<div align="center">

Composition:
traces left with intent
hear,   here
now

</div>

I. Introduction

In this video, my intention is to orient and invite the listener/viewer to look at violence differently by distinguishing *what* is violence, from *when* is violence, from *when is (not)* violence.

Most illustrations about violence depict violence. The viewer will note that in this video I explore *what - when -* and *when is (not)* violence <u>without showing violence</u>.

A. Why examine the issue of violence?

As a social worker, my interest in violence stems from working with abused children with "special needs" (who are often referred to as emotionally handicapped), their families and agencies working with them. I found something was missing in the "therapeutic" systems we are co-generating.

> Emotions are dynamic body (structural) dispositions that specify at every instant the domain of actions in which the animal operates at that instant.
> Gerda Verden-Zoller and Humberto Maturana, 1993, p. 1

<div align="center">

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</div>

The models, techniques and interventions I knew and used with these children were not functioning well. And when they did function, clients would often return to an environment that was not conducive to change. Within a short time, damaging behaviors would re-surface. So after years of being a therapist, administrator and consultant working primarily with clients from the ghetto, I began to ask: Why was I working to change a child and her or his family when they then had to live in a culture unwilling to change and unsupportive of their change? I was triggered to explore radical change.

> I am not interested in saving or improving society…I want a **new** one. What are the connections that might support this creative endeavor? I have published some ideas in a paper entitled 'Beyond Planning: Technological support for a desirable society.' Among the premises of the paper are that the notion of society arises in dialogue (or conversation), that the primary function of dialogue is not communication but the maintenance and creation of distinction, and that dialogue is the converse of control. As such, control and communication as the primary mechanisms of society are challenged.
> Laurence D. Richards, 1991, p. 2

Here Richards assumes that distinctions are part of the process of observing, since we human beings are distinguishing/observing all the time. He sees conversation as the converse of control, which points to the autonomy of those involved in conversations. Thus, one way to make radical change is to re-create language. This is a starting point in my work. Conversation is created through a history of languaging and emotioning.

Culture arises through networks of conversations. It is through dialogue that we can change culture. Things are what is said about them in (our) social worlds. We co-create our social worlds with our languaging and emotioning. To understand this may be the converse of a paradigm nested in control and communication.

B. Why use video for this composition?

Initially, I wanted to capture moments in my learning processes that would be useful when looking back – reflecting. Video allowed me to record and document all types of events while maintaining a speaker's language and emotions. Video lets speakers speak for themselves, without middle persons translating or inserting their views. I also think that most people today are more likely to watch a video than to read, and a video can reach those who do not or cannot read. Video tapes of events are also an excellent resource for distant learners by creating a classroom in their homes.

Most important, perhaps, video is a means for integrating time, dynamics, emotions, language and experience into one's explanations in science and art. Video is suited to an examination of meta-levels, diffusing boundaries. Having video footage, I can put segments where I want, regardless of time. Fragments of conversations, taken at different times, at different places, can be placed in

contradiction, provoking conversations that would not otherwise happen.

C. Why cybernetics as an epistemology?

When studying the ideas of violence and (not) violence, I began looking at

models and theories that not only looked at the individual system, but at systems on

as many levels and in as many ways as one could generate.

> CYBERNETICS is a young discipline which, like applied mathematics,
> cuts across the entrenched departments of natural science: the sky, the
> earth, the animals and the plants. Its interdisciplinary character emerges
> when it considers economy not as an economist, biology not as a
> biologist, engines not as an engineer. In each case its theme remains the
> same, namely how systems regulate themselves, reproduce themselves,
> evolve and learn.
>
> Gordon Pask, 1974, p.18

Cybernetics is a framework for knowing and looking at looking, for understanding the

dynamics of when and how we know what we know. It is a means of exploring

human *relations* and organization on meta-levels, a transdisciplinary approach for

looking, seeing and knowing. Second-order cybernetics is unique in that observing

one's observing is central to one's understanding, knowing, being and doing, central

to explaining and changing ourselves, the arts, science and society.

What do I mean by "observing one's observing"? Although the language of

cybernetics may be difficult to understand, since words are used in unfamiliar

combinations, this is an intentional technique to illustrate the actions and dynamics of living in language.

> We human beings exist in language. As such we exist in a world that consists in the flow of our recursive consensual coordinations of actions with other human beings in the praxis of our living.
>
> Humberto Maturana, 1992, p. 59

In another example, Maturana speaks of languaging and emotioning instead of language and emotion – to connote the dynamics of doing – now.

> We move from one domain of actions to another, or from one rational domain to another, through our emotioning as we adopt one set of basic premises or another as our emotions change in the braided flow of our emotioning and languaging that takes place as we do whatever we do.
>
> Verden-Zoller and Humberto Maturana, 1993, p. 1

The language of cybernetics is used throughout this video and this essay. Other idiosyncratic elements include:

· <u>Parentheses (reflecting, observing my observing):</u>

I use parentheses in traditional and non-traditional ways. Most often I use this in a manner invented by Humberto Maturana, to demonstrate that I am reflecting on what is being said. I am speaking for one person, for me, even when saying (we).

Parentheses are indicative of an explanatory path of (objectivity), reflective of a constitutive ontology. A constitutive ontology reflects the awareness that one cannot refer to anything independent of what one does. To paraphrase Maturana (1988a): We do not capture, we constitute. We bring forth a reality via our operational coherences as observers observing.

· <u>Anticommunication</u>:

Placing words in unfamiliar juxtaposition is a technique used by Herbert Brun in what he has called <u>anticommunication</u>. Anticommunication is an offer, not a refusal. It is composition that illustrates a desire to respect the composer and a listener, both of whom are recognized as observing observers. I do the same in this video and essay. (See Methodology section for more about anti-communication).

