

**Case Study**  
**Tony Downunt**  
**21<sup>st</sup> January 2004**  
**London**

**AP**

It's the 21<sup>st</sup> January and we're here in London with Tony Downunt, in his home, this is work in context, before we go on to the questions, thanks for having us to come,

**TD**

It's a pleasure

**AP**

To your home, I just wanted to run through the key words that you supplied, for the interview format and you supplied the key words file, media, autobiography and video diary and you organized the questions as, material institutional contexts, intellectual philosophical contexts, process or conduct, and product and outcome. So if we start with material institutional contexts, we can get into the, substance of what your research project is, I think in funding context area, where we can actually look at the, the research project but the first question we have, is how appropriate do you feel the institutional demand for research questions is, with regard to talking about your research?

**TD**

This is the AHRB...., institutional demand?

**AP**

Yes

**TD**

Right I suppose I don't have a sort of, very definite answer about it. I quite liked as I was thinking about the project, I quite liked having that discipline of having to come up with research questions, but I think that the research questions I came up with were derived more from media theory, in cultural studies and documentary studies, in other words kind of basically written, disciplines, than they were from my, the practice side of my project, and I think it's worth saying that my, that the research project that I'm, doing is, is definitely a kind of mixture of practice research and kind of more conventional kinds of, text-based academic research, so that ah..., I don't have a problem with it in relation to the latter, I think that there are questions about, ah..., whether research questions as kind of conventionally posed are useful, in the field of practice as research, so that in other words in making something so that, but there are, I mean in terms of documentary, there are, kind of, I mean there is a sort of, a theory of documentary making, which a guy called Michael Rabiger particularly sort of formulated, which is to do with, which is actually very research based in the sense that, he has this model of documentary making which is like a round hypothesis, and he sort of suggests that what you do when you're making a documentary is, you kind of make a hypothesis

about the world you test out, in, in the research phase of the documentary and then you, you, you come up with a hypo ... with a further hypothesis as a result of the research and then you, you, your next phase, is, if you like, production and so you then test out that hyp... that hypothesis in production and then you test out the hypothesis that results of, from the raw material, from the rushes, in the edit, so that, there are models of, of, of, of, of, of documentary production, which are kind of allied to research, in a way, but I think that the, there's still an area which, which kind of, I'm, I'm not at all sure of in these investigations and I will, and I will be looking, you know, during the progress of the research, which is well how do you, how do you ask a research question if you are making a documentary or making a film, as opposed to, what, you know, as opposed to, a research where your output is more conventionally, kind of, an academic text, and I don't have an answer to that, but I'm, I, I imagine that the, that process would widen the definition of, or change the definition of, research questioners, so that we'd have to get used to different kinds of questions.

**AP**

Okay, and what's your current context for framing your research, I mean this might be what you wanna talk about as a creative fellow.

**TD**

, oh, you mean just actually where I'm doing it, and what I'm doing concretely?

**AP**

Well, how, how are you positioning this research in both institutionally but also personally?

**TD**

Yes ..... , the, the, I think probably those are two separate answers ..... , I mean, I can talk about how I kind of personally came across the idea of doing this and why I formulated it in terms of my own kind of , working trajectory, what, what's happening in my working life and I can answer it in relation to being , a teacher at Goldsmith's and an academic at Goldsmith's college is, a ..... those two things

**AP (Overlapping)**

Yes, both, both of those seem great.

**TD**

..... both those things, right. Okay, let's start with the tricky one, then. (Laughter) The autobiographical one: I, I've, I've ..... sort of, almost throughout my working life, I've had a kind of ah..., I haven't al..... just been a practitioner in the sense of somebody who works in the industry, in the television industry making things, I've always done teaching of various kinds, I mean associated with different kinds of univ.ers... not lots of different universities, and, and, you know, particularly recently, two MAs, one on video for development at Winchester and one and, and, and over the last seven/eight years, the MA in screen documentary at Goldsmith's. So, and the, in the nature of my work has always had a kind of , a sort of political,

theoretical bent in the sense that I started working, in the seventies in community video, where the, where, which was part of the whole independent film and video movement in the seventies and the eighties, and where the, the, the practice was informed in various different ways by theories, and, and in fact, in certainly the way that we conceived of it in the seventies, theory and practice weren't separable, or that we were trying to do something different politically or socially or whatever and that therefore, you needed to think theoretically, whatever that means, about what you were doing practically and that there was a, there wasn't a separation. So, that's a different, that's quite a different history to, to somebody who would just, who would just have, got a job in the media industry and worked through that ..... so, so that's a sort of, I guess that's the sort of broad background, I mean specifically with this project, I've, ah..., which, you know, the project around autobiographical documentary and video diaries, I've ..... always had a kind of, a feeling, that, and a kind of intuition that I've explored in different contexts, the, that, ah..., in terms of the sort of the politics of the media and of representation which is a sort of broad area the community of video and independent film have, have, have operated in, that, ah..., questions of, kind of aesthetics if you like, around how you make things are as important as the kind of, the more sort of, nitty-gritty political issues about who holds the camera and where the control is and what the content of the, of the media artefact is, so that I've always had an interest in, which say(?), I mean it's, maybe most easily explained in relation to, , the work that's been done in Aboriginal Australia on uses of media by Aboriginal people in Australia, where, the, in, which is the most dramatic, in a way it's a very dramatic example of, a kind of excluded community using the media and how that relationship develops, ah..., where, where the, kind of the issue of a media forms and how media us used, is, ah..., more dramatic than in other contexts and I mean it's a b... give a concrete example that's ;like, I did a programme in, in Aboriginal Australia in the, sort of, central Australia which Abor, Aboriginal groups about how they use video and this in kind of, remote communities in the, in central Australia, which are still quite traditional culturally and, there's, what, an interview with a woman who worked in a video project who talked about recording secret ceremonies, women's secret ceremonies in traditional Australia, and putting them, putting those videos on a shelf in a, in a cupboard that was locked and those only being accessible to women, initiated women, so that, which sort of completely in, turns on it's head the idea of media and mass-media and the sense about things being universally, ah..., accessible. I don't know whether this example is making sense, but it's like, ah..., so that, you know, the issue of, of, of the institutions of the media and how things are made and what they're made for and the viewing contexts, have always been ..... ah..., part of what my work is. I'm straying miles from the questions (laughs).

**AP**

Not really.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Right, yeah, okay, yes, so I'll get back for, the more personal, so ..... what I, yes, so that the, the, the kind of, the, I suppose, the next bit of the story really

was the, was, developing an interest in video diaries, which, came out of, as a lot of sort of the work that I've done, has done in a way, has come out of the sort of technical development of camcorders and much smaller, kind of and more accessible machines for recordings, television pictures and, and that, that resulted in the, in the, the early nineties, particularly in the kind of video diary movement, at particularly at the BBC Community Programme unit initiated, and it was interesting to me as an example of, if you like, access, in the sense of access to television for people who would otherwise get access, and the, the kind of promise of it, which is obviously very much more complex than this but the promise of it was that, a video diarist would, would get a video camera and, ah..., would be able to ah..., make their own vision, make their own television outside of, kind of the institutional context of television and outside of the kind of hierarchies of power over how people are represented as well as what's represented. So, I was in, yeah, I've always been very interested in video diaries in that way and did some work in the mid-nineties with a, a group of young women who were, m..... using video cameras as, as diary things, ah..., over quite a long period of time, so, got interested in, in video diaries as kind of, part of that movement that I've always been involved in, about representation, and, I think that, more personally, sort of for me, I've ..... in a, one of the ways I can look at what I've been doing, in a way throughout my working life is thinking well, ah..., you know, I've worked a lot with other people, so I've produced other people's films, I've done some of my own work, but, but mostly my focus has been on either producing other people's films or in access as a kind of discipline about, enabling other people to make films, in one way or another, either kind of, you know, excluded youth groups(? Indistinct) in the seventies and early eighties or kind of political groups later on in the eighties or whatever. So that, I felt, I sort of felt increasingly that, you know, I'm now fifty-two so I kind of b..., been working for quite a long time, and I've sort of felt a need to, to return to myself in some way, to that, that, that, if I didn't kind of, look at who I was and what I'm doing now, it was, it would seem absurd that there was a kind of, sort of, you know, I couldn't carry on postponing the moment where I kind of, turned the, in a way, turned the camera on myself rather than kind of enabling other people to, to do things in a XXX partly because that's what it feels like at this stage in my life, and that partly because I also feel that, there is a way in which, in terms of the sort of broad research, the, sort of, the things that I've been interested in throughout my life, you, you, you know, it's kind of a cop-out that there are, kind, you know, it would be interesting to use myself as a guinea pig, in a sense and saying, ah..., 'You've been working with lots of other people throughout your life, so now what about you?', you know, how do you, how do I, deal with all of this? So that's the personal XXX.

### **AP (Overlapping)**

That's the personal side, yeah. What about the institutional contexts, that being positioned at Goldsmith's ..... Okay

### **TD (Overlapping)**

, sure, yeah, ..... Goldsmith's is really in, in, very, I mean it's a really interesting place to work because it's so, because it both has a kind of a very lively and active prac...., practice departments so that there's a lot of,

production that goes on at Goldsmith's, but also notable, you know, that, it's a five-star research department, and a lot of very interesting people who work there, so it's a very, very lively environment, but, and I've worked there I mean, for the, on the MA for eight years but I've also took, kind of, taught on and off on BAs before that, and it always seemed to me that certainly, you know, ..... in the past, more than the present, certainly in the past, the kind of, the link between what people are learning and studying theoretically and researching theoretically and what the practice department's doing, has been very weak, and it used to be incredibly well, I mean I remember teaching on the BA, there was a joint BA in Anthropology and Media, joint honours degree and, I XXX from what I remember there was no kind of, ah..., real dealing with visual anthropology as a discipline in the course, you know, the anthropology and the media were, were kind of separate and the practical work that the, the joint honours students did was just, you know, they'd come in and be taught by somebody who was a visiting tutor from the industry as I was in, in those days, and, there was no, there, there was no attempt within the teaching to talk about issues of visual anthropology either and I think that's changed now, but it's always been, an, a kind of ambition of mine to ah..., to work in an academic context where those, where practice and theory are much more intermeshed and much more interrelated and so, throughout my time at Goldsmith's, I've been interested in that, and the MA, and the screen documentary in fact, though it's primarily a kind of, a production course, in the sense that the weighting of the marks is towards people producing a final project in, nevertheless is, it's very interdependent, you know, we do, we, we want people to think about, documentaries, studies and theory alongside working things out and they do on the whole, so that's exciting and it is also interesting as, as, you know, the, the part of my growing interest in autobiographical stuff is also because, ah..., a large number of the students, certainly two or three each year, who I've had over the last five years, which may say more about who I select than necessarily anything else significant statistically. People do come to documentary with, a lot of them, with a kind of an impulse to put themselves in the films in some way or other or to, to look at the issue of, of how they are positioned in the films, sometimes to make or the, or even they were able to, biographical issues so, it's always seemed to me to be, in that context, the issue of, of autobiography and film, is a very live one, with, with, bodies of students that I normally work with so .....

