

Sheffield Hallam University

Stories from an art institution: The writing lives of students with dyslexia

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**Stories from an art
institution: The writing
lives of students with
dyslexia.**

Karen Tobias-Green

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
award of Doctor of Philosophy.**

Sheffield Hallam University, February 2020.

Dear Reader

Thank you for reading this thesis. I hope you will enjoy it. In this letter I set out my approach to my PhD project. This thesis is the embodiment of the project, but the project entire is my practice, my work, the time I have spent carrying out this research.

Firstly, this is not a social sciences thesis. I am not arguing. I don't set out to prove a point and I'm in conflict with no one particular idea. I am not right and you are not wrong. The kind of model I use comes from my various convictions:

1. There is no one singular Truth but many truths.
2. There is more than one way to write a meaningful thesis.
3. There are some things that cannot be neatly packaged and to do so would be to reduce them to less than the sum of themselves.

In a practice-based specialist Arts University, practice-based research is 'a way of acknowledging that not everything that is knowable or worth knowing can be captured accurately within mathematical or scientific frameworks or...theoretical orthodoxies.' (Rolling, 2014, p. 164) and is 'entirely in keeping with a paradigm of knowledge that purposes the creation of possibilities over the proving of certainties' (Rolling, 2014, p. 162).

I need to say, however, that I not only understand but also respect the conventions of the academic thesis. In my teaching, when supervising dissertations, I am often heard to encourage students to consider, acknowledge and care for their reader/s. One way of doing this is to use the formulas of academic writing as guides, signposts and reference points along the way. This allows us to take the reader with us on a journey without than losing them forever in a layby. So to do this I have:

1. Written according to thesis convention an introduction, methodology, literature review, four data chapters and a conclusion that sets out my contributions to knowledge.
2. Preceded each data chapter with a brief introduction and concluded by briefly discussing the "take home" points it offers and referring to its contributions to knowledge.
3. Used formal academic referencing and followed the conventional ordering of the parts of the thesis.

However, the laybys I mention above are where so much of value resides and the reader must be able to find them and ponder awhile in them. This allows the many voices (rather than the one, declarative, adversarial voice) to be heard and acknowledged. And many voices that are not often heard can find spaces to be heard in writing like this.

This leads me to:

1. Not always adhere to an introduction, theory, data, theory, conclusion model. Sometimes I mix theory and data. This is because I am 'reading- the data-while-thinking-with theory' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 4) It's the data that helps provide the *with*. And on certain occasions the *with* is particularly important.
2. Justify the use of short sentences, which are reflective of the informal conversational discourse that the participants and I engaged in. To acknowledge that faithfully I have reflected in my style of writing the style that students speak and write in. Not academics, not researchers, not theorists (although some do, and these are the ones I use most often).
3. Use font, line length and justifying of text to indicate the many voices including my own contributing to this research and to do them the courtesy of making them apparent. I set out clearly in the methodology chapter how I have styled this.
4. Use eruptions to present the well, eruption, of theory, practice and "aha" moment. These eruptions are not random. They are the hotspots Jackson and Mazzei and Maclure talk about; they are the 'zigzags', the 'lightning bolts' (Mazzei and Mclure, 2010, p. 505). They are cuts in the moment, they remind us all knowledge is contestable, contingent, situated. And that abandoning the pretence of objectivity, according to Haraway, helps us produce and discover knowledge with greater objectivity.
5. Use a small range of theories and arrest a 'specific concept'. I am not forcing the concepts into the thinking of data (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). I am using the vocabulary and concepts of Foucault (power) of Deleuze (desire), Goodley (dis/ability) to 'push research and knowledge differently'. This lets me 'focus on the constitutive and generative aspects of the text'. (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 7).

And crucially I also need to state – because a colleague and wise friend pointed out to me that I have not said this in my thesis – that I am a creative writer.

So– I am a creative writer.

I have written since I was nine years old and won a short story competition run by a regional newspaper. I studied language, literature and creative writing for my first degree. I have published stories, poems and numerous articles online and in print. I run and teach the Creative Writing degree course that I also wrote. I write every day and am informed by the sensibilities and methodologies of my practice, which is dear to my heart and my intellect

Because of this there are:

1. Two- or three-word sentences
2. Lines of text that stand alone and apart from other lines of text.
3. Poems that stand on their own without over analysis.
4. Accounts of encounters between participants and me, and between participants and each other, that hold the richness and quality of their language between the frames of theory rather than interrupt the flow and bring us up short, ruining the moment of happening.

There are sections of the thesis where the poetics of language become part of the text. That's why I use lines that may feel incomplete, alone, or stand out, short phrases that aren't sentences, poetry that isn't analysed until there's nothing left to think other than what you're told, encounters that aren't coded, measured and graded until the very life has been stripped from them. I seek the:

Abstract machine that connects a language to the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field. A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 1).

And so I believe there is no fixed model for a thesis that cannot allow some of this rhizomic connecting, this problematising of conventions, a way of reaching out to the reader. Here is an anecdote that might speak better to this than I have yet done.

The multi-patterned table.

My partner and I were sitting opposite each other in our living room having coffee. In the space between us was a small, circular table made of blue and white strips of raffia woven into a pattern. Suddenly I found myself saying out loud:

Look at that gorgeous pattern on the table, I've never noticed it before. It's like 4 triangles all converging into a mid-point.

David looked at the table and frowned. Where?

On the table.

The coffee table?

Yes.

I can't see it.

What, it's so obvious. It's really clear from here.

No. I can see straight lines. The pattern is straight but wavy lines, sort of woven/wavy. No triangles though. Not even one.

What?

I got up and walked over to where he was and sat down next to him.

Oh my. You're right. You are. From where you are, you're right.

From where I am I can see one pattern. Clearly. And only one. From where he is he can see another pattern. Clearly and only that pattern. When I stand by him I see his, when he stands by me he sees mine. When I stand and look down on the table from above I see something altogether different. As Haraway points out, seeing from further away tells us one thing, from our own perspective we learn another perspective, and from another's perspective something else. This isn't about who is right or wrong, whose knowledge is better. It's about realising there are many knowledges, many ways to be. And that when we write up our research we may have been on one side, the other, above or below, and that is there in my writing. It must be there. Surely, we need to look from all angles and above, from within and without. What if we only ever saw one thing, and "knew" we were "right"? So I have got in amongst this data and I have sometimes reflected on it doing what might be called theory sections and at other times I have let data speak very much in its own voice. This isn't accidental, lazy or capricious.

I invite you into the assemblage and hope you will look at it from all angles.

Thank you

Karen

Abstract

This thesis explores the complex and shifting relationships between writing, the art institution and constructs of dyslexia. At the time of its submission, a detailed study of dyslexia within a post-humanist framework is unique. This thesis engages with the writing lives of six art students diagnosed with dyslexia over the course of an academic year. It interrogates writing in some of its many manifestations, notably writing as an academic, assessed and measurable outcome and writing as a form of fluid and imaginative communication. By placing writing in the art school, I explore both institutional power more broadly, and constructs of the art school, and examine how these relationships interact with and create each other. To do this I actively use ideas around place, objects and materials as factors in the shaping, becoming and making-invisible of dyslexia. I question dyslexia as a fixed and medicalised model, combining theory and practical methods of research to problematise dyslexia and to explore how it comes to be, and its fluctuating relationship to the student participants. I use a post-humanist framework to consider disability, writing, and active, radical pedagogies. I have turned to thinkers including Haraway, Goodley, Butler, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari to think through these problems. Refuting the arboreal model of knowledge has allowed me to work with participants, present their stories, navigate the art institution, engage in discourse around dis/ability and writing and develop new and exciting ways of making writing a rich, viable, valid and accessible creative practice.

As a direct result of this, I have authored, had validated, and now teach the BA (Hons) Creative Writing undergraduate degree in my institution. This is the only creative writing degree course in an arts institution in the North of England and the only one informed by this radical pedagogy and post-humanist framework.

This research contributes to knowledge theoretically, methodologically and pedagogically. Methodologically, the structure and assemblage of the thesis reflects and shapes its subject matter and makes manifest actual students' writing lives, thereby bringing theoretical considerations and practical circumstances together in a novel way. Regarding theory and pedagogy, the rhizome enables me to interrogate dyslexia differently, and to produce new understandings of a) dyslexia, b) writing, c) the art institution, d) me as a researcher, e) places of research, and f) post-humanist approaches to ethics in research. It does this by employing a critical disability perspective which opens up the relevance of my radical pedagogy to many underrepresented groups and to those who might be regarded as mainstream.

The conditions created by this research make this possible and are replicable. This research demonstrates a framework (through explanation and documentation of the 3 workshops) that is portable, transferable and flexible. It can be and has been applied to community groups, adult education students, tutors, community arts groups, literature festivals, writing circles, F.E. and 6th form students across arts and humanities, with dyslexia specialist teachers, with artist lecturers/practitioners, amongst M Level and doctoral students, with groups of young people transitioning from further to higher education, with widening participation cohorts and with potential H.E. applicants from polar quintiles 4 and 5.

This research has produced, and continues to produce, peer reviewed articles, conference presentations, creative fiction and non-fiction.

This thesis demonstrates a different and transferable way of doing research. It has a life beyond its printed text. It exists in the lives of the participants, in the propagation of the writing workshops and in the development, writing and teaching of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing degree. This thesis presents a vibrant and theoretically sound radical pedagogy which may inspire and provide a blueprint for critically aware, imaginative, liberating and productive teaching and learning.

Contents

Dear Reader.....	1
Abstract	5
Candidate declaration	10
Acknowledgements.....	11
Chapter One: Introduction.....	12
Rationale, aim and scope of study	12
Myself as researcher/ myself in the research	16
Thesis Roadmap.....	18
Policy context: The educational and political landscape of dyslexia, art and writing	22
Why this research matters	24
Chapter Two: Literature review	26
Introduction.....	26
Part One: The construction of dyslexia	26
1a. The construction of dyslexia	27
1b. The construction of dyslexia as a disability.....	30
1c. The construction of dyslexia in/by the art institution.....	34
Part Two: A post-humanist ‘take’ on three key dyslexia texts:.....	38
2a. The construction of dyslexia	39
2b. The construction of dyslexia as a disability.....	41
2c. The construction of dyslexia in and by the art institution	46
Part Three: What would a post-humanist literature review look like?	49
Conclusion	55
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	58
Introduction.....	58
Myself as researcher	58
Definitions of methodology.....	61
My position(s) on knowledge	64

Recruitment of participants	70
Methods and overview of research carried out.....	72
Ethics	80
Dealing with data.....	83
Conclusion	84
Chapter Four: Desire and Duress	86
Introduction.....	86
Emma’s opening semi-structured interview	91
Belle’s opening semi-structured interview	101
Tom’s opening semi-structured interview	104
Chloe’s opening semi-structured interview	108
Amy’s opening semi-structured interview	113
Hattie’s opening semi-structured interview	115
Conclusion	117
Chapter Five: Deterritorialising dyslexia	119
Introduction.....	119
The workshop format.....	122
Deterritorialising place	126
Deterritorialising Writing.....	129
Belle’s (re) making of herself.....	131
Desire: Making words work.....	135
Deterritorialising dissertation writing	136
Deterritorialising education: ‘You’re in education and you’re being educated’ ..	139
Deterritorialising shame	143
Deterritorialising storytelling	145
Plaiting as a form of deterritorialisation and entanglement	147
Reflections on writing intervention one and on recent experiences of academic writing.....	156
Conclusion	159
Chapter Six: Power and/as Performativity.....	162
Introduction.....	162
On performativity	166

A word on performance	167
Picking your words: power and performative language	168
The power of multiple heads: co-mingling and co-making.....	174
Exploring power in performative writing.	182
The power of material objects	184
Talking about your art: taking ownership of and performing language	191
Reflections on writing intervention two and on recent experiences of academic writing.....	201
Conclusion	211
Chapter Seven: Betwixt and between: rethinking our sense of place in an art institution.....	216
Introduction.....	216
Bringing the past into this place.....	221
Time and place	228
Asking questions in this space.....	231
The ‘take three words’ workshop	236
The University: could you ever inhabit this place again?.....	244
Reflections on workshop three and on recent experiences of academic writing.....	252
Conclusion	253
Chapter Eight: Conclusion	258
Thematic contribution: Rethinking Methodology.....	263
Thematic contribution: Reconceptualising Writing	271
Thematic contribution: Reshaping the art institution.....	277
Thematic contribution: Me in the Research	280
Thematic contribution: Reimagining the importance of place	284
Thematic contribution: Post-humanist ethics in research.....	288
In Conclusion	290
Appendix 1: Timeline	293
Bibliography	298
Indicative Bibliography.....	314

Candidate declaration

I confirm that the thesis is my own work; and that all published or other sources of material consulted have been acknowledged in notes to the text or the bibliography.

I confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award.

Signed:

Acknowledgements

Enormous thanks to my supervisors Professor Carol A. Taylor, Professor Jacqueline Stevenson and Dr Jen Slater. Some clichés are also true and it really wouldn't have been possible without you.

Love and thanks always to my wall of arms David, Jack and Alice.

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For my Mum, who would have been proud. And for my Dad, who is.

Chapter One: Introduction

Rationale, aim and scope of study

This thesis examines the writing lives of six art students with dyslexia in an art institution in the North of England. It uses post-humanist thinking to explore the data generated from three writing interventions and a series of informal interviews and discussions. The three writing interventions create encounters with place, people, materials and writing that further generate data and findings, which relate to and add to/become part of participants' writing lives as art students with dyslexia. The semi-structured interviews and discussions entangle with some of these conversations and experiences. The research is longitudinal, and took place over the course of one academic year. My Dear Reader letter sets the context.

Dyslexia is a complex entity. It is both a medical condition and a social phenomenon. The six participants in this research were not "diagnosed" as dyslexic in the same way at the same time but "came to be" dyslexic through a series of psychometric tests, and via a range of discussions, events and questions that were asked or took place over extended periods of time, from childhood to the present. They are, to some extent, still "becoming" dyslexic as they negotiate their way through formal higher education, graduation and entry into the wider world.

The rationale for this study arose out of my particular situation and position within the organisation I have worked in for more than 22 years. It began as a "hunch", although to be fair a hunch that was amply supported by the behaviours and comments of the many students I was working with. Simply put, I thought that students given the title of dyslexic often defied the medical model of dyslexia that had given them their title. This shaped the rationale of this study: to explore the experiences, the lived writing experiences – in an art institution – of students who have been designated dyslexic, in order to promote different ways of thinking and doing writing and to produce knowledge differently. The construction of power, of

knowledge, of normalcy and of writing can, and often does, lead to the disabling of art-student-writers. Using post-humanist thinking to problematise this allows me to be able to interrogate dyslexia differently.

I have used post-humanist thinking to research and write this thesis. Just as with a rhizome, a root appears and becomes entangled. My writing does the same. It mirrors the rhizome deliberately. Having considered long and hard over many years the organic nature of writing I have elected to write in this style. Writing is complex, multi-faceted and non-linear. So is time, if we look at temporality rather than a post-industrial, mechanised version of time that runs by calendars and clocks. When the participants discuss their writing lives they are discussing both the past and the present, and making rhizomic entrées which entangle with their future writing lives too. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p.6) describe James Joyce's words as having 'multiple roots, [that] shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language, only to posit a cyclic unity of the sentence, text, or knowledge'. Like writing, and like time, when we release ourselves from the tyranny of the linear I believe we can discover more of meaning and value. Because of this, I have chosen to use a style that mirrors, complements and makes clearer the rhizomic possibilities of research. I detail this later in this chapter, and in my opening letter to my readers.

Post-humanism moves away from the traditions of 'coding in interpretive data analysis' and instead opens up ways for qualitative researchers to 'create ontological becomings in their reading of data' (Jackson, 2013, p.741). In Chapter Four I introduce what I call my first data chapter. I am aware of the problematics of this term. Data becomes not a means to an end, not a yes or a no; a right or a wrong, not a binary or a conclusion or a way of making assertions that allow for no movement or questions (or if it does, then often the same old questions). Instead, in my thesis, the rhizome becomes both a figuration and a different tool for analysis (Jackson, 2013).

For me post-humanist thinking with theory was very real. When I wrote this thesis, I would often type into extracts of text things like 'yes that's exactly what I

experienced in writing intervention X'. When Butler wrote 'it's a boy' in her discussion of language and performativity, I scrawled in the margin 'where Butler (1990) writes 'it's a boy' I say 'it's an academic essay' and thus the academic essay becomes the performed act; the thing that carries the heavy, heavy weight of duress and expectation that gender or heteronormativity or abled-bodiedness carries.

When I wrote my original opening paragraph five years ago it read like this:

The purpose of this study is to interrogate the prevailing narratives around writing and dyslexia in an art institution. It will use a narrative inquiry methodology to explore the constructions of identity of the institution, dyslexia, the student and writing. Bauman (2000) asserts that reality cannot be a finite and neatly rounded off affair. We see our own experience and identity as intangible and under constant reinvention whilst others' identities seem solid and stable. What we are seeing when we look at lives other than our own, however, is what he calls 'a work of art' (Bauman, 2000, p.86). And this work of art, which we make up out of our experiences, is what Bauman calls identity.

Later research into post-humanist methodologies has led me to question the centrality of the individual's identity as a model but it still provides a very useful entrée or starting point for understanding my original rationale for this research and for helping me deconstruct some of the issues of positioning, labelling, defining and situating of students with dyslexia. These I later explored with a more Foucauldian and post-humanist lens, looking at the relationship between knowledge and power and at how meaning (which speaks to identity) is made.

Butler speaks of identity in this way:

The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated (Butler, 1990, p.148).

As previously mentioned, dyslexia has more than one identity. The medical model sees dyslexia as a neurological impairment and is concerned with defining dyslexia, its causes, and its effects on the individual.

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills (British Dyslexia Association, 2007).

Phonological processing is also widely held to be at the root of the medical model definition of dyslexia (Goswami and Bryant 1990; Snowling 2000a; Griffiths and Snowling 2002). I had worked with many students with dyslexia who did not conform to the medical model, or – it became clear and was much more interesting to note – conformed only partially, at certain times and under certain modes of scrutiny. Later I came to know the social model of disability, which led to the separation of disability from impairment. This moves the lens from the individual and their ‘lack’ or ‘issue’ to the way in which society oppresses and dis-ables (Oliver, 1990).

‘To be a disabled person, therefore, refers to a person with an impairment who is disabled by society’ (Mallett and Slater, 2013). Later I touched upon critical disability studies, which broadened my understanding further. Critical disability studies counters a normalising societal judgement that pathologises disability (Goodley, 2017). It is:

A broad area of theory research and practice... antagonistic to the popular view that disability equates with personal tragedy... a paradigm shift; from disability as personal predicament to disability as social pathology (Goodley, 2017, p. xi).

Critical disability studies moves the spotlight away from the idea of an individual with a lack or problem and shines a light on society, culture, class, race and gender, on the assumptions of dominant power to define and normalise. It emphasises ‘the complex social, cultural, material and economic conditions that undergird the exclusion of disabled people’ (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016, p. 2). I have found critical disability studies helpful because it is sceptical of singular notions of truth, particularly scientific truth, and it rejects overarching narratives that conveniently and simply explain and dictate. It draws on complexity and discourse. It rejects binaries of good and bad, able and disabled and can be applied to thinking about dyslexia and writing and the very notion of student-hood in an institutional space.

It does not consider people to be homogenous and it reveals that underlying discourses often rely on normative narratives. In my case it has been one of the ways I have been allowed to think differently about my research and, particularly in terms of my literature review/s it has shown me where 'literature fails to think outside discourses that teach us about the 'right'/'ideal'/'normal' way of being child/adult/human' (Slater et al, 2019, p.417).

As I have also shifted towards "becoming post-humanist" in my thinking, so my perception of writing has changed. This process began some years ago. As my role within the University, over 22 years, extended to include work alongside the wider student body – among students both with and without the defining label of dyslexia – I began to understand the possible scope for change in the University; both in the positioning of student identity and in the way that writing is explained, explored and taught alongside a creative arts practice. This began as my main motivation for this study, and although I have changed, my axis has altered, and the waters have become muddier (though much more exciting to swim in) I remain loyal to these original aims and see them as key points of acceleration in the assemblage of this research (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Myself as researcher/ myself in the research

I came to the art institution that is the subject of my research (at that time a college, now a university) in 1997, aged 35, from a background of study, travel and working in the charitable sector in London. My role was originally as a very part-time maternity leave cover Dyslexia Tutor. I was positioned as a Dyslexia Tutor under the umbrella of Additional Learning Support because this was the branch of post-compulsory education that funded my salary at the time.

I tutored initially on the institution's Further Education (FE) programme and my students were aged between 16 and 18. Finding myself in strangely intimate settings in small rooms with young people who had just left school, got a place at

art college and were now discovering that writing and reading were still on the agenda was revealing, challenging and often frustrating. It seemed that the majority of them did not particularly want to read or write about art and did not want to be taken out of the studio/making space and encouraged to do so by me. Many had been the unwilling recipients of “additional support”, “learning support” or “extra help” at school. They had an understandable horror of returning to this situation. For this reason, attending tutorials with me were always voluntary, although the institutional message I got was “try get them to attend because as well as being a pedagogical issue it is a funding issue too.” I had no problem with this.

My prescribed role was to support their writing across their course of study and to help provide them with strategies for managing their dyslexia, to assist them with their reading, processing and managing of theoretical and course-related texts, and to help them construct writing about their art. But always when I met students for the first time I would explain how I hoped we could work *together*. My approach was always to talk first about their art practice – sometimes this involved helping them understand what the term art practice actually meant. Already I was beginning to see institutional slippages, spaces between what was assigned to me, what was expected of me and what I might actually do.

The post was made permanent by the same person who had offered me office space and who had supported my work. He in fact then offered me my first teaching role in the University covering for a class he was not able to teach. I was experiencing Foucault’s concept of *puissance/connaissance* (power/knowledge). Operating at the margins, working with “additional” support, tutoring a disabled minority, the “academy” was allowing me to become one of the ‘authentic inhabitants of the margins’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 37).

Eventually my hours increased. Over the years I moved from the edges of the institution to the centre. I became Dyslexia Coordinator. I physically relocated to the part of the campus that taught undergraduate students. I became incorporated into a department known as Academic Support, my hours were extended so that

my post occupied 4 days a week, I had my own tutorial room to teach in and, as our team expanded, I was given more responsibility for induction, training, supporting and later managing a staff team of my own. I requested and got a job evaluation, which resulted in my title changing to Senior Lecturer Language Development. The margins were no longer the only places I occupied.

I was also recruited to work on the institution's first postgraduate programme, the MA in Creative Practice. I was later promoted to module leader for Research Methods and asked by the Principal to lead one of the University's four fledgling research clusters, making me Pedagogy cluster leader. Additional support had become pedagogy. I was managing my own and others' research. I was encouraged to study for a Master's degree and found myself on a PhD. The distinctions in terms of identity and labelling were unravelling. Questions about edges, marginality, definitions, labels and centres of power were swirling around in my head. 'The entire history of the concept of structure...must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center, as a linked chain of the determination of the center' (Derrida, 1978, p. 279).

My position on knowing and being was formed over time, not just in this institution but elsewhere, but since I began to carry out my own doctoral research it began to be formed, provoked and challenged most. I became a narrative inquirer; and now I believe I am becoming a post-humanist qualitative inquirer.

Thesis Roadmap

Chapters One and Two

Following Chapter One (this introduction) is Chapter Two, the literature review, which is divided into three parts. Part One identifies three distinct bodies of knowledge (the construction of dyslexia; the construction of dyslexia as a disability; the construction of dyslexia in and by the art institution). It presents them first as they occurred to me— as humanist, modernist models lending themselves to separation and codification in the traditional manner of the literature review. Part

Two then takes a key text from each body and applies a post-humanist perspective to them in order to demonstrate by critical example how this revised methodological approach re-shaped and re-positioned my theoretical lenses. Part Three imagines how and why we might write a post-humanist literature review. This chapter deals with the theory and literature that underpins the research and where the research is situated in the field.

The three-part literature review illustrates my journey from straightforward collection and analysis of accepted knowledge to exploration of the possibilities for thinking differently that a post-humanist literature review might present. Part Three, as I say later, refutes the traditional literature review, which presents the view from the top of the rooted tree. Haraway argues that this top-down vision is ultimately anti-knowledge, it is irresponsible, in its so-called objectivity it is unanswerable; it excludes, it reflects and repeats old Enlightenment notions of rationality, wisdom and power. It is 'unable to be called into account' (1988, p. 583).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three discusses the rationale for my methodology, setting out my position on knowing: epistemology; and on being: ontology. It considers my position in the research, the recruitment of participants, the rationale for working with dyslexic students and the research methods used for presenting both my data and findings. Recognising the rhizomic nature of these findings, and any interpretation or presentation I try to make of them, I have chosen to present them as contemporaneous worlds, existing alongside each other and making tentacular relationships (Haraway, 2016). This is because, in post-humanist enquiry, 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

As already indicated, I have written the thesis in a way that is true to my research practices. The participants' words/narrative appear in Trebuchet to distinguish them from the rest of the body of the writing. My speech in these conversations

appears in Arial to distinguish it from theirs. I deliberately do not use speech marks. This allows the participants to speak more directly to the reader and avoids some of the overtones of coding used in more traditional data analysis. The participants' word poems are in Times New Roman font size 16. This is a tribute to their lovely, bold, stand out-ness and a nod to the fact that so many so-called definitive texts are written in this font so it's rather nice to subvert the definitive with the possible. My questions to myself are in Bookman Old Style, a font I find friendly and useable.

Chapter Four: Desire and duress

In this chapter, I deal with the complex and rhizomic entanglements of the participants' writing lives, with both the joy of and the damage to these writing lives. I have chosen desire and duress as ways of doing this. I understand that there are entanglements that are not wholly positive, nor negative, but unfurling. So desire and duress are not separate but rhizomically enmeshed. There is a need in a formal thesis, of course, to understand what makes the content, to separate out its strands and organisms, to chapter and verse it. In order to do this, I present data from semi-structured interviews and conversations to discover and uncover the part played by dyslexia in the writing lives of the participants.

Chapter Five: Deterritorialising dyslexia

This chapter explores the first writing intervention of this research project, drawing upon the intervention and the data that emanated from it, as well as on the participants' retrospective evaluations of the event. Deterritorialisation allows us to question the process. To territorialise in the field of dyslexia is to lay claim to certainties and to divide and separate those "with" and "without" dyslexia. Deterritorialisation also allows the recognition of and exploration of crossovers and striations. Experiences, observations, and thematics that have been discussed in Chapter Four surface and then resurface further on in the thesis. Deterritorialisation rejects the verticality of structuralist thought but retains an emphasis on the "'real" productive effects of flows and interruptions' (Woodward and Jones, 2005, p. 236).

This intervention – workshop one, held in the Life Drawing room – was the first opportunity in the research for all six participants to meet and engage in a writing intervention. Its research aim was the deterritorialising of dyslexia, writing and disability.

Chapter Six: Power and/as performativity

This chapter explores power and performativity, drawing upon both the second gallery-based writing intervention and the data that emanated from it, and on the participants' retrospective evaluations of this intervention. Power and performativity emerge often in my discourse around the construction of dyslexia in the institution and are explored from within the gallery space. This research uses the idea of the assemblage – the coming together in one space of the environment, the human and the non-human, always in a state of flux, always more than the sum of its parts. Space and location prove to be vital matter in the grouping together of these parts, and the opportunity for new knowledge and positions to emerge.

Chapter Seven: Betwixt and Between: Re-thinking our sense of place in an art institution

This chapter explores the third writing intervention, drawing upon the workshop and the data that emanated from it, as well as on the participants' retrospective evaluations of the event. The author and dyslexia tutor Pat Francis paraphrases the artist Paul Klee who 'encouraged artists to take a line for a walk – getting them to loosen up their drawing and to observe what the line became and where it went' (Francis, 2009, p. 15). The placing of the workshop in a liminal place within/without the institution allows for the mapping of the lines of making, speaking and flight that emerged and provides a rich space in which to further deterritorialise dyslexia.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This chapter uses the key eruptions of the research to enable me to set out my conclusion. These eruptions also help me see and state clearly and confidently in this chapter what the contributions to knowledge are that this research makes. In this research I make contributions to knowledge which are new and part of a radical

pedagogy. Using a post-humanist approach to theory and practice, of putting theory to work (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) I challenge and problematise binary and fixed categorisations of dyslexia, disability, writing, the art institution and its students. I challenge the medicalisation and simplification and categorisation of these things and use instead the notion of the assemblage to open up previously closed down categories and propose new ways of knowing and understanding dyslexia, disability, writing and the art institution. Beyond that I propose a general opening up of categories, a rhizomic, social, political and cultural interdependent network that points towards a radical pedagogy in higher education and includes the writing and delivery of my new Creative Writing degree course.

Policy context: The educational and political landscape of dyslexia, art and writing

This research is situated in relation to a clear policy agenda. The former coalition Government's recent decision to '*modernise* the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) which are available to Higher Education students from England' (my italics) (Willettts, 2014, p. 1) moves some elements of funding from a national student-centred support model to an unfunded, institutionally-based support model. Whilst DSAs remain, the scope has been narrowed through policy changes which directly affect funding. The current Government is continuing to pursue these policies. Interestingly, part of their rationale suggests that dyslexia – one category of disability previously safely marginalised by centres of power – is now slipping out of the spotlight and another – mental health – is being moved up the seemingly arbitrary hierarchy.

Previous research has shown that the largest groups of impaired students to which higher education institutions cater were students with dyslexia. The group least likely to feel their needs have been met sufficiently were students with mental health problems. In light of these findings and the Government's proposed changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), we carried out a review in 2014-15 (HEFCE, 2016, p. 1).

Critical disability studies might call this cherry picking: dividing the deserving and undeserving at the margins.

At the time of writing, support is provided to students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLDs) through Student Finance England's (SFE) DSAs. Specialist support staff are referred to in government documents as Non-Medical Helpers (NMH). In my University and more generally they are referred to as specialist study skills tutors, or dyslexia tutors. This policy (funding) switch has already impacted upon institutions. Students are no longer automatically provided with laptop or desktop computers to support their academic studies (BIS, 2015). Institutions and individuals who provide specialist support to students with SpLDs are being closely audited on their increasingly complex paper-trails. Audits are carried out annually, paid for by the individual support provider or institution.

'Higher education (HE) providers will be expected to take primary responsibility for most non-medical help' (BIS, 2015, p. 12). Some institutions have already chosen to not claim Student Finance England funding through DSAs to support their students with SpLDs and are instead rationalising their services and funding them from their own budget. There are three possible implications of this: 1) dyslexic students not having access to necessary support; 2) writing being removed from art curricula; and 3) downgraded support for writing, and the status of writing, as part of degree programmes.

This research offers a different production of discourses around dyslexia and writing within disability studies, critical visual studies, pedagogy and narrative. It will utilise Foucault's notion of governmentality to question how institutional discourses shape and label their members (Foucault, 2006). It questions the way in which knowledge is made – and by doing so casts a critical light on the notion that knowledge is in itself made, is a social construct, is the way in which power is wielded through who knows what and who is allowed to know what. It explores the manner in which knowledge relating to dyslexia is made and shaped; how knowledge around the primacy of orthography is made and shaped; how the institution is made and shaped; and how art writing might become as a means of unsettling these notions.

This is important because ‘people with disabilities are probably under-represented in most institutions and across higher education as a whole’ (NCIHE, 1997, p. 1). A mere 6.9% of UK first year students in 2011-12 were disabled (Equality Challenge Unit, 2012), although a higher proportion of students studying creative arts and design were disabled than any other subject (14.7%) (Equality Challenge Unit, 2012). This research contributes innovative insights by focusing on the lived-experiences of students with dyslexia.

In addition to changes in funding and supporting SpLDs, a significant aspect of the landscape of higher education is influenced by tuition fees ‘which increased from £3,375 to a maximum of £9,000 per year for students at English universities’ in 2012 (Sa, 2014). Changes in tuition fees have impacted upon the choices potential arts students make. Widening participation legislation provides a safety net of sorts for those particularly economically disadvantaged, including categories such as first in family, lower income families, people with disabilities and some ethnic minorities. However, dyslexia and other SpLDs are not covered by these categories.

Applications decrease in response to higher fees, especially for courses with lower salaries and lower employment rates after graduation. Attendance also falls in response to higher fees, but there is no evidence of a larger reduction for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Sa, 2014, p. 1).

Why this research matters

This study seeks to entangle situated empirical research of students’ writing lives within this wider discourse. As such its audience might be students, writers, educators, artists and those interested in reviewing writing curricula in higher education. Writing is constructed through signs, symbols and associated meaning. It is often seen as an impersonal, formal exercise lacking practical relevance: ‘integrally linked with ideology, culture, knowledge and power’ (Rassool, 1999, p. 7). Madriaga et al (2010) however explore the notion that the emphasis on testing, assessment and categorisation of dyslexia sets up a false binary. Perhaps we might regard ourselves as both impaired in some fashion and complete in some fashion.

And perhaps we might interrogate the power of the cult of normalcy and its hold upon us (Davis, 2006).

There are however other constructions of writing about art and writing in relationship to art. Writing is both an art and a craft; it is a 'complex iterative process' that 'takes place over time' (Byrne, 2014, p. 13). The process of imagining, constructing and realising writing is very similar to that of the visual arts and involves both synthesis and praxis. Writing parallels the stages and processes of making in many art disciplines (Francis, 2009). Mattelart and Mattelart (1992) argue that communicable knowledge emerges from what they call 'groping about' (cited in Dallow, 2003, p. 61).

The location of this research in the art institution itself is critical to its be-coming, and is one of the key reasons it has value and validity. This research presents a longitudinal approach to narrative inquiry which follows writing lives carefully and seeks to show them as faithfully as possible by plugging theories in to one another, to data and to participants (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012), by critiquing institutional power and normative practices and by exploring a view of writing as a generative and agential act in visual practice. The post-humanist lens I adopted as part of my research journey is apparent here in the way I explore knowledge and show both data and findings, which presented me with what Haraway (2016, p. 20) calls 'a field of great relational complexity'.

I had a compelling reason for doing this research with these participants and with their writing practices. My methodological journey became part of the story and in my University these findings have become part of the institution: I now run workshops and interventions across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes inside and outside the University. This work has generated not only findings but action and re-configurings. It is important in these times of blind and cruel assertions, to which writing may provide an antidote, that we continue to humbly and energetically grope about.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Introduction

The three-part literature review illustrates my journey from linear collection, organisation, systematisation and analysis of accepted knowledge to exploration of the possibilities for thinking differently that a post-humanist literature review might present. It is methodologically and intellectually consistent with the way this research has been conducted. These three literature reviews represent my response to a changing theoretical understanding. Part One was constructed in three main parts. It gathered evidence from these three areas and penned it in like animals in a farmyard: a pen for the construction of dyslexia, a second pen for the construction of dyslexia as a disability and a third for the construction of dyslexia in/by the art institution.

Part One: The construction of dyslexia

This literature review presents an epistemological approach which is largely modernist, humanist and descending from the enlightenment tradition. It assumes knowledge is separate to the knower and that such things as objective positions exist. Three bodies of literature inform this first literature review. The first body of literature studies dyslexia as a neurological impairment, a specific learning difficulty (Frith, 1999; Ramus et al, 2003; Turner and Rack, 2005; Snowling and Stackhouse, 2006). Here, dyslexia is considered an impairment which carries with it specific impediments to writing. The second body of literature is disability studies which explores disability as a social construct and critiques the language around “dis/ability” and the social environment which creates, upholds and enforces the notion of disability.

The third body of literature is that which charts the art institution’s long and turbulent relationship with the written word. Graves (2007) notes how words and

images are often seen as acting against each other and that written work, even when a student is deeply engaged in the activity, may be seen as incompatible with carrying out studio practice at the same time. These tensions position the teaching of writing as problematic, or even anomalous, in the art institution (George, 2002; Nyffenegger, 2009,) which is something the proposed research aims to unpack.

1a. The construction of dyslexia

Townend, J. & Turner, M. (Eds.) (2000). *Dyslexia in practice: a guide for teachers*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Turner, M. & Rack, J. (2005). *The study of dyslexia*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

The first body of literature considers dyslexia as a neurological impairment and is concerned with defining dyslexia, its causes, and its effects on the individual. This is the medical model.

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills (British Dyslexia Association, 2007).

Phonological processing is widely held to be at the root of the medical model definition of dyslexia. (Goswami and Bryant, 1990; Snowling, 2000a; Snowling and Griffiths, 2002). This theory is seen by some (Nicholson, Fawcett and Dean 1995; Stein, 2001) to ignore sensory “defects” that often appear alongside or in tandem with dyslexia and has led to the adoption of the “competing” magno-cellular theory. The roots of dyslexia therefore are in dispute but, under UK law, dyslexia is classed as a disability. In the assessment of dyslexia, “mental capacity” is determined and formal diagnostic testing is used to “diagnose” dyslexia and to make recommendations for support, intervention and structured teaching.

Key texts on education and dyslexia are selected. Their contents and their position on dyslexia are analysed. Townend and Turner’s (2000) edited collection, *Dyslexia*

in Practice: A Guide for Teachers explores dyslexia through the lens of an educational remediation. These texts were selected as they were essential reading on my postgraduate certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy, which I studied at York University and provided the basis for the entire course. They are indeed known as seminal texts, and whilst often debated their underlying validity is never questioned. They are highly territorialised.

My own relationship with them was somewhat biblical. I carried them everywhere with me, wrote in their margins, puzzled over their language, struggled to memorise their facts and have never been able to look at them since without a feeling that I was about to be questioned on something I might not be able to answer.

In her introduction to Townend and Turner's book, Snowling (2000b) talks of the importance of objective and standardised assessment and structured observation for assessing 'spoken language skills' in order to 'treat the symptoms' of dyslexia (Snowling, 2000b, p. vii). Dyslexia has its own lexicon; phrases such as phonological *deficit* and linguistic *weaknesses* (my italics) appear on educational psychologists' reports. Disability studies' perspectives of the language of disability (and there are multiple perspectives) will be discussed in more detail in the second part of this literature review.

Although 'the underlying basis [of dyslexia] is still hotly debated' (Ramus, 2001, p. 393), Townend and Turner make it clear in their introduction that 'Dyslexia is thus a matter established in scientific research, law, public policy and in the efforts of many teachers' (2000, p. ix) and in doing so they point out that the acceptance of dyslexia as a condition is a hard-won battle. Snowling (2018) makes a clear statement relating to the present-ness and solid foundations of this hard-won battle:

According to recent UK statistics, 14 per cent of 11-year-olds fail to reach age-expected levels of reading. Many of these children are

likely to have dyslexia, a learning difficulty which affects the ability to decode print. Arguably, of all the neurocognitive disorders, dyslexia is the best understood in terms of etiology, behaviour and life course, and it is well-established that, in cognitive terms, dyslexia is characterised by a deficit in phonological skills which compromises the ability to learn grapheme-phoneme correspondences (Snowling, 2018, p.1).

Within the various chapters, the authors foreground the efforts of dyslexia teaching to remove barriers to learning. Borwick's (2000, p. 34) discussion of dyslexia acknowledges the power of speech and language, which are 'the means by which we communicate with one another'. We can start to see from this deconstruction of the authority of written and spoken language that what we are coming to know as dyslexia figures significantly in the complex interactions which bring about human verbal and textual communication.

This authority of written and spoken language is something my research explores and questions. The role of language in an art institution is, I propose, mediated by the space and place(s) sought out there for the radical re-thinking of words and images.

The importance of structured yet holistic teaching and assessment is foregrounded in Turner and Rack's (2005) series of edited texts *The Study of Dyslexia*. In the introduction Turner recognises not only the complexity of dyslexia within the context of the general difficulties of acquiring, processing and expressing English in all its richness, variety and slipperiness.

He equates dyslexia tuition to a

Craft skills tradition... informed... by the grain of language itself, by close up familiarity with the idiosyncratic byways – the lanes and hedgerows – of written English (Turner in Turner and Rack, 2005, p. vii).

Whatever the disputed underlying causes of dyslexia, the effects on language input and output are clearly evidenced. Frith and Frith (1998, p. 4) point out that 'written

language is a novel accomplishment which mankind has possessed for a relatively short period of time'. This dual understanding of language – as a relatively recent phenomena and also one which has attained authority and primacy – recurs throughout my reviews.

Turner and Rack (2005) also consider the social factors that contribute towards the acquiring of language skills and confidence. The authors assert the existence of dyslexia as separate from socio economic background:

Dyslexia can occur despite normal intellectual ability and teaching. It is constitutional in origin, part of one's make-up and independent of socio-economic or language background (Peer, 2001, p. 3).

However, dyslexia cannot necessarily be separated from the cultural capital that is afforded to some learners who are able to access language, books and conversation in the home. For these individuals the possibilities afforded to assist in the acquiring of language skills and confidence may appear more realistic.

Although behaviour varies with age, intellect and culture, nonetheless the following criteria are used to evidence dyslexia: longer time taken to read and comprehend, difficulty with entirely new words, error-prone spelling (Frith and Frith, 1998). This medical model of dyslexia is still rich with complexity and leads into Part 1b. of the review where I look at the construction of dyslexia through the lens of disability theory.

1b. The construction of dyslexia as a disability

This section considers an alternative view of the construction of dyslexia – of difference rather than deficit – which contests the representation of dyslexia in the literature referred to above. This is the social model. Dyslexia is classified as a disability under UK law. Therefore, because of this, perhaps the most powerful representation of dyslexia is as a disability. Hosking (2008, p. 6) writes 'Liberalism

has traditionally conceived of disability as personal misfortune preferably to be prevented and definitely to be cured’.

The dominant paradigm for understanding disability throughout most of the 20th century has been the medical model which identifies the source of the disadvantage experienced by disabled people as their medical condition (Hosking, 2008, p. 6).

The classification of dyslexia as a disability opens it up to the same scrutiny as other impairments and allows us therefore to examine it through the lens of disability studies. This allows us to scrutinise the social model of disability. The emergence of a social model of disability, as opposed to a medical model, led to the separation of disability from impairment. This moves the lens from the individual and their ‘lack’ or ‘issue’ to the way in which society oppresses and dis-ables. (Oliver, 1990). ‘To be a disabled person, therefore, refers to a person with an impairment who is disabled by society’ (Mallett and Slater, 2013, p. 1).

A disability studies perspective offers an alternative to this notion of personal misfortune and deficit. According to Hamraie (2013, p. 1) ‘Disability studies overwhelmingly treats the category of disability ontologically, focussing on what disability is and how it comes to be’. Disability studies rejects both the *noblesse oblige* approach to disability – charity and pity – and the fetishisation of disability – the disabled person as hero which manifests itself in the ‘super-crip’ stereotype (Barnes and Mercer, 2010, p. 193). Goodley describes it as

A broad area of theory research and practice...antagonistic to the popular view that disability equates with personal tragedy (Goodley, 2011, p.xi)

It is, instead, he states

A paradigm shift; from disability as personal predicament to disability as social pathology [and] it places problems of disability in society (Goodley, 2011, p. xi).

Disability studies bores down into the prevailing constructs of disability, how it is realised and how it comes to be understood. Linton (2005, p. 518) writes ‘disability

studies' project is to... expose the ways disability has been made exceptional and to work to naturalize disabled people.' Disability studies argues that the socio-cultural construction of disability is the problem, not the impairment. The body and the mind may carry impairments, but it is society that dis/ables, by judging, measuring, excluding, problematising or marginalising (Pothier and Devlin, 2006). It is only because we understand or subscribe to the notion of normal that we can have abnormal. Goodley (2011) calls this normalising a cult. Davis (1997) asks where is the whole, complete, perfect and self-sustaining human being that is the norm against who we measure ourselves. Is it male, is it white, is it heterosexual? (McRuer, 2006) talks of the internalisation of normalcy, echoing Foucault's internalisation of normalising societal behaviours.

The social model of disability, then, offers a powerful way of deconstructing dyslexia as a disability, a neurological impairment. It is therefore both a thing we possess (to be dyslexic) and a thing we lack (presumed competencies in defined areas of literacy). Davis (1995) rejects an ableist discourse and argues that disability needs to be re-visited and reconstituted in the same way as gender, class and race. In order to have a disability or be dyslexic we need to have a notion of what it is to have no disability, no dyslexia. In other words, our understanding of how humans come to be is predicated upon the idea of normalcy, of the lack of any 'dis'.

Titchkosky (2011) explores how this norming came to be. She politicises knowledge. She uses phenomenology and storytelling to question medical models of disability. Titchkosky (2011) uses the principles of Universal Design to question representations of disability. She provides insights into how perceptions of disability are made and reflected in architectural structures and interior design. The shape, space and environment of the institution are complicit in the building's "disabling" of its users– the absence of ramps, the opacity of signposting.

My research, in using the writing experiences of art students with dyslexia, foregrounds disability studies pedagogy and locates it in an institutional context. Disability studies pedagogy acknowledges behaviourist, humanist and cognitive

theories of learning, whilst recognising the socially constructed aspects of understanding how we learn and how we understand ourselves in the world. The art institution and the adoption of a visual studies platform, which questions the privileging of text over image, offers 'rich opportunities for expanding disability studies pedagogy' (Derby, 2012, p. 1), particularly for expanding alternative positionings of dyslexia as a disability. This is where Parts Two and Three of this literature review conveniently overlap. Bourriaud wrote 'artistic praxis appears these days to be a rich loam for social experiments, like a space partly protected from the uniformity of behavioural patterns' (1998, p. 9). Visual studies (such as those located in an arts institution) provide a space to explore pedagogical, social and physical possibilities.

There are also models of knowing dyslexia which present it as a gift and as a sign of left-brained creativeness, but these are problematic. Another way of othering and positioning dyslexia is exemplified the provocatively entitled *The Gift of Dyslexia* (Davis, 2010). Davis argues that one of the causes of dyslexia is an underlying talent, which is then compromised by environmental influences and unsuccessful learning experiences. This special/Othering of dyslexia is controversial and runs the risk of fetishising dyslexia, rather as Barnes and Mercer's (2010) 'super-crip' stereotype suggests.

Wolff and Lundberg (2002, p. 84) note that 'according to self-reports combined with objective testing, the incidence of dyslexia was far higher among art students.' However, the construct of disability of a gift equating with increased creativity is challenged by the same authors.

It is a widely held opinion that dyslexia is associated with remarkably artistic creativity. Speculations on different brain structures and brain functions have been proposed as an explanation. Very few objective studies have been reported that confirm the conjectures on the relationship between dyslexia and artistic creativity (Wolff and Lundberg, 2002, p. 34).

As stated, under UK law dyslexia is a disability and this entitles students within higher education to certain supports. So the 'dis' or 'lack' is then positioned in such a way that it brings an extra or entitlement to those that have it. Titchkosky (2011) illustrates how this fixing of disability into law is another example of how disability is produced. In reviewing Titchkosky's definition of disability, Hamraie writes 'disability is produced through knowledge, perception, and interpretation within the spaces of higher education' (Hamraie, 2013, p. 1). Titchkosky is saying here how disability "comes to be" in particular through the landscape of education and its institutions.

Another social theory of disability is offered by Writing PAD, (Writing Purposefully in Art and Design), a collection of writers, artists and researchers whose external outputs include the peer reviewed *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*. Wood (2005) might concur to an extent with Davis (2010) who talks about the 'heightened possibilities' of the 'dyslexic mind' (Davis, 2010, p. 24). Whilst this positioning of dyslexia might be read as the obverse of the reasoning that positions it as a deficit, it presents a valuable alternative view, particularly Wood's critique of the way certain manifestations of learning – such as writing fluently, reading effectively, speaking and delivering information in a linear fashion – are privileged. This echoes the first section of this literature review where the primacy of orthography is also challenged by proponents of the medical model of dyslexia.

1c. The construction of dyslexia in/by the art institution

In Part 1c. of the review I look at how the art institution as a place of pedagogy, practice and bodily inhabitation addresses the role of writing within art.

The third body of literature charts the art institution's long and turbulent relationship with the written word. Graves (2007) notes how, in academic writing, words and images are often seen as acting against each other and that written work, even when a student is deeply engaged in the activity, may not be seen as compatible with carrying out studio practice. These tensions position the teaching of writing as problematic, or even anomalous, in the art institution (George, 2002; Nyffenegger, 2009) which is something my research aims to critically interrogate.

