more tension to provoke the audience's curiosity and engagement. Translated to the documentary context of the film about principal dancer Marie Lindqvist, that meant focusing mainly on how much of her life she has invested in dancing to make her farewell seem even more dramatic. She would agree that she has invested a lot in dancing throughout her life, but she might not agree with my perspective of what it means to her or that it came at the cost of not experiencing all the things in her life that I chose not to film. And here lies the dilemma I have struggled with in many documentary processes: Marie Lindqvist is a real person who will be recognized as herself in my film. When she meets people who have seen the film, their impression of her will be influenced by how she and her interactions, surroundings, and relationships are portrayed in the film. As a documentary filmmaker given the trust to film another person, I feel a responsibility to that person. They should be able to say: 'this is only a part of my life or who I am, but I recognize myself in it and I can stand for how I am portrayed for good and bad.' If they can't say that, then I have betrayed their trust and used them in an immoral way. I have also betrayed the viewer who watches a documentary film with the premise that they will watch a 'reality'. The minimum requirement for the film to be considered an authentic depiction of documentary events should, in my opinion, be that I (as the filmmaker) and the person who is filmed, agree that it is. The consequence of this is that as a filmmaker, I don't want to make a better film by pushing the dynamics only based on my artistic vision or angle my choices only based on my perspectives.

The Man Behind the Throne - who is he?

To succeed in making the choices that stir curiosity and engagement with the story and at the same time being true to the participants, I try to stay as close as possible to what I understand reality is for the person being filmed. I judge that I am close enough when I don't have to make elaborate constructions to reach a sense of authenticity through the selections on my timeline. But this is also where I can get the most lost if I am not aware of my own preconceived notions or limited perspectives since I am the one who gauges the level of authenticity during filming and even more so in the editing process. In documentary processes, there is usually a built-in checkpoint when the film, often in a rough-cut stage, is screened for the people who are in it. It can come as a complete surprise to the filmmaker that the people filmed don't recognize themselves in the portrayal. Or that their friends and relatives don't. That can be the basis for a serious and humiliating disapproval of the filmmaker and lead to a severe crisis of distrust that jeopardizes the future of the film.

This has happened to me a couple of times. A recent example was working on *The Man Behind the Throne* (Grunditz Brennan 2013), the film about Michael Jackson's choreographer Vincent Paterson:



Still from *The Man Behind the Throne*

I follow him for more than a year, during a turbulent period, in many kinds of situations, in Canada and the USA. The team and I are based in Sweden, so the filming is done during a number of intense trips of a couple of weeks each. Between them I stay in touch with Vincent by email. Halfway through the filming I edit and send him a six-minute teaser to give him a sense of where I am going with the film. He loves it, and thinks it captures him and his world. The teaser is close to my vision for the film, so the trust it garners me with him feels honest and unproblematic. The film is tough to finance so the actual editing doesn't start until a while after we finish filming. We edit in Sweden and the editing needs to pause several times as we wait for more money, and it takes longer than anticipated. During this period, I don't see Vincent but he sends me his journals from projects he's done over the years. My sense of him becomes less and less influenced by our spending time together and more and more by an image of him from the filmed material, the many interviews I did with him, and his journals. Working together with my editor to make a feature length film from what we've filmed, the character Vincent and his motivations start to take on a life of their own. The story is also flavored by experiences my editor recognizes from his own life and Vincent's. I give weight to my editor's interpretation due to their apparent similarities. We are crafting a powerful storyline, but the feel of the teaser is only present at short moments. When we have a rough-cut of the whole film, I go to Los Angeles to show it to Vincent. We watch it together and afterward he tells me that he thinks the film is interesting, dark, and complex, but it is about somebody other than him.

In the editing we have given the impression that he is a man driven by inner demons, by the need to make up for being a homosexual in a small town and by a complicated relationship with his father. None of which was false, but in the wrong proportions he appeared very far from the positive, ambitious man, driven by lust and joy, that was always present even in the most focused and charged situations during the intense filming. A man I had lost track of in the film material that apparently could be slanted toward a completely different interpretation of his personality.

Once he gets over the rough-cut screening, we have a long conversation about the film and his experience of himself in it. Then we hang out for a couple of days. I go home with a different and deeper understanding of him and a rekindled connection with who he was in front of the camera when we filmed more than a year ago. With a recalibrated memory I can finish editing the film. It is now lighter in tone and shows him in a way that he and his friends and family recognize.