## **AP**

So it's quite a clear connection between your pedagogical role, or interests in your own personal XXX

## **TD (Overlapping)**

Absolutely, very much so, yes, yes, increasingly interestingly I think that, over the eight years I've been there that kind of, which I think is, partly is a reflection of, of the w, wider world of documentary and the kind of, the increasingly sort of institutionalized and closed down versions of documentary that are available to, to people to make in the industry and, and therefore, why because lots of people come on the course, partly for vocational reasons,

partly to escape the pressures of the industry for a year and explore creative directions so .....

**AP**

Okay and I think that takes us onto issues of funding contexts, you might want to speak maybe a bit more specifically about, you know, the current time with, as an AHRB creative fellow, so in terms of your current project, autobiography, what are the funding contexts of that and how has that impacted on the research?

**TD**

Hmm..., the, the funding contexts outside of the AHRB,

**AP**

No, I think it talked specifically about the AHRB

**TD**

Yeah

**AP**

And if there are other ah..., sources of, of funding, what might you about it as well (unclear)

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yeah, yeah, well kind of crudely, I, I, I mean I was really interested in getting a fellowship because it, it takes me out of the marketplace, out of the industrial marketplace for three years so that the, and I think that, well in, in, in most of the areas of work that I'm interested in, it was getting increasingly difficult to make a living, in the sense of I, you know, I could g.... mount projects relatively easily but in terms of, of their having substantial budgets or enabling me to make that, a living, that was getting increasingly difficult, so that what the fellowship gives me is a kind of, is a funding context where I have a salary for three years so that, that removes the major material obstacles to me investigating things that I want to look at, I think that, that in terms of, of getting, I don't really know yet what the, the kind of sources outside of the AHRB might be for, I'm planning a major film project which will involve me going to Sierra Leone and stuff so, that, and, and some of that will be covered by, both by support from Goldsmith's and the costs for the AHRB are coming up with the, probably not all of it, so there is a question about whether I can raise extra production money from ah..., television channels, or not particularly I would have thought, I don't know the answer to that yet, I mean I'm kind of, part of, of, either way, I'm using the fellowship, is, is to, to enable me not to think about that kind of thing, for a year or two at least anyway because it's very, if you are constantly as I am or have been, thinking both 'Oh well, that will be an interesting idea' and 'How can I, can, sell it?' , the immediately, you know, ninety percent them'd be interesting questions that you could explore of close down by the, in that one thing 'Well how can I sell it, so what's the market?' so, and the market determines, you know, how you would approach the subject and what the subject is and all that kind of stuff a lot, so .....

**AP**

Because you're quite in an interesting position, being, because aren't you the only creative fellow, the AHRB creative fellow that's working in media practice, within, I mean I know that there's XXX (obscured)

**TD**

I think Andrew Cotting's got one hasn't he? I think so, who is .....

**AP**

They have both tended to be in the sort of art and design side of things,

**TD**

Yeah

**AP**

You were working with video and film

**TD**

The two, certainly I'm pretty sure Andrew Cotting's got one, and his, his, a long history of, of independent film practice, and, well actually, Lucy Kimble I know has got one, hasn't she, has she? I think she has, yes, and Lucy Kimble XXX she's not a film-maker, she's a, a web, artist and, so that's not relevant. Yeah, but I suppose I am one of, one of two I think, yeah, yes.

**AP**

And does that place, is there a sort of, an awareness of that within the wider, your wider research context, that impacts on the work that you do? Because I mean the AHRB,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yeah, yeah.

**AP**

Created fellowships in the (obscured)

**TD**

Yeah,

**AP**

A number and dance, I mean from a Parip perspective,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Uh-huh, right, uh-huh,

**AP (Overlapping)**

In robots and dance, in theatre (obscured)

**TD (Overlapping)**

Right, uh-huh, right, right,

**AP**

And you're quite interested, for I know that people, people like John Allison,

**TD**

Yeah

**AP**

John Adams have raised the issue that,

**TD**

Yeah

**AP**

There's very little of this practice as research funding to go into media practices

**TD**

Right, right

**AP**

As has done.

**TD**

Yes, I'm not sort of aware enough of , of discussions around that to know how it's sort of, how it's im, im, impacts on the , the rest of, sort of, media departments in other places, I mean, erm..., it's interesting as you say, I mean I hadn't thought of that before, that it, either there are ways in which there, it is quite unusual , yeah, well that's nice (laughter).

**AP**

(Phew!) I want to talk also about the resource and plant contexts, I mean those are interesting words that Parip has been,

**TD**

Sure

**AP**

Using and sort of, I know that you do your work here, but one, what are the other resource and plant contexts of your current research?

**TD**

Mmm..., well , I mean because I'm because the, the, the, the subject of my document, of my research is, is , autobiographical XXX and notably video diaries, I, I mean, I've deliberately, part of my whole strategy in terms of equipment, particularly in what I need to do, the work has been to, domesticate it in a way, really scale it down, so you know, I've got the, I bought one of these, which is a , which is, you know, a, a, a video diary camera though it's quite an , an expensive one, but it's basically not three chips video diary camera and , ah..., I actually bought that myself, it's not Goldsmith's machine, though there are machines at Goldsmith's that I could



have borrowed, but I, I felt like I needed, needed it, you know, I needed to own it in order to sort of, be a diarist, as it were. , how, I'm not sure how that's going to develop, but we'll see , and, you know, the rest of it is really , an editing computer, and, with an, few extra bits and bobs, but , and deliberately kind of, sc, scaled down, partly from, because I, because, because it's a sort of video diary project, I wanted it to be quite domestic in the way that I was working on it, but also , because I'm interested in, in, partly through my experience of running the MA as well, in the idea of, of desk-top , documentary production of the , because that is certainly, you know, the, it seems that these days either you, you work on a reality TV show for television, or you try and generate your own work kind of independently and the desk-top method is, is the most , ah, accessible way for people who are interested in documentary, to go ah..., and make ..... and lots of people are doing it and so I, I felt like a need, in, in terms of my sort of, you know, what happens after the three years, in terms of my own sort of developments, say that the, the MA at Goldsmith's to, to understand how that works, how desk-top documentary production works, so that was part of the, reason that I'm equipped myself in this way. I mean I got the copy of final cut pro, the editing programme, from Goldsmith's, so they're resourcing that and I can go there and do, and will go there and, and do finishing-off work and then, in terms of post-production and I can, and there's an audio dubbing suite at Goldsmith's and the, so there are, I have a lot of back-up at Goldsmith's as well so I'm not cutting off from it , and will be in, will use those resources, but, it, I would, I did make very particular decisions about, about working here, with this relatively modest bit of kit, to see what that was like and so that's part of the research imperative, in a way.

#### **AP**

Oh, that's really interesting, that per..... sense of personal ownership and so you think that, that was, yes it, shaped by your own research imperatives and this might be a difficult question to answer, but do you think, had, had the research been funded through, XXX, an AHRB small or large grant as more part of the institution, would things have gone differently, because obviously there's a sense in which the creative fellow is a very individual position?

#### **TD**

Hmm..., yes I'm sure that's true, I think that would be true, that, it is, I mean it's also to do with the length of time that , that, because it's three years it feels uh..., you know, it's kind of worth investing in, it's a, worth, worth , , developing it, whereas if it was just a sort of, more of a one-off project grant, it would be, it wouldn't make sense. It would make much more sense to work it, to do, do it within the Goldsmith's context more literally, so yes, I think that is true.

#### **AP**

Okay, you asked when you organized the questions you placed the question 'What were the problems encountered in the things you might do differently in all four of the categories?'

#### **TD**

Hmm..., keep going (not entirely clear)

**AP (Overlapping)**

I mean, in, in the original format, it was a sort of summation type of question. , so in terms of ..... specifically in terms of those materials in, in institutional contexts, which we've just talked about and I think the next section will look more specifically at your research questions and your, , so the question is, what were the problems encountered within what you've just outlined, and how would you do things differently?

**TD**

Hmm...,

**AP**

Were there encount..... problems encountered?

**TD**

I mean I sort of, it, it feels a bit too early for me to , to answer the question clearly in relation to the project, because I've only, what, been at it for three, four months or whatever, so , I think that , I mean, one of the things that I think is that, that ..... that I'm aware, that, that is likely to be a problem kind of looking at the budget, is, that, I'm probably under-budgeted in terms of product, the production of the, the film that I'm gonna make , and that, I think I, when I was filling out the AHRB form, I thought really I was thinking pragmatically, you know, 'What were they gonna wear here?', you know, is it and I can't put in, you know, anything near what I would put in if I was sort of, budgeting it for television or something, and so it was, you know, it, it was self-censorship in a way, I mean I could've done that and, and , 'We'll see what happened', put in a much more full budget, because it does involve a lot of travelling in my project particularly , so, that's the only thing I can think of what I would do differently, or at least want to explore differently, and I think, is, is an issue for, I think that is an issue for the AHRB if they're going to be seriously in funding research work in, in film and TV and stuff, that actually, you know, they won't fully fund something that's ah..., that's a, a production, they could be looking at lots of money , I remember thinking, ah..., you know Terry Flaxton don't you? You do, don't you know Terry's got this high-definition stuff he wanted to explore, now he can call in a lot of deals and stuff, as, as, as all of us can but it's still, if you're working in high definition it's a really serious research project. The costs of that, are, you know, gonna be substantial, and even for me, because of my project involves a lot of , ah..., of travelling and stuff and, you know, to some extent I've been able to fund , P..... A..... partly because my Dad dies, and at XXX last year and I got a bit of money so I was able to buy the camcorder and the computing and I self-funded a lot of it, which I'm happy to do because it's a long-term thing for me, but, it's not that the AHRB have funded everything that , funded the whole resource.

