Drawing out Language:

From Or to And, Disrupting Dualism Through Conceptual Poetics

Rachel Smith

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of

Sheffield Hallam University

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2019

Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the university, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the university's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged. The practice work for one of the submitted artists books: *Read(writ)ing Words* was made partly in collaboration with artists Helen Frank and Madeleine Walton and their part in this project is fully acknowledged in the thesis and Appendix Four.

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.

5. The Word Count of this thesis is 43,445

Name	Rachel Smith
Date	December 2019
Award	Ph.D.
Faculty	Fine Art (C3RI)
Director of Studies	Dr. Sharon Kivland

Abstract

Drawing out Language: From Or to And, Disrupting Dualism Through Conceptual Poetics

I address how the material and conceptual form of artist books may be used to explore the partial nature of communication and to challenge the fixity of meaning implied by dualism in language. My project produces spaces where any compulsion for definitive terms and reliance on the *or* of binary sense may be called into question.

Cultivating a rhizomatic and associative method developed from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, I forge connections, crossing disciplinary boundaries and assembling diverse theories. I elicit a praxis response to explore the abstract notions of existing *between* or *beside* through an examination of new materialist writing terms. Unsettling dualism in order to avoid fixing or claiming a position, fragmentary techniques are employed to reject immediate coherence, opening spaces to reflect on minor processes of meaning-making.

Considering the book form, I examine the condition and position of the author: the death, return, authorial position, and conceptual distance achieved since the author's original death declared by Roland Barthes in 1967. As an author(ity) continually re-emerges, and cannot be killed, silenced, or neutralised, I suggest how distraction, meandering, error, and misrepresentation in relation to reading and writing challenge authority and expectations of research behaviour. I develop a method which combines elements of Caroline Bergvall's call for conceptual poetics of engaged disengagement – breaking the relentless submission to the rules, while acknowledging the complexity of lived experience – with Barthes's insolent but smitten reading approach. My own disruptive devotion to reading, writing, and making are enmeshed in the practice, using drawing, photography and writing to produce artist books.

The art works disrupt existing texts by using association, error, and distraction to fragment. In doing so, spaces are produced to materialise elements of the reading process which explore the construction of sense for this reader. Reading as writing as making are understood *via* a term I have developed: writ(read)ing. This term defines the development of a method, used by the read(writ)er, where practice cuts together-apart processes related to reading/writing/making to challenge oppositional terms.

Contents

Appendices:

Bibliography   192

List of Illustrations

All Photographs are by the author unless otherwise stated.

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who have supported me during this research project, and so an enormous thank-you goes to:

My godmother Pauline Glasby who left me a totally unexpected and generous gift in her will, which paid for this endeavour. Her gift allowed me to spend six years developing my practice and research in ways that would not have been possible otherwise.

Dr. Sharon Kivland and Dr. Alice Bell, my supervisors without whom none of this would have materialised. They have supported me in so many different ways from being inspirational in their own right, holding me to their rigorous standards, having enthusiasm and belief in my project even in the dark times, engaging in discussions around practice which have pushed me out of my comfort zone. I will miss their conversations and expertise.

Angela Rees, my one-to-one support worker, as she has always offered a space for me to deal with my anxieties, provided strategies that have helped me organise my thoughts on paper, and enabled me to see strength in what I considered my weaknesses.

My Ph.D. community which over the six years of research has changed and shifted but always offered a space to think, question, and test. In-amongst these people there are some who deserve special thanks. Bryan Eccleshall for his humour, generosity, useful chats in the pub, and for always asking the awkward questions. Jo Ray for her friendship, pep talks, and so many silent writing sessions. Louise Finney and Emma Bolland for their friendship, writing sessions, ranting over cocktails, and of course Bananarama ArtWriting. All of which helped to keep me on track and smiling!

Helen Frank and Madeleine Walton for their continued creative support, for the work and support they contributed towards *Read(writ)ing Words*, and all the other experimental endeavours we have collaborated on leading up to and beyond the period of this research. Their can-do approach always inspires me to do more.

All the artists who worked with me during my *Interrupteur* residency at Sheffield University. With special thanks to Amanda Crawley Jackson for her invitation to take up the residency, along with her endless enthusiasm and boundless energy in supporting me to pull the project off.

Lawrence Morton, a headteacher who believed in the value of education beyond exams and the classroom, the importance of further study for his staff, and who pushed me to take the leap in applying for the MA, which formed the start of this journey and whose support and encouragement was invaluable.

Lastly and most importantly, my partner Vicky, who has been unbelievably patient and generous through the six years of part-time research. She has given me the space I needed to get this done (even holidaying alone!) and always been my cheerleader to keep me on track to completion, even when I didn't believe I had it in me.

Introduction:

I.1 Picking up from the middle (or to begin over six times)

> 'The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out [...] on a single page, the same sheet: lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations'.[1]

In constructing this writing, while circling my ideas to present an unambiguous account of the research, I am repeatedly drawn to the above quotation from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, because the apparent need to explain everything at once is always present. Any starting point requires a clarification, a step back to describe the context, to outline a glossary of terminology. Ideas cannot easily be laid out in a linear form because they are constructed in a network. If I pick up any particular subject, attachments that exist between that subject and other ideas and objects produce a myriad of associations that require attention.[2] I am writing in-among all the different elements of the research and to begin, I take a step back to explain the whole project. I should find the best place of entering this existing dialogue in order to make myself clear, yet there is no best place. In developing this research through a non-hierarchical system there can be no best place, as all places have equal value. I make the introductions from the position which I have fought to maintain – always in the middle.[3]

As suggested by the sub-heading above, to pick up from the middle I shall start more than once.[4] I have borrowed the idea of repeatedly beginning over from Sarah Wood's *Without Mastery*, the chapter entitled 'Try Thinking As If Perhaps'.[5] Herein she uses the

---

1 Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [*Capitalisme et Schizohrénie, Tome II, Mille Plateaux,* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1987], p. 8.
2 Often, I feel like a director trying to control a cast of unruly performers, who all want to jostle to the front of the stage and shout about the importance of their role. These performers; the artworks, theories, books, conversations, ideas need to be given equal weighting in relation to taking a non-hierarchical approach, and this is explained in more detail in the coming sections.
3 The middle is a term that will be returned to throughout the thesis, and developed in relation to a variety of concepts, but is explained in the following section *via* Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 26–27.
4 In fact, from the first word of this introduction I have already started over as the abstract has already introduced the project. As such this section acts to reintroduce and extend ideas outlined in the abstract.
5 Sarah Wood, *Without Mastery: Reading and Other Forces,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, p. 24.

structure 'to think about thinking' in relation to selected literary sources.[6] This idea represents my experience of the research process more accurately.[7] While each subheading acts as an entry point ideally all should be laid out on a single surface so each aspect may be seen in relation to the rest, avoiding any implied hierarchy.

I.2 Start at the very beginning, it's a very good place to start[8]

If only this were true. As I have said in ~~starting~~ here,[9] I am in the middle, even after this thesis is written.[10] Let me explain. The methodology of this research is underpinned by a response to the writings of Deleuze and Guattari on the rhizomatic and to decipher this, it will help initially to examine the biological structure of a physical rhizome.

In scientific terms a rhizome is a root system, a tangle of connected roots with underground nodules containing the capacity to grow new plants. Each plant is self-sufficient rather than reliant on the entire root network. Strawberries have stolon type roots – a shoot that grows along the surface above the ground from the main plant, sending roots down from its nodes, whereas stinging nettles, couch grass, ginger, and potatoes have rhizomatic connections which grow roots in a similar manner but underneath the surface of the soil. The rhizome refers not to the plant or specific roots, but to the portion of plant that connects them. It remains below the surface, charts the direction and movement of the plant growth, and stores proteins and starches which

---

6 Ibid.

7 I reach up to the library shelf to borrow Sarah Wood's book *Without Mastery: Reading and Other Forces.* Randomly I select one from the four shelved volumes, careful to avoid the reference copy. Having carried the book home once I eventually open the book, it falls open at a page where I instantly recognise my pencil annotations. Simultaneously the tiny pink post-it note I left after photographing this book from an earlier project becomes visible, now slightly faded at the corner. These are the tiny coincidental occurrences that make this volume of the book seem to belong to me.

8 This subtitle refers to *The Sound of Music* and the song by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, 'Do-Re-Mi' sung by Julie Andrews in 1965, but I might instead have used a line taken from the King in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*: 'Begin at the beginning, the King said, very gravely, and go on till you come to the end: then stop.'

9 Here I use Jacques Derrida's technique of *écriture sous rature* (writing under erasure). This technique involves crossing out the word in use while leaving it visible, demonstrating a refusal of its meaning and a pragmatic approach towards using the existing lexicon. Later in Chapter Two I will consider this in relation to methods of new materialism.

10 In Chapter Two *the middle* will be revealed as too specific a location and consideration is given to less specific positional language: towards in-between, in-amongst, and beside.

enable the plant to perennate from year to year. No matter how much of the rhizomatic weed is dug up, only a fraction of it must remain in order for an entire system to grow back. Though Deleuze and Guattari diverge from the plant-based rhizomatic to build an abstract structural theory, I will return to this gardening metaphor in describing my practice.

The main features of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic structure are:

- Any point in a rhizome can and must be connected to all other points. All are simultaneously self-contained and connected.[11]

- The rhizome has multiple entry and exit points, each journey traces an individual route through the territory.[12]

- There are no points, only lines in a rhizome.[13]

- A rhizome can be ruptured in any location, and a 'line of flight' will emerge charting new growth, either along existing lines or forging new lines; the rhizome continues to expand its reach.[14]

- The rhizome is non-hierarchical and anti-genealogical, as opposed to the image of the tree and verb 'to be'.[15]

- It exists as an alliance, 'the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, *and...and...and*'.[16]

- Exiting the rhizome is seemingly impossible as a rhizome always connects to other rhizomatic systems and as such has no interior or exterior.[17]

- Positionally, the middle is a constant location of the rhizome, having no beginning or end; the middle is where things pick up speed, a rapid transversal movement sweeping away.[18]

---

11 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 6.
12 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 22.
13 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 7.
Umberto Eco refutes this, writing: 'this feature is doubtful: intersecting lines make points':
'The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth', *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington, IN:
Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 81
14 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 8.
15 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 3.
16 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 26.
17 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 24.
18 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 26–27.

I translate these theoretical attributes into a practical way of working, embedded in the way my thinking develops, the process of writing, and how the work is made. All points (ideas, theories, objects, or art works) are connected, and their respective influences are enmeshed. Consequently, each chapter is a journey through an area of the assembled territory, which may be imagined as a map of the entire project. Writing through the network structure leads inevitably to tracing over some of the same nodes in the diagrammatic map. Ideas addressed will refer back and forth across the chapter structure, and any repeated references are a reminder of the rhizomatic network beneath the visible page surface. Though the thesis exists as a bound, fixed object, the construction of the work suggests that the ideas it contains might be rethought, restructured to produce a different account of the research. Footnotes are important – they are used to acknowledge the fluid associations, tangential thinking, and new lines of flight drawn after any rupture occurs. My writing acknowledges different voices contained across the practice and theory as they are woven throughout to propose a multiplicity rather a hierarchical position given to any singular viewpoint.[19] The *and...and...and* which appears above is used in a number of ways: to construct a territory assembled through the rhizomatic alliance of *and,* connecting art works, ideas, objects, and theories in an unending process; to foreground the disruption of the *or* which resides in the *either or* of language dualisms; to approach the collaborative endeavours in the practice.

Working in a rhizomatic manner has provided many challenges. According to Umberto Eco, thinking in a rhizomatic space 'means to grope one's way'; he suggests that seeing locally inside the structure of the rhizome is the only possibility.[20] As any rhizomatic system connects to other rhizomes the idea of an interior and exterior is removed and reaching the outer limits of a territory becomes impossible. As each journey through my assembled research territory takes a different route, every navigation is unfamiliar. An attempt in the early stages to explore, understand, and apply the rhizomatic principles to the whole structure of my project prevented me from seeing what I was actually doing on

---

19 This approach to recognising different voices in the research process via the rhizome is acknowledged by Eileen Honan, 'Writing a rhizome: an (im)plausible methodology', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 20 no. 5, 2007, 531–46.
Though it may be impossible to produce a completely un-hierarchical account as there will always be a particular approach which is foregrounded over another. By trying to disrupt dualism in language it can be argued that I am offering a more privileged position to something that seeks to avoid this.
20 Umberto Eco, 'The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth', *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 82.

the ground. While navigating the provisional territory I have gradually constructed, the best analogy is that of walking a landscape. I can look up or across at the whole picture, but this frequently causes me to trip over the rocks beneath my feet; in watching the ground I tread to avoid stumbling, I miss a view of the vista beyond. It became apparent that this lack of complete vision was inevitable, as identified by Eco, who proposes that descriptions made inside a rhizome are merely hypotheses, likely to be false, due to the condition of blindness the rhizome invokes.[21] Donna Haraway outlines in *Staying with the Trouble* that methodologies of collaboration, experimentation, and invention are needed to 'follow the threads where they lead[...] following a thread in the dark'.[22] In darkness of uncertainty the threads of collaboration and experimentation are what enable a path to be followed.[23] Accepting these conditions has enabled me to fight for my local and partial position, to take the risk of stumbling through the dark, trusting the generative encounters with making, reading, and writing.

Part of this challenge lies in writing my rhizomatic associations. No matter how often I lay out a structure or map the intention of each section, I cannot predict in advance how I will build the rhizomatic connections in the moment of assembling an argument. The ideas forged involve a process which embraces lostness and thinking in action, rather than the delivery of resolved content. This leaves the structure and shifting territory as provisional, constantly subject to revision. In making a connection from Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome towards Eco's description of the rhizomatic, the labyrinth appears, an image that lies across the map of this research. Having made the link I have no easy way back to where I was and am momentarily at the end of a thread. This is not the dead end of a maze, for the possibility remains that all the ideas are connected, but in the moment of thinking while writing it takes energy and time to develop a new 'line of flight' to link the ideas in a flowing sequential manner. My thought process is ruptured and, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, if the rhizome is ruptured, lines of flight either reform along existing lines or sweep off in a new direction.[24] This is how the rhizome continues to expand.