II. Categories of Knowledge Needed for this Composition

Video, my composition

Violence, my work

Cybernetics, an instrument for observing one's observing

The creation of "From what to when is (not) violence?" required the study of the same three distinct subject areas: video, violence and cybernetics. Video is my composition for exploring my topic, violence. Violence is what I observed and was asked to address in the workplace. Cybernetics is my guide for looking at my looking, reflecting, in languaging and emotioning while conversing about violence.

A. Video, my composition

Initially, starting in 1991, I was *perturbed* and sat in front of the camera to record my thoughts and feelings about my work. Then I began to use video to document my learning, such as taping the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC) conferences or local events and seminars relevant to the topic of violence.

In early 1993 I used the video editing facilities at Towson State University, in Baltimore. I spent most of two months there learning about the technical processes of video taping: producing and editing, logging, scripting, computer titling and graphics.

Later that year I audited a course in Ethnomusicology and Film/Video at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Through conversations in the course, I came to understand aesthetics and how video is used to document and report about diverse cultures.

I came to learn that the way to learn video is by doing it, by operating the camera, editing, viewing, observing observing, reflecting, again and again. Since entering Union Institute, I have recorded at least 500 hours of video footage and have spent at least twice that reviewing, selecting and editing for this product entitled "From what to when is (not) violence?" (See Appendix C: Videography.)

B. Cybernetics and Video

Several academicians have encouraged me to create with video and instructed me in its potentials. Annetta Pedretti of London, England, has been using video for observing, instructing and reporting. When we met at the 1993 conference of the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC), she used a video camera and monitor to illustrate order, recursion and chaos. In private discussion she helped me to understand the video camera as a witness separate from me. We discussed the geometry of video and used the camera's "special effects" to illustrate the structural dynamics of living systems, that is how we are changing all the time while maintaining

our organization and identity. At another meeting in front of the video camera, Dr. Pedretti and I talked about violence, control, management and requisite variety. At the time, I hardly understood a word she spoke. Yet after viewing the tape several times and after further study (other conversations, seminars and readings in cybernetics), I understood more clearly what we had discussed. This is a beauty of video as a composition for exploring a topic. I can, while dynamically changing, review the captured video footage and see, learn, experience it differently. Traces remain for future examination and future interpretations.

I do not remember exactly when I made the decision to do my dissertation primarily as a video. I do know it was invited by interactions with Annetta Pedretti and Herbert Brun. Humberto Maturana once said to me that he thought video captured the soul. Laurence D. Richards (1991, p. 3) proposed:

> ...that the cybernetician be a craftsperson in and with time. What would distinguish this person is that he or she would accept time as a medium in which to create, build and study....The arts have, at the moment, the most to contribute here – hence, my insistence on making artistic endeavor central to the activities of the American Society for Cybernetics.

Art may be a way for bringing forth this new way of looking at human beings. For a cybernetician, art or artistic endeavors may be a primary mechanism for explaining – since we live in cultures of *transcendental ontologies*, explanations about

existence that are based in independent realities assumed to exist whether I exist or

not, without consideration of my observing. A disconnected view, a transcendental

ontology requires rational, objective, linear, causal languaging and emotioning.

> We human beings are not rational animals. We human beings are
> emotional languaging animals that use the operational coherences of
> language through the constitution of rational systems, to explain and
> justify our actions while in the process, and without realizing it, we blind
> ourselves to the emotional grounding of all the rational domains that we
> bring forth.
>
> Humberto Maturana, 1992, p. 58

Another way of explaining is from an explanatory path of (objectivity), based

in a *constitutive ontology*. According to a constitutive ontology "Objectivity is the

delusion there can be observations without an observer" (von Glasersfeld, ASC

1995). Objectivity, without parentheses, denies or negates the observer's observing.

Art, such as video, became a means for me to incorporate emotions, language, time

and (objectivity) into my academic product.

> I would like to suggest that the path of (objectivity) in parenthesis is the
> natural path of our species and that the path of objectivity, is an artificial
> language....We begin with the <u>natural way of learning</u>. This is the name
> I have given to the biological phenomenon of our species that we
> observe and make distinctions. This ability to observe and to distinguish
> unities and to signify this distinction by naming makes us languaging
> animals. From the moment of birth, we constantly unfold our world
> through making distinctions.
>
> Kathleen Forsythe, 1986, p. 15

When looking from a constitutive ontology, if we want to understand the

dynamics of violence, we need to look at the conditions conserved in western culture that bring forth violence. What is our history and pre-history of conservations in our languaging and emotioning that make violence a natural feature of our culture? (Maturana, 1993a)

C. Violence

I began to focus on the issue of violence in the 1980s while working for the county Department of Social Services, developing alternatives to incarceration for adult offenders who would otherwise have gone to jail. I then decided to work with a similar and younger population at a residential treatment center for adolescents.

At the residential treatment center (we) developed a concept called Behavioral Cybernetics. This involves distinguishing behaviors within a continuum, a continuum ranging from comfort to discomfort to disruption to chaos/disorder. Having this conceptual view, one begins to see movement along the continuum and can intervene accordingly. I was able to put Behavioral Cybernetics into practice in the Baltimore City Schools where I was hired as a part-time therapist for 20 special education 7th grade children. What proved most important was the ability to connect with teachers in this middle school and offer them a useful way for looking at and dealing with difficult behaviors in the classroom. But Behavioral Cybernetics was not enough.

Dear Sue; a poem for You

emotioning somewhere in me bodyhood
braiding (our) media
how to say when
                    no words
            yet....

inherited, hired and acquired criteria
telling me right and wrong while
(not) listening
to each other as voice(s) <==> observer(s)
part of meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee
need to give them voices space and time and ...
whatever else (we) need to...
I worry about rights and wrongs as criteria
for (our) future
with and without you.