As long as students (and teachers) focus on the differences between writing and design, as long as they perceive the former as an impersonal, formal exercise lacking practical relevance and the latter as a creative, satisfactory personal journey, they will not be able to establish helpful connections. Instead of emphasizing (or even celebrating) an opposition of visual and verbal literacy, design knowledge should be used to develop student writing. (Nyffenegger, 2009, p. 3).

Byrne (2014, p. 2) suggests that 'writing in the arts constitutes a specific set of literary practices in context (Gee, 1996; Street, 1997; Lea and Street, 1998).' The dominant form of academic assignments in higher education is the academic written text (Lillis and Scott, 2008). Rassool (1999, p. 2) talks about the 'hegemony' of literacy as 'cultural capital'. It is, he says, 'integrally linked with ideology, culture, knowledge and power' (Rassool, 1999, p. 7). The art institution appears to both value and mistrust the written assignment. On the one hand the incorporation of art schools into the university system has arguably made art education more academic and theoretical in its approach (Borg, 2007.) Yet at the same time an art school mentality remains which challenges textual and theoretical primacy and sets the visual almost at odds with the written or textual (Nyffenegger, 2009).

Byrne (2014, p. 13) argues that 'arts education is located within a system that privileges a particular form of rational, text-based literacy' over others, leading to the assertion that this form is viewed as 'crucial for validating another form of literacy practice':

Creative works, no matter how highly esteemed, cannot in themselves be in themselves be regarded as outputs of research. They can only become so with explanatory or contextualising text (The UK Council for Education 1997 cited in Borg, 2007, p. 98).

Madriaga et al (2010) however explore the notion that the emphasis on testing, assessment and categorisation of dyslexia sets up a false binary and that everyone should in some way be regarded as having an impairment where meaning making is concerned. Where one person might speak effectively in public they may find their

writing less successful, or where vocabulary is highly developed, an understanding of grammar and punctuation might not automatically follow. This would lead to a different perspective on making meaning in a written form, contributing towards the breaking down of the glass wall between academic departments, artist practitioners and disability support services (Byrne, 2014).

There are indeed many initiatives and approaches around writing in the arts including the lively and innovative suggestions of Francis (2009) where she proposes tactile writing, visual and emblematic representations of the thinking/writing process and explorations of the language used to discuss, for instance, the feel, sound and structure of painterliness and colour. Derby (2012) advocates visual-textual essays, and alternative forms of assessment are discussed by Orr (2005) and Orr, Blythman and Mullins (2003) amongst others. Language is a 'complex socio-cultural phenomenon' (Byrne, 2014, p. 4) and literacy is primarily being about making and interpreting meanings (Gee, 1996). Street (2003) argues that literacy is a social practice. It is not neutral, it is linked to ways of being, to identity. This reflects the views of Titchkosky (2011) who talks about the identity of disability and the construction of otherness, and Bauman's (2000) questioning of where the perceived drive to 'fix' identity comes from.

George expresses the need for reconciling and mediating:

In place of a resolution, then, I am after a clearer understanding of what can happen when the visual is very consciously brought into the composition classroom as a form of communication worth both examining and producing (George, 2002, p. 14).

As previously stated, writing is an art and a craft. It is a 'complex iterative process' that takes place over time (Byrne, 2014, p. 13). The process of imagining, constructing and realising writing is very similar to that of the visual arts and involves both synthesis and praxis. Writing parallels the stages and processes of making in many art disciplines (Francis, 2009). As previously stated, Mattelart and Mattelart (1992) argue that communicable knowledge emerges from what they call

'groping about' (cited in Dallow, 2003, p. 61). This 'groping about' is reflected by Rogoff in *Academy as Potentiality*:

Subjects and knowledge do not live in a simple state of productive harmony... [which] counters the aims to uniformly instrumentalise education towards a set of predetermined outcomes (Rogoff, 2006, p. 13).

Using post-humanist thinking to interpret Rogoff and Mattleart and Mattelart we see that making writing and diffracting knowledge are not linear but are rhizomic. We write in fits and starts, we revise and edit and return and refute, we learn in jags and spikes and through roots and tubers. Education is a lifelong experience, as the participants in this research demonstrate. It is not static or still and is bound up in our ontological and physical selves.

It is this proliferation, this multiplicity that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) talk about that helps contribute to our understanding of who we are in the world we inhabit. This issue of identity is central to this study. It appears in both modernist and post-modern writing, in humanist and post-humanist lexicons. Later I will expand on the idea of identity as it has appeared to me in my research. I position it less as a representation of the 'inner self' and much more as a way of being and be-coming, a way of realising and inhabiting something we feel compelled to attain for reasons of belonging, and something we are by virtue of our experience. I call upon the post-humanist ideas of be-coming in order to develop the idea of identity into something we can slough off and also inhabit – inhabit in the way Haraway (2016) discusses inhabitation of the planet by species, and ways of inhabiting our relationships through what she calls tentacular practices. This way of making identity, of be-coming identity, is explored later in the chapters on data and findings.

Bauman (2000, p. 83) writes 'identities are fixed and solid only when seen from the outside'. Theories of identity and positioning around dyslexia and disability are equally relevant to the understanding of writing in an art institution. And institutions have identities too (Linde, 2009). This research references Ricoeur's

(1991) theories of time and narrative and Bauman's (2000) identity theories: ideas of how we reconfigure and reshape our experiences. Van Rensburg argues that it is not necessary or desirable for students to become 'fixed in their academic identities' (2006, p. 2). Writing, he argues, is one of the most important ways in which students 'assume' alternative and perhaps 'real' academic identities in the university (2006, p. 2).

Alternative approaches to art education include literature that looks at art education as a radical pedagogy and the art institution as a place of cultural exchange. Derby (2012, p. 1) suggests that disability aware arts education should include 'critical and creative responses to global contemporary art and learners' everyday diverse and multimodal experiences' and asserts that disability-aware arts education offers 'rich opportunities for expanding disability studies pedagogy' (2012, p. 1). This rhizomic connection between art education, disability studies pedagogy and institutional policy making helps inform the choices for the literature studied in the second literature review.

Part Two: A post-humanist 'take' on three key dyslexia texts:

Townend, J. & Turner, M. (Eds.) (2000). *Dyslexia in practice: a guide for teachers*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Wolff, U. & Lundberg, I. (2002). The prevalence of dyslexia among art students. *Dyslexia*, 8(1), 34-42.

Titchkosky, T. (2011). *The question of access: disability, space, meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

I have learned much that has informed this second review, and not in a neat linear form. Post-humanism helped me in 'creating a language and way of thinking methodologically and philosophically together that is up to the task' of dealing with

situations, research and data which is new and which perhaps we 'do not understand' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2016, p. vii). Letting the animals of theory out of their pens of containment reminds us that instead of one Truth we are dealing with an array of truths, and with co-mingling species, artefacts and data of all kinds.

Assumptions of rightness can lead to acceptance of Truth, rather than considerations of truths (Potgieter, 2003). The positivist tradition suggests a rightness of being which defines us. Most knowledge systems assume that truth occurs in some correspondence manner; that beneath the surface there are codes to be cracked. This correspondence manner might describe the first part of this literature review. Here I take text from each of the three sections of the first review and apply a post-humanist lens to them.

2a. The construction of dyslexia

Townend, J. & Turner, M. (Eds.) (2000). *Dyslexia in practice: a guide for teachers*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

The literature reviewed in the first section of Part 1a. ascribes a medical model to dyslexia and views it as a remediable learning difficulty (Goswami and Bryant, 1990; Frith and Frith, 1998; Fawcett and Nicholson, 2008; Duff et al., 2014). Townend and Turner's (2000) edited collection, *Dyslexia in Practice, a Guide for Teachers* explores dyslexia through the lens of educational remediation. In her introduction to this book, Snowling (2000b) talks of the importance of objective and standardised assessment and structured observation for assessing 'spoken language skills' in order to 'treat the symptoms' of dyslexia (Snowling, 2000b, p. vii). Dyslexia is given validity through standardised psychometric testing. It is seen as a problem which can be solved, which must be solved.

The acquisition of spoken language, phonological awareness, and fine motor control take place in a sequence that has been well documented. Progress tends to occur within broadly predictable age bands. This means there is an optimum time for the acquisition of any developmental skill, though there is

no age beyond which improvement becomes impossible. The obvious implication is that for children, whose development of these skills is late, early identification and intervention will be of greater benefit than later intervention. Foundation skills: There is a surprising degree of consensus among recent research papers looking at the factors which influence literacy development. We will call those factors the foundation skills. The early indicators of future literacy success are all language based: spoken language, attention and listening, and most important, phonological awareness (Townend and Turner, 2000, p. 2).

If we apply post-humanist thinking to Townend and Turner's text, above, we can see set out before us a landscape of clear correspondence between knowing and knower. Without the timely acquisition of these skills the child becomes problematised. In addition, the child is normalised, made a statistic in a bell curve, which represents normal distribution and therefore abnormal performance.

The child who does not meet the normalised milestones is not progressing. He or she becomes a late developer of skills, rather than a differently developing child traversing the non-linear paths of their multiple be-comings. The language of dyslexia is clear and crisp – it is the language of statistical certainty. The 'sequence is well documented' through psychometric testing and remedial teaching, which is embedded in the national curriculum. The division of child development into clearly identifiable chronological age ranges is part of the construction of dyslexia as an aberration from the norm. Foucault argues that knowledge makes power. Institutional discourses shape and label their members (Foucault, 2006). Townend and Turner wield institutional power in their reference to a consensus around the factors influencing literacy development, an agreement, a shared paradigm of how a certain mode of scientific knowledge is made and displayed by young people.

The factors influencing literacy development are named – they are foundation skills. This language again suggests a progressive, systematised and hierarchical way of knowing and of displaying that knowing. It is a mechanistic, humanist, linear vision of learning, of knowledge. It suggests a clear linear route and obvious markers of aberrant behaviour. Children's literacy and in particular phonological development is coded, interpreted and transcribed.

A post-humanist approach might be to replace this mechanistic coding with dense and multi-layered treatment of data that pushes both the research and the theory to its furthest extent (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). The treatment of data around dyslexia and literacy is rich and complex. 'Data are partial, incomplete and always in a process of re-telling and re-remembering' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 262). So, the onus is on us to question what we are asking of this data and why certain parts are privileged and other parts remain untold. It's as much about what we do with and to it as about what it actually is. We have "privilege and authority". We could just as easily be telling another story as the one we are telling, and by telling this one we are not telling another (Cixous and Calle Gruber, 1997). Jackson and Mazzei's studies are 'time out of joint', constructed by us, and their main purpose is to show how the past is 'insistent upon the present.' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. xii). They highlight what the participants themselves felt were important parts of their past, and what they selected to bring to the fore when talking about their present lives and present writing identities (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. xii).

Children's developmental behaviour, too, is not always linear and chronological. Children's language and literacy acquisition is often messy and deviating. It depends upon environment, parenting/caring, social interaction, school life and home life. It responds to factors such as class, gender and economic status. Townend and Turner claim territory in their construction of dyslexia (Braidotti, 2013). Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p. 7) suggest another way of looking at this territorialised construction of dyslexia through 'what is produced in the deconstructive moment – the jarring and excessive nature of events that do not fit neatly into categories, nor capture an experience, but that rupture structures and received notions of the academy'.

2b. The construction of dyslexia as a disability

Goodley, D., Lawthom, R. & Runswick Cole, K. (2014). Posthuman disability studies. *Subjectivity*, 7(4), 342-361.

This text will be analysed from a post-humanist stance. The emergence of critical disability studies challenges disability studies prior to the early 21st century.

Disability invites a critical analysis. It poses difficult questions about normalcy and binaries. It challenges identities (Goodley, Lawthom and Runswick-Cole, 2014). In literature review Part 1b. I quoted Wolff and Lundberg:

It is widely held opinion that dyslexia is associated with remarkably artistic creativity. Speculations on different brain structures and brain functions have been proposed as an explanation. Very few objective studies have been reported that confirm the conjectures on the relationship between dyslexia and artistic creativity (Wolff and Lundberg, 2002, p. 34).

What we have above is a complex presentation of humanist speculation around dyslexia. Firstly, the “creative benefits” of dyslexia are presented as opinion. We understand from this word ‘opinion’ that they might be considered to be spurious and unsubstantiated. Ideas around brain structure and function are also presented as ‘speculations’. So, the evidence is felt to be unsound because it is not really evidence, it is opinion. Instead, we are required to look for ‘objective studies’. However, post- humanism rejects the notion of objective studies, and critical disability studies questions the evidence-based, modernist, humanist model as of testing, sorting, labelling.

Titchkosky (2011) for instance ‘uses perception and relationality to critique empirical, scientific and medical approaches, which assume that disability is a diagnosable and knowable condition’ (Hamraie, 2013, p.1). Titchkosky (2011), in *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning*, asks what might happen if we treat disability as a way of understanding and positioning the world rather than conceiving of it as an individual functional limitation? Where might this leave the flag bearers for disability as charitable cause, disability as cause for celebration? What might happen to the ‘gifted’ child or the heroic Paralympian then? Might we be forced to take a more post-humanist view of them, to see them not as territorialised and categorised in their disabled identities? The entanglement

between post-humanist thinking and critical disability studies has been mentioned already.

Critical disability studies, we argue, are perfectly at ease with the post-human because disability has always contravened the traditional classical humanist conception of what it means to be human. Disability also invites a critical analysis of the post-human. We examine the ways in which disability and post-human work together, enhancing and complicating one another in ways that raise important questions about the kinds of life and death we value (Goodley, Lawthom and Runswick-Cole, 2014, p. 343).

With this thinking we might be forced to recognise those with impairments not as aberrant from the enlightenment view of normalcy but as human animals with embodied differences who are part of a rhizome – a social, political and cultural interdependent network and whose bodies and minds are in fact being dis-abled by the way in which society is constructed for this largely mythical norm.

Wolff and Lundeberg (2002), by critiquing the perception of dyslexia as a gift (Davis, 2010; Eide and Eide, 2012), are in fact presenting the polar opposite but connected popular perception of disability as an individualised calamity. Critical disability studies is ‘a broad area of theory research and practice...antagonistic to the popular view that disability equates with personal tragedy’ (Goodley, 2011, p. xi). In critical disability studies, disability is seen as a ‘cultural trope’ and ‘historical community’ that questions corporeal materiality and the ‘social formulations that are used to interpret bodily and cognitive differences’ (Goodley, 2013, p. 633). Personal misfortune narratives, the hero-worshipping of the brave disabled, the narrative of the disabled child or artistically gifted dyslexic student, are unsettled by critical disability studies’ challenge to normalcy.

The role of critical disability studies in an understanding of dyslexia is important in this research. ‘Theory gives us new vocabularies for thinking about society’ (Goodley, 2011, p. x). This research draws on critical disability studies to understand dyslexia as a construct. Late twentieth century disability studies concerned itself with ‘establishing the factors that led to the structural, economic and cultural

exclusion of people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments' (Goodley, 2017, p. 81). Critical disability studies severed 'the causal link between the body and disability' and relocated it to 'social, cultural, political and economic registers. Having an impaired body did not equate with disability' (Goodley, 2013, p. 84).

More recently there has been a developing of 'nuanced theoretical responses to these factors' which has been motivated to a large extent by the politicisation of disabled people and groups (Goodley, 2013, p. 631). Contemporary disability studies look towards transdisciplinary binary breaking, merging the professional and the personal, questioning institutions, merging theories and activism with challenges to 'other forms of oppression including hetero/sexism' and racism (Goodley, 2013, p. 631).

'The intersectional character of disability is one of a number of reasons why we might conceptualize the contemporary state of the field as *critical* disability studies' (Goodley, 2013, p. 632, my italics). The word critical is important, denoting what Goodley calls a means of appraisal, a space to think through 'political, theoretical and practical issues that are relevant to all' (2011, p. 157). Critical disability studies takes the researcher beyond the social model of disability in a post-modernist age. It replaces or at least challenges the social model of disability which largely discussed the 'material conditions of disablement' (Goodley, 2013, p. 633). The imperative of critical disability studies is to see not the individual, impaired body but the societal impairing of bodies and more keenly the 'the impaired body as a social body' (Goodley, 2013, p. 633). Critical disability studies offers disability as possibility (Mackenzie, 2009). Importantly, as previously noted:

Critical disability studies...are perfectly at ease with the post-human because disability has always contravened the traditional classical humanist conception of what it means to be human. Disability also invites a critical analysis of the post-human (Goodley, Lawthorn and Runswick Cole, 2014, p. 342).

This complexity offers a lens through which to explore dyslexia as construct in the University and aligns it well with a post-human perspective ‘celebrating moments of difference and disruption’ (Goodley, Lawthorn and Runswick Cole, 2014, p. 342).

I do not reject dyslexia as a name or as a way of describing a set of literacy and language and processing related difficulties – because to do so would be to reject the narratives and lived experiences of the participants and to reject the whole basis of psychometric testing that has explored their efficacy and skills and performances in these fields. These tests and their outcomes form part of the many truths of students’ lives. I do however reject psychometric testing as the single Truth, and see it as part of the socially constructed representation of normalcy.

This research accepts the multiple truths of what is called dyslexia, rather than the Truth. It accepts that dyslexia is a recognised category of disability and as such is socially constructed in terms of its labelling: it is likely to be visible and felt necessary to be identifiable in a society that privileges orthography. In a society that records and transmits information differently it may not be recognised. In societies where literacy is denied to some but not to others its recognition may depend on class or status or gender. Perhaps we recognise dyslexia because we privilege writing and respect speed of reading, “correct” spelling and a certain kind of academic knowhow (Derby, 2012). Perhaps we recognise Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AD(h)D), medically deemed to be on the same spectrum as dyslexia and dyspraxia, because we privilege controlled behaviour, biddable learners, quiet classrooms, seated students. There may be other difficulties we haven’t even identified or considered.

But also, I recognise that although it is society that disables (Michalko, 2002; Goodley, 2011; Titchkosky, 2011), that we as human beings carry with us impairments that cause us to experience pain or discomfort, or to wish us to be able to do things differently, more comfortably or in a different way. The opening up of a conversation around corporeal form and intellectual capacity is important in breaking down perceptions of normalcy. It is from this perspective that I am

interested in exploring the lived experiences of art students with dyslexia in the art institution.

2c. The construction of dyslexia in and by the art institution

Titchkosky, T. (2011). *The question of access: disability, space, meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

This section uses the writings of Titchkosky (2011) and Bauman (2000) as well as drawing on policy documents setting out the legislation (territorialising, categorising) and “treatment” of dyslexia and students with dyslexia within the art institution. Bauman and Titchkosky were selected because Bauman was a familiar name for the research participants, a theorist they had studied and who dealt with identity – something artists are often asked to explore. Titchkosky writes from a disability studies perspective, notably about bodies and access to physical spaces. She draws on cultural studies and phenomenological versions of feminist, queer theory, and Black studies.

Titchkosky cites Bauman, also a sociologist, and also a philosopher dealing with ideas of modernity and rationality. They are very different yet they speak to each other and illustrate how different approaches for creating new ways of looking at knowledge can produce new, rhizomic connections. This section takes a post-humanist approach to this literature, highlighting the classification and approach to “dealing with” the art student with dyslexia. It does so by reprising Bauman’s vision of identity as both liquid and fluid, as something that might become entangled with other elements of self and place and material. Titchkosky draws on Bauman who, she argues, sees identity as both something we ought to be and something we already are, and which also arises out of a need to belong (Bauman, 2000 in Titchkosky, 2011).

This seems to sum up the crisis of the dyslexic student in the art institution well and interestingly shows the use of a modernist humanist theory by a post-modern post-humanist theorist. The student with dyslexia in the art institution is constructed as an art student who must become a good writer in order to succeed (ought to be). He or she must be dealt with accordingly in order to become a successful art student dyslexic who can write about art (already are). And students with dyslexia have desires to “be” dyslexic (or why go through the trauma of psychometric testing and often the associated cost?) because this category provides a home for their needs and a place where those needs are dealt with. This place is separate from and secluded from the mainstream teaching of the institution. Support is offered discreetly.

Titchkosky refers to disabled people as ‘essentially excludable’ (2011, p. 39). In a post-humanist act I have (in my teaching within the University) taken writing workshops to the generalised teaching areas and invited student classed as dyslexic and students not classed as dyslexic to share these experiences. Haraway might call this conjugating ‘worlds with partial connections and not universals and particulars’ (2016, p. 13).

The workshops are presented as ways in to writing and making. Language is made visible in a series of mark-making exercises, a range of implements for writing are trialled, signatures are signed with feeling (anger, sadness, a grand flourish), objects are handled and discussed, their sensory impact is addressed, and meanwhile writing is taking place as a concurrent making activity. Sheets of paper are filled. Text is read aloud, quotes are deconstructed playfully, sentences are reconstructed with new and startling meaning.

A quote from Judith Butler which read ‘identity as a compelling illusion, an object of *belief*’ (Butler, 1988, p. 520) was cut up into small pieces and reassembled to read *belief an illusion of identity*. Although accidental, this construction is important. It forms a line of flight as Deleuze and Guattari would say. Titchkosky (2011) defines disability not as an *object* of knowledge but as a ‘space of

interpretive encounter' (p. 56) and a 'way of perceiving and orienting toward the world' (p. 4). The workshops, which were made for and arose out of this research, are my way of repositioning the art student with dyslexia within the University.

Part 1c. of the literature reviews dealt with some of the contradictions and anomalies of theory around writing in an art institution and its intersection with the student with dyslexia. The false binaries of making and writing were considered (George, 2002; Graves, 2007; Nyffenegger, 2009; Madriaga et al, 2010). Writing was examined as part of an epistemological hierarchy (Lillis and Scott, 2008), and Rassool (1999) discusses the hegemony of the cultural capital of literacy. Nods are being made in the direction of an understanding of writing as a constructed way of demonstrating institutionalised and ideologised knowledge and power. In my University, where writing is seen as an important part of a student's demonstration of their ability to show understanding of their subject area, there are clear expectations of the art student as writer.

The recognition of dyslexia as a disability and the funded teaching support given to students with a formal diagnostic assessment of dyslexia is part of the construction of dyslexia within my institution. Support is funded, as discussed in the methodology, through Student Finance England (SFE) and this funded support dictates how and in what way the specialist study skills tutor works with the student. Students receive a formal letter setting out their yearly allocation for specialist study skills support; they are generally also given financial assistance towards the cost of a laptop but under new legislation must provide the first £200 of the cost of this and are also assigned a package of assistive software to help with literacy skills.

Specialist study skills tutors, such as myself in one of my iterations, are then assigned to work with individual students. We fill in an individual learning plan with each student which denotes their learning needs and areas for development and review this twice yearly. They are also asked to sign a learning contract which sets out the expectation, amongst others, that they will attend regularly and clarifies

that we as specialist study skills tutors will assist only with language and structure, not with content of writing.

This presents a myriad of problems and possibilities. How can we assist with structure and language but not with meaning and content? Territorialising and categorising language, writing, speech into these categories makes a rhizomic encounter with teaching and learning difficult. Negotiating this very post-human phenomena is part of the joy and the anomaly of specialist study skills support in the institution. Post-humanism is about the conjunction of the material discursive. I argue, after Mazzei (2013a; 2013b), that research is constituted between the discursive and the materials, that the material is discursive and the discursive is material.

Part Three: What would a post-humanist literature review look like?

Part Three of this literature review asks what a post-humanist literature review might look like. Firstly, it wouldn't list the texts it reviews in bold at the top. There are too many to mention when knowledge becomes rhizomic. It will refer to ways of understanding text instead. In Part 2a. of this literature review I attempted to link meaning, signs and interpretation by taking one piece of literature from each of the three original 'bodies' and tried to bring these three things (meaning, signs and interpretation) into a relationship. This re-imagining of the literature review asks questions of traditional hierarchical knowledge organisation such as the traditional literature review I presented in Part One. This radical re-thinking, I suggest, also allows for a re-thinking of dyslexia and language. In discussing Foucault's banishing of authorship, Bal (1997) writes how instead he (Foucault) proposes as an alternative:

A radical proliferation of meaning, where the author/work becomes a fluctuating function always interacting with other functions in the larger discursive field (Bal, 1997, p. 16).

Two definitions of a literature review are given below. I turned first to a traditional bastion of knowledge, the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE). Its definition of a literature review tells us ‘a literature review is an assessment of a body of research that addresses a research question’ (HGSE, 2018, p. 1). Its purpose is to identify ‘what is already known about an area of study, identify questions... not [yet] answered and make a case for what further study of research questions is important to the field’ (HGSE, 2018, p. 1). The process has several steps which, summarised, are the framing, searching, managing and synthesising of existing literature and the critical evaluation of the literature (HGSE, 2018).

The Royal Literary Fund, in a not dissimilar way, defines a literature review as a survey, analysis, critical analysis and presentation. In defining critical analysis, it gives as its aim ‘identifying gaps in current knowledge; by showing limitations of theories and points of view; and by formulating areas for further research and reviewing areas of controversy’ and makes explicit that all that findings must be presented in a clear and organised fashion (Royal Literary Fund, 2017, p. 1). These definitions suggest a humanist, Enlightenment approach to the production, collection, organisation and presentation of knowledge and therefore to the production of new knowledge. There is a clear sense of structure, of hierarchy, of god-like voices, of what Haraway calls ‘immortality and omnipotence (1988, p. 580). In this vision of knowledge ‘what can count as knowledge is policed by philosophers codifying cognitive canon law’ (1988, p. 575).

Post-humanist theory questions these traditional definitions, asking instead:

Whose knowledge is being gathered, analysed and reflected upon?

Where does this knowledge come from?

How do we capture this knowledge?

Once we “have” it, how do we organise it and present it to the world?

On what basis are we judging it?

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explore a new way of making sense of knowledge. They characterise traditional knowledge organisation as hierarchical and arborescent, using the notion of the tree. The tree has one root, from one root comes all knowledge. This corresponds with the modernist, Enlightenment paradigm: one Truth, distributed through power, with control maintained. They introduce us to the rhizome – a biological concept known already in nature – and characterise it as having multiple roots which are self-generating and move in various and continuous directions. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This post-humanist making sense of knowledge poses questions to traditional hierarchical knowledge organisation.

Deleuze and Guattari do not claim their work is post-human but they do refer to the post-personal (Massumi, 1995) which I understand to be related to the idea that emotion is a fixed and qualified, personal feeling whereas affect (which comes after this personal, and is post-personal) is 'unqualified. As such, it is not ownable or recognizable, and is thus resistant to critique' (Massumi, 1995, p. 88). We cannot use affect to control world events, and our own worlds, but we can understand that we are relationally entangled with them.

If we move away from the arborescent model where do we go next?

A Deleuzo-Guattarian literature review would not ask the same questions in the same way and for the same reasons as the Harvard Graduate School of Education, or the Royal Literary Fund, or as I did in Part One and Part Two. Knowledge is organised rhizomically, a rhizome is 'absolutely different from' the 'roots and radicles' of the tree-like hierarchy of knowledge (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 6). It has five principles. The first two are connection and heterogeneity.

Any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other...not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status. Collective assemblages of enunciation

function directly within machinic assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

We are alerted here to the way in which traditional knowledge organisations are products of social, political economic and ideological conditions that create them. And within each separate body of traditionally organised knowledge, codes and ciphers and ways of making meaning function intricately to both include and exclude those seeking entry or membership, and those seeking to question and overturn.

The third principle of multiplicity means knowledge organisation 'ceases to have any relation to the One' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 8). The multiplicity may be in the text, or it may be in us as reader, as researcher, as maker, as body. The hegemony of the traditional literature review starts to give way to variety, richness, the mapping of one text onto another, the letting out of the animals from their farmyard pens and the inter-species mingling in the farmyard. Where dyslexia interacts with spontaneous, object-driven writing, it changes its colours immediately. Remove the primacy of spelling, the rules of punctuation for a short time and see what happens.

Principle four, 'assignifying rupture', means that 'a rhizome may be broken...but it will start up on one of its old... or new lines' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 9). It ruptures and flies, but this is a part of its becoming, not its destruction. And principle five explains that the rhizome is mapped, not generated and traced: 'make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome' (1987, p. 10).

So dyslexia in the rhizome is not an isolated neurological condition, or a gift, or a middle class fancy, or part of a complex spectrum of specific learning difficulties – categorised, argued over. Instead it becomes a situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988), an embodied experience, connected to learning, environment, sense of self,

connection with others. It does not come from one. It is not start or finish. 'It is always the middle' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

Once it has reached as far as it feels it can go it 'undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21). In my findings, there are numerous examples of this metamorphosis as participants reflect upon their experiences of dyslexia and art writing in various spaces and places. My research starts in the middle – halfway through their degree courses, poised between undergraduate and graduate status. It's not about lineages, it is about expansion, rupture, variety, off shoots, the going back and forth between knowledge(s).

There is an alliance, an entanglement between post-humanism and feminism which Haraway explores by presenting the social constructivist perspective that 'no insider's perspective is privileged, because all drawings of inside-outside boundaries in knowledge are theorized as power moves' (1988, p. 576). But this does not mean we should regard all knowledge as the 'same'. Using Haraway (1988) to help me reimagine a literature review I ask:

Whose knowledge is being reviewed?

Haraway (1988, p.581) rejects the Christian right's evangelist creation story, what she calls 'the conquering gaze from nowhere'. This is, she says

The gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and white (Haraway, 1988, p. 581).

The traditional literature review presents the view from the top of the rooted tree. This vision, she argues, is ultimately anti-knowledge, it is irresponsible; in its so-called objectivity it is unanswerable. It excludes, it reflects and repeats old enlightenment notions of rationality, wisdom and power. It is 'unable to be called into account' (Haraway, 1988, p. 583).

We need instead to see from below; to beware of the 'god tricks' of relativism and totalization' (Haraway, 1988, p. 584). Like Deleuze and Guattari (1987) Haraway argues for

a doctrine and practice of objectivity that privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connection and hoped for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing (1988, p. 585).

Her webbed connections echo their rupture, variety and off shoot.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest we must start in the middle, a rhizome is always in the middle, always connected, always able to be joined with. Haraway suggests we take the view – situated in our complex identities, our many ways of being – from beneath, from within, and from amongst, which promises a different way of grounding and organising knowledge. And that we ask different questions to those proposed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the Royal Literary Fund, and Part 1 of this literature review. Instead of asking what is known already and adding to its further stratification and hierarchisation she urges us to ask questions of the traditional literature review:

How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders? (Haraway, 1988, p.587).

Haraway urges responsibility and accountability:

A map of tensions and resonances between the fixed ends of a charged dichotomy...For example, local knowledges have also to be in tension with the productive structurings that force unequal translations and exchanges – material and semiotic – within webs of knowledge and power (Haraway, 1988, p.588).

Like Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway urges us to make a map, not a tracing. Into this material and semiotic tension Haraway brings the embodied body, the situated place. The traditional literature review is a social and political construct,

hierarchising and acknowledging knowledge from the seats of white male heterosexist power.

‘Acknowledging the agency of the world in knowledge makes room for some unsettling possibilities’ (Haraway, 1988, p. 593). Barad (2003, p. 801) challenges language (and by implication writing) with her assertion that ‘language has been granted too much power’:

How does one even go about inquiring after the material conditions that have led us to such a brute reversal of naturalist beliefs when materiality itself is always already figured within a linguistic domain as its condition of possibility (Barad, 2003, p. 801).

We are not just our words, words are not immutable and immovable; matter matters, and this too makes for unsettling possibilities.

Conclusion

A post-humanist literature review would not be a process of several steps; it would not be the ‘framing searching, managing, synthesising of existing literature and writing an assessment of that literature’ (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2016). It would not be a tracing of old ways and repeated power structures, but instead (through objects, materials, questions, poetry, embodiment, writing, language and meaning-making) it would be spread wide. It would be a mapping, a variety of rich knowledge making and of questions asked of knowledge.

In this internet age when the control of knowledge and its subsequent hierarchisation is confounded by a multiplicity of platforms and voices, it may not even be a book or journal, but if it were it might look like this:

A book is seen as an assemblage. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movement deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow

on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness or viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 4).

It might be a way of making meaning differently, breaking down boundaries and accepting we are not in control; that ideas are constantly shifting; that we are dependent upon each other for knowledge that helps us understand. We might see from a post-humanist literature review that we do not need to 'fabricate a beneficent God to explain' but that instead we are 'responsible for the knowledge we make however we organize it and whatever we call it' (Haraway, 1998, p. 595).

This post-humanist sense of a literature review underpins the knowledge making practices of my thesis. It informs my methodology, my research practices and both my epistemological and my ontological standpoints. This rethinking of knowledge as a rhizomic encounter rather than a systemic network of tracings is represented through the depiction of the literature review in three ways and is part of my contribution to knowledge made manifest through methodology, research, data presentation and analysis of data. It informs my conclusions and guides my future research directions. I do not set out to answer a list of research questions. I am problematising the question and answer, call and response, of the traditional thesis. I am problematising the notion of knowledge as a tree that dispenses its certainties to those lower down its trunk. I am questioning Enlightenment certainties of the rational, the scientific and the absolute.

In doing this, I am not throwing babies out with bath water. I look at and delve into the medical and social model of dyslexia, I question and explore paradigms of ability and dis-ability, I engage with the idea of institutional power and politics, I understand the many places that knowledge lies in and emerges from – the bodies, and bodies of knowledge, it is entangled with. This means I accept that knowledge comes from many places and in many ways. I favour the question over the answer and have a scepticism for the answer all too readily and certainly given. 'Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 4).

I believe this is a virtue, not a lack. It does require a different reading of a thesis. I aim to both interrogate dyslexia and thesis writing differently. I hope I succeed. I am setting off on a journey, pulling threads from a garment, untangling them, seeing where they came from, where they go, what their next iteration will be.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this thesis, indicating why it was appropriate. In this chapter are my definitions of methodology, my position on knowledge, my position in the research, the recruitment of the research participants, the methods used and ethical considerations underpinning this study.

The purpose of the study is to interrogate the prevailing narratives around writing and dyslexia in an art institution. This is done in order to understand, provoke or even change constructions of the institution, dyslexia, the student and writing. By understanding these narratives, I can, as an educator, a researcher and a writer in an art institution, make my teaching more engaging, varied, purposeful and enabling. In addition, I show through my research how engaging at a local level in a particular environment – with writing and making in art institution with six students with dyslexia – can be a way of making knowledge more broadly about the landscape of disability, institutional power, student-hood and art writing.

Myself as researcher

I began this study as a specialist study skills tutor working with undergraduates who have been formally assessed with dyslexia and/or dyspraxia in a small specialist arts institution in the North of England. An audit of institutional screening tests in 2015 suggested that at least 50% of the institution's learners identify as having some traits commensurate with dyslexia or dyspraxia, namely issues with short term memory, expressing ideas in writing, structuring language and processing information, issues with coordination and spatial awareness and reading efficacy. I offered weekly, hour long tutorials, allocated to students with a formal diagnosis and paid for through funding received from Student Finance England (SFE):

Individual 1:1 support [which] addresses the effects of language processing (acquiring, retaining and recalling information) in written and spoken language as well as the range of memory, organizational, attention and numeracy difficulties that students with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) often face when producing academic work in an HE context (ADSHE, 2009, p. 8).

At the time of writing this chapter I was a Senior Lecturer in Language Development and module leader for research methods and the dissertation on the institution's postgraduate programme. I still delivered dyslexia support tutorials but my remit had grown. I taught narrative and visual language and piloted a series of tactile writing workshops across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as a direct result of the research I carried out for this study. My multiple positionality helped me understand some of the conflicts and anomalies my participants experience in their multiple roles – student, dyslexic, artist, writer, member of an institution. I share these anomalies and contradictions, not the least of which is my interrogation of the medical model of dyslexia as presented above which itself, to some extent, frames part of my role(s) in the University. I am now course leader for the University's BA (Hons) Creative Writing degree.

I have always been troubled by my position in this research, worried by the sense that I must present “objective” “data”, quantified and tabulated, and early on I puzzled over how to “give voice”, an almost colonial act, and also “present findings”. At the outset of this research I agonised over how strictly to transcribe the voice-recorded interviews and writing workshops that were part of my method of inquiry. I wished to make sense of the complexity. Too much retelling leads to over-intervention in the research by the researcher. I am also in the parade that I study (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Because of this I had to find some way of reconciling my writing choices with the many and multiple ways in which writing *could* be done and find some way of presenting findings and discussions that fulfil the requirements of a doctoral thesis, yet remain true to the intent, the interaction and the moment. And to do this I was brought right back to where I started. Richardson's (1990) monograph situates

writing as a method of inquiry. It becomes therefore 'itself a way of knowing, not simply a way of telling' (Taylor, 2009, p. 27). Richardson (2002, p. 878) after Derrida says, 'a disclosure of writing practices, thus, is always a disclosure of forms of power'. Understanding that writing itself is a powerful and nuanced act was a key methodological moment.

Another key methodological moment was presenting at the Twelfth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in May 2016 at Chicago's University of Illinois, which left me breathless with new ways of knowing and being. I had what I would call my first post-humanist experience. Walking amidst the houses, gardens, industrial estates and shopping areas of the twin towns that sandwich the campus I experienced a sense of sublimation of self to landscape, history and materials that has remained with me ever since and has allowed me to reflect differently upon this research. It has raised the methodological question of the relationship between researcher and participants, decentring the hierarchical relationship.

Gannon (2016) talks about entanglements between researcher and research participant and I have tried right from the off to be as transparent as possible, making clear that I understand I have more than one relationship with each participant in moving from study skills tutor to researcher. I feel there is another layer added – that of inquirer who really wants to know, who has a genuine interest in participants' stories and often finds herself sharing, laughing, and being enthused by these stories. In moving from one-to-one role to another, I take with me elements and aspects of all these relationships. Post-human thinking allows me to develop this idea of narrator and participant into something more fluid, which allowed the various material outputs and physical locations of my research and its findings to play a part in presenting knowing and being around institutional power, writing and disability.

I knew that, methodologically, one straightforward approach would not suffice when sifting through my data and trying to present my findings. Selecting a methodology for understanding my findings involves selecting a methodology that

can “handle” photographs, objects, drawings, sketches, collages, prose, poetry, fiction, and extracts from theoretical texts. Selecting a methodology that is informed by the concepts of collage and assemblage allows the research itself, and the researcher, to become a collage of data gathering, collection, assembly and analysis that is not fixed like a fly in amber but is fluid. It provides what Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p. 106) call ‘an unpredictable movement of flows with an eye towards how particular entanglements pressure and produce reconfigurings.’ It is this sense that animates my role as researcher in the research and the writing of this thesis.

Barad (2003) speaks of the performative possibilities of the interaction between what Foucault (1972, p.49) calls ‘words and things’. She presents these as a way forward for research. If we do not believe that words absolutely represent things and that words tie things down, if we are not tied to thinking that there is one Truth which can’t be challenged, then we are free to explore the way the human and non-human can combine to tell us about the world we live in, and give us different ways of being in that world.

Definitions of methodology

The following definitions of methodology informed my research journey. When the journey began I drew on qualitative inquirers whose approach could be defined as humanist and qualitative. Firstly, Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 3) who provide this short, overarching definition of qualitative research. ‘Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalist approach to its subject matter’. Flick (2009) describes qualitative research as the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study. It is described as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, and depth to the investigation. Flick is clear here that qualitative inquiry is a rigorous research methodology, despite discussing the problems of multiple methods, questioning of fixed positions and the often felt need to equate qualitative methodologies with quantitative ones in order to “prove” their validity.

Creswell states that

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic pictures, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

This definition focuses on the methodological complexity of qualitative research and highlights the part played by the institutional setting of this research, which is essential to its becoming.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) provided this more extensive definition which was helpful to me initially in describing not only my processes but also my perspective as I carried out my research:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their actual settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

My definitions expanded as my understanding increased. Place, objects and materiality become important as data, as findings and as ways of reconfiguring. So, Bennett (2010a, p. 47) talks about 'non-human materialities' which present themselves as 'bona fide agents.' The materiality of the institution – rooms and places where participants and I met and interacted – are agential and forceful in making this research become the collage that it is. The thesis becomes an end product but also reflects the energy and engagement that helped it to be realised.

Voice took on a new and ambiguous shape as I delved further into a post-humanist approach. Methodology in qualitative inquiry is interpretative (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Being interpretive however contradicts much post-humanist thinking. Traditional qualitative enquirers would argue strongly for a voice, for the existence of a participant voice, gathered through interview perhaps and filtered through the researcher's interpretive lens. Not so in post-humanist inquiry and so in this study I plug into Jackson and Mazzei's (2016) theories about data, place and participants in order to contribute to my assemblage of findings and discussion. This results in 'an emergent construction' (Weinstein and Weinstein 1991 in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). Semi-structured interviews where participants recall their past and reflect on their present(s) became not only data but findings, 'entrées' into participants' narratives, (Jackson and Mazzei, 2016, p. xi). Writing interventions became a collision of place, person, materiality and reflection where something is known and understood again, but differently.

St. Pierre (2016, p. 34) argues forcefully that 'what we need are not new methodologies and their knowledge practices but new concepts and new conceptual practices' and she describes methodologies as concepts in action. This has helped me reconcile what at times have seemed difficult bedfellows. For instance, that it is possible to question *a priori* categories whilst interviewing categorised (dyslexic) students, and also in journeying from a straightforward qualitative inquiry methodology to a more entangled perspective, where I try to also make space for other ways of knowing and being.

To make connections one needs not knowledge, certainty or even ontology, but rather a trust that something may come out, though one is not yet completely sure what (Rajchman, 2000, p. 7).

Questions of "validity" and "truthfulness" are put into doubt, in that they are placed alongside recognitions of multiple truths and the shifting effects of time and reflection upon narrative interpretation. Knowing and being is seen as organic and progressive, for post-humanist qualitative researchers question fixed notions of validity and reliability. Methodology can be characterised as concept in action (St.

Pierre, 2014) and as process in action (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012), referencing Deleuzian notions of 'ribbons stirred by the wind' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p. 75). Methodology itself is not fixed.

My position(s) on knowledge

Qualitative narrative approaches

Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research and is the research methodology that originally, at the time of commencing my PhD, informed my study. It has been essential to my approach and to my decisions about how to analyse my findings. In writing this methodology, I was always slightly disconcerted by nomenclature. I had originally thought of myself an interpretive narrative inquirer but had failed to really comprehend the contradictions in the way in which interpretive narrative inquiry privileges voice. From the participants I learned that this voice was a slippery, unstable, and richly complex element of the "findings" rather than fixed and code-able. I now place myself as a researcher who has employed some qualitative narrative approaches and aims to employ post-humanist thinking with theory.

I had trouble thinking of the interviews, intervention accounts and outputs this research has manifested as "data" and would have struggled to find a motivation to code them in any fashion, as was the approach of previous and more traditional narrative inquirers (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Ollerenshaw and Cresswell, 2002). I have found it necessary to look further than this for a re-positioning of voice and a re-interpretation of the meaning of data and findings for my research purposes. Instead, I have looked at the findings of this research more as liminal, shifting spaces: 'the overlap and complexities that exist when trying to situate a study within a particular perspective' (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p. 2).

This has helped me to present something that is both adheres to the thesis framework, but also allows for a questioning of the framework and of the method of inquiry itself.

Unlike many qualitative frameworks, narrative research offers no automatic starting or finishing points... There are few well-defined debates on conflicting approaches within the field and how to balance them... Despite these difficulties, many of us who work with narratives want to continue and develop this work. Most often, perhaps, we frame our research in terms of narrative because we believe that by doing so we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change. (Andrews et al, 2013, p. 1).

This may not be, strictly speaking, the language of post-humanism but I believe the narrative inquiry perspective is useful to the researcher as part of talking about ‘a move to begin creating a language and way of thinking methodologically and philosophically that is ‘up to the task’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. vii).

Positions on knowing: Epistemology

Epistemology is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘the theory of knowledge and understanding, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion’ (OED, 2016a, p. 62). The OED is a societally powerful reference point: a recognised frame to keep words safe, secure and understood. Epistemology is a noun, it names something, it is seen to exist. But interpretive inquiry sees knowledge as a social construct and as intricately tied up with power (Foucault, 1995). Anywhere you find knowledge, there too you find a system of power (Roderick, 1993). The art institution – the site of this study – provides a place to explore what Foucault (1995) calls the complex relationship between power, knowledge and subject.

Qualitative research and, specifically, narrative inquiry, were my methodological starting points and remain important in my work but, in a sense, I have started at the end because I feel that many of my certainties around qualitative inquiry have been disrupted – helpfully, but disrupted none the less – by the post-human, post-structural theorists and writers I have since encountered. In writing this chapter, I am not the same person who began this research.

Potgieter (2003) alerts us to the manner in which assumptions of rightness lead to acceptance of truth, rather than considerations of truths. Delanty and Strydom (2003) consider the problems of validating Truth. The empirical tradition suggests a particular rightness of being which defines us. Most knowledge systems assume that truth occurs in some correspondence manner; that beneath the surface there are codes to be cracked 'that something is truthful or meaningful when it corresponds to some pre-given structure or pattern' (Potgieter, 2003, p. 48). However, I would argue that as researchers, as writers, we shape and frame the narratives we hear, and those narratives in turn are shaped and framed by assumptions and underlying paradigms. Truth and its shaky foundations are exposed by pointing out their existence:

The post-modernist stance challenges claims to a singular correct style for doing and presenting research and rejects the enlightenment's faith in progress thorough education and rationality (Richardson, 1990, p. 11).

In this research the complexity of interaction between site, place, object, material, language, image and persons has provided a rich laboratory to experience the paucity of recourse to singular knowledge, single stories and solitary truth. Qualitative inquiry provides a way of knowing. The methodological collage of qualitative inquiry allows me to understand that one person's justified belief may well be to someone else a matter of opinion, or a propaganda tool to bring about certain behaviours, attitudes, or outcomes. This in turn opens up a vista of opportunities to challenge notions of absolute truth.

Positions on being: Ontology

The Oxford English Dictionary describes ontology as 'the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being' (OED, 2016b, p.1). Ontology can be thought of as ways of constructing reality. Ontological questions are those that tend to relate to matters of real existence and action. Ontological questions ask 'how things really are' and 'how things really work' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 201). Ontology is a theory of being. It explores issues of what exists and uncovers the claims that a

particular paradigm makes about what we call reality or truth (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989).

The ontological turn in education, which is concerned with agency, transformation, materiality and relations, sets aside enlightenment humanism and traditional humanist qualitative methodology. In the abstract for her article *Post Qualitative Inquiry in an Ontology of Immanence* St Pierre states:

Because post qualitative inquiry uses an ontology of immanence from poststructuralism as well as transcendental empiricism, it cannot be a social science research methodology with preexisting research methods and research practices a researcher can apply. In fact, it is methodology-free and so refuses the demands of “application.” Recommendations for those interested in post qualitative inquiry include putting methodology aside and, instead, reading widely across philosophy, social theories, and the history of science and social science to find concepts that reorient thinking. Post qualitative inquiry encourages concrete, practical experimentation and the creation of the *not yet* instead of the repetition of what *is* (St Pierre, 2018, p. 3).

This is what I have tried to do in this research. Ontology is about theories of what exists. That we can have theories about what exists itself alerts us to possible multiplicity of paradigms and perceptions about what *is*. Immediately we are in the field of multiple truths, as opposed to one Truth. There is more than one reality. And this is the field I stand in. Epistemology and ontology both impact on methodology.

Earlier definitions of ontology make claims for prior knowledge that could reveal the essences of things. Qualitative inquiry allows us to think of ontologies, rather than ontology, and in a variety of ways, not as a fixed paradigm.

The history of ontology has consisted largely of a set of fundamental, often long-running and implacable disputes about what there is, accompanied by reflections about the discipline’s own methods, status, and fundamental concepts—e.g., being, existence, identity, essence, possibility, part, one, object, property, relation, fact, and world. In a typical ontological dispute, one group of philosophers affirms the existence of some category of object (realists), while

another group denies that there are such things (antirealists). Much of the history of philosophy is in fact a history of ontological disputes (Simons, 2016, p. 1).