---

21 Ibid., pp. 80–82.
22 Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 3.
23 The word 'threads' will always divert my thoughts back to the 1984 BBC and Nine Network Australia film *Threads* by Barry Hines, a post-apocalyptic world set in Sheffield after a nuclear war, the first of its genre to depict a nuclear winter.
24 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 8.

Momentarily lost in the tangle of these rhizomatic lines I pick up a different thread in an attempt to find another route back to where I need to be. Is that a need or desire? Suddenly the association is of Alice and her desire for nonsense, and the difficulties experienced when one gets one's desire.[25] The feeling of falling down the rabbit hole, as well as a thought of a literal line of flight relate to Robin Nelson's use of the word clue and clew (the old form of the same word), which 'literally denotes a thread'.[26] The lines of flight that I trace to build this network of connections are similar to those threads outlined in Nelson's description of the need to write clues/clews to accompany arts-based research process. He refers to the clew as being connected to the labyrinthine nature of research, a confusing tangle of passageways with a thread to hold which guides the reader, allowing them to follow the path taken. Continuing the idea of lostness in arts-based research Antonia Pont writes in *Practising with Deleuze*:

> Practice requires us to engage with a 'tolerance for lost-ness and not-knowing. As well as a getting-lost, practice would invite or court a becoming-lost, a setting out into lost-ness – a skill for embarking with this strange intention.[27]

Embracing lostness has been an important feature of this research as it has enabled a searching without presuming knowledge in advance. Acting while lost can be a way to embrace randomness as a tool for undermining expected patterns of behaviour, and authority. Lostness in writing refers to writing thoughts in the process of thinking, working ideas out before fully formed. I draw maps of my ideas and research in diagrammatic form. These guide the writing process. However, in bridging the gaps between points or words written on the maps, to write in a relatively linear manner with a clear linkage, I must articulate what might occur in the spaces between points. This gap exists as what has yet to be thought out. Each new connection across the idea diagram is a light of flight: a leap into the unknown as the as-yet-unthought is drawn out.

---

25 Alice here refers to Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, London: Macmillan, 1980.
26 Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances,* Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 10–11.
27 Antonia Pont, 'Philosophising Practice', Suzie Attiwill, Terri Bird, et al, *Practising with Deleuze: Design, Dance, Art, Writing, Philosophy,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, p. 21.

I.3 Begin over, acknowledging multiple voices, while addressing a contradiction

To suggest that I might start again from a different activation point by adding another beginning is a contradiction here. Writing demands redrafting, restructuring, and after much erasure and editing, the presentation of a clarified and finalised account of the research. In contrast to writing, speech behaves more contiguously with this current method of working. I speak without having the ability to erase what I have said, unless I add more content to correct what has already been spoken. As Barthes writes:

> Speech is irreversible; that is its fatality. What has been said cannot be unsaid, *except by adding to it*: to correct, here, is, oddly enough, to continue. In speaking I can never erase, annul; all I can do is say 'I am erasing, annulling, correcting', in short, speak some more. This very singular annulation-by-addition I shall call 'stammering'.[28]

Speech, as opposed to writing, adapts errors through further additions to what has already been presented, and Barthes suggestion of stammering implies a fragmentary approach. My introduction engages with both these attributes, presenting shards of writing that approach the research from different standpoints, framing the sections as multiple beginnings. Here writing takes on an attribute of speech, with its inability to erase and fragmentary stuttering.[29] The application of this device challenges the dualism of speech and writing, by working in a way that occupies the space between these two positions, entwining characteristics from both.

If writing may take on attributes of speech, it is timely to acknowledge the variety of voices identifiable in my writing. The practice-based researcher adopting both a critical and creative voice is explored by Rolf Hughes in his investigation of hybrid forms of writing for practice research.[30] He considers how we might shift genres of research writing beyond just the addition of criticism to practice and theory. He calls for hybrid styles of writing

---

28 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986, [*Le Bruissement de la langue*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1984] p. 76.
29 This is of course, inevitably, not true. I am still erasing and redrafting as I chart and write the journeys taken through the rhizomatic threads. The stumbles and reroutes have often occurred in the manner they are presented but in this finalised retelling they become less spontaneous as they are rewritten for clarity as the reader's ability to navigate a path or follow my lead through the rhizomatic darkness is more carefully considered.
30 Rolf Hughes, 'The Poetics of practice-based research writing' *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2006, 283–301.

which incorporate the critical, embodied, and poetic. These he argues cause 'reductive binary oppositions [to] dissolve'.[31] Felicity Allen's *The Disœuvre: an argument in 4 voices* takes up this call using art writing to converge material, personal, rational, and cultural voices.[32]

The dual aspect of research writing, which Hughes calls attention to emphasises the binary nature of theory and practice, is part of what I challenge. In this writing are several identifiable voices. The researcher, with an expected academic tone, whose interests include how to make a clear case and unpicking theories to contribute to academic discourse. The artist whose concerns are focussed on the process, production, and material aspects of this research. The latter voice is interested in material, collaboration, in testing ideas and generative production, believing any problem may be solved through making or doing. The poet is similar to that of the artist but more interested in word play, metaphor, rhythm, and tone. The mathematician is interested in establishing patterns and symbols, abstract theories, neatness, and finding rules to follow (which the artist may bend or break). The educator desires clarity to impart knowledge and facilitate growth. Another voice joins this growing list, a more conversational voice concerned with the experiential elements of the research process, the struggle of human endeavour beneath the academic veneer. It willingly engages with distractions of popular culture and quotidian references; it is the spontaneous voice of free association, without the desire to formulate a cohesive argument for the sake of academic rigour.

A more recent addition to the polyphony is more painful to admit. This is not a new voice, only newly recognised and named. This is my dyslexic or neuro-diverse voice. Until 2016 I might have identified this additional voice as part of the conversational tone I have adopted – the voice that always follows a distraction or tangent, most likely to get the wrong end of the stick and run with it. As the focus of the research turned to extended writing, I was advised to have a Diagnostic Assessment after it became increasingly apparent that there was a mismatch between my spoken and written styles. In finally getting an SPLD (dyslexic tendencies) diagnosis at the age of forty-four I had to re-examine or re-think so many of my life experiences. I realised that I had been trying for

---

31 Op. Cit. p. 297.
32 Felicity Allen, *The Disœuvre: An Argument in 4 Voices (WASL Table); 6:27,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2018.

some time to figure out what it meant for me to have a low working memory with phonic processing skills without knowing the correct terminology for how my brain worked. While re-reading Deleuze and Guattari's writing on minor literature they outline the experience 'to be as a stranger in one's own language'.[33] Though they are describing the process of writing in a second language, this resonated with my dyslexic voice, and the feeling of being a stranger in language.

Following the diagnosis, I recognised how much I had hidden and learned to compensate through developing strategies now so firmly embedded that at times it is almost impossible to consciously see them. Through this late discovery it became clear that parts of my research are certainly connected to my continued process of trying to understand how I make sense of the world. I have had to find ways of quieting my inner critic in order to allow my dyslexic child-voice time to speak, for she had to hide and stay quiet for fear of discovery for many years – this has restricted me in ways I might never completely discover. Hiding is a practice in which I have become an expert. Yet, I am gradually gaining a certain sense of freedom in finally having this information and releasing some of the tightly held habits. Allowing these different voices to be present in the writing emphasises the idea of multiple entry points here as described in a rhizomatic system.

I.4 Tracing a route through the Title

I.4.1 Drawing out Language

The first section of my title – *Drawing out Language* – holds layers of meaning. The verb *to draw* contains reference to the movement of pencil across paper, the motion of pulling, straining, or attracting, the act of pulling out a weapon, coaxing someone by exerting a persuading pressure, and the selection of lots.[34] As homonyms, only when other words are used in conjunction with each term does the clarity of meaning becomes apparent. The

---

33 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', *Mississippi Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1983, 13–33, p. 26
34 Draw out, taken from:
https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57533?rskey=uRnlpg&result=1#eid6250249
https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=draw+out

verb's transitive and intransitive properties also contribute to the slippage of meaning, and the generative force of this oscillation will reappear later.[35]

The verb phrase 'draw out' suggests an extraction, and in relation to language the potential of digging for meaning. Vilém Flusser acknowledges the penetrating action of writing, refuting assumptions of writing as a construction where one media is added to another material surface, instead returning to writing's earliest form of etching into clay bricks.[36] In using an archeological example of scraping, as well as relating writing to sculpture rather than to architecture, he frames writing as a cutting activity rather than a construction. Similarly writing is described as a carving action by Jacques Derrida in *On Grammatology*, comparing writing with the action of the ploughman, which involves a mechanical digging. The action of 'writing by furrows', as with ploughing are both seen as 'systems of incision'.[37] If digging, then this action suggests excavation, discovery, piercing or probing, uncovering, and rooting out. A surface is broken and the act of deconstruction uncovers, though what is revealed may not be immediately apparent. Having unearthed something, further sifting, careful scraping, and an emptying out of the excess are required before clarity emerges.[38]

In the context of my practice 'drawing out' refers to the process of drawing in response to language.[39] The art works produced explore the relation between making, reading, and writing, in response to existing language using drawing, photography, and writing. If drawing is described as the process of making lines across paper, then writing is an expanded form of drawing. Serge Tisseron considers this idea in 'All Writing is Drawing', exploring the gesture of the hand in writing: 'the inscriptive process is above all the hand

---

35 In chapter two I will explore writing as a transitive and intransitive verb in relation to Roland Barthes

36 Nancy Roth, 'A note on "the Gesture of Writing" by Vilém Flusser and the Gesture of Writing', *The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2012, 24-41, p. 26.

37 Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998 [*De la grammatologie*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967] p. 287.

38 The metaphor of digging returns me to the garden, as I know I should be working beyond my laptop screen to battle the physical rhizomatic weeds growing in the garden outside the window where I sit writing.

39 https://www.etymonline.com/word/draw [last accessed 13.5.19]

exploring a given space and organising it according to its own possibilities'.[40] In analysing this idea of the exploring and organising hand, one may see the overlapping tendencies of writing, drawing, and photography. By considering the ways in which I explore and organise my thought processes, photography may be included as another expanded idea of writing-as-drawing. If writing is drawing, then photography may be considered as a form of writing, for symbols are produced on a paper surface. Photographs may be read or interpreted in a similar manner to writing. By entangling descriptions of different processes, I seek to construct an inter-medial practice.

I.4.2 From *or* to *and*, Disrupting Dualism

The first part of my subtitle – *From or to and, Disrupting Dualism* – describes the intention to trouble, interrupt, or tangle oppositional language terms with an additive and associative set of methods.

Dualism is explored by Barthes as he analyses the way sense is produced from what he terms 'the oppositional wellspring of the paradigm'.[41] Which is to say, the source of meaning generated from oppositional terms which exist in relation to each other. To elaborate, he describes the paradigm as 'the opposition of two virtual terms from which, in speaking, I actualise one to produce meaning'.[42] The paradigm described by Barthes is the decision made to fix meaning, and is in Western thought, a reliance on opposition 'the choice of one term against another'.[43] According to Barthes this might be phonic (the clarity of meaning revealed in the difference of a term in speech as opposed to writing) or semantic (conceptual oppositions). Barthes writes that 'meaning rests on conflict [...] and all conflict is generative of meaning: to choose *one* and refuse the *other* is always a sacrifice made to meaning'.[44] This is developed from Saussure, and structuralism which privileges speech over writing, as speech is considered to be the sign object which

---

40 Serge Tisseron, 'All Writing is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies,* no. 84, 1994, 29–42. pp. 41–42.
41 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France* (1977-1978), trans. by Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 [*Le Neutre: cours et séminaires au Collège de France* 1977–1978, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002] p. 7.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid. (Authors italics).

represents thought, and so writing is merely a sign of a sign, the image of speech. As explained by Arthur Bradley, Derrida disputed this oppositional position of speech and writing, between signifier and signified, and 'the larger network of oppositions' as part of his deconstruction of language.[45] This is *différance*, the concept that underpins Derrida's work.[46] Oppositional terms exist in an *either/or* way of thinking, words under consideration might be seen as separated and fixed, for instance male/female, practice/theory, language/material, presence/absence. Dualism is based on binary choices, yes/no answers, taking a side, using closed meanings distilled into expressions which conceal the complexity and overlapping nature of such terms. In order to avoid the conflict Barthes proposes a third term – 'the *tertium*' which engages conflict avoidance and is the neutral.[47]

In addressing complexity beyond the either/or, Umberto Eco considers the use of a perfect language, in his book on translation, which also contains a 'tertium comparationis' (third part for comparison). Rather than operating inside the 'two-valued logic (either True or False), the language Aymara is based on a three-valued logic, and is, therefore, capable of expressing modal subtleties'.[48] However, he goes on to admit that in terms of translation 'once the perfect language has resolved these thoughts into its own terms they cannot be translated back into our natural native idioms'.[49] It seems the search for a perfect resolution is not the answer, as Avasilichioaei and Moure write of their work in *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, 'translation [...] is impossible because there are no equivalences, only counterparts and digressions'.[50] These diversions form part of my methods which seek to disrupt the oppositional nature of dualism.