<div align="right">Judith Lombardi, 1994</div>

A consistent theme with clients in the school system as well as in my private

practice as a therapist for abused children (physical, sexual and emotional abuse)

was the connection between violence and one's ability to disconnect momentarily

from <u>what appears</u> to be all emotion, time and place. Intrigued by these processes,

for three years I participated in a monthly study group about Dissociative Disorder

and Dissociative Identity Disorder, a study group sponsored by Sheppard and Enoch

Pratt Hospital. Every model presented was from a transcendental ontology.

My study of violence continues in my work at the Johns Hopkins School of

Hygiene and Public Health. There, Dr. Lisa Werthamer-Larsson runs two federally-funded projects involving elementary school systems. The first project, the Alpha Prevention Program, is targeted to individual 4th graders at high risk of violent behaviors and drug use. They are grouped in a special class for half a year in an effort to teach them cooperation and critical thinking skills. The second project, a Classroom Prevention Program, provides an alternative curriculum for first graders, a curriculum intended to promote learning and positive behavior.

As a behavioral consultant on these projects, I was initially involved in the group training of teachers, serving as a role model in dealing with escalation and de-escalation of behaviors, what I call Behavioral Cybernetics. I also consulted with individual teachers in the classroom on behalf of difficult students. In recent years my role has expanded to videographer, providing additional learning tools for these projects. Teachers were taped doing their favorite instruction and then given these tapes to see themselves in action, as a way to learn while reflecting. Other tapes describe these interventions and have been shown at professional meetings across the country, including: the 1995 American Psychiatric Association annual meeting in Miami, Florida; a lecture at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, in the class of Dr. Daniel Webster; and a University of Southern Florida conference entitled "Public Health Approaches to Preventing Violence."

Through my work with Dr. Larsson I met and video taped Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and author of <u>Deadly Consequences: How Violence is Destroying Our Teenage Population and a Plan to Begin Solving the Problem</u> (1991). Her international statistics and her viewing violence as a public health issue has provoked me and others to look at violence differently.

The work of Dr. Werthamer-Larsson and Dr. Prothrow-Stith focus on violence prevention and early intervention. I, too, in my work and in this video, hope to focus on prevention rather than secondary or tertiary interventions.

If I want a new society and things are what is said, when said, about them in (our) social world(s), then I need to make false statements.

Utopia - one explanation

A place we co-design
Observers - each I am and I – is in the present
giving and getting needs - wants - desires
met. Each I is structurally determined
since organizationally closed.
So I am and
I is
emotioning, languaging, conversing
in a medium that includes
time
conspiring when reflecting
the biology of love
mutual respect and generosity
the natural way of knowing
being

learning

happening.
<div align="center">Judith Lombardi, 1995</div>

D. Cybernetics and Violence

During my work at a residential home for abused children, I became aware

that one's behaviors invite escalation or de-escalation of aggression. Aggression is an

emotion - a set of behaviors.

> Aggression the domain of those behaviors through which any other is
> negated as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself.
> Humberto Maturana, 1994, personal conversation

In the early 1980s I first encountered cybernetics as a manner of explaining

escalating behavior. A visiting lecturer, training a group of child welfare

professionals, discussed how there was no need to place "hands on" an aggressive

child. He proposed that one could <u>talk</u> a child down, rather than <u>hold</u> a child down, a

procedure which he referred to as cybernetics.

After starting the Union Institute program, I discovered at the Library of

Congress in Washington, D.C., a contemporary book on cybernetics entitled <u>Self-</u>

<u>Steering and Cognition in Complex Systems: Toward a New Cybernetics</u> by

Heylighen, Rosseel and Demeyere.

> Classical cybernetics failed to describe the functioning and steering of complex systems. It seems now generally recognized that the self-steering capacities of complex systems or component actors of a system must be fully taken into account. A 'new cybernetics' may emerge that draws attention both to the internal determination of behaviour ('autopoiesis,' as characterizing biological systems), and to its external determination (information-processing, problem-solving, i.e. the control paradigm that underlies the design of artificial systems).
> F. Demeyere, F. Heylighen, E. Rosseel, 1991, p. xi

When visiting the authors in Brussels in 1991, I learned about the American Society for Cybernetics. I began attending annual meetings of the ASC and was elected treasurer in 1995.

I now realize that my introduction to cybernetics involved first-order cybernetics, based on an allopoietic (other-produced) approach for looking at control and communication in <u>observed</u> systems. This formed the basis of my Behavioral Cybernetics theory. Allopoietic systems are assumed to be other-determined, such as a car, a trivial machine. Autopoietic systems are assumed to be self-determined cognitive systems, such as a living system.

Originally I was developing a model that assessed human systems, such as "aggressive" children, as if they could be controlled, or other directed. I now think the other can only be invited to de-escalate when living in a domain of behaviors in which he or she arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself. This change in thinking has provoked in me a different interpretation of Behavioral Cybernetics. In

recent years I have come to embrace a second-order cybernetic approach – which

assumes an autopoietic (self-produced) manner for looking at living systems.

> Autopoiesis means self-production in the capability of a system to
> maintain its identity by keeping its organization and its internal
> coherences invariant….The internal coherences…enable the living being
> to maintain its identity….An autopoietic system is a homeostatic system
> which maintains constant its own organization….What changes is the
> system's structure in order to compensate for perturbations from its
> ambience or environment.
>
> <div align="right">E. Rosseel, 1986, pp. 1- 4</div>

Cybernetics involves a mixing of concepts such as observing, observing

observing, reflecting, understanding, circularity, recursion, fluidity, variety, change,

patterns of relations, processes, invariance, closure, organization, structural

dynamics, difference, consciousness, self-reference, steering, cognition and autonomy

(Richards, 1994). Second-order cybernetics is a way of looking at looking, that

recognizes each observer (every I is an observer - with an epistemology) as part of

circular processes of relations for being and co-creating a world which he or she

brings forth via his or her observations, distinctions and operational coherences while

living in language.