**AP**

Which is quite a common thing, I mean this is sort of a more and more general point, but this does seem to be a thing across the performing XXX XXX (obscured).

**TD (Overlapping)**

Oh really? That's interesting.

**AP**

People are under-budgeting because they know that the AHRB won't fund it so we have these knock-on effects which are actually starting the undertakings of the research, something that you can make things up as you go.

**TD**

Yes, yes, which is ah..., a..... I mean I don't s..... I mean we'll see, you know, it's , like (indistinct) anything else ask me the question in two years' time and it might be different and at the moment I can't, I think I can do it, ah..., and I think I can do, you know, find ways of making the work money, and I do get bits of money, research money, from Goldsmith's as well, so , so I think it'll be okay, but it won't be, you know, it won't be a fully-resourced production budget.

**AP**

The final question in the, in the sort of context or institutional context section, obviously this project is, comes after the last re and I know that in 2001 re Goldsmith's took the decision not to submit practice, wha, what, were you involved in the 1996 RAE when practice was submitted? Was you practice submitted and what was your experience of that in terms of how, how it may have fed into thinking about practice as research currently?

**TD**

Sure. That, really don't know about the last bit of the question, ahh..., in t..... I was submitted in 1996, I think along with some , with, with I think most other practice colleagues, I think we had a completely inclusive , policy at that point, was that you bunged everybody in, at that point I knew nothing about practice as research as an area at all, I mean I, and I had barely understood what the, you know, why I was being asked to list my productions over the last four years or what I'd written or, I mean I did, I think I was thought of as being reasonably safe, because I, I think in that round it, yes it did, it included , a book that I'd written and edited that went alongside a series of television programmes , so that it was kind of , academically Kosher up to a point, it wasn't, I mean it wasn't a massively academic book, but it did, did, it was used in universities and, and had a reasonable international kind of coverage and stuff, so, I think I was in there more because I'd done, oh, where, you know, I was thought to be safe in that context more because of that, than because of anything that I'd done in terms of production. . Ah..... we did, and but Goldsmith's did get a four in that year, which there, you know, obviously , and I think it had been a five and went down to a four and, and so that the, in the run-up to the, the next one, which was what, 2000 was it, or 2001?

**AP (Interjecting)**

2001, yes.

**TD**

Yeah, and the run-up to that, there was a, enormous institutional anxiety and , the, , er..., er..., you know, the department was completely focused on getting back up to five, five-star whatever, and there were very pragmatic decisions made about who would be submitted as a result of that and I wasn't submitted in , that, ah..., and , we, we did have conversations about it and, you know, I submitted some stuff that I'd done, but I ..... , you know, in terms of that strategy, I thought they made the right decision, I wouldn't have submitted me either in, you know, if, if you bought the, you buy the strategy. Whether it was right in terms of, of the way that cultural studies panel, was it panel number .....  
.....

**AP**

Sixty-five

**TD**

Six, sixty-five. Whether it was right in terms of how that panel actually behaved or wanted to behave, I don't know, I mean I think there's an open question about, which for me is interesting, about the d, d, degree to which they were open and what their and, what their definition of practice as research was a that time, which we may, and we may have missed a trick, I don't know. But , in terms of the strategy, I thought 'fair enough', you know, 'if that's what I need' bore fruit in a sense that, you know, Goldsmith's is now a five-star department I think it's, you know, resolved a set of problems about what happens in the next round which , , but, I mean , , I think is a massive, I still think, is a massive problem, because I think that even if, you know, if you kind of look at ..... you know, there's, you know, who teaches at Goldsmith's and the number of, that the professors like Angela McRobbie, James Curran, David Morley, Kevin Robbins, you know, these, those people , have built up kind of over twenty, thirty years, very, , substantial international reputations as academics who produce books that are internationally recognized and are very clearly, you just, sort of, you can see those are RAEable with that, with no problem. Now, if you, , in a sense, what, in order for the, for them, for the kind of, both, the sort of, the department within Goldsmith's, and the wider world, to feel secure practice as research being RAEable, in once sense you'd, we'd have to have kind of, twenty, thirty years of building up a body of work which was in some way, kind of, ah..., refereeable and assessable, across the international academic community, and that's a lot of, of, of work, you know, it's a lot, a long-term project so I, my own hunch is that the, that ..... unless the kind of, power shifts or whoever it is, is XXX that's sort of involved in this XXX.

**AP**

Yes

**TD**

You know, that, you know, and that, and that, unless a very vigorous kind of , defence of practice as research, leading up to the next RAE round that, that, we're gonna be in substantially the same vulnerable position as we were in the last round. but that may be too pessimistic, I don't know.

**AP**

Because, of course, the, the peer group the constituency nominates panel members.

**TD**

Yes

**AP**

That, those definitions are quite fluid, but,

**TD**

Yes

**AP**

In terms of, I mean, here you are being funded for three years by the AHRB yes, a creative research fellow is a slightly different tangent to research output, but because it's linked in with the AHRB , it's quite interesting to think about how Goldsmith's would use that in whatever form the next RAE will actually take,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, I think it's, yeah

**AP (Overlapping)**

So it would seem a missed opportunity,

**TD**

Yes, I

**AP**

To not include it.

**TD**

Absolutely, no, no, I am sure, I think they will, and I think that it would be, ah..., , well it's tricky to know of what stage it will happen and what my, sort of, outputs have been at that point, but, but, no, I could see that being , I don't think that would be a problem. I think I would be included , but I was thinking more , in terms of the sort of field as a whole and , that, , you know, I still, , I mean, I don't know what is, as I say, I don't know what went on in the last RAE panel at all. No, but , and had written(?) to what extent practice as research was considered, and what the, those discussions were like, but I know that they were disappoint..... you know, the public ..... message at least is that they were disappointed about the lack of practice as research submissions, there was a low level of those submissions but, who knows? I don't know, I mean I think that, you know, what I, , that the AHRB, you know,

one of the functions of the AHRB , which is very exciting, is to be a kind of advocate for the area, that, you know, within XXX and within the academic community that, you know, using the, the fellowships and the kind of, to say 'here is a developing body of work that , that needs recognition' and stuff, for sure.

**AP**

There's also it o....., it opens up that issue of citation, I mean you were talking about, the international standing of traditional researches, who have books out, but of course if you're, if you're operating within other areas of practice, different kinds of networks of citation work in that way,

**TD**

Yes, yes

**AP**

And you do have a wide variety of peers who reference work it's just in less identifiable.

**TD**

Yes

**AP**

Concrete forms

**TD**

Yes, yes ..... yes

**AP**

But now I'm,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Very interesting

**AP (Overlapping)**

Getting of topic now XXX XXX

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, well, no it's interesting, I think it's a very, I think it's a crucial issue, the , because it's like well, you know, I suppose when everything's distributed onto, on DVD and you can, you can, sort of footnote a shot and say 'well this short is similar to a shot in another film, or this sequence was inspired by .....', you know, you could get to that point, but otherwise it's very tricky, I mean it's very tricky, hmm...

**AP**

I want to move now onto the intellectual and philosophical contexts of the research. , so really it's, it's the specific things, how and where are your research impulses located? I guess this comes back to the more general level and your interest in, in autobiography, but very specifically, in this project , ,

yes, so yeah, what I said a bit about it before, I mean, personally, I think the , that ..... yeah, the sort of central thing, the central part of the impulse is really about the sort of history of documentary , and the moving away from, which is now sort of, really ..... happened, I think it's sort of not really developing, it's happened, is that we, that everybody knows that documentaries aren't, a kind of transparent window on the world from an authoritative position, the, you know, the kind of, of the view of the, the, the , let's say the kind of BBC documentary of the fifties or sixties or so, you know, but, but, the, the, the reputable, serious, expository documentary with the 'voice of God' commentary that says 'this is the way it is' and that we, in that the audience kind of accepts that as a, a , in a transparent way as , an objective picture of the world. so there's on the one hand, the one , hand at the pole of, of, of, of documentaries there, which are also, you know, obviously throughout my working life, I've kind of worked against that as a , ah..., because I've always seen documentary as being partial and ideologically inflected by whatever institution it comes from and all that stuff, so, the, there's a way in which I think ah..., the idea of, of autobiographical documentary sort of interpreted maybe quite widely in term of like very individually authored documentary where the individual authorial voice is quite , evident in the, in the thing itself, in the text itself, in the film itself, , is kind of at the other end of that pole 'cause the, the, the, you know, it's the, it's the voice of one small person rather than the voice of God, so it's , you know, it's , it's, it's, it's an interest, it, it, it began to be very interesting to me, particularly, you know, after the video diary movement as, as a, as a kind of , ..... ah, a tool for looking at documentary language from the opposite end of that pole so that , ah..., you know, looking at issues of subjectivity and , and issues of representation, because, from the point of view of, of this, of individually authored stuff that, erm..., that includes substantial amounts of, of the documentary-maker's own life, or whatever. So , does that make sense?

### **AP (Overlapping)**

That makes sense, yeah.

### **TD (Overlapping)**

That was kind of part of the, part, part of the impulse was, was to , go to the other extreme and to look at it from that point of view. I think that , that the kind of , the sort of thing I've become increasing, as I sort of worked out the research proposal and as I, and as I've been working on it for these last three months or whatever it is to think well, that, that, the opposite pole idea actually opens up an enorm....., you know, a whole other field of problems, particularly around the idea of individual authorship anyway, you know, the death of the author and the , and , and , you know, maybe more significantly , what do we mean, about the self anyway? Now, so , you know, and so in a sense it's sort of bouncing ..... what I'm looking at, is bouncing back from that pole so that, and, and, and, and looking at the problematics around , ..... ah..., who these individuals or who I am, you know, in the end who I am, what myself is that's involved in this process and looking at other, other, you know, I think the whole, for instance, the whole field of , or , ..... feminist autobiography and the kind of writing that has, particularly writing that's been around that those, that, that obviously have some visual stuff by Annette Coombe(?) and , Joey

Spence and people who have looked at photography, still photography particularly, it's very interesting for me in that context, that there is pe..... there has been quite a lot of work done which in, mostly I think in, in still photography and, and, and written XXX autobiography around the, the, those, difficulties. That's where the work's been done, not much on film that I know of yet, but .....