In his lecture course, *The Neutral*, Barthes explores various ways of outplaying the oppositional paradigm and its 'menacing pressure, its arrogance' towards a 'polymorphous field of paradigm, of conflict avoidance = the Neutral'.[51] Seeking to avoid conflict or opposition in this way can be thought of as an avoidance of closing down

---

45 Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology,* Indiana, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 44.
46 Op. Cit. p. 70.
47 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral,* p. 7.
48 Umberto Eco, Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation, London: Orion, 2004, p. 177.
49 Ibid.
50 Avasilichioaei and Moure, 'Curiously 'My' Writing', *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, LA: Les Figues Press, 2012, p. 35.
51 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral,* p. 7.

meaning. Embracing the polymorphous seeks to engage a multiplicity of forms, which implies ambiguity, not as a way of avoiding meaning entirely, but to wrestle with and constantly adapt meaning in relation to changing environment, information, ideas, and context. Barthes uses the lecture course not to explain, or define, but only to describe: 'To describe = to 'unthread' a word [...] to unweave it thread by thread [...] to unthread what? The nuances.'[52] I am interested in using practice to activate complexity and nuance to tangle fixed and oppositional terms. I employ meanings that oscillate and are constantly shifting. I disrupt the way oppositional terms occupy a fixed position, instead ravelling them together with the multiplicity of *and*. To disrupt dualism I seek to employ methods of contradiction, diversion, error, excess, experiment, and layering.

Attempting to avoid oppositional positioning Bruno Latour poses questions about the function of critique after deconstruction. He looks toward an analysis that takes an additive approach to avoid the breaking down of truth, shifting matters of fact to matters of concern.[53] Building on some of his ideas I provide spaces to question the compulsion for definitive answers and the reliance on oppositional meaning, or binary terms. In the current climate of post-truth, mass information, polemic language, and a growing lack of certainty, the material aspects of language should be interrogated, rather than accepting presented truths or un-contextualised answers.

Contradictory positions are embraced in the research as a way of challenging oppositional terms. I take a lead from: Roland Barthes's 'insolent [...] and smitten' approach to reading, where reading is both faithful to and strays from the intention of the text;[54] Caroline Bergvall's call for a conceptual poetics approach with an 'engaged disengagement', where she suggests playing conscious games while breaking predetermined conceptual rules;[55] and Karen Barad's method of 'cutting together-apart', as a way of working with tangled complexity.[56]

---

52 Op. cit. p. 11.
53 Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* no. 30, Winter, University of Chicago, 2004, 225–48, p. 232.
54 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
55 Caroline Bergvall, 'A Conceptual Twist', *I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, LA: Les Figues Press, 2012, p. 22.
56 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', *Parallax*, vol. 20, no. 3, 168–187, 2014.

The methods used are cultivated in a rhizomatic structure using drawing, photography, and writing. However, in shifting from the oppositional *or* towards gathering a multiplicity using the *and* has meant exploring a range of responses to ideas of dualism. Whether art works, concepts, or theories, an analysis of these challenges to dualism underpins each chapter as I chart my own responses in avoiding oppositional sense.

I.4.3 Through Conceptual Poetics

The second part of my subtitle – *Through Conceptual Poetics* – illuminates the intention of working *through* Conceptual Poetics, shifting and moving beyond the existing frame and methods of this genre, rather than placing the work firmly in any category. This genre of writing includes experimental texts which use appropriation, and any production or form is driven by the concept of the work. The terms Conceptual Poetics, Conceptual Poetry, Conceptual Writing, and uncreative writing are all titles that have been used interchangeably at times by its some of producers and writers. I use the term Conceptual Poetics as an umbrella term to encompass an analytical study of form and structure, as well as a term which includes work that takes an interest in structural form made under conceptual constraints.

At the outset of my project the term 'Uncreative Writing', coined by Kenneth Goldsmith in his eponymous book, was frequently used to describe this type of work.[57] Uncreative writing avoids the personal and expressive by using appropriation and conceptual methods in order to deflect the author's individuality. This type of writing is said to require as much thinking as it does reading, often due to the vast quantities of data that are collected and presented as work. Robert Fitterman writes: 'Conceptual Writing, in fact, might best be defined not by the strategies used but by the expectations of the readership or thinkership'.[58] This refers to an expectation that the audience will be required to think about more than actually read the content of the work. Conceptual Writing is often closely allied to Conceptual Art, demonstrated by writers such as Kenneth Goldsmith, Vanessa Place, and Robert Fitterman, using Sol LeWitt's statements

---

57 Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age,* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011.
58 Robert Fitterman and Vanessa Place, *Notes on Conceptualisms,* Ugly Duckling Press, NYC: New York, 2013, p. 4.

on Conceptual Art to demonstrate what Conceptual Writing is and does.[59] These statements produced by LeWitt act as a manifesto for Conceptual Art laying out the rules of how to make work following predetermined procedures which cannot be adapted, in order to distance the ego of the maker.[60]

In her introduction to *I'll Drown My Book*, Bergvall refers to the work in the anthology as 'conceptual poetics [...] filled with the meandering troubles of the term itself'.[61] By using the term Conceptual Poetics there is an acknowledgment of the material form of my work, which is something that some Conceptual Writers have sought to play down, preferring to foreground the concept rather than the form. My interests echo those of the annual Conceptual Poetics Day whose mission is to 'explore[s] the imaginary border between visual art and literature'.[62] I explore tensions between language and material and my works embrace the contradiction of working with the constraints of a concept, while allowing for the inclusion of meandering association, distraction, and error.

Over the period of the research there has been much debate about contemporary conceptual work and its adherence to procedure in relation to ethics and how to move forward after a canon of Conceptual Writing established itself. Several influential texts that chart the rise, progress, and reconsideration of the genre are considered in detail later.[63]

---

59 Adachiara Zevi, and Sol LeWitt, *Sol Lewitt: Critical Texts*, Rome: Incontri Internazionali D'Arte, 1994.
60 Sol LeWitt, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art', pp. 78–82 and 'Sentences on Conceptual Art', pp. 88–90 in Adachiara Zevi, and Sol LeWitt, *Sol Lewitt: Critical Texts*, Rome: Incontri Internazionali D'Arte, 1994. Kenneth Goldsmith appropriates and adapts LeWitts 'Paragraphs' for Conceptual writing Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing', *Open Letter: Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory*, edited by Lori Emerson and Barbara Cole. Twelfth Series, No. 7, 2005, 108–111.
61 Caroline Bergvall, 'A Conceptual Twist', *I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, LA: Les Figues Press, 2012, p. 20.
62 Conceptual Poetics Day, http://conceptualpoeticsday.org/mission.html This event, convened by Michalis Pichler, is run each year in conjunction with MISS READ: the Berlin Art Book Fair. MISS READ was founded in 2009 and is Europe's major Art Book Fair, interested in the discourse around artists' books, conceptual publications and publishing as practice. See http://missread.com/
63 Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
Robert Fitterman, Vanessa Place, *Notes on Conceptualisms,* New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2011.
Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith, (eds.) *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing,* Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

The Writing Art module led by Sharon Kivland as part of my M.A study led me towards my interest in Conceptual Writing, procedural methods, and Oulipian constraints.[64] This was partly a pragmatic approach, a strategy to manage part-time working, studying, and making art work by imposing specific time-based restrictions on the way work was produced. Beyond the practical motivations, these methods have been productive in developing the relation between my writing practice and more visual work. The constraint-based approach fed into the early stages of this project as I developed procedural strategies to make work. However, the process of researching as described in relation to rhizomatic structures began to take over. The act of searching became more important in the process, allowing me to become lost, in order to wrestle with uncertainty. The use of pre-determined strategies, though still of interest, meant that I knew where I was and how I was going to get there, which seemed counterintuitive to my understanding of research. Consequently, I allowed more spontaneous and ad-hoc ways of working to collide with some of the constraints to allow for more unexpected results.

I.5 Lead with the practice submission: art works accompanying the thesis

This thesis is accompanied by three sets of artist books which reveal the progression of the practice and the method of read(writ)ing. Presented alongside is a set of photographs *Voids* whose status is uncertain: an unbound book, research artefact, future work in progress.

Lines of Flight, Ravelling Eco's Net, and *Promise the Infinite* form a set concerning the rhizomatic. *Lines of Flight* was made as a material object made to think through Deleuze and Guattari's writing on the rhizome, and the phrase: 'The ideal for a book would be to

---

Caroline Bergvall et al, '*I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual Writing by Women,* LA: Les Figues Press, 2012.
Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012
Felix Bernstein, *Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry,* CA: Insert Blanc Press, 2015.
64 The OuLiPo (*Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*), is the workshop of potential literature, a set of artists, mathematicians, and writers who devise restrictive processes to work under. Work from this group will be considered further in Chapter one.

lay everything out [...] on a single page'.[65] The process of making this is discussed in Chapter one. The following books are a material response to Eco's writing on the rhizomatic from 'The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth' and Jorge Luis Borges story of 'The Library of Babel' which both expand my thinking about the rhizomatic form.

Reading Words and *Read(writ)ing Words* form a pair of books which sit either side of a collaborative exhibition, analysed in Chapter three. They reveal the method that has been developed during this research project as a read(writ)ing route made through an existing text: Jean-Paul Sartre's autobiography *Les Mots*. The first book visualises my personal reading of Sartre's text, and the second book acts to cut together-apart the first by fragmenting it and using additional material in collaboration with artists Helen Frank and Madeleine Walton (as a response to re-reading Sartre's text) to reformulate the object as a continual process of re-fusal.

Additionally, there is a set of books made while reading in libraries. These books form the beginning of a library collection of my own work. I explore material routes taken through library spaces and individual books using distraction, interruption, error, meandering, glancing as methods of reading which can be employed as productive techniques. These have been instrumental in building the method of read(writ)ing and contain elements at different stages of the research and appear at various points in the thesis.

One of my underlying concerns is how art practice might offer ways of visualising and materialising the thinking or sense-making process in relation to the transmission of physical language. Art practice here draws attention to the construction of sense as a wrestling with, an active process, and uses distraction and error as a tools for breaking open spaces to think. In this respect the photographs act to unsettle the clear presentation of books and visualise the as-yet-unthought, a grasping towards sense.

---

65 Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [*Capitalisme et Schizohrénie, Tome II, Mille Plateaux,* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1987] p. 8.

I.6 Commence with a chapter synopsis

I.6.1 Chapter One: Unravelling the tangled action of the rhizome: a search for structure

Chapter One considers how the book form may be used to explore the partial nature of communication and how structural forms might challenge fixity of meaning implied by dualism in language structures. Acting as the literature review it imagines my own version of a library collection, housed in a structure that appropriates a template from Jorge Luis Borges' infinite Library of Babel.

Borges's hexagonal-shaped room structure enables me to consider my own books, as well as those I have borrowed, or wish that I owned, in relation to some of the art works I have made. An examination of the library as a space for artistic intervention foregrounds themed rooms, whose arrangement demonstrates a partial taxonomy of artist's books and related works. Proceeding through the space allows the possibility of selecting individual books from the shelves and considering particular works more closely. As this space is potentially infinite, it extends through and beyond the constraints of the thesis. The themed rooms extend into the appendices and bibliography, and each chapter can be considered as another location inside the overarching library structure.

I.6.2 Chapter Two: A continual state of becoming: transversing dualism to undermine fixed positions

Aiming to challenge the fixity of meaning implied by dualism in language through practice, Chapter Two enacts a Baradian cutting together-apart and re-turning through practice activity as a way to consider how practice might shed light on the theoretical terms. It elicits a practice-based response to explore the abstract notions of existing *between* or *beside,* unsettling dualism in language through practice in order to avoid fixing or claiming a position.

My *Interrupteur* artist residency project is analysed in relation to a number of theoretical ideas, drawing together strands to frame the working methodology.[66] Threading together the process of enacting a Baradian cut together-apart, while also giving a critique of Springgay's article in relation to practice based research, I borrow Anna Fring's term 'zone of awkward engagement' to consider the impact of performing research in a liminal but public space. Rhizomatic ruptures, interruptions and distractions are explored as both productive tools and as short circuits in relation to Slavoj Žižek's discussion of minor literature and critical reading. Finally, Deleuze's dialogue with Claire Parnett is expanded in relation to a rhizomatic way of working with others in a collaborative space.

Work made for the *Phantom* exhibition is examined in relation to the possibility of re-turning as a practice activity.[67] This embodies the idea of a constant state of becoming or process of de-con-struction which breaks down and rebuilds simultaneously. The spaces in the work are then examined in relation to Derrida and ideas of the trace. A further reworking process is thought of as a re-fusal: a term developed to acknowledge both the refusal of the original and the subsequent re-fusing of new material into the work.

I.6.3 Chapter Three: Interrupting Transmission: exploring methods of disruption to question the position of the author

Herein I outline the existing dialogue around the death, return, authority, and distance of the author since his [sic] originally declared death by Barthes in 1967. I analyse how existing literature explores the continual re-emergence of the author, who cannot be killed, silenced, or neutralised. This leads to an exploration of the methods in my practice that acknowledge a re-emergence of the self through materialisation, error, misinterpretation, and associative writing. I propose that the author stands for authority and existing accepted systems of behaviour in relation to reading and writing. This enables

---

66 My *Interrupteur* artist residency took place at Jessop West foyer in Sheffield University between April and May 2018.
This project was devised with the support of Amanda Crawley-Jackson at the University of Sheffield with the humanities department. The purpose was to bring together artists and academics to open conversations about practice based research across disciplines. There is a blog documenting the project and interventions:
http://residencyinterrupteur.blogspot.com
67 *Phantom*, curated by Jane Boyer, Anglia Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge, 2017.

questions about how distraction, meandering, error, and misrepresentation in relation to reading and writing might subvert authority and expectations of research. Though constraint-based working methods have been a useful tool throughout this research, as a counter response, randomness is also considered as a useful tool to undermine authority built on rules and patterns of predictive behaviour.

Two Conceptual Writing anthology introductions are considered to demonstrate the ways in which the author might not be fully distanced from the work produced, and that though appropriation allows for a removal of a personal or expressive tone, this may have unexpected consequences if the complexity of socio-cultural structures are ignored in favour of blindly following the rules. I argue that language may be stripped of its context but that might not fully disengage its affect if power dynamics are not acknowledged.