Ontology is not about one way of knowing reality but about particular ways of knowing multiple realities. Ontology for me therefore is about the recognition that there are disputes about what exists – which then links back to epistemological questions about how we can “know” about what exists. This allows me to consider dyslexia as a category and a definition, as an experience, and as a social construct, and to gather stories, problematic as the notion of “story” is as I explain above, from those who “have” it (dyslexia) about what it is and how it may exist for them.

In post-humanism, ontology and epistemology and ethics are conjoined. Barad (2007) speaks of ethico-onto-epistemology. There are shifts in the separate categories of ontology and epistemology when taken from a post-human view. Post-humanism is about decentering the human and putting the human in relation with objects-bodies-things-nonhuman materialities. Post-humanism is what a more traditional thesis would have called the theoretical framework. Taylor (2016, p. 5) refers to the ‘cacophonous ecology’ of post-humanism.

Spurning ‘desires for a quick and easy relay from theory to practice, and ... requirement [for] “evidence”’, post-humanism engages in a ‘radical critique of assumptions of “doing” educational research’ (Taylor, 2016, p. 7). Questioning human/non-human binaries, anthropocentrism and the split between ontology and epistemology, post-humanism proposes different and new entry points for educational research. It might in fact problematise the very categories I lay out here. Defining ontology and epistemology suggests binary approaches whereas a post-human turn might ask different kinds of questions. It might ask us to look at

A different set of epistemological presumptions about the forms of knowing that produce valuable knowledge about educational experiences, and in different ontological presumptions about the modes of being through which humans and nonhumans inhabit the world (Taylor, 2016, p. 8).

Critically, post-humanism is ethics: ethics in theory and in practice, ethics in every encounter.

Posthumanist research practices offer a new ethics of engagement for education by including the nonhuman in questions about who matters and what counts in questioning the constitutive role played by humanist dominant paradigms, methodologies and methods in working as actualizers of normative procedures (Taylor, 2016, p. 8).

It does not treat ethics as a separate consent form or a box to be ticked. It would never look at a research project and say “well I’m not interviewing anyone so no ethical issues there, no consent form to be signed.” It would recognise that ethics is in the language we use, the thoughts we have, in the objects we use to progress our desires, the people we walk by, refer to, brush up against, the invisible cleaner who takes away our rubbish after we leave the conference hall. This for me above all is the glue that binds post-humanism to my research, my main point of connection with a vast and critical and complex methodology that I came to through study and experience.

As a theory, post-humanism is entwined with the experimental theory/practice approach of post-qualitative research. It finds itself best through encounter, through happening, through space, place, object and location. It is already *in* qualitative inquiry (Taylor, 2016, p. 24) but it is different. It problematises some of the reliance qualitative inquiry ‘has on its centerings in dialogue, voice, empathy, narrative, meaning, method, coding, data (and I would add, rigour, trustworthiness and validity)’ (Taylor, 2016, p. 24). It is this constant insistence on the richness, variety, mutability and re-new-ability that gives post-humanism its unique turn.

In the muddle of research, in the

Here of post-humanism that displaces the panoply of what arrives with ones “choice” of research paradigm... we begin with immanence, relation, non-separability, values, partisanship, responsibility for each and every choice or cut, immersion or emergence (Taylor, 2016, p. 25).

If post-humanist research is ‘an ethico-onto-epistemological practice of materially-emergent co-constitution’ then what comes from my research, in this thesis ‘cannot be ‘about’ something or somebody, nor can it be an individualised cognitive act of knowledge production’ (Taylor, 2016, p. 26). Instead I propose it as

An enactment of knowing-in-being that emerges in the event of doing research itself. In opening new means to integrate thinking and doing, it offers an invitation to come as you are and to experiment, invent and create both with what is (already) at hand and by bringing that which might (or might not be) useful because you don’t yet know into the orbit of research (Taylor, 2016, p26).

As I start to write, as I revise my writing, as I finish my writing, I am still inventing, creating, and still unable to lay my hands on what is the ‘orbit’. This is a good thing.

Recruitment of participants

I had known all six undergraduates who participated in this study as tutees for at least a year before starting this study. Knowing them prior to engaging in this research with them gave us a platform of trust and familiarity. We had sat together and discussed dyslexia and the landscape of writing in an arts institution. We had shared stories and humorous asides; we were not strangers. I am sure this was a benefit to the research, and gives it an added depth. Under the current provision of the Government’s Student Finance England Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs) funding, I saw each student for an hour a week and worked with them on their formal, course-related writing in support of their diagnosed dyslexia.

The participants are: Belle, in the final year of a Textiles (Pattern Design) degree; Tom, Emma and Hattie, all final year Fine Art students; Amy, a final year Photography student and Chloe, a second year Fine Art student. All students were identified as having “dyslexic traits” by myself or a member of my team when they first joined the Institution, and all were assessed as dyslexic whilst on their degree course. This was done initially by questionnaire and later through formal diagnostic

assessment. I acknowledge the contradictions of using and referencing the results of psychometric testing to establish dyslexia when I am at the same time critiquing psychologistic and socially constructed disability. This is how institutions operate. These “tests” were part of the students’ lived experiences. Acknowledging these contradictions and multiple truths helps me present my research more honestly.

I recruited each participant by personal invitation and discussion at the end of one of their tutorials with me. I explained the research and the commitment I was asking from them – to work with me for a full academic year as research participants, taking part in interviews and writing workshops. I gave them the first paragraph of the introduction to this methodology to read and discussed with them what I meant by this. All six participants had worked with me already for at least one academic year and I knew them to be resilient, committed, good-humoured and questioning.

I was satisfied that they would not commit to the process unless they were happy to do so and that they would have relatively little difficulty in questioning or challenging any behaviours or practices they were uncertain of. I felt they would possibly enjoy the process and I was clear in my own mind that I had the intention of making the research as hands on, enjoyable and collegial as possible. I was also fairly certain they would all get on well enough to spend time together during writing interventions and that there were no obvious issues with ego, control or worries about disclosure of dyslexia. I asked each one in advance about being identified as a student with dyslexia to the rest of the group and this was met with willingness and, again, good humour.

My rationale for working with dyslexic students

My stance on knowing and being allows me to consider the category of “dyslexia”, its “meaning” and construction. It is possible to re-imagine this “disability”. This reimagining, questioning, unpicking is a complex part of the research process. The dyslexic identity of the participants is confirmed by the diagnostic testing and reports of their educational psychologist or SpLD assessor. This is the medical model

of disability, the model that proposes 'Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills' (BDA, 2007, p. 1). This research however also questions, amongst other things, the construction of dyslexia and the associated psychometric apparatus through unsettling some of the theorising and practical applications of disability, art writing and institutional power.

Writing and dyslexia

Textual language can and often does enhance the process of making visual art, and artists and art students with dyslexia do not necessarily feel excluded from the creative and intellectual possibilities that this offers. Writing is an art and a craft – the process of imagining, constructing and realising writing 'parallels the visual or active making of things' (Francis, 2009, p. 27). Writing in an art institution is entirely commensurate with notions of creativity, which may allow for re imaginings of positionality, labelling and power.

My research is motivated by the view that the experience of writing is valuable and agential for art students with dyslexia. Writing in the arts is closely connected to students' complex sense of self (Charlton, 2008; Byrne, 2014). This research looks at ways of being dyslexic, ways of being a writer, an art student in an institution. Writing in my institution constitutes a large part of the assessed learning outcomes and assessment criteria that of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Methods and overview of research carried out

This section will explain the structure and content of the fieldwork. The fieldwork for this study took place over a full academic year. Appendix 1 presents the research design in the form of a table.

Timeline

September 2015 – December 2015. Individual semi-structured interviews giving accounts of students' writing lives and discussion of their writing identities helped me understand where and how participants position themselves in relation to their dyslexia, their writing and their art practice, before my fieldwork commenced.

December 15th 2015. Writing intervention one, a tactile writing workshop, took place in the University's life-drawing room. Objects, materials and sensory approaches to writing were generated and explored.

January – February 2016. Individual conversations took place with participants reviewing their experiences of the workshop and reflecting on their writing lives. I also met with participants to discuss their experiences of their course-related writing, and how participation in this research project might allow them to reflect differently upon/reinterpret their experiences of writing.

February 25th 2016. Writing intervention two, a writing workshop, took place in the University gallery to generate writing experimentally and spontaneously using the visual stimulus of the institutionally-sited art gallery and exhibits.

February – March 2016. Individual conversations took place with participants reviewing their experiences of the workshop and reflecting on their writing lives. I also met with participants to discuss their experiences of their course-related writing, and how participation in this research project might allow them to reflect differently upon/reinterpret their experiences of writing.

May 18th 2016. Writing intervention three, a workshop, took place in the University courtyard, a garden area enclosed by the building but open to the sky.

May 2016. Individual conversations took place with participants reviewing their experiences of the workshop and reflecting on their writing lives. I also met with participants to discuss their experiences of their course-related writing, and how

participation in this research project might allow them to reflect differently upon/reinterpret their experiences of writing.

May – June 2016. Individual semi-structured interviews giving closing accounts of students' writing lives and discussion of their writing identities helped me understand where and how participants position themselves in relation to their dyslexia, their writing and their art practice, after my fieldwork had ended.

Opening accounts of students' writing lives and discussion of their writing identities

I draw on qualitative narrative approaches, but only draw on them. I am not using narrative inquiry as an approach, a methodology. To reiterate, I am making use of post-qualitative inquiry, which overlaps with post-humanism but is different and which encourages 'concrete, practical experimentation and the creation of the not yet instead of the repetition of what is' (St Pierre, 2018, p. 3). The research itself began with a one-to-one semi-structured opening interview conducted with each participant in the room we usually met in for our dyslexia tutorials.

I began to gather their accounts of their writing lives and assessment of their writing identities carried out using a conversational interview style described by Richardson (1990, p. 28) as telling collective stories 'which are both true *and* partial' and by Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 63) as 'walking into the midst of stories'. The aim was to understand where and how these art students with dyslexia position themselves in relation to their dyslexia, their writing and their art practice, before my writing interventions commenced. The interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes made on my PC.

Writing intervention one: The tactile writing workshop:

This intervention was around 2 hours long and took place in the Institution's Life Drawing room. Its aims were:

- to deepen writing skills by exploring the interaction of objects, text and language in the making of visual and textual connections.
- to break down the barriers between image and text and to explore the tactile and aesthetic qualities of writing, making connections between theory and practice and between visual and textual language.

The workshop provided an opportunity to interact with writing, materials and academic text in a purposeful, non-threatening environment. The workshop was voice-recorded, handwritten notes were made and photographs taken on single use cameras.

This is the invitation that was sent to participants early in the research process:

The workshops are a maximum of 2 hours long, specifically situated and voluntary in attendance. Their aim is to break down the barriers between image and text and to explore the tactile and aesthetic qualities of writing; making connections between theory and practice and between visual and textual language. The workshops provide an opportunity to interact with writing, materials and academic text in a purposeful, non-threatening environment. They provide a way into thinking about, doing, making and constructing possible links between art practice and research for formal dissertation and essay writing, evaluative and reflective writing and in preparation for crits and presentations.

Review of writing intervention one

I continued to grow the data through semi-structured interviews, following the first writing intervention. This framework provided a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. I planned for each interview to begin with *what did you think of the first writing intervention?* This exchange was then voice-recorded, some quick word-processed notes were made at the same time. Later on, I listened to the recording, transcribed it and made fuller notes. I also got email responses from participants, which were offered by them, rather than elicited by me, and these were also included in the later data analysis. This provided a further and different opportunity for participants to reflect upon the experience of this

intervention through their narratives. The interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes made on my PC.

Review of participants' recent experiences of academic essay or dissertation writing (as applicable)

I explored with each participant their concurrent experiences of course-related writing: essays, evaluations, reports and annotations. I planned for each interview to begin with *how did you feel about your recent mark and feedback for this particular assignment?* The aim was for them to reflect upon this writing task and for me as researcher to gather their narrative accounts and to reflect upon the experience of this writing for them. The interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes were made on my P.C. Listening back to these recordings has been eerie and beautiful, the voices are replete with the character and bodily forms of their owners yet there is nothing to touch or see or smile at. It later emerged that the distinctions I had naively assumed I could make between what were responses to formal writing and what were responses to other writing was far less clear, and like the rhizome suggests each question, each response, fed into a rich loam of

Connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

This line of questioning, which is not a line at all but very different and fluid shape, is in itself a rhizomic experience and forms part of the study's contribution to knowledge.

Writing intervention two: Gallery sited writing

This intervention was around 2 hours long and took place in the Institution's newly built white walled gallery. This space is new to the University and reflects the aesthetic of the White Cube – 'a certain gallery aesthetic characterised by its square

or oblong shape, white walls and a light source usually from the ceiling' (Tate, 2016, p. 1). The construction and imposition of this widely recognised aesthetic on the Institution (which itself went through the process of transitioning from Higher Education Institution to a University with Taught Degree Awarding Power during the writing of this thesis) provided a symbolically rich opportunity to "play" in a formal setting.

The aim was to generate writing experimentally and spontaneously using the visual stimuli of the institutionally sited art gallery and exhibits. The workshop was voice-recorded, handwritten notes were made and photographs taken using my iPad.

Review of writing intervention two

I continued to grow the data through a semi-structured interview following the second writing intervention. This framework provided a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. I planned for each interview to begin with *what did you think of the second writing intervention?* Again, spontaneous emails were included in the later data analysis. This provided a further and different opportunity for participants to reflect upon the experience of this intervention through their narratives. The interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes made on my PC.

Review of participants' recent experience of their particular, course-specific academic writing

I discussed with participants their experiences of their recent course-related writing. Although the original intent had been to ask a very specific and direct question (*how did you feel about your feedback and/or mark?*) what happened was a much more complex unfolding of words and responses. This led to a richer account of the intersections between formal and informal writing, the tyranny or delight of marks and grades and the subject of relationships between marker and marked.

Writing intervention three: Outdoor workshop

The intervention – around two hours long – took place in the University’s “urban garden”, a small courtyard space containing benches, picnic tables, plants and sculptures. An outdoor courtyard populated with faux garden furniture, ashtrays, potted plants and hand-engraved wall-mounted paving stones reading ‘love’ and ‘death’. The aim of the session was to sit in a space both contained by the construction of the University, but also in the open air, and to introduce both spontaneous painting – with either paintbrushes or fingers – and storytelling to the narrative. The workshop was voice-recorded, handwritten notes were taken and photographs were taken on my camera phone.

The decision to take the workshop outside was dependent upon the weather. After checking the forecast, this is the invitation sent to participants to join this intervention:

Dear all

It’s going to be sunny **today** so I thought we could **meet at the SU seating area and go outside – 2.00-3.30**. I have some paints and some paper. I emailed yesterday asking if you could bring **one, some or all** of the following:

- Paint
- Colourful mark making object
- Something that you really like that to have close to you when writing
- ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ making
- Something that reminds you of childhood writing memories
- If it’s cold we can move into the Life Drawing room.

Hope to see you there

Review of writing intervention three

Continuing to grow data through interview, I met with individuals at a set time and in a set place. Each participant knew that the intent was to develop a narrative response using the opening question *what did you think of the third writing intervention? This was voice-recorded and later transcribed. I also got email responses from participants, which were offered by them, rather than elicited by*

me, and these were also included in the later data analysis. This provided a further and different opportunity for participants to reflect upon the experience of this intervention through their narratives. The interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes made on my PC.

Review of experiences of writing artist's statement for end of year show or for reflective analysis (as applicable)

I intended to discuss with each participant their experiences of their recent assignment to write a 100-word artist's statement to accompany the work being displayed for their graduate show, using the opening question *how did you feel about the experience of writing, and the final outcome of, your artist's statement?* However, the conversation became much more about writing experiences in general, and was all the richer for that. Interviews were voice-recorded and typed notes made on my PC.

Closing accounts

My intention was to meet with each student separately and conduct a closing interview along the lines of the opening interview, but life turned out to be much messier than that. In the end, only Chloe and Emma met with me in this way. The participants were all variously engaged on end of year shows, exhibition activity, job hunting, moving possessions home and dis-entangling their own personal relationships in preparation for becoming no-longer-students. Instead I constructed a narrative of their words by email and in person through chance encounters (I met with Belle at a gallery and Hattie in the restaurant where she was working as a waitress). I believe this narrative was all the richer from being both incomplete and partial – as is all of life – and for having come from the places the participants found themselves in at that point in time.

Ethics

I gained ethical approval for this research from Sheffield Hallam University and my institution for the conducting of this research. The practical necessities of ethical consent were dealt with early in the research relationship. I had already discussed the nature and purposes of my research and gained participant signatures on the consent form. Mindful always of the ethical imperative of these shifting and developing and multiple relationships, I went through the consent form again and engaged the participants in a conversation about boundaries and confidentiality and about the narratives I would be reshaping from these interviews and conversations and about the slippage between interview and conversation. 'The ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one's response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating' (Bennett, 2010a, p. 37).

All data was kept in a lockable cupboard in my office. The consent form assured participants' anonymity and gave them the right to withdraw from the study at any time. We discussed the way in which the participants' outputs might be stored and displayed. Each participant gave signed consent to their outputs being used at a later stage of the research. Outputs have turned out to consist of:

1. transcribed sections of interview – written
2. audio recording of interviews and interventions
3. photographs
4. sketches, drawings, stories, paintings, collages
5. prose, poetry, fiction

Ethics lies in each relationship, each human encounter, in the recognition of corporeal, intellectual and situational effects on every encounter, every voice heard and every choice made, and the recognition of all the non-encounters, every silent (and silenced) voice, and all choices not recognised as even possible.

The ethical choices I have been faced with in this research have been many and varied however, and some were visible to me only retrospectively. These include

the interpreting of interview “data”, the selecting of moments of illumination, the spontaneous secondary questioning of participants (*Ah you said x but what about earlier when you mentioned y?*) to the declaration of personal interest (*That’s the thing that really gets to me – you’ve hit it on the head*).

In conversation with Chen (1992, p. 87), Minh-ha refers to ‘speaking nearby’, or speaking alongside/with. It is essential for the integrity of the research that I am not seen to be speaking for the participants. I include their voices, their words, their outputs, the answers they gave me to the questions I asked. In the spaces these opened up between and amongst us (“them” as a group of participants and also with me as researcher/participant) I offer a solution to the vexed question of representation in narrative inquiry. ‘Each and every encounter keeps the matter of ethics open’ (Taylor, 2016, p. 16).

Ethics in practice

This account may shed some light on the ethical dilemmas experienced during this research project and illustrate the entwined nature of ethical decisions and methodological practice. Towards the end of the academic year during which my research took place I met with Emma for her feedback to writing intervention two. During this interview she spoke at length about how her mother had responded to the difficulties Emma encountered as a child with reading and writing. She asked me why I thought her mother had been apparently so unwilling to acknowledge the difficulties Emma had experienced. I was faced with a choice of doing the traditional interviewer response of turning the question back to Emma and asking why she thought this was the case. When I did this, she replied: *I don’t know*.

I had something I wanted to say. As the child of now very elderly parents, the child of a mother who experienced limited educational opportunities in her young adulthood, I wondered if Emma’s mother had similarly been restricted in her understanding of the nature of her daughter’s difficulties by the limits of the world she occupied.

I reminded Emma she had said her mother *had left school well before her fifteenth birthday*.

So did mine, I said, and do you think that must have shaped them?

We meandered down this path a little more. Emma said her mother rarely wrote and read little.

Is dyslexia familial? she asked.

I said that the medical model assumed it to be – although I also wondered how much our mothers' limited educational opportunities might have played a part in their shared lack of reading and writing activity in later years.

Maybe my mum was dyslexic, Emma said. *Or maybe she just didn't have a chance to find out.*

As I noted above, 'the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one's response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating' (Bennett, 2010a, p. 37). And the story above was my response. I weighed up the situation quickly in real-time, but slowly in my head, calling on as I did my experiences of shared encounters with students down the years. I called on my knowledge of Emma as a person as far as it went and my genuine wish to respond to her question as carefully as I could. I tried to be mindful that my enthusiasm was not the point of the exchange, but the point was rather her wish to know more, or know differently, what her mother might herself have known partially or differently. I did not stop Emma's story emerging.

These assemblages, places and spaces have been part of the ethical landscape we have negotiated as researcher and participant. Other ethical questions have arisen unexpectedly over time:

Where do I store the outputs from workshops?

How do I ensure anonymity when we are meeting as a group of seven people, what happens to those disclosures about issues not directly connected to writing lives or dyslexia, but which do play a part in constructing participants' identities and do also at times feed into their art practice?

What happens to the warm and genuine feelings we have as a group for each other?

Here, we come 'to focus on the ambiguity in meaning as the central location at the edge of critical reason that helps identify ethical choice' (Harcourt, 2007, p. 23). Research then becomes 'a practice within a politics of location' (Taylor, 2009, p. 32). And thus, data finds itself in a methodology chapter.

Dealing with data

Dealing with data, defining data and the analysis of data was iterative and ongoing throughout the whole process. This iterative process involves a reflexive cycle of 'doing and learning from doing... repetition... starting from the self... and materiality... the feeling – in both senses – of the textures and emotion' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 21).

The generation and collection of 'data'

Post-qualitative research deconstructs any fixed notion of "data". 'New empirical post-qualitative research is an international endeavour oriented towards rethinking the empirical on two main fronts' (Taylor, 2017, p. 211). It questions the notions of the primacy of big data and it unpicks the epistemic codes of qualitative inquiry (Taylor, 2017). So, whilst I use the term "data" I use it carefully and with due regard for its problematics. For example, regarding interviews and pen portraits, I constructed these accounts, I committed the words to the page, but the participants gave me those words. I asked the questions, but they did not always give me the answers to those questions. Instead they gave me answers to

something else much more apposite and I went down that path with them. Sometimes I led the interview by returning them to a point they had made earlier and asking them to reflect on it in the light of another point they had made later. 'Choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context' (Nelson et al, 1992, p. 6).

The writing interventions developed from the ideas and writings of Francis (2009) who talks of starting writing 'with issues of feeling and exploring 2 and 3 dimensional objects... to inspire questions and engage with the materiality of writing' (p. 20). These events produced unexpected data: Six A1 sheets of paper covered in writing, glued-on objects, sweet wrappers; a story made by writing a line each but not seeing the previous line, scraps of papers and sketches, broken pencils and smears of paint on tables. Two disposable cameras, one black and white and operated by the participants; one colour and operated by me, captured these outputs. I had the photographs developed and saved all the large sheets of paper and the story. I asked each participant in their follow up interviews if they wanted to see their outputs which I had saved and unanimously they said they did.

Conclusion

The methodology of this study was an attempt to give place, form and structure to the 'messy' world of research (Robson, 2002, p. xvi). It had to exist, to become in order to satisfy the requirements of a doctoral thesis, and also to be understood and available to others who might wish to read about it or participate in activities related to it by using it as a model. It is governed to some extent by time, its passing by the revisiting of recordings, transcripts and memories and by the sifting through of hybrid identities.

As I became more and more compelled to pursue post-humanism even my original methods were under review. The understanding, analysis and presentations of findings from the data must take into account, however, the 'interdependency and co-implication' of human exchange (Taylor, 2016, p. 3). 'There are entanglements

between researcher and research participants' (Taylor, 2016, p. 3), we inhabit multiple identities and these interviews reveal multiple perspectives of the participants and of me as researcher. 'Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent' (Derrida, 1978, p. 26).

In terms of my findings, post-human approaches have been integral to my understanding of what to do with what I'd got. MacLure (2013, p. 558) writing about 'the-object-that-would-have-been-called-data' says that to engage with this is as much about experience as about method. Words like attitude, uncertainty, and experience have guided my data analysis.

Perhaps I will find something amongst this collection as I engage and
re-engage with it?

Jackson and Mazzei (2016, p. 104) argue that 'bodies and actors in a network or assemblage can no longer be thought of as subjects and objects'; instead they are agents and like non-human materials have agential possibilities.

These assemblages of recorded voice, mediated voice, constructed intervention in voice, objects, poems, text, mark making, photographs, collage, transcripts and audio recordings are my foray into them, my journey through them and the possible reconfiguring of them – to make me see differently, to reconfigure what was there before. It has been my hope this might reconfigure something for the participants too.

Chapter Four: Desire and Duress

Individual semi-structured interviews took place between 23rd September and 7th December, and were conducted using a one-to-one study room. This is the space where we usually met for our weekly DSA funded support sessions and where students felt comfortable.

Introduction

This is the first “data” chapter of this thesis. It will contain thinking with theory, thinking with data and eruptive asides. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the participants. It would have been possible to list their dyslexic profiles or give my account of how we had worked together on their writing. However, this would not be the research I propose for this thesis. Meaning is mobile and knowledge contestable (Taylor, 2016). My “version” of the participants would not be their version and in seeking to show the reader the most authentic version of the participants that I can, I am using their words as authentically as I am able. ‘Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.3). There are many and several participants, but this is what they said about themselves. There is no “truth” of the subject under “inquiry”, but instead

An idea of knowledge as a machinic network for knowing, replacing arborescent, lineage and root-based images of thought with rhizomic modes of knowing characterised by non-linearity, multiplicity, connectivity, dimensions (rather than a pivot), flatness (rather than depth), and ruptures which may (or may not) tie unforeseen things together so that they work (Taylor, 2016, p. 15).

In this chapter I present the individual semi-structured interviews giving accounts of students’ writing lives and discussion of their writing identities that helped me understand where and how participants position *themselves* in relation to their

dyslexia, their writing and their art practice, before my fieldwork commenced. Firstly, I discuss my use of the rhizome, then my decision to use the ideas of desire and duress to help me understand the data I have gathered.

The rhizome as a-centred image of thought shifts the focus from knowledge “about”, procedures for producing knowledge, and concerns about what knowing “is” to questions about what knowledge does, how it works, and how its effectivity may generate more (not less) of life (Taylor, 2016, p. 15).

In seeking to do justice to the narratives of these participants, I have explored the rhizome as a place of starting. By starting, however, I mean less a beginning and more a picking up in the middle, the muddle, where their lives were when I met them, and where all our lives continue to be. This is not a linear account of a transcribed interview. Even a direct transcript cannot give us body language, inflection, background noise, bodily reactions and discomfort. It cannot even approximate the gathering and entangling of place, space, objects, materials, the clicking of a keyboard, the sniff, the cough, the momentary lapse of concentration in the event itself.

I have decided not to be tied to the tyranny of transcription, not to give too much power just to language (which Barad (2007) warns against) but to start in the muddle. ‘Muddle’, says Haraway, ‘is old Dutch for muddying the waters’ (2016, p. 174). She uses this term as a ‘theoretical trope and soothing wallow to trouble the trope of visual clarity as the only sense and affect for mortal thinking’ (2016, p. 174). Haraway allows us to be unclear so we can become clear. Muddles, middles and mulch are ways of exploring entanglements. We must accept entanglements first, however.

If we insist on seeing this vast global interaction we call the world as a series of separate, hierarchal, chronological straightjackets all ultimately linked to a single truth, we will fail in any possibility of lively and re-sensitizing worlds (King, 2011, p. 19).

In defining the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 12) describe it as altogether different to 'any structural or generative model'. It is unlike the hierarchical, arboreal model of 'tree logic' which 'articulates and hierarchizes tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree' (1987, p. 12). Instead, the rhizome is a '*map and not a tracing*' (1987, p. 13, my italics). I have also decided to use the ideas of desire and duress to help me understand and appreciate what was unfolding before me in these interviews.

I do this because I need a way to do this that is helpful to thesis writing. I don't want to deal in binaries, because I understand that there are entanglements that are neither wholly positive nor negative, but unfurling. There is a need in a formal thesis to understand what makes the compost, to separate out its strands and organisms, to chapter and verse it. I have chosen desire and duress as ways of mapping this and I follow this through to the next chapter, using them as a way of mapping the first workshop which held for me such bodily and psychological importance and which I so wanted, desired, to be a good space for the participants to be in.

Desire is a key concept in Deleuzian philosophy. Deleuze's desire is quite different from that of other thinkers... desire is usually understood as something abnormal, avaricious and excessive, the opposite of rationality, to be controlled and suppressed in man. Deleuze's desire is much wider, referring not only to man but animals, objects and social institutions. In Deleuze's view desire is not a psychic existence, not lack, but an active and positive reality, an affirmative, vital force. Desire has neither object nor fixed subject. It is like labour in essence, productive and actualisable only through practice (Gao, 2013, p. 406).

The Collins English Dictionary online (CED, 2018, p.1) described duress, the noun, as 'compulsion by use of force or threat; constraint; coercion (often in the phrase under duress)'. In legal terms it means imprisonment, reminding us of Foucault's (1995) docile bodies. Stoler (2016) uses the term (post)colonial studies to emphasise a colonial presence in its tangible and intangible forms and to acknowledge that there are colonial "presents" in the narratives of occupation and nationhood. This brings to mind Deleuze and Guattari and Haraway in their

understanding of the rhizome as something to do with the idea of the past still going on in the present. It also makes me think of Foucault's questioning of institutional power, and also of Ricoeur's wish to 'push analysis to the point where there stands revealed [an] irresolvable paradox' (Dowling, 2011, p. x). Not because I see these three theorists as soulmates but because in different ways and through acknowledging temporality, they question philosophy, whose danger 'lies in the temptation to believe that any truth one has managed to discover is absolute' (Dowling, 2011, p. x).

Stoler (2016, p.6), in *Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*, trawls dictionaries and textbooks to give what she calls the 'lineaments of duress':

Duress...has temporal, spatial and affective coordinates. Its impress may be intangible, but it is not a faint scent of the past. It may be an indelible, if invisible, gash. It may sometimes be a trace but more often an enduring fissure, a durable mark (Stoler, 2016, p. 6).

We must train ourselves to recognise duress because it continues to weigh upon us. Stoler (2016, p. 6) offers further definitions:

Duress (n.) early 14 c., 'harsh or severe treatment,' from Old French *duresse*, from Latin *duritia* 'hardness, severity, austerity' from *durus* 'hard' (see *endure*) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2014)

French *dure-* r, to last, continue, persist, extend. Latin *durare* to harden, be hardened, hold out, last. Sense of 'coercion, compulsion' (Dictionary.com, 2016).

1. Hardness, roughness, violence, severity; hardness of endurance, resistance, etc.; firmness.
2. Harsh or severe treatment, infliction of hardship; oppression, cruelty; harm, injury; affliction.
3. Forcible restraint or restriction; confinement, imprisonment.
4. Constraint, compulsion; spec. in Law, Constraint illegally exercised to force a person to perform some act. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).

She goes on to say:

Duress, then, is neither a thing nor an organizing principle so much as a relation to a condition, a pressure exerted, a troubled condition borne in the body, a force exercised on muscles and mind. It may bear no immediately visible sign or, alternatively, it may manifest in a weakened constitution and attenuated capacity to bear its weight. Duress is tethered to time but rarely in any predictable way. It may be a response to relentless force, to the quickened pacing of pressure, to intensified or arbitrary inflictions that reduce expectations and stamina (Stoler, 2016, p. 7).

Poetically, she writes

Duress rarely calls out its name. Often it is a mute condition of constraint. Legally it does something else. To claim to be 'under duress' in a court of law does not absolve one of a crime or exonerate the fact of one. On the contrary, it admits a culpability – a condition induced by illegitimate pressure. But it is productive, too, of a diminished, burned-out will not to succumb, when one is stripped of the wherewithal to have acted differently or better (Stoler, 2016, p. 7).

I don't want to code, or over code. I don't want a dead-eyed unity. 'Unity always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding)' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 9). In understanding the participants, in entangling with their rich and lovely stories, I find desire and duress, in all their complexity, to be invaluable and friendly helpers and co-constructors.

An introduction to the participants

Belle: A mature student in her early 40s with two young children, Belle is originally from one of the Scandinavian countries. She studies textiles, is in her third year and came up through the University's Access to Higher Education course. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her second year.

Tom: A third year student when he became a research participant, Tom studies painting. Tom is from just outside London. Tom was 20 when I began working

with him as his dyslexia tutor. He was diagnosed with dyslexia in his second year at University.

Chloe: A second year student when she became a research participant, Chloe studies painting and sculpture and comes from a small town in the Midlands. She was 21 when I began working with her as her dyslexia tutor. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her second year at University.

Emma: A third year student when she became a research participant, Emma studies painting and is from a small village in Scotland. Emma was 20 when I began working with her as her dyslexia tutor. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her second year at University.

Amy: A third year student when she became a research participant, Amy studies photography and is from a small town not far from London. She was 21 when I began working with her as her dyslexia tutor. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her second year at University.

Hattie: A third year student when she became a research participant, Hattie studies painting. Hattie is from a large Northern city. She was 22 when I began working with her as her dyslexia tutor. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her second year at University.

Emma's opening semi-structured interview

So, here's Emma, in the muddle. Emma, a participant in this research, had an art teacher when she was in sixth form. This teacher was mapped upon Emma. She was *the greatest teacher*. When she discovered that the uptake for her A level art classes were going to be very low she cried. When she knew Emma was planning to take A level art she was delighted. Emma remembered this. She remembered both the encouragement and the emotional investment of her

teacher. And how her own agency, in decision to study art A level, in turn affected her teacher.

Emma said that she *struggled at primary school... I couldn't grasp it, there were blocks in the way.*

Emma also remembered being taken out of class at sent to a different place called the ABCD classroom where

they went to do things like guided reading and spelling.

She was with other people, pupils from other forms whom she didn't know.

They weren't odd but the teachers that helped them made them feel they were secluded.

Who are 'they?'

The people who had it, she replied.

So, the ones who had *it* were taken away. Society disables. They were made to be separate. The very teachers who helped them were also institutionally required to isolate them.

After her diagnosis of dyslexia at university (where I met her), Emma experienced a radical shift in her perception of herself as a writer, as a learner. From her vantage point of higher education, she is able to re-visit the rhizomic muddle of her relationship with *it*.

The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes linear multiplicities...from which the

One is always subtracted ($n - 1$). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

How many times does Emma change, undergo metamorphosis, in my
interactions with her?
How many Emmas do I know?

I encountered Emma the first-year undergraduate who had been sent to the ABCD classroom. I encountered Emma in the middle of her anxiety over the written modules of her course. I encountered Emma also taken away from the studio space – her usual place of learning in the art institution – and coming willingly and with agency to a different sort of space: my cheerfully decorated little tutorial room. Here, sat side by side at a PC, I encountered her just as she had received her dyslexia diagnosis and I was assigned to be her specialist one-to-one tutor.

I began with her in the middle. I began with her in the muddle. She spilled over much that I am indebted to – her narrative is full of wisdom and wonder – and when I left her narrative she was in the middle of one of her (I hope many) happy endings. She had graduated with a “good” degree; she had been offered two prestigious painting commissions in London; she was at peace with her writing identity and her painting practice. But the Emmas that are written about here are not chronological Emmas. She wasn’t first confused and undiagnosed, then diagnosed and liberated. Dyslexia wasn’t her ‘gift’ (Davis, 2010). Emma is not arboreal, hierarchical and governed by “tree logic”. I am not tracing Emma’s history. I am attempting to map some of Emma’s story.

Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

Stoler's duress is a dark place, one that 'does not call out its name' (2016, p. 188) and must be borne, and resonates with Foucault's writings on 'the mutually establishing relationships between knowledge and power and their use for social control' (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 1). In my research I find the scent of desire in duress, and the aroma of duress in desire. In discussing the social control exercised by the institutional power of school, Emma gives us both these things in this section of reported speech.

Emma begins her narrative by telling me she had *always thought* she might be dyslexic. Later she says she didn't really know what dyslexia was. She did know however that *the people who had it*, well *they* were made to feel different, and had to sit in a different classroom.

There was duress here, for Emma, to witness this othering of children. Yet there seems also to be the faint hint of a desire for this too – if she wasn't one of the children who had to be taken away and separated then what was she? A girl who perhaps wasn't "coping" very well with certain aspects of learning and had no real understanding of why? She said none of her teachers suggested it and surely, they would know? Because *it* "was a disability" wasn't it? And therefore, teachers should be able to tell.

And when she eventually got her diagnosis at university she

couldn't quite believe it.

There is a sort of wonderment. She says:

it seems I've got a reason for that now, for that struggle, and it makes it so much easier knowing I've got ways round it whereas before it was just like oh I'm rubbish at that.

So not having *it* was more disabling than having *it*. Having *it* was a way forward for Emma. Emma draws distinction between the people that had *it* and the people that didn't. They were both a homogenous bunch and a set of disparate individuals. On the one hand, an individual is 'a non-threatening, subordinated political subject' and on the other they are given or 'installed with' a 'new kind of person hood or identity' (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 11).

And where was Emma in this muddle?

She describes them (those who had it) as *school kids with maths, English and grammar problems*. She says of herself that when it came to certain aspects of schoolwork she *couldn't grasp it*, there were *blocks in the way*. I am minded to consider Barad's (2007) interrelationships and intra-actions here, in Emma's sense that something might be grasped and, therefore, might fit to something else, something just out of her reach, that might be helpful in letting her understand or be agential, but at this point just wasn't there for her.

In an article (2015) Scott argues for Barad's spacetime-mattering in performance and interaction. Barad's (2007) notion of 'intra-activity' emerges through 'intra-actions', or 'the mutual constitution of entangled agencies' (2007, p. 33). In the interview with Emma, and in the spaces where workshops have taken place, the nature of such intra-actions is exposed, with the 'apparatus' of the interview and the workshop space acting as an intrinsic part of the 'ongoing reconfigurings' of the events themselves (Barad, 2003, p. 818). In the 'lively' space generated through such events, matter is always in the process of 'mattering' (Barad, 2003, p. 817). Emma has spacetime-matterings with dyslexia, a rich and complex intra-action.

Emma's complex relationship with dyslexia – both desire and duress – continues. Emma does not get taken to her special classroom but goes on – both different and a part of the cohort – failing to keep pace with the rest of the individuals in the class. Barad (2007) refers to a cut, something that produces difference and also entangles. Emma is not one Emma, a single Emma, she is Emma cut by

dyslexia, a different Emma but the same. Foucault (1995) dismantles the ideal of the individual and of the political, economic and cultural influences of that concept. 'Liberal politics enshrines the right of the individual... and actively seeks to make collective groupings, like class or ethnicity, invisible or unremarkable' (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 8).

Emma is robbed of the collective noun, dyslexic, which might empower her to know she is not stupid because she is the weak individual but in fact does have points of reference with other children. However, she doesn't desire these points of reference. The children in the ABCD classroom are not her, they are different and other. Emma desires dyslexia when dyslexia manifests itself as something positive. Desire in Deleuzian terms is 'an affirmative, vital force' (Gao, 2013, p. 406).

However, this too is not straightforward. Goodley discusses socially just pedagogies and urges us to

Unpack some of the assumptions that underpin educational understandings of "disability" and "impairment", suggesting that we need to engage more willingly with politicised and socially constructed ideas in relation to these phenomena (Goodley, 2007, p. 317).

Had Emma been "given" her dyslexia diagnosis (the one she came to desire in later years) at school, she may well have found herself shunted between conflicting pedagogic belief systems: 'mainstreaming', 'integration', and 'inclusion' (Goodley, 2007, p. 318). And disabled students remain marginalised through their construction as an othered group requiring empowerment (Clough and Barton, 1998).

Thus, wherever Emma may have been located in time and place she was likely to be subjected to obfuscating ideologies that ultimately obscured 'actual power inequalities' (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 9). She was a child in the school system.

I was kind of, like, in high school, I was always in sets 1 or 2 and I always considered myself quite clever but when I carried on to 6th form I took ridiculous subjects; I took chemistry, maths as well as art, photography. I just struggled so much with chemistry and maths and the teachers didn't even pick up or suggest anything. I suppose I thought if they'd thought I'd had it they'd have found out earlier.

Why did Emma take ridiculous subjects?

What story of being clever made her feel under duress to do this?

Why did Emma feel she needed validation of her dyslexia by her teachers?

What power did they exercise over her?

I felt so unmotivated. I remember sitting in maths and thinking they think, I'm not going to get an A or make the school look good, so I don't matter. It wasn't said but it was very much how I felt and as a result I didn't get good A levels.

Emma sees her "failure" to attain "good" grades as being a direct result of the disciplinary panopticon of the school curriculum and the pedagogy of normalcy. Foucault describes prisons as a 'great, enclosed, complex and hierarchised structure' (1995, p. 90). Control of the body and mind is achieved through coercion, through being entered into, or entering into, what Foucault (1995) describes as a social pact. Emma in high school was a 'technically mutable' body to be manipulated (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 98).

These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called disciplines. (Foucault, 2007, p. 137).

Emma says she took *ridiculous* A levels to please the school and waited to be told why she was struggling so badly with them. Meanwhile the 'chronologizing

of power, passing from school year to school year' marks time for Emma (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 110).

The University perhaps allows Emma to intervene in that power. I mentioned the influence of her art teacher above and the brief confidence Emma got from gaining decent GCSEs, but then A levels came and there was, I discovered, another narrative that mulched in with the academic one here. Emma says she had struggled with confidence, with mental well-being and with anxiety throughout her A levels. This came later in our conversations but adds an additional poignancy to the manner in which she first described both the desire and duress surrounding her arrival at this University and her dyslexia diagnosis.

Emma had no burning desire to come to this city. In fact, in her first conversation with me, she remembers looking at university prospectuses and thinking

not this one, probably not art

but her positive experiences with art at A level and the difficulties she had had with anxiety and friendship groups encouraged her to look at art institutions. When she visited the Institution, she says knew immediately it was the place she wanted to be.

I really don't know what I would have done if I hadn't had that diagnosis. It's me now. It's fine; it's me, it's my style, that's ok, whereas before I thought that's not ok.

"Becoming" dyslexic changes Emma's identity.

It happened here [at the institution] really. I was really struggling with work and I decided to have the free screening. Mum was adamant I wouldn't have it but when it was suggested, when I had the full test, I

couldn't quite believe it in a way because I'd never thought in my mind I'd have it. I just thought (lowers voice) I wasn't good academically. I just presumed, um, that's what it was.

When Emma says *I couldn't quite believe it* and lowers her voice to a whisper, I read this not as a fear of diagnosis but a desire of diagnosis; it suggests to me that Emma might be asserting desire for dyslexia, for an answer to her questions, for an assurance that she was *good academically*. I read this as Emma desiring a way of understanding the power games that had dictated her educational life.

In her induction week she is screened for particular learning styles and traits using the same yes/no 20-question checklist as all other undergraduates in their first-year induction. She is called in for a chat, a friendly discussion, about the number and nature of the items she's ticked. She meets Jan – dyslexia tutor – who has a long list of other first years to see and for whom this process is entirely normal, democratic and simply part of the induction process. She has a further screening test with Jan, they talk about the possibilities of dyslexia, about the advantages of knowing and understanding, about the rhizomic entanglement of the questions on the generalist and the more detailed psychometric tests of the screening test. Jan says that many of the students tick lots of boxes of the questionnaire and this in many ways calls into question notions of normalcy.

If the questions are about aberrations from the so-called norm how come so many of us – staff and students – have so many ticks?

I read Emma's desire for dyslexia also as a possibility of agency. Although she is expressing happiness at the 'scientific paradigm through which her dyslexia is identified' (Schwan and Shapiro, 2011, p. 110) this science is – in my view – simply a convenient and somewhat incidental mechanism through which Emma receives her sense of powerfulness.

I couldn't quite believe it.

What possibilities did Emma see opening up for her in the understanding of dyslexia, in the realised desire for dyslexia? At school, she had

A block in my head. I really couldn't get it.

She had to ask for her friend's help. This wasn't enabling:

I had to get my friend to help me and I just got myself in a mess I got really upset. This year, after diagnosis, I didn't ask for help from my friend.

I ask: When you had to go to your friend before, for help, what were you worrying and panicking about? What were you worrying would happen, what did you see as your problem?

She replies poetically: *Just like struggled with "not get". I knew what I wanted to say in my head but not getting it down on paper.*

Emma explains that seeing me provides a space to find ways round and through her dyslexia. I too am a conduit, or rather an entanglement and place of eruption, for Emma. Seeing her dyslexia tutor for an hour a week is agential pedagogy. It is the fulfilment at least partially of one of her desires and the resolution at least partially of some of her duress.

What are your ways round it? I ask her.

I'm breaking things down a lot more. Taking my time with it, coming to see you, building on that. Every time I go to the library, I write the things I want to achieve, I write lists for my essay and I cross things off the list. I highlight, and I annotate. Obviously, I still have some trouble

with that now, but it seems I've got a reason for that now for that struggle and it makes it so much easier knowing I've got ways round it whereas before it was just like oh I'm rubbish at that.

So when I meet Emma for the purposes of this research there is already an Emma I know; and knowing her makes what we go on to do richer and more productive.

Belle's opening semi-structured interview

Belle is another participant who expresses desire and duress in her conversations with me. Belle's first language is Danish. She is a mature student and many of her musings are also reflections on her past and the effects of her past on the present situation she finds herself in; a single parent with two pre-teens on a course populated mainly by A level finishers away from home for the first time.

Conversation is important to me. I was quiet for so many years she says when I ask her what the turning point was for her in her writing life at the University.

You take me seriously - our conversations show that. Things lead on to other things. Coming to see you is not just about being patted on the back. I am challenged. I think. I reflect. We end up discussing the things I say that are relevant to the things I'm writing and that makes me feel you're taking me seriously.

In our opening interview Belle speaks of her childhood in Denmark, of the poems she wrote for her Mum and an essay she wrote on the Crusades when she was sixteen that she was particularly proud of. She recalls defending her young cousin at school and surprising people with her physical strength. She modelled clothes for a magazine as a child and so

People thought I was too meek to fight

She did well in languages at school and was a fluent English speaker. But her spelling she says was *very visual*. She left school at 16. She tried college but

It went wrong. I only enjoyed art. I tried again but I dropped out again. I had the urge to travel; do something else interesting.

She remembers meeting her husband-to-be on a boat when she was 18. Shortly after that they came to England, and there she says her writing life almost stopped for 17 years. A wife and mother by then she opened a shop selling designer gifts with her husband's mother and, when asked to write the flyers and adverts for the shop, recalls feeling

Very insecure. I made up my own spelling rules. I thought it was because I was a foreigner. You know, I spelt phonetically. My ex, he said I was pretty stupid. So that didn't help.

Joining the Institution's Access to Further and Higher Education course proved a turning point for Belle as regards her writing life. Fears and delights that had lain dormant were roused again.

I was at Uni. I was talking again. And writing. And making art.

She passed this course and wanted to apply to the textiles degree course.

He [her husband] wouldn't support me, so I got a grant.

Once an undergraduate student, Belle demonstrates further determination (a form of desire) by calling into the student support office to request help with her writing. Belle had ticked the English as an Additional Language (EAL) box on the screening checklist and because of this was initially referred to an EAL tutor

rather than pursuing a dyslexic identity. 'Students do not model their narratives on archetypal ones but rather cut and paste their own academic identities onto the structure of a narrative' (Van Rensburg, 2006, p. 1). However, her dyslexia, her desire to be heard, her writing duress, her gradual movement from someone with a suspended writing life to someone with a living (albeit troublesome) one follows her into the room and are always part of her, are always steps she ascends and descends in her telling and re-telling.

Deleuze and Guattari describe their writing of *A Thousand Plateaus*:

We had hallucinatory experiences, we watched lines leave one plateau and proceed to another like columns of tiny ants. We made circles of convergence. Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 20).

Belle's description feels like movement through plateaus as she recounts her story to me. She goes on to explain how in the course of the conversation with Jan she learned that screening might lead to testing which might lead to support and tuition on a regular basis. She was very clear that she wanted to go ahead with this and the situation moved quickly on.

Belle came to desire dyslexia inasmuch as it provided her with answers to questions, but her approach to her diagnosis was very pragmatic. Diagnosed as dyslexic less than two months later, Belle commenced her weekly tutorials with me. A year into our working together I began this research and asked her to participate. In our opening I interview I felt I was hearing something about a desire to be heard and a sense of duress round writing, both of which manifested themselves to me more strongly than Belle's relationship with, or desire for, dyslexia.

I knew I had trouble with organising. Sometimes it all felt like a big mess. My writing. I didn't know where to start. And my memory. I'd forget certain types of things. Not numbers. But sequences of information. At 42

I know I've had all these years to build up strategies and get around stuff, so you know when something's wrong.