**AP**

Yes, it's quite interesting because it's actually in some ways as dealing with that strange demarcation that Nichols makes this the performative and reflexive (indistinct).

**TD (Overlapping)**

, absolutely.

**AP (Overlapping)**

But, of course, in, in autobiography, once you start talking about the destabilising of any sense, of any essence of self, it starts to deal with those two issues.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Mmm..., mmm..., absolutely, yes.

**AP**

And I think you've sort of, you've touched on those, the sort of, the issue of research epistemologies from that intellectual tradition and you've said earlier that it's more difficult to think about works in through that. Did you want to anything about sort of, those research epistemologies surrounding the material?

**TD**

Film making, yeah. I'd love to say loads about it, (laughter) but I'm not sure I can so anything, I mean, I think that, well, I, I suppose I can, there's, there's something that occurs immediately, which is, , some work I did as a result of that, the video, the, the video diary project with the young women that we did in the, sort of, late nineties I think, where I sort of interviewed, one or two of them, the diarists, since and, and read a bit about video diaries, and looked at the, the, the issue that I was particularly interested in, was the, the relationship ah..., to the camera and, therefore, in a sense, to the audience that different diarists adopted, and, so that in my own practice, ah..., and this is more kind of what I'm going to do than what I have, well I've done a bit of it actually, but, I, , ..... what I think I need to look at and do, and sort of pose questions with the camera as a, as it were is, , is around that, is around well, if you're, you know, if you're sh....., self-shooting, what is, how do you, in the way that you're shooting, ask questions about your relationship, my relationship, to the material, that's, that's in front of the camera, whatever, which includes like I mean in the, in the, in the girls' video diaries, because they were, they were trained in the sort of BBC diary method originally, not by us, but by, by the project we were working with. They did a lot of, of pieces to camera, you know, which is the kind of, which in the genre, of the video diary



genre, is that sort of, the major aesthetic technique, really, and , but they did ..... they used an extraordinary variety of different ways of doing that, and of expressing their relationship to the camera within that immediately comes to mind is this , one thing that immediately comes to mind is this , woman who ..... a young woman who'd, who wanted to tell the story of , , how she ..... it was she actually, it wasn't important that she wanted to tell the story, that she'd set up the camera, so that she was kind of on one side of the frame, and making a side in, down the camera lens, like a sort of, I mean, actually John Dowie's written a bit about this that I, the sort of, the, that, that coming down and doing the, you know, on the stage, doing the, can't remember what that,

**AP (Interjecting)**

Soliloquy

**TD**

Yeah, the soliloquy, but that's sort of aside to the audience, you know, where you,

**AP (Interjecting)**

XXX XXX that 'Moonlighting' technique.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Which happens a lot in Shakespeare.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, it is, that's true, or, or indeed, sort of 'impera la fou', Goddard, whatever, it's interesting, I see, that's very interesting, I hadn't thought of that ..... yeah. Hmm..., , ..... anyway she, and she, there was this extraordinary scene where she was set up, sort of, one side of the frame, so she kept looking round into the camera and doing this stuff, and, but, in the background her mother came into the picture, it was in the kitchen, and sort of went to the sink and stuff, and her mother, and she'd just crashed the car, the family car (laughs) and she'd just told us, when her mother was out of the room (whispering tone) 'I've just crashed the car, I don't know how I'm going to tell my mother', you know, (laughter) sort of, and , and then her mother comes in, and, and she said 'I just crashed the car' and her mother doesn't actually really register it, and starts talking to her about did she see a piano or something that she was supposed to XXX and she sort of, and then her mother walks out and she looks at the camera and says , (whispering tone) 'Why is she talking about the piano when I told her I've just crashed the car?' (laughter) I mean XXX XXX and what it was, I mean it was very funny but it al..... but it, it also, you know, has this extraordinary kind of, relationship with the audience through how she was using the camera and , I think that's what I , that's what I mean when I think about how you pose questions with the camera, in a way, that, that, I'm not sure how ..... I mean I must, I must actually talk to that because she, in fact curiously she's now doing a sociology PhD at Goldsmith's XXX.

**AP (Interjecting)**

Oh, right.

**TD**

I don't know ..... (unclear) she's available. , I must talk to her in detail about how self-conscious she was about placing the camera in that way, and I'm not sure it matters whether she was or not, but, but I suppose all you can say is a sort of practice as research XXX you probably should be XXX XXX you're self-conscious about that and , and that' that is a way of posing a, a research question with a camera as opposed to words ..... though, well, not as opposed to, , maybe on top of, or,

**AP (Interjecting)**

Together with

**TD**

Together with ..... instead of (laughter)

**AP**

And how then, does the research, or does the research engage with issues around professionalism, which I think is an, an interesting question to ask, because it means working within documentary film genres.

**TD**

Mmm..., professionalism, in the sense of industrial professionalism,

**AP (Interjecting)**

Yeah.

**TD**

In the, the, ,

**AP (Overlapping)**

Well, professionalism, however you want to,

**TD (Interjecting)**

Yes

**AP**

Define that, because obviously whatever your practice may be, you have a different relationship with that notion of professionalism what is your notion of that relationship?

**TD (After a pause)**

Yes, it's a tricky one, I , I mean, if differ..... professionalism defined as, you know, the, the, the sort of normal practices in the profession and if you take the profession to be television and documentary, I think it , ah..., I mean it has a relationship and there are, it's interesting , that , I was watching the , the Grierson Awards , I think it was just before Christmas, which is a sort of m-m-m-major prize giving ceremony for documentary each year and erm..., in the category of, the sort of, the may..... the, sort of, the most prestigious category of social documentary or whatever, I can't remember the exact pri-um, prize

title, but, two out of the three submissions were effectively autobiographical documentaries in one way or the other – by documentaries that relied on , actually there were some – one of them was a, was Lou Collins' film about the death of his brother and which was very autobiographical and the other was , a film by ..... , , a young m....., I can't remember the title of it or anything but it was a young man who, who was involved with a group of drug addicts and it was about, particularly, his relationship I think with one of them and , and , what happened to her and that, so it was a, it was again, autobiographical so that there is a, within the sort of, the profession, if you take the, sort of like, docu- XXX independent documentary makers, there is a kind of real interest in, in that way of working , so that I think it relates to that, you know, it relates to that sort of work and that area of concern, and I think it also, in, in the sort of wider sense of the profession as in a narrower maybe, sense of the profession, as the television industry. It , it, it poses questions about, ah...., what, you know, how we're gonna learn things through television, if at all, , w- in a, in a time when television aesthetics are very XXX XXX XXX television aesthetics are actually very formulaic, in my view, I mean, you know, , in a particular way, I mean something it's very interesting, you know, like Wife Swap, I think is quite an interesting programme, but it is nevertheless, very heavily formatted and that's the kind of thing that's being ..... funded at the moment, so you know, it may be this kind of work raises questions in that context too.

#### **AP**

I suppose there, the issue, the question about professionalism as well, is that it's, it's trying to touch on ..... how, whether you see those research imperatives as something opposed to, or , cope(?) ..... I don't know (whispering tone) .....or, (tutting) what is the word I'm trying to think of? Parip is then, you know, it's very difficult to talk about practice as research in media practices because of this, industry thing that we can't deal with. How do you do practice as research with that?

#### **TD (Overlapping)**

Within the industry. As it were. Yes, I think, I mean, either, I th..... I think it's, it is very difficult to ..... think about , certainly, it's very difficult to think about how you could, you could, which is one of the difficulties around the whole RAE business as well, I don't know how you could, how professional practice can count as research from a, a media back – , you know, a television that say (not entirely clear) particularly television background, because of the imperatives of the industry and there is a, the, you know, I think it's indisputable and more and more indisputable that the, that ..... , what you, what is made for television, is very, very substantially shaped by those institutional imperatives and, therefore, in what sense could that be research? , though I see it could be, , you know, again, with the old the, the, the sort of accompanying whatever, you know, you could make another film that was actually , was in interesting project that Rosie Tomlinson at Westminster's doing which reminded me of that, which ..... , I think she's applying for AHRB money for a s-s-small grant for it, but it's, it's, it's she was involved in sh- I don't know if you know her do – she was

**AP**

Yeah

**TD**

An independent producer who is involved in , she teaches at West, in Westminster now, but she was, uh..., has made a lot of programmes to do with the nineties and she, made a programme , or she'd pitched a programme to Channel 4 about, now what was it about? It was about Aids, I think, it was about young people and Aids or something in ..... uh..., at some point in the late nineties, they got interested in it and by the time it was made, it turned out to be a sort of six part series with young people talking about sex. It was one of the first, kind of, though it actually, and it was never transmitted (laughs) curiously, but what an amazing story about, and it was a partic-particularly historical moment in Channel 4 where they were just becoming, you know, they were just anx-anxious about ratings and just wanting to turn things XXX XXX, so it had a very specific context. Now, she wants now to make a, a documentary that, that critique, that whole process you know, that look up, looks back at that and tries to explain why it happened, so, you know, that's obviously practice research the making, the actual making of that programme and the sort of, it's p-passage from a sort of a p-proposal about Aids to a rather cheap talk show about sex, is, is, what it, it's difficult to tell how that, you could say that on it's own is research. Does that answer your question?

**AP**

We're here with Tony Dounumt, this is tape two of the twenty-first of January 2004 , we were discussing issues of professionalism.

**TD**

Right

**AP**

And I think, wa- I wanted to sort of wrap up by going back to the issue of, because you were talking about how the autobiographical form is gaining more currency within the community of, at least documentary making , so it sounds as though your own project, which is very firmly situated as practice as research because it's funded by the AHRB as a XXX fellowship, but also it does, although it might not be shown at seven-thirty on Channel 4, that there is a clear professional trajectory, whereby it can be both research and be situated within a more industrial context (murmur of agreement). Is that so?