Beyond this exposition, the practice work undertaken evaluates ideas taken from Barthes's 'Writing Reading', Hélène Cixous's' '*Écriture Feminine'*, and some art writing examples to propose disruptive devotion to read(writ)ing as a technique that can be used to engage with existing texts as a practice method. Processes involved in reading and writing are investigated, alongside an exploration of the difficulty of separating the two terms, moving towards a practice of read(writ)ing.

I.6.4 Conclusion: Drawing to a close: concluding observations

I present an exposition of my findings and proposals for future work. I show that I have formed my own reading methods, which are applied to library settings, individual books, or even singular phrases in order to explore the generative potential of being lost, distracted, and allowing for misinterpretations. I define this as a 'disruptive devotion as method'. I demonstrate the synthesis of writer, reader, location, and temporal space in my artist books. Reading as writing as making is understood through the practice, *via* my term: writ(read)er. I have developed a transferable method of read(writ)ing practice, and explain how folding reading, writing, and making into one another to re-fuse the author (writer) and reader, releasing the death of particular positions and forms, instead acknowledging the complex shifting relation of these inseparable positions.

Having introduced a variety of entry points into the thesis, it is necessary to move forward. So, I pick up a rhizomatic thread and ask that you (the reader) follow me into the labyrinthine library.

Chapter One:

Unravelling the tangled action of the rhizome: a search for structure

1.1 Imagining Babel

Here I examine how the structural form and content of artist books may be considered to mount a challenge the fixity of meaning implied by language dualism. To present my literature review I have developed an imaginary library to house relevant works, appropriating and adapting the structure from Jorge Luis Borges' story of the infinite 'Library of Babel'.[68]

The 'Library of Babel' is a metaphor for the universe, with an infinite number of hexagonal rooms. It contains every book written or that could be written, in every possible language. A similar sense of enormity in the face of vast quantities of texts, accompanied by the difficulty of finding the most pertinent books, has at times overwhelmed and stalled this research.[69] There are so many books, works, and ideas that potentially exist in my imaginary library, that might have been included in these limited pages, but the word count restricts what can be acknowledged, some are annexed in appendices, or excluded from the discussion. I ask the reader to imagine the quantities of books stored in this fictional library beyond reach, the books that remain unopened in this moment. I might refer to Gerry Smith's *Essential Reading* by developing his categories of books which include: 'books I think I ought to read [...] books loaned to friends, etc, and not returned [...] books I've given other people the impression of having read, whilst in fact I have not'.[70] All of this points to further work. As acknowledged by the narrator of Borges fiction: 'I am preparing to die just a few leagues from the hexagon in which I was born', suggesting the limited capacity for navigating the infinite possibilities of the library space.[71]

---

68 Jorge Luis Borges, the 'Library of Babel', *Labyrinths*, London: Penguin, 2000.
69 Craig Dworkin in *The Perverse Library* writes of libraries being defined by what is absent from any collection, and libraries are 'haunted by other collections which [...] they cannot contain' and engages with what is missing from his list before presenting a mapping of shelves and rather than individual books.
Craig Dworkin, *The Perverse Library*, York: Information as material, 2010. p. 13.
70 Gerry Smith, *Essential Reading*, artists book signed in an edition of 50 copies, 2004.
71 Borges, 'Library of Babel', p. 79.

Even now I identify with this sentiment.[72] This research may be considered as fragmentary in relation to the vast possibilities.

Constructing my own imagined library image in response to Borges requires that all locations used should be considered as 'rooms' inside my version of this ever-growing structure – though again due to its potentially vast nature what is written here is a fragment of what exists.[73] 'Books' stored in this imagined library represent texts in their expanded sense, as objects which may be read: photographs, drawings, ideas, words, digital screens, performance, and theory. This trope enables me to explore works that I own, works that I have made, works that I have borrowed, as well as works that I wish I owned, those that are lost, while holding the potential for works yet to exist. As this space is a fictitious invention, potentially infinite, it extends through and beyond the pages of the thesis. Rooms of additional books can be found in the appendices, followed by the bibliography, which employs a conventional shelving convention which might not normally be expected for such a list. These methods point towards the rhizomatic threads expanding beneath the page surface, and the impossibility of exiting the labyrinth.[74]

As this research is, in part, an exploration of how it might be possible to visualise the process of sense-making in relation to language, in addition to embodying the rhizomatic methodology of the research, part of the function of this chapter is to explore how a

---

72 Right now, surrounded by piles of books and printed journal articles, feeling frozen by the inability to make a decision as to where to start, the quantity of potential reading before me is overwhelming. I desire the ability to teleport into a science fiction scene in order to speed up the process of knowledge gathering. I wish to be Trinity requesting the ability to fly a helicopter be downloaded into her brain from the film *The Matrix* in a few seconds. Or I request the role of Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as she uses dark magic to literally ingest all the knowledge and text from a book into her own body, through the surface of her skin. These imply the acquisition of a complete knowledge. Unable to adopt this fictional approach, a smash and grab method will continue to be followed, taking inspiration from Cixous's bird and robber analogy, flying through, quickly grasping the things that seem appropriate.

73 The studio, cafe, walks through local woods, our dining table can all be considered part of this library construction as they are places in which the work has been produced, in thought, making, discussion, and writing, however as this chapter has been edited and redrafted, in this current version of the thesis they have been relegated here to a footnote instead of having their own subtitled heading.

74 Repeatedly I hold a scene in my mind from the film made of Kafka's *The Trial*. The images of the labyrinthine corridors which haunt the protagonist as he is required to work towards apparent acquittal or deferment persist in my memory. There is always more work to be done, nothing can ever be resolved. This particular version film was my first encounter with Kafka, and its impact led me to his work.
David Jones (director), *The Trial*, BBC, 1993

structure has been sought for communicating various elements of this project. To examine how these structures might be used conceptually is to unravel the logic of sense.[75] By structure I mean the way something has been made, the organisational system that is manifested, the arrangements of a variety of elements, and how these contribute to potential meaning. Though structure might be seen to overlap with materiality, materiality will be discussed more explicitly in Chapter three in relation to making art works that materialise less visible elements of reading.

In each attempt to categorise books into different imagined rooms, the rhizomatic tendency to find other connections has pulled them from their shelves into different places. Books are carried from room to room, reinforcing the shifting boundaries between different sections. The original intention of producing a taxonomy of artists' books has become contrary to the work: the groupings are frequently adapted as new associations between objects in close proximity to each other influence the type of characteristics observed. Yet each room is written to reveal an aspect of the book structure, to scrutinise constraint, concept, content, form, and performance exploring their imbrication.

Before accessing the imagined rooms of the library, first I navigate a rhizomatically written section which reveals some of the thinking-in-process and associated lines of flight from gathered influences. Secondly, I examine physical libraries as a site for artist intervention projects. Subsequently I present the modular rooms for examining the different book type objects, where selected volumes are lifted from their shelves for closer inspection.[76]

1.2 Tracing lines around the library, through the book, and beyond the page

In searching for coherence across a diverse range of sources, I am, in the words of Will Self, 'guilty of an association of ideas'.[77] Gathering associative threads following the

---

75 Here I merely mean the system or rationale behind a shared understanding, rather than referring to the title of Gilles Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, which rewrites *Alice in Wonderland* as a way of theorising the construction of sense. Though it is a reminder that all words connect to other associations which is part of the difficulty I have in structuring my thoughts into a logical order for someone else to follow.
76 Jorge Luis Borges, the 'Library of Babel', *Labyrinths*, London: Penguin, 2000
77 Will Self's rhizomatic investigation of Kafka in the form of a hyperlinked digital essay.

method of *and...and...and* is a productive approach, allowing unexpected results to emerge. This section of related ideas is written in the most obviously rhizomatic and associative manner. It demonstrates using the attributes laid out in the introduction, drawing lines of flight across ideas and images contained in the diagram of this chapter, using fragments, footnotes, and following associations in a fluid manner.

In positioning this research I have assembled a rhizomatic platform (albeit temporary) for it to occupy. One of the problems I have found with assemblages is that they are never complete – the connecting fragments have the potential to attach to further objects, stretching the research beyond the scope of the current project. The territory I have charted 'is made of decoded fragments of all kinds, which are borrowed'.[78] The selected objects I have spent time deciphering form an assemblage.[79] This construction allows the identification of a position from which to momentarily state my case, to demonstrate the exploration undertaken. Despite the fixed appearance of the thesis, I maintain that these pages may be ripped apart and reworked, as my understanding exists at the moment of writing and will be added to and revised after the pages have been printed. Everything is 'borrowed' because every word in the thesis has been used before in a different space and

Will Self, 'Kafka's Wound', *London Review of Books*, online, 2012, https://thespace.lrb.co.uk/#i-am-guilty-of-an-association-of-ideas [last accessed 17.9.18]

78 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 556.

79 Here it would be remiss not to at least acknowledge the model of assemblage developed by Manuel DeLanda from the work of Deleuze. Though it has been on the horizon of this research it is beyond the current position, a reach too far to be useful. However there are some points worth noting. In borrowing the phrase 'assembling a territory' I imagined this was connected to the theory of assemblage. This was further confused by my reaction to Graeme Harman's 'absurd collection of entities' used to explore the limits of what constitutes an assemblage. The components suggested by Harman are 'the Pacific Ocean, Angela Merkel, and the set of all coins and beans that have existed or will exist'. This seemingly random collection of objects, used to test DeLanda's theory of assemblage set in motion a whole chain of thoughts about a piece of work, and the potential ways that we network associations to find connections in order to make sense of information and to confer meaning perhaps where there is none. Having returned to the parameters of DeLanda's theory it is clear that it muddies the arguments I am trying to make. In order for these to be considered an assemblage, the assemblage would need to be able to impact back on the components from which it is made. The assemblage would need to have its own identifiable properties and have impact on other assemblages. Finally the elements that exist in the assemblage are replaceable without affecting the overall identity of the assemblage.
This is a much more social and specific set of criteria than I had initially understood by the word assemblage, and demonstrates the difficulty of a wide range of words that have both general meaning and specific disciplinary meaning. In considering my collected and assembled territory for this research, I am deliberately cultivating the feeling of these diverse elements being gathered for the purpose of making an argument, to produce a space to occupy, and so am merely using the term assembled as its more common definition would imply, to gather together or fit together. This is collage.

location by many authors. Each word could be footnoted, referenced to a myriad of existing texts; all pages are palimpsests, even those that are blank.[80] As de Certeau writes: 'in spite of persistent fiction, we never write on a blank page, but one that has already been written on', pointing to the culturally inscribed nature of material. [81] Even Laurence Sterne's famous blank page left for the readers' own description of the Widow Wadman holds his imagined version even before the multiple readers flesh out their own.[82] Sterne's blank page holds every potential version of a woman who has been or will be desired. The page may be seen as rhizomatic in its multiplicity, or even as a Conceptual Writing mental work, a form outlined later. It may also be compared with Borges's library, as it holds infinite possibility, but as a single page labyrinth.

Re-turning[83] my mental images of Borges's and Eco's structural descriptions of library and encyclopædia I often conflate them. Borges's library of Babel is configured as an enormous expanse of hexagonal interlinked rooms containing every book written or to be written. This space appears infinite, though this fact cannot be confirmed due to human limitation; it is a labyrinth of rooms, all appearing structurally the same, the contents being the only variation. Ariadne's thread would help here. Vast quantities of the books are described as useless to each reader as the characters inside resemble nonsense.[84] Despite this, as the space of the library potentially contains every configuration of languages and writings possible, the users of the library hold a hope that somewhere in unexplored rooms there must be books that are readable.[85]

---

80 This is proposed as a conceptual work.

81 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall, Berkeley: California University Press, 2011 [*L'Invention du quotidien, 1. : Arts de faire et 2. : Habiter, cuisiner, éd. établie et présentée* par Luce Giard, Paris, Gallimard, 1990 (1re éd. 1980)] p. 43

82 Laurence Sterne [1759] *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman.* London: Penguin Books, 2003.

83 Re-turning, not merely as in a return to, or going back to, but used as Karen Barad writes it; a worm composting, turning over and over, fidgeting and continually reworking an idea. This phrase will be explored in more detail in chapter two.

84 The vast quantities of unreadable books leads to odd behaviours in the users of the library: endless searching of the territory for words that can be read; juggling letters and symbols in the hope of discovering sense by chance; books being destroyed; and in some cases it leads to madness.