> When we operate in language through our consensual interactions in
> the happening of living of a community of observers, our structural drift
> in the happening of our living becomes contingent upon the course of
> those consensual interactions, and that this takes place in a manner that
> keeps the transformation of the happening of our living congruent with

the domain of reality that we bring forth in that community of observers,
or we disintegrate as members of it.

<div align="right">Humberto Maturana, 1988a, p. 49</div>

Understanding cybernetics – particularly second order cybernetics – has offered me a

radical means for looking at looking, for looking at escalation and de-escalation of

behaviors, and thinking about living systems.

E. Cybernetics

My current understanding of cybernetics is based upon extensive reading and

conversation with cyberneticians attending the annual ASC conferences and the

Summer School for Designing A Society, which I attended for three summers, a total

of 12 weeks. I presented early versions of this video and taped the subsequent

discussion at the 1995 ASC conference in Chicago and at the 1995 Summer School

for Designing A Society in Atlanta. I appreciate the discussions this video produced in

Chicago and Atlanta, and how these discussions provoked future editing and

reflecting.

The 1992 ASC conference, organized by Dr. Rodney Donaldson, was entitled

"Language, Emotion, The Social, and the Ethical: An In-Depth Exploration of the

Cybernetics of Herbert Brun and Humberto R. Maturana." There I first met Brun and

Maturana, who speak throughout the video. Brun, a composer, politico and professor

at the University of Illinois in Urbana, has oriented my learning about composition,

language and performance.

> When is 'Composition'?
> 'When' is composition!
> > Herbert Brun, 1986, excerpt #140

In the work of Dr. Maturana, a neurobiologist at the University of Chile in Santiago, I

found a sensible way for looking at the dynamics of living systems, including human

beings.

When I look at a living being in terms of its composition, I speak of its physiology. If I look at it in terms of its relations, in terms of its relations with its circumstances, I speak of its behavior. We are from a zoological point of view, that is as animals, *Homo sapiens sapiens.* But as human beings we are relational beings. We exist in relations. The human happens in a manner of living in language, in an interpersonal, relational space (not in a molecular space).

Humberto Maturana, 1996, personal conversation

The term cybernetics comes from ancient times, traced to Hero of Alexandria who lived in the first century C.E. (Klaus Krippendorff, in Richards, editor, 1993). The term re-emerged in modern science with the publication of Cybernetics (1948) by mathematician Norbert Wiener who defined cybernetics as the science of control and communication in the animal and the machine. Cybernetics was not seen as a discipline but as an interdisciplinary, collaborative effort in looking at systems.

The development of this concept was spurred by a series of meetings from 1946-53, by a study group called the Macy Foundation Conferences on Cybernetics which included people now considered pioneers in the field. (Heims, The Cybernetics Group, 1991). Each pioneer was likely to have her or his definition of cybernetics. Some of these definitions are listed in Appendix A. Anthropologist Margaret Mead, a member of this study group, said at the first annual meeting of the American Society for Cybernetics: "I now would like to consider cybernetics as a way of looking at things and as a language for expressing what one sees" (1968). She invited members

to apply the concepts of cybernetics onto itself. One story is that Mead's comment triggered Von Foerster to invent a mathematical description for the processes of observer observing in relation with the observed object, what Von Foerster refers to as "circularity." Here, a distinction arises between first-order and second-order cybernetics. First-order is about observed systems, <u>what</u>. Second-order is about observing systems in circular relations, <u>when</u>.

In creating this video "From what to when is (not) violence?," I have attempted to configure several concepts of cybernetics. Perhaps the most important is the idea of *observing one's observing*, reflecting. Second-order cybernetics invites the viewer to shift his or her ways for knowing, his or her epistemology, away from looking at things as if they were 'out there' toward the circularity of looking at looking itself.

> This turn from looking at things out there to looking at looking itself, arose - I think - from significant advances in neurophysiology and neuro-psychiatry. It appeared that one could now dare to ask the question of how the brain works: one could dare to write a theory of the brain....And even more fascinating, the writer of this theory [of the brain] has to account for her - or himself.
> Heinz Von Foerster, 1992, p. 11

This idea of a theory of the brain led many early cyberneticians into what is now called artificial intelligence, the computer age, cyberspace.

Accounting for oneself when explaining the brain, nervous system, living

system, cognition or autonomy is exemplified by Chilean biologists Humberto

Maturana and Francisco Varela in a theory they call <u>autopoiesis</u> (Maturana, in

Maturana and Varela, 1980). Maturana suggests when offering an explanation for

human systems, that is observing systems, that the starting point include an observer

observing, reflecting a constitutive ontology.

> I propose <u>not to take</u> cognition and language as given unexplainable
> properties, but to take them as phenomena of our human domain of
> experiences that arise in the praxis of our living, and that as such
> deserve explanation as biological phenomena.
> > Humberto Maturana, 1988a, p. 4

From this path of looking at cognition and language, it becomes clear that

explanations do not take the place of the experience. "We observers happen in

language and explaining is something additional, a reflection upon our happening,

which is also in language. This is our starting point" (Humberto Maturana, video,

1988b).

> Everything said is said by an observer to another observer, including
> oneself, and since objects (entities, things) arise in language, we cannot
> operate with objects (entities or things) as if they existed outside the
> distinctions of distinctions that constitute them....Without observers
> nothing exists, and with observers everything that exists, exists in
> language.
> > Humberto Maturana, 1988a, p. 34

So explanations are always artifacts, stories about by-gone experiences. And an observer decides whether or not to accept an explanation according to his or her history of constructing criteria. One's criteria for validation - epistemology - follow either a constitutive or transcendental ontology. That is, an explanatory path of (objectivity), a constitutive ontology, or an explanatory path of Objectivity, a transcendental ontology.