**TD**

No, I think that's true, I mean, it, it, an industrial context taken widely, I think it's absolutely true that, I mean, concretely say, you know, what, what I want to do for this imposium that I'll put on is, is, is, and you know, I've already talked to , ah..., ..... the, ah..., documentary film makers group, which is a sort of , you know, an, it's mainly London based but it's a kind of, ah..., asso-associated with , (tutting) a website whose name escapes me, oh! it doesn't matter, but anyway, it's kind of part of a sort of new movement of young film makers and, and dohouse, which is another initiative which is a, so and, and,

and, you know, and Bristol Docs and all that, so that, that there is a sort of ..... outside of the immediate industrial context, there is a sort of, a community and that, that is a, parallel with the profession and has relationships across into the profession that will be p-will definitely be the context for some of the dissemination of the , of the work, and, and the sort of, you know, a place to talk about it.

**AP**

Okay, and now we're coming to the end of the second section so we're returning to your, your question that you wanted ..... placed in each section. What were the problems encountered in the things you might do differently at this stage in your research with specific reference to the intellectual context.

**TD**

I'm beginning to re-regret that idea (laughter) XXX I said all this! , re-regret ..... because you're gonna ask me this at the end of every section, aren't you? "As you said, as you asked what.....".

**AP (Overlapping, to CR)**

You can tell he loves it!

**TD (Overlapping)**

And now I'm faced with my own petard!

**AP (Light-heartedly)**

I mean you don't have to answer the question.

**TD**

I don't think I can in relation.

**AP (Overlapping)**

Okay

**TD (Overlapping)**

To that, XXX I'll have to admit. (Laughs)

**AP (Overlapping)**

We'll leave that to the end. So I won't say then to move on to the third section, which is this process and conduct , and this sort of narrows the conversation down even further, I know we've dealt, I think, generally with this, but what were your specific research questions? Did you frame specific research questions in your AHRB XXX?

**TD**

I, I did, yes,

**AP**

What were they?

**TD**

, most interesting XXX I can remember them now actually, I, I mean they are on, but you know, I can give you a paper copy, or, you've probably even got one, have you?

**AP**

I don't think I do.

**TD**

Aahh....., I mean they were, as I remember them now, they were, do you want them? I mean I can, you know, I can find them, now.

**AP**

You can send them to me, but just XXX

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yeah, but, I mean, they, they, the- there were two major sections to them, one was a, specifically about , autobiographical documentary and what, , you know, like, , what, what does the autobiographical form tell us about the, , crisis of documentary and representation, in, in a, in documentary at the moment. , does, you know, sort of sub-questions like 'Does, ah..., the video diary form alter?', or the sort of, the, the, the focus on the author as film maker as subject of the film , is it kind of solipsistic and, and , and self-referential and inward-looking or does it tell us more about, could it tell us more about the relationship of the film and the f- and the subject of the film and the filmmaker, to history and to wider things. So it was around, , what ..... the autobiographical form ..... ah..., how it helps us understand what documentary is about now, and what its uses are, and then there were the sort of three sub-questions about , the, about film making and practice as research and, and to what extent , and how that this, that particular, this particular project would help us understand what, what film making as practice as research could be about.

**AP**

Okay, and what was the specific process, by which you devised those questions, because I mean clearly they're generally informed by (murmurs of agreement) your past practices .

**TD (after a pause)**

, are we also within the, sort of first group of questions? I also talked about the, the stuff about the self, that we were talking about.

**AP (Interjecting)**

XXX XXX (inaudible)

**TD**

Earlier, how did I formulate them?

**AP**

Yes, I mean, was, was there a specific identifiable set of contexts by which you arrived at these questions and not others.

**TD**

I think, I mean, I , you know, I was, you know, it's ..... very concretely , some of them came particularly out of , Jon Dovey's work in , , 'The Last Freak Show', you know, where, which was about , and, and worked along those same sort of lines, which was about , which really was about , the, camcorders and video diary stuff and personal film making I mean, some of them w-were about, you know, my readings of an interest in films like, particularly say Ross McElwee and , Alan Berliner, two American autobiographical film makers, , there's work by, in a m..... Is this the kind of thing you mean?

**AP**

Yes

**TD**

It's a bit concrete, that it, work by , , an American theorist called Michael Renov who has written a lot about autobiographical documentaries, Catherine Russell's , 'Experimental Ethnography' is a book that refers quite a lot to , America, particularly American avant-garde, sort of , , ..... personal autobiographical film making , ah..., you know, I'm sure there's lots of other stuff but it's sort of, there's a lot of stuff that's swimming about that's relevant.

**AP**

Okay, and how the, the devising process, if you can call it that, for the work that you do, of the, of your specific research project (murmur of agreement). How does that relate to your past practices? Is it very different process? How is it different? and that really comes, I guess it's that question of the context of working, and as an AHRB creative fellow, how has, that shaped your practice differently?

**TD**

Hmm... I, again, I think it's pretty early days to tell that in, , to be very clear about that , 'cause I'm sure it'll change over the next , sort of, two and a half years enormously but I, I mean, you know, as I w, as I was saying before, that, that the kind of , I mean in the way that I'm just actually sort of experiencing it , at the moment, it is ah..., it's massively different to be able to structure my own time, on the basis of following interests in a, in a sort of blue sky sort of way , rather than, you know, my, I, , my work up until now has either been sort of preparing things for teaching, and teaching and working with students or it's been , writing proposals to try and interest television executives in, you know, commissioning editors in, in them and , so in, in, in a sense my work has always been much more rigorously targeted around particular outcomes, and wanting things to happen and trying to make them happen in a very immediate and practical way , it's very ..... ah..., I have never been in this position, I don't think ever having this sort of sense of free-floating kind of, I mean there are obviously very ..... fixed points in it, you know, I have to give a report at the end of the year, and I have to produce something by the end of the three years and all, but so there is not that, it's completely free, but to me it feels enormously , more fluid and experimental

and following my nose than, that I have ever experienced before which is, it's both, kind of exciting and frightening, that, you know, 'cause I don't umm..., ah..., because it does feel like, you know, I come to a fork in the road and I don't necessarily, there's not nothing that tells me which fork to take, whereas before, I would, , it would be very clear, you'd take the practical form, the form of the results of that commission, or, you know .....

## AP

And what kind of strategy, if, if any, do you have in this process for, evaluating those, those stages?

## TD

Hmm..., yeah, evaluations, interesting actually, I haven't thought much about that which is , which I should do. , I, well I suppose it's true that I did actually , I mean in fact, in the sort of, in this sort of, three month, four month period that I've been doing it, I, I have , what I did was, just before Christmas, I , I sort of wrote what I kind of , half-jokingly called a sort of first-term report on myself, so, which was for my , mentor at , at Goldsmith's and , so I kind of went through what I'd written and films that I'd seen, and some of my thinking about my, the film making project that I'm going to do and kind of came to, I think what, that, what I ended up doing, in a way, was, was coming to conclusions about where I should put my energies more specifically, so it was like a process of , ah..., of, cutting down options in a way, being, being, 'cause, because one of my experiences at the, the sort of first few months was thinking, you know, 'I can do anything', you know, I had sort of, immediately I had sort of half a dozen ideas for films I could make, for instance, which weren't the films that I'd proposed at the AHRB XXX (laughter) and I had to sort of rein myself in, in a way, and feel much clearer now that, that's , , that that's the way to go otherwise I'd go mad, you know, I mean I could, I mean, I think that maybe one of the effects of being let loose from a, quite a structured working life to a research life, where, you know, anything but, sort of, seems to be possible, you, I think I've realised now it's not, but a, and I quite like, I mean I like that as well actually, that I, you know, that is one of, you know, I want some elements of that to remain, because I don't want to , you know, the whole point for me in a way is , is to be able to think in a relatively untrammelled way, you know, in a relatively free way, that's what I'm, you know, want to do so, you, one of the things that I , that one of the kind of ways in fact I was writing about in this report was, was re-realising that there were a kind of, there were sort of almost like two ways to which aren't ..... you know, there are, the, the, the, they sort of mix up, but there are sort of two poles that I identified as ways of working: one would be , , to look at it as quite a seri....., you know, look at it as a, as a professional academic and think 'well, the first thing I should do is do the literature review properly', which would, would be both literature and film making, so I should sort of sit down and see every autobiographical film ever made and I should XXX it down and write, read everything about autobiographical film, identity, self, , feminist autobio....., you know, I should do all of that and then I should decide what I was going to do so, 'cause I knew what the field was about and so the ..... , and I suppose there's a way in which I'm doing some of that, but, the other sort of pole feels to be like 'well, actually I need to sort of relax and kick back a bit and just see



what floats to the surface' and , and start working with, with what comes to the surface, what seems to be a priority in , in ah..., in that more, less structured, more , intuitive kind of way, and that I think there is, there may be something to do with, that may be something to do with practice as research, I'm sure I, actually it's to do with it, it should be to do with all kinds of research as well, if you've got the, the freedom to do that, but certainly in terms of practice as research, where, you know, the idea of making a film on the basis of, ah..., a number of th....., you know, (raspberry sound) , coherent theoretical constructs that come out of a literature review, is a bit weird, I mean, I can't imagine doing that, you know, you , I mean, I can imagine ..... getting a sense of what those theoretical constructs might be, but then I can also sense that, because of my experience of making films, is that you, you, that certainly with documentary, you know, it's back to that sort of Rabiger hypothesis thing, in one sense you can make hypothesis, but when you actually research, you end up chucking out the window, I mean you shoot, you end up chucking out the window, so however coherent your theoretical contract, constructs might be, they will certainly, you know, be flushed down the toilet really soon in the process, I imagine.

#### **AP**

Mmm..., that, that raises really interesting questions, I mean because people tend to focus on the, the processes of creating outcomes as somehow speaking to your research imperatives, but of course actually, the whole process of research also sounds as though it needs to relate to the research questions themselves that it, that it's sort of literature review is quite a blunt instrument to deal with a whole range of different kinds of research questions, that may demand different kinds of methods.