85 A memory lingers of staring at the scanned fragments of Robert Walser's work: envelopes covered with coded asemic writing. I forge a connection towards the determined work of the researcher Helena Whitbread who worked to decode Ann Lister's diaries of her lesbian exploits in the 1800s. I am astounded by the human compulsion to write, to record events so private that a personal code is developed, and also, as fascinating is the desire of some readers to find out the texts hidden meaning. Robert Walser, *Microscripts*, New York, NYC: New Directions and
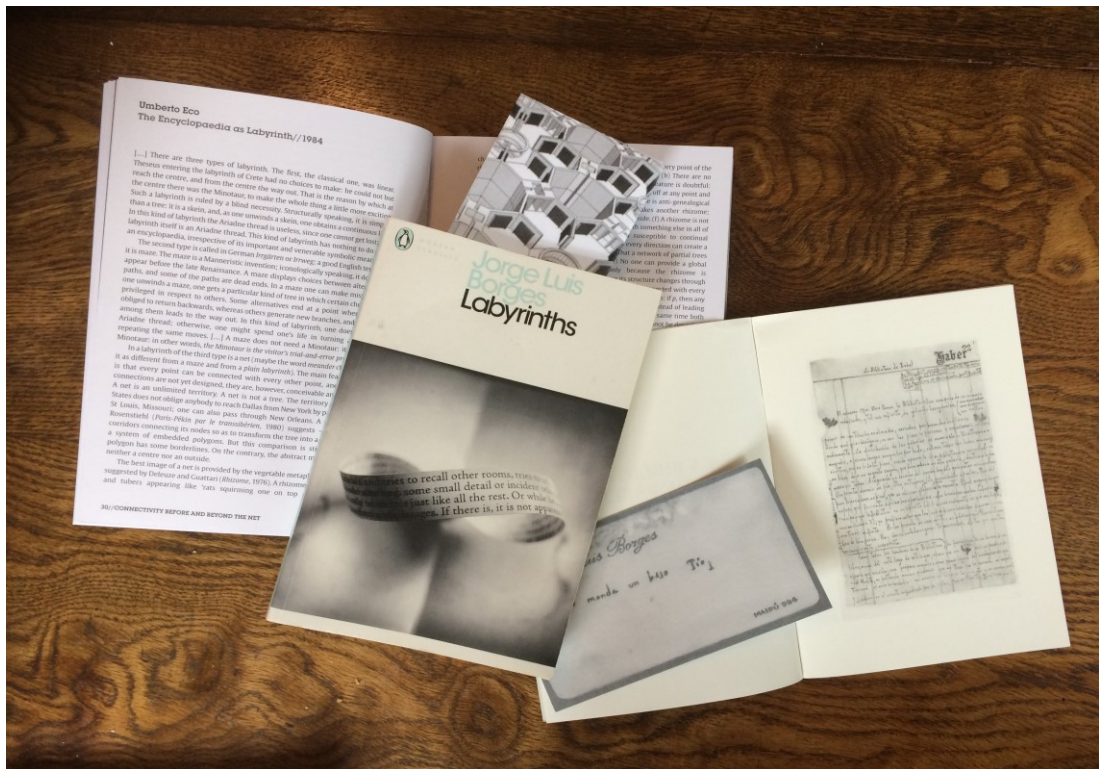
Luis Jorge Borges, *Labyrinths*, Jamie Zawinski digital model of Babel,

Penny McCarthy, *La Biblioteca de Babel*, Documents of Contemporary Art,

Networks

Inside my copy of *Labyrinths* is a 3D rendered image which I am using as a folded bookmark.[86] Also in the pile next to my computer is Penny McCarthy's book of meticulous drawings and hand-written version of her Borges text,[87] alongside a fragment of Eco's writing of the encyclopædia as both tree and labyrinth.[88] Eco describes a labyrinth as three structures: the classical labyrinth with only one route in and out, spiralling, yet when unravelled a single thread; the maze, with dead ends, many possibilities to get lost, with

Christine Burgin Gallery, 2010. Ann Lister, Helena Whitbread (ed) The Secret Diaries of Ann Lister, London: Virago Press, 1988.

86 Jamie Zawinski produced a 3D digital model rendering of the infinite library described in the 'Library of Babel' by Jorge Luis Borges. https://hyperallergic.com/330489/an-attempt-to-3d-model-jorge-luis-borgess-library-of-babel [last accessed 1.10.2018]

87 Penny McCarthy, *LA BIBLIOTECA DE BABEL,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2018.

88 Read from a fragment of the text, in *Networks*, Whitechapel Documents of Contemporary Art Cambridge: MIT 2014 pp. 30–31 Umberto Eco, extract from *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, [originally *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*, Turin: Einaudi, 1984] pp. 80–82

one single exit point – when unravelled this maze forms a kind of tree; and the net, for which Eco uses the word 'meander' in differentiation, the rhizomatic labyrinth where any point in the net can be joined to any other, and all connections are possible, even if not yet designed. In these descriptions the library and encyclopaedia are places of possibility, but also threaten that one might be lost forever in the maze-like configuration. Adding another layer to the complexity to the images in my memory, is Robert Musil's description of a library in *The Man without Qualities*, which has also recently started to blur with these other library spaces.[89] Flicking through Alberto Manguel's *The Library at Night* I am aware of his repetitive use of 'The Library as [...]' for all the chapter headings, again pointing to the dizzying possibilities for describing the library space.[90] Unfolded diagrams of potential structures to aid memory in Frances Yates's *The Art of Memory* sit in-amongst the piles of books.[91] These written and visual descriptions are palimpsests, forming a mental collage. As Anna Sophie Springer writes:

> the library—from Robert Musil and Virginia Woolf to Jorge Luis Borges and Walter Benjamin to Alberto Manguel and Moyra Davey—is inhabited as a space of tension between chaos and order, a space of collecting information of and about life and the universe in an attempt to make sense of it through organisation, reading, commentary, and interpretation.[92]

These slightly disturbing descriptions of libraries, which exists as places of infinity, babbling languages, chaos and order, connect to my memory of seeing Kadar Attia's installation *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder*.[93] Floor to ceiling bookshelves are piled high with books from a vast array of genres and disciplines. Reflected in a mirrored ceiling, the books tower upwards in a dizzying fractal vision – all the books which might be written – compared with the smell of dusty paper from the physical volumes below. The infinite possibility of books beyond the manageability of reading within a lifetime is played out in Eco's relation to his own library which contains around forty thousand volumes, a 'deposit for books to be read at some future date' rather than a 'place to keep books one has already read'.

89 Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, trans. by Sophie Wilkins, London: Picador, 2017[*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,* Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1943]
90 Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
91 Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, New York: Random House, 2011 (1966).
92 Anna-Sophie Springer and Etenne Turpin (eds), *Fantasies of the Library*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016, p. 15
93 Kadar Attia, *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder,* London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2013 [viewed 29.08.2014]

Kadar Attia, *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder*

Nassim Taleb uses this admission about the quantity of unread books in Eco's collection to introduce the idea of an anti-library and anti-scholar, one who focusses on the unread books, aware of what is not known, rather than relying purely on existing knowing as a boost to self-esteem:

> Read books are far less valuable than unread ones. The library should contain as much of what you do not know as your financial means [...] will allow you to put there. You will accumulate more knowledge and more books as you grow older, and the growing number of unread books on the shelves will look at you menacingly. Indeed the more you know, the larger the rows of unread books. Let us call this collection of unread books an *antilibrary*. [94]

This ambivalent relation to knowledge and books is also acknowledged by Robert Musil's fictional librarian as he admits to not reading the books, but only the catalogues, to avoid being overwhelmed and biased in response to the collection. [95]

---

94 Nassim Taleb, *The Black Swan,* London: Penguin, Allen Lane, 2007
95 Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, p. 503.

All these descriptions belie the physically ordered and limited space of the university library in which I often find myself. Looking at the two sides of the library, they appear recto and verso, as if pages facing each other. Books are shelved on the verso side of all floors, and computer spaces on the recto, paper *versus* digital, with bookable rooms around the edges. It mirrors the structure of the book *Fantasies of the Library* in which different chapters are presented simultaneously on *recto* and *verso* pages, in different fonts. This structure makes the reading process more challenging initially, yet once a rhythm is established the route of the eye is less tiring, as it travels less far. The book proposes the itself as a curatorial model, page space as gallery, library as imagination. It acts as a mirror for the two-sided library space in which I am sitting, enabling me to see my own developing curatorial model more clearly.

If the book or library functions as a mirror of other spaces, then Musil's description of the library 'like being inside an enormous brain',[96] may reveal something about the way thought is constructed in parallel with the library or organisational structure. Often I find books by chance due to their proximity to other volumes. This chance meeting of useful books on a shelf (even occasionally due to errant filing) demonstrates the importance of meandering through physical library spaces, as opposed to searching online. Yet from online searching inter-library loans are frequently requested, extending the idea of library as network; books are posted back and forth between institutions, conjured from the digital catalogue into a reachable space. These books must be read at speed in order to be returned in the allotted timeframe, demanding a different relation with the book object – some even come with specific handling instructions, reminding the reader of their status.[97]

Since the rhizome is a structural idea, to develop this literature further I must move on from rhizomatically following lines of flight around the library structure and look towards concrete examples: the books and objects produced inside the space. From here I shall avoid ambiguity by embracing my local position to examine specific locations and objects inside my labyrinth including the library, the book, the page, its margins, the unbound book – and a journey between them.

---

96 Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, p. 502.
97 See *Borrowed Reading.* This photographic work explores the materiality my experience of inter-library loan reading, and the affordances implied by the packaging of this particular book.

1.3 The Library as site of artist intervention

Faced with an existing mass of knowledge or vast body of books, I consider methods that may be employed to navigate through a collection. Nicole Brimmer explores 'an experiment into abstraction, chance, and writing' as a method.[98] She outlines an unpredictable procedure developed for randomly opening books in her library, selecting single sentences from each book which are then listed as a single written text. This text is the basis for the essay in the article which she developed from the initial appropriated collage. The result is a fragmentary yet flowing essay containing elements that feel vaguely familiar. Here language is fragmented, stripped from its original context, but some of the phrases still hold echoes of the original style, making some elements recognisable.

Finding ways to navigate, interrupt, or reconfigure the space of a library may be seen in many artist's works. As one of the Leeds College of Art *Library Interventions: creative disruptions, a culture of curiosity*, Sharon Kivland's library intervention project called for agents to read on her behalf. The call out acknowledged her desire to read without having the time, asking others to fulfil the work of her residency under Hegel's master/slave dialectic. In answering her call out (let me be clear), I am not Nabokov's good reader – my own reading experience is fragmented, frustrating, and slow. I imagined reading, I stared absentmindedly at book covers, and counted pages in books, the hours spent considering the task documented to suggest a volume of work achieved. In my errant behaviour I did not even visit the Library in Leeds, seeking volumes from their online catalogue that I might look at while in remaining in Sheffield.[99] This confession is made now, as I avoided it at the time, despite being offered the chance *via* Abbie Canning's slave intervention: *Absolve me, Sharon, quia peccavi.* Canning asked the audience to confess their sins to paper and leave them behind in the act of seeking absolution and freedom.

---

98 Nicole Brimmer, 'Lost in the Information Age', *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge,* online Issue 34 (2018) https://doi.org/10.20415/rhiz/034.e02 [last accessed 5.9.18]
99 Rachel Smith, *Library Interventions: Sharon Kivland, Rachel Smith: Intervention,* self published in 3 copies 2014
I produced only three copies of a bookwork, (one for the library, Kivland, and me). A fragmented, errant engagement with a library space and the idea of labour. Kivland was invited to sign the copies to release me from my bondage. Kivland's copy was actually misplaced, never recovered, presumed stolen on the night of the closing event and had to be reprinted to complete the process. There now exist two more copies made for the purpose of the practice submission.

In a closing event the agents presented their research for Kivland's approval. However, the performances and readings revealed the disobedience of the agents and how they, under the guise of working tirelessly for Kivland, had in fact (as she had suspected) served their own interests. Virginia Woolf recognises libraries are sanctuaries affording us license to read what and how we wish, a place that she believes no authority should possess the power to instruct on how to read.[100] Faced with the clear organisational structure of the library, or a instructional contract to behave in a particular manner, users often take delight in finding their own path.[101]
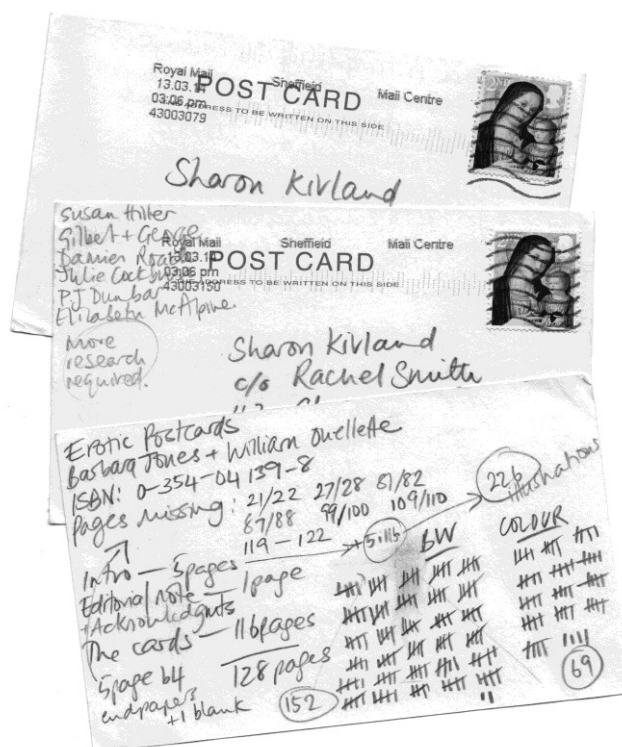
Cover from *Library Interventions: Sharon Kivland, Rachel Smith: Intervention*

100 Virginia Woolf, 'How Should One Read a Book', *The Common Reader: Second Series*, Vancouver: Read books, 2012

101 This delight in reading as a method of tracing a route through a library can be seen in the book by Bideaud and Kivland, in which their letters pass back and forth over a month, exploring reading, writing, the process of reading, rather than the subject of reading. Fabienne Bideaud and Sharon Kivland, *Our Libraries/Nos Bibliothèques*, London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2018.

The endeavours in response to the Leeds Library Intervention project engage in errant ways with the structure and space of the library as a way to energise and question conventions of knowledge and information, from Pavel Büchler's instruction to produce a new category of book from the title of Henri Beyle Stendhal's *Red and Black*,[102] to Maria Fusco's *Reading Gendered Words* intervention, which questioned the categorisation of gender in library categorisation, using a feminist cataloguing system. Invited artists to Fusco's intervention also explored queer absence from institutional collections, and the production of the 'girl library' as a hub for open reading.[103] Such library interventions question reading habits in relation to the existing organisational structure.