> In daily life we usually move from one explanatory path to the other as we discuss and explain our statements. We are driven by our emotioning, our interpersonal desires and relations to take different stances on these two paths. It is the intermingling of these two very different perspectives of our understanding which enables us to be generous with those with whom we generally agree and to be mean to those with whom we disagree.
>
> Kathleen Forsythe, 1989, p.15

A constitutive ontology is an explanation about existence that accepts the biological question about observing observers, distinguishing distinctions in language, assuming that one cannot be outside one's observations, distinctions, emotions, language or experience. Thus each "I" is connected to the circularity of observing. Children know this, yet they are *forced* through our current cultural institutions, conservations and conversations to negate their natural ways for knowing, being and learning. Children are forced to accept a linear, controlling, transcendental view of the world.

> As we experience the distinction of others of our kind we begin to live in language. We are told the correct names of things and our metaphors are modified and controlled. We learn our poiesis, our <u>constructed way of knowing</u>, is not always acceptable. We become <u>received knowers</u>, expected to learn about an objective world independent of ourselves, recorded in the language of our culture and the artifacts for storing this "objectivity," books and other media.
>
> <div align="right">Kathleen Forsythe, 1986, p.16</div>

What if we were to "teach" children from a constitutive way of looking? We would

not ask them whether they agree or disagree, but would ask: "In what worlds would

this explanation make sense?" Thus children would realize that thinking for themselves

is acceptable.

The

> To take seriously that everything said – **everything said** – is said by an observer (an epistemology) to another observer (again an epistemology), is to revolutionize human experience. It is to hear every assertion not as 'fact' or 'truth' but as an **invitation to orient** in a particular manner, and no more.
>
> <div align="right">Rodney Donaldson, 1992, p. 6</div>

From this context, the video is meant to invite and orient a viewer to distinguish *what*

is violence, from *when* is violence, from *when is (not)* violence.

> composition:
> I use the word 'composition' whenever I wish to speak of the composer's activity and the traces left by it. The composer is motivated by a wish of bringing about that which without her or him and human intent would not happen.
>
> Herbert Brun, 1986, declaration #49

The video focuses on three primary distinctions in relation to violence: *what* is, *when* is, and *when is (not)* violence. The first section appears to be about *what* is violence. This reflects (our) western cultural focus on the *what* and the contradiction between *when is (not)* and *what* is violence. The difficulty of being able to video, talk, transition out of the *what* and into the *when* requires a shift in one's looking. This shift is not easy, since we live in a culture that sees aggression as the fundamental emotion rather than seeing the biology of love or mutual respect as a fundamental emotion that guides one's consensual actions. Hopefully, I was able in the video to illustrate the difficulty of this transition, and eventually clarify *when* is violence and *when is (not)* violence. I chose not to include violence, <u>any negation of another or oneself</u>, in this video. The challenge here was looking at each scene, reflecting on *when is (not)* violence, and consciously avoiding the illusions or perceptions of violence.

This video has three sections distinguishable by the title scene reappearing twice, at intervals of approximately 28 minutes. Where it would be useful to show

portions of the video and allow time for group discourse, these first two title scenes

may be used as a cue to a suitable stopping and starting point.

Many of the people shown in this video are colleagues in cybernetics. The

footage seen in this video was selected from 500 hours of video footage taken

between 1992 - 1996, collected while attending conferences, seminars or local events

relevant to my work. The video is a conceptual montage of the video footage I have

collected over the past five years. Some of the video footage, spontaneously taken,

involves (personal) experiences that I felt a desire to video, such as me on the phone

around the time of the shooting of Julie Lombardi.

The music used in this video is that of Herbert Brun and Christine Humphries. I

chose this music for its acoustics and for the poetry that often accompanies Brun's

music. Its unique sound requires a listener to listen, a thinker to think about language.

> Anticommunication is an attempt, not a refusal...The listener is called
> upon to manifest more than his or her mere existence....The composer is
> called upon to manifest more than his or her mere existence.
> Herbert Brun, 1983, p. 3

The viewer may find this video confusing. I understand this, and have used this

technique consciously, having learned it from Herbert Brun, since

> Insistence on 'communication' ultimately leads to
> social and physical violence.

'anticommunication' ultimately leads to
the insistence on composition and
peace.
<div align="center">Herbert Brun, 1986, declaration #48</div>

Scenes in the video and essay dance between communication and

anticommunication, in order to bring forth a balance between first and second order

looking. As a composer, I want to bring about something that without me would not

happen. I establish unusual connections, to create anomalies.

...if I wish to uncover the paradigm which conditions my thinking, I might
have to take a leap, to observe with fresh attention the anomalies in my
environment rather than only its predictable loops.
<div align="center">Marianne Brun, 1980, p. 2</div>

In terms of format, I took segments of video footage and put them together, to

see what could be brought forth. Some of what was configured I now understand,

and some I do not understand yet.

In terms of theory I drew heavily upon the work of Humberto Maturana, who

has examined the biology of being. Maturana speaks of how, when looking at the

multi-dimensionality of human being, including the nervous system, our psychic space

is largely invisible, while our relational space is behaviorally obvious.

The psychic space has a richness much greater than the description that

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we make of the behavioral space in terms of the particular behaviors that we can distinguish...[and] it depends on the attention one has dedicated in one's life to reflection about oneself, whether one becomes aware or not of what people like Freud...speak about when speaking about an unconscious domain. The nervous system operates as a closed network of relations of neural activity. For this reason the description of the unconscious or the unconscious life in terms proper to daily life is inadequate.

<div align="right">Humberto Maturana, 1996, personal conversation</div>

In a culture of violence, violent behaviors and the psychic space in which they arise are invisible to its members. If we want to understand violence, claims Maturana, we need to understand the emotioning and languaging that constitutes violence in our relational and psychic spaces. In order to do this (we) need to reflect - observing (our) observing – which we human beings are capable of doing since we live in language. However:

In order for members of a culture to reflect about their behaviors in it, a conflict of emotioning is required that generates sufficiently intense contradictory behaviors for them (members) to release their natural certainty about the legitimacy of their actions.