#### **TD**

Yes, yes, I think that's true. I mean one of the things that I was, remember thinking about in, at, , the presentation they did at Parip was , was the, for instance, the degree to which , my own experience of personal therapy was a, was a research method that, you know, which I've been involved in for a sort of, most of my adult life in a way, it's like well, is that research? You know, in, in even terms of, of what we were saying about the self and what the self is and identifying. It probably is, but it's certainly ..... I mean I s....., I mean it's very difficult to know how to do a literature review of that but I suppose you could try but it's much more experiential in a sense, I think that's the problem, so the ..... yeah I think the sort of, the, the, the thing, the challenge behind what I think you're saying is, is , in terms of practice as research is how do we ..... account for experiential kind of , for experience in, in, in a context where you, you, you've , you need to come up with research questions or whatever and whether you can in relation to experience or how you do that and I don't I don't know of any models of that.

#### **AP**

I mean, that's, that's the interesting challenge that practice as research poses, I think, to research generally, which is what you said earlier because ..... because that model is not what happens on the ground with book writing either, so what potential practice as research has for that? , I wanted to move

on to , I know it's early days again but, the, the components of your practice as research, the work that you've done so far, how,

### **TD (Interjecting)**

Sure

### **AP**

Have, how have your investigations, thoughts around, the different components of the project, impacted on, on each other and shifted things?

### **TD**

Mmm..., well, I, I, , , in a way it's been quite , I have had, I mean, I suppose the major development in term, because I have developed uh..., I've moved on from the, my notion of, of the outputs of the research that's in the ..... AHRB proposals, so I need to re-negotiate with them at the end of this year what, you know, or maybe sooner, what, what, 'cause I committed in the out, the outputs that I committed to in the proposal were a book on, about autobiographical documentary that was gonna be based on interviews with autobiographical film makers and video diarists with possibly an accompanying film that was kind of along the same subject , and, you know, and a symposium and my own, autobiographical film. Ah..., now what I've, what I now want to do, is a, a symposium where, whi-whi-which results in a publication with, which I edit, but, or co-edit, but that is, has contributions from, from academics and practitioners, probably about , that's about autobiographical documentary, because I became increasingly bored and sort of frustrated with the, or kind of w-w-w-really didn't see why I should speak for, or attempt to speak for autobiographical documentary makers, and it felt, and also that the film idea felt kind of interesting I mean I wouldn't, I'd quite like to make it, but , but it also seemed a bit dreary really, you know, I was just sort of, you know, and I remember when I wrote it down in the proposal, I though, you know, this is, you know, it sort of feels like it's, it's okay but I'm not really excited by it. , and , ah..., and, so that actually the ..... yes, so that's one part of the changes and the other p-part was just thinking about well, and that frees me up in a sense. To put all of my sort of production energies into the autobiographical film, which is based on my great-grandfather's diaries in Sierra Leone, which I'll, I talk about a bit more if you want, but , that, ah..., and it also gives me an opportunity to do more kind of potential written work , around that project , which is, which opens up the possibility of being of it being , the, the written work being much more where, y-y-you know, where, where the ideas lead me, where the experience of doing the film leads me, which is , which, which means it will be much more personal in a sense, than of a book about autobiographical documentary, it would be a book about the process really, I was encouraged, Dave Morley encouraged me in this direction actually, so which was very nice so I, and I could also then also think, which is something else that I'm interested in, very interested in, in terms of output, is that that package how, whatever it turns out to be, and I've really no idea what it's gonna turn out to be, but that package could be a , a more integrated, I mean it could be a DVD that has text and maybe a book that's part of it or whatever that , that includes the film, so that though the all(?) includes versions of the film or, you know, so that the, the , , you know,

the , Carol and I have talked about this, you know, and I think the ideas you're looking at in terms of DVD are very int- and very, and some of the ideas that came up at the Parip Conference actually are very interesting in terms of what the limitations are of a linear film as a research outcome and whether, you know, whether, what other ways there are of using DVDs as a, as a way of intervening in that, but it could be more interest- so I'm really interested in all of that, and that opens up that, so, more of a possibility, I think.

## **AP**

Which I think takes us to the question about documentation, really I mean, how have you started to conceive of documentation in its very broadest definition, with the research project?

## **TD**

Hmm..., , hmm..., ..... well apart from what I've said, not a lot really. I mean I do, I keep a kind of , , which was about the other , , suggestion of a, of an academic friend of mine who, suggested I kind of keep a methodology diary, which is sort of vaguely what I did, but I don't fill it in that often, but I (laughter) do try and keep a kind of track of what my move- what I'm thinking and keep writing that down , ..... I haven't done much. I mean it's interesting actually, I think I'm quite, I think the challenge for me, in terms of, of documentation or the relationship with the, to the video project is, what I'm going to, and I haven't done much in terms of actual shooting yet, in the, in this period, I've done other things before that, and I'm not sure, I'm ner- I think I'm sort of nervous about getting into that, I don't really know, and I'll need to sort of e-ex-work through some of that and experiment, I mean I'm thinking about , and I did the work, one the, the , the, photographs of my mother and my parents I did for Parip, which was very interesting actually, yeah, one of the interesting things about documentation actually, is that I've really noticed is that I, I'm almost kind of , unable now, to think about writing anything without illustrating it without putting pictures into it, which I've never, and I get very excited the moment I put a picture into something that I'm writing , which, , was partly, , so which was definitely held, sort of pushed along by doing that mother piece, but seems to be happening all over the place, I-I-I kind of scan stuff in now and think that , and it feels like it's, it's , it satisfies me more immediately, if I can put an image into the text and , ah..., it feels more appropriate and everything, so that's , that's interesting, but in terms of actual videoing, I don't know, really, I'm gonna have to , ..... it's a sort of familiar stage to me, in terms of, I mean, XXX I think lots of, of ..... you know, before you start something, there's a kind of nervousness about putting you-your toe in the water and I feel a bit of that. I'm not sure that's about documentation particularly, but I suppose it is, kind of.

## **AP (Overlapping)**

Well what's quite interesting though, is that your focus on writing performance as a way of documenting process and in terms of these case studies that's in, it's an interesting contrast with the people who are working in performance practices.

## **TD**

Mmm..., sure.

## **AP**

Who also have different kinds of writing forms to document their process, but they know privilege, those they're, they're privileging those image-based, either still or moving, as, the documentation of their performance practices, so it was a question that I'd raised with another case study XXX (murmur of agreement). What to do with, with that writing? but it sounds as though you're actually ..... in-interested in privileging some kind of writing process as a way of talking about documentation.

## **TD (Overlapping)**

I don't ..... I, I, I sort of don't think I am, but I think (I didn't feel safe, I mean think my proposal and the, the, the, the whole thing is very interesting, 'cause I think I did, I mean I know that I deliberately wrote it as a, something I thought would be safe, because, you know, , the AHRB could look at it and think 'well even if he f\*\*\*s up with the , the, the, ', I'm not sure if I should say this, but anyway (laughs) you know, 'even if he kind of if he produces a rubbish film, at least there's some sort of respectable academic (laughter) core to this thing' that would result in a, but which is part of my impatience with the idea of a document. A book about autobiographical documentary that's not an edited collection that so, I'm, I'm very T- I'm torn, it's a conflict actually, and I don't think that I, in my mi- in my sort of soul, mind whatever, I don't privilege, the written stuff, which is part of the reason why I raised that, why that thing about pictures in text occurred to me because actually, I think that, this is, I don't know whether this is relevant at all, but I can – one of the things I've been doing recently is, is, thinking about W.G. Sable's work XXX XXX and you know the way he uses pictures and, they, they're, but I think that was really interesting in, in, because those pictures exist in those, in the text in a way that isn't kind – they're sort of float in a weird way, so they don't have captions or anything they, I mean sometimes they are reference – you know, very literal references but they always feel a bit weird, like they're kind of they have a sort of, a free-floatingness, a sort of, ah..., so they're not, you know, in a sense they're not I mean they are text, his book obviously a text, a written text and that's privileging in some senses but the use of the pictures is a bit floaty and I'm, I, I, it's interesting that I've been thinking that alongside this too, so but I think that, the ..... I mean it's a very live issue in documentary really, because there is like, the int- the issue of ah..., you know, it's back to the old 'voice of God' thing, commentary and stuff and the way that, the extent to which words do anchor images or not, or so, you know, I think all of that is, is going on and I think it's a, it would be interesting for me to think about, about that relationship from, of text to video material rather than just still images and the, and what, yes, what, what video images, how they exist for me as documentation and I don't really have an answer to that yet, it would be something interesting to look at, but it's certainly not part of my intention to privilege text, though I think that it, it, it, you know, I can recognise ways in which I do slip into it, as an, as a way of, and it may be part, that, that, maybe, you know, for me what's important at this stage is the research process that is, that I've, that, you know, writing things down is, is more, is a way for me to grapple with things that at the moment, at the moment, I don't know.

**AP**

Okay, which I think leads into question about artefacts, you've talked about outcomes, particularly in terms of the symposium of the details of the symposium and of the editing bit, and as a range of, of other artefacts, but if you wanted to talk about, wondered if you wanted to talk more specifically about, the, the autobiographical film about your grandfather in Sierra Leone and how that artefact leads back into the research context more generally.