My Leeds College of Art Library Intervention residency project, part of a later series *Library Interventions: creative disruptions, a culture of curiosity* was another wayward act of not reading,[104] a deliberate meandering through the space.[105] Ignoring the traditional method of searching using the categorisation or search terms, I followed the visual detritus left by those before me. Drifting through the space, following found bookmarks, post-it notes, and the marginalia of others, I tried to find a path through the organised lines of knowledge with a preplanned but chance strategy.[106] Distractions that interfere with immersion or flow have become a tool for scrutinising reading behaviour. These bookmarks are a reminder of the physical presence of previous readers that have already encountered each text. In the book produced for the end of the residency: *Drawing out Language: Library Collection*, research is visualised as rather than articulated, opening a

---

102 Pavel Büchler sent instruction to form a new section in the library using congruent signage, all books in this new section to have the word red and or black in the title, arranged in no other particular order. This was a reworking of a work he made for the artists' show *Anxious Words* curated by Sharon Kivland at Waterstones bookshop, Piccadilly, London, 2000.
103 http://mariafusco.net/events/feminist-library-cataloguing/
https://www.leeds-art.ac.uk/news-events/events-exhibitions/library-interventions-reading-gendered-words [last accessed 3.12.18]
104 *Library Interventions: creative disruptions, a culture of curiosity,* Rachel Smith Drawing out Language 2016.
105 Rachel Smith, *Drawing out Language: Library Collection*, self published 2016.
106 This action might be seen as *dérive,* a strategy of Guy Debord: a method of experimental behaviour influenced by the circumstances of urban society and takes the form of an unplanned journey which allows for the unexpected encounter. The term can be seen in the strolling actions of the Flâneur developed in the work of Walter Benjamin. Instead I consider how extravagant a gesture the Flâneur represents, how much of my own experience of the urban space is rushing through, time poor, impatiently queuing. I think about listening to poet Richard Barrett give a paper on 'How Queues Work' as a class interruption of the image of the *Flâneur*. Researching a Ph.D. gives me the luxury of carving out a time to think, to explore, to play, to be an artist, that otherwise my daily life would not afford, but even this endeavour is squeezed into two days a week.

space for fluid associations between the bookmark and image. Hélène Cixous suggests poetry over the novelistic form, allowing for fluidity of associations between signifiers, as opposed to the established structure of a narrative.[107]

Here, photography functions as poetry. A recurring reaction to the photographs in discussion with other artists and photographers is the effect of *trompe l'œil*, that the eye is tricked into imagining the scraps of paper might be lifted from the images, a grasping action from the reader. Confronting that reaction I am drawn to Derrida's description of grasping for language and the deferral that occurs as meaning is sought. Sense is continually deferred, always out of reach, to confirm meaning of one word another word is added, creating a chain of signifiers without concluding. The illusion produced by the shadows in the photographs provoke a physical grasping action in the viewer that mirrors the desire to catch/hold onto meaning in whatever form it might take.

Rachel Smith, pages from *Drawing out Language: Library Collection*

---

107 Hélène Cixous, 'Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976.

These negotiated encounters in relation to the library space go some way to exploring Barthes's principle of reading which is 'insolent in that it interrupts the text, and smitten in that it keeps returning to it and feeding on it', a phrase to which I return repeatedly.[108] Running the phrase around my mind I drift back to Cixous' use of *voler* to describe women's writing. Unravelling the image of both bird and robber, there is *jouissance* in the flight of the bird and disrespectfulness in the action of the robber in common with Barthes sentiment. Despite errancy there is an intention to reveal the act of reading in its many forms, and beyond that, how sense might be sought in the vast array of knowledge contained in the library space, to materialise a personal relation with the texts and language found therein. As Barthes endeavoured to write his own reading process, it has been my aim to find a method of reading that makes room for both immersion and distraction.

The personal relation to the knowledge contained in libraries may be seen in *Go to Reception and Ask for Sara in Red Felt Tip* by the poet Holly Pester. She develops her position in relation to the chosen collection, by considering anecdote, gossip, and materialising voices that exist beside the archived objects. She uses constraints and fragmentary methods to produce work that collects, breaks apart, and reimagines stories. As I turn the pages of her book I internally chant Cixous' words of flying through and rifling in-amongst the objects of a given space; here the material of the Women's Art Library collection and archive in London. Pester writes: 'The anecdote, however, fantasises connections, negentropically forming stories from fragmentary information. Materiality and story come together over the bones of an archive'.[109] This work questions the position of the researcher, and by working in such a fragmentary, anecdotal style, Pester points towards hierarchical notions of what 'good' research might be. I repeatedly return to the idea of knowingly avoiding existing conventions and in Chapter three, I do this to question the position of author and reader.

---

108 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
109 Holly Pester writing about *Go to Reception and Ask for Sara in Red Felt Tip,* BookWorks: London, 2015, https://www.bookworks.org.uk/node/1843 [last accessed 16.08.19]

Holly Pester, *Go to reception and ask for Sara in red felt tip*

I look down at Pester's book, currently in my hand, realising the discussion has already moved from the generality of a library space to the specifics of the books it might contain. This description belongs inside one of the library rooms as part of the categorised system, and so I should duck into one of these imagined spaces and continue the exposition from there.

1.4 Rooms that 'promise the infinite'[110]

A modular structure allows rooms to be reconfigured in their tessellating stacks, so there is no particular order given to the way in which each room is approached. Barthes extols the virtues of chance ordering, in his fragmentary lecture series *The Neutral.* He proposes

---

110 Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*, p. 78.

it as useful a system as alphabetisation in order to avoid the fixing of meaning.[111] However, inside each room the books are grouped according to their material content or physical form, though carrying books from room to room has the potential to disrupt categorisation.

1.4.1 Book as a structural object

The books shelved in this room sit awkwardly together; they do not tessellate comfortably due to their shape and form being part of their conceptual making. This 'disturbing of order' by irregular shaped books is acknowledged by Sharon Kivland in her essay 'Ex-Libris'.[112] This will become more apparent as they are lifted from the shelves. Examples from the AMBruno project [sic] serve my purpose in this regard.[113] Artists were invited to produce and show work for events and book fairs in response to a given theme. In 2017 the call out for [sic] asked for books:

> in which the content (whether text/image/other) and/or the formal and physical elements (such as page layout and sequence, binding and materials) are in some way at odds with assumptions of what a book should be or do. *sic* is short for *sic erat scriptum* (thus, or, thus was it written). It is inserted after a quoted word or passage to indicate that this has been transcribed exactly as found in the source text. The notation's usual purpose is to inform the reader that any errors or apparent errors (for instance misprints, surprising assertions, faulty reasoning or spelling) are intentionally reproduced.

In deliberately courting the error, whether in form or concept this collection of books clearly examines the structure of what a book is and can be. *In the Beginning* by Judy Goldhill 'relates to the biblical account of the creation of the universe'.[114] Its tome-like form was bound such that the depth of the books page edges took on an asymmetric form, leaving the holder of the book to question its production. Invigilating the AMBruno stall I watched the book-fair audience repeatedly attempted to 'straighten' the book spine:

---

111 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral* pp. 11-12
112 Sharon Kivland, 'Ex-Libris', *Pages,*16th International Artists' Book Fair, Leeds, 2013.
In this essay Kivland wishes for an elegant solution to the irregular shaped books, and I suspect would not approve of my ad-hoc and untidy piling of books in this imagined space.
113 AMBruno is formed by a collective of artists who despite their diverse practices are brought together by their common interest in the form and function of the book.
114 Judy Goldhill, *In the Beginning,* edition of 18, Tilted book block, 2017,
http://ambruno.co.uk/judy-goldhill.html [last accessed 13.08.18]

the physical structure had been successfully altered to make the audience uncomfortable, challenging expectations, and bringing questions of creation to their attention.

Judy Goldhill, *In the Beginning*, (photo from AMBruno website: http://ambruno.co.uk/sic.html)

John MacDowell's book *Ellipsis* stripped back the book form to the minimal nature of cover and endpapers.[115] The text appropriated from Heinrich Böll's *Murke's Collected Silences* was printed on the overlapping edge of the endpaper which became fragmented by the boundary of the hardback cover. The elided text is left to be imagined in the space outside the book, as it forms a reading path out of and around the space at the back of the book. As the reader turns the book in the hand to trace this invisible path they are led back to the beginning and repeat the action, chasing the invisible narrative. Here physical structure foregrounds the concept of the making and requires audience interaction to complete the work.

---

115 John MacDowell, *Ellipsis*, open edition, cloth-covered boards and laser printed endpapers, 2017, http://ambruno.co.uk/john-mcdowall.html [last accessed 10.10.2018]
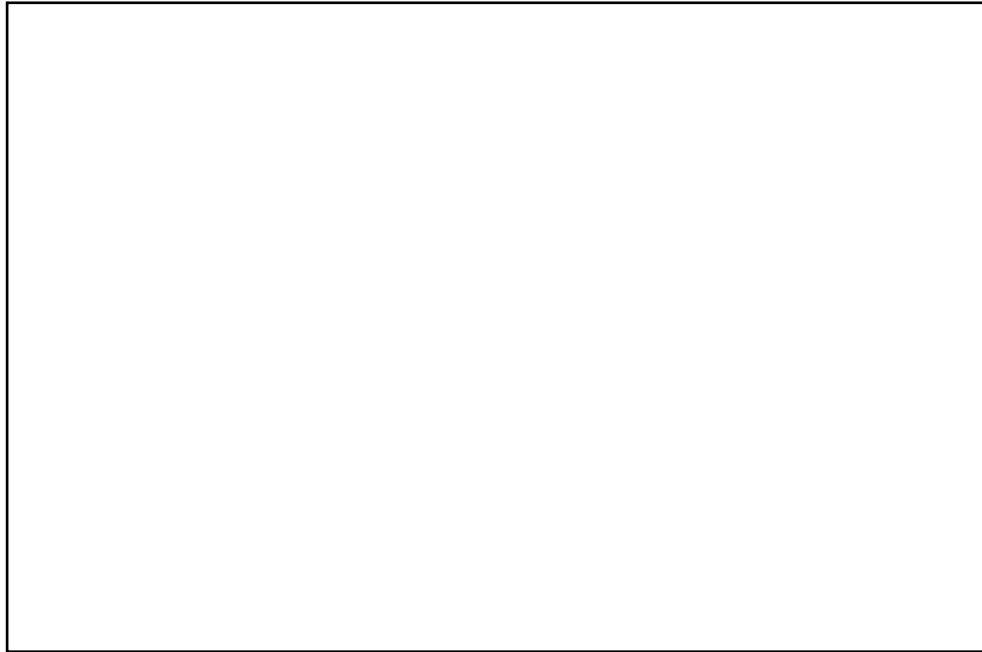
John MacDowell, *Ellipsis*, (photo from AMBruno website: http://ambruno.co.uk/sic.html)

Lines of Flight was my contribution to this project.[116] This work explores ways of forcing together the two contradictory systems of the book and the rhizome. Characteristics of the rhizome appear to stand in opposition to the book which generally assumes a linear sequence, whose structure is both fixed and laid out in a singular direction. A rhizomatic diagrammatic drawing was produced using text and image which traces my thoughts in response to some of the writings by Deleuze and Guattari in relation to the rhizome. This was to better understand their proposal that 'The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out [...] on a single page'.[1] They also suggest that lines of flight may be mapped across the ever increasing plane of multiplicities. This conveys that the rhizomatic space is constantly moving and re-mapping, as opposed to the book which is a fixed space once printed. It was this contradiction which I wanted to explore.

The flat diagrammatic drawing has been physically fragmented by cutting it up into pieces small enough to digitally scan. Each smaller section of the drawing has then been scanned and thrust into the paginated structure of a book. Lines of thought transverse the book surface, split apart, opening potential spaces beyond the whole. My original proposal was

---

116 Rachel Smith, *Lines of Flight*, first edition of 25 hand finished laser printed books, 2017 http://ambruno.co.uk/rachel-smith.html [last accessed 10.10.2018]

to make the book of the scanned drawing and perforate the pages so that the book could potentially be destroyed in order to return the object to its original single surface. However, in the process of shifting from one system into another, unexpected ruptures formed and fragments of information became lost. The scans lost millimetres of the drawing at the edges making it impossible to get a smooth transition between pages. In trying to match up the flow over the edges of the paper fragments of the drawings or letters from words became lost in the bleed trim. In encountering these difficulties, the work had to adapt to incorporate the growing errors, it seemed that in deliberately courting an error, it was not going to be so easy to resolve. The errors seemed to multiply, expanding with each development of the process.