Belle used her time with me to revisit, re-inhabit her dyslexia, her phonetic spelling, her excellent visual memory, her relationship with her ex's view of her intellect and her position amongst her peers.

I've got confidence. I know I'm not stupid. I've got ideas. I just can't get them on paper.

She began writing poems again, haikus, and spoke about her sometimes pleasure and sometimes frustration in helping her own children with their writing and reading.

In the workshops Belle talks often of poetry and storytelling. She writes sentences which are lyrical and tells tales of her past which remind me of folk tales in the way she recounts them. She talks of having her hair in plaits and this makes me think of string figures and cats' cradles, of entanglements with childhood that never leave us. I sense a wistfulness to Belle's desire. Later in the thesis I will look at the workshops and the spaces for desire and duress they open up and we will hear more of Belle's stories.

Playing games of string figures is about giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads and failing but sometimes finding something that works. Something consequential and maybe even beautiful that wasn't there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site (Haraway, 2016, p. 10).

Tom's opening semi-structured interview

Tom is a fine art undergraduate who presents himself, in his own words, as

Just about the happiest person I know.

Tom is *never sad*. He *never stops enjoying life* and as I got to know him I did wonder if he might actually be that mythical student whose life is one long party. Tom told me he regarded *painting as a party* and there was little difference in the joy both gave him. Tom paints in a bold, lush, rich, thick and colourful way. His paintings are sticky and textured. His work often spills onto the floor or wall and regularly on to his clothes. If I had to say what Tom desired most it would be paint. And for Tom duress, I think, would be about the party ending early. Tom talked to me about his early writing life.

My granny really used to like my writing when I was a kid. She was very complimentary about my essays. I was proud of my writing. And my mum helped me a lot. I didn't read much. Mum would type up my essays because my hand writing's bad. I was six or seven.

Then he talks about a later period in his writing life.

It got harder for me as I got older. I had to have a dyslexia test in secondary school and that meant I had extra time in exams. English comprehension was hard 'cos of my reading. I became shut off from it. It was embarrassing. I made out I didn't care. I started joking around and being silly.

Tom is no longer proud of his writing. The pleasure of pleasing his teachers, his family, has been removed. Tom responds by becoming the class clown. 'Students identify in almost peripatetic mode with certain elements in grand narrative' (Van Rensburg, 2006, p. 4).

I was spontaneous, funny, joked around. I was known as the arty one.

I asked Tom if that's how his teachers would describe him. He replied *No, they wouldn't*, they would probably have regarded him as a *little shit*. Another element of Tom's grand narrative!

It is possible to argue that Tom was acting under duress. He understood desire and pleasure, success and well-being – his grandmother’s praise, her love of his writing – but he knows embarrassment, self-consciousness, a disassociation from his peers, which results in him finding other ways to connect with them – by fooling around. And, in doing so, earning the wrath of teachers, of those in authority. Duress is ‘productive, too, of a diminished, burned-out will not to succumb, when one is stripped of the wherewithal to have acted differently or better’ (Stoler, 2016, p. 7). Tom being the class clown may well have been much better than Tom being “the reject”.

Did he adopt this behaviour as a form of rebellion?

Interestingly, he then talks of a teacher who allowed him into the fold again, who put desire within his grasp. Like Emma, Tom has a significant art teacher at secondary school who encourages his drawing and whom he describes as being *nurturing and accepting* of his *difference*. He gets a grade C in English at GCSE and is proud once again. He goes to college to do a BTEC in art and again is encouraged by a supportive tutor.

There was no writing in that course either

and so his writing life too is an abeyance until he takes up his place at this Institution, where duress sets in as he encounters the academic demands of first year undergraduate study.

The writing and reading, the lectures, were awful. I actually can’t remember anything about it. I shut it all out.

At the beginning of year two he approaches our team for help and he and I start working together. I remember Tom’s child-like pleasure in finding that if I asked him questions about his work he could articulate his ideas and I would type them up for him. He struggled, though, with reading complex academic text. Instead we talked

about philosophies and ideas, using the texts as springboards rather than shackles. Even so, Tom still *can't remember much about this time*. He says to me he was *glad of the help*, but he seems to be saying that it wasn't really anything to do with him.

I think he feels I got him through the essays

and he had little agency in this. His final year presents a different story. *I'm more engaged. My art has changed too. I have a voice to talk about art. Something clicked.*

I want to pursue this path in my questioning; not a 'pre-established' path of 'arborescent systems' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 16) but a rambling, mazy gully of past and present. I ask Tom to say more, if he can. He reminds me that he'd asked me to help him write a statement about his practice for his application to the Royal College of Art. He describes it as

My creative life on one piece of paper.

Agency reappears in his account. His artist statement is *easy to write* because it's *Knowledge you have about something they don't know about*, he explains. I ask him how he feels about writing now, as his final year draws to a close and he has almost finished his dissertation.

I enjoy writing about myself and my practice. It's flowing. I read now.

He describes his strategies for reading which are complex and effective – he uses the internet, a lot of cut-and-paste, discussion with me and his tutors and peers. He found out about post-modernism through a lecture on YouTube. He listens more to the news now and knows more about current affairs.

I ask him: How has your knowledge and understanding grown?

You start to understand what fine art really is. Everyone has a practice. You want to think about what's the relationship between practices. You ask yourself what's around you and where are you on the scale. You listen with purpose because there is a purpose. You hear key points.

I ponder whether Tom's desire to paint, and to make manifest a statement about his painting, was what led him to overcome the duress of reading and writing. It seems to me that Tom made painting the centre of his cavernous, convoluted path through university.

Chloe's opening semi-structured interview

Chloe says early on in our opening conversation that she's very interested in the idea of identities (plural). She examines changing identities as part of her art practice. She mentions her art practice very early on in our conversations. She has moved from portraiture to installation in the first year of her degree and when she was on her Foundation course she was interested in film and photography. As Chloe talks, and as I read back the transcript now, it feels as though she has referenced not only her mutable artistic identity but also something about time passing and also about her writing life.

My practice is closely connected to my identity as a person. I've always been interested in people. I used to do a lot of work on self-image in school. I didn't realise at the time, but I do now.

She talks about having low self-esteem at school and about dealing with illness and death in her family. She found artwork that reflected and spoke to her about these things, using Jo Spence's portraits of women who had undergone surgery after breast cancer to help her

in dealing with death and her art was always about dealing with my life.

More than any of the other participants, Chloe segues very easily from discussing art, life events and identity to discussing her writing life.

Her very next sentence after *always about dealing with my life* is *I knew I was dyslexic at university* [because she was screened and assessed and “diagnosed”] *but I always knew ‘cos in comparison with others I always struggled. I always had to do more revision to get average grades.*

Here is Chloe’s duress, her use of the word struggle, her implicit and explicit comparisons with others and with other normalcies. ‘Popular culture trains our thoughts on to our individual selves, our minds and our bodies, to check how we match up to a normative model of humanity’ (Goodley, 2014, p. 4).

Chloe, it seems, uses identity as a way of supposing both herself and others, but at the same time she is self-aware, she questions her own recall, she questions what she is supposing.

An outsider would say about me you’re a clever girl you’ve done really well but... I always think if, but - if I’d not had to work so hard, if I could have worked less hard and not been dyslexic I’d have done just as well.

Chloe tunnels time, she conflates and co-recognises two things, maybe more, at once: she didn’t realise at the time, but she does now, that she uses art to explain and explore life issues, identity tags, and that she was *always* dyslexic. Now (it seems to me) she can see it, from the vantage point of being where she presently is, it seems she always knew it, somewhere in her was a dyslexic identity. Like all new undergraduates she filled in the self-assessment checklist in induction week in first year and because of the high number of positive responses she was called in for a chat. When I ask her if she was surprised, she replies that she

Was yet wasn't. I didn't realise a lot of these things that I had struggled with were attached to the dyslexia thing, but this made it all come together...it all made sense.

I wonder - is Chloe just being wise after the event? Or does she inhabit what Triggs et al call 'a social awareness at the level of the body' (2014, p. 21)?

Does Chloe feel that her behaviours, her experiences, her shifting relationship with writing and writing identity (which she goes on to discuss in more detail) were inhabiting her at some more profound level, being and becoming part of her identity and shaping her as they shaped her art?

Does she, as Barthes says, 'struggle with her image'; does she 'suppose herself'? (1979/1993, p. 67).

Triggs et al talk about the 'potent after-life' of art making practices, and how one can 'activate responses that recalibrate other creative practices' (2014, p. 23).

Deleuze and Guattari speak about long-term and short-term memory:

Short-term memory is of the rhizome or diagram type, and long-term memory is arborescent and centralized (imprint, engram, tracing, or photograph). Short-term memory is in no way subject to a law of contiguity or immediacy to its object; it can act at a distance, come or return a long time after, but always under conditions of discontinuity, rupture, and multiplicity (1987, p. 16).

In recalling the *was yet wasn't* of her dyslexic identity, Chloe suggests a multiplicity of duress and desire. The quiet, guilty resentment she feels towards her best friend who makes study look so easy, the love of creative language which somehow doesn't survive the institutional demands of examinations. And Chloe's words are full of the push and pull of desire and duress:

I used to absolutely love creative writing at school; I knew lots of creative illustrative words but by not doing it I forgot. I always enjoyed it, but I

always struggled. I do enjoy writing, but I get stressed and I do forget a lot. I won a poetry trophy but now I think I've forgotten a lot but if I could remember it would make things a lot easier. It was always effortful. I compare myself to my best friend she did no revision and got excellent exam grades. I got a level grades A, A, B. I had to really crack on and really build up a body of work.

The language Chloe uses – *crack on, body of work* – echo the language of the Oxford English online dictionary on duress. 'Hardness, roughness, violence, severity; hardiness of endurance, resistance, etc.; firmness' (OED, 1989, cited in Stoler, 2016, p. 6).

I ask what she remembers feeling before and after her assessment:

I'm such a worrier and I've got such a shockingly bad memory. But then I think to myself I don't know why I'm worrying so much; I've always been like this and [now I know] it's just the dyslexia thing. I've always had that. Also, I used to worry I was a bit deaf. I am a teeny bit, but the assessor said it might be a dyslexia thing - my brain working out what they're saying and working out a response. So, it's interesting because there's deafness in my family but I don't have it.

Chloe seems to be relieved of some of her duress here, she excuses herself, even forgives herself for her *shockingly bad memory* and is able to put aside a worry that it might be familial deafness that has caused some of her issues. Goodley warns against the medicalisation of disability: 'Disability is normatively understood through the gaze of medicalisation: that process where life becomes processed through the reductive use of medical discourse' (2014, p .4).

I apprehend some contradictions. Chloe is relieved to be dyslexic, to be able to blame *the dyslexia thing*. It answers questions, provides comfort. But equally she is relieved not to be found deaf.

I just felt a lot better about myself. It's an explanation for why I struggled. I also thought life is unfair and other people have other things that I don't suffer with. But anger is no good. I can understand better now. I might still be a bit annoyed but...

Chloe is able to pull out these contradictions: life is unfair, but more so for some than others. She moves on to considering how this unfairness is not only distributed but might be mitigated.

I've never found a group of people I belong in. There's always someone I can't tolerate or don't feel equal to. I want to use those don't belong feelings to impact others' lives as well as my creativity. I want to do art therapy. The people who make the biggest impact are the people who've struggled.

And then she proposes desire:

I've a vision of the future - a café-gallery-therapy centre. I wouldn't make lots of money, but it'd be so cool. I'd have a proper goal for my life.

Again, Chloe is entangled in her time travel, all becomes one in her visions of past present and future. The rhizome 'fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12).

When asked about her writing life at the present time she again invokes desire and duress, and summons up a narrative, almost a picture I can imagine before me as she speaks. It is full of the entanglement of desire and duress.

Well I used to worry 'cos didn't know what was wrong but since I know [I'm dyslexic] I worry less. Before I make any art, I write. It really helps. Informal writing. But formal writing... essays. Hmmm. I enjoy writing about what I'm interested in but reading it takes so long, which causes

stress, which cuts down on enjoyment. At home I can hear my flat mates all giggling in the kitchen. I'm me, in silence, especially when I'm reading. I have to write and read in private. If I can hear them I get stressed, can't concentrate, I get annoyed why can't I do this like them. But not living with them next year so will be a lot better and I do really enjoy it [writing]. Part of the process of making is thinking reading and writing. You don't need to write that much, people say to me, but I need to write that much for myself. A lot of my ideas for art come out through writing.

Is your writing for your practice very different to your academic writing? I ask her.

Yes, very. It's just for me, it's not about grammar; it's a filter, a way of organising. Academic writing is for others to understand.

Here Chloe raises another of the themes that permeate this research, a perception of the difference, even binaries, of formal academic writing and art writing for one's practice.

Amy's opening semi-structured interview

Amy, like Chloe, begins her reappraisal of her writing life by invoking a memory of place, space and family.

I remember my sister reading Winnie the Pooh out loud. My sister constantly reading, me not reading - that was the identity I had. I read some Jacqueline Wilson, some Roald Dahl but it was hard. I stopped reading in Year 6.

She makes me laugh out loud when she recalls sternly reading to her teddy bears because they *wouldn't answer back*. Amy refers to objects as having agential properties – books, soft toys, boxes, her cameras.

I made my first photograph album with my first disposable camera that I got when I was seven. I made another one at twelve. I still have it. My Grandpa left me film cameras when I was fifteen. Dad had a camera. I often borrowed his. I spent all my eighteenth birthday money on a digital SLR. I kept all the photos in a box.

Amy's interview is shorter than the others. She seems to me to be full of gentle self-mockery and refuses to catastrophise her writing life. She too was sent to a spelling *club* in school. She recalls it ironically but when I ask her if she would rather have gone to another school she is adamant that the institutional power and politics of her Grammar school enabled her to succeed in her GCSEs and A levels and that had she gone elsewhere she would have *failed*. The only irritation she expresses is at the casually dismissive manner she perceives the school as adopting towards arts subjects. But even here she simply says she *got on with it* on her own and chose to study photography at university. And her pragmatism extends to her career choices.

I don't want to be a photographer. It would ruin something I love.

Amy makes the fewest references to desire and duress in comparison with some of the other participants. This may be because

The attitudes of middle-class society can be characterised as a sensibility of individualism; the drama of individual attainment, exploration and achievement over the wild savagery of nature (Goodley, 2014, p. 11).

Amy, a grammar school girl – *I got in by one mark* – has been flattened out in her range and scope for desire and duress, invested instead with a cheerful, dismissive self-awareness that laughs in the face of adversity, a contemporary stiff upper lip. Ironically, Amy is the participant who – after graduation – has been most visible in the University with her gorgeous, lush photographs of a contemporary jewellery maker's exquisite pieces adorning the walls of the University gallery. Amy, it seems, has achieved visibility.

Hattie's opening semi-structured interview

I don't properly remember learning to read and write but I remember lots of the kids could read and I couldn't, and I knew I was behind, and my mum used to get up with me in the morning and we'd do reading before school. We used to do spellings in the morning and I used to read in the evening and I remember I didn't enjoy it at all.

Is this at home? I ask her.

Yes. We used to sit at the breakfast table and do reading and later I'd do spellings. Spellings weren't too bad. I'd do spellings with my dad.

Hattie remembers viscerally: the sticky plastic tablecloth in the kitchen where she studied before school, the teacher who told her she was a disgrace for forgetting her homework because she never forgot her make up: 'Although we understand our bodies to be private and personal we are actually made to acknowledge them in very social and public ways. They are socio-political' (Goodley, 2014, p. 7). She recalls the numbing sense of time dragging as she sat in the classrooms of her middle school years and felt the pleasure, the desire, for writing, and the sense she was a good, imaginative storyteller give way to outsider-dom.

In my last English lesson, we were watching the same BBC Bitesize extract we'd watched a hundred times and I'd had enough, I'd really had enough of formal education, and the teacher said are you not concentrating, and I said I'm not concentrating because I've gone, I've just gone.

How would that teacher have described you? I ask her.

Talkative, with a low attention span, disruptive.

How would your friends have described you?

As a good friend. A friendly chatty, feisty, protective, outspoken girl. I didn't like to see injustice. I used to be seen by the school as a creative writer but by GCSE it was like how can you be a good writer if you don't know/can't remember what is a simile, an adjective, a noun? You're perceived as lazy - if you can say it, why can't you write it?

'There is a possessive nature to ableism that clings to its own and expels outsiders. Our task must be to deconstruct its logics. One of these logics I have termed neo-liberal ableism: a logic that pursues the (hyper)normal' (Goodley, 2014, p. 21).

But Hattie ends with a confident embracing of her renewed desire to make art and to write about it.

In Year 2 of Uni, talking through with you what I'd done and having deadlines and discussing reading and having a constant dialogue really built my confidence. The dialogue comes from the talking about the practice. I didn't realise what I say sounds like it does until you type it and say it back to me. What I say and what I write have in the past been different things. I'm a confident speaker but the dialogue with you helps me pinpoint what I mean and develop it. It's not GCSE English anymore; it's not bloody Of Mice and Men, it's for myself. I'm writing to understand I understand my practice more and further. Just doing art would help me understand it physically but not mentally. I'm fine tuning, I'm creating dialogue in my brain about what I'm doing - it helps me understand what and why I'm doing.

Hattie's assertion that what she says and what she writes aren't always the same, and her citing of our discourse as somewhere she and I 'converge on a plane of consistency' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 4) are part of the rich mulch of "data" this thesis entangles with. I pick up these entangled issues again – of corporeality and writing, desire and duress, knowing and understanding, time and temporality, disability and the cult of normalcy – in the following chapters. Here, I have offered

an entry into the writing lives of these participants, a reader/writer/participant entanglement with which to pursue the journey.

Conclusion

The key insights arising from this chapter are that desire – an active, positive and productive reality (Gao, 2013) and duress – a complex push pull of coercion, compulsion and resistance present a vibrant paradox within which the stories of the six participants begin to emerge. Desire and duress operate rhizomically with the idea of the past still going on in the present (Deleuze and Guattari, 2007; Haraway, 2016). As stated, I meet the participants in the muddle, as their stories start becoming stories to me, to us. All of them have relationships with dyslexia and writing that are to some extent defined and driven by desire and duress.

Emma struggles, couldn't grasp, has blocks in her way, but also welcomes dyslexia with wonderment and sees it as solving her puzzle. Be-coming dyslexic changes her identity. Belle is a quiet person made loud again by university, by her course, by making art and by demanding her struggles with writing and organisation are recognised and dealt with. The thing that had made her ex label her stupid becomes the thing she needs to label and codify herself with in order to get support and make her voice heard. Belle moves through 'plateaus of experience', 'circles of convergence' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.20). Tom – *the happiest person I know* – is silenced too by dyslexia at one point. He recalls in his opening interview the imprisonment of duress that Stoler (2016) refers to: his desire for his grandmother's praise, the duress of his disassociation from his peers, not being able to remember any first-year lectures because he shut it all out. Then he speaks about the satisfaction of writing about his practice – all his practice on one page – the subversive joy of being able to write well about something he knows better than anyone else.

Desire and duress for Chloe are intrinsically linked – her desiring of friendship groups, her closeness to her family alongside her resentment of the lack of effort friends had to apply to writing, the uneasy praise for her sister’s success (*she never had to work as hard as I did*). Amy amuses us with her desire to read to her teddies because they *wouldn’t answer back*. She brings objects and spaces to life with her description of her childhood bedroom and camera. She is pragmatic about her grammar school education and the duress not being recognised as dyslexic placed her under. She recognises her advantages; she wouldn’t change what occurred. She doesn’t see herself as a victim. Hattie recalls the sticky plastic tablecloth, her run in with authority, her diminishing desire to write and tell stories because she can no longer do so without being marked, judged and coded.

It is evident in this chapter that the participants are vibrant and active in the rhizome of knowledge making. As readers, we come to experience some of their ‘I’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1997). This ‘I’ is an intensity, an affective meld, a convergence of forces, always unstable, mobile, emerging, becoming (Taylor, 2016, p. 14). Through ‘experimentation with the real’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1997, p. 3) we see that time is fluid and active in all the participants’ accounts. Space is vital, bedrooms continue to hold teddies and tale telling, post office sets continue to bring joy and delight, pens make continuing marks and computers flicker their still relevant stories. Power is questioned and held to account; old wounds are still felt. Dyslexia is experienced differently for each participant but provides a common territory to explore. What I find particularly helpful about a post-humanist approach to knowledge making is that the theory is the practice, the questions are entangled with the analysis, and the analysis becomes the knowledge making. This chapter has begun to map the participants’ landscape of connections, stratifications and territorialisation, and how their narratives become deterritorialised. In Chapter Five, we will pursue these rhizomic connections, and enter further into the mulch of the participants’ and my research experiences, the first of which is writing intervention one.

Chapter Five: Deterritorialising dyslexia

Writing intervention one: 15 December 2015, 4.30-6.30pm, Life Drawing Room
Participants: Hattie, Tom, Emma, Amy, Chloe, Belle

Introduction

This chapter explores the first writing intervention, a writing workshop that took place in the University Life Drawing room, and the data that emanated from it, as well as the participants' retrospective evaluations of the event. Here I set out the structure of the chapter and its key take home points. Firstly, I set the scene, next I explore the theorists I think with, then I give you the workshop and its discourse and outcomes. Interwoven here are observations on theory (thinking with theory) and data (thinking with data). So I may comment on the lines of a poem/piece of student writing or on an exchange. Then I present reflections on the workshop and finally I conclude, outlining the contributions to knowledge formed in this chapter.

This chapter explores possibilities for the deterritorialisation of dyslexia through the experiences of the writing intervention and subsequent conversations.

Deleuze and Guattari lay out the theory of "territories" or sets of environmentally embedded triggers of self-organizing processes, and the concomitant processes of deterritorialization (breaking of habits) and reterritorialization (formation of habits) (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1).

I take up the concept of deterritorialisation to consider crossovers and striations, where experiences, observations and thematics surface that I have raised before and then deal with again further on in the thesis.

Workshop one, held in the life-drawing room, was the first opportunity in the research for all six participants to meet and engage in a writing intervention. Its aim was to explore the manifestations and eruptions of writing and dyslexia within the institutional space. The workshop, as so beautifully expressed in feedback by one of the participants, shows the

linking [of] creative methods/processes to academic processes.

Deterritorialisation is the concept through which this is explored.

Deterritorialisation allows us to question the process. To territorialise in the field of dyslexia is to lay claim to certainties and to divide and separate those “with” and “without” dyslexia. To territorialise in the art institution is (amongst other things) to make spaces that are suitable and designated for certain things, that are “fit for purpose”. This chapter interrogates and problematises territorialisation in writing and in spaces, and I use the workshops to show (rather than tell) how different forms of action can be released, made, produced and uncovered.

Deleuze and Guattari offer a detailed and complex “open system” which is extraordinarily rich and complex. A useful way into it is to follow the concepts of coding, stratification and territorialization. They are related in the following manner. Coding is the process of ordering matter as it is drawn into a body; by contrast, stratification is the process of creating hierarchal bodies, while territorialization is the ordering of those bodies in “assemblages,” that is to say, an emergent unity joining together heterogeneous bodies in a “consistency” (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1).

To territorialise in writing is to subdivide and classify writing into genres: academic and non-academic, formal and informal, prose and poetry, assessed and non-assessed. To territorialise is to stratify, codify and pronounce. Certain words become labels, which in turn ‘prompt a different form of action to be applied to a body’ (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1). There are ‘socially sanctioned “order words”’ such as “I now pronounce you man and wife” that bring about ontological and epistemological states. They ‘lay out the theory of “territories” or sets of

environmentally embedded triggers of self-organizing processes' (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1).

The Life Drawing room (site of the workshop) is a slowly deterritorialising space. Once strictly forbidden to anyone other than life models and artists it then became a storage room, teaching room, overspill space, venue for Christmas parties and, eventually, was demolished in the construction of the University's building works. The workshop was a way of creating conditions of emergence for a research assemblage that explored narratives of dyslexia and the art institution through writing and through tactile, embodied making. The format of the workshop – the writing and making objects and ephemera, the carefully chosen space – all provided an assemblage opportunity, a space where lines of flight might emerge, where questions might be asked, where “mistakes” (of spelling, grammar, syntax, plaiting, gluing, sticking, pronunciation) might also be safely made, closely interrogated and become useful rather than shameful.

An invitation was sent to participants early in the research process (see Chapter Three), which set out the aim of the workshop. The invitation to attend stands as a scene setter for the participants and me; its intention was to place us in participative, amiable, creative and trusting relationships to each other as we entered a multi-purposed space of making and being. I had no idea what was going to happen when I sent that invitation. Yes, I had a plan, and I had a sense of purpose and joy and excitement. But the participants' embodied selves could not be predicted until they became assembled as six people around a table strewn with writing and crafting ephemera and bags of sweets. Until that moment when they were there I had no idea what sort of research assemblage they might become. My first notes, when I return to them, say: *Workshop one starts with laughter and taking a picture. Everyone introduces themselves.*

Chronological time is not 'securely established'. Our events and experiences are not 'enshrined in a past that remains stable.' Remembering the past chronologically is a way of saving ourselves from chaos, of installing cause and effect upon our lives. We may feel that narrating the past is securing

both our presents and our futures, that through it we 'erase incongruities and smooth our paradox in order to create the delusion of time as a seamless whole' (Lorraine, 2003, p. 44).

And with this I remember the workshop, and present the data. What follows now is the main data section of this chapter. It will contain thinking with theory, thinking with data and eruptive asides.

The workshop format

The format is flexible and responsive, and no two workshops will ever be identical, but all include these elements roughly in this order. Participants sit around the horseshoe shaped table and select a writing tool. These include, but aren't limited to, chalk, graphite sticks, bits of broken ruler or paperclips, biro, crayons, felt pens, soft fruit, carrot sticks, feathers, fountain pens, pencils. If a participant chooses a "difficult" mark maker (one with limited mark making capacity such as a paper clip) they are told they can also select a more traditional marker.

Once they've done so I ask them to swap it with their neighbour. They have to give up their chosen implement and receive another one. We discuss how this feels: choices, consequences. We then go through a series of quick exercises involving signing our names – sign as though you were angry, a celebrity, trying to be invisible, forging your own signature, elated. We are writing on a big sheet of paper. We might write with the "other" hand; the one we don't usually use. We record how this feels in drawings, gestures and words which are committed at will to a large sheet of paper which each participant has in front of them.



Figure 1: Writing Intervention One

I then ask if you were a piece of cheese, what cheese would you be? If you were a piece of art, what art would you be?

Reactions to the two questions are very different but generally arouse similar responses – laughter, puzzlement, a consideration of the many and varied properties of cheese and the strangeness of personifying cheese, and the difficulty of relating yourself to a piece of art. Often the responses to the art question is very different to what the questions what art do you like or what art do you make, which we often end up discussing too.

We then select a piece of material and examine its properties, its tactility, its sound and smell, its taste if we feel like it. We try to use all five senses. We might dip the material in our cup of tea or pin it in our hair to see what it looks like and how it makes us feel. Materials include bric-a-brac and haberdashery off-cuts from the market, plastic face masks cut into squares, pom-poms from old hats, string, foam

squares, labels, ribbon, wood, denim, felt patches, faux leather, real leather, sweet wrappers, sticking plasters (unused).

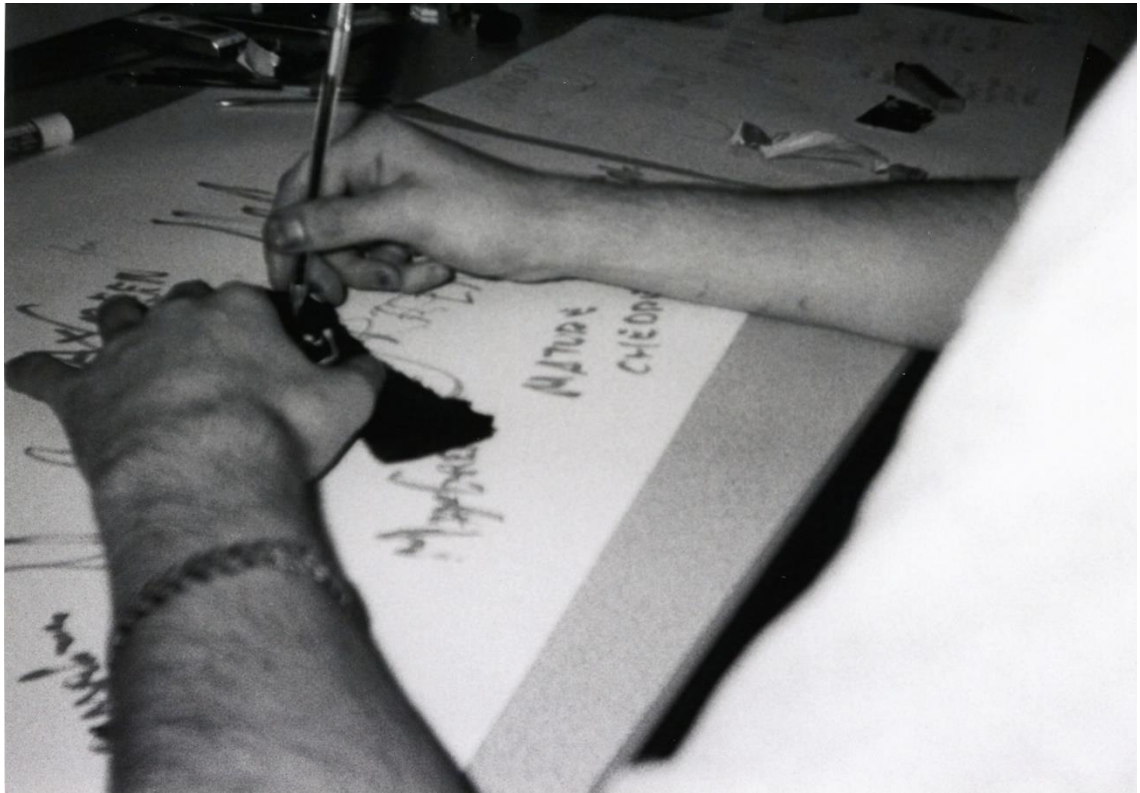


Figure 2: Writing Intervention One

We write about this encounter with materials spontaneously using single words or phrases which we generate through the activity – I ask a lot of questions to encourage this activity (what does denim sound like when you scratch it? What does paper sound like when you screw it up in a ball and throw it?). We write the words on different pieces of material. We are inspired by textures to generate language around the experience of writing. Some are very yielding, others put up a fight (the materials, not the participants!) We swap implements amongst ourselves and note the variety of mark making opportunities (and catastrophes) that ensue.

We acknowledge and explore sound, shape, weight, density, bulk. We reflect on what we've done and how the sheet of paper is looking. We discuss our experiences. This reflection is important, this acknowledgement of the way time isn't chronologically secure but can shift as we revisit it, bringing the recent past

into the re-seen present. Participants might select a postcard, ticket or photograph and are given a series of words to play with. Some of the words are taken from Zygmunt Bauman's writing on fluid identities from *Liquid Modernity* (2000) which is used later in the workshop. I ask them to relate the words in some way to the images on the postcard. They write some of these words down on sticky notes and pass them to their neighbour. Their neighbour responds with another word generated by the one they've been given.

If we get stuck we use our implements and for inspiration – what does a scratch on plastic feel like? Tight? Taut? Difficult? Squeaky? Unyielding? Ok write it down and give it to your neighbour and they can use it to generate another word.

Then we plait. We plait text after cutting into it. We unplait. We cut words out and attach them to the paper. Because we plait we discuss construction, patterns, process, design, the appearing and disappearing of words into the plait and out of it. We consider the collaborative nature of making and the words and phrases and ideas that this notion of collaboration encourages us to form and shape.

All these exercises generate words, which are collected on the paper and on various bits of material that we attach to the paper. A collage of experiential writing and making is being formed. We discuss what writing feels like by experiencing how marks are made with implements on surfaces. We also try sign or air writing. Spelling is a very fluid thing. Understanding and making ourselves understood is more important.

The workshops end with an intervention into the Bauman text. I give the original, a summary, a paraphrase and a quote. This quote was chosen because it comes from a popular text the students are given to consider in their art history module and it often strikes a chord with them, referring as it does to very material and tactile qualities like form and liquid and surface and wrapping – ideas art students might be in tune with.

The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow, to solidify the liquid, to give form to the formless. We struggle to deny, or at least cover up, the awesome fluidity just below the thin wrapping of the form; we try to avert our eyes from sights, which they cannot take in (Bauman, 2000, p. 82).

They read it aloud so they can hear it. They select a word, sentence, or phrase. They can take it as a whole or in parts. They cut it up and add it to their collage. They then construct a sentence relating to their own practice that contains this word/these words. Each one reads it out in turn. It sounds a bit like a poem being recited. This activity mirrors, albeit subversively, the act of incorporating theory into academic writing about practice. We discuss how this feels and review what we have created, as well as our responses to the activities and to the experience of writing in this manner.

Discussing arts practices, Hickey-Moody et al (2016, p. 1) talk about the 'disruptive and generative potential of... diffractive pedagogy as an example of the type of learning that can take place when materiality and entanglement are considered as vital constituents'. The material properties and lives of the objects, constituents, spaces and places where these workshops and interviews took place are generative, diffractive and entangling indeed. Materials help to form, create and generate text. Hickey-Moody writes:

As an affective exchange, encounters with literature, music, and dance might be considered a posthuman form of education. This is because, on one level, pedagogy is fundamentally about people, yet on another level, the material changes, or traces of interaction that identify the kinds of subjective modulations that occur through literature, sound, and movement, are forms of change that are not created by people. Rather, these changes are created by the materialities of texts (Hickey-Moody, 2009, p. 273).

This research is about both pedagogy and people – and art practice, I assert, can be added to the list of literature, music and dance in the quote above.

Deterritorialising place

Without wishing to wash the past in colours of a rosy hue, I feel I am okay to state that this room was a good place to be that day. As Lorraine (2004) states (in my opening to this chapter), time is not secure and chronological, but rather a feast we can move to and return to, and returning to this moment I remember ease and calm in the visible interactions – the intra-actions – between human and material worlds, and between human and human. There was a great deal of laughter. The soft murmur of voices sharing asides. The rustle of sweet wrappers. Of course, I am not able to speculate about the silent stories we all carry with us even when outward appearances indicate something different. I don't doubt that all of us were dealing with duress in this workshop, it was somewhere in our complex selves. What I saw, I believe, was a space where duress was not obviously holding sway.

This space was a space of be-coming and deterritorialisation. Its original designation as a Life Drawing room had been under duress for some time. I had used the room for a postgraduate exhibition myself and had attended a Christmas party there the previous year. One of the technicians had long been using the space to house his impressive collection of paint brushes (as Hattie will tell us more about later). For her it became the room of requirement made famous by J.K. Rowling in the *Harry Potter* series). Deterritorialisation allows for the disembedding of social relations (Giddens, 1990).

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guatarri (1977/2001) encourage the use of alternative meanings and interpretations in regard to their ideas and phrasing, stating that the people best likely to understand their thinking are those who can adapt it, make new meaning with it and who are not steeped in academia. So for me deterritorialisation in the Life Drawing room became about the quiet unfurling and occupying of a space that did not tie us to our social, cultural, physical and educational delineations. Artists, writers, tutors, students, manipulators of materials, holders of pens, consumers of sweets, researcher and participants, taught and teacher, powerful and less powerful tie us to territories, acts and hierarchical power relationships.

Deleuze and Guattari use deterritorialisation to name processes that decontextualise sets of relations, making them virtual and readying them for different actualisations. This is relative, not absolute deterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977/2001). I am facilitating a workshop, I have a plan, I (think I) know what's coming next. I am still in role to an extent, in my territory, but the space opened up for subversion, diversion and reterritorialisation is, I discover at the end of two hours, beautifully realised.

Re-examining desire and duress through this lens is illuminating. In the Life Drawing room during this workshop there are no rules, only suggestions, spaces made available and opened up. Writing becomes something fluid and accidental. It is driven by materials and processes and sensory experience. Sweets are allowed, encouraged, laughter is the order of the day, dyslexia is discussed along with perfume, singing in the shower and stray cats. It isn't surprising that desire and duress are experienced differently in this space, and exploring them both, in their relational complexity, is one of the contributions to knowledge this chapter makes.

Rather than describe in detail each aspect of the workshop, as though it were a complete and chronological event, I try in this chapter to give a sense of 'worlding time, not container time, entangled times of past/present/yet to come' (Haraway, 2016, p. 11). Haraway refers here to a concept of time that includes and embraces past, present and future, rather than restricting us to strict linear and causal time. I will select moments and happenings, eruptions, to illuminate my research interests of exploring writing lives, institutional space and power, discourse around disability and normalcy. I use these eruptions to illustrate the richness of post-humanist theory on mulching and mingling of human and non-human, past and present, voice and act, thing and thingness that allows for what Haraway calls 'speculative thinking' (Haraway, 2016, p. 11).

Within the deterritorialising of dyslexia are desire and duress, always present at some level and always in conversation with each other. Desire has the life force to affect upsurges and change, to make and produce. This makes me think of

Goodley's describing of disability studies as being 'vital' and a 'lifesaver' (Goodley, 2013, p. 631).

Disability studies is eruptive, it causes change. It unsettles and challenges. Like post-humanist thinking it reterritorialises and deterritorialises. Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) ask questions like 'Who Does the Earth Think It Is? and How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?', (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1987, p. 4). Goodley asks, urges us to consider 'what it is to be human' (2014, p. x). He calls on Judith Butler, Margrit Shildrick and Gilles Deleuze to help us understand how this erupting is productive and performative. It operates at the level of the body, the non-normative body, as a 'performative entity', highlighting but also challenging 'corporeal standards... This can be productive. Indeed, impaired embodiment demands new, inclusive and potentially exciting forms of response from others' (Goodley, 2013, p. 635).

Stoler (2016) on the other hand treats duress as domination. Taking her starting point as a linear analysis of the colonial narrative of oppression – what she calls 'colonial genealogies' (p. 6) – she turns linear time on its head. This has the effect of pushing to the foreground the continuing clear and present danger of oppression, something that 'carve[s] out the distribution of inequities and deep faults of duress today' (Stoler 2016, p. 6). Therefore, as stated, desire and duress are always present at some level and always in conversation with each other.

Deterritorialising Writing

I began the workshop by asking the six participants to carefully select a writing implement of their choice. They have many to choose from including chalk and crayon and craft knives and paper clips, feathers and ink and stems of dried roses. Here comes duress: I ask them to pass these to the person on their right. They are disempowered of their first choice. And yet here is much laughter and discussion as each person ends up with the consequence of someone else's choice. No one seems overly concerned; instead, they look at their implements with fresh eyes, as

they were not the ones they selected. In response, Tom (who has ended up with a green pen) helps himself to a paper clip too. The labour and the means of production are deterritorialised – the pen does not need to be the implement that writes, the writer can employ a feather or a paper clip to make a mark. I tell them I am anonymising them in my writing, so they will all appear with different names.

He says he *thinks he'll love being Tom* and I say,

You can be anyone you want to be today.

'The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow, to solidify the liquid, to give form to the formless' says Bauman (2000, p.68). As I mention in my opening to this chapter, the space offered by writing differently, writing from the self (as opposed to about the self) opens up identities, labels, markers. I ask them to sign their names with their writing implements in a variety of ways – in anger, in joy, as a celebrity signing autographs. We discuss how the mark maker moves differently across the paper with the force and pull of the emotion. Signatures grow, shrink, become flamboyant. Each angry one is followed by the audible full stop of a pen banging down onto the paper. Words have sounds.

I purposefully introduce duress further into the proceedings; I ask them to sign their names as though they were in great danger of their lives. They find clever ways to disguise themselves. One signature is written in reverse, another in a foreign language, a third so tiny I can't read it, a fourth nestles in the corner of the page, a fifth becomes a tiny logo, and the sixth one simply refuses to sign. Amy looks at me and says

Well I'd be mad to, wouldn't I? If it meant my life would be in danger.

Foucault argues we have internalised discipline and punishment, become the guards of our own prison cells, the author of our own set of limiting rules and regulations (Foucault, 1995; 2006). Amy, however, refuses to be a docile body 'that

may be subjected, use, transformed and approved' (Foucault, 1995, p. 136).

Foucault also talks about resistance and the messiness of power.

When asked what sort of cheese she might be if she were a cheese (the workshop is about sensory interaction, human/thing interaction, and a bit of just being silly)

Amy replies

A Baby Bel because it's nice. And round.

Hattie says *brie*; it's one of her *faves and makes a good sandwich*.

Danish blue of course, says Belle.

Tom is a cheese string: *happy and silly and child-like*.

Hattie isn't sure if this exactly falls into the cheese category exactly. The conversation turns to colour, taste and smell as we work our way through the sensory interaction. Sensory experiences are deterritorialised, made playful, poked like plasticine into new shapes.

Rustle this sweet wrapper by your ear. What's it saying? Smell this cheap perfume. Ugh! Who does it remind you of? Write it down, write it on your big sheet of paper, I urge them.

Don't let these lovely words slip away.

Belle's (re) making of herself

Blue. We say blue for sadness, don't we? But when I wrote my sad signature I just wrote it very slowly instead cos I had no blue colour to help me, says Belle.

Yes, but I use grey for sadness. Not blue. Grey is moody. Depression, Amy responds.

If I was a work of art, says Belle, I'd be a tapestry.

Would you have made it? I ask her.

Yes, I'd have made myself.

Belle has already discussed the remaking of herself – the struggle to be recognised as dyslexic, as a student, as a mature student, as a not-wife – in her earlier conversations with me. Belle has spoken about how she has re-identified herself through ascertaining dyslexia and through separating from her former partner. Belle is remaking both her dyslexia and her marital status. She forms the habit of feeling stupid/being his wife; she breaks the habits of feeling stupid/being his wife; she becomes something else through this. McRuer (2006) in discussing the cult of normalcy talks about the non-identity of certain dominant metanarratives, for instance 'Able bodiedness ... still largely masquerades as a non-identity, as the natural order of things.' (2006, p. 1).

This 'compulsory abled-bodiedness...produces disability' and 'is thoroughly interwoven with the system of compulsory heterosexuality that produces queerness' (McRuer, 2006, p. 3). McRuer writes that Judith Butler's own 'queer theories of gender performativity could be reinscribed within disability studies' (2006, p. 9). McRuer sees dialogue between Butler's critique of heteronormativity and the academy's critique of academic writing and composition. Theories plug into one another. In problematising feeling stupid/being a wife, Belle is questioning the 'natural' order of things. Questioning this natural order of things lets us see how normalcy is naturalised then turned into a cult and becomes fetishised. One in fact is contingent upon the other.

McRuer talks also about the 'cult of ability' (2006, p. 4). Here in the workshop Belle writes with confidence and skill about her daughter, about her son, about her love of colour and texture and her wish to be able to draw well. She contributes to poems that emerge spontaneously from the group and offers constructive criticism and well-structured arguments to the range of topics that arise. However, when we discuss academic writing, she says

When my tutors mark my essays, I feel like I'm being judged. Academic writing is about being judged. This [the workshop] is different, it's a comfortable setting and it's not being marked. Dissertation writing is about right and wrong. Here there's no right or wrong.

This theme of the power held by assessed and marked academic writing is discussed in detail in the next chapter. In the extract above, Belle situates academic writing as a 'hierarchical body' and, in doing so, seems to touch on the idea of stratification in writing. Academic writing ties her to the 'hierarchical bodies' discussed at the start of this chapter (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1) and to duress, whereas her own writing in the workshop – *a comfortable setting* – with no right and wrong, signals no duress.

Belle breaks down binaries of right and wrong here, she finds a space in this room to reject, to rise above the traditional demarcations between academic writing and "free" writing whilst at the same time acknowledging their power and positioning. The whole group then go on to discuss how in formal writing (writing which is to be marked and assessed, or even writing which might be seen by those in "writing authority") they often write a simpler word than the word they want so as not to spell it wrongly. However, when I ask if they are doing this now in the workshop, they say no it's ok to spell how you want here, but in dissertation writing they would definitely either look up the spelling or not use the word at all.

Van Rensburg writes of the master-apprentice paradigm which he argues can be used to interpret many of the tutor student relationships played out in higher

education (2006, p. 2). He offers instead the idea of the Writing Academy as a possibility for the creation and utilisation of new spaces. The Writing Academy is a project he initiated, but the broader concept is of a space where meaning can be made and remade:

The role of the academy is not for students to reproduce knowledge but to create new knowledge and participate in doing that. It is not enough for institutions to give students access to the academy and to socialise them into the dominant practices. Students have to work through the different voices in a written text and explore which voices to own; students have to problematize the transparency of language and they have to open up <talk back> spaces (Van Rensburg, 2006, p. 2).

One of the aims of this workshop was to do just this, to make this space, to show this space was viable and could exist, simply by placing six people and their objects and part of their writing lives in it, it becomes a 'talk back' space. 'Human bodies are subjugated by turning them into objects of knowledge' (Foucault 1995 p. 28). Van Rensburg asks us to reject this discourse of surveillance (2006) and instead we are put in mind of a different philosophy:

A writing of the people, not the experts, which must engage substantive multiplicities and not allow itself to be over-coded into formal unities, binaries which synthesise into totalities, and so on. To write [or to live] is to weave' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

Belle is examining a label cut from inside a jumper and which has found its way into the writing prompts box. She struggles to decipher the tiny print. On her paper, she's written:

Trilobal nylon- label.

What is it? What colour I wonder. Nylon- fake, synthetic. Does it roll like a bal(l)? down the hall, thru the puddles, stops at the boy's feet, ball rolling. Ball of nothing.

LIM is glue in Danish



Figure 3: Writing Intervention One

Desire: Making words work

The word association part of the workshop arrives. The word association poem emerges like this: we've been talking about the qualities and properties of materials. Hattie holds a piece of shiny transparent pink paper. From this we go on to briefly mention the film *Mean Girls* which features a group of students called the "plastics" (a reference to their shallow friendship codes). Each person proffers a word, spontaneously, with me calling out in excitement halfway through: It's word association; we're making a poem!

Here it is:

Shimmery water
Water. Tropical
Flamingo. Pink

Pink. Car
Wheel. Flintstones
Pebbles. Beach
Water. Puddle
Wellies. Kids
Scary. Film
Actors. Celebrities
Fragility.
Plastic

The shimmery nature plasticity synthetic nature Yeah? Tom says.

Yeah Hattie replies

Look how words work, I offer.

Tom is still repeating and reading the words in wonderment and finishes off with *That's so weird.*

Deterritorialising dissertation writing

Belle's ex told her she couldn't spell and would never be able to go to university. Here is duress. It's palpable. She is folding and refolding a piece of stiff, metallic paper and the sound is like a crackle of electricity. Later, when we interact with materials, touching, tasting and smelling them, Belle says she always recognised and sorted laundry by the smell of her children, her partner, smells that somehow remained in the essence of the washed fabric and spoke to her. I spray some aftershave on to the collages that are starting to fill up with signatures, words that were spoken out loud and have been written down, marks, scratches, glued up sweet wrappers, feathers and doodles.

I got this sample out of a glossy magazine.

What does it smell like? I ask.

Tom: *It smells goood. Cherry.*

Me: Who'd wear it? What sort of person?

Tom: *Whoever reads the magazine? Someone who loves a bit of gossip.*

Me: I take them home and give them to my son 'cos he -

Tom: *-smells!*

Raucous laughter. Suddenly my son is in the room with us and he's blushing a bit but also laughing and I'm reminded of all the relationships we have to each other; of all the people we are in one. We are not bordered by time and space, our loved ones, our past and future can slip in and out of this place. We can make immediate connections between any point of the rhizome; we can break out of linear time and prescribed identities. We can be mother and son and teacher and friend and willing participant in research. Tom wears a silver pendant his mother gave him. He never takes it off.

Belle says she doesn't know what ideas the smell triggered off really, but nonetheless she wrote about it, a short piece that links sound and colour and texture together.

I say if we have a dissertation it's often full of stuff we can't name and don't understand but we have to deal with. It'd be interesting to define your dissertation materially or to declare what you'd like to do with it.