**TD (Slightly overlapping)**

Mmm..., sure yes, I mean the ..... the, the, the, Great-Grandfather's diary Diarist Project is something that I've sort of had in my mind for ye-for, for maybe decades, but certainly years and I, I mean I've found those diaries in , in, you know, the home that, the house I was brought up in, in my sort of teens, I don't know, they've sort of been in my life for a long time , and at, and at various times over the last, certainly the last fifteen years I think, maybe twenty years I've kind of thought 'Oh, these'll b e an interesting basis for a film' and played with various script ideas and sometimes made a, kind of proposal to an arts organisation to do something with it or whatever, never with any success, and , so they've kind of, it's int- you know, it, it kind of intrigues me that they've always been around in some way and that they were obviously kind of important to me so, and the particular reason why they came back up at the, in the pro- in the process of formulating the proposal, was because ah..., they are, you know, they are written diaries, written by a Victor, a twenty-five-year old Victorian , soldier, Lieutenant in the British Imperial Army in Sierra Leone in the 1880s so they, they, I mean they are very interesting kind of , ah..., account in a way, a sort of interior account of how somebody ah..., w-was sort of reconciling himself in a w- a way to being a racist and an imperialist and a kind of , you know, that, in, in, term historically they're very interesting in that way. but also obviously they're diaries, so they, , so I, the idea of putting them together with a sort of video, contemporary video diary that I do of a trip to Sierra Leone at the heart of the film. I think they'll be other things in it, but at the heart of the film that's what will be there, , the questions that I ask , in, in one of the research questions really is about what, what is the relationship between sort of, video diary, autobiographical, confessional stuff, in relation to history, you know, so that, and, you know, like there's the whole Nicholls thing about the sort of rela- you know, documentary and history and the discourse of sobriety and all that kind of stuff, so, there's a sort of feeling that documentary should deal with weighty, weightier historical social stuff, so it just seemed like a really interesting opportunity to , ah..., put those, those two things together, but also is very personal to me, both literally, because I'm his Great-Grandson but also, you know, I was brought up, I was born in the house that he bought and brought into the family, as it were, so there are very kind of literal – felt connections with him, pre-material connections, in a way ..... , and the diaries themselves as a kind of object, objects, you know, they're, they're there, so , is this answering your question?

**AP**

Yeah, of course (laughs)

**TD**

Oh Good. , I think I'm sort of, yeah, I think that's it really, so I sort of, , so , yeah, that's why, that's what the sort of heart of the project is.

**AP**

Right, okay. , and how, this sort of takes it perhaps a little bit away, although I think we can relate this back in: Questions about modes of assessment conceived, I mean we talked earlier about how you're evaluating the process, but have you formulated or how have you formulated the potential moment of assessing these different kinds ..... (murmur of agreement). Do we need to break this down any more?

**TD (Overlapping)**

I don't know whether, I don't think it's our bill(?) XXX XXX, so let's not worry about it.

**AP (Overlapping)**

Okay. But in terms of assessing the success of, the different kinds of artefacts or outputs that you're producing I mean by, by what means. Were you, would you judge your video work to have successfully answered and addressed your questions? ..... again, I know it's very early on in the process, but is this something that you've thought about?

**TD**

Not really. I mean I think that ..... I mean in, in my kind of , the way that I will go about it, I imagine that, I mean I would assess it , in the same way as I assess anything that I make as it were, as in a sort of like going along and , I mean I always reckoned that I never know until at least six months after finishing something, what I think about it actually is , it seems be , you know, I'm, it's impossible to me to be , in well, in any way objective or even to sort of look at something without kind of , you know, shuddering at the points where I think it doesn't work or whether memory of what that shoot was like or, you know, so that I think that's it, it, assessment, you know, self-assessing films is very hard in that way, I mean obviously the process of making them involves continual assessment, so you're assessing your rushes when you edit and that, etcetera, etcetera , but ..... getting a sense of, of, from ma-vaguely from the outside of what something is like is a very long-term project, I think, so, I would, would , would imagine , that I'll be both in the process of production. Which is one of the ver- I think, the real advantages of, of , doing a production that's research-based, rather than, kind of output production, you know, sort of commission-based , is that, there's an opportunity for that process to be, you know, for, for instance to be able to show people rough edits , in a rather, you know, part of having all the gear here in a way, it's just XXX 'cause I can sort of do a rough edit and, and, and , get it onto tape and all, the DVD or whatever, and show it to people over quite a long time, get feedback and come back to it, so that I would ah..., one, I think that's a real advantage of resea- of, of practice as research is, that you, you know, that it can become a, a, a, a process that's much more open-ended than is possible in a conventional production process and that, that is part of a process of continual assessment and evaluation and working towards something ..... , so I can

envisage that and then , I mean I guess then when the thing's out, you know, when you finally finish tinkering with it, and it's out and whatever, then it gets assessed in whatever ways these things do get assessed by whoever sees it or reviews it or uses it or whatever .....

**AP**

And which leads us, leads me into thinking about the sense of contributions to knowledge, because when you're framing practice within the strict, mode of research has to be some kind of contributinal,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Contributinal, I don't know.

**AP**

But how do you think about that at this stage, as opposed to, at a later stage or in reflection, are you able to conceive of contributions to knowledge beyond, I suppose, your research questions, really?

**TD**

Mmm..., at this, so what, what do I think I'm doing at the moment that contributes to knowledge?

**AP**

Yes.

**TD**

Hmm..., interesting, I don't know, actually, I mean I, (laughter) you know, concretely I'd be, you know, one of the things I'm gonna do for instance is do a seminar for my MA students on autobiographical documentary, which will be , which obviously will be informed by everything that I've done over the last few months and before , and it, it, I, I'm, you know, I wrote, you know, I wrote , the part of the sort of a sort of background thing about practice as research and the setting up of this project for the journal and media practice with the, which includes, a sort of, 'what I'm about to do on the project' but doesn't really deal with it, and so I imagine I'll, what I'd like to do is to continue in some way or other using journal and media practice as a way of, of putting ideas out 'cause people do talk to you about what you've put out and that's inter- that's nice. I mean, I'm not, I mean, it'll be up to people to decide whether that contributes to knowledge or not, but I, I, it would certainly contribute to my knowledge in the sense that I get feedback and , is that, is this the kind of thing you mean concretely or .....

**AP (Overlapping)**

Well I was gonna say feel, feel free to actually problematise the whole notion of a contribution to knowledge, but do you.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Hmm..., oh right, yes, yes.

**AP (Overlapping)**

Think, what is a contribution to knowledge. And how does that relate to your practices? And would there be a better way of asking it? Do you feel that that's something that can only be determined by .....

**TD (Overlapping)**

By a peer group.

**AP (Overlapping)**

A peer group?

**TD**

Not necessarily. I think it, it, I mean I would, I would say e-e-e- you have to interact with people to some e-whomever they are, to feel that you are contributing anything. I think the, maybe the problematic is, is knowledge really, and what we mean by knowledge and , that , ah..., you know, XXX XXX it'll probably be easiest to return to that example of, of the young woman who put the camera in that particular place in her kitchen with her mother and what that , ah..., you know, the, the, (retching sound) there's a kind of knowledge about, both about film making but also about, , relationships with parents and, you know, all kinds of knowledges that you could say, that are , located in that shot, or in that sequence , which aren't, which wouldn't probably pass muster in some academic circles as kind of research generated knowledge, but nevertheless are a kind of knowledge to me, so , I think there's tho-those , I think that's an issue; I'm not sure where I stand on it particularly, I mean, 'cause, you know, I'm kind of like, I'm sort of a bit pragmatic, I suppose I'm a bit pragmatic really, I sort of think 'well, you know, part of the, in the end, you know, we, we are to some extent, I mean, I've escaped the pressures of the television industry into this industry but there is a way in which this is, you know, the aca-academic is an industry with institutional pressures and, and I mean, I think we can, you know, we have the opportunity, sort of in this kind of a way and through Parip to kind of challenge those institutional pressures and ideologies but they still, nevertheless, are there and, , I don't mind engaging with them up to a point, you know, I don't mind, I, it's useful for me, both personally, in terms of what I'm doing and , and also I think, for me institutionally, to, to write the occasional article which privileges text over images, although I probably always want to put some images in it and always want to raise those issues, but I don't mind, I don't feel too constrained by the, the, the , imperative to , , what is it that you're supposed to do with knowledge?

**AP**

Contribute

**TD**

Contribute! (laughter) to contribute to knowledge, you know.

**AP**

With that in mind, I suppose this raises the issue of, of dissemination and it's quite clear how the symposium, or it's quite clear to,



**TD (Interjecting)**

Yes

**AP**

Institutionally, how a symposium, how a book disseminates these contributions to knowledge. How are you constructing these dissemination networks for your video work?

**TD**

Hmm..., well I'm not at the moment is the honest answer, I, but I think that , ah..., one of the interesting things that , that I got fired up about at the visible ev-evidence conference was that, that , the , Wallflower Press were talking concretely about distributing DVDs with books and that, concretely, I think that's really interesting that, and that essential actually, I mean not just interesting, but the, the kind of, the, the sort of, I mean it's easily mind-blowing to me, the extent to which , you, we, we're still getting books with crappy illustrations of stills from films, I mean it's absolutely extraordinary in, n-now, with what we have technically that so, in terms of the artefacts produced, I can, I think that, that there's a lot of scope for – I'm very excited by that – there's a lot of scope for putting stuff out that, that, that doesn't privilege the text necessarily, that has on it a more, an, an interesting relationship between the text and, and the DVD, which I, you know, that Bierfine(?) new media book or what's it called? Can't remember. Anyway, that book , I didn't think of the , in they in those terms I think it was an interesting book in terms of actually breaking down the relationship between a text and visual material, I didn't think it did that. Particularly, the bits that I read, I didn't plough all the way through it, but , so that I think is very, I think in terms of of the dissemination of the sort of video elements of the research project, that's certainly w-w-w-something that excites me a lot at the moment. I mean I would her – I would certainly, I mean, I mean, I, I, I can't predict what sort of a film this is going to be at all, so it's very difficult to d- and , I don't want to, you know, that's the whole thing I've been talking about, about being, not being target oriented in terms of commissions and that, so I'm deliberately not thinking 'Well, you know, if I made it in such-and-such a way, I'd be able to sell it to late-night Channel 4' or, you know, which I could do, ah..., , but, I would, I, I will, to try and do that, you know, once I've got a film I'll flog it around the place and see who wants to take it, but it'll have to be , , the oh, I'm, you know, I'd be, I'm not precious about it, I mean, if they said 'Well this is too long' or, or 'We want X bits of it but not X bits of it'. I would, certainly if they paid me I'd consider doing a re-cut and doing, you know, I'm not precious about it, so I would look for distribution in that way to, just as getting, you know, out in public domain, not particularly in the research community, but I think those two things are different .

**AP (Overlapping)**

Although clearly. I mean, if

**TD (Overlapping)**

Which is .....