Through the process of mass production each book is slightly differently trimmed. In the transfer from physical to digital I discovered that my measurements were incorrect in calculating the ratio between the drawing size and book size. This meant that the book pages did not correspond precisely with the scaled size of the drawing so there were sections that did not quite fit as easily onto the page as intended. This led to the ruptures being completely visible on the page surface as well at some of the page edges. These cuts made to the drawing and clearly visible in the pages of the book speak of the materiality of the object as it shifts towards its destination. Parts of the drawing are repeated, and the double-sided pages make it impossible to reconstruct the original flat surface. In this way the work clearly acknowledges the layers of error while at the same time relentlessly pushes the idea onward, carrying the mistakes along, in a way that suggests the driving motion of the rhizome. To allow room for further reconstructions, the printed book pages have been drawn into, making each of the first twenty-five books an original, hinting at the idea of each new reading providing a different route through the rhizomatic system. While the book might physically bind the rhizome in this work, it does not fully contain it, and later this will become apparent, as the afterlife of these book pages continue to produce further rhizomatic lines of flight.
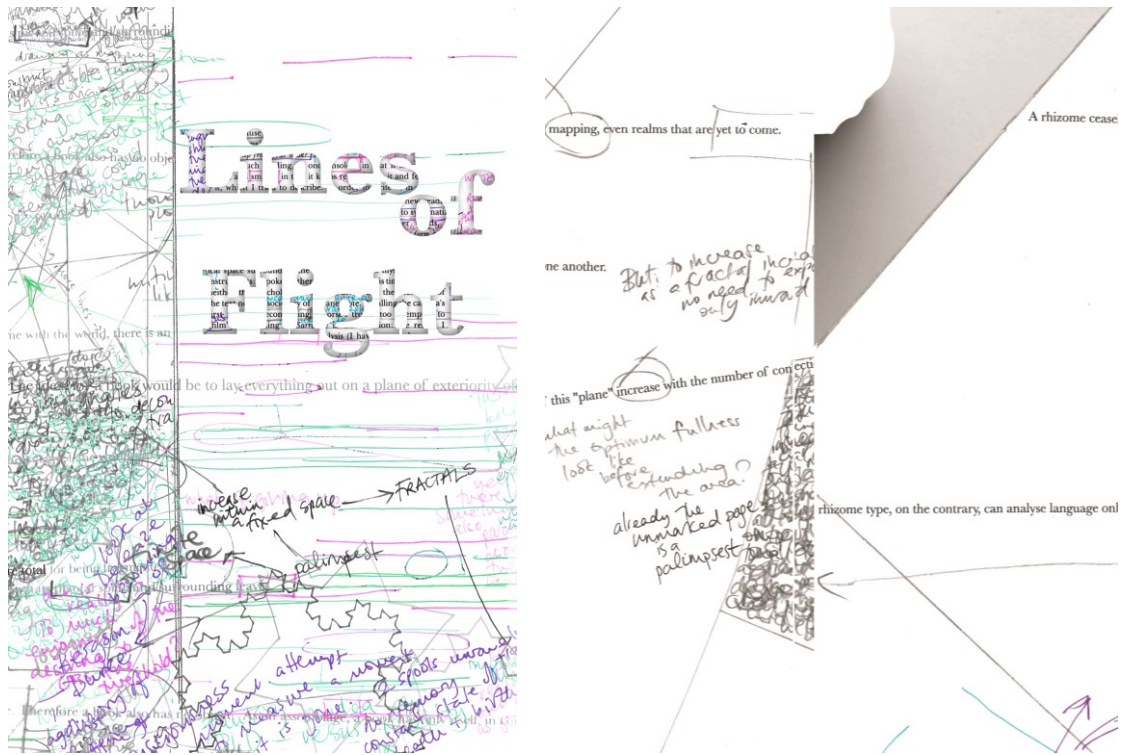
Rachel Smith, cover and page from *Lines of Flight*

The difficulty of making the object is more useful for the purposes of research than if it had smoothly been executed. Even to say that the rhizome and book structures would be combined in a single space is remarkably optimistic, verging on a conceptual piece of work that might exist more easily mentally.[117] The physical process of materialising this object was fraught with problems, but in attempting and failing to resolve them there is room for further thought or remaking in response as the outcome is flawed. As both systems have been disrupted by forcing them to occupy the same space, gaps have formed to make space for further work.[118]

---

117 I am reminded that I must divert my path *via* the mental works of *Crux Desperationes* which will appear later in this chapter under the heading of Ideas as books.

118 *Lines of Flight* provoked discussions about the potential status of the fragmented drawings as an artwork, and also promoted the publication of a pamphlet work, *Voler: To steal and fly*, published by Penteract Press. This work rips a page spread from the book and adds the structure of a paper aeroplane onto the surface to engage with Helene Cixous and her ideas of women writing as both stealing and flying through existing structures of language.
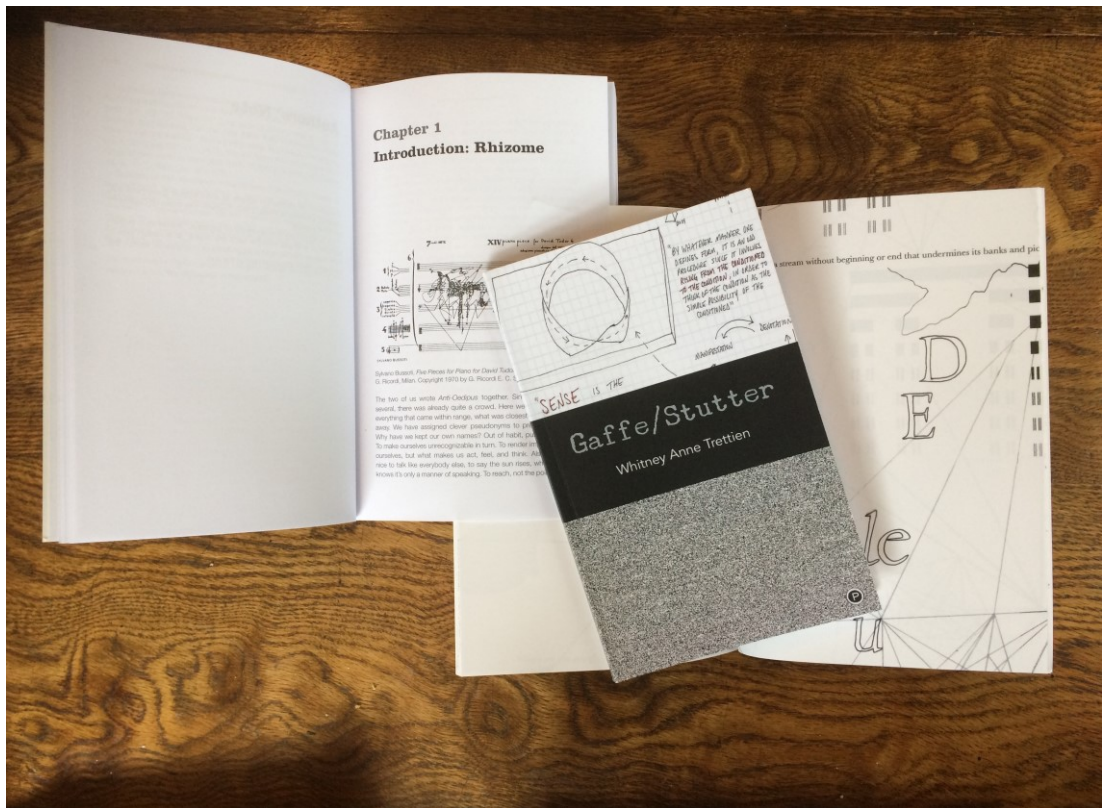
Whitney Anne Trettien, *Gaffe/Stutter,* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*,
Rachel Smith, *Lines of Flight*

Whittney Anne Trettien's book *Gaffe/Stutter* uses diagrams to chart thought process in response to reading Deleuze.[119] The book is an account of an abandoned reading group started in order to navigate *The Logic of Sense* by Deleuze. Part narrative, part illustrative diagram, part html code, she tracks her stuttering path through the sense of Deleuze's words, alongside the failed coding that also refused to formulate the result intended for her diagrams. Failure is covered in more detail later, but Trettien's and my work are comparable as both use diagrams to materialise thinking while reading a challenging text. She imagines a scrollable and annotatable webpage of her diagrams, whereas I imagine a book torn apart, reconfigured and annotated by its reader. Both attempts fail to realise their original intention but nevertheless construct a visualisation of the search for sense

---

119 Whitney Anne Trettien, *Gaffe/Stutter,* New York: BABEL Working Group, an imprint of punctum books, 2013.

through making. Both book objects act as documents of the process undergone in trying to find sense in the face of Deleuze's writing. Yet in terms of categorisation Trettien's book has been picked up and carried around in a pile with *Lines of Flight,* while thinking about error, diagramming, and understanding Deleuze through drawing. Accidentally it temporarily resides here, lifted and carried along with another pile of gathered books. Structurally it has more in common with other rooms. I will carry it with me for a while in hope of finding a more suitable room to house it.

1.4.2 Text as a structural object

Unlike the books next door, where the physical shape or structure of the book questions its use or function, here the examples explore the material structure of the text or image inside as the structural object to be manipulated. The outer appearance of these books often mirrors a traditionally understood book form, covering the potentially radical structure inside. I glance across the shelf at the books I might open. Pavel Büchler's *Perfect Love* 'explores the model of space and time legible in the linguistic texture of Robert Musil's 1911 novella *The Perfecting of a Love*'.[120] Büchler removes all the appropriated text from Musil's work, leaving only the similes in their original position on each page. The cover is a technologically produced facsimile of one of Musil's heavily edited manuscripts. The marks of crossing out and evidence of restructuring and editing text are no longer as readily evident in the age of digital writing. Much of the writer's thought process is now swept clean by the ease of digital erasure. One of the concerns underlying my research is how art practice might offer ways of visualising and materialising the thinking or sense making process in relation to the transmission of physical language. I argue that the space for thinking is gradually being eroded, made invisible, which impacts on the way and speed at which thinking might occur. Art practice is used here research to draw attention to thinking, to materialise acts around construction of sense, celebrating interruption and error as tools for breaking a seemingly never ending flow of information.

---

120 Information as Material press release which accompanies the book by Pavel Büchler.
Pavel Büchler, *Perfect Love,* Information as Material, 2018

Johanna Drucker's *Diagrammatic Writing* embodies ideas of multiple voice, materiality, and the performative in the way text inhabits the pages of this artist book, whose unassuming cover gives little indication of the complexity inside.[121] The text is materialised in a single font, but in a variety of sizes and character styles, with careful consideration to the page layout, which act together as forceful elements of the conceptual conceit. The content of the text describes the format itself and the impact of materiality on the reader's understanding. The work is completely self-referential, tightly contained and visually arresting, a neat conceptual trick that could easily be looked at and put down. However, it draws me back through the variety and thoroughness of its content. It acts as a carefully structured demonstration, offering possibilities of how the various systems and attributes of typographic layout can embody or disrupt meaning inside a book object.
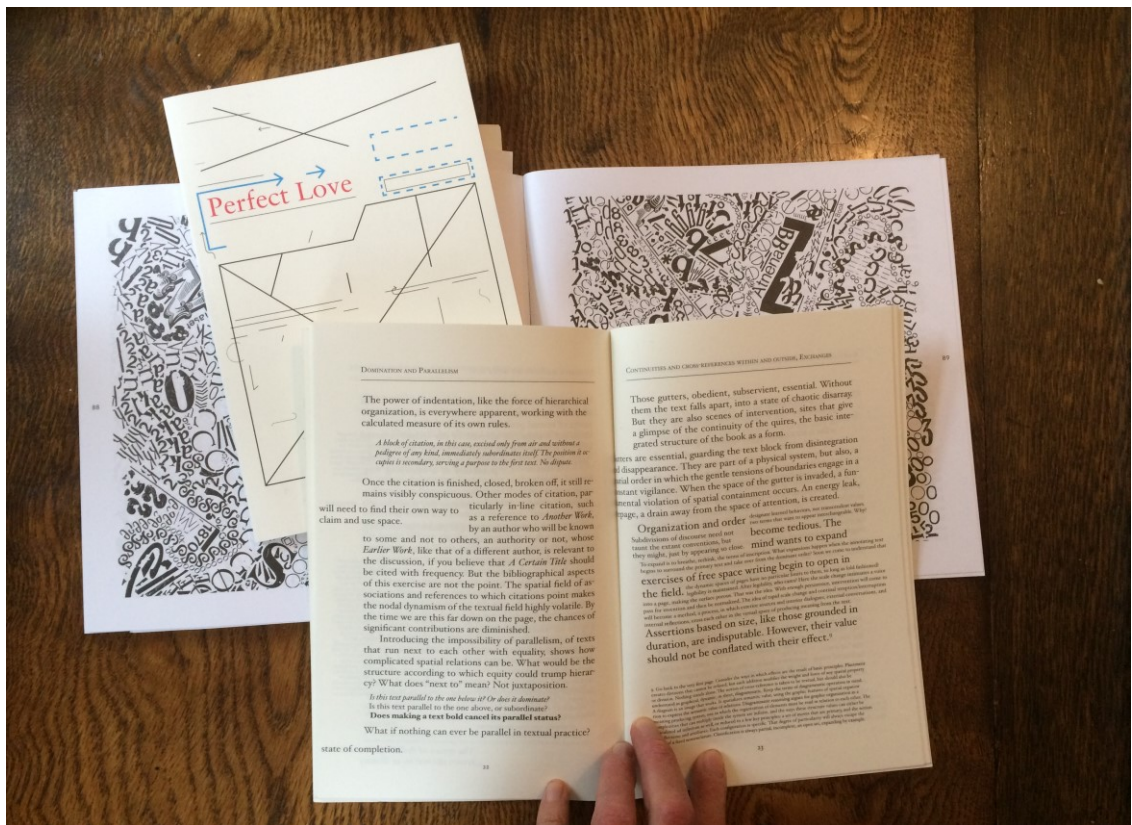
Johanna Drucker, *Diagrammatic Writing,* Pavel Buchler, *Perfect Love,* Derek Beaulieu, *Kern*

Also considering the typographic layout of words and letters, but using the visual qualities beyond the normative sense of reading, Derek Beaulieu's typographic poems explore the space between reading and looking.[122] Though constructed of letters they are unreadable in any traditional sense.[123] They are tactile objects as the eye navigates them looking for structure, pattern, repetition. His work shifts between boundaries: concrete and conceptual, book and gallery wall, poem and art, and as such can be found in several rooms across the library, as well as on the walls of the corridors between.

1.4.3 Erased or obscured works

I was expecting to pass a room which houses books which have been erased or obscured, but this collection appears to have been relocated. Elisabeth Tonnard's *We are Small*, Emilio Isgrò's *Lettera bianca*, Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning*, or Jérémie Bennequin's *Ommage* which physically erases the text from pages of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* might have been expected.[124] More recent acquisitions for this room include Nise McCulloch's erased page from *Fahrenheit 451*, where words have been burned from the copy.[125] My memory fades as does the room which contains them.