<div align="right">Humberto Maturana, 1993a, p. 16</div>

Therefore, I have included conflict and contradiction throughout the video, contradictory behaviors, to invite viewers to change their conversations.

From another domain Brun talks about the important distinction between conflict and contradiction.

Distinctions

Not many people know how passionately dedicated they are to the society which they cannot stand. Unaware of their living in contradiction they live in conflict.

Not many people know how passionately dedicated they are to the society which cannot stand them. Unaware of their living in conflict they live in contradiction.

Herbert Brun, 1974, p. 472

When the composer finds, upon looking back, reflecting on his or her composition,

that the composition reflects contradiction rather than conflict, this is useful, since

contradiction requires changing the system itself rather than changes within the

system, which is conflict (Stuart Smith, 1975). We live in a system full of contradictions

that are often referred to as conflict, in order to maintain the existing order.

In our social context, things are what is said about them.
Herbert Brun, interview with Christine Humphries, 1990

In terms of language, I have learned *its* importance from Herbert Brun.

"If we desire to solve our problems without violence, then we have to put all our

energy and our confidence in language, the language of words and gestures..."

(Herbert Brun, 1986, declaration #75). This requires distinguishing language from

drummage and *message*.

"Drummage is when I hear what you say but (hear the word but) but understand what I mean....Message, when I know what you mean though I hear what you say....Language at last, just to remind you if it should ever come your way, recognize it please. You never know it could happen any minute that you meet language. [Language is] when I hear what you say and understand what *it* means....I wish you good luck!

Herbert Brun, video, U.M.B.C., 1995a

IV. Reflections, Clarifications about the Video

With the video, "From what to when is (not) violence?," I wanted to *seduce* the viewer to begin to see violence as a continuum, to distinguish *what* from *when*, and *when* from *when is (not)* violence. My hope is that the languaging and emotioning of the video and essay will invite and orient the listeners, viewers and readers to change their explanations concerning violence. I use the word *seduction* intentionally, for it is meant to convey equality between the composer (me) and a viewer (you), a floating hierarchical view, rather than a stable one. For example, as I am writing this, I see my hands dancing with each other, braiding equally, on even ground, each hand, even each finger, arising as the center of action in different moments.

My views of violence are constantly changing, since I accept the explanation that I am an autopoietic system, a dynamic structurally determined living system in a praxis of emotioning and languaging.

> I claim that we living systems exist in the present and that, in fact, the whole existence is in the present. We have the ability to see this and be aware that this is so because we exist in language. Your present changes – your past changes. Your present changes – your future changes. This is not trivial, and this reflection is an explanation, of course, because as we do this reflection we are changing in our dynamics according to how we are explaining our present and our future as a manner of being in the present.
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992a*

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*All quotes in this section are identified by their original source, as listed in Appendix C: Videography. All are also found in my 1996 video entitled "From what to when is (not) violence?"

This video includes many voices. The two most frequent speakers are

Herbert Brun and Humberto Maturana, both of whose work reflects a cybernetic

epistemology in that the observer observing is central when explaining. This path for

looking, which asks and accepts the biological question about the observer

observing, assumes that one's explanations include an understanding of emotioning,

languaging, explaining and self.

Actually, this video involves a braiding of three primary voices: Brun's,

Maturana's and my own. Since I was the observer who created this collage of

voices, I needed to explain my viewpoint explicitly and implicitly. Bringing forth

myself, in front of and behind the camera, was the *most* difficult task in making the

video. I needed to "discover" my voices, my observers, my languaging, emotioning

and epistemology in order to make this video a second-order cybernetic endeavor.

My voice is explicit when languaging my frustrations and my desire for a

new society. An early scene shows me on a sofa, talking about my visit to the

ghetto to see Sabrina. I verbalize my confusion with my work:

> I went to the ghetto today and hung out with Sabrina, a kid I have been
> seeing for about three years. [She] has been extremely traumatized,
> much as a result of living in the ghetto. ...Sabrina is a brilliant kid who
> has incredible potential, but has parts that have developed in order to
> survive, parts that are very destructive....[I question] what I do as not
> being effective intervention.
>
> Judith Lombardi, video, 1993a

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I work as a therapist, in a community of frustrated therapists, educators, administrators and clients. This led me to seek radical ways for looking at violence. Violence when...

> [I saw] little kids that are 6, 7, 8, who are practically destroyed already. But wonderful souls!...It is just really overwhelming to me. I hate it... this whole scene. It really makes me feel the need for creating a new culture, a new society, a new way of being in this world.
> Judith Lombardi, video, 1993a

My voice is <u>implicit</u> throughout the video when I quote others or show them speaking. I have chosen their words, theories, languaging and emotioning to form my premises and assumptions, to create a dynamic way of looking at looking, a dynamic way of looking at violence and (not) violence.

Early in the video I stand at a chalkboard, talking about a radical way of looking at human beings and human interactions. I interpret some of Maturana's cybernetics and current behavioral cybernetics:

> It is in the relational space where *human being* happens, not in the bodyhood. This is an important distinction....And this situation brings forth or can bring forth a continuum of behaviors....As a process of languaging and emotioning and braiding in a medium with a particular bodyhood.
> Judith Lombardi, video, 1995a

This suggests that language does not take place in a bodyhood, but in relational/psychic spaces – spaces in which we are immersed, while languaging and emotioning with our media. We learn our emotioning and languaging from those with whom we share our relational spaces, from those with whom we are interacting.

In regards to Sabrina and the other children who live in the ghetto, this manner of explaining human being suggests that if we want people to be less violent we need less violations in our psychic/relational spaces. The ghetto is violent, braiding and breeding despair, discontent and destruction in order to survive.

However, violence is not limited to the ghetto. I use the word "ghetto" with intention, to refer to a particular social space where certain people are locked in economically, emotionally and mentally. I see this as a form of violence, in and of itself. Violence is internalized within all of (us), in our relational and psychic/relational spaces, since violence is generated consistently, consciously and not consciously through much of what we do in western culture. That is, (we) live a culture that is violent inside and outside a ghetto. If we want to change our relations with violence, we need to look inside and outside and re-think our schools, our interactions, our explanations with children and each other.