Hattie responds enthusiastically *Yeah really fuck it up*

Tom: *Yeah, yeah, tear it and shred it.*

Hattie: *Yes! With an electric shedder!*

But Amy says she *likes her dissertation and would treat it well. She would, she says, mark it and give it 100% and a gold star. And be proud of it.*

On her paper she has drawn her dissertation and a gold star. She has drawn her desire.

Then they select a writing prompt from the basket of labels, train tickets, scraps of newspaper, till receipts etcetera and this sets off the next round of writing.

Hattie: *That perfume smell reminds me of someone I know, it's like...*

Evocative, Chloe suggests

I ask her if the people it sums up are in the room now?

Yes, it's my friend Suze and I've got a glass of wine already in my hand we're drinking together.

'Because I can never tell a whole story, I tell fragments' (Triggs et al, 2014, p. 31).

Hattie's fragment is enough to bring warmth to this space. We take a round of colour photos to mark the moment.

This section that deals with the participants' conversation is part of the deterritorialisation of dyslexia. In the room with us are our loved ones, our other people, our memories and our sensory experiences. In my Thesis Roadmap I wrote:

Deterritorialisation rejects the verticality of structuralist thought but retains an emphasis on the "real' productive effects of flows and interruptions" (Woodward and Jones, 2005, p. 236).

In this institutional space my son, Hattie's friend, the scent of perfume, the weight and tug of writing, all produce the participants' wonderful word poems, their words that work so well.

Deterritorialising education: 'You're in education and you're being educated'

So, are you allowed to have an opinion when you write? I ask them. With this interjection I am guiding, pushing, encouraging reflection in a very gentle way. I am making a 'cut' in 'spacetimemattering' (Barad, 2007, p. 234).

I don't think so. You have to write what they want, someone replies.

Belle: I think it's to do with you age. You question more at my age; you don't take it all for granted.

Me: Is that right? Do you agree?

Emma: More or less I think young people are less used to going against the grain. When you're older you might realise there's less consequences to going against the grain but when you're younger you might perceive there are more consequences.

Hattie: You don't want to look like you're failing. It's about what people think. Like me I've gone through education; I've not had a year out. You're always geared up to express yourself, but you're also always geared up to consider what other people think of you. You're in education but you're being educated. That's what I mean.

Belle: I talk to the tutors.

I ask Tom if he thinks talking to the tutors is an age thing?

No not at all, I don't see tutors like different people. I just treat them as if they were, you know, like normal people.

Amy: I see them as more experienced because they've been in, like, the real world and I haven't, kind of thing, not had to fend for myself kind of thing, and they have.

Pause

Me: They might be really messy and scared people too. I don't mean specifically David and Clara [their tutors] I just mean you're all away from home and here and doing your thing and working and studying and being adults. I don't know, it's interesting, cos you only need to put someone in a slightly different setting or give them a different, like, set of life events or even just a situation and they're, like, completely different. And you might think well how can that be right you're still the same person but now you're presented quite differently? Like when you wrote your signatures and you presented yourself in different ways when I said scared or happy but still, you're still Tom, Amy, all of you...

There's more silence after this, and on the tape there's a rustle of sweet papers then a murmur of voices which I can't pick out but which all sound so strangely comforting on re-playing. I remember them musing on this question of age versus authority and thinking that whatever they think now they might not think in twenty years' time and that in a way it didn't matter because all thoughts are connected. Deterritorialisation allows for the dis-embedding of social relations (Giddens, 1990). And, as also previously stated, 'territorialization is the ordering of those bodies in "assemblages," that is to say, an emergent unity joining together heterogeneous bodies in a "consistency"' (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1).

This speaks into the heart of the practices of assessment as a performative technology which the conversation here is in some way 'deterritorialising'. David

and Clara are part of the performative technology, but they will shift in shape and importance and affect over time. They will not remain the same. They become part of the story, part of the conversation about being in education and being educated. They are up for discussion – something many students find it impossible to achieve in relation to those who hold the sway over assessment.

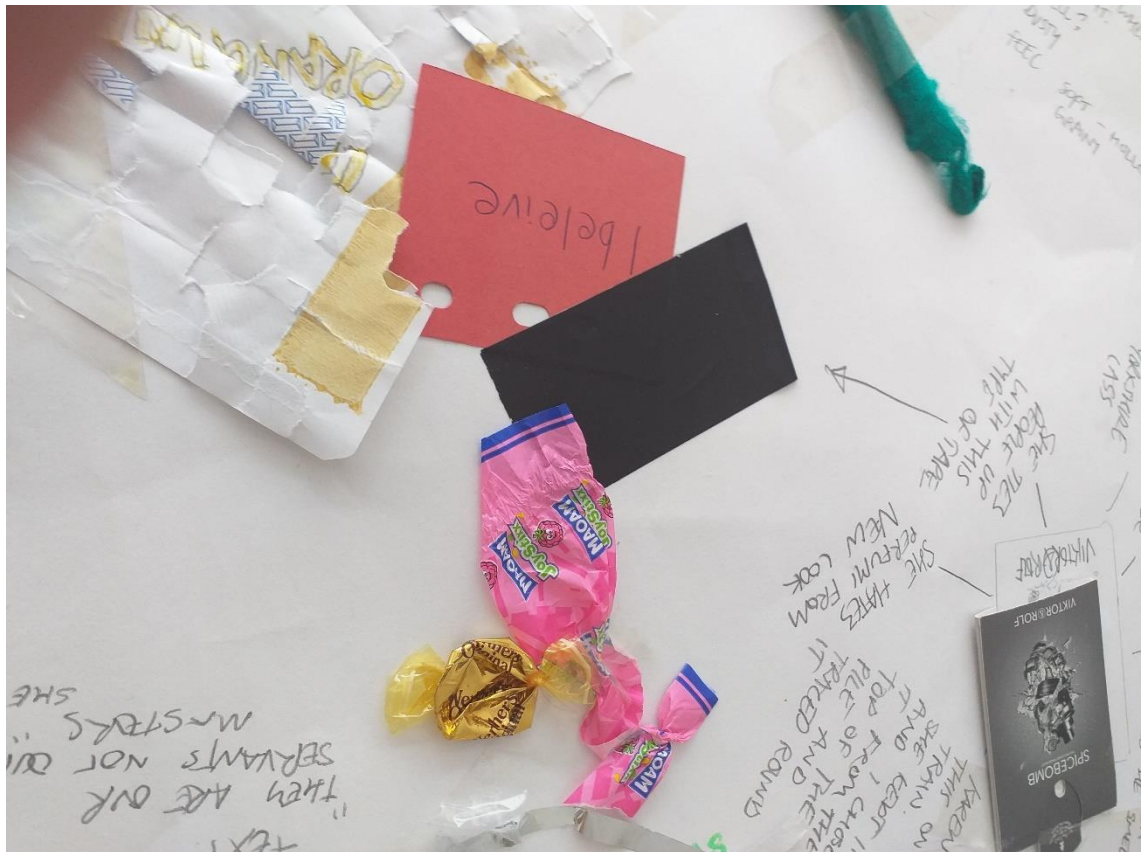


Figure 4: Writing Intervention One

Emma has spoken of negotiating both temporality and the notion of the grain, the wood that is smooth is one direction only; rough and scratchy otherwise.

What's wrong with rough and scratchy?

Do we desire to smooth all our corners, varnish away all our edges?

But I too am writing this research and being assessed
But that's easy for me to say, someone who often desires rough and scratchy and
does not see it as duress.

It's maybe harder for them because they are 'in education, being educated' as one of them has already described it, and going against the grain is harder, less rewarding?

Deleuze and Guattari offer a detailed and complex "open system" which is extraordinarily rich and complex. A useful way into it is to follow the concepts of coding, stratification and territorialization. They are related in the following manner. Coding is the process of ordering matter as it is drawn into a body; by contrast, stratification is the process of creating hierarchal bodies, while territorialization is the ordering of those bodies in "assemblages," that is to say, an emergent unity joining together heterogeneous bodies in a "consistency" (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1).

This notion of institutional hierarchies is picked up and developed much more fully in Chapter Six: Power and/as Performativity.

Where is the desire, where is the duress?

I heard desire in Emma's belief that as we age we grow in confidence; I heard some duress in Amy's assertion that perhaps she hadn't lived enough yet to really claim her own voice. I felt duress in Amy's belief that age and experience of the "real" world, the working world, validated belief systems.

...the social process of disabling arrived with industrialisation and with the set of practices and discourses that are linked to late-eighteenth and nineteenth century notions of nationality, race, gender, criminality, sexual orientation etc. (Davis, 2013, p. 24).

David and Clara are respected because their knowledge is socially accepted; they are educators but these students around the table (and suddenly they *become* students because they are discussing their tutors) are *in education*.

Our conversation about David and Clara questions the habits of conferring infallibility and all-seeing-ness on our educators.

What is knowledge?
Is it a tree or is it a rhizome?
Is it a mark and a grade or is it a bolt of lightning?
Can it be both?
Does it exist within the institution or without?
And how can writing ever reveal absolute clarity when language is
socially produced?

Language is currency. It is artistic and economic and cultural and political capital. It is based on socio-psychological theories of how people understand people. Using language effectively takes us from place to place, opening up doors and asking questions of power. It is not a frozen artefact – it is rich and malleable and changes according to context and speaker.

Where is the deterritorialisation? It is in the audacity of discussing David and Clara as people who occupy many spaces and roles. Not as lecturers and tutors fixed in a hierarchy of educational power and control, but fallible and malleable and flexible and various – they might be wrong, they might be compromised, they might be uncertain. And they might be powerful and they might be distant and they might be enigmatic. But they operate on planes of intensity and we can look at them in this space as ‘productive connections between immanently arrayed material systems without reference to an external governing source’ (Smith and Protevi, 2018, p. 1). We aren’t tied to the territories of roles and structures.

Deterritorialising shame

Then Belle tells us that once her daughter said the phrase *I thunk the therefore I am* for I think therefore I am and she and her partner turned it into a joke and laughed at Descartes. At Descartes. Not at her daughter.

Who is here in the room now?

Belle's daughter has put her head round the door. Descartes called by for a brief exchange but left early, finding himself not a revered philosopher after all but instead a figure of fun, laughed at by Belle and her family. Well, he should have got down from his tree of knowledge and taken a paddle in the mulch with the rest of us. Maybe he will now. Hattie's friend Suze is here, smelling of underperforming perfume. And Emma has conjured up her tutors for us, not as infallible gods but as flawed, and therefore much more interesting, human beings.

Stoler (2016) describes duress as endurance and points out its eruptive qualities. It emerges from history as a sore but also points us to the eternal resilience of the word, its 'capacity to hold out and last, especially in its activated verb from to endure, as a countermand to duress and its damaging and disabling qualities' (Stoler, 2016, p. 7). The capacity of these people to endure their flaws, their embarrassment, their anxieties around educational hierarchies, resonates in their humour and their continued re-enactment – and therefore repositioning – of these narratives.

Belle and her daughter know that language gets us out of trouble, and sometimes it can get us into trouble. It reflects and also shapes class, culture, gender, and race. It reflects and shapes art and is in turn reflected and shaped by art. It is itself an art, a craft, a skill, a knack. I heard the possibility of duress, of shaming, or ridicule, in Belle's daughter's mispronunciation, and I heard laughter, and the desire to break old cycles – *my ex said I was stupid* – in Belle's enjoyment of that lovely word *thunk*. Duress did not win out. In the relationship between parent and child, past and present, oppression and liberation, the desire to enjoy, to feel pleasure, to revel in language in all its glory, won out.

And there is shame. Deleuze (1977/1997) discusses shame, asking a question which resonates with me more than I care to admit. He says 'A small problem which interests me very much: why are certain 'disturbances' more susceptible to shame, or even dependent on shame, than others' (Deleuze, 1977/1997, p. 1).

Why might writing as error, as mistake, exist as "shameful things"?

Deleuze is trying to work out a philosophical relationship with Foucault but also is reprising a friendship that spans their most fruitful intellectual and emotional lives. Both Foucault and Deleuze offer 'forces of resistance' (Deleuze, 1977/1997, p.1). The body and the mind can offer these forces.

Even if we are shamed to the point of violent red faced-ness by our "mistakes" in written English, in language manipulation, we might still offer that red faced-ness as a form of opposition, as a hard-faced returned stare saying no I will not be othered.

And if we can find a place in our minds to take a line of flight from this shame and make it not invisible but less visible, utilitarian, a resistance to rather than a capitulation into, if we can entangle with others and make out of our "mistakes" something else rich and powerful. Well – that's a start – do you think?

Dyslexia has been associated with shame in the accounts of the participants; sometimes clearly stated and sometimes inferred (Belle's ex said she was *stupid*, Hattie was made self-conscious about making up her face but forgetting her homework, Tom considered himself a reject at one point, a *little shit*). Perhaps we can deterritorialise shame, perhaps we can break the habits of shame (Smith and Protevi, 2018).

Deterritorialising storytelling

We are at the completing sentences stage of the workshop now, using words I've provided. Here I am - a researcher who is making cuts, urging lines of flight that cut across a single structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

These sentence starters or sentence triggers act on one level as prompts – here are some words from what a conventional sentence might look like; add to them and you will have some recognisable writing – but also, they are lines of flight and jumping off points. The sentence starters include:

I heard

What else

This seems to be

Usually I

For example, Amy – who was given *I heard* to start hers off with – has written

I heard a cat.
Has Polly
stolen a cat
again?

Amy tells us a story that reduces us to helpless laughter. It's a funny story but it's the way Amy tells it too, a sort of slightly ironic, softly spoken, understated delivery. Polly has a habit of "finding" "stray" cats that turn out to be local cats with homes who have succumbed to Polly's offers of strategically placed bowls of tuna fish. Polly desires a cat, but their landlord says No.

Look at my paper', says Amy, it's splodged all over. It's covered in splodges.

Amy has told us a story and we have all laughed. Amy is centre stage, not shrinking, not drowning but waving. And her observation on her paper is not about the

structure or semantics of her writing but about the fulsome and weirdly blob-like shapes that she has been splodging onto its surface with a paint brush and a piece of sponge.



Figure 5: Writing Intervention One

Plaiting as a form of deterritorialisation and entanglement

I introduced plaiting into the workshop because I see it as a very simple effective mode of collaboration and corporeal cooperation. Some people can plait, and others can't or haven't. It can be done individually or as a team exercise. I have talked to the participants about my undiagnosed dyspraxia before and I think I would be able to plait on my own but not in a group, because I can't sequence other people's movements. Plaiting links me to Haraway's string figuring too: string figures are 'a theoretical trope, a way to think-with a host of companions in sympoetic threading, felting, tangling, tracking and sorting' (Haraway, 2016, p. 31). These previous conversations point to the impact of narrative time on my research – the subjects have been opened up in other conversations and allow certain things to be said that don't require explanation. We have a history here; this is not new

ground, and it is evident that the earth is stirred by this conversation, worms turn 'in their wormy pile'; we make compost (Haraway, 2016, p. 32).

I say to Hattie You're making a kind of growth on your paper. It's growing out of the page. Foil and cloth and string.

We embark on the task of plaiting wool and pipe cleaners to explore the combining of materials and bodies, conversation and actions. Belle says plaiting is *about feeling, it's tactile, and it's relaxing*.

I ask what is a plait, what does it signify?

Hattie says *It's about interlocking things*.

I think it's about childhood, says Amy.

Belle agrees. *I used to plait all my hair; it made me really happy*.

I ask them what it was like plaiting together.

Amy had to help me, I say.

Amy says, so kindly, that *without me it wouldn't have worked*

Belle says, *I was thinking about how doing it in threes meant you were all there to help*.

I ask if a plait is a sort of collaboration and would we ever consider writing collaboratively? Would we plait our words together?

Tom responds first, with enthusiasm *Yes we'd get dead confused, but we'd still try it*.

Hattie says *I think it'd be great you'd be able to say things out loud then get the other person to write things down for you or bounce things off them, it'd be really helpful.*

We are all so taken with this idea. We write our responses to plaiting on one sheet of paper. No one cares about spelling. Somehow, cheese strings have become entangled.

Here it is:

Team 1

Clever Amy took over.

Karen lost her way.

She held it tight.

Interlocking.

Amy did the role/roll? of 3 people.

Team 2

Confusing.

Where we plaiting?

'It's a feeling'

'its felt'

Childhood

Curly hair

Undone plait enjoy getting lost.

Turn right and see what happens

Pyscogeography

road to nowhere
Plait wearing- childhood
Take a gamble
Cheese string
Green thing
What does it sound like? Staticky when I rub it
Smell? Dusty.
Feel- soft. Hollow. Grainy.
Plating
Childhood
Team
Cogs
Working as 1
But been 4.

This is my version of deterritorialisation, and my attempt to make meaning out of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy (as they ask us to do in *A Thousand Plateaus*). As we plait and write and draw and stick and cut we are working in twos and threes and as a six and singly, we are swapping and crossing over and twisting and winding, we are filling up space so it becomes unrecognisable from our own space and just becomes the space occupied by material and objects.

Sometimes our bodies are starved for the feel of perception's integrating functions that entangle us in the world, especially when we are bombarded with understandings of perception and the making of knowledge as uncomplicated one-to-one correspondences, rather than necessarily aesthetic experience (Triggs et al, 2014, p. 27).

I say let's do a collaboration then. I've never done this before, but I had it down as a possible for today. Let's do exquisite corpse

I explain how this works – you write a line then fold the paper over, so the next person can't see, and you write the last word of your sentence and the next person has to start their sentence off with that word. And so on. Round the table. I say I'll start off but that I might get confused folding the paper over and Emma asks me if I think I'm dyspraxic and I say, well I've always struggled with this kind of thing.

Belle asks what it is, and I say It's not like dyslexia; for me, it's not about reading writing or spelling

and Belle says *well nor is my dyslexia! Everyone thinks it is but I'm a good speller. It's about organising ideas.*

Belle is clear that "her" dyslexia has certain characteristics and parameters not always shared by others. She resists the normalising and territorialising of dyslexia. At the start of this study I observed that many of the students I worked with defied the generalised, medicalised and even socialised portrayals of dyslexia.

I say there are similarities, it is about organisation for me.

I stress the "for me". And then we discuss with the others how we can walk out of a door and go totally the wrong way even if we only went out or came in that same way a few minutes ago.

Then Tom asks about the rules of exquisite corpse again and while I repeat them Belle tells the others about her psychogeography essay she did in year 2 and tells us how *going on a derive*, on lovely, purpose-free, embodied tours around the liminal edges of the city made her

Quite relaxed about getting lost and I want to get lost now and that's really good.

Belle is no longer afraid of being lost.

If you're not going anywhere specific how can you be lost?

Do you feel like that with your writing, I ask them? Would you like to get lost with your writing because you've all taken a lot of risks today?

Amy says I just let my brain like spill out on to the page then I sort it all out after. I vomit on the page.

Vomit on the page! Hattie repeats this with delight and writes it in big letters on the paper.

Amy is in fact deterritorialising writing. This is one of my workshop aims. They're discussing the nature and look of their papers as they add random words and stick things down. They talk about the randomness of words and how they just occur to us "without reason". They discuss random writing and compare it with music and the randomness of musical notes and then they do their collaborative story telling/paper folding. Then I read it out:

Exquisite corpse

There was once an old geezer called Donald. He stubbed his toe
on a cardboard box.

Boxes kept on falling down around me and I didn't know what
to do.

Do something entertaining like stealing cats

Cats was the tramp that sat on the corner of Hyde Park pub
drinking lambrini

Lambrini was poured into the glasses, light turned down with
soft music playing.

Playing outside it was snowing and betty had her hand knitted
sox pulled up tight
Tights that are green remind me of people dressed up like jolly
elves in crappy tv shows.

Everyone laughs, and marvels at the random logic of this cautionary tale.

We're running out of time, I say. Let's do our Bauman quote on identity. I'll read it out. You've all heard it before. You know I love this quote.

This is a striation, a reference to previous conversations I've had with the participants, a standing joke that whenever anyone approaches me for a quick fix of philosophy I drag out this quote because if nothing else it seems identity is one thing we all share an interest in. I read the quote aloud. Here it is again:

The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow, to solidify the liquid, to give form to the formless. We struggle to deny, or at least cover up, the awesome fluidity just beneath the thin wrapping of the form; we try to avert our eyes from sights which they cannot take in (Bauman, 2000, p. 86).

I ask them all to take their quote and select bits from it, any bits, a line, a word or two, the whole thing, and weave it into a sentence about their own practice. I want them to engage this theory with that practice and feel like they can do that and not be overawed by the language or cowed or silenced but just to take it as they had the rest of this workshop with so much warmth and enjoyment and creativity. There's silence for a while as they write. Here is a tableaux of what they then read aloud:

Ongoing search to flow the eyes across my work and develop a form with the flow of a liquid.

My work is about the struggle of having a short-term memory and how memories solidify and turn to liquid in my brain.

I struggle to understand the meaning of someone else's words but can understand the fluidity of my own. This is because they are part of my identity and flow like liquid from my mind.

I struggle very much with drawing and feel my identity as an artist is dependent on it.

Slowdown the flow: to take in my surroundings is something I aim to do in my practice.

Slow down the flow of thoughts in my brain and take time to do things.

Give form to the formless: the 'irrelevant' trying to make the mundane interesting.

We try to avert our eyes from sights which they cannot take in: I try to slow down the flow and take in my surroundings, to take photos of things people see as irrelevant and give form to the formless.

Tom says, when you were reading it I completely zoned out I was just listening to your voice I remember you said you said to give form to the formless, so I just wrote that down 'form to the formless'. It's quite nice.

And blank canvas. I wrote that. It was perfect. I want to put it in my dissertation.

Me: 'Don't submit it [your dissertation]. Just put that quote in!

Hattie: *Yeah, it's so good!*

Everyone laughs. We dare him. Dare him to leap around one of the 'innumerable loopholes' of the 'innumerable authorities' that Foucault speaks about in *Discipline and Punish*, to leap over these fences of power and put in his four-word dissertation (1995 p. 79).

I say Who says we can't read and write and make? Who says? Thank you.

Smiles and silence. Everyone seems to agree we've reached a suitable ending. I don't think it's just me that feels satisfied. Relieved. Happy.

Hattie says *You know, this all makes complete sense now - why you were giving us writing prompts and all that. I wasn't sure before but now - it makes complete sense.*

I say I'm not giving you them because I don't think you can do it. It's not a gift that I can give, because they [words] don't belong to me – they're all of ours. We all share them. Like we shared the plaiting. I give prompts because people give us prompts, people share stuff in life, and all we're doing is sharing stuff that belongs to everybody.

This is the ethics of me in the research in action. I do not own language, it's not mine to bestow. I am here, making an ethical choice. I tell them I'll be in touch for feedback. I'm aware I've loved it but

It's what it was for you that's really important.

Tom takes a handful of sweets, a last look round the room and wishes everyone a merry Christmas. Before he goes out the door he scans the table again:

Nice, he says, smiling.

Thank you all; thank you, I repeat.

Reflections on writing intervention one and on recent experiences of academic writing

Tom talks about the inanimate prompts I used, both the written words and the objects on the table.

For me it was all about realising that writing is easier than I thought. The tasks you gave us kind of took the pressure off the usual formal writing that can get very stressful.

Below – anonymously – a participant calls out the tyranny of the blank page and suggests there has been a reflective element to the process, an awareness of this thing we call the brain that is us, yet is also mysterious to us:

The workshop was alot of fun. You managed to create a safe environment which didnt feel too much pressure or like I was being tested or judged on what i write down even if what i write didnt make 'sense'. And the name task at the start was a good starting exersize as i feel it freed up the blank paper, as a blank page is often the hardest thing to tackle. It was all about figuring out how the brain works or what triggers can bring out in the mind, experimenting and observing.

Hattie, voice-recorded conversation:

I used to get help at school in a smaller group and the woman was always a nice person who you could talk to, informally, and didn't feel scared of and that bit reminded me of school. I think cos I was with Tom and we laugh a lot it felt a bit like school. It felt a bit like we were like laughing at each other and messing about and, but it was different, and a lot more grown up than school. I got sort of sweets, that taste in your mouth a bit like school but the reactions you got from people were very different and much more comfortable.

Hattie summons up possible deterritorialisation in her interwoven account of what school can be (you're a little kid with no power and sometimes there are people there who you don't feel at ease talking to or being with); what school could be subverted to (laughing, messing about, eating sweets but running the risk of getting scolded); and what school became (different, comfortable, exciting, happy, open.) I ask her if, eventually, did she think that the ideas of the workshop could have any effect at all on her academic writing?

Yes, because if you've not written for a long time and you then have to do these long academic essays you need a setting where you can feel freer with words and aren't being judged and can play around with words.

Titchkosky (2011) uses 'the politics of knowledge to define disability not as an object of knowledge' (Hamraie, 2013, p. 1 but as 'a space of interpretive encounter' (Titchkosky, 2011, p. 56). Discussing dyslexia with Hattie feels very much like the latter: here we are at the point I made in the aims section of this chapter – that I wanted to explore the potential for deterritorialising dyslexia, writing and disability. Suddenly we are discussing how useful connecting words are. They are no longer words Hattie may not be able to spell or words that may trip her up but words that she has some control over, some relationship with.

Emma gives this response as her feedback. It's like a poem:

*I was excited to get words down but I've not felt like that for a long time
It was a bit of fun but... but also where words can take us
It gives you a better understanding of your writing
It's really useful in terms of dissertation writing but it really freed it up a
bit
Doing something just for the task not for the purpose of learning just for
the experience
...Reading my writing out loud really helps
The feel of the object
...It was the feel in your hand
This writing is different
The 2 are linked*

The material is the discursive is the material.

Amy returns us to Foucault's questions around how we counter educational control.

Physical objects

Theory

Although not glaringly obvious

They all Fitted

Writing doesn't have to be boring - a dull drag to get the grade. Academic writing doesn't have to be standard and boring and making it more interesting for everyone but perhaps especially people that tend to struggle with it more. Having no boundaries... but in a good way.

So, we are all entangled in Amy's equation. She opens a door to those of us fortunate enough not to be described as replete with 'super health and wholeness that are, by dint of their power, in danger of rejecting those who fail to reach such standards,' (Goodley, 2014, p. 26). She points out how our ableist knowledges are 'naturalised, neutralised and universalised' (Goodley, 2014, p. 23). Amy's duress: her dull, boring drag to get the grade – and her desire – having no boundaries, but

in a good way, her line of flight that allows her to cut across a single structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), these all point to the possibilities of the radical pedagogy of the post-humanist assemblage.

Conclusion

The key take homes from this chapter are:

- The act of writing itself can deterritorialise dyslexia;
- The re-thinking of space, and how we occupy it, can open up possibilities for creativity and break down traditional hierarchies;
- Writing and creativity can and do exist in a discourse;
- The material and the discursive, Bennett’s vibrant matter (2010a), the language of objects and senses can be rhizomically entangled with notions of disability and writing to create new ontologies and epistemologies.

Chapter Five set out to explore possibilities for the deterritorialisation of dyslexia through the experiences of the writing intervention and subsequent conversations. In the workshop we get to see what one of the participants calls the

linking [of] creative methods/processes to academic processes.

This is not often seen in the field of writing in the arts, and even less so in an institutional setting where work is assessed and graded. Too often there is a divide, often impassable, between creative processes and academic processes. Each area is territorialised. And this helps to form people’s views of themselves as able or disabled, as “good” or “bad” writers. Van Rensburg asks ‘what processes are involved in the negotiation of an own identity within an academic discourse community?’ (2006, p.3). By asking this question he asserts that academic discourse exists firmly within its own community – academic writing is for academic purposes only, and is governed by its own codes and hierarchies.

The materiality of objects, the tactility of things, the bodily engagement with stuff that this workshop electrifies reminds me of Haraway's plea for the 'politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims' – these claims, she argues, are 'claims on people's lives'. This is 'the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity'. (Haraway, 1988, p. 575). These are the bodies that hold pipe cleaners, sniff perfume, lick sweets, fold paper, smear paint. Providing space to reflect on the workshop allows the events to have an ongoing life, an ongoing narrative. And gives a space for the participants' voices to be heard after the event itself. This is a key contribution to knowledge of the workshop.

Bennett (2010a) draws our attention to the vitality of things, of materials and objects, to the 'curious ability of inanimate things to act, to produce effects both dramatic and subtle' (p. 6). Creative processes are often positioned very differently to those that we classify as academic or formal writing, and both are rarely allowed to defy their territorialised boundaries. Hattie says, though, that if you're going to do academic writing:

You need a setting where you can feel freer with words and aren't being judged and can play around with words.

And the workshop allows this. It deterritorialises the institutional space and reimagines it as a playground for tactile interaction, discourse and sensory engagement. Returning to Foucault's 'closure in a protected space' (1995, p. 141) the Life Drawing room (a protected space) and what takes place in it make manifest the extending of writing's domain in order to allow in messiness, play, humour and questioning. Foucault (1995) discusses institutional power, particularly 'the art of distributions'; using school as one of his examples. He talks about the 'disciplinary machinery' that partitions space in a cellular fashion and how 'rank begins to define the distribution of individuals in educational space (Foucault, 1995, p. 141).

Hattie's identification of the structures of traditional educational settings (schoolteacher at head of class, rows of children, a regular and routinised mode of operation, no sweets allowed, the threat of not being heard or of being reprimanded) entangles with the mood and responses and behaviour of the workshop and in doing so provides an alternative view to deterritorialise education and discipline.

There is a 'relationship between the material and the discursive' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 127). The workshop has made 'a performative practice', a 'reinterpretation of other materials' and this has led to the deterritorialisation of both writing and dyslexia. Participants have written lovely poetic language and have discussed, upbraided and problematised their dyslexia. They have questioned academic writing and have engaged with a philosophical quote by Bauman in meaningful ways. Through deterritorialisation, power is both acknowledged as existing, and also questioned. If Tom sees tutors as regular people to be debated with then Amy may revisit her perception that they know so much more than her just because they're older. If Hattie can enjoy writing and Belle can revel in word play then may also consider their fear of being judged for their "mistakes".

One of the main contributions to knowledge of this workshop is its success in demonstrating the stealing of the usual garments of writing within the art institution and the situating of writing elsewhere. It allows dyslexia to be problematised by disempowering spelling and grammar and by making the tactile and human/nonhuman engagement with materials important. The codes of writing and dyslexia are 'stolen' and 'separated and isolated from' their 'original milieu or territory, liberated from [their] original function and then resituated in a new territory' (Bryant, 2011). In the Life Drawing room, the codes of academic writing are deterritorialised and realised differently.

Chapter Six: Power and/as Performativity

Writing Intervention Two: 25 February 2016, 2-4pm, University Gallery

Participants: Hattie, Tom, Emma, Amy, Chloe, Belle

Introduction

This chapter explores the second writing intervention, a writing workshop that took place in the University gallery, and the data that emanated from it, as well as the participants' retrospective evaluations of the event. Here I set out the structure of the chapter and its key take home points. Firstly, I set the scene, then I explore the theorists I think with. Next, I give you the workshop and its discourse and outcomes. Interwoven here are observations on theory (thinking with theory) and data (thinking with data), so I may comment on the lines of a poem/piece of student writing or on an exchange. Then I present reflections on the workshop and finally I conclude, mentioning the contributions to knowledge formed in this chapter. In post-humanist terms, this presents the reader with moments, eruptions, from the workshop itself, and an analysis of power, performativity and performance. There is a discussion of the interaction between language, power and performativity.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore power and performativity, drawing upon both the data that emanated from the second gallery-based writing workshop, and on the participants' retrospective evaluations of this intervention. The space used was the University gallery, a formal, white cube with a designated institutional purpose. This aligns with my aim, which was to look more closely at the students' formal writing lives, and specifically at the writing they produced that was assessed and marked, and to explore their relationships to this writing.

I asked each participant to bring along an object and a piece of artwork of their own that they had some connection to. I did this to explore materiality, tactility and the making-ness of art in the space, and to set it alongside, and entangle it with, thinking about the processes of formal writing. This is what students are expected to do on their undergraduate degrees – to write about art and their relationship to art, to show knowledge and understanding of objects.

As part of my post-humanist approach of ‘thinking with theory’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. vii) and putting theory to work (see Introduction), I take up McRuer’s (2004) analysis of [written] composition as a way of ordering that is inevitably connected to power and normalcy. Composition is a word that McRuer problematises: ‘Composition is a cultural practice that would seem to be inescapably – even inevitably – connected to order’ (McRuer, 2004, p. 48). As I use it here, composition refers to the academic writing that the participants have to produce as part of the requirements of their degree courses, and more widely to the act of writing within the art institution.

I use the gallery space (the White Cube) as a material space to explore power and performativity. This is the term used most notably by O’Doherty (1986) to describe the 20th century construction of the art gallery as a cultural space ‘saturated with ideology... [that] can be analyzed spatially and politically through artistic practices’ (Sheikh, 2009). I have mentioned how power and performativity have surfaced in discourse around the construction of dyslexia in the institution, and in the University gallery space these two seem to emerge almost from the start.

Gaining permission to “use” the gallery (as opposed to simply stand in it and look) was the first exercise of power. I approached the gallery manager, Jenna, and explained our plan and she agreed. Tables and chairs were moved in, so we could perform our workshop. Jenna provided the conduit to allow us into this space and, as gallery manager, permitted the use of the space for purposes other than displaying or performing art. This “permission” is important. Just as Ahmed (2006, p. 546) recognises the political use of tables, particularly the philosopher’s table

which 'allows the philosopher to do his work' undisturbed by family in a private space, in the same way I recognise the backdrop to the gallery space, the physical lifting and shifting done by Jenna and the gallery assistants to get these objects into this space. Also important in *this particular* white cube is the work done by non-human materialities. Here, Taylor's (2016) work is helpful in speaking of the need to take account of the more-and-other-than-human, the floors, tables, chairs, surfaces, objects and agential things that are silent collaborators in our thinking and making and being.

The analysis of the workshop sees power and performativity as key elements present both in the space and amongst the participants. I consider them in relation to the material-discursive construction – the ideology – of the white cube. McEvelley (1986) also says that the resemblance of the gallery to religious buildings also echoes the sense of a hierarchy of knowing and being. There is always a higher presence that we are aware of in the gallery. We modify our behaviour, we do not eat or drink or talk loudly or swear or make love or touch the exhibits. We are in the presence of something that constrains us. He argues that this presence is not simply celestial but a representation of the dominant culture.

So, the gallery becomes habitus, a place where power and all its rituals are exercised, both upon those who don't know and upon those who do, but may still feel uneasy about this knowing. We are surrounded subtly by high art and a certain type of language, education and behaviour that does the bidding of the cultural elite and it is hard to repel this as viewers in the gallery. In fact, we could argue it becomes the cultural norm. And regarding cultural norms, in this gallery setting I found that suddenly I felt like a supervisor at the centre in a way I had not done in the first workshop, nor in my interviews and tutorials with the participants at other times in our well-established relationships. It echoes Foucault's (1995) description of the supervisor in the centre. Disability studies, as discussed, has done much to counter the hegemony of normalcy. Derby writes, 'Since its inception disability studies had circumvented the ivory tower's barricades to establish an accessible hall' (2012, p. 1).

However, although the hall may appear a kinder space to move in than the viewing tower – or the white cube – simply altering the space we are in does not dispel institutional hierarchies. And space itself can promote institutional hierarchies. O’Doherty refers to the gallery space in particular as an evenly lighted cell (1986, p. 13); Bourdieu (1989, p. 16) suggests we might not even recognise these spaces for the ideological cells they sometimes are: ‘The means one has to use to construct social space and to exhibit its structure risk concealing the results they enable one to reach.’

Foucault (1995) writes of space as a container for power, vision and visibility. He uses the plague to symbolise the separation of the clean and unclean into spaces and the settling of power around these spaces. He writes of the manipulation of space, and in his analysis of the panopticon he discusses the need to constantly put space, and the occupants of space, under surveillance. Containing the epidemic involves the division, separation, and manipulation of space. Foucault offers a perspective on the operation of power, which helps me understand my sense of unease once seated at the gallery tables with the participants. His vision of power makes us think differently about what power actually looks like. Power, he argues, is not hierarchical, power is not a unitary concept, nor is it an absolute.

Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the inter-play of non-egalitarian and mobile relations (Foucault, 1995, p. 94).

Gupta (2014) concurs: ‘This is not to deny that power struggles might be unequal but to suggest that it [power] is not exercised in a single, downward vector’ (p. 50). Power is exercised less through the hierarchical tree of knowledge model we are led to believe in and in fact equates more to a Deleuzian vision of entangled, networked power dispersed through the network of relationships which make up society and are based in discourse. Bristow (1997) asserts in fact that power can come from below and whilst it does not come only from below, this word below reminds us of Haraway’s mulching, of her wormy, root-like, underground network

of interdependency, which we might apply to the acting out, the performing, of power.

This is important. In the first intervention, workshop one in the Life Drawing room, power seemed to me at least to be less present, less on the surface.

Power was perhaps aligned to the relative freedom of the space, the playfulness of the exercises, the sensual elements of touch and taste and the references made to a subverted classroom where pupils were not pupils but rather Alices in Wonderland, running wisely amok throughout their painted landscape.

On performativity

Butler explores the ways in which social reality is not pre-ordained but is continually created as an illusion 'through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social signs' (1990, p. 270).

Language is performative, and a word that arises around the notion of formal academic writing is composition. McRuer discusses composition as a way of ordering that is inevitably connected to power and normalcy. Composition is a word that McRuer problematises: 'Composition is a cultural practice that would seem to be inescapably – even inevitably – connected to order' (Burke 1950, cited in McRuer, 2004, p. 48). McRuer then asks:

How then do we acknowledge and affirm the experiences we draw from multiple academic and non-academic communities where composition (in all senses of the word) is clearly an unruly, disorderly, cultural practice? Can composition theory work against the simplistic formulation of that which is proper, orderly and harmonious? (McRuer, 2004, p. 9).

McRuer asks whether we can release ourselves from the tyranny of the notion of composition as finished product, amongst which he numbers 'the highly routinized, "well-made" essay; the sonnet sequence; the supposedly secure masculine or

heterosexual identity' (2004, p. 49). If we could, he proposes, what might be the results? Participants certainly recognise the power and performativity of the formal academic essay – its cultural value to them, its specific requirements.

If, true to our experiences in and out of the classroom, we continually attempted to reconceive composing as that which produced agitation. In what ways might agitation be productive? (McRuer, 2004, p. 49).

Might a post-humanist construction of dyslexia, and the writing of students be part of this agitation?

A word on performance

Performativity is not performance. But performance is also used in this writing as a word that means to open up the idea of making visual expression manifest. We might perform in many ways as human beings, both to an external audience and internally to ourselves. We act out, make physical/aural/oral our thoughts and desires. However, O'Sullivan writes about art as a cultural object, a thing made to be played out in a gallery, a museum, a domestic interior or on stage, on screen, in a concert hall.

This approach is implied in any theory of art, for the theory is made only of objects, in order to determine them. But the work is not merely a cultural object, although it is that too. It harbours within it an excess, a rapture, a potential of associations that overflows all the determinations of its reception and production (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 125).

This excess, this rapture is important. It is part of performance, part of power. It resurfaces in the next chapter (the third intervention, workshop three) when the workshop moves outdoors. It is also present in this gallery space, particularly in the second half of the workshop where the power I manage/facilitate (in a Foucauldian sense) flows between me and the participants more freely, making them agents in the unfolding of events. Performance might be part of a rigid and formalised observance of behaviour but equally, and thrillingly, it can be a method of

resistance. 'Performance privileges threshold-crossing, shape-shifting and boundary-violating figures' (Conquergood, 1995, p. 137). When participants perform in this workshop it is then that they are seizing back power, asserting their confident selves, and most often when they are spontaneous, stripping themselves of formality, speaking from the moment.

What follows now is the main data section of this chapter. It will contain thinking with theory, thinking with data and eruptive asides.

Picking your words: power and performative language

The participants were asked to engage and entangle with some language here that is often perceived as belonging to academia. There were words used in this intervention that are part of the lexicon of art criticism and artistic analysis; words the participants might expect to encounter in their everyday journey in education, in lectures, seminars, texts and pertaining to art objects, materials and spaces of display and encounter. Here they are in full:

*Social visible tactile runny viscous visceral gouache gesso mainstream loveable
critical criticise crit academic time prime exposure expose momentarily vivid
private sweet*

First, the entrance into the gallery space. Tom shouts *hello*, Hattie is complaining because she has a cold. Emma has found herself a place at the table and looks very composed. Amy is quietly helping to sort out the sheets of paper I've brought with me and lays them out, so everyone has a piece in front of them. Chloe and Belle come in together. I catch the end of their conversation on my recording

I'm thinking of getting a record player again, all that vinyl, it's so real,
says Belle.

I'm alerted to my phone which is on vibrate. My daughter is in the middle of a crisis at her university and so she is very much with me in this space today.

After they seat themselves, I say I asked you all to bring an object and a piece of art. Thanks for that. And I've brought us some words. Words connected with writing and practice, and words that are descriptive and feel sort of rich and tactile. Now, can you choose a word? Pick a word; any word. Maybe two. Shall we pick two?

As in workshop one, I am presenting a choice to the participants. This time it isn't paint and feathers and charcoal but words. But it is me who chose the words. I operate the power. They are the language of art and the language of tactility and sensuality, with one or two like social, private and mainstream thrown in almost as provocations.

They pick them up, put them down, smile, and frown. There is not the enthusiasm I'd hoped for. I feel a bit wrong footed.

Will, as McEvilley (1986) suggests, the context of the gallery devour
the objects, the words?

Don't be put off if you don't know its meaning; think of it not as a stranger but a word you haven't met yet!' I say optimistically.

Hattie tries to read the word viscous but can't.

Do you know what it means do you have a definition? Has anyone not met it before? It means sticky, tacky, you put your hand on it, it goes slurrck.

A discussion then ensues about gesso: 'plaster of Paris or gypsum prepared with glue for use in painting or making bas-reliefs' (Merriam-Webster, 2018, p.1) and there's

a moment when we realise that the explanation of the word that Belle is providing is wrong.

That's glue you're describing, not gesso, says Tom.

He explains what gesso is and the conversation takes off between the six of them.

Belle seems entirely happy to be part of it. *I guess I didn't know,* she says.

I didn't know either, says Amy, *I'm a photographer not a painter.*

It reminds me of a poem I studied years ago, *Naming of Parts* by Henry Reed.

Soldiers on basic training are told what each part of a gun is called and what it does.

The soldier narrating is standing in a field amongst flowers and sunlight:

And this you can see is the bolt. The purpose of this
Is to open the breech, as you see. We can slide it
Rapidly backwards and forwards: we call this
Easing the spring. And rapidly backwards and forwards
The early bees are assaulting and fumbling the flowers:
They call it easing the Spring
(Reed, 1946, cited in Smith, 2016, p. 76).

The counterpoint between the mechanistic horror of the object and the beauty of the day is the main tension of the poem. But also, this is redolent of Austin's (1962) Speech Act theory; the word 'spring' becomes the action to spring, to pull the spring back and release it and fire it at the enemy. The word 'fire' in this context means to ready aim and fire, to act upon the enemy, to commit an act that cannot be undone. Here in the gallery the naming of parts is quite different; in fact, the tension is lifted as the six of them discuss their understanding of and access to subject specific vocabulary – the parts that make up their art. Tom and Hattie seem to be confident in their explanations. And Chloe describes gesso, its qualities and use, in such a way that it becomes an object of interest, of engagement for us all.

Is it thick or runny? How do you know when it's dry?

As Belle distinguishes it from glue she seems untroubled by *not getting it right* because now it an object of comparison. Amy says she doesn't expect to know these terms as she isn't a painter but it's an interesting sounding material.

There is a contrast, a cut, between the uncertainty I perceived around the selecting of the words I'd provided, and the free-flowing discussion around gesso that takes off between the participants. And it has nothing to do with me. I am relieved to sit back and listen to them. I am not comfortable playing power broker, and, from a purely pragmatic point of view, I feel sure that more productive outcomes will arise from this workshop if participants can direct it and feel relaxed with their word play. And then we spring back, like the soldier's bolt, into the space I have created with unfamiliar words and instructions that don't seem to be really moving us forward:

How many words can you make out of your two words? I ask.

Shall we write them down; are we sticking them down? they ask me, each sat separately in front of their paper, ruminating over their words. I jolly things along.

Let's see how many words we can make; let's get you writing and thinking about your word.

There are discussions about the words, but they include statements such as:

from Chloe *I'm making up words! These words don't exist!*

and from Tom *It's so hard and A! I've got A!*

Emma asks, giggling *is cous a word? Like couscous but just one cous?*

Everyone laughs, and I say I'm happily telling you to do this; I can't believe how hard it actually is!

Belle then says, *if I put a slang word does it mean I'm stupid?* And then under her breath *I can't think Danish right now.*

'Performativity is the power of language to effect change in the world: language does not simply describe the world but may instead (or also) function as a form of social action' (Cavanaugh, 2015, p.1). I would argue that in this space, as she utters it, *stupid* is a performative word. In her opening interview, Belle told us that her ex had described her as *stupid*. I believe that the utterance of this word is a powerful reminder of that time, that emotion, that identity. Stupid – a powerful, active, malicious, word acts upon her. It takes away her ability to *think in Danish* – a skill she seems often to underestimate and one that allows her a dual attack on the slipperiness of language.

Performative language includes:

Speech acts such as promising, swearing, betting, and performing a marriage ceremony. For instance, the utterance, "I do" – said under the right circumstances by the right speakers with the right intentions – transforms the utterer from being unmarried to being married (Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 1).

Or, in Belle's case it might include going from being OK with not knowing gesso (in her subject area why should she?) to being stupid again. I say don't worry about the spelling but that's daft; they are restricted by spelling rules, by sequencing difficulties, by spoken/orthographic inconsistencies, these are writers with dyslexia. I am not able, and they are not able, to override that in this situation.

Is peal p e a or p e e?

It's both

Oooh hmmm

They do start coming after a while, am I right? I ask, hopefully.

Belle says (polite yet unconvinced) *yeeees you just have to start thinking though* and the others just collapse into laughter.

However we choose to write we are involved in intentional behaviour, and intentional behaviour is a site of oral responsibility. Further, because power relationships are always being played out in personal and civic arenas, there is no way to avoid deploying one's power if one chooses to act/write in this world (Richardson, 1990, p. 27).

I began my research with Richardson's ideas of writing, and although I've been on a journey since then I am always mindful of her assertion that power play is unavoidable. I am in an arena with people I have asked to be a part of this research and I am aware that I am anxious not to act arrogantly in this setting. Suggesting that just thinking hard about language will make it appear is ignoring the issues faced by students with dyslexia who might not make automatic memory/lexical connections and who may struggle with the sequencing of letters in order. I'm so aware that Tom is berating himself, however gently, for only being able to identify one and two letter words, that Belle thinks she might be thought of as stupid, that no one really seems to believe that if you keep thinking it will just suddenly happen.

I realise that this exercise I've selected is precisely what I didn't want it to be, a reminder that spelling rules are spelling rules and that if you have difficulties placing letters in sequential order, and making graphemes into phonemes, then playing this sort of word game is likely to result in something less than productive. Thinking on my feet I decide to put them in pairs.

Why do I do this? To give them each other, to lift the pressure and power off me. I didn't want to be doing this.

What's the point if it's not productive? It's just repeating the same tired patterns of failure they've experienced before.

Quickly I move into the next strata, bearing in mind Goodley's entreaty to pedagogues that they should

Engage alongside learners who weave away, performing multiplicities of self, resisting over coding and the subtle forms of segregation brought about by assessment. Alongside the learner, the rhizomatic pedagogue cares for the ever changing, ever moving, ever becoming learner (Goodley, 2007, p. 324).

And decide that two heads (or multiple heads) are going to be better than one...

The power of multiple heads: co-mingling and co-making

Let's join up in pairs and put our words together. So, you've got four words now and they say two heads are better than one, I say.

Immediately they start chattering about the words, what they mean, which new ones they can make, how you spell it, what to do if you've too many vowels, lots of conversation and chatter and when I listen back to the recording and it's full of words for a while.

Coil. Coli? Soil? Sole/ s o l e. Ale? Ale? Ooh very good.

Everyone is now talking.

Tom says to me *I can't think of any others.*

How about starting with G, I suggest, as he has gouache.