1.4.4 Navigating between the rooms:

As I descend the stairs to move between rooms memories of works may be conjured. Sarah Sanders has been here earlier writing her work in chalk on the stone steps beneath

---

122 Derek Beaulieu, *Kern,* Los Angeles: Les Figues Press, 2014.
123 Derek Beaulieu's work demonstrates a clear trajectory from concrete poetry. Concrete poetry uses a variety of linguistic elements where the visual sense of the typographic affect is more important than the words themselves and their ordinary meaning. Historically, concrete poetry has developed from the tradition of poems that are shaped so as to represent their subject. Bob Cobbing experimental work with a typewriter has considerable influence on the development of the development of concrete work artist Carl Andre and poet Sean Bonney.
124 Elisabeth Tonnard, *We are Small*, artist book, 2012, Emilio Isgrò's *Lettera bianca,* acrylic on canvas, 2005, Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning*, erased drawing on paper, 1953, Jérémie Bennequin, *Ommage 2.1, Manuel,* Paris, 2013.
125 Nise McCulloch, *F451 Hands*, burnt book page, 2018.
Page 102 torn from the book *Fahrenheit 451* with most of the text burned from the page, revealing a found poem in the remnants.

my feet. The words *I used to* are smudged but still legible.[126] While travelling between rooms, any text is no longer in front of me, I am more 'insolent' than 'smitten'.[127] While Vladimir Nabokov's description of 'a good reader [...] is a rereader'[128] stresses the importance of discipline, which involves repeatedly returning to the text to avoid straying too far in an associative manner, I am allowing myself to become un-disciplined. In *Choreographic Figures* Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker, and Mariella Greil write about becoming undisciplinary as a way of exploring modes between disciplines to transverse the spaces beyond and before to ask what forms of knowledge and knowing emerge in the gaps. I am interested in the idea of un-disciplinary as refusing some of the expected rules or methods of a discipline. To be un-discipline is a deliberate act of working beyond existing expectations.[129] Maria Fusco describes a similar process involved with art writing. She proposes an art writing that does not adhere to the 'modalities of writing as given, rather it tends to, and experiments with, non-division between practice and theory, criticism and creativity'.[130]

Nikolaus Gansterer, et al. *Choreographic Figures*, Maria Fusco, *Give up Art*

---

126 Sarah Sanders, *I used to* was a work I saw at the Text Festival in Bury, 2014. It was live art writing which she chalked onto the stone steps of the museum space. The phrase I used to... began a set of statements which explored the possibilities of memory and change in relation to who she might be or was before.
127 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
128 Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, New York: Harcourt, 1980, p. 3
129 Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker Mariella Greil, *Choreo-Graphic Figures: Deviations from the line*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017, p. 39.
130 Maria Fusco, *Give Up Art*, LA: New Documents, 2017, p. 13.

1.4.5 Constraint-based work

Embracing the premise that there is freedom in restriction, the OuLiPo was founded in 1960 by Raymond Queneau and Francois Le Lionnais.[131] The movement comprises writers, mathematicians, and artists based mainly in France. OuLiPo is short for Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle, a workshop of potential literature. Rule-based strategies are developed, tested, and published by Oulipian members for others to employ. 'Oulipian constraints provide the rules of a language game'.[132] A constraint may be defined as an instruction or method that will drive, but also limit, the mode of production. It is a way of restricting the writer, and by doing so freeing them of some of the difficulties of writing.[133] However, the room in which I stand clearly contains shelves of real books, work that has been made from the procedures developed. The potential work is stored in a further room elsewhere, alongside a variety of ideas as art or ideas as poetry. Notable examples of Oulipian literature, which line these shelves, using well known Oulipian constraint, are Georges Perec's *A Void*, written under the Lipogram constraint, an entire novel written without the letter e. This results in removing the possible use of the French words for mother, father, parents, and family, acting as a metaphor for both Perec's loss of his parents through the Holocaust, and a broader sense of loss.[134]

Faced with vast quantities of information or data that seems beyond comprehension can lead to an inability to act.[135] How to proceed, what to do, are common questions. Kenneth Goldsmith writes that with 'an unprecedented onslaught of the sheer quantity of language

131 Igor Stravinsky, cuts to the heart of the attitude of Oulipian work, writing: 'The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit... the arbitrariness of the constraint only serves to obtain precision of execution.' and his words head up the Oulipo webpage at http://www.nous.org.uk/oulipo.html [last accessed 16.11.15.]
132 Jacques Roubaud, 'Introduction: The Oulipo and Combinatorial Art (1991), Mathews, Harry, Alistair Brotchie (eds), *Oulipo Compendium,* trans. by Ian Monk, London: Atlas Press, 2005 p. 40.
133 Roubaud goes on to write: 'from the users point of view, constraints can be more or less difficult, [...] Obviously a complex relation exists between the requirements of an outwardly imposed rule and the artist's inner freedom'. The use of obviously is not justified, but as the constraint is self directed, or specifically chosen then there is an implication that of desire to follow, rather than break this selected rule. Op. Cit. p. 41.
134 Georges Perec, *A Void*, trans. Gilbert Adair, NYC: Vintage, 2008 [*La Disparition*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969]
135 As Reijo Savolainen writes: 'in general, information overload may be understood as a subjective experience of the insufficiency of time needed to make effective use of information resources available in specific situations'.
Reijo Savolainen, 'Filtering and withdrawing: strategies for coping with information overload in everyday contexts', *Journal of Information Science*, vol. 33, no. 5, 2007, 611-621, p. 612.

[...] the writer faces the challenge of exactly how to respond.[136] Majorie Perloff coins the term 'moving information' to draw attention to the methods of appropriation and contextual repurposing as poetic strategies for dealing with large quantities of data.[137] Nicholas Bourriaud suggests 'the artwork as a surface for data storage',[138] alongside 'the importance of maintaining activity in the face of mass production'.[139] Practical methods are needed to overcome the frozen inertia and the work in this room demonstrates possible solutions.

Raymond Queneau's work *One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* consists of ten 14-line sonnets, with alternate rhyming lines, printed so that each line is cut into separate strips to reveal all the possible combinations.[140] This work presents the reader with an overwhelming task, and becomes an object to be thought about rather than actually read, an idea which is picked up shortly by the Conceptual Writing movement. In *Exercises in Style* Queneau writes a bus journey described from a number of literary variations.[141] Different voices and styles retell the same mundane event through ninety-nine stylistic retellings, including: Hesitation (which poses questions between ellipses); Asides (using italics for the remarks which break up the events); and Negativities (including alternatives to each object in the story). Both works question the presentation of a singular version of events, visualising the possibility of the multiple.

---

136 Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Why Conceptual Writing? Why Now?', Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith, (eds.) *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing,* Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011, p. xviii
137 Majorie Perloff, 'Moving Information: On Kenneth Goldsmith's *The Weather*', *Open Letter*: Kenneth Goldsmith & Conceptual Poetics, 2005.
138 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World,* New York, NYC: Lukas and Sternberg, 2002, p. 85.
139 Op. Cit. p. 93.
140 Raymond Queneau, *Hundred Thousand Billion Poems*, originally published in 1961, a version of this appears in: Mathews, Harry, Alistair Brotchie (eds), *Oulipo Compendium,* trans. by Ian Monk, London: Atlas Press, 2005
141 Raymond Queneau, *Exercises in Style*, trans. Barbara Wright, NYC: New Directions, 2013 [*Exercices de style*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1947].

Publications by Anthony Etherin and Penteract Press

The influence of the Oulipo may be seen in the work of poets such as Anthony Etherin who uses mathematical constraint to construct his poetry, favouring palindromes and his own more complex aelindromes, which are 'a palindromic variation in which letters are symmetrically parsed according to premeditated sequences'.[142] Structure is crucial to the predetermined anagramic repetition and mirroring of specific letters which determines the selection of words. This form returns me to Borges's library, imagining the repeated reordered configuration of characters, words, phrases, in each book as the users of the library search for a reconfiguration which offer the possibility of conjuring a graspable sense. Penteract Press, run by Etherin, publishes *Concrete and Constraint*, an anthology of constraint-based and visual poetry demonstrating a range of techniques and enquires currently explored.[143] The contributors' copy I hold is yet to be properly filed in the

---

142 Anthony Etherin, *Aelindromes (φ –π– √2),* Penteract Press, 2017,
https://penteractpress.com/store/aelindromes-anthony-etherin
143 Anthony Etherin and Clara Daneri run Penteract Press who publish leaflets and small booklets concerning constraint based and concrete types of poetry. https://penteractpress.com

library, as it only arrived in the post this morning (at the time of writing). Divided into two sections: 'Procedural & Permutational', which explores text and spatial experiments, and 'Prohibitive & Plastic', which includes material and conceptual restrictions, it demonstrates the different approaches currently employed in relation to constraint-based work.

These procedural methods in writing mirror work made by artists such as Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin, and Hanne Darboven. The idea is formulated first and then the making process becomes machinic and must be followed to completion without alteration.[144] As with Oulipian constraints, Sol LeWitt devises the instruction which might then be carried out by another person.[145] This gifting of the process allows the work to be reformulated by multiple producers in a variety of locations. It also produces a space between the instruction and the production in which the unexpected or errant might occur in translating and completing the supposedly machinic process. Martin's paintings use abstract and repetitive lines which are insistent across her body of work. These drawn and painted lines appear as a process of physically figuring something out, making and remaking, pushing towards, a meditative practice, practice here as intent to develop through repetition.[146] Darboven's mathematical calculations presented in calendar form which simultaneous seem to embrace the rigid order and structure of familiar grids while offering a representation of the constant flux of time though personal and cultural events as found images and postcards became part of her work. *Kulturegeschichte 1880–1983* is

Anthony Etherin (ed) *Concrete and Constraint*, Penteract Press, 2018. Contributors include Derek Beaulieu, Christian Bok, Nasser Hussein, Lucy Dawkins, amongst other artists and writers. https://penteractpress.com/store/concrete-amp-constraint-anthology-1

144 See Sol LeWitt Sentence and 'Paragraphs on conceptual art': 'When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.'

145 Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing 86,*
Ten thousand lines about 10 inches (25 cm) long, covering the wall evenly.
Black pencil, June 1971.
Lines are applied at the singular discretion of the draftsman, who is instructed only to maintain the length of the lines and appearance of evenness across the surface of the wall. The even distribution is conditioned by the dimensions of the wall, giving each iteration of the drawing a different level of density. Other aspects of the lines (their orientation, how often they intersect each other, etc.) are decided by the draftsman as the drawing progresses. The operation of restriction and flexibility results in a visual marriage between pattern and intuition.
Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing 86, Ten thousand lines about 10 inches (25 cm) long, covering the wall evenly.* 1971
http://www.massmoca.org/lewitt/walldrawing.php?id=86 [last accessed 9.3.15]

146 Agnes Martin, *Agnes Martin,* London: Tate Modern, 2015 [seen on 5.8.2015]

archival in its appearance but it defies any linear reading.[147] Fragmented and resistant to comprehensibility the work is restructured with each iteration of the installation. It explores the multiplicity of history without reduction.

Goldsmith, a leading proponent of the Conceptual Writing movement, has occasionally been dismissive of some Oulipian work for not being conceptual in its output.[148] His argument is based on the premise that whereas the Oulipian constraints are often left open to be applied to any source texts, the method or form of re-presenting in conceptual work must be seen to have conceptual relevance to the appropriated source. Thus the procedure – and therefore the concept – become lost in the traditional style of the writing; the constraint is no longer at the forefront of the work and the reader's attention. Yet Roubaud writing to explain what an Oulipian text might be states it is 'a text written according to a constraint describes the constraint'.[149] This implies the constraint should be foregrounded in order to succeed in this function. In Craig Dworkin's *Parse*, the constraint is clearly the only visible material, as the original text is completely obscured by the procedure. The work is a conceptual translation of Edwin A. Abbott's *How To Parse: An Attempt to Apply the Principles of Scholarship to English Grammar,* made by applying its own system of analysis to the original book, so that each word is reduced to a statement of the type of grammatical word.[150] However, the conceptual arguments emanating from the room opposite my current position are already affecting my approach to this room, and so I must move on.

---

147 Hanne Darboven, *Kulturegeschichte 1880–1983 (Cultural History 1880–1983)* New York: Dia:Chelsea, 2017

148 According to Goldsmith, Georges Perec's *A Void,* written without the letter e, falls into the trap of using 'blandly conservative narrative fiction which seems to bury the very interesting procedures that went into creating the works'. From Eric Baum, Interview with Kenneth Goldsmith, *Read Me*, Issue 4, 2001, http://home.jps.net/~nada/kennyg.htm [last accessed 23.3.15].Rather than drawing attention to the conceptual method, Perec's writing is so accomplished that the reader is often unaware of the constraint, rendering the work unsuccessful as a piece of conceptual writing, by the standards set by Goldsmith. Perec still had many decisions to make in process of writing his novel; the omission of the letter e did not enable the production process to become a 'perfunctory affair'. So the difference between a concept and a constraint seems to be whether there is still editing or choice left in the process of production. However, conceptual poet, Vanessa Place would disagree with Goldsmith, as she believes that *A Void* is 'conceptual in the way it works'. The book is about the loss of one's parents, and by not using the letter e, the words relating to parents and family in the French language also disappear.

149 Jacques Roubaud, 'Introduction: The Oulipo and Combinatorial Art (1991), Harry Mathews, Alistair Brotchie (eds), *Oulipo Compendium,* trans. by Ian Monk, London: Atlas Press, 2005 p. 42.

150 Craig Dworkin, *Parse*, Berkeley CA: Atelos, 2008.

1.4.6 Book as conceptual content

Conceptual Writing is a term that applies to experimental writing which subjects existing texts to a range of procedures and the concept behind the work is more important than the resulting output. The method used must be indistinguishable from the concept of the work, whereas constraint-based writing is more about foregrounding the chosen technique which might be used across any number of texts. Conceptual Writing is closely allied to debates from Conceptual Art in relation to the importance of art as idea, instead of art as object. Goldsmith's appropriation of LeWitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*, with text adjusted to writing rather than art, also solidified the association between the two movements.[151] It is always possible to tell if Conceptual Writers have passed through this space as the Conceptual