This is not the only time I have slid off course or, without realizing it, taken liberties with real people's lives. I have been ashamed and apologized, but without exception, when facing these missteps, I have gained increased self-awareness as a filmmaker. Above all it has deepened my appreciation of film's potential power – that it can be misconstrued as a direct representation of reality. As a director I am therefore increasingly careful not to use too observational an approach. I try to avoid the 'fly-on-the-wall' style in which e.g., Frederick Wiseman made his film about the ballet of the Paris Opera; *La Danse* (Wiseman 2009). When I made the film about Marie Lindqvist at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, I went close and met her gaze with the camera, then tried to catch her perspective by literally turning the camera towards what she was looking at.

In documentary films, which I have worked with most in my career, there is often a claim that the film image, on some level, represents a reality that unfolded in front of the camera. In certain respects that claim can be made to live-action fiction as well. In both documentaries and fiction there are people in front of the camera. And in the same way that the dancer always is both herself and a body portraying something else, the actor in front of the camera is as much herself as the person participating in a documentary when it comes to the fact that whoever watches the film will recognize the actor in contexts other than the part she plays in the film. With famous actors it becomes even more apparent; when Meryl Streep plays the tough fashion editor in *The Devil Wears Prada* (Frankel 2006), as a viewer, I can't 'unknow' that is Meryl Streep as soon as I recognize her. Every other film I have seen her in, interviews with her, or other contexts where she has participated as herself affect how I perceive this character. That adds another layer of precognition to the next role I watch her in. In *The Devil Wears Prada*, she also moved around in a New York that looks the same as the New York I filmed Vincent Paterson in. A few clips from each film, taken out of context, could be part of the same film and for anyone not knowing who they are, there is really nothing that indicates that one of them is being himself and the other is acting. I see two dressed-up people who swear and get into cabs in what clearly is the same city. Both are at the same time fiction and reality, operating on a sliding scale of fictionalization between a cinematic version of a fictionalized reality and a documentary film portrayal of actual reality.

Marie's Attitude – or mine?

Another aspect of film's power to look like reality is the multitude of versions of a reality that can be perceived as *THE* reality. In the same way that my perspectives looking at Marie Lindqvist's world supported the string of choices that lead to the narrative closure I later had to take out, it was clear that in addition to all the conscious choices, there can be hidden or unconscious perspectives that sneak into the construction of a narrative logic. That logic can be entirely made up from an invisible or masked subjectivity, but gains credibility as an inner logic by the fact that it stems from a singular subjectivity. The more coherent and credible (authentic feeling) the narrative logic is, the more it supports the idea that what we are watching is a depiction of a potential reality. And if that subjectivity is not overtly stated, the embedded subjective perspectives can be read as objective truths. Throughout film history this has been manifested time and again, as James Baldwin describes it in the Raul Peck documentary '*I am not your negro*'; stereotypical depictions of race, gender, and class – perspectives of an unacknowledged subjectivity – are perceived as objective, factual, and accurate. More importantly, viewers draw conclusions about real people they meet based on stereotypes from films – as if the films show a reality equal to an actual experience of their own. (Peck 2016, 16:10)

When it comes to the film about Marie Lindqvist, I ask myself not only what choices I could have made during the editing and my attitude towards the filmed material, but also how I could have clarified my unspoken preconceived notions and preferences to myself and the cinematographer before the filming. My ambition to make myself and the camera visible (but not observing in a Cinema-direct style like in Frederick Wiseman's *La Danse*), led me to be highly selective when directing the camera. Based on my preunderstanding of the world we entered, I chose not to film many things that happened during the filming period. Could I have predicted how limiting that would make shaping the final film? And could I have created other types of frameworks for my directing (and later my editing) that would have allowed more space for the main character's view of her world?

I watch the film again and distinguish two different kinds of scenes that feel less problematic to me in relation to the unfulfilling new ending.

I find the first scenes where Marie works on choreography interesting, especially the relatively (at least for classical ballet) modern repertory like Maurice Bejart's Rite of Spring and works by Mats Ek. The same goes for scenes from rehearsals focusing on problem-solving and physical training more than role interpretation. There, my skepticism toward the classical ballet world shines through to a lesser

degree. These scenes have a naturalistic forward motion, are depicted in dialogue and action without her narration, and the cuts are almost invisible. The material carries the story by itself, and in the editing, I have highlighted the shared view she and I have on what she is doing. The scenes feel authentic; like they are told from her perspective.

The other kind of scenes are the ones where I cut sharply between time and place, but keep the movement continuous. The discontinuity of time and place make the cuts visible, while the continuity of her dance movement ensures that I don't take away from Marie's artistry and expressiveness, or her movement qualities. This cinematic form of cutting between studio rehearsal, stage rehearsal without costume, dress rehearsal, and performance makes it clear that her world is depicted from my point of view. Here I also place interviews with Marie as voice-over narration where she talks about what ballet training means to her, and what the rewards are for months of rehearsals of a piece she may perform only a few times. This kind of scene, where the image editing and the narration (Marie's voice) don't have the same perspective or vantage point, also works towards an ending that no longer includes her farewell performance.