He looks at me and frowns. *Go* he hazards. Then *Goose. The goose that laid the golden egg.*

I suddenly realise that Tom probably has difficulties with initial sounds as the others are way chattier and coming up with lots of words.

Hattie says *the words I made were average four letters. The words I was given were longer than that!*

Tom says *They've got loads. I got A!*

I feel bad. If I hadn't set such an ill thought out task initially...

Is dyslexia only real to the extent that it is performed?

Central to Butler's theories of performativity is the idea of repetition – gender is made, not born, and that it is made, or constructed, through the repetitive performance of it (Butler, 1990). Butler's theory does not accept stable and coherent identities. And statements about dyslexia, writing lives, our sense of who we are, are both citational and performative. One must be inducted into power to cite these labels – an educational psychologist must pronounce dyslexia; a wedding celebrant must pronounce marriage. And through 'the forcible citation of a norm' we are 'in-dissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment' (Butler, 1993, p. 232).

Critically, Butler (1999) suggests that performativity relates to attributes other than gender, and Cavanaugh states

Performativity, then, is the process of subject formation, which creates that which it purports to describe and occurs through linguistic means, as well as via other social practices (Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 1).

McRuer (2002), influenced by Rich (1980), argues that compulsory able-bodiedness is similar to compulsory heterosexuality, where it is assumed that to be heterosexual is to be normal and anything beyond that is a difference, a distaff to

the sword, thus making the notion of perfect literacy something to be striven for but also 'impossible to achieve' (ASC Queer Theory, 2010, p. 1).

Tom's *they've got loads, I've got A, I can't think of any others*, Hattie's *my words are so short*, Belle's *am I stupid?* (an echo from her ex) and other utterances, put me in mind of the participants' opening interviews. Here they all, in diverse ways, told a narrative of becoming dyslexic, of learning that they were slower than others to read, needed help from parents at the kitchen table, were dissuaded from taking certain A level subjects, had to work twice, three times as hard as their peers. In other words, they spoke of impossibility, of striving and not achieving.

Tom's *they've got loads; I got A* is surely literature, almost Beckettian in its lamentation, and it certainly is world-making. Tom is rarely if ever unhappy, he has told us this before, and he is not crushed here, but he does turn to me and says these words in a lowered voice.

Amy notes that her chosen words were *Quite hard, practical words*.

Yes, they are doing words, your practice words, I say.

I picked this word gesso even though I don't know it. I just liked it. I don't like the word academic. I guess because it has connotations, she says.

Academic I would argue is also a performative word (as well as being a powerful one that's not averse to a bit of a performance itself – academic paper, academic conference, academic language – a confident word with plenty to say for itself). To follow of McRuer's (2002) theory (developed from Butler) that compulsory 'swords' create compulsory 'distaffs', McRuer makes the point that 'these "alternatives" are reminders that there is still a superior 'norm' (ASC Queer Theory, 2010, p.1).

So, Amy struggles with the word academic, which in turn becomes a word that trips her up and makes her fearful.

Performative utterances do not describe but perform the action they designate. Theorists have long asserted that we must attend to what literary language does as much as to what it says... The performative brings to centre stage an active, world-making use of language, which resembles literary language – and helps us to conceive of literature as act or event (Culler, 2013, p. 1).

The idea of literary language as an act or event perfectly mirrors Butler (1990) and McRuer – it reminds us that the act of ‘composition’ – as McRuer (2004, p. 50) describes academic writing – is exactly that, a performative act, an act that makes itself. The notion of the conforming, mastering of language is something Amy seems to recognise, but equally we can see how Amy comes to love her dissertation. We can argue that the word academic does not describe but performs the action it designates. It affects Amy, it approaches her, and she repels it. She will not choose this word, where she has a choice not to. Amy has, however, expressed warm feelings towards her dissertation and given it a metaphorical gold star. The act, the event of writing formally for Amy may not be entirely negative, despite her response to the word academic.

Their pages are filing up, and their pairings are fruitful. Belle (with mainstream and vivid) in a pair, turns her original

me

satin

stream

stain

div

main

bane

mean

into

Wain
Dim
weet
mean
dream
Danish
Street
Sea
Vain
Waste
Mean
Dinner

And here at the bottom of the paper is her Danish, emerging from out of the shadows of the performativity of stupidity:

tre
Tina
naiv
ymer.

Working in pairs, the words visceral and critical are encouraged to produce:

Crit
lace
last
178

vice
vile
it
crate
race
I
Lace
trivial
vital.

Tom co-produced from gouache and academic:

A
ache
go
ace
made
hum
oui
mic
hag
him
acid
age
hug
ham

gum
dig
daim
mug
made
came
mice
medic
deem.

In presenting these poems I am not suggesting that dyslexia is a myth, nor that the issues and difficulties faced by the students I see and countless others are not real. I am asking how we frame these difficulties and issues alongside an automatic assumption of certain types and categories of behaviour. A little when like Foucault's panoptic space, the gallery viewer is also the viewed, seeing themselves act out and perform the business of scrutinising art works in the white cube. Surveillance here is based on a system of permanent visibility and on an assumption of the power and agency of the space itself to hold knowledge and culture (Foucault, 1995).

And does performativity apply to the acting out of power roles in the
University too?

Through this workshop I ask:

Is there in fact a discourse of dyslexia that assumes the normativity of the non-dyslexic population, a population that presumes a level of orthographic competence and reading fluency that is measured and
assessed?

Is there a performativity around dyslexia that explores which expressions of dyslexia are acceptable, and which are not?

As a researcher, as a tutor, as facilitator of writing intervention two, I am employed by the University to perform my role, to see out the event, to seat the participants and guide them through instruction. I am I hope a benign exerciser of power. And in the workshop I felt power move and slip. I am I hope a benign exerciser of performativity too, aware enough of my power to recognise that my 'identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.' (Butler, 1990, p. 25). But it is there, nonetheless. I can feel it. I hear it. I read it in the participants' contributions. Until it changes, until at some point it becomes an eruption.

We're at the end of this part of the workshop and all is well. But there are lessons to be learned:

I think that "coherent identification" has to be cultivated, policed, and enforced; and that the violation of that has to be punished, usually through shame (Butler interviewed in Kotz, 1992, p. 88).

I don't want to overstate the case – we aren't talking shame or public humiliation here. This is a good place; we are good to each other. I know there's power relations going on, much as I try to smooth their edges off and divest them of their sting, and we've touched on some narratives here that recall and recreate times of uncertainty and discomfort with language, but this is essentially a benign situation. However, I am mindful of the issue of shame I discussed in Chapter Five, and it is easy to feel that reddening of the cheeks, the itchy sweat under the arms, that sinking feeling in the stomach. I believe my opening word search activity may have evoked some of that, and I am truly sorry for that. Butler talks of experiences being taken back into the body, making and becoming embodied within our physical selves. Dyslexia too becomes an identity performed, one which the participants are reminded of when they discuss and discourse with me and each other about their former experiences of 'becoming' dyslexic.

Exploring power in performative writing.

Now on the next page just unload whatever words come into your head when you think of your last piece of formal essay writing and the experience of writing it and your feedback. And your mark. Don't tell us your mark; just what you think of it.

Quiet. Breathing. Scratching of pens. Tapping of fingers. Coughing.

It's a sort of therapy! I say, you don't have to read them out unless you want to.

Everyone seems relaxed and says they will.

Daunting disappointing surprised gutted upset interesting
excited enthusiastic knowledge relief stressful lost.

This is Belle's written response. Belle's is perhaps the most complex. We will see in the closing interviews how she narrates this account of her troubling dissertation (her performative writing). She chose to pursue a subject that her dissertation supervisor was dissuading her from doing and through this, she says, she learned so much. Her result though, a high 2:2, was a disappointment to her and for a while seemed to put her back into the no man's land of am I clever or am I stupid. If Belle was struggling with her identity here, I am minded to consider Salih who writes:

Identity is intrinsically political, while construction and deconstruction (note that they are not antithetical) are the necessary—in fact the only—scenes of agency. Subversion must take place from within existing discourse, since that is all there is (Salih, 2002 p. 59).

Belle exercised choice and defied power. She was subversive. And sometimes in our conversations about her final mark, I sensed she felt she was being punished for this.

In writing intervention three, Belle speaks about this in more detail and we continue our conversation around her changing, agential writing identity.

Stressed relief ecstatic terrace beers unclear proud undetailed helpful.

This is Tom's written response. It doesn't matter for the purposes of this study, but it may be worth noting anyway that not a word of this is misspelt. And every word tells its story. He got a high mark for his dissertation. Who would have thought – when he was making one-letter words in word search? Tom for instance is full of wonder at his result, but also inspired and made confident by it. Tom repeats his dyslexia differently. He does what Salih says when she refers to gender, which

Does not happen once and for all when we are born, but is a sequence of repeated acts that harden into the appearance of something that's been there all along (Salih, 2002, p. 58).

Tom is able to re-do dyslexia, he is able to seize language and work with it, and make it work for him. Butler, as previously stated, also applies these ideas, and to subjects other than gender. So, the discourse around dyslexia too can be repeated differently. And we are not, Butler argues, bound to be trapped within this discourse. In his opening interview Tom spoke of how he finally came to understand the part language could play in expressing his artistic ideas and desires and how theory, once demystified, became a support to his ideas not a hindrance. In his evaluation of his dissertation mark, I feel he is vindicated.

Happy effort annoying logical understandable satisfaction proud long relief interesting exciting tiring proofing over glad thoughtful.

This is Amy's written response. She is *contented and happy* with her high 2:1. In workshop one she spoke fondly of her dissertation, saying she would like to give it a tick and a gold star and tell it well done. Foucault challenges 'the doctrine of internalization,' the theory that subjects are formed by internalising disciplinary structures. Salih rejects the commonly accepted distinction between surface and depth, the Cartesian dualism between body and soul' (2002, p. 7). In this response to her mark, in workshop two, I feel there is a real sense of Amy erasing the tattoo of language difficulty from her skin.

This notion of inscription and corporeality puts me in mind of the lasering of dyslexia into the surface of these students, and of the process by which they have overthrown this tyranny and written both confidently and well: 'resistance to normativity is not purely negative or reactive or destructive; it is also positive and dynamic and creative' (Halperin, 1995, p. 67).

The power of material objects

What did you bring as your object? I ask them.

Tom has brought a necklace, a present from his mum from Mexico. Emma has a piece of fabric from an old dress.

Hattie has *a silver turtle, made from Sheffield steel, bought from her hometown with money left to me by my grandma*. Amy has *a red ceramic elephant, a birthday gift*.

Chloe has brought old sepia photographs of long dead families, and Belle a small metal tin. *A tin full of things*.

Do you want to swap your objects with your partner? I ask.

At this point I am about to stand up and help Hattie move her painting closer to her writing partner. Suddenly she says, clear as a bell:

If you could not move mine please.

Immediately I stop, and she moves it herself, carefully. I am bowled over by her confidence, her almost lioness-like defending of her work from sticky untutored hands. This reclaiming of power feels like a turning point to me and I absolutely welcome it. I offer them some writing prompts to get them going:

At the beginning I

The idea is

It feels like

The smell reminds me of

If we were

All words are

I can hear

If I could

What we do

It/they feel(s) like

Taste and touch

Look at

Pick up, put down

What does it mean

Write in, up, around, behind

I confirm they can use their phones for spelling, synonyms, anything they want. I suggest they move around the gallery if they want, sit on the floor, sit in pairs. I explain I want to move away from chairs and tables, which feel a bit school teacherly and formal.

It's so quiet, I comment once they are spread out around the gallery. Belle sits on the floor to write. After ten minutes or so, she announces

I'm uncomfortable. I've got hard boots on.

And the floor's not a very yielding surface, I reply.

Belle makes the words active; she makes them bring about the end of that part of the workshop. Salih, on Butler, writes that the body is not silent (2002). And the body will react, will rebel, will feel pain and discomfort. However, we are not bound to be trapped in these positions, in these discourses.

McRuer writes about composition as a fetishised form of fixed and formalised outcome, process ignored or decried and only product made important. Composition, he argues, creates docile bodies in the institution, 'the student dutifully mastering marketable skills and producing clear, orderly, efficient prose' (2004, p. 49). He urges, instead, 'alternative, and multiple, corporealities' (2004, p. 50):

I contend that recentring our attention on the composing bodies in our classrooms can inaugurate a productive process of "decomposition" – that is, a process that provides an ongoing critique of both the corporate processes into which we, as students and teachers of composition, are interpellated and the concomitant disciplinary compulsion to produce only disembodied, efficient writers (McRuer, 2004, p. 50).

Belle refuses to be made uncomfortable.

When we return to the table, Tom is the first to offer to read out. His "composition" is droll and perfectly formed.

This is about the shiny red elephant's first visit to an art exhibition and it's from his point of view.

Why is it quiet, why is everything so white, who is this dirty man carrying me, he can't stop flirting with the red fire extinguisher?

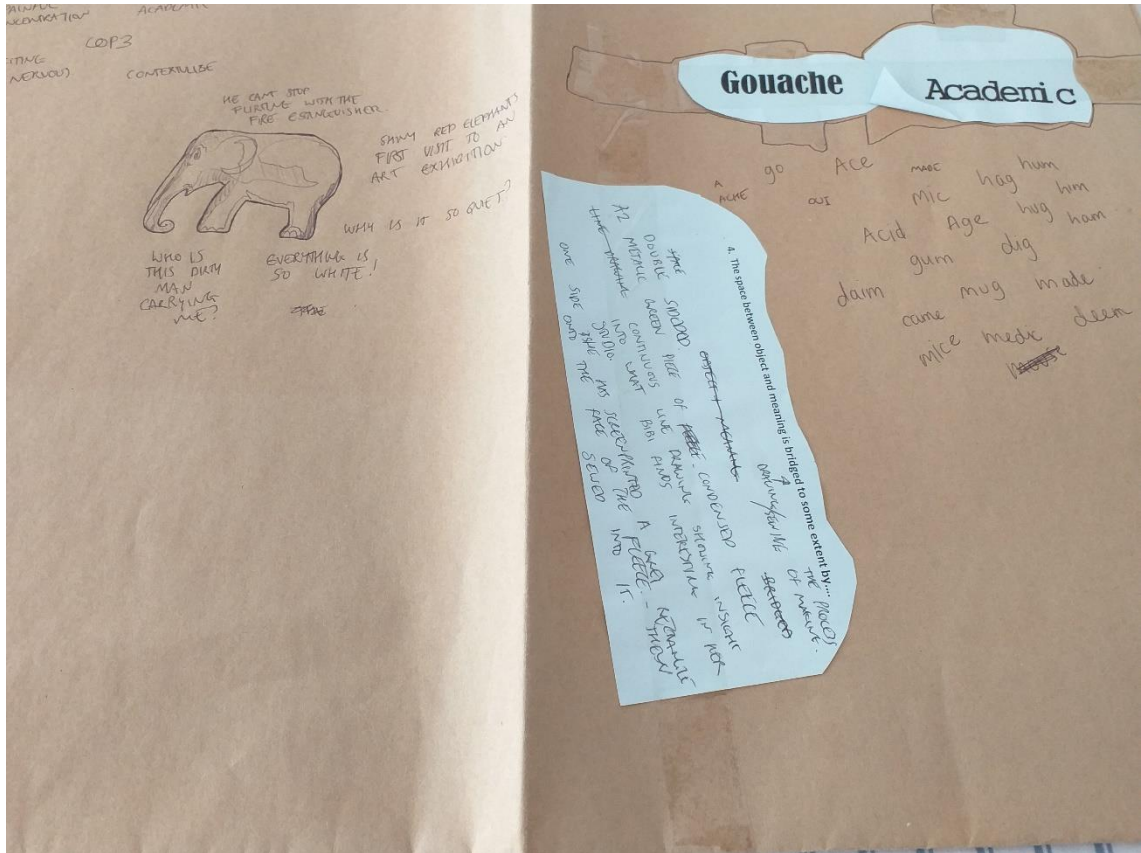


Figure 1: Writing Intervention Two

Everyone laughs. Tom has done that thing he does, of capturing the moment and writing it. Whilst he was composing the elephant tale he was sat by the gallery fire extinguisher with Amy and her red ceramic elephant.

The white cube, O'Doherty says, encourages a 'convention of silence' (1986, p. 49). Tom however undercuts the power of the gallery space; his performance of language calls on the bizarre, the quaint, the comic. It elevates simplicity and holds verbosity up to a cold clear light. It makes us all laugh and restores to the group some of the ease and confidence of the earlier workshop, of our usual encounters.

Amy describes Tom's pendant, using a dual narrative – one re-telling the story Tom told us about his mum's trip to Mexico and the other writing about Tom himself:

Tom loves his pendant. It has a yellow blob of paint on because at the moment he's painting everything in yellow.

Hattie has written about the people in the photos.

The writing on the back is beautiful and polished and may suggest they are educated the letters are beautifully formed. They cost 30p. That's very sad and not a lot for all the sentimental value

Chloe, writing about Belle's tin, explains how she wrote a long list of words then assembled them into a poem.

I wrote about how the past is always the present and you can't get beyond it because in this case it's in objects that are always physically there.

We discuss how we can be in past and present at same time. We are touching on the richness of spontaneous conversation now. The formality is falling away, and on the recording, their voices are entangling, jostling, laughing, and raising points about memory and identity, referring in shorthand to events and incidents they share.

Emma says *I wrote just a little bit and drew a picture of a turtle. I wrote*

need to get back to sheff

precious history reflecting past heritage

home safe held past engraved.

It's a poem I say

Yes, she asserts.

What do you think of your reflections on someone's objects? I ask.

Chloe says, *I liked starting with words then letting them make sentences.*

Chloe has agency here, power – she is letting language do things with lists of words, allowing the forming of sentences – letting go of control is also a form of power. She has the power to confirm creativity and agency among language, written language.

Hattie says *it was interesting for me because I usually do analytical writing but this time I started with a list of words too and that was different. There're way more descriptive words in my art writing; way more than in a letter or email.*

This leads on to a discussion about whether this sort of creative, responsive, descriptive writing is different to other writing. Is it different to the formal writing about art they have to do for essays?

Belle says that in her object response writing she *started philosophising but then I stopped and panicked a bit because this was a different sort of writing.*

Different to what?

To just, you know, just writing stuff. It was about someone's object. I was going to read it out.

Do you feel like that? Does it make you panic?

Chloe says, *it depends if it's being graded or not because I always struggle to know if what I've written is actually good in a grading sense.*

Hattie says *Yeh I once asked David [tutor] about the language of feedback and learning outcomes [that we are assessed by] and he said 'we just use that to keep the plebs out'.*

We are back to grades again, and to the subtle and not so subtle markers put down by power to exclude and to contain:

'Within the orthodoxies of education research in higher education generally there has been a sustained focus upon lines of the former kind... of rigid segmentarity, to do perhaps with divisions of class, gender, ethnicity, ability which neglect the molecular, the happenstance, the fleeting revelation (Gale, 2016, p. 243).

I would argue that Hattie's repetition of David's quote is, at this juncture, a fleeting revelation in itself. She can at once see both the irony in David's remarks but also the very real effect these words might have, if not on his students (they might guess he is joking, as a working-class artist himself in a Northern university) but that these words have most power when they are hidden – not delivered as spoken sounds but, rather, placed as invisible barriers to education, speech, opportunity; to knowing and being:

People require access to a general feeling of legitimate participation, meaningfulness, belonging. A classroom, a policy or a professor can be perceived through questions of access (Titchkosky, 2011, p. 7).

Art should be accessible, Hattie asserts, it's like if you go to a gallery especially in London and read the text panels - it's way more specific than in a regional gallery.

Institutional hierarchies are promoted by space (Foucault 1995; Titchkosky 2011; Derby 2012). The same might be said of a gallery. Hattie finds text panels a barrier to participation.

Emma too is clear *I never read text panels. If I like it [the exhibit] I like it if I don't, I don't.*

Emma seems to be referring here to the rigid correlations set up between text and image, the part that language can play in defining and categorising and hierarchising what we see and how we see it. Emma rejects this fiercely. She will not take part in this performance. McEvilley (1986) argues that the gallery removes all cues and clues from the exhibits within except those that point to it as “Art”. There is no context other than the gallery. Frames act as a “grid”, separating each piece from the next. Boxes, text panels and display cases do the same. McEvilley sees the white cube as a tool of social control, an ideology dispenser. He believes it promotes a notion of ‘pure form’ and the ‘transcendentality of time’ (1986, p. 12). We see later in the data section of this chapter how participants refer to the clues and clues of the gallery – the text panels explain/obfuscate – in thoughtful and analytical ways. They question the orthodoxy of contextual knowledge.

Talking about your art: taking ownership of and performing language

I tell them I’m going to fetch them some sweets and crisps to sustain them and that I’ll be back in five minutes. I left the voice recorder on when I went out. It didn’t occur to me to stop it.

Tom (I hear all this when I listen back to it) says *It’s still on. It’s quite fun.*

We’re her test subjects. It’s going to be on there. What we say.

They laugh. Emma starts talking about the red elephant. She and Tom go on to discuss their paintings together. I pick up references to gin, parties, student accommodation and how long paint takes to dry (this is part of Hattie’s practice – the drenching of canvas in paint, the slow drying, the layering of more colour). Belle asks Tom how he mixes colour. Then I return with snacks and confess my mistake. The next section of the recording is filled with the fluent sounds of engaged conversations and the rustling of crisp packets.

Look this gesso Tom says, turning to his painting.

Hattie's voice is next: *The elevated section, submerging the viewer. The interaction the colours have amongst themselves. On its own, the colour is different. Colours communicate create dialogue. I'm interested in process. Seven base layers. 27 gesso layers. Long drying time. Constantly fighting between the side of the wood and the frame that it's sitting on. Hopefully they'll glow.*

Tom suggest she *put them together*. There's a pause in the voices while she does this then *take them apart* he says.

Another pause.

They're brighter alone, he declares.

I am struck by this sentence, this eruption. Tom is so confident in his assertion, but I don't read it only as that, but also as a stepping back and a moment of clarity for him, and a nod towards the loneliness of striking out in your own as an artist, as a graduate, as a writer with dyslexia, as a young adult. Hattie and Tom have been friends and allies (sometimes artistic rivals) right the way through their studies. There is an acknowledgment of something coming to an end here.

Tom tells us he uses an ice cream scoop to put paint on the canvas with.

Neapolitan ice cream, Belle murmurs thoughtfully.

Emma bursts into speech. *Mine's gestural*, she explains and goes on to compares the shape, colour, composition, relationships between the larger shapes and paintings and the smaller ones, the little ones.

They don't belong together; they aren't a development. I always do a little one first. I only do shapes I like. It's what I really want. I scope it out with masking tape beforehand.

Then suddenly without warning she tears some of the masking tape off one of the paintings, revealing a clean, shockingly bare white space. Everyone gasps. What power. What a performance. What control!

In this workshop, in this space, the presence of power was more deeply felt. Why? How are categories produced and represented?

Somehow the formality of the gallery space and the subject matter of the workshop, made me aware of the shifting power relations exercised between and amongst myself, the space, the participants, the notions of formal writing and the discussion of the participants' own artwork. All these factors contributed to a tangle of mobile and electric power interactions. From amongst them came moments of illumination and disruption which this chapter seeks to record and make sense of. Emma's tearing away is one of the most breath-taking.

Chloe talks about her *really gross latex plaster cast installation*, which, she says,

contrasts how sophisticated and polite we are socially but how we have a really animalistic side to us. I like psychoanalysis. I'm interested in that tension between intrigue and revulsion. Why we want to touch it.

Someone describes it as *flesh like* and suggests colour would make it *less repulsive*.

Belle says *I can't draw. So, I use photography and tracing. My screen-printing went wrong. I use a lot of went wrong. Stitching - I used the opposite side. I like the reverse side.*

What is it? Tom asks of her stitched piece

It's the back of the studio, she replies

Oh, I thought it was a landscape, Tom re-joins. *Yeh, I like the lines.*

Belle draws something out of the went wrongs, she has an ambiguous relationship with them. When they are delivered by her ex (*he wouldn't support me, he said I was stupid*) or her tutor (*they thought I'd taken on more than I could handle*) she pores over them and delves into them, but she sees them also as opportunities and as moments of pure subversion: *I got on the course. I used the opposite side. I like the reverse side.*

Power was being disturbed, normalcy was questioned, time was inverted and diverted, language was playfully employed and even duress was questioned. If power wasn't simply reversed it was almost certainly destabilised, and the active participation of the workshop members was tangible in the room.

I photograph texture. Stitching for me is drawing in one continuous line, Belle responds.

You've spoken so beautifully, I say, and now you're going to write beautifully, but not about your own work. About each other's.

I make a cut; I exercise power.

They are welcoming of this and organise themselves into pairs. I can sit back and let it happen. Power shifts. It is active. Now it feels so much better to be playing a supporting role. I don't want to be the supervisor at the centre (Foucault, 1995).

Describing Bentham's panopticon, Foucault writes in the centre, a tower...All that is needed is to place a supervisor in the central (1995, p. 205).

We are not in a tower during workshop two – unless it is an ivory tower (although the ivory tower as a concept is indeed entangled with gender, race and class) – but we are in a space divided for purpose, a white walled gallery reminiscent of the white cube. O’Doherty’s (1986) notion of the white cube (the modern art gallery) as a place of ideology is, in many ways, not dissimilar to the notion of the panopticon. He regards it as similar in construction and purpose to religious buildings. In his introduction to O’Doherty’s *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, McEvelley states:

It has been the special genius of our century to investigate things in relation to their context, to come to see the context as formative on the thing, and finally to see the context as a thing itself (McEvelley, 1986, p. 7).

I was curious to see how intervening in these contexts during the second writing intervention could be both disruptive and productive. McEvelley regards the modern gallery as a highly controlled space that affects both the art within and the viewers themselves. Context he says eventually ‘devours the object, becoming it’ (1986, p. 7). O’Doherty likens the modern white cube gallery to a church or to the caves of the ancient pharaohs, sealed off from the real works and real time. It is, he says:

Constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church...The outside world must not come in, so the windows are usually sealed off, walls are painted white, the ceiling becomes the source of light... the art is free... to take on its own life (O’Doherty, 1986, p. 15).

However, McEvelley (1986) is critical of this idea. He believes that by sealing real time out and looking towards posterity, the future, memorialisation, we are really killing art.

Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of ‘period’ (late modern) there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbo-like status; one has to have died already to be there (McEvelley, 1986, p. 7).

Tom asks Hattie if she wants to write about his. They’re talking among themselves.

Tom says *how are you writing it? Oh, you're writing a review of it?*

They are asking each other now, not me, like they were at the beginning.

Have I made something, through my performative language (let's do this, now we'll do that) and then handed it over to them?

Is the power theirs now?

Is this part of the mobile relations of power (Foucault 1995)?

It's all very quiet for a while, peaceful, the light from the window hits the gallery wall, there's a scratching of pens, I really can't explain how calm the space is, how much it feels they are acting as a harmonious entanglement, temporarily engaged. Once inhabited any space can be subverted. My language is performative when I say "you are going to"; it makes the next thing happen. It unfolds the next stage of the journey. It is powerful.

Tom says he wants to see the picture afresh. Belle suggests turning away from it, but Tom says,

I've seen it now I'm going to keep seeing it.

The image is on Tom's retina, in his mind's eye. It is powerfully tattooed, like Foucault's assertion that our self-policing is inscribed. He cannot un-see this image. Instead, he writes about it, with agency, with his own voice.

The space between object and meaning is bridged to some

extent by... drawing/sewing

The process of machine

Double sided

A2 metallic green piece of condensed fleece

Continuous line drawing showing insight
Into what Belle finds interesting in her studio
One side she has screen printed a grey rectangle
Onto the face of the fleece
Then sewed in to it.

I just wrote what came in my head quickly says Belle, then she reads out:

Blobs of splatter a moon landscape of ice cream
Subtle colours in a giant sink
Squareness yet soft shapes. Mountains of white
Brown and greeny blue.
Marbled emotions and random splatters.
Seaside day out on the moon.
'Can we have an ice cream, mum?'
A lake with islands with no people
On it. No people, no reflections. Reflections to the
Childhood. Then reflections lead towards a random
Memory of the dog running along the path
In the woods...a washed-out memory like
The washed-out colours in the square.

That's good; that's really good! Tom says to Belle. They all clap other at the end of the readings. I actually feel a bit tearful.

You're all so brave I say, and they look at me fondly. The ethics of relationality here place me explicitly in this situation, in this moment, and also immerse me

further into my long-term, continuing, elastic relationship to these participants over time. If ethics is about how we should live, then it is in essence about how we might and should live together (Austin, 2008). I am suddenly in Butler's 'scene of address' (Murray, 2007, p. 416) where ethics are embodied and where we 'move away from the self-sufficient, autonomous subject as the outset for ethics, towards an understanding our very being as dependent on the being of others' (Blomberg Tranæus, 2015, p. 1).

This is NOT the 'corporate processes', that

Privilege one kind of body on either side of the desk... the docile body of the contingent, replaceable instructor; on the other the docile body of the student dutifully mastering marketable skills and producing clear, orderly efficient prose (McRuer 2004, p. 49).

Is this writing of theirs McRuer's 'productive agitation'? (2004, p. 49).

Hattie reads:

The piece makes you want to touch it.

Its soft, delicate. Repetitive.

Uneven colouring shows process.

Repulsion contrasts with interest for touch, smell.

Each panel is different. Small/bigger fingers

Animal like/fleshy

Each individual piece is almost precious to that specific panel.

I can imagine its easily breakable

Why aren't the panels all the same size?

Shiny/matt in some places

I have established I don't like the smell of latex.

Amy goes next:

small cute little worn old special tangled
random old new sparkly clanking memories
recollection affect feeling comforting homely protection
hard strong metal delicate subtle pastel faded time private
a way to transport past and memories
it is in a way an afterlife for the past that is gone

Then Chloe:

exciting layers playful temporary
black colours varying line/shape. Is it a line or a shape?
Interact with the space because it stands out against the white
wall gallery background
Glossy against the matte background
Shiny new temporary shapes against the nice matte background
Warm but one cold colour
Light bouncing off the vinyl shapes

I also did short, sharp things, says Emma, and delivers hers with particular confidence:

Even so if the image is still attached to the body as planned, it will morph into a VERY real form especially if the plan is achieved to (photograph) shoot the person in their true form.

Perhaps subverting the meaning from a 2D piece of printed paper to then a transfer tattoo, and finally on to a realistic human figure, will represent the idea of lack of real plant forms in urban spaces.

The idea of a lack of living plants/trees/bushes etc. in urban areas is suffocating and sums up images of pollution and ill health that could contrast with the choice of colour, it could be described as garish and unnatural. But on the other hand could be understood as complementary and harmonious. As matched in nature through the harmonys real plants flowers etc. make among themselves

Everyone claps everyone's performance. It is a performance. Orchestrated initially by me but freely given and exquisite. Remember, this is Emma who hates text panels, who won't engage with other's criticisms, who has memories of school life, writing trauma, inscribed on her. 'The act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene' (Butler 1988, p. 526). But Emma here has altered the scenery and switched the stage set. She is performing a different Emma whose voice resounds off the gallery walls.

Hattie says she liked being in this gallery best. Emma says she preferred the Life Drawing room. She describes the gallery as stuffy. It's interesting they feel at ease enough now to compare, be critical, reflect. On the recording, I have captured Emma saying – it's a bit fuzzy beforehand so am not sure in response to what:

I don't care. I paint to paint. In art history [at school] my teacher ran a quiz "name the artist and painting". If you didn't get five out of five he'd say, "you shouldn't be on this course!" I got two! But I got in.

Chloe is indignant: *that's rubbish. It's just your memory. I haven't been educated in the theory of painting.*

I note Emma's use of the verb "ran"; he ran a quiz. Like a Mafioso boss runs a cartel. Performative language indeed. But Emma defiantly owns her 2 out 5, and she came to university to study art.

Reflections on writing intervention two and on recent experiences of academic writing

When I meet Tom again it is for a tutorial about his next piece of writing, some annotating of two large paintings he has just finished. He expresses enthusiasm about starting this task and has brought me photographs of the finished pieces which we look at together.

I've got a lot to say about these two, they've been keeping me up at night, he says.

I ask him if he has any thoughts about his dissertation mark which he received a week ago. I know he got a high 2:1.

Yeh! I'm really surprised. I was two marks off a first. That's the best writing mark I've ever had

Why were you surprised I ask him?

I've never put that much effort in before.

I'm surprised Tom refers to effort here, it makes me think of him having agency, having power, where his work is concerned. It contrasts so much with his opening interview where he said

English comprehension was hard 'cos of my reading. I became shut off from it.

I also wonder if maybe what we did together helped with his agency, might have made the effort seem as though it was worthwhile because it might actually result in something that works for Tom?

He is willing, able, to work with performative writing, writing that will be graded and assessed, because he wants something from it and feels he is in a position to make this work for him. He has seen 'power's condition of possibility' (Foucault, 1990, p. 92).

The Royal Academy thing, you know. I didn't get in this time. But they liked my statement and my work. And they said yeah, try again. He pauses. It was a good experience you know. I need more practice. It's ok. I'll try again.

This is Tom who said in his opening interview: *The writing and reading, the lectures, were awful. I actually can't remember anything about it. I shut it all out.*

I ask him about the second workshop in the gallery.

The workshop was good fun. I liked responding to objects people had brought in quite creative ways, like telling a story. But responding to others' work was really challenging. I don't know - Belle - and also that piece of work she gave me. I still can't understand how she ended up with that, how she screen-printed on, and my question, the one you gave me to answer, was about the relationship between object and meaning and it was a random object and I didn't see the meaning, so it was hard to write about it.

I hadn't thought of this, I hadn't realised that it might be difficult to attribute meaning where no meaning could be seen, and that Tom would want to be able to describe and understand the process Belle had used in her making and might be frustrated that he couldn't. My lack of awareness of the primacy of process and methods in art processes here puts Tom in a position of knowing more than I do, of seeing the situation differently.

So, you tread carefully, conscious of responding to others' work? I ask him

Yes, he repeats firmly. I didn't know her or what it's about and didn't understand it.

It feels different, Tom saying that he didn't understand Belle's artwork, to when he says he doesn't understand a text we are reading. There is a sense that he might understand, and could understand. The capacity, his interest, his knowledge, is there. When he goes on to tell me what he did say to Belle he is able to offer an alternative – although she hadn't made her meaning clear he was able to offer another way of describing, of articulating:

That sentence, space and meaning - the space between object meaning that was your writing prompt for own work too, I remind him, and you wrote something for that.

Oh yes. The space between object and meaning is bridged to some extent by the process of making. I remember it.

Is this the sentence you would have written when being a little shit at school?

No.

So, what's happened?

I've started to understand my own work by discussing it with you, and other people.

When did it stop feeling like massive pain in the neck and more like a development of practice?

When I had to write my positioning statement for my dissertation. I really understood my practice. If anyone asked me, I could explain it... concluding what my practice is and where I'm going to go and what I'm going to do.

Tom gives a clear statement of intent with his next words. He doesn't complicate the issue; he is clear and concise. He moves through the analysis of his back and forth journey over three years of study with ease and confidence.

I'm much more confident than first year. A writing task wouldn't loom over me. I'd be quite happy to do it. And then now if we have to do statements for an exhibition or descriptions of work to apply for stuff it's quite easy to do it.

When I meet Amy for feedback she says she enjoyed the gallery workshop more than the first one.

The room linked the artist and creating and writing together. The light. The Swapping of objects it was really good talking platform. I like how my ornamental turtle was reinterpreted.

Did it feel Safe? Risky? Commenting on other people's work?

It's just like a crit or a presentation in the studio. We're all artists you're trying to explain your practice to someone who isn't an artist maybe textile worker. It's what we do.

Again, I am struck by the confident tone, the acceptance of constructive criticism, the expectation that language and analysis will be employed to discuss and write about her own and others' work. This powerful exertion of will of language, this sense that words will be used to make and compose the stuff of art itself. It feels like another layer, another eruption. Emma says straight away her feelings are mixed about her dissertation mark.

When we were talking it through together, my ideas, my thoughts, I felt confident and not that I wasn't pleased with my mark but I was really disappointed with my work after that. I feel I've lost my way a bit with my practice maybe some others feel similar. We're at such an important stage last 3 months had a crit and there's no advice given and just same feedback no attempts to push you. I was clearly really struggling in crits with David and Clara.

Emma, like Tom, sees and experiences this as a multiplicity – her theoretical pathway, her actual results, her practice, and the way in which she receives feedback and has been guided by others.

What do you want them to do I ask her?

I want them to be like "this is working; this isn't working".

Why?

I feel a bit lost

She mentions the name of one of the students on her course and says she thought *her writing was better than theirs.*

So how do they mark it? she asks. It's so subjective. Which is fine. Because it's its art writing.

I sense Emma is angry. I think I know her well enough to pick up on her staccato sentences and rhetorical question. She says she is asking for feedback, for direction - *this is working; this isn't working* - but I have a question I want to ask her.

Why do you think they don't like your work?

I don't think necessarily they don't like it altogether. I think it's being dyslexic seeing just that one plane of something I'm attracted to in a painting. I'm attracted to very abstract flat things. I don't want them to be directive; I want them to be more critical.

Emma places dyslexia directly next to her sense that David and Clara aren't guiding her, aren't getting her, aren't really liking what she does.

Is she questioning them or is she attributing the problem, the issue, to dyslexia – the notion that she can see only one place, that she's attracted to flat abstraction in painting – does she think this is a lack in herself?

The other girl she says. The other girl got 72. I wasn't even expecting to get a 67. So really I've flourished. I mean I'd never have thought I could have got a 67. But something's stopping me. Stopping me painting.

She looks and sounds anguished. She is comparing herself and seeing a lack, then she places this next to her expectation of herself and sees a triumph. It feels though like a no-win situation for Emma. She is clearly unhappy. Her mark is only good because she could never – given her previous dyslexic self – have expected it, and the higher mark of her friend/peer acts as a stick to beat herself with. 'The gaze is alert everywhere' (Foucault, 1995, p. 195). There is a pause and suddenly she switches, another rhizomic move happens upon her and she is beating the dyslexia back with a stick.

I don't think it's anything to do with dyslexia anymore. We had that conversation when you interviewed me and I kind of, my work, it's still at the back of my mind, I've lost that confidence I had when I was writing my dissertation.

And now an eruption occurs. Emma is seeing the period of confidence in her work as being the period when she wrote her dissertation. Somehow, this is what happened for her, and I remember it too. She was painting and writing like a demon and the two fitted so well together. Now she has her mark and it's less than the other student (the one she pits herself against and measures herself by) and suddenly that confidence is diminished.

So, what would have made you happy, I ask? If you'd got just one more mark than _____ then?

No. no.

Then why's it affected your practice?

I'm a very competitive person. I mean I'm so happy for _____. They worked so well and so hard. They deserve it. I've been feeling lost for a month. I should be over the moon

Something is stopping her?

Is it this person? I ask. There is someone Emma talks about, who often comes up in our conversations.

I don't care about her, but she makes me very - I feel like I'm constantly annoyed. She affects me. I feel once I produce a piece of work in the next couple of weeks I'm happy with I'll be fine again.

It feels like Emma is making herself a hostage to fortune, hoping that doing more will make her feel better; setting herself a task that exists in the future and – right now as we speak – finding no comfort or solidity in the present or the past.

Clara didn't like that I really like it. She didn't think it was good.

There feels like a lot to unpick here. Emma likes her painting

Clara doesn't?

and Emma feels Clara didn't only not like the painting, she didn't like that Emma didn't agree with her. For what it's worth – and I don't say this to Emma – I strongly suspect Clara didn't articulate those exact words. Knowing the style, language and subtext of crits as I do I suspect there were words left floating and rhetorical questions asked that Emma has made concrete and pulled down as facts.

What do you want? To make a piece you're happy with or a piece Clara likes?

That's the way it works.

The story's already written then, I say. Why bother?

She looks at me. There is pause.

That pink one [referring to one of her paintings] I said to Clara what do you think as a composition by itself? She kind of looks at it and doesn't want to say no and says you shouldn't just have them on [shapes she has sketched out]. You need paint as well. I AM going to keep it like that.

Emma is progressing through an argument with Clara, with herself, and I am listening to it unfold. It feels like Clara is in the room. I want to ask her how she

knows that Clara *doesn't want to say no*. I am provoked by her assertion that she *IS going to keep it like that*.

The ones [on display] in the corridor are not resolved. Why didn't you tell me that before I handed it in? Emma repeats.

Emma is now using Clara's words as she unfolds the narrative. It is Clara who said *the ones on the corridor are not resolved*. It was Emma who replied *Why didn't you tell me that before I handed it in?* The power relationships played out in this earlier discourse resurface within the space of the room Emma and I occupy, and there is something very fierce and lively about the way Emma seizes and repurposes these words in order to lay them out before us and exclaim at them.

Not resolved! she repeats. *I want to make art that has that flatness. It's my modus operandi*

Emma then tells me that she wishes she had taken another course instead of her own. She talks at length about her friend who studies printed textiles at another university and now has what Emma calls her *dream job*. *She has had internships in London and L.A. I'm so so so envious of her*.

Emma's desire – characterised by Gao through a reading of Deleuze in Chapter Four – oozes out of the page as I write this.

In Deleuze's view desire is not a psychic existence, not lack, but an active and positive reality, an affirmative, vital force. Desire has neither object nor fixed subject. It is like labour in essence, productive and actualisable only through practice (Gao, 2013, p. 406).

When I did my artist's talk and I got feedback from Elaine [another tutor] it just felt like the work she was referring to wasn't my work. And I'd taken these gorgeous photos and not wanting to spoil them I'd put them on a

black background and the feedback was the backgrounds were too overwhelming. Then I tried to tell Clara about this gorgeous illustrator painter designer that I loved, this got me excited, she calls herself all these things she has no boundaries. I wrote about her, but I don't think Clara really likes it. I wish I could just go make fabric make whatever.

The desire, the duress, the power struggle – they are palpable. The longing for no boundaries, the yearning to be someone else, somewhere else, to be differently understood. She talks a while longer about her decision to do her course instead of another. It feels like so many of the different Emmas are in this room that they are crowding each other out.

What happens next is another eruption. Emma goes on to talk about a time at school that was very difficult for her, and she maps out the past rhizomically, making connections between the difficult emotional events of her A level years, the intrusion of dyslexia into her studies and self-worth and the fear she has – because it happened to her once before – that one person can have the power to dictate to her how she perceives herself. The conversation meanders for a long while and during it, I ask Emma how much these past events might have influenced her feelings towards being critiqued, approved of and graded. She acknowledges the connections and says that her anger with her tutors is more to do with a need to be validated, battling against a longing to walk her own path (*it's my modus operandi, I AM going to keep it like that.*)

Here we are reminded of duress, discussed in Chapter Four.

Duress... has temporal, spatial and affective coordinates. Its impress may be intangible, but it is not a faint scent of the past. It may be an indelible, if invisible, gash. It may sometimes be a trace but more often an enduring fissure, a durable mark (Stoler, 2016, p. 6).

Emma's paintings are a redoubtable, active, positive mark of duress. They are staying there, in the corridor, finished or otherwise. I meet Emma again three

weeks later for another tutorial. By this time, she has revisited her desire to change courses. When I remind her of it she looks a little shocked and says that she now thinks she took the right path; that she is a painter, and that her painting is *working for her again*. I ask about the corridor paintings and she speaks warmly of them. *They are fine, they're doing well. I like to walk past and see them. I've moved on to...* [explains new project]. Emma has entered a competition. I later find out she has won, and we discuss this. She is full of energy and agency; our last conversation is full of possibilities and looking forwards. Her desire, her duress, her unfolding, arcing, erupting story is concentrated, for me, into this last meeting where I see an iteration of Emma filled with hope. Or perhaps remembering Emma's wish to have no boundaries, Deleuze is right when, drawing on Foucault's analysis of the disciplinary society, he says there is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

When I speak to Amy about her future plans in our last meeting she is calmly optimistic and echoes Emma's lightness of tone. I later hear she has had work selected for inclusion in an exhibition and is gaining a reputation as a photographer. Hattie and I meet up by accident in a restaurant some months after graduation. She is waitressing until she can afford to travel. A few weeks later I get an email from her. She is in overseas doing voluntary work and wants a copy of her dyslexia report so she can apply for extra time in her Maths GCSE retake.

It seems to me they have all found new ways of being in the next 'repetition authentique' (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 173); some new or rediscovered multiplicities of being that propel them spreading towards and moving amongst their spaces of growth and propagation.

Conclusion

The key take homes from this chapter are:

- Power is not simply repressive; it is also productive... Power subjects bodies not to render them passive, but to render them active (Sheridan, 1980, p. 218);

- Dyslexia is performed and can be performed differently;
- Different approaches to disability trigger different responses in those engaged in the activity/assemblage. Asking the “wrong” questions, or asking the same question over and over again produces one letter words. Asking questions differently, and combining responses, creates poems of great depth and beauty;
- Language, power and performativity are bound up with each other. Location and cultural capital can affect that binding and loosen or tighten its bonds.

The space used for the second writing intervention was the University gallery, a formal, white cube with a designated institutional purpose. This aligns with my aim, which was to look more closely at the students’ formal writing lives, and specifically at the writing they produced that was assessed and marked, and to explore their relationships to this writing. In this setting I was able to put theory to work: the intra action with objects and space (Barad, 2007) and both examine and disrupt McRuer’s (2004) positioning of composition as order. In the situated space of the white cube gallery, with all its associated cultural ideology and physical control, events of rhizomic disorder erupted. A space divided for purpose where context becomes the thing that modifies behaviour, becomes habitus and leaves us visible and observed, became a place for paper to be ripped off and sweets to be eaten.

In exploring the performativity of ‘language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social signs’ we have seen how the enacting of dyslexia, formal academic writing and the appreciation of art become performative behaviours and beliefs (Butler, 1990, p. 270). Participants express fears of being able to “do” or understand art writing, they question if they can write for assessment, there are moments when they cannot inhabit the gallery space as relaxed and comfortable bodies but must always be on guard for the signs of power, the words they can’t work with, the floor that’s too hard.

In the external galleries they summon up, there are text panels that are dense and meaningless, no eating or no drinking signs, the sense of a silent, staring gallery

invigilator. However, in the University gallery space during the workshop the participants erupt out of these confines.

The power of dyslexia to disable and confuse is highlighted by my poor choice of exercise, which demands that participants have to identify initial letter sounds, recall spellings and are limited to a small number of letters to make their meaning from. But we see how dyslexia can be both performative and re-performed, or performed differently. 'Performativity is the power of language to effect change in the world: language does not simply describe the world but may instead (or also) function as a form of social action' (Cavanaugh, 2015, p. 1).

The other workshop exercises play with, disrupt and challenge both power and performativity. They work in pairs, they develop word poems, they are free to rant about their dissertations and later they explain, and explore, their precious objects and even more precious art work with each other and the words just won't stop coming. The power of the objects in the space, their engagement with and triumph over the performative nature of writing (Tom's personal statement, Amy's dissertation) the casual "it's what we do" that accompanies questions about whether it was hard to discuss and write about artwork, all demonstrate shifting power and a repositioning of dyslexia that takes place within the confines of this culturally prescribed space. One of my contributions to knowledge is to do dyslexia differently, and through placing the workshop in this highly "coded" space I am able to demonstrate this through the data I analyse.

In their feedback they explore both power and the performativity of the language of assessment (given, passed down, performed by their tutors, felt, imagined inferred by their peers who are "doing better than them" and although not everything is resolved they are spreading towards and moving. 'Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault, 1990, p. 93) and all of the participants have been moved or are moved by power, its exercise over them, theirs over it.

After the workshop, Hattie asks me for a copy of her dyslexia report in order to facilitate her entry onto a course that will both mould her into a teacher and give her the opportunity to be the teacher she wants to be. The report has power indeed, and Hattie can use this for her own ends. We see therefore that power in this chapter is striated. It is clear from the data here that there is a calmness to the unfolding of this situation, a radical difference between the questioning, staccato, uncomfortable, restricted writing and conversation of the early part of the workshop and the free flowing, confident conversations, questions, assertions of the later part.