I do not propose that it is easy to distinguish violence as a continuum of emotioning and/or languaging. Early in this video I sit at a computer, typing. I was

still unable to language clearly what I wanted to point at: the distinctions between

what from *when*, from *when is (not)* violence, without depicting violence. Even though

I know the viewer will make her or his own distinctions about violence, I know the

viewer has a history of braiding in a medium similar to mine, so I provide guidance,

especially when insisting via repetition. Certain scenes, concepts or statements

reappear, such as a child dancing or Maturana explaining the biology of love.

Gertrude Stein's words make an important distinction between repetition and

insistence. Her "lively little aunts" would repeat stories to each other over and over

again. Yet each time, each aunt heard or said something different, exemplifying how

we human beings are changing, all in time.

> Then also there is the important question of repetition and is there any
> such thing? Is there repetition or is there insistence? I am inclined to
> believe there is no such thing as repetition. And really how can there
> be?
>
> Gertrude Stein, 1935, p. 166

Here Stein suggests that repetition is a form of insistence. We human beings are

dynamic systems. Through languaging and emotioning while living in a medium that

includes time, we are changing, evolving, drifting together.

The most repeated scene, or insisted upon point, is Maturana's explanation of

the biology of love, which involves generosity, mutual respect and cooperation. To

Maturana, a biologist, the biology of love is *not* a sentiment but the domain of actions

– behaviors – that constitute the legitimization of the other in co-existence with oneself.

He assumes that: 1) emotioning (the flow of actions and body dispositions at any

moment) is a fundamental feature of living systems; and 2) human language, <u>which</u>

<u>includes all rational domains</u>, is brought forth via one's emotional foundation

(Maturana, 1993b, 1994).

> I am an optimist because I think that in the core of human
> life, as in mammalian life in general, the biology of love is
> the fundamental emotion….What you will observe is that
> there are many things, strife, war, killings, and either this
> leads to destruction or to a new beginning, and the new
> beginning is always in the biology of love.
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992a

Thus, the biology of love is the fundamental emotion for human beings together, for

conversing, turning together, as (our) pre-historical, our natural ways of being,

knowing, learning and loving.

> This is our human condition. When we deny the biology of love, we
> become ill. We are cured through love….We fall into the biology of love
> or we disappear.
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992a

I use insistence here, make repeated references to the biology of love, to invite

viewers to understand this concept and to consider the biology of love as a

foundation for *when is (not)* violence. Thus, love is not viewed as a sentiment, but as a domain of actions.

Another technique I use to guide viewers of this video in distinguishing violence is the concept of contradiction. I often place "unlikely" images in juxtaposition. For instance, in the ArtScape segment showing a Shrine to Lost Children, a box with a haunting, child-like face appears. This is art depicting violence to children, part of a 3-day 1992 art festival in Baltimore. Then the camera focuses on a single child, with a remarkably similar face, dancing within the exhibit area. This dance depicts legitimization, (not) violence. Such images, juxtaposed, are intended to *provoke* the viewer to distinguish *what* from *when is (not)* violence. I use contradiction to bring distinctions about violence to a conscious level.

I used to think, perhaps many people do, that violence is when somebody hits someone. Traditional research tends to accept this view of violence as a static event, such as when someone is shot. Now I see violence as a continuum, the *what* being the ending of escalating violence, a segment of a series of actions and reactions. Something has happened prior to the "hit," something that an observer, witness or participant distinguished as violence.

> *What* is violence is one thing and we talk all the time, inadvertently or
> advertently, about whether we know what violence is. I insist we do not know
> *what* violence is, but we know *when* violence is. Violence is *when* somebody

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says so.

Herbert Brun, video, 1995a

I now view *when* is violence as a particular kind of emotioning and languaging that demands obedience, submission, dominance or control, distinguished by an observer observing observing. Thus *when* is violence is in accordance with a particular observer's herstory or history of emotioning and languaging, which reflects her or his history of conversations and her or his psychic/relational space. Thus the *when* is an explicit decision.

This video includes a submission/dominance scene, the Safe Sex show, where someone is showing how to beat someone else with a whip, safely. Here is an example of a contradiction in our society, and a possible contradiction in one's psychic/relational spaces. Is this scene violent? Some see this behavior as legitimate. While showing the words "when is (not) violence?" on the screen, I as narrator say:

Who decides, when? Each I decides.
Judith Lombardi, video, 1995b
Yet many people prefer to own the Truth – not a (truth) in parentheses, but an unquestionable Truth. They prefer to decide for themselves and for others, even when this means the negation of others.

As pointed to in the video, <u>I think</u> it is violence, even in the scientific domain, when one fails to ask or accept the biological question about the observer observing.

Instead, one could continually ask: How is it I can know what I know and do?

> The problem with scientists is [that] they play as if they were only scientists, when they are not. They consider themselves separated from daily life....All scientific endeavors are extensions of daily life. Cooking is an extension of chemistry. Biology is an extension of taking care of the chickens. Philosophy an extension of taking care of the children. And children ask honest questions.
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992b

To attempt to disconnect observing from daily life is to be in a dance of violence.

Disconnecting demands separation from self (as if this is possible), from our pre-history, our biology, our natural ways of being. Instead, if one accepts the constitutive ontology where an observer observing is central, where the observer reflects, this constitutes (not) violence, an exploratory path of (objectivity).

If I or (we) want to change our living in relation to what we refer to as violence, then we need to distinguish *when is* and *when is (not)* violence. We need to be aware of subtleties of violence in our emotioning, languaging, conversations and culture. In our psychic/relational spaces.