**AP**

The ability to release in those different areas to circulate in, in different contexts is quite interesting because

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes

**AP**

All the contexts are different, the work itself may or may not be.

**TD**

Mmm..., yes. Well I, that's part of the reason why I'm interested in the whole DVD thing because, you know, I want to produce a linear film, definitely, eh..., because that's my, been my trade and that's m-that's part of my interest, you know, that film, I don't, but I think that, ah..., that there are limita – you know, that there are limitations in what, terms of what I want to do and talk about in that form on it's own and so, that would be interesting, you know, that's one interest in exploring that DVD thing as well, , yeah.

**AP**

Okay. , and I'm not gonna ask you what the problems encountered in the things you might do differently.

**TD**

(Laughs) I think they've come out, don't you?

**AP (Overlapping)**

Yeah, I think they have come out.

**TD (Light-heartedly)**

In my stumbles!

**AP**

I think this really takes us, I suppose, to, to my last question which is, which is a question that I deliberately had at the end of the list, because it's been quite interesting, 'cause each case study we've done has placed this question at different points but I had sort of exercised my authorial stamp by wanting to ask this question right at the end, which is really about ..... in what kind of relationship do you see between the way in which you are thinking about your own practice as research, and the way in which this interview context has been, has been structured is this an appropriate way of discussing practice as research? And if not, why not? So ..... are we touching on, I mean, there is of course the Parip, there is the interest in discussing practice as research per se, so there

**TD (Interjecting)**

Yes

**AP**

Are already questions about the specificity of what you're trying to do with your video work, because we're trying to look at this comparability and how we evaluate practice as research; but how is this a valid way of talking about it?

**TD**

Hmm... , it, it, which is really a question about a valid way of talking about practice as research as a general category, rather than particularly my experience.

**AP (Interjecting)**

But al- but really, but also your experience. Can that experience be made to relate to, practice as research?

**TD**

I mean in a way that's why I want a copy of this because I don't think I'd be able to, 'cause I can't stand outside of this process immediately. I mean, I, I, you know, it's been fun and I've liked it and I've found it stimulating and , challenging and interesting and made me think about things, , so in that sense it, it feels like it's contributing to what I'm doing very m-very well, actually, it's been, you know, I think that, you know, I can immediately say it in those terms of the specifics of my project, the, the int- the, the interesting, one of the things I'll be looking at when I get a copy of it, is well, this was Angela and Caroline authoring a piece about me in a way, and that, but that I was, I was contributing to it in some way as well, so I'd be looking at it from that, partly with those, that hat on, you know, as a what, what, what's this what, how much of this is me, how much of this is you, how much of this is the Parip and the AHRB and that would be an interesting thing for me personally, because of the nature of my project to look at I don't , I mean I think it's more , it's, it, it ..... I don't know, it's complicated, isn't it, because I don't know what the , I mean the interview in a very particular form, which , has very you know, I know that I am doing an interview, I'm not having a conversation , that I sort of sometimes veer more into conversational mode but , but I know that you're asking me questions, I'm not asking you questions and so , it's a particular sort of performance , which is in-interesting in the way that I was talking about f- as a film maker in terms of what I look at, what I get out of it when I look at it, later on. I, I would imagine that if I was a dancer for instance, I would find it constraining, just because you haven't got a fluid-head tripod, so I (laughter) couldn't get up and prance about or whatever, and , but maybe they don't want to, I don't know, I don't know how dancers really operate, but , all I can see as a performer, you know, they'd be inter- there would be interesting possibilities in how you interacted with the camera, so that the kind of , you know, the thing for me the, the sort of misap- well let's, you know, go and return to the, the, the young woman with the, with the video diary expert, you know, the extract, you know, that, in, in order to make sense of what I was talking about in the context of this as a piece of video tape, you'd have to see that, really, or it would help enormously to see that, it would say much more than I've said, but it, because you would experience , what I was talking about, it's back to experience, in a way, so I could see that as a limitation. I

mean I suppose I kind of have deliberately, maybe, or not, semi-consciously, not quoted from films that much, because of the limita- you know, because I'd have to sit here and describe them and , you know, they, they would be better see, rather than quoted. , is this the kind of thing you're thinking about?

**AP (Overlapping)**

This is the kind of thing I'm thinking about, but also I mean of course the, the questions that I', posing although Parip as a team has devised them in collaboration, are very specifically oriented around the very specific institutional contexts in terms of they draw upon kinds of questions that the AHRB is interested in, they draw upon the kinds of questions that are being asked b- of the wi- by the wider community of, about the validity of practice as research XXX and the question is really about, are these the kinds of questions that will allow us to

**TD (Interjecting)**

Right

**AP (Overlapping)**

Construct the value around practice as research or, going through this process, is this, is this a-an interesting process, but is this something other than, I mean are these questions actually not useful in terms of constructing that value, or validating practice as research?

**PAUSE**

**TD**

I don't know, I think, no, I think they are useful. I don't know , y-y-you're sort of thinking, a- 'Do I have questions in my mind that I think that you haven't answered in the, or that you haven't asked in this process' or .....

**AP (Overlapping)**

Yes, I mean that link, can be, you know, as specific as that

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yeah, hmmm...,

**AP (Overlapping)**

Or, or, just, you know,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Or general areas that feel untouched, hmm...,

**AP (Overlapping)**

Is, is that, is that question of the institution and, and whether this is a blunt instrument.

**TD**

Hmm..., hmm..., I suppose I don't, you know, up to a point I don't , , I mean because in the, what I was saying about being pragmatic is that I don't w-sort

of mind up to a point because I think that what we're, we're all engaged in a process where we are enmeshed in institutional pressures and stuff, so that it's good. Actually, to , it's good to engage with some – you know, because it'll give you some sort of structure to bounce off and fight with, if necessary and whatever, so I don't mind that , that, too much and I don't feel, a-this may be to do with, very specifically to do with hmm..., my positioning and what I know about and the f-and, and film as a, as practice research in general, but I don't feel that , ah..., I don't feel like there's a sort of , you know, there's a taboo area, an unexplored area in relation to practice as research in film that, that I'm sure there are lots of things that it – it's leaving uncovered but I'm not sure that we know what they are yet , and that , you know, part of the excitement of the whole thing is, is to carry on looking and uncovering things , so, yeah, I don't feel, I mean apart from the things that I was saying, which I think are important about , you know, it's impossible to talk about film without looking at film, you know, that's obvious , ah..., and that there are things that you, you know, there are experiences that you have when you're looking at film or video that aren't reducible to words or to me spouting answers here or you know, writing things, I think that's an, a, that's obviously so, and true , and central to the, central to the whole issue , but we know that, you know, so it's like ,

**AP**

And part of this whole experience, it, it's always about translation and representation and absence, because it will always be

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, yes

**AP (Overlapping)**

These huge absences, when you're trying to talk about practice as research.

**TD**

I mean if you want, you know, I'm, I can get you a copy of the, that video diary if you wanted to quote it in, when you put this together, I don't mind that, I mean

**AP**

That would be great, that would be something to think about in ter- once we do more of these case studies and see what we actually contribute.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Hmm..., yeah, yeah

**CR**

I, I, I think that, I, I just to stamp my authorial (laughter) XXX XXX that , I, if Tony had shown us the video diary in the course of the interview on the video player, then that would be appropriate but I think tech(?) put in addition XXX they know and appendix XXX XXX out of context (not entirely clear).

**TD (Overlapping)**

All right, well we could fake it, we could reconstruct it! (Laughter) I can, I can get I'm not sure if I've got the video here, actually.

**AP**

But that is something that we discussed and we very deliberately decided.

**TD (Interjecting)**

Not to do that.

**AP (Overlapping)**

Not to have additional material.

**TD (Overlapping)**

So are you 'The dancers can't get up and prance about'?

**AP (Overlapping)**

No, they can, they can, absolutely. That's what .....

**TD (Overlapping)**

They can, or , if they can do that, I should be a ..... (laughs)

**AP (Overlapping)**

It has to be in the context of the interview, because we're interested in what,

**TD (Interjecting)**

How

**AP**

How people themselves construct in these interview situations.

**CR (Overlapping)**

It's quite int- but it's quite interesting what you said, you know, 'Of course I would've ideally, I would show a series of film clips' but actually the potential to do that

**TD (Overlapping)**

But I didn't so, it was there, and I didn't take it up, but, you know .....

**CR (Overlapping)**

Yeah, but, so, so, so it's no good, but all that ind- perhaps indicates that maybe ..... because that you understood this at the interview that this was the equivalent

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes

**CR (Overlapping)**

Verbal form

**TD (Interjecting)**

Yes

**CR**

But we have had other people who have shown stuff on their monitors and, but .....

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yeah, yeah, that's interesting. I'm not a, a, yes, it's interesting because I'm not an , I'm not a natural performer in that way, you know, I don't think about performance as performance, so it's like .....

**CR (Interjecting)**

Really?

**TD (Overlapping)**

It's interesting, yes, 'cause I did think so far as to get you down here and in front of this stuff but not so far as to bung stuff on, yeah, hmmm...

**AP**

But clearly, I mean, there's no – that's what we're interested in, is that difference, not that there's a right way or a wrong way to do the interview, we're interested in how people engage.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes

**AP**

With this situation and what they do with it.

**TD**

Yes

**CR**

But, of course, what I'm realising now is the fact that we have the camera. But though I've been glib about it, before we started I said 'Well, you know, it's just because in addition we can', it does actually present the whole visual as a possibility, suddenly.

**TD**

Yes

**CR**

So even though this is a verbal, primarily verbal inter-intercourse,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, yes

**CR**

That, the, the potential exists. I mean we, we did it prime-partly, actually a lot to do with dancers in performance and they want to demonstrate.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, sure.

**CR**

But, of course, that it could – one could expand that into,

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, yes, yes

**CR**

To film makers, because as you say, there are things that can't be talked about XXX XXX.

**TD (Overlapping)**

Yes, yes, it's interesting ..... it's sort of , it's, it's in a way a very personal challenge to me because it's the extent to which I, I rely on words or I think about film, so it's , it's interesting ..... sobering even. (Laughter).

**AP**

And on that note, thank you very much, Tony for taking the time out of your day to talk to us.