The workshop is complex, it's often hard to tell where power resides as it moves and shifts about; power has mobile relations (Foucault, 1995), and language when looked at through the lens of power and performativity holds us all – but especially me, I think, because of my facilitating role – to account. Whatever mistakes I might have made, or however well I managed to facilitate a happening, the participants' words establish that – in their becoming-ness – they are more than able to be other/more than that which they might be decreed by others to be. I am sometimes sat at the other side of the desk (McRuer, 2004), at other times we are together round a table. Emma is both cast down by her tutors' responses and at the same time determined in her vow to *keep it like that*

This “documenting” of the nature of power and performativity is a contribution to knowledge made by this chapter. What we see here is the segmentarity that Deleuze and Parnet (2002) talk about. Deleuze and Parnet write we that are formed of lines. These lines are like conduits, passages, that run through individuals and societies and where change happens and eruptions occur. Just like power, which moves between and around and within. We are power, we contain it and it contains it, it moves both rigidly and in a molecular way, just as the lines do that run through us, through society. The participants are not just their history, and every time we meet, they show me that.

Crucially, in its exploration of power and performativity in the gallery space, this workshop makes me consider if be-coming dyslexic is possible, if that is what has happened to them at some point and continues to happen and un-happen as we meet and move in and out of our relationship.

Do they perform dyslexia
Are they made and re-made by it?

And – if so – I perceive that they are just as capable of using it as it is of using them, and that like a snake with an old skin they slough it off when done with it. *I don't think it's to do with dyslexia anymore*, says Emma, repulsing dyslexia and quashing its power (of which she has been very aware), and considering instead the effect of one person's success on her self-esteem. So Emma forces dyslexia to relinquish some of its power over her but then takes on the challenge of asking herself why this person she knows is able to exercise a different sort of power over her. And Chloe asks questions about the dyslexic writer by producing what is essentially poetic composition.

In doing so, particularly within the white cube, she traces out modifications, crosses a threshold (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002), she makes writing into a performance rather than giving us performative language, she opens up writing for us in her lyrical half sentences. Re reading the data, all the participants seem to do this, their “unconventional” – at times non-normative – use of spelling, grammar, punctuation, word order, etc., create and perform becomings, micro-becomings, which don't even have the same rhythm as our ‘history’ (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p. 214). In the workshop we see the old and decisive ways the participants engage with, challenge and disrupt power through their actions, intra-actions and writings. They compose through uncomposing and do this singly and together. Power makes them active.

Chapter Seven: Betwixt and between: rethinking our sense of place in an art institution.

Writing Intervention Three: 18 May 2016, 2-4pm, University Garden

Participants: Hattie, Amy, Chloe, Belle

Introduction

This chapter explores the third writing intervention – a writing workshop that took place in the University garden - and the data that emanated from it, as well as the participants' retrospective evaluations of the event. Here I set out the structure of the chapter and its key take home points. Firstly, I set the scene, then I explore the theorists I think with. Following this I present the workshop and its discourse and outcomes. Interwoven here are observations on theory (thinking with theory) and data (thinking with data), so I may comment on the lines of a poem or on an exchange. Then I present reflections on the workshop and finally I conclude, mentioning the contributions to knowledge formed in this chapter.

The final semester was drawing to a close and participants were preparing for their end of year shows and for life after University. During the workshop we talked, wrote and handled materials. I brought paint (the sort children use in school, in big deep palettes with thick paint brushes and reams of paper), as well as crayons, chalk, lemonade and the by now obligatory bags of sweets. Only four of the original six could attend. One was working, and the other was transporting their artwork to an external exhibition – literally taking their lines for a walk (Frances, 2009).

This chapter foregrounds the importance of place. It becomes a key player in the formation, recording and analysis of the data. It proves another area of segmentarity. The garden is both fluid – in its ability to let knowledge, discourse and making flow around it, and rigid – in its concrete limitations, its defined

parameters and in its designation as University garden; its 'threshold or quanta' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p. 214). It is a betwixt and between place, half in the University, half outside. Within this – during the intervention – discourse around dyslexia, writing, making, time, and identity contribute to the be-coming of the participants. The garden therefore is another site of activity and eruption, a vital place for the workshop to happen.

Theoretically, this chapter is informed by both Massey (1994) and Frances (2009): theorists I think with (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). Massey is particularly important. The garden setting for this workshop lent us a space to discuss and discover without ever leaving our location. Massey argues that place is progressive, process-led, not always defined solely by both political and administrative boundaries, a sense rather of holding multiple times and identities (Massey, 1994). This is an essential point with which to understand the garden and the part it plays in this research, because we are both within and without the university and this helps us understand the world from an ethico-onto-epistemological perspective (Barad, 2007).

Because we are both part of the University world and apart from it, myself and the participants gain a different understanding of writing, dyslexia, the material world and our past/present/future selves. We can no longer see ourselves as innocent bystanders, observing the world from a freestanding perspective, or, as Haraway has called such a dishonestly neutral, over-arching point of view; a 'god trick' (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). Instead, one of the take homes from this chapter is that the participants begin to look beyond their current writing lives and identities and speculate about future selves.

Massey talks about place in the context of an era when 'things are speeding up and spreading out. Capitalism is going through a new phase of internationalisation' (Massey, 1994, p. 146). We travel more and for longer and further, our goods are made in far flung places and instead of the slow trail of information in letters and postcards we speedily send texts and emails. Much of what is written about space, place and post-modern times emphasises a new phase in what Marx once called

the annihilation of space by time. This process is asserted to have gained a new momentum, to have reached a new stage – a phenomenon which Massey calls 'time-space compression' (Massey, 1994, p. 10). It's fascinating to me, for instance, that in the workshop one of the first topics initiated by participants is the difference between handwritten letters and emails and how the time taken to communicate affects the responses, memories and intra-actions of both sender and receiver. What is it that determines our degree of mobility, what is it that influences the sense we have of space and place? (Massey, 1994). Time-space compression refers to movement and communication across space, to the 'geographical stretching-out of social relations', and to our experience of all this (1994, p. 10).

As a result, she argues there is 'increasing uncertainty about what we mean by places and how we relate to them'. With so much movement and 'intermixing' how can we 'retain any sense of a local place and its particularity?' (Massey, 1994, p. 146) She talks of the dangers of nostalgia for place and the risk of fetishization of 'our' place, our 'locale' that results in certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalised recovering of sanitised 'heritages', and outright antagonism to newcomers and 'outsiders' (Massey, 1994, pp. 146). But Massey also asks if we can 'rethink our sense of place' (1991, p. 24) and encourages to look at the overlooked, the less looked at, to seek knowing and being that is situated, sited, part of place. She asks that we look at place as a way of reconfiguring our mobility, of using the local to explore social relations.

Massey meshes with Haraway (1998) where the latter talks about the god trick, the idea that by being farther away, higher up than and more 'in charge' of a global view we can see reality. Like Haraway, Massey questions this clarity. The closer in we travel, the harder we look downwards rather than upwards, the more detail we're likely to see. Imagine you're on an aeroplane, she says

Look in closer and there are ships and trains, steam trains slogging laboriously up hills somewhere in Asia. Look in closer still and there are lorries and cars and buses, and on down further, somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, there's a

woman – amongst many women – on foot, who still spends hours a day collecting water (1994, p. 149).

The University garden is this space. Seen from above it is a space in the structure of the neo-liberal arts institution. Seen closer, it is a liminal space between outside and within (we can smoke here and drink coffee but we are on University “territory” still), and seen close up it is a place of crawling ants and wind-blown paper and laughing asides.

In her book *Inspiring Writing in Art and Design: Taking a Line for a Write* (2009) the author Pat Francis paraphrases the artist Paul Klee who ‘encouraged artists to take a line for a walk – getting them to loosen up their drawing and to observe what the line became and where it went’ (Francis, 2009, p. 15). Whilst the word ‘take’ might not sit too well with the looser and less mechanistic structures of the rhizome, the word became (be-came) reminds us of the difficulty of tying knowledge down and the terrible loss of potential that may result from holding knowledge still, restraining it, refusing to let it be-come something else. Deleuze and Parnet (2002) write we that are formed of lines too, and Francis is a useful way of understanding these lines and how they are formed. Francis (2009) argues

The writing process parallels the stages of working in many of the arts... rehearsal of the parts of the whole, focusing, re-focusing, exploring points of view, talking writing, hearing writing and writing by doing. Writing may be a dialogue between writer and their thoughts through the medium of words written by the hand (Francis, 2009, p. 16).

The writer, she says, needs to feel that ‘nothing is wasted. Going off at a tangent is not a crime – it often leads to deeper understanding. Alternative viewpoints. There is also the serendipitous finding of something by accident; a vital coming up by chance’ (Francis, 2009, p. 31). This puts me in mind of Haraway, and of the rhizome too, the map that is ‘detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

The garden is betwixt and between studio, lecture theatre and gallery and, critically, it is in between and meshed to the neoliberal trappings of higher education – to the bricks and mortar of the University, to what Massey (1994) calls the actions of capital, but capitalism is not enough to explain our complex relationships with space, time and place. Gender, race, dis/ability, ethnocentricity, colonialism, financial freedom, all act on our ability to move about and inhabit places.

The art institution acts as a metaphor for all these factors as well as providing us five on that day with the garden itself, a simple, suitable and relationally expansive place to be. The sun was out and there was a sense of be-coming as well as of endings. I chose to hold the last workshop here, a walled place overlooked by the studios where students worked, furnished with wooden benches, plant pots, random pieces of statuary and discarded art works and ashtrays for the smokers, because it provided a liminal space, an outdoors inside the art school, a place subject to the vagaries of sun and rain and wind (our papers below about and our hair was ruffled by the summer breezes). Neimanis writes of liminal ecological spaces:

We must learn to be at home in the quivering tension of the in-between. No other home is available. In-between nature and culture, in-between biology and philosophy, in-between the human and everything we ram ourselves up against . . . (Neimanis, 2012, pp. 93-94).

What follows now is the main data section of this chapter. It will contain thinking with theory, thinking with data and eruptive asides. In post-humanist terms, this presents the reader with moments, eruptions, from the workshop itself, and an analysis of place, betwixt and between-ness and the thinking with theory that emerged from this workshop.

Bringing the past into this place

This workshop I feel, more so even than the other two, rammed us up against space, place, time and materials and in this small locale we became entangled with the objects that sustain and alarm, writing that withstands and threatens, and memories that leap into our present times. Phones, music, old drawings, childhood toys all become mingled with dissertation grades, future plans and writing identities. In my introduction, I explain my changing relationship to the term, and concept of, identity. I had shied away from using this word. When I first began my doctoral studies, I was wedded to it, and Bauman's quote was my touchstone: 'identities are fixed and solid only when seen in a flash from the outside' (Bauman, 2000, p. 83).

Realising post-humanism, I came to question the fetishisation of the identity of the individual self and felt it as too simple a trope to keep referring to (I had once played with the idea of referring to the writing identities of students in my title but soon changed this to writing lives). However, I did use the word, in the end, as you will see from this account, and I stand by it because despite its problematics it has been a kind word wrapped up in a useful quote and the participants and I did not overanalyse it but put it to our own uses – the results of which are written up in this chapter.

I ask them what they brought as emblems of former writing lives. Hattie has brought some left-over paint. The paint is in big tubes with images of children in a classroom on them.

I'm a kid says Hattie, smiling. She puts them down on the table.

Belle has brought fragments from a place mat her auntie embroidered for her when she was small.

We all had one. You had to put your plate on it she says, summoning up a time of custom and tradition.



Figure 2: Writing Intervention Three

Chloe has brought a letter from her granddad.

Me and my grandad write each other letters when I'm at Uni and it reminds me of when I was little, and we still do. It is sweet, it is sweet, and he sends me poems too he finds in newspapers.

The others ask if they can write to him too.

Yes, he'll be really pleased she replies.

Belle comments that *we don't really write any more do we? I can't remember when I last received a proper letter in the post.*

It's so much more personal, says Amy.

Hattie says she and her cousin tried letter writing for a while, but *it didn't work 'cos it's like cos you've got Facebook, so anything that happened in her life you just see. She's engaged so I'm not going to send her a letter about it. Too long! I'm going to text aren't I?*

Is this Marx's annihilation of space by time that Massey writes of? Does the speed of Hattie's response to her cousin's news reflect the death of letters and slow news, or does it signify the importance of the need to respond to this news quickly?

Because we can, we do. We discuss the way that Facebook makes our musings global in an instant, whereas text retains something of the private, epistolary nature of old-fashioned letter writing. Belle remembers how phones used to be tethered to walls with cords and says for that reason she prefers to text.

I used to have a phone that wouldn't move from the wall and it drove me crazy.

Even though now her mobile allows her to talk and walk she prefers to text. The past continues to exercise its influence over her choice of communication. Time telescopes.

They divide the sheets of drawing paper out between them and ask me what to do with the mark making materials. I say that this is up to them:

Make some marks don't think too much. I just thought it would be nice, be a bit of freeing up, to handle materials and not think too much about what and why.

Soon they are making marks and after that I don't refer to it, just knowing they're doing this is enough, it feels like soothing white noise to me, I don't know how it feels to them, but it appears to be very spontaneous. The conversation continues to

refer to the past, with the now and present objects signalling stories that take us back and forth along timelines. Hattie tells of her *dreadful* paintings she used to make for her nana who tactfully chose to hang them:

In the pantry and in the cupboard under the stairs.

Belle recalls making a door-sized painting for her grandma in Denmark.

Once I'd moved to England she said how long do I need to keep this for I said oh chuck it I didn't care anymore but she wanted to keep it.

Places don't have 'single, essential, identities' (Massey, 1991, p. 26), place is not just about boundaries, about those allowed in and those left out. Belle recalls the place she was in with her grandmother; she recalls the door sized painting that she had no place for but that her grandmother refused to dis-place. And in the garden, in this place, they are telling their stories of past-creations.

Maybe we need to think place, ask what a community is and where
do we take our spatial perspectives from.

Maybe we need to complicate community identity and place, mix it
up and question it further?

There is layer upon layer of linkage, as Haraway would say, of mulch, of entanglement. For instance, Amy says if she had brought any early childhood writing memories she certainly wouldn't have brought her old school exercise books because

I don't remember making them but looking through them recently they were really funny. Like horrific, like really bad!

Me: In what way?

Amy: As in like really bad at English. It doesn't make very much sense. It's quite funny.

Amy is laughing at this now, and this is the Amy who gave her imaginary dissertation 96% and a gold star because she was proud of it. Belle remembers other childhood toys:

That's one of my earliest memories, that I really wanted one of those post office things.

There are intakes of breath at this at this; we all remember the post office set.

Yes! You know when you write out the receipts you stamp things I loved it writing out the receipts. I wanted to work in a Post Office after that.

We discuss this for a while. I also had post office set as a child and I too lined my teddies and dolls up in a queue, so I could stamp bits of paper for them. We are all different ages and backgrounds, but we all remember this place, our place, where we exercised this control – a satisfying stamp was for me a sign of authority.

I then asked the question what objects must also occupy this place?

Chloe says *a cup of tea*.

Hattie says her phone and I say, yes but that's just in general life, I mean for writing, and she looks at me and says

But I need my phone when am writing because I need the thesaurus and dictionary. I can't spell without it.

A minor eruption – I'm supposed to be so tuned in to dyslexia and writing lives, but I didn't think of that vital phone function.

Amy: *I have my phone set to a timer on 'cos I can only work 15 mins at time then I have to have a 5 min break then 15 minutes writing again and so on, otherwise I can't get anywhere.*

I think it's interesting that she uses that expression with its connotations of movement and progress, writing taking us to other places, or lack of writing keeping us in one place.

Belle says, *I think you're right about phone and a drink sometimes glass of wine and I find the writing goes a bit easier but it's not always so good the next day!*

Chloe: *it's more fun though!*

Belle responds *I suppose I avoid writing to be honest. It's only because of the University, the assignments we had... it's not really something you enjoy is it? I wouldn't sit on the blanket with my kids around me and say come on let's write.*

So for Belle the place she makes to sit with her children would not, she says now, be a place of writing. But I have heard her talk a lot about places she makes to be with her kids, activities they do to fill those places, stories they tell. And this is the same Belle who wrote the lovely poems from workshop two. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) when discussing thinking with theory write it 'gets us out of the representational trap of trying to figure out what the participants in our study "mean"' (p. viii). There is not one meaning, there are multiple narratives here, in this betwixt and between place.

And also, the Belle who identifies this part of the workshop as being about childhood memories of writing and goes on to say, reflectively,

I didn't write a lot as a child. We were more artistic, my aunt was a knitter, my mum sewed.

All of this is Belle, time-space compressed.

I ask them what they have close to them when they're making for their art practices.

Hattie is quick to reply *it's my one paintbrush. The paintbrush I use for everything.*

The same one? asks Amy

Do you have just one? I echo

One for everything, she replies.

Chloe persists. *Do you have varieties of that?*

No, it's just the same one. Because it's a really, really, like expensive paintbrush. I shouldn't have it cos it's not mine. I never gave it back. She laughs

Aah. There's general exhalation of recognition.

It's really nice and soft and I condition it.

Belle: *You condition it?*

Yeah it makes the paint go on really nice. That's like what my practice is - or has been for the last 2 years - that paintbrush. It's starting to get a bit rusty.

Belle: *What if you want different thicknesses? Do you never-?*

Hattie: *Everything that I do, it's like layering, so it'll be like 50 layers of gesso or whatever, so you never have to change it. Cos if you put it on more thickly with that material and, and, any other paint brushes I use, it just cracks. I've tried pouring, I've tried rolling it on. The paint brush is just the best. It must sound very boring.*

Belle: *No, no, not at all.*

Hattie: *It's like it's not actually mine.*

Me: *It's invaluable to you?*

Hattie: *I went to the room of requirement like Harry Potter. The room of requirement, that was me! I said to Rob [technician] can I borrow the paintbrush? He said yeah. It never came back. Well, all the others there, everyone's used, and they've just left them and never washed them, and I've really looked after this paintbrush. I feel like it's...*

I suggest *Cos* really it's yours.

The room of requirement is now another name for the Life Drawing room! The place where we had our first workshop. I too have "acquired" paint brushes from there from time to time. That was a place indeed! A place I for one think of with the desire discussed in the previous chapter. It's no longer there. It was turned into a general teaching room and now while the University is being reconfigured entirely due to our massive extension, it's a rubble filled void. Its 'locale' has changed (Massey, 1994, p. 146) but in its repetition, its re-call by Hattie it gives new opportunities for thinking.

Time and place

Chloe says she needs to have a phone by her to measure time because

Sometimes if I'm writing I get in a weird trance and it feels like ages but it's only 10 minutes and other times it feels like ten minutes and it's actually, it's like 2 hours later so I need the time in case I've anything else to do.

Chloe needs her time, her measured clock-time and her weird, trance-like time. She needs them both, and where she writes, the places she writes in, although I don't know them, I guess they must become varied places, short-time and long-time places; experienced like Massey suggests without even moving one's body. We discuss whether writing time is different to other time and Belle says

Now I feel I never have the time. There's always something else. There's people there. There's things in the house around me. I feel like I should do the washing up. There's never the kind of... that's why I enjoyed Uni so much. But at the same time, I cannot write at Uni and I cannot, you know, I feel I have to come in and be creative, but I can't write here. I do it at home late at night when everything's quiet and everyone's in bed.

I wonder now, what are the things around her I wonder that stop her writing?

And what is the time she gives a definite article to?

Not a time but the time.

And where is this "same time"?

Is it also in the house, the place that won't let her write in the day but be-comes a place she can write at night?

Just as she says this, the University clock sounds 3.00pm.

Amy says that time for her is different when she's taking photographs to when she's writing.

I enjoy it more and it's not like I have to concentrate I don't have to concentrate that sounds really cocky, but I just do it, it comes easy. Dunno, it's just more breezy. Just go out and...I don't have anything by me as I work that has to be there. The way I work best is just to go out and explore.

The derive? I ask.

She concurs. Derive is a term she used in her dissertation to explore the psychogeography of cities through the camera lens.

One of the basic situationist practices is the *dérive* [literally: 'drifting'], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. *Dérives* involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll (Debord, 1956, p. 1).

On her 'derive', Amy is free to operate rhizomically:

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones (Debord, 1956, p. 1).

How rhizomic is this description of the entry and exit points, although in the city we are often dissuaded from entry and exit by the social, economic and geographical barriers of the landscape.

Massey talks about power in relation to flows and movement:

Different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections... Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people

are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it (Massey, 1991, p. 25).

In taking her derive, which she can only do with her camera, Amy is exercising her differentiated mobility, making free movement with her lens, capturing even parts of the city she cannot enter. Francis talks about reflection and 'unlocking some self-knowledge' (2009, p. 66). She says 'an understanding of what lies at the root of your work is important' and to achieve this recommends we traverse the work of others (2009, p. 66).

She also talks of 'unlocking creativity' by doing other things than being obviously creative – go for a walk she says, watch rubbish TV, sit and watch the world go by (Francis, 2009, p.66). She is not a post-humanist scholar; she is a writer and art lecturer, but I like the way she uses Haraway-esque phrases and ideas such as root and unlock, and how she urges us to mix and mulch with the activities and lives of others not directly connected to our creative/making processes. I like how she tells us that nothing is ever wasted because doing other things may bring us back circuitously to where we need to be (Francis, 2009).

Asking questions in this space

I ask have you re-evaluated your thoughts about writing?

I acknowledge this is a big question. I am asking here, in this place, for a review, a reflection of how the past has made the present; asking them to enter their rhizome and look at tubers and growths. In this space of the University garden the question takes on a particular resonance, it isn't only that we are nearing the end of this research experience but also that the outdoor territory, the geography, the parameters and thresholds of the space encourage the asking of such questions, indeed they urge them. Chloe's answer to this big question is interesting. She questions her many writing selves, writing lives, as she moves between can't be bothered to trying so hard. And Chloe's evocation of hours and hours and hours

rings round the space. She is 'time-space compressed' (Massey, 1994), caught between the 'lines' of her writing selves (Frances, 2009).

Chloe: I think I have but maybe not just 'cos of these sessions but 'cos of writing my essay this year. It was so fascinating, it was more fascinating even than my artwork. I think I go through phases where I think I just cannot be arsed 'cos I have to try so hard to make it any good, but I do enjoy it at the same time. So, there's like a tension between. I do really enjoy it and to think I can write a good essay, but then I see other people just writing it easily and I take hours and hours and hours to make it sound like sort of standout... But with my practice, the theory is a massive part of it too, so it makes sense to do that.

Anyone else had thoughts about repositioning writing identity?

Belle: I used to, I did get into it, in my dissertation. And then I got my result and then I got out of it again very quickly. I said don't be so stupid.

Me: Oh no don't say that.

Belle: Yeah, I really did.

Me: I want to stop you thinking like that.

In Chapter Four, Van Rensburg (2006) talks about writing identities in the academy. Here in the garden, Belle and I are face-to-face with the narrative of her dissertation, telescoped, compressed into this place. Theory and data smoosh up against each other. Massey writes about this thing that she calls 'different experiences of time-space compression' (1994, p. 10). She asks us to look in at the tiny and particular then step back and gradually allow the local, regional, national, international and global rhizomes to lay themselves over our vision. 'Imagine all the

social relations, all the links between people', she says, 'fill it in with all those' (1994, p. 154).

For what is happening is that the geography of social relations is changing. In many cases such relations are increasingly stretched out over space. Economic, political and cultural social relations, each full of power and with internal structures of domination and subordination, stretched out over the planet at every different level, from the household to the local area to the international (Massey, (1994, p. 154).

Belle regrets not conforming, acknowledges the power of the academy, her subordination to the marking and assessment processes. But Hattie interrupts and says

When I got my results, I was like really pissed off and you, you helped me see it differently.

Me: You were quite cross.

Hattie: *Yeh, I know I was. I shouldn't...*

Me: No, you've got every right.

Hattie was angry not with her mark but she expressed the feeling that others who worked less hard got greater rewards, and others who asked for a lot of help and made dramatic gestures were given more help. This was her experience. When I challenged her about why the lives of others mattered so much to her, enough to corrupt 'like a worm i' the bud' (Twelfth Night, Act 2, Scene 4) her pleasure in her own success, she re-evaluated her response.

It is from that perspective that it is possible to envisage an alternative interpretation of place. In this interpretation, what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus (Massey, 1991, p. 28).

I say to Belle Did you push yourself really hard I wonder to write a complicated and messy subject, and I wondered if you'd felt a bit pissed off at the end – I hope I'm not putting words in your mouth – that you hadn't picked an easier subject that was easier to deal with?

Belle: *No, you're absolutely right and you're not putting words into my mouth.*

Me: Yours was difficult, complex, it asked lots of questions?

Belle: *Yeh that's what I set out to do, to write a dissertation that was interesting, and I didn't get the good marks cos I took on too much.*

Me: *Hmm too much...?*

Belle: *No I should've just stuck to something, and also being a mature student there were things I was advised against like the writing in the first person but being the person I am, I think I wanted to write that way.*

Me: I still think you were right to write in the first person.

Belle: *Yeah I do but there were little things I should've...*

This is a major eruption for me – Belle and I spent many hours discussing how she might approach her dissertation. The tutor responsible for teaching art history in the context of her subject area had a very particular and stratified method of teaching essay writing, advocating a beginning, middle and end, a clear contextual/critical theme and a definite linking of that theme to the students own practical work. Her supervisor concurred but another tutor was mainly concerned with the development of her practice and placed his emphasis on Belle producing and writing about a collection of work that was audience ready.

In amongst this Belle and I talked back and forth about whether or not she should abandon her chosen theme (looking at some of the grey areas that exist between theory and practice – in particular, the notion of the polymath versus the jack of all trades) and her wish to write some of the dissertation in the first person and, instead, go for a very cause-and-effect title and all third person delivery. The privileging of voice in certain types of qualitative inquiry suggests there is a time and place for data to emerge but here in this betwixt and between place we are revisiting Belle's decisions, her actions and her thoughts. We are 'working the limits of voice' (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009, p. 4).

Belle made it absolutely clear that there was no possibility that she could talk about her experiences of this subject area without writing in the first person. We went to another tutor for help with this (Clara, in fact, who has used this genre in her own doctoral thesis). She suggested life writing and we were guided on how to apply this technique to a small section of Belle's dissertation. Belle also chose to stick with her more complex theme as it mirrored her interests, experiences and practices and there was a lot of literature and research on it already.

In the light of this it is interesting to unpick Belle's words now: *I should've stuck to something...*

What? Easier? What she felt her tutor was telling her to do? Is it because she's mature student that she took the decision not to? She has said before she doesn't fear her tutors because they are her age or younger. But now does she feel hoist by her own petard – if she hadn't been mature, confident, she'd have gone for the easier option?

And also, being a mature student, there were things I was advised against like the writing in first person but being the person I am I think I want to write...

There is desire here – I want to write – and this has to sit with what Francis calls the ‘soul-searching’ question asked by so many students ‘Well, I don’t really know – what do they mean, what do *they* want to hear?’ (2009, p. 66, my emphasis). Francis quotes Virginia Woolf: ‘I’ve just typed out my morning’s work; and I can’t feel altogether sure. There is something there...but I can’t get at it squarely’ (Woolf, 1987 cited in Francis, 2009, p. 25).

Did Belle feel like this, a sort of grasping about?

And ‘yesterday I had a conviction, today it is gone’ writes Woolf (1987, cited in Francis, 2009, p. 25). Belle’s conviction to follow the theme and style of writing comes and goes and has done so between us and more importantly in Belle’s felt life over the course of the writing of her dissertation. Perhaps it is also something she has expressed before – her love of language, her poetic turn, and always in academic writing the need to understand “what do they want to hear,” which may not sit well with “being the person I am, I want to write...”

The ‘take three words’ workshop

When I was in America for the University of Illinois conference, my supervisor and I attended Laurel Richardson’s ‘Take Three Words’ workshop (2016). She took us through the process – you can write anything you want in response to a given subject or stimulus, but each line must be only three words long. This discipline, this structure, both focuses and challenges meaning and content, and has the effect of producing something quite poetic.

Transferred to the garden, enacted in another place, I explain the process and ask:

Can you try this in response to one of today's prompts: what do you keep by you when you write? You don't have to stick to that theme but start with it. If you could write three-word blocks about what you keep by you when you write.

Short sentences? asks Belle.

They can be word collections. It's loose. The only stipulation is three words per line.

Chloe: *So it's not just what you brought, that's just as a starting point, to look at the process of it?*

Amy asks *Is this about writing? Am I doing it right?*

Before I can reply Belle breaks in with *It's funny, we're really insecure about whether or not we're doing it right, we really want to get it right*

And as soon as she's said this they start to write. I don't need to reassure them because it's not needed. They are fine, they are getting on with it.

There's silence now apart from a police siren in the distance and sweet paper rustling.

When they finish I ask, so, what does this three-word workshop feel like?

Quite poetic, says Amy.

It's hard to stick to three words, says Belle. I raise my eyebrows at her. She winks at me.

I'll go first, Hattie volunteers.

Neaten up desk
Stare at wall
Stare at screen
Stare at text
Stare at phone
Type 3 sentences
Read out loud
Delete 2 sentences
Re read book
Quickly type paragraph
Go for break
Come back look
Have a breakdown
Have pep talk
Re-read text
Have some chocolate
Re-type paragraphs
Read out loud
Sigh go home

Me: lovely.

Chloe: *That's so good*

Chloe reads:

Phone laptop tea/coffee

Part of me
Part of others
Jumbled confusing thoughts
Intriguing absorbing learning
Messy hard challenging
Focussed concentrated motivated
List in trance
Have to stop
Phone laptop tea/coffee (I'd repeat that over and over again)
Distracted by Facebook
Have to start
Phone laptop tea/coffee
Not totally satisfied.

Amy is next to read out:

Am sitting on bed
Laptop on knee
Door is shut
Bottle of water
Is it hot
Window is open
Is it cold
Door is shut
Set a Timer

for 15 minutes
Type type type
Beep beep beep
set a timer
for 5 minutes
Watch a programme
Beep beep beep
Now I repeat

Belle says *I didn't write about writing; I wrote about the items.*

She reads:

Phone wine flag
Flags for birthday
Wines for fun
Phones for everything
Everything is reachable
Just touch button
Flag is memory
Feeling very special
My special day
Lots of presents
Another year gone
Tablecloth still relevant
I am grown up

White wine or red wine

Used to be

Always red wine

There's a chorus of *so lovely*.

I ask them to do another one – this time about what they keep close by when they are making/creating.

After a while Hattie reads out:

My one paintbrush

My acquired paintbrush

My borrowed paintbrush

My stolen paintbrush

My adopted paintbrush

Tape out section

Layer gesso on

Sand gesso off

Layer gesso on

Sand gesso off

Repeat process, lots

Tape out area

Using precise measurements

Layer gesso on

Sand gesso off

Layer gesso on

Sand gesso off
Repeat processes lots
Tear tape off
Apply oil paint
Duplicate oil paint
Polish surface UP
Now process finished.

Hattie's clarity of thought and ownership of process is a stark contrast to the child who sat at the sticky tableclothed table and reluctantly did spellings.

Chloe is next:

Choose some music
Sit quietly thinking
Slowly start making
Absorbed into it
Lost in trance
Phone goes off
Text someone back
Quietly reflecting
Then continue making
Absorbed in trance
Phone goes off
Text someone back
Continue making

surprised at time
Repeat all again
Not totally satisfied

Hattie: *That's how I ended my writing one!*

Amy reads:

Make a plan
Where to go
Grab my camera
Clear the card
Set the settings
Start to wander
Look at images
What is good
What is Bad
Take more images
Stop when bored

Someone whispers *Great*.

Belle again introduces hers with a caveat: *I wrote about the music. It's not grammatically correct.*

I love singing

Sing in the car
With my daughter
In the shower
Never done so
But people do
Why do they
Sing in the shower

We all laugh and discuss this.

Someone says: *No one sings in the shower.*

But Chloe says her friend does. *YMCA the other day. For god's sake. They were really trying. It wasn't a joke.*

Hattie: *My boyfriend's brother sings in shower like an opera "morning is here, la la la" we're like oh shut up!*

I wonder if the shower is a special place for reaching out to others, musically, and if Massey might have anything to say about this, but I won't pursue it.

The University: could you ever inhabit this place again?

In the third and final workshop, just before we do the last piece of writing I ask the four participants attending if they'd ever voluntarily choose to undertake something like their dissertation again. For me, this is the most succinct feedback I can offer from that session.

Amy replies *I want to do a Masters.*

There is a buzz of conversation about this. They ask if she will do it in photography and she says not, and they ask if you can do a Masters in a subject you didn't study, and she says yes. It feels like a space is opening up that has some possibilities in it and Amy has clearly done some research here. Belle says she'd like to do a Masters in weaving if that was possible, which is interesting, and Hattie says

I want to write but just for me this time.

Amy: I just want to be more educated. That's what it is.

Chloe: Yes I never want to stop education, even if I did an MA it'd be so cool to do a PhD; but even if I'm not ready for that I want always to do evening classes and always be learning.

Belle: It's funny though cos I'm the first in my family that's got a Uni degree and I used to think that's never... it used to be such a far-fetched thing, it's almost like becoming a doctor! It's like you can't do that and then I've done it. But over the three years your head gets into the idea you're doing a degree and it becomes - not less valued - but it doesn't become the same as... Then you go oh I might do a Masters or a PhD and you move yourself don't you??? That's what I wanted. To also show my kids that you can for a degree; you can do it later in life.

I can't stop myself – the sun is shining, we're eating sweets, it's nearly the end of term, they are all going to leave the university soon. It's pointless pretending I don't have an investment in this, in them, even if it's circumscribed and particular.

That just makes me so happy! I exclaim, and Belle nods.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) write 'the assemblage made and unmade us authors' (p. 2) By plugging into their data they become multiples. I am struck by my emotional response here, another me.

Belle's conviction resurfaces as she looks back over time and place and as she entangles her present situation with her hopes for her children's future/her future-children. This garden allows 'a sense of space to be progressive; not self-enclosed and defensive, but outward looking' (Massey, 1994, p. 147).

I say right last one. Oh, it's the last writing thing we'll ever do probably. Your writing identity in three word lines. Let's get some paper.

Amy asks, *What do you mean by writing identity?*

How you feel about writing, if your identity, identities, have changed. If they did, if they do, if they might. Think of the last few months, in three words only.

They go straight to it, writing in silence again. One or two visitors to the garden regard us quizzically. Just as they finish Sarah approaches with a book for me:

They said you were up to something out here. I've brought you that book I promised. Sorry if I'm interrupting.

The others greet Sarah warmly. Another student, she's well known to them. She takes a sweet and says *I wish I could join you; it looks so lovely. To write, out here.*

She hands me the book, which is about art writing and walking, then goes on her way.

Hattie again chooses to read first. She just begins:

Absolute complete terror
Lost in research
Irrelevant research material

Meet Karen discuss
More focussed research
Have tutorial
Comforting feedback review
Stop Researching cop 3
Panicking at deadline
Set strict timetable
Achieve 50% of what's on timetable
Start to enjoy research
start to love writing
Hand in essay
Feel hugely relieved
Feel triumphant in writing
Get my results
Feel pissed off
Talk to Karen
Feel more confident
Time passes quickly
Could write again
could enjoy again
Let's do again
I am excited.

Chloe is next:

Am I good?
Am I bad?
Too much writing
Too much thinking
Too much
Need some help
Totally excitingly interested
Discovering many revelations
Am I good?
Am I bad?
Need some help
I feel better
Maybe I'm good
Am I finished?
Takes so long
Time worth spent?
Am I good?
Ami good?
Am I bad?
Submitting with confidence
Submitting with nerves
Not totally satisfied
Again!!

Belle:

Used to hate
Writing with words
Did travel writing
Observation of people
People are fun
People are different
just to observe
I loved it
Love my dissertation
love it when
make it exciting
make it interesting
I was wrong
Need to conform
Stay within lines
Don't go beyond
Do go beyond
Push yourself
A lesson learned
too big ambitions
or maybe not
just work harder
a clearer picture
do it again
yes, I would

but with reservations

Amy's turn:

When at school
Struggled a bit
everyone around me
was very good
Made many comparisons
Had no faith
Came to university
all this changed
I am capable
If I try
Just takes time.

There's quite a long silence on the recording then a deep sigh.

Thank you all so much. That's what I had planned. It's been perfect as far as I'm concerned. And we finished early.

How come we did this bit then? asks Chloe, holding up the paper she's covered in lines and swirls and pops of colour. *Was that for you to...?*

No, not for me at all. I just wanted you to not have to spend whole time writing and to just write in short blocks and that you could paint draw or doodle while I talked, and I've never seen you all just playfully sit with paper and paints and pens. It's quite spontaneous.

It was quite relaxing. I don't usually do this, she responds.

Can I keep these lovely things you've made?

They say yes but they take photos of what they've done before giving it to me.

Look, Amy points out, ants everywhere. Look.

Haraway's little creatures.

They're drifting off. *Got to do a show now. My paint will take ages to dry,*
Hattie calls back over her shoulder.

Thank you for your time, I say, when you're all so busy. What about a closing interview? Shall we do it by email? You're all going to be all over the place.

So in my last recorded sentence to them I used the words time and place. There's a 'fearful symmetry' there (Blake, 1794/2000, p. 38).

I could never have hoped for such a place as the garden, and such a time as that day, and such a consanguinity that made their writing possible. The garden has provided a space for data which is contribution to knowledge. Massey (1991) writes that one of the criticisms of a study of place is that the progressive counterpoint to taking pleasure in place is that place becomes reactionary, idealised, essentially a land of the status quo. But she goes on to dismantle this argument by talking about

An adequately progressive sense of place, one which would fit in with the current global local times and the feelings and relations they give rise to, and which would be useful in what are, after all, political struggles often inevitably based on place. The question is how to hold on to that notion of geographical difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want that, without being reactionary (Massey, 1991, p. 26).

Francis talks about capturing 'the flutters that help us grow as people and as practitioners' (Francis, 2009, p. 36). In Chapter Six, we encountered the sometimes-

stifling environs of the white cube and in Chapter Five we were cloistered in the Life Drawing room, a liminal space that is no more. Writing, and writing lives, were everywhere in the places, but I posit that nowhere did the sun shine on them quite so longingly, quite so purposefully as it did in the garden.

Deleuze and Guattari ask 'How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of re-territorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another?' (1987, p. 10). They explore the relationship, ever changing, between wasp and orchid. 'Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome' (1987, p. 10). But also, while this is happening, at the same time

Something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 10).

In the garden, the ants, the sun, the paper, the paints, the words, the table, Sarah and her book, the flow and ebb and assertion and pronouncement, the certainties and the maybes, the memories that are still alive, formed a veritable be-coming.

Reflections on workshop three and on recent experiences of academic writing

It didn't prove as straightforward as at other times to get feedback from the final workshop as the participants were in a stage of moving on and moving through their final experiences of university life, but over time I wove together some narratives from the fragments I could gather. Firstly, I was eating out in a restaurant and who should turn out to be the waitress that night but Hattie. We had a big hug and in between serving tables she was able to come and sit with me for a bit and chat.

I discovered she wasn't currently painting but her reasons were entirely pragmatic – she simply had no space to work in anymore, studios were too expensive to rent, her layering process too time consuming to fit in with work and the cost of her

materials prohibitive. She was full of plans for leaving England and working abroad but fearful these plans might not be realised. She was I felt both hopeful and tentative. She spoke warmly of our research activities.

Hattie emailed me from overseas, four months later asking for a copy of her old dyslexia statement as she was about to retake one of her biggest fears – GCSE Maths – and I also saw she had achieved one of her desires – to work and travel abroad. When we met in the restaurant she mentioned possibly going into teaching. If she has done, or intends to, this feels like a triumph of repositioning for someone who had such ambivalent feelings about the school system. If Hattie were to be a teacher I believe she would bring the sum of all her parts to this, and that those she taught would be fortunate to cross her path.

Amy, I know, is now working as a freelance photographer as well as having a full-time job – exactly as she'd planned, to keep photography the thing she loved, not make it her only job. She was invited to produce some images for a recent art exhibition and her work was much admired. Emma received commissions to make work too. The last I heard from her she was working to earn money to move to London where she envisioned her future.

I haven't heard from Tom since his breezy farewell after the second workshop, but I heard he's still painting and enjoying life immensely. Belle is working as a creative development assistant. She still makes and sells work freelance. I have a purse she made me. It is beautiful. Chloe graduated with a first-class honours degree and found work in teaching alongside pursuing her art practice.

Conclusion

In the garden, we are both local and global. The University stretches its contacts out across the world, and students come and go from all corners of the globe.

Knowledge, finance and personnel are all globally connected and affected. The participants in this research are getting ready to graduate, to leave and possibly never return, but we are also five people in a place all at once with materials, paper, pens and other objects, with narratives and connections and with tiny ants creeping over our hands on this unusually hot day. The garden is a small space within a large institution. We were only there, together, the five of us, for a short while, but its localised, situated significance should not be underestimated. The garden rang with meaning and import. While we are in it we are in the world together, in the place together, making room for the ethical, ontological and epistemological assemblage; for 'connections between multiplicities' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 23).

At the start of this chapter I foreground Massey, who asks if we can 'rethink our sense of place' (1991, p. 24) and encourages to look at the overlooked, the less looked at, to seek knowing and being that is situated, sited, part of place. She requires us to look carefully at place in order to reconfigure our mobility and suggests that the local place can be somewhere important to explore social relations. I also refer to Massey asking us to consider what it is that determines our degree of mobility, what it is that influences the sense we have of space and place (Massey, 1994).

The participants speak of both duress and desire in the garden. They refer to their writing lives as both disappointing and frustrating and triumphant and alive. They say they are both pissed off and proud, and when asked if they might ever do this (writing) again they are like bumble bees zig zagging in flight from no to maybe to yes. Time-space compression refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this (Massey, 1994, p. 10). The discourse and the writing of the participants in this intervention sing with movement, communication, and the stretching out of social relations. We go from letters to grandfathers (Chloe), to pride in being able to show our children what we have achieved (Belle, who was once called stupid).

When Hattie emails me from overseas it's to tell me she is starting a teacher training course. She will do a PGCE and she will teach others – the woman who used to reluctantly contemplate morning spellings with her mum. From a place very different to where we parted, she is now reconfiguring her future writing identity. In this chapter I allowed myself to revisit the word identity. It was a big part of my original thinking before I encountered qualitative research as a subject area and before I'd delved into post-humanism, but I retained it as it was 'a kind word wrapped up in a useful quote' (Chapter Seven) and one which the participants used themselves and responded to.

Both Haraway's meshing and Francis's tangents proved to be vital for my thinking with theory in this chapter, and objects have particular agency. We discussed family ties, the pros and cons of using the postal service, our past selves, objects of significance – the Post Office set, the paintbrush. Mark making brought about discussions about relatives and loved ones, time, drawing, and the importance of place: a grandmother's house, the room of requirement, the way the place-ness of University grows visual creativity but for some stifles the written word, but the place-ness of home lets it free.

But at the same time, I cannot write at Uni and I cannot, you know, I feel I have to come in and be creative, but I can't write here. I do it at home late at night when everything's quiet and everyone's in bed.

How rhizomic is this description of the entry and exit points, although in the city we are often dissuaded from entry and exit by the social, economic and geographical barriers of the landscape.

Massey talks about power in relation to flows and movement, Francis talks about reflection and 'unlocking some self-knowledge' (2009, p. 66). Different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. Amy talks about her perambulations around place on her 'derive', where she is free to operate rhizomically. In taking her derive,

which she can only do with her camera, Amy is exercising her differentiated mobility, making free movement with her lens, capturing even parts of the city she cannot enter. Hattie says, in answer to the question about reconfiguring your writing identity:

I think I have but maybe not just 'cos of these sessions but 'cos of writing my essay this year. It was so fascinating, it was more fascinating even than my artwork, and that was interesting cos I have to try really, really hard to do a good essay

When I ask Belle she says *I used to, I did get into it, in my dissertation. And then I got my result and then I got out of it again very quickly. I said don't be so stupid.*

Me: Oh no don't say that.

Belle: *Yeah, I really did.*

Me: I want to stop you thinking like that.

Belle describes grasping about for her writing identity. There is duress in her self-reproach: if I'd been younger less confident I'd have followed their advice and chosen a simpler topic written the way they wanted it but...

In the three-word workshop she takes us on this marvellous space time compressed journey:

do it again
yes, I would
but with reservations

And in her feedback, she says *but I can show my kids I did it. I did it later in life*. She talks about a masters or a PhD. She says maybe. Hattie goes from fed up to pleased, from pupil to future-teacher.

The key take homes from this chapter are :

- We recognise the importance of place as a social and as a global concept. The garden allows us to ‘imagine all the social relations, all the links between people’, Massey says, ‘fill it in with all those’ (1994, p. 154);
- Participants are able to speculate as to their future selves;
- I am able to let go of my researcher role, knowing my involvement is temporary and the participants will move on from me and from this project;
- What I have learned can exist within the confines of the neo-liberal arts institution – I get the chance to project and expand these workshops to other students and into the degree course I am writing; this workshop is evidence of the value and possibilities of that. I draw on this often when imagining the course I will later write and teach;
- In this chapter there are multiple lines of flight taking off around writing identity, all contained within and made possible by this place, this betwixt and between place.

Participants stretch outwards and take in all their future possibilities, places and selves the garden as place allows this to happen. It is a contribution to knowledge made by this chapter that we have been able to do what Massey asks, to look in at the tiny and particular then step back and gradually allow the local, regional, national, international and global rhizomes to lay themselves over our vision.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

‘What’s past is prologue’ (The Tempest, Act 2, Scene 1)

This chapter sets out the contribution to knowledge made by this thesis. It does this both thematically and by revisiting some of the key eruptions that this research has enabled. By revisiting key eruptions, it is possible to add to and complement the thematic discussion, offering real events, voices and situations that in themselves both illustrate and state more clearly and confidently what the contributions to knowledge are that this research makes.

The thematics of the contributions made by this research:

- Rethinking methodology
- Reconceptualising writing
- Reshaping the art institution
- The importance of me in the research
- Reimagining places of research
- Post-humanist ethics in research

In order for the reader to navigate this conclusion more easily I will provide a summary below of my contributions to knowledge. Not only does this give an at a glance guide to these important aspects of doctoral research but also, I hope, by doing so, to make the thesis more widely accessible and engaging to non-experts. This is not a niche study. Its remit may be appear particular- art students with dyslexia who write - but its reach is wide. In creating this at a glance guide to contributions to knowledge I hope to reach the specific reader as well as government education policy makers, the UK Treasury, the care sector, the health sector, educators, administrators, and learners with dyslexia-like abilities.

Key contributions to knowledge- summary

- At the time of its submission, a detailed study of dyslexia within a post-humanist framework is unique.
- Embracing the idea of the rhizome both ontologically and epistemologically guides the methodological approach of this research. Refuting the arboreal model of knowledge has allowed me to work with participants, present their stories, navigate the art institution, engage in discourse around dis/ability and writing and develop new and exciting ways of making writing a rich, viable, valid and accessible creative practice.
- As a direct result of this, I have authored, had validated, and now (since 2019) teach the BA (Hons) Creative Writing undergraduate degree in my institution. This is the only creative writing degree course in an arts institution in the North of England and the only one informed by this radical pedagogy and post-humanist framework.
- This research shows how it is possible to do research differently by foregrounding the asking of questions differently or different questions, by using space, place, materials and narrative to question paradigms of knowledge. It questions dyslexia both as a fixed and medicalised model and as a social model. It problematises dyslexia more widely than simply definitions and cause; looking at its constructions and its effects and its shifting relationship to the lives of people. It does this by employing a critical disability perspective which opens up the relevance of my radical pedagogy to many underrepresented groups and to those who might be regarded as mainstream.
- This research questions and disrupts ideas around both institutional power and constructs of the art institution, and examines how these relationships interact with and create each other. To do this I actively use ideas around place, space and materials and theories which can be transported to many institutions, amongst policy makers and educators as well as individuals.