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CJDG – a connection

I am mainly interested in developing filmmaking that reveals its own construction. That Marie's and my perspectives are clearly and separately conveyed creates tension in the storytelling. Editing for discontinuity of time and space implies that this is only one perspective of many other potential ones and refutes the illusion that this represents any one reality. By editing in a way that maintains the integrity of her dancing, I give body movement the role of linking the flow of images. I can still create continuity in the storytelling and a sense of authenticity and respect for the main character.

I am invited to follow the process of creating a retrospective exhibit of a very well-known Swedish artist, Carl Johan De Geer. He has made several autobiographical films, written several autobiographical books, and there are books written about his art by others. It feels like most of what would go into a traditional artist portrait has already been said and done. The trademark of his autobiographical films is his talking straight to the camera or narrating with a direct address, often accompanied by his own still photographs. I am enticed by the thought of telling a different story about him. A story that is not based on the revelation of unknown aspects of his life or art and not based on him talking to me/the camera the way he talks in his own films. I want to present a different view of him – as an artist in process. I have his trust to shape the film however I want, and I'm invited to film anything I want around the creation of the exhibit. An idea starts to form. I want to make an intimate documentary that focuses on what he does, how he does it, and how he interacts with others. I want to film him talking to people he is collaborating with but not to me (the camera) and I want to tell a story about him by showing 'how'. I also envision cutting to images of the actual artworks as he does things with them for the exhibit. I don't want the art to be shown as illustrations but portrayed as details in physical rooms. I have no funding for the film, but I write up a proposal based on this idea and secure full funding faster than with any project I have ever done.

My plan is to follow the work with the exhibit for nine months, ending with the opening. During that period, Carl Johan has some other commitments and smaller exhibits he invites me to follow, so when I start there is a lot to choose from – quiet work in his studio, travel, and different types of collaborations with others.

It is always tricky to film a filmmaker. I'm a bit wary that he will automatically start talking to me/the camera the way he does in

his own films, so I devise strategies to quickly establish the relationship between him and the camera that is at the core of my vision. Carl Johan has a strong work ethic and a great respect for the craft of filmmaking. I decide to be my own cinematographer so that I make up the whole team hoping that since I am busy handling the camera, he won't disturb my work by talking to me while I am filming. On our first day of filming, I go with him to a literary festival in Sigtuna where he will screen a film of his followed by a Q&A. My strategy works great. I come home with loads of footage of the artist in silence, in conversation, in motion, and in relation. When another author questions him in the green room, I film their discussion from different angles as they munch on sandwiches and pretty soon, they don't care that they are filmed. I film thinking about how I want it to be edited – in and out of movement, focusing on relations, actions and reactions, with a wide-angle lens so that it is apparent that I am close to them with the camera, not sneak-peaking from a distance. I look through the material when I get back and feel encouraged in my strategy and happy about how the artist comes across differently from the Persona he takes on in his films or when he lectures.

Soon after that first day of filming, I show some material to one of the financiers who is also a co-producer. The screening turns into a confusing event. She doesn't see any of what I see in the material. She can't connect with Carl Johan when he doesn't talk to the camera. She is completely uninterested in how he moves and relates to other people he meets. She finds meeting him through other people's way of talking or relating to him uninteresting. She can't see what I see – that Carl Johan feels alive and present when he gets to be the older, unguarded man that he is, in body and movement. I thought this screening would be encouraging since I had managed to do exactly what I had envisioned in the funding proposal. Instead, it marks the start of a long battle with this co-producer on aesthetics, expression, address, and what it means to connect with a main character. I must fight for my vision, but I am grateful it was clearly articulated in the project description the funding was based on.

I go through the filming process the way I had planned it. Not until after the opening of his exhibit, right before we start editing, do I make a couple of lengthy interviews with Carl Johan where he talks to the camera/me. I do it partly to please the co-producer who has asked for it every meeting we've had, and partly because I think we will need some support from narration in the editing. By this time, Carl Johan is used to having me around and we have developed a relationship that is so personal that his way of talking

to me is very different from how he talks in his own films. But in the few situations when I film him after these interviews, what I feared would happen, does. I end up not using any of that footage for the film because once I opened the door for him to talk to me while I'm filming, it becomes hard for him not to perform for the camera. It is hard to film him on the go, in relation, in motion... everything that provides a different side of him than what was already out there before my film.