> If we want to bring about some drastic and radical change in a society and want to do that without being called violent we have to know how to do that, and this know-how is missing.
>
> Herbert Brun, video, 1995b

Brun suggests here that we do not yet know how to change society, without violence. In this video, I suggest that we start by closely examining our ontological views when reflecting on languaging, emotioning, communication and control.

Words, as nodes of languaging, or traces left of languaging, are active and multi-faceted. As a biological phenomenon, languaging is the flow of recursive consensual coordinations of behaviors. For instance, I can say "sit down." These two simple words can be said with inflections that are quiet or loud, sympathetic or angry. The impact of these words will depend upon the participants' inflections, tones and body movements, and the history of conversations of those involved in the situation. These words can lead to *when is* or *when is (not)* violence.

Ironically, given the way language is used now, Maturana suggests that living in intimacy generated the biology of love, emotioning that conserved cooperation, generosity, mutual respect. This allowed for language to arise.

> Language would not have arisen without sufficient intimacy in living together….Love has been the fundamental emotion under which this story about human origin could take place and language arose. Not in order that language arise, but if this took place then language could arise.
>
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992a

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When we consciously or unconsciously deny emotioning and languaging as

fundamental processes, we deny the biology of love. We then use our languaging

and emotioning in a manner that negates one another, leading to *when* is violence.

> We are a culture of warriors using the gun/gun or the gun/reason. We
> use our arguments as weapons.
>
> Humberto Maturana, video, 1992a

Can this be changed? Is it possible to generate relations that allow for the

legitimization of others, to create a space for such operations? If we closely examine

our languaging and emotioning, perhaps we can create a new honest language.

Language creates conversations. Networks of conversations generate culture. And if it

is culture, it can be changed.

> Honest language requires decision-making. Decision-making requires
> consulting criteria: inherited, nominated and acquired by an observer.
> Re-validating language requires asking and accepting the biological
> question about observing, when explaining. So the biology of love is
> fundamental.
>
> Judith Lombardi, video, 1995b

In the video I often use the verb "legitimize." Legitimizing is an action- oriented

concept that involves someone feeling accepted or acknowledged, according to his or

her criteria for acceptability. When this occurs with intent or purpose, I would call it

purposeful action, another concept that Maturana suggests can foster the biology of love. One can <u>attempt</u> to legitimize with an action as simple as a greeting or through more complex interactions, such as de-escalating an already aggressive situation. I propose that no word is trivial. No emotion is trivial. In this video, the child Caitlin Larsson (1995) voices this when she rearranges an old poem:

Sticks and stones may break my bones, and words can hurt me too.
<div align="right">Caitlin Larsson, video, 1995</div>

Sometimes language has unintended consequences, such as in the scenes with me answering the phone, as friends call in terror, having heard of the shooting of Julie (not Judy) Lombardi. My friends and family heard this on the television news and acted as if I were shot. In the video, I say:

It is amazing what words can do!
<div align="right">Judith Lombardi, video, 1994a</div>

More often, we use words thoughtlessly, carelessly, without really examining the assumptions and criteria from which they arise.

> It is a suicidal society in the language that uses it…I communicate to you that you are unhappy. Because you are intellectually mature, you understand and you agree with what is said, that it is the case. And you think that the fact that you agree and understand is an argument for the case. It is an argument against the case or against you. Make up your mind.

Herbert Brun, video, 1994a

Whether it be intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious, languaging and

emotioning are generating how we are. Often our words speak against what we

want and desire. In this video, I suggest that this could be different.

> Instead of language speaking us - why not us speaking language? Why
> not us speaking *it* ?
>
> Judith Lombardi, video, 1995b

Herbert Brun suggests that words are active.

> He who speaks is, unfortunately, an activist.
> He who speaks is, fortunately, an activist.
> She, fortunately, is an activist if she speaks.
> She, unfortunately, is an activist when she speaks.
> That is, every speaker has to be aware that
> The speaking speaker is spokesperson
> For the undesirable and a pointer at the desirable
> And has to be able to show which of the two the speech is doing.
>
> Herbert Brun, video, 1994a

To bring the unconscious to a conscious level requires awareness, reflecting on

(our) ability to reflect. In the video, Annetta Pedretti suggests that we are doing this

all the time.

> I am continuously reflecting on what I am doing, whether I make it
> explicit or not, since where I actually am is where I actually am.
>
> Annetta Pedretti, video, 1993a

We are capable of reflecting on our doing, saying, feeling, wanting. Thus, if we want to live in peace, we can, when reflecting on our actions, generate the biology of love. With conscious reflection comes an understanding of our constitutive nature and an awareness of how we are co-constructing (our) realities. With this awareness comes a shift in (our) emotioning and languaging. Our awareness to choose responsible actions or not, when reflecting. Freedom.

(Understanding), reflecting and purposeful actions foster the biology of love, behaviors that we say legitimize others in co-existence with oneself, including oneself. Generating cooperation, generosity, trust and mutual respect. (Not) violence. Let each I decide. We can have peace and disagreement.

V. Implications for Future Work

If others were to build upon this work, using this way of looking at human being as a dynamic entity, there are several directions that she or he could go. This video, as an artifact, could be used as a trigger for exploring the following:

1. This video can be an invitation, a learning tool, for future conversations about when is (not) violence, so that violence does not arise in any environment where people are motivated to look at violence as a consequence. Examples: child care workers, teachers, police and other human relations workers.

2. One could create a generative mechanism for being an effective change agent. An effective change agent – in the domain of when is (not) violence – is someone who wants to de-escalate a situation instead of escalating it, hence opening a space for reflections. The components of an effective change agent would include composing, observing, explaining, emotioning, reflecting and legitimizing.

3. In conversations we generate culture. If we want to disintegrate violence as a standard manner of living relations, then it is through conversations that open spaces for reflection that we can generate a new, honest languaging in which violence is

considered a mistake. Questions could include:

· When would be an honest languaging and emotioning that does not validate

violence?

· What could be guiding concepts for inventing such a space for living?

I don't know yet.