- This research contributes to knowledge in that it combines particular elements that have not been combined in this way before. It interrogates writing in some of its many manifestations, notably writing as an academic, assessed and measurable outcome, and writing as a form of fluid and imaginative communication.
- The conditions created by this research make this possible and are replicable. This research demonstrates a framework (through explanation and documentation of the 3 workshops) that is portable, transferable and flexible. It can be and has been applied to community groups, adult education students, tutors, community arts and poetry groups, literature festivals, writing circles, F.E. and 6th form students across arts and humanities, with dyslexia specialist teachers, with artist lecturers/practitioners, amongst M Level and doctoral students, with groups of young people transitioning from further to higher education, with widening participation cohorts and with potential H.E. applicants from polar quintiles 4 and 5.
- This research has produced, and continues to produce, peer reviewed articles, conference presentations, creative fiction and non-fiction. These outcomes made up my 5 entries to my University's first ever REF (Research Excellence Framework) submission.

This thesis, I propose, demonstrates a different and transferable way of doing research that offers a contribution to a radical pedagogy of engagement. This research has a life beyond its printed text. It exists in the lives of the participants, in the propagation of the writing workshops and in the development, writing and teaching of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing degree.

This thesis presents a vibrant and theoretically sound radical pedagogy which may provide a blueprint for and inspire critically aware, imaginative, liberating and productive teaching and learning.

In this chapter I explain why each thematic is relevant, and set out what contributions to knowledge they make. I illustrate this with examples from the research data. I call these examples eruptions after MacLure (2013) and Jackson and Mazzei (2016) – although they use the term ‘hot-spots’. I use the term “eruption” as it suggests an arousal or bursting forth which I recognise as being present in this research.

To embrace, not avoid, the methodological “hot-spots” where difficult situations may exist or erupt. Maggie MacLure (2010) alerts us that these hot spots may have much more to teach us than the “static connections that we often assume between self and other, researcher and researched” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2016, p. 266).

Eruption is a good word and helps clarify, with examples, the contribution to knowledge this research offers. And it is not possible to collect these together in any meaningful way without identifying the rhizome as a significant unifying metaphor in both my gaining of knowledge and my contribution to knowledge. Knowledge is organised rhizomically; a rhizome is ‘absolutely different from [the] roots and radicles’ of the tree-like hierarchy of knowledge (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 6). From the rhizome of knowledge (thinking with theory) come eruptions (events, happenings) that then allow me to see and understand methodological, theoretical and practice-oriented contributions.

In his analysis of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Clinton writes

The tree becomes the villain. “Arborescent” is a dirty word. “We’re tired of trees,” writes Deleuze, “We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They’ve made us suffer too much.” Trees are genealogical, where by contrast ‘the rhizome is an antigenealogy (Clinton, 2003, p. 1).

The Cambridge Dictionary defines genealogy with the following words:

Ancestor, ancestry, idiom: blood is thicker than water, bloodline, descent, distaff, family tree, forbear, genealogist, generation, heraldic heraldry lineage lineal successor (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018, p. 1).

Distaff, bloodline – this reminds me of the epistemological impossibility of escaping the notion of inherited and received wisdom, the dreary and anxiety-inducing oppression of believing we are trapped by our genes, that biology is destiny. Working with the participants in this research has shown me that we can overcome such fears if we reposition knowledge rhizomically. Writing this conclusion has led me to my own anti-genealogy. It has been impossible to write a conclusion without revisiting the start. Any attempt at understanding my own journey in a linear way is confounded and challenged by recognising what the past has done to the present and what the present does to the past, and also in my recognising the existence of both of them in the moment I read and reread; write and rewrite. The rhizome produces new understandings.

Rather than seeing these thematics as separate and distinct I view them as an assemblage. This is a purposeful and deliberate decision. I did not begin this research with a traditional research question to be answered. I have done something specific and different in this research, to set off on a journey of discovery using post-humanist thinking with theory. Please return to my Dear Reader letter at this point if it helps.

I have established thematics. When discussing psychoanalysis and linguistics, (Deleuze and Guattari) state:

All the former has ever made are tracings or photos of the unconscious, and the latter of language, with all the betrayals that implies (it's not surprising that psychoanalysis tied its fate to that of linguistics) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 14).

With a tracing, a photograph, a mere reproduction.

You will be allowed to live and speak, but only after every outlet has been obstructed. Once a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it's all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces. Whenever desire climbs a tree, internal repercussions trip it up and it falls to its death; the rhizome, on the other hand, acts on desire by external, productive outgrowths. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 14).

I deliberately present my thematics alongside my eruptions, these external productive growths. I intend to move forward with them as an educator.

Thematic contribution: Rethinking Methodology

A key contribution to knowledge made by this research is in the embracing of the idea of the rhizome both ontologically and epistemologically. This guides the methodological approach of this research. Recognising the rhizome as a way of sifting, shaping, sharing and conjecturing knowledge and applying rhizomic methodologies to this study is part of its contribution to knowledge. Refuting the arboreal model of knowledge has allowed me to work with participants, present their stories, navigate the art institution, engage in discourse around dis/ability and writing and develop new and exciting ways of making writing a rich, viable, valid and accessible creative practice. It has provided my methodology and made the writing work in new ways.

Regarding methodology, the rhizomic considerations utilised in this research appear in the carrying out of this research and in its presentation. The style, tone and register of this text, the language, intonations and inflections of the writing voices, are displayed, fed and repeated, in the visual appearance of the writing on the page. 'There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 4). The rhizome – a theoretical construct – becomes a methodological imperative in this thesis. The structure and assemblage of the thesis reflects and shapes its subject matter and makes manifest actual writing lives, bringing theoretical considerations and practical circumstances together in a way that hasn't been done before.

The method supports the methodology. The thesis is written as an assemblage and uses creative modes of presentation and varieties of forms of address. The methodology of the interview provides a contribution to knowledge. As I explained in Chapter One, the participants' words/narrative appear in Trebuchet to

distinguish them from the rest of the body of the writing. My speech in these conversations appears in Arial to distinguish it from theirs. I deliberately do not use speech marks. This allows the participants to speak more directly to the reader and avoids some of the overtones of coding used in more traditional data analysis. The participants' word poems are in Times New Roman font size 16, a tribute to their lovely, bold, stand out-ness and a nod to the fact that so many so-called definitive texts are written in this font, so it's rather nice to subvert the definitive with the possible.

My questions to myself are in Bookman Old Style, a font I find friendly and conversational. In this last chapter, I deliberately ask myself questions as I move through this journey, questions being the most eruptive and productive form of conclusion. Answers shut us down, close doors, snip tubers off at their most productive. Questions, like compost, water and the right amount of sun, promote growth.

I am inspired by Haraway to write like this. As her title *Staying with the Trouble* suggests, it is in the difficulty and the mess that Haraway (2016) works. To navigate it her methodology is experimental and linguistic; she builds worlds in the interstices of words (Davies, 2016). 'There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 4). This quote has come into its own as I re-visit my writing – the style, tone and register of this text, the language, intonations and inflections of the writing voices need to be mirrored, fed, repeated, in the visual appearance of the writing on the page. It matters.

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what worlds make worlds, what worlds make stories (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12).

And it matters what font we use to delineate participants' direct speech and reported speech, how we make questions clear to the reader, and how we

distinguish between the pause for thought of the writer and the request for response from the reader. I want you to respond, I want you to consider what I'm considering, I value your participation, I want you in the mulch. Font size and style, images, line length and line spacing, experiments with punctuation – these are my rhizomes, my 'image of thought', a way I use to show the many, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in my data representation and interpretation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

The Deleuzian notions of 'ribbons stirred by the wind' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p. 75) remind us that methodology itself is not fixed. This study contains so much in the way of entanglement that at times it is difficult to separate out whose voice we are hearing, and this is the reason I have used a variety of visual devices to indicate where and to whom words are attributable.

Further on the subject of methodology, I struggled with the formality of an introduction, a literature review and a methodology chapter. However, in the end, by producing them I gained a discipline I didn't think possible, which arose from making my thinking as clear as I could to others. It's a loss of ego, I think, to write to these formal, traditional thesis requirements. It means putting your reader first and making explicit both your framework and the messy inner workings of your mind. There's some stating the obvious (obvious to you, as writer) because it's not obvious to your reader and needs to be. And there's the discipline of reading and reframing the words and thoughts of others to make them clear and contextualised for your reader, paying due diligence to what they have said and written, listening with respect to their knowledge which, like my own, was hard won.

In the end, I wrote three literature reviews. Not one, not two, but three! And this really was my first line of flight, the difficult to negotiate, difficult to write space where the humanist and post-humanist entangled and my new ways of shaping and forming ideas really took off. It is in a way a metaphor for the whole study and this presentation of three different ways of framing knowing and being is part of the overall contribution to knowledge of the thesis – the knowing of knowing, the be-

coming of being is laid open with rigour and variety both as a model and as a method.

At the beginning of writing up this research I identified three distinct bodies of knowledge. I felt wrong footed by my own neat categorisation of knowledge because I knew that knowledge had not come to me, or to the participants in the narratives they told me, neatly wrapped and ordered, Dewey system classified. In

Chapter Three: Methodology – I write:

It later emerged that the distinctions I had naively assumed I could make between what were responses to formal writing, and what were responses to other writing was far less clear, and like the rhizome suggests each question, each response, fed into a rich loam of connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. ‘ A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

This line of questioning, which is not a line at all but very different and fluid shape, is in itself a rhizomic experience and forms part of the study’s contribution to knowledge.

Eruption 1

The methodology of the “interview” provides a contribution to knowledge. This research abandons any pretence at the role of the objective interviewer, who records only what is said and treats it as data. Even if it were possible to make a transcript of every word and pause and intake of breath, there is still the issue that the words were generated by the interviewer’s selective questioning. The words themselves are replete with a variety of meanings and interpretations. The space the interview was carried out in and the pre-existing/shifting power relations between interviewer and interviewee will muddy the waters and make “objectivity” impossible and, I would argue, even unwanted. Instead, I propose a different way of viewing these interviews, these conversations, these exchanges, as ways of building worlds, of rhizomic tuberous interactions reaching back and forward across time, place, experience and subject matter.

So many worlds have been built in the interstices of the participants' words I could sit all day and all night and not do justice to the world-building-ness of their words but here's just one, chosen because it contains Belle as a practitioner, as someone who embraces 'gone wrong', and as an unconscious wordsmith.

There's poetry in 'I like the reverse side', surely?

In Chapter Five, Belle says

I can't draw. So I use photography and tracing. My screen-printing went wrong. I use a lot of "went wrong". Stitching - I used the opposite side. I like the reverse side.

I can see Belle's went-wrong world, and it is full of shapes and colour and language. She has made it hers and made the reverse of language, the reverse of technical drawing, the reverse of fabric, into her tracing, making this a mapping of new territories, not a reproduction of old ones.

Eruption 2

In Chapter Three, the methodology chapter, Emma says her mother rarely wrote and read little.

Is dyslexia familial? she asked.

I said that the medical model assumed it to be – although I also wondered how much limited educational opportunities might have played a part in our mothers' shared lack of reading and writing activity in later years.

Maybe my mum was dyslexic Emma said. *Or maybe she just didn't have a chance to find out.*

As we spoke Emma summoned up something of her mother's world, one she was seeing herself for the first time. What an eruption, what a moment to be there and be part of. When I think of it now I feel a little shiver. Emma's world will always be

mapped on to mine. The semi-structured interview process had become a site of productive growth and exchange, a lace of eruptive knowing and discovery. To have coded, transcribed these exchanges would have been one thing. But to think with theory, with real life, on the spot, in the moment, and again afterwards in conversation, and again later in writing – that is the rhizome in action. I propose that the value of these entanglements is a contribution to knowledge, to doing research differently.

Eruption 3

In part two of the literature review, I am concerned very much with what was a revelation at the time the finding of these words that so completely captured what I thought but couldn't quite get to, that there is no one truth, but instead a set of truths defined and shaped by our position in the world, our view from above, below, within and amongst.

Potgieter's deconstruction and disruption of the correspondence theory itself shaped this literature review and was one of the first texts that I found that I felt enabled me to progress through my research with some modicum of confidence. Assumptions of rightness can lead to acceptance of Truth, rather than considerations of truths; the correspondence tyranny which states that 'something is truthful or meaningful when it corresponds to some pre-given structure or pattern' (Potgieter, 2003, p. 48). The empirical tradition suggests a rightness of being which defines us. Most knowledge systems assume that truth occurs in some correspondence manner; that beneath the surface there are codes to be cracked. This correspondence manner might describe part one of the literature review.

Eruption 4

This deconstruction of the correspondence theory provides a contribution to knowledge, particularly in the way it is applied within this thesis. For instance:

I say to Hattie you're making a kind of growth on your paper. It's growing out of the page. Foil and cloth and string.

Belle says *plaiting is about feeling, it's tactile, and it's relaxing.*

I ask what is a plait what does it signify?

Hattie says *It's about interlocking things.*

I think it's about childhood, says Amy.

So plaits are not just material bound together. Plaits are de-coupled from a hair style choice, that correspondence is cut. Instead they are interlocking things, childhood, touch and feel and movement. Amy and Hattie here are making post-humanist tuberous connections and journeys with words. They are not tied to meaning like boats moored to a harbour but are confidently coursing the seas. I would argue that the facilitating of the space, time, energy, ontology and epistemology of this research has been a major contributory factor in causing that to happen to erupt, and that it may well have the power and agency to make it continue. Once a way has been found in post-humanist mulching it will continue to be found again and again.

Eruption 5

In literature review part three I make what I think a post-humanist literature review would look like. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest we must start in the middle, a rhizome is always in the middle, always connected, always able to be joined with. Haraway (1988) suggests we take the view – situated in our complex identities, our many ways of being – from beneath, from within, and from amongst, which promises a different way of grounding and organising knowledge. And that we ask different questions to those proposed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the Royal Literary Fund, and parts one and two three of this literature review. Instead of asking what is known already and adding to its further stratification and hierarchisation she urges us to ask questions of the traditional literature review:

How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for?
Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets
blinded? Who wears blinders? (Haraway, 1988, p. 587).

I use the Royal Literary Fund as an example of arborescent knowledge stratification and enlightenment values (Royal? And Fund? We have this benevolent place of learning for you, here are some crumbs, but please behave yourself. Funding can be withdrawn...) Ironically, I recently received (and accepted) an invitation to become a member of the Royal Society of Arts. I have learned how “what we do does” and am happy to engage with institutional power to improve the recruitment possibilities for my creative writing degree course, because on that degree course my intention is to make my understanding of rhizomic knowledge and disrupting power available to students to use as they think fit.

And I return again to this example where, in Chapter Three, Emma says her mother rarely wrote and read little.

Is dyslexia familial, she asked?

I said that the medical model assumed it to be – although I also wondered how much limited educational opportunities might have played a part in our mothers’ shared lack of reading and writing activity in later years.

Maybe my mum was dyslexic Emma said. Or maybe she just didn’t have a chance to find out.

Same example, same eruption, but this time we can see more, see with a different viewpoint. By breaking the automatic links and assumptions, words become rhizomic feasts. Emma is asking different questions. Not ‘why didn’t my mother know I was dyslexic?’ But ‘what events and interactions with cultural capital shaped and defined the parameters of my mother’s life?’

A contribution to knowledge (demonstrated in the eruptions above) is the foregrounding of the asking of different questions, the asking of questions differently, and the questioning of paradigms of knowledge.

Material reality appears as an immutable and fixed order of things which necessarily pre-structures and pre-determines our consciousness of it (Fagan, 2019, p. 1).

Thematic contribution: Reconceptualising Writing

This study makes a contribution to knowledge in that it combines particular elements that have not been combined in this way before. The study interrogates writing in some of its many manifestations, notably writing as an academic, assessed and measurable outcome, and writing as a form of fluid and imaginative communication. By placing writing in the art school, I explore both institutional power and constructs of the art institution, and examine how these relationships interact with and create each other. To do this I actively use ideas around place, space and materials, as factors in the shaping, entangling be-coming and making-invisible of dyslexia.

I also question dyslexia as a fixed and medicalised model combining theory and practical methods of research to problematise dyslexia and to explore how it comes to be, and its fluctuating relationship to the student participants. As previously stated, the medical model of dyslexia argues that dyslexia is a neurological impairment, and is concerned with defining dyslexia, its causes, and its effects on the individual.

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills (British Dyslexia Association, 2007).

Dyslexia is also socialised inasmuch as disability is caused not by an individual's impairment but by society's response to a given condition. This includes both physical and attitudinal. Within the University, students with dyslexia are given extra time for assignments to be submitted, offered learning support sessions and allowed extended library loans. There has been discussion over the year about not penalising students with dyslexia for spelling, grammar and punctuation, provided this does not impede meaning, and there is a high level of awareness within the

institution of some of the common issues facing students with dyslexia, including slower processing speed, phonological processing and short-term memory function.

I have taken this many steps further by questioning the primacy of orthography and some of the definitions of academic writing that students are expected to work to. In my discourse with participants and in writing interventions we have taken apart and reconstructed notions of academic writing by allowing materials, objects, artwork and sensory experiences into the traditional spaces of education learning and artistic display. We have discovered that dyslexia can take many forms. Belle for example has few problems with spelling – she learnt to spell almost visually and puts this down to having English as a second language. Chloe reads like a demon but needs to re-read often. Tom found that once he was writing about something he had ownership of, his language changed and his ability to recognise his grammatical errors improved.

When I gave the participants decontextualised words in writing intervention two – the gallery workshop – they struggled. When I suggested they work together they flourished. I was lacking in awareness. I forgot that making new words out of existing words might be difficult for students with dyslexia because of issues with letter ordering and phonological awareness. And anyway – what was the point of the exercise? We could just as easily make new words out of existing words through discussion. I had chosen an orthographic exercise when I should have chosen a verbal one. My mistake. I “made” dyslexia happen, I created duress. This made me realise how much we make disability and then blame it on others. This is a contribution to knowledge made manifest.

A key contributing factor to knowledge here, and a mark of the originality of the thesis, is the model of the writing workshops that have been used to both make new knowledge and understand past knowledge. Clinton (2003, p. 1) referring to the rhizome, writes that it is ‘the ecstatic elaboration of a metaphor, a web of interconnected concepts, the development of a new vocabulary’. Deleuze’s metaphor, he argues, ‘applies even to the very text in which it comes into being’ –

the text is not descriptive or static, it alerts us to the fact that ‘an enactment is at hand’ (Clinton, 2003, p. 1). The rhizome, as previously stated in Chapter Four is a ‘map, not a tracing’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 14). It refutes the copying and reproduction of old ways, instead both responding to, and making, knowledge as it performs its own acts.

It is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 14).

The writing workshops provide a contribution to knowledge by performing their own acts, allowing participants and myself to ‘construct the unconscious’ and providing from these enactments the raw material for new workshops, new encounters with narratives around dyslexia and writing, new ways of countering institutional power and oppression. I have also been asked – as a direct result of my research and teaching – to develop, write and deliver a BA (Hons) degree in Creative Writing in my University. This is predicated in large part upon the writing workshops, upon my research themes and upon all the powerful mapping, concepts and vocabulary acquired through this process to facilitate a new opportunity for students (especially non-traditional students who may not see themselves as writers, students with dyslexia diagnoses, mature students, BAME students) to embark on their own rhizomic writing life.

Eruption 6

The word poems are tributes to the power of the rhizome, each one proof of the generative nature of place and writing, each one asking a question of the medicalisation and socialisation of dyslexia, each one posing a challenge to the distinctions established between formal and informal writing, academic and non-academic register. The presentation of the poems: the font and line spacing, the absence (not lack) of speech marks, the visual setting out on the page are methodological contributions to knowledge as much as the content of the poems themselves. The example below – and I could have chosen so many – contains

time, place, memory, identity, growth, objects, materiality, and is the spontaneous writing of an art student with dyslexia. Spontaneous, not contrived – this is what she can do in the moment, as the sum of her writing life so far. The methodology of this research has allowed that eruption to happen. The decentring of distinctions between dyslexia and writing, the introduction of discourse, place and materiality, all contribute to this piece. I propose this as a contribution to knowledge.

small cute little worn old special tangled
random old new sparkly clanking memories
recollection affect feeling comforting homely protection
hard strong metal delicate subtle pastel faded time private
a way to transport past and memories
it is in a way an afterlife for the past that is gone

Eruption 7

In the first writing workshop, participants say these words:

things lead on to other things

and

things fall apart

This eruption is about the power of the workshop to both make visible and challenge knowledge, being and power. This eruption is about new ways of doing writing, it is a contribution to research. To roam amongst the sometimes difficult terrain of making words mean what you want them to mean, and questioning meaning itself. Presenting words, writing and knowledge in an arborescent fashion cuts off the flow of knowing and being. It ties us to the all-powerful trunk. It makes

writing the whip of duress to beat us with and highlights the issues of dyslexia in a non-productive fashion:

When my tutors mark my essays, I feel like I'm being judged. Academic writing is about being judged. This [the workshop] is different, it's a comfortable setting and it's not being marked. Dissertation writing is about right and wrong. Here there's no right or wrong.

To have no right or wrong, to dispense with the tyranny and binary, to wallow in the mulch of making writing is a re/generative experience and a powerful act of re/clamation. In this research, the participants explore their feelings around the formal elements of writing – in particular the dissertation – and are able to work in, through and around some of their complex feelings about this mode of communication, this packaging of knowledge. But first they had to be able to just relax, just be, just know, just write. This was the contribution to knowledge of workshop one.

Eruption 8

You know, this all makes complete sense now - why you were giving us writing prompts and all that. I wasn't sure before but now - it makes complete sense.

Nice, he says, smiling.

Thank you all; thank you, I repeat.

This encounter ends workshop one. The notion that I might give (not bestow or pass down from above, but give as in offer, proffer, share) some writing prompts, some existing eruptions that might in themselves spur on other eruptions, other words, is a contribution to knowledge that must not be underestimated. Teaching – about writing or anything else – that is about bestowing from above cannot hope to meet the places and people that teaching which comes from entangling does. The

participants, the room, the objects and materials, the teaching, all are entangled. I am moved to thank them for their part in this and I regard this as a contribution to knowledge.

Eruption 9

I observed after the second workshop, set in the white cube of the University art gallery that

Power was perhaps aligned to the relative freedom of the space, the playfulness of the exercises, the sensual elements of touch and taste and the references made to a subverted classroom where pupils were not pupils but rather Alices in Wonderland, running wisely amok throughout their painted landscape.

Here participants demonstrate through their upending of power structures, their taking over of the space. They are able to articulate both the power of the space and the tyranny of language (*The words I've made don't exist!* Tom cannot summon up new words from old as he cannot articulate initial sounds) and their ability to write differently (they join in pairs and pool resources, Belle writes in Danish), when they write about an object (rather than are prompted by a spelling or a word) they can produce poems and critiques of wonder and richness.

Eruption 10

This is an eruption that shows the way in which writing is an act of defiance and an act of faith. In the place they feel safe. Participants can trust themselves to just write, to get on with writing. The conditions created by this research make this possible and are replicable. This is a contribution to knowledge.

Amy asks *Is this about writing? Am I doing it right?*

Before I can reply Belle breaks in with *It's funny, we're really insecure about whether or not we're doing it right we really want to get it right*

And as soon as she's said this they start to write I don't need to reassure them because it's not needed. They are fine, they are getting on with it (Excerpt from Chapter Seven).

During workshop three, these words are spoken. It would have been easier to support a contribution to knowledge here by picking a point where the word insecurity isn't mentioned, but in the rhizomic and arboreal paradigm of ontology and epistemology to be insecure is simply to be in a place where we have not yet put out tubers, where we are in a process of be-coming and being. And this is a contribution to knowledge made by the research – to provide, open up a space (in the garden, in the sun) where participants can acknowledge their own be-coming, laugh at their repeated, performative behaviour, and they do this through writing, by getting on with writing:

Here we are, asking to be reassured. Let's write.

There's no right, no wrong.

Thematic contribution: Reshaping the art institution

The institution too has changed its aspect, journeying from college to higher education institution to university with full taught degree awarding powers and a new name. In July 2018 I formally became course leader for the BA (Hons) in Creative Writing, the first writing degree ever to be delivered by the university. I am currently writing that course, recruiting for students and looking forward to welcoming the first cohort in 2019. In terms of contributions to knowledge I believe that without this research there would not have been a creative writing degree taught in my University. The connection is established. The child-me always wanted to be a writer. History is caught up in itself. This is a contribution to knowledge forged out of my immersion over five years in my doctoral thesis and in the practising of my craft over 22 years.

The institution embodies what Foucault (1995) calls the complicated relationship between power, knowledge and subject. It has been my habitus for over twenty years now and I have grown to love it in some strange way. It is both an edifice, a container, and a germinator. It has housed and made possible innumerable entanglements; it is itself a place of rhizomic construction. Some of us within the University remember the former feel and shape of the place, when certain corridors and staircases led to places that are now expanded, removed, differently ordered or re allocated in terms of usage, as Foucault argues in terms of power

The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them (Foucault, 1990, p. 92).

Power is everywhere. The research demonstrates through use of place and objects of significance and import the sway in which the institution both creates and confounds power relationships. Tutors are held up to question, marks are railed against, and memories of past writing lives are unsettled (my parents didn't think that at all. I said I'd never do any more writing. But, my mother might have been dyslexic...).

Eruption 11

If you could not move mine please.

This eruption is about institutions. It highlights the institution as a place of ideology (O'Doherty, 1986) and is significant in its disruptive, regenerative power. It takes place during the second workshop, amongst the confines and challenges of the white-walled, white cube University gallery with its suggestions. We are about to start writing about their own artwork (always a site of eruption, where the participants demonstrate authority and agency) and I am about to help Hattie pick

up her large canvas, layered with gesso, gleaming blueish pink in the overhead lights. Suddenly she demands I leave it.

If you could not move mine please.

It is easily marked. She knows how to carry it safely. There, it's done and safely at the table. She isn't rude or excluding; she is clear as a bell and in control. So what does this tell us?

Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations (Foucault, 1990, p. 94).

The research has made rhizomic spaces for this power to move between tutor and tutee, writing and art, agency and passivity, not as binaries that can only exist because of but in opposition to each other, but as fluid and agential properties that illuminate the possibilities of the participants. A contribution to knowledge made by this research is to illuminate the complex, shifting and unequal nature of these relations, for without knowing this we cannot work against it.

One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole (Foucault, 1990, p. 94).

Hattie cleaves the body with her assertion, her ownership, her defence of her painting.

Eruption 12

This eruption is about writing and institutional power. Emma has perhaps the most complicated relationship to both her writing and her practice. During the time we have worked together she has also uncovered and reconnected with events and experiences in her childhood and early adolescence; events that have shaped the Emma she is now and may become, and also helped her reflect on her past self. At

times full of questions and slipping between certainty and uncertainty Emma suddenly, in the second workshop (the one where the shifting movements of power are somehow most apparent) makes this about her two paintings she has brought with her, a large one and a small one.

They don't belong together; they aren't a development. I always do a little one first. I only do shapes I like. It's what I really want. I scope it out with masking tape beforehand.

Then suddenly without warning she tears some of the masking tape off one of the paintings, revealing a clean, shockingly bare white space. Everyone gasps. What power. What performance. What control!

In this workshop, in this space, the presence of power was more deeply felt. Why? How are categories produced and represented?

Somehow the formality of the gallery space and the subject matter of the workshop, made me aware of the shifting power relations exercised between and amongst myself, the space, the participants, the notions of formal writing and the discussion of the participants' own artwork. All these factors contributed to a tangle of mobile and electric power interactions. From amongst them came moments of illumination and disruption which this chapter seeks to record and make sense of and Emma's tearing away is one of the most breath-taking (Excerpt from Chapter Six).

Desire and duress are writ large on Emma's responses here, her rupturing of the ties that bind her to the opinions of her tutors, her peers, the longing to be both approved of and to go her own way.

This research makes a key theoretical intervention in current debates around disability and normalcy; about writing and its epistemological and ontological intersection with power, space, bodies and matter. Dyslexia is considered through its connection to power, normalcy, performativity and through the de-constructing and reconstructing of knowledge in a post-humanist manner. Emma's gesture, her corporeal act, her spoken declaration, this eruption, beautifully illustrate this.

Thematic contribution: Me in the Research

I am present in this research. This is a contribution to knowledge. I am not objective, I am not exact in my transcription, I am not omni-present or not-present, I am not the same as the participants, I am different. A contribution to knowledge is the ability, the willingness to confront the Enlightenment paradigm of the all-seeingness of knowledge and to refuse to take the god view that only sees knowledge that is bigger, higher, louder and faster from above (Haraway, 1988). I need to be reminded of who I was and where I was five years ago, and to do so, to evaluate what I know I need to get right back into the heart of the past. I have struggled with my original opening paragraph, focusing as it does on a quote from Bauman on identity:

Bauman (2000) asserts that reality cannot be a finite and neatly rounded off affair. We see our own experience and identity as intangible and under constant reinvention whilst others' identities seem solid and stable. What we are seeing when we look at lives other than our own, however, is what he calls 'a work of art' (2000, p.86). And this work of art, which we make up out of our experiences, is what Bauman calls identity.

You might ask if this is a contribution to knowledge or a contribution to my knowledge. I think both. Understanding my epistemology and ontology gives me the access to the rhizomic nature of research, practice and teaching and writing. Without that I cannot write this thesis. Shifting focus from the concentration upon the idea of individual identity as central, or the idea of one voice as omnipotent and authoritative, towards the methodology of the rhizome (and my understanding that if anything is to change, it can't simply come from the will or wish of one individual placing their desires, no matter how altruistic) has made this research possible. Acknowledging my story is part of acknowledging the stories of all participants and co-constituents of this research. This, I propose, provided a different way of doing research that offers a contribution to a radical pedagogy of engagement. This research has a life beyond its printed text. It exists in the lives of the participants, in the propagation of the writing workshops and in the development, writing and teaching of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing degree. This is a key contribution to knowledge.

Is this being-in knowledge arguably a contribution to knowledge in itself, or at the very least, a way of engaging in research and practice that can provide new contributions to knowledge? I believe so.

Eruption 13

This eruption is about the way being present in the research, in the assemblage around the research (my university, my teaching, my writing practice), in which discourse and communication can open up paths to writing and thus make writing more productive, more within the compass of the writer, something to be revelled in and enjoyed. My relationship to the participants reflects my commitment to this rhizomic approach to knowing and being, my entanglements with them have made me a better teacher, researcher, writer and contributor to knowledge.

You take me seriously - our conversations show that. Things lead on to other things. Coming to see you is not just about being patted on the back. I am challenged. I think. I reflect. We end up discussing the things I say that are relevant to the things I'm writing and that makes me feel you're taking me seriously.

When I consider myself in the research as I reach the end of this research it is with a sense of real joy and satisfaction. It has been gratifying and generative to be part of this rhizome. A contribution to knowledge made by this research is the possibility of showing how this might work for others, how letting go of ego but recognising what is in ourselves, in others, across the many lines and territories we habit can lead to fruitful and generative discourse. This letting-go, this decentring of the ego and the individual wish to be right and prove rightness is a damaging, unproductive and ultimate dead end.

Eruption 14

This eruption is about acknowledging the shifting of power and intimacy that takes place in education, between researcher and researched. They are not my subjects. I am not their author. This is important. This is a contribution to knowledge.

The washed-out colours in the square.

That's good; that's really good! Tom says to Belle. They all clap other at the end of the readings. I actually feel a bit tearful.

You're all so brave I say, and they look at me fondly.

The ethics of relationality here place me explicitly in this situation, in this moment, and also immerse me further into my long-term, continuing, elastic relationship to these participants over time. If ethics is about how we should live, then it is in essence about how we might and should live together (Austin in Given, 2008) (Chapter Six).

This interchange takes place in workshop two, in the gallery space. I cannot be anything other than involved, entangled, and yet I feel I can see all the lines of flight that we are embark/ed/ing on. I know this is part of something else; it is shared by us all here in this space, but only for now. This is one of the reasons I know not to call them "my" participants, "my research subjects."

Eruption 15

Belle: It's funny though cos I'm the first in my family that's got a Uni degree and I used to think that's never... it used to be such a far-fetched thing, it's almost like becoming a doctor! It's like you can't do that and then I've done it. But over the 3 years your head gets into the idea you're doing a degree and it becomes - not less valued - but it doesn't become the same as... Then you go oh I might do a masters or a PhD and you move yourself don't you??? That's what I wanted. To also show my kids that you can for a degree; you can do it later in life.

I can't stop myself – the sun is shining, we're eating sweets, it's nearly the end of term, they are all going to leave the university soon. It's pointless pretending I don't have an investment in this, in them, even if it's circumscribed and particular.

That just makes me so happy! I exclaim, and Belle nods (Chapter Seven).

In *Situated Knowledges* (1988) Haraway writes of the problem of making and sharing

An account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness (Haraway, 1988, p. 579).

In the garden we have found epistemology and ontology, we have used our semiotic technologies of voice and mark making and we have given our accounts in integrity, we have discussed suffering and experienced happiness. Together. I was there too. This ethics of relationality in my research is a contribution to knowledge. Through this, in eruptions 13 and 14, I become part of the power that can be disrupted, moved about, utilised and challenged. I become of use to the participants, they are active and see me as active too. And within this, warmth can exist, and laughter, and some yearning, and some recognition of a commonality.

Thematic contribution: Reimagining the importance of place

Place is essential in allowing a rhizomic exploration of dyslexia, particularly within the art institution.

If one moves in from the satellite towards the globe, holding all those networks, social relations and movements and communications in one's head, then each 'place' can be seen as a particular, unique, point of their intersection. It is, indeed, a meeting place (Massey, 1994, p. 10).

Dyslexia is also present in and problematised by the institution. The University recognises dyslexia and supports students with dyslexia. It also make dyslexia visible through this support (the academic support office, the extensions to hand-ins, extended library loans) and in much more subtle and profound ways, by privileging orthography, by asking for writing to be "done" in a certain way, by

presenting textual information in a decontextualised way, as words to be read separately from art practice. In the writing interventions in the institutional space I deliberately introduced language and text into the melee of objects, materials and sensory experience. The discourse created by these interventions is often around the way dyslexia shifts and moves within the lives of the participants, and within their experiences of the institution itself. This discourse is a contribution to knowledge.

I show in my research how space, and material objects, can become agential and powerful, allowing participants to remember, and remember differently, to slip between places – their childhood homes, schools, studios, bed-sits, university lecture halls, tutorial rooms, and the three locations of the writing interventions: the Life Drawing room, the gallery and the garden.

This tentacular form of place (Haraway, 2016) and time is mapped by the participants' narratives and by the mapping of these narratives onto the locations of their writing lives. The Life Drawing room, gallery and garden become enmeshed with the people, experiences and language of the research. In this way my handling of place provides a forum to make new knowledge, to re-discover old narratives and to re-position the participants' narratives of their writing lives in the writing they make, the rooms they inhabit and the discourse they produce.

People and spaces are permeable to each other in a way that people and people are not. I saw that space is like water. People can go inside it (Fusselman, 2013, cited in NLQ, 2017, p. 1).

The cloistering in the Life Drawing room, in particular, rings in my memory with a kind of warmth, secrecy, squirrelled-away-ness that could at that time in that place only really be achieved by going off grid, hiding in little used places. This repurposing of places and using them to do writing, do dyslexia, do pedagogy, do research differently is a further contribution to knowledge.

Eruption 16

In Chapter Five, Hattie describes the Life Drawing room as *The room of requirement*. In Chapter Seven I note:

The room of requirement is now another name for the Life Drawing room! The place we had our first workshop. I too have 'acquired' paint brushes from there from time to time. That was a place indeed! A place I for one think of with the desire discussed in the previous chapter. It's no longer there. It was turned into a general teaching room and now while the University is being reconfigured entirely due to our massive extension, it's a rubble filled void (Chapter Seven).

This is not the 'reactionary... idealised...land of the status quo' that Massey warns us against but instead a rhizome itself, allowing us to experience 'the fields and relations' it 'gives rise to' (Massey, 1991, p. 26). Hattie found what she needed in this room of requirement. This object she selected, the paintbrush that never left her side, is steeped in its own ontology, a piece of material culture that bridges the spaces between knowing and being.

Eruption 17

In Chapter Seven, I note also that:

Writing, and writing lives, were everywhere in the places, but I posit that nowhere did the sun shine on them quite so longingly, quite so purposefully as it did in the garden. I describe the garden as a simple, suitable and relationally expansive place to be. The sun is out and there as a sense of be-coming as well as of endings (Chapter Seven).

Metaphorically, we are string figuring in the garden. As Haraway says, we are telling stories:

String figures are like stories. They propose and enact patterns for participant to inhabit, somehow, on a vulnerable and wounded earth. [They have] complex histories...as full of dying as living [and show us both] partial recuperation and getting on together (Haraway, 2016, p. 10).

This eruption is about the rhizome. The ants, the sun, the breeze, the conversation are all living things and as we sit there, there is also the future looming; the sun

setting, the participants leaving, the ants returning to ground. It is all these things; it is rhizomic. The rhizome 'brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21). This research combines elements of thinking with theory and putting trust in both place and discourse, and in doing so offers the scene above as a contribution to knowledge.

Eruption 18

This eruption is about the institution itself. Discussing the gallery sited workshop, I call on McEvilley's (1986) comments on the white cube, but I also write that, despite the white cube's exercise of institutional power, any space, once it is inhabited can then be subverted.

I write of the University's newly built white walled gallery:

This space is new to the Institution and reflects the aesthetic of the white cube, which 'Refers to a certain gallery aesthetic characterised by its square or oblong shape, white walls and a light source usually from the ceiling' (Tate, 2016, p. 1) (Chapter Seven).

Here the ceiling and the light become symbols of almost religious power and authority, casting a glow on those of us below, but I recognise, as for the participants, the potential for play and subversion in this space. Sat at tables and chairs (both not usually seen in a gallery) we both mimic and challenge the constraints of the white cube and the positing of knowledge distribution and its power relationships. We eat sweets, sit on the floor, write quaint tales of fire extinguishers and when it comes to discussing or even physically moving their own artwork the participants inhabit their powerful language and protective bodily acts. This research demonstrates Massey's (2005, p.9) assertion that space is 'always under construction' and that it can be thought of as a 'simultaneity of stories so far' and this I believe is a contribution to knowledge. This research will continue to live and produce tentacles as the creative writing degree course continues to grow its radical pedagogy.

Thematic contribution: Post-humanist ethics in research

Ethics is in every encounter. I believe that recognising that ethics is in every encounter and the way in which I seek to act this out in this research, is a contribution to knowledge. At the very start of this research, I discussed with each participant the nature and extent of their involvement with the project. I explained that this was about my research for my PhD and that they would have a part in this if they wished to do so. They understood what I was to gain from their participation, that there would be no research without them, and I was grateful for that and acknowledged that. I said to them that there was a power relationship involved in research, much as we might like to pretend there isn't, and rather than act as though we were all perceiving this cooperation in the same way, it might be better to set out clearly the terms of engagement. This was done with by means of an ethics consent form, but also by continued, regular, conscious and reflexive discussion and an attention to the encounters between researcher and participants.

When we meet the participants for the first time in this research through pen portraits and opening interviews, we know immediately we are in a stratified space, a rhizomic structure that has been co-created but that originated with me. This is honest research. This makes participants' voices as authentic as I can without claiming total objectivity or a god-like overview. I talk often about power, not only in Chapter Six: Power and/as Performativity, but elsewhere, and as I cannot ignore or eradicate power. Instead I acknowledge and examine it which I believe to be a more honest and intellectually productive act. Ethically I was always aware that I was just meeting and entangling with people, places books and objects at points in time, and that these participants were never "my" participants. This is a strength of the study, I believe, and a contribution to knowledge. It matters, because participants are not things that we use to get results. They are people we encounter and entangle with and we leave traces on them as they do on us.

To have this different relationship with research participants echoes Haraway's (2016) idea of getting along with. I might own the words, I do not own the participants, but we are still part of the rhizome, part of the

Ceaselessly established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 8).

My ethical decisions aimed at allowing the autonomy of the participants to take as close to equal place as possible with my desire, my imperative, to write and deliver a good piece of doctoral research for institutional purposes.

Eruption 19

Presenting the conflicts and contradictions of the participants' narratives is an ethical decision. This gives permission to both delve into and disrupt these narratives, and gives legitimacy to alternative manifestations of knowledge. See for instance: the participants' ownership of the Life Drawing room, gallery and garden; their inhabitation and sequestering of these spaces; their production of words and image and writing; their questioning of each other and of their own narratives; their arguments with their dyslexic identities.

See their wild and wonderful attempts to refute Foucault's 'People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does' (Foucault n.d., cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 187). See them try to understand 'what what they do does.' We see a rich and nuanced and theoretically considered part of the participants' writing lives this way, and present something of them that is ethically driven and complex rather than flat, coded and delivered as indisputable evidence.

Eruption 20

Understanding, acting in the moment and revising over time, these are all ethical issues that researchers must face. In Chapter Three I discuss in some detail my decision to discuss Emma's mother with her. 'The ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one's response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating' (Bennett, 2010a, p. 37). I weighed up the situation quickly in real-time, but slowly in my head, calling on as I did my experiences of

shared encounters with students down the years. I called on my knowledge of Emma as a person as far as it went and my genuine wish to respond to her question as carefully as I could. I tried to be mindful that my enthusiasm was not the point of the exchange, but the point was rather her wish to know more, or know differently, what her mother might herself have known partially or differently. And I thought of my own mother, of the many complications and conflicts of her life and of how she might wish to be understood or seen by others and I acted to the best of my ethical compass.

This study makes a contribution to knowledge in the arena of ethics by striving to be honest, by admitting involvement, feeling, bias, complexity, by letting go the participants and not seeking to own them, by avoiding the preposition “my” before the word participants, by using participant as opposed to subject. It makes a contribution to knowledge by not making the partial represent the whole and by also questioning the whole (it’s a case of where you sit or stand, whether you choose to sit somewhere up the tree of knowledge or entangle and engage with the mulch, it’s Haraway’s god trick again and not wanting to fall foul of it). It’s about respect – for the people, the process, the language, the places, the endeavour and effort and sheer hard work of all of those voices and all of those words and all of that writing and that contribution to our own personal knowledges and to bigger discourses we made over the past five years.

In Conclusion

You are the end of this thesis. But it isn’t the end. It’s part of a story, full of tentacular possibilities and alternative narratives. This isn’t a conventional thesis. But it shouldn’t be unrecognisable as a thesis. I used the quote below in Chapter Two.

Creative works, no matter how highly esteemed, cannot in themselves be in themselves be regarded as outputs of research. They can only become so with explanatory or contextualising text (The UK Council for Education 1997 cited in Borg, 2007, p. 98).

This thesis is both creative work and explanatory text.

Ivakhiv (2014) writes about Haraway:

She isn't taking you from point A to point Z. She will take you in a weave-like motion across the same set of crossings on different threads. Let the words and images wash over you, and, at the same time, follow the little waves that you can, then, surf-like, try to catch another one. But having a road map helps (Ivakhiv, 2014, p.1).

I have used my methodology, my theory and my practice to try to do this in my way in this thesis and I hope I have done it clearly and well enough.

Cintron asks:

Instead of solely and repeatedly asking the questions Cintron rightly cites as central to "school-appropriate" writing instruction – "'Have you chosen the right word?' 'Can this be made clearer?', 'Your argument here is inconsistent.' 'Are you being contradictory?'"(231) – we might ask questions designed to dismantle our current corpo-reality... How can this system be de-composed? (McRuer, 2004, p. 58).

I use this thesis to respond to McRuer's question 'How can this system be de-composed?' whilst still remaining within the system of doctoral requirements.

I have been privileged to work with the participants, to have access to places, people, time, support and encouragement. That's me. Lucky me. But what emerges from all this is that all stories go on, and are variously heard and understood each time they are recounted. What matters is that the voices are heard and absolutes are challenged, whether they are whittled away at, or resolutely faced down. That educational opportunity and access to rights are not the domain of the privileged or those that know the score. That institutions of power acknowledge their power, and individuals acknowledge the consequences of their actions upon others.

Finally, I return to Haraway:

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what worlds make worlds, what worlds make stories (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12).

I hope I have made it matter here.

Appendix 1: Timeline

This was my projected research timeline. Dates and venues remained generally as planned, although time and life events meant that the last intervention and subsequent feedback involved 4 out of the 6 participants.

Date	Event	Method	Purpose	Participants
Sept 2015 - Dec 2015	Preliminary narrative accounts	Initial narrative accounts of students' writing lives and assessment of their writing identities	To understand, through narrative inquiry, where and how these art students with dyslexia position themselves in relation to their dyslexia, their writing and their art practice, before my fieldwork commences	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy
Dec 15 2015	Writing intervention one	Tactile writing workshop	To explore the possibilities of tactile writing in the setting of the art institution	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy
Jan 2016	Review of writing intervention one	Growing a narrative through semi-structured interview. I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This framework will provide a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent	For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this intervention through their narratives. For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of participants' experiences and to reflect upon the experience of this intervention for them and for me.	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy

		<p>is to develop a narrative response using if appropriate the opening question 'what did you think of the first writing intervention?' This will be voice recorded and later transcribed. Through email exchange</p>		
Jan-Feb 2016	Review of participants' recent experience of academic essay or dissertation writing (as applicable)	<p>Growing a narrative through semi-structured interview I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This framework will provide a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent is to develop a narrative response using if appropriate the opening question 'how did you feel about your dissertation/essay mark?'</p>	<p>For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this writing through their narratives.</p> <p>For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of participants' experiences and to reflect upon the experience of this writing for them and for me.</p>	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy
Feb 25 2016	Writing intervention two	Gallery sited writing	To generate writing experimentally and spontaneously using the visual stimulus of the institutionally sited art gallery and exhibits.	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy
Feb 2016	Review of writing intervention two	<p>Growing a narrative through semi-structured interview. I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This framework will provide a space to ask</p>	<p>For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this writing through their narratives.</p> <p>For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of participants' experiences and to</p>	Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy

		<p>questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent is to develop a narrative response using the opening question 'what did you think of the second writing intervention?' This will be voice recorded and later transcribed. Through email exchange</p>	<p>reflect upon the experience of this writing for them and for me.</p>	
Feb-March 2016	<p>Discuss with participants their experiences of their recent course-related writing</p>	<p>Growing a narrative. Semi-structured interview. I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This framework will provide a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent is to develop a narrative response using the opening question</p> <p>'How did you feel about your course-related writing and any feedback you were given on it?'</p>	<p>For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this writing through their narratives. For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of participants' experiences and to reflect upon the experience of this writing for them and for me.</p>	<p>Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe, Hattie, Amy</p>
May 18 2016	<p>Writing intervention three</p>	<p>Garden-sited writing and painting</p>		<p>Belle, Amy, Hattie, Chloe</p>
May 2016	<p>Writing intervention three review</p>	<p>Growing a narrative through semi-structured interview. I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This</p>	<p>For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this writing through their narratives.</p> <p>For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of</p>	<p>Belle, Tom, Emma, Chloe,</p>

		<p>framework will provide a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent is to develop a narrative response using, if appropriate, the specific opening question 'what did you think of the third writing intervention?'</p> <p>This will be voice recorded and later transcribed.</p> <p>Through email exchange</p>	<p>participants' experiences and to reflect upon the experience of this writing for them and for me.</p>	<p>Hattie, Amy</p>
<p>May- June 2016</p>	<p>Review of experiences of writing about their practice as they approach the end of year show.</p>	<p>Growing a narrative. Semi-structured interview. I will meet with individuals at a set time and in a set place. This framework will provide a space to ask questions, hear answers and share discourse. The intent is to develop a narrative response using, if appropriate, the specific opening question</p> <p>'How did you feel about the experience of writing about your practice as the end of year show approaches, and can you reflect on your experiences in and around the writing workshops?'</p>	<p>For participants- to reflect upon the experience of this writing through their narratives.</p> <p>For me as researcher- to gather narrative accounts of participants' experiences and to reflect upon the experience of this writing for them and for me.</p>	<p>Belle, Amy, Hattie, Chloe</p>

May- June 2016	Closing narrative accounts	Growing a narrative- reviewing, reflecting on and entangling with participants' accounts, workshop recordings and outcomes.		
June 2016- onwards	Reflecting on and writing up findings	Gathering and displaying a narrative through transcribed sections of interviews, workshop outcomes and images, narrative accounts in a variety of manifestations from single words and phrases to prose, poetry and fiction- showing the range and possibilities of the words, narrative, storytelling and research.		

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