I like my film experiences to be both emotionally and intellectually stimulating. I don't like feeling manipulated toward a prescribed emotional response. Still, I want to be seduced into a cinematic world where I am invested in the people the film is about. Some films manage to pique my curiosity and keep my attention but fail to make me care about the characters. In those cases, I sense the filmmaker doesn't care about them either. Those films set off my manipulation radar and stop me from caring about the characters. When I edit, I search for the moments when I (as the filmmaker/viewer) feel a connection³ with the characters and this plays a big part in how committed I become to the story. But it is not a given that the director and I experience this connection in the same shots or takes. I recently read an interview with the Director of Photography Nadim Carlsen about the work with the film *Holiday*. He said they used more shots on body language to avoid making the film emotionally and psychologically engaging: "We tried to avoid making an emotional and psychologically engaging film; body language often felt as important as the actors' facial expressions. In fact, only a handful of close-ups made it into the film." (Filmmaker 2018)

[3] Connecting: simultaneously experiencing with, feeling for, and thinking about a character/figure (a person, a thing, an animal, a plant...). This interpretation of connection is applied in *Character creation in editing* as well as in almost all editing situations I've been in.

His statement (made as if it was self-evident) that more focus on body language and less on facial expressions would make the film less emotionally engaging is foreign to me; on the other hand, I think it has to do with how the body language is filmed and edited. I often experience a strong connection to people I meet through their movements and body language, and that is what I look for in filmed material. In many editing situations, the director and I have talked about the connection to whomever is in the film image as a 'meeting': it is through that word I grasp what Nadim Carlsen might mean. When a person moving in front of the camera is observed from afar, they can be perceived as an object and there is no meeting since meeting requires reciprocity. In Wiseman's *La Danse* (2009) the dancers move at a cool distance, seemingly unaware of the camera. I experience their body language and movements as two-dimensional images. The movements don't connect to or land in my/the viewer's body and therefore don't convey the dancers' feelings or expressions. The dance and the dancers become moving graphic shapes that, in the best case, communicate in abstract terms. What's seductive (or manipulative, depending on who is watching) with *La Danse*, is that it can be perceived as an objective representation of an environment and the people in it. Through the editing, it appeals to the viewer's curiosity by revealing a world behind closed doors bit by bit. I, however, don't feel that I ever meet anybody in this ballet world,

not by direct address, facial expression, or even through the dancer's movements. A completely different kind of cinematic storytelling where I also don't experience a meeting/connection with the characters is Terrence Malick's *To the Wonder* (2012). Malick keeps the camera close to the characters and it is constantly moving, focusing on the characters' motions. From my perspective as the viewer, the camera movements feel voyeuristic, but I have no relation to who the voyeur behind the camera is. The camera feels like an invisible but active witness to events that the people in front of the camera have not invited. There are many long tracking shots, but the movements of the film characters are only depicted when the camera happens to catch them, broken up and without weight or spatiality. The result is that I don't experience any meeting with the film characters moving in front of the camera.

To cinematically share my connection with Carl Johan De Geer through his body language and movements, I needed to be physically close to him with the camera. I also needed to film from different spatial perspectives so that it would be possible to shape his movements through the editing by their relationship to the room, to gravity, and to energy. I didn't edit the film, but I filmed with the intention that the connection with him should be created in the editing of his movements and relations to his environment and other elements.



Still from *CJDG*

The film *CJDG* (Grunditz Brennan 2014) ended up having a moving nerve that provides a different kind of meeting with him than his own films. But it divided the audience into two clear camps – those who got emotionally moved by meeting him this way and those who didn't connect with him at all and found the film shallow. I can see the film from both perspectives and feel that I wasn't able to take my idea

of movement-driven cinematic storytelling far enough. But maybe I took it as far as possible in a documentary context where I sometimes couldn't be as close or in as much control as I could have been in a fiction context. One of the concerns that has motivated me to do artistic research is my wish to explore how I can film and edit to make body language and body movement, rather than facial expressions and direct address, paths to connect with the film characters.

Conclusion

The unique challenges of these three film processes could be described as disorienting dilemmas. They are creative itches to scratch across different projects and different production conditions. Each dilemma demands further scrutiny and could be a research area of general interest. The dilemmas point to different questions in the filmmaking process, such as; what drives the narrative, how to deal with the ethics of recognition and identification, what relational contracts are embedded in the aesthetics, and how the content creation process often reproduces unconscious bias. In addition, how the different dilemmas overlap offered a promising premise for this research project; looking at editing as an intersection of cinematic practices but also of ethics, aesthetics, production modes, story, and characters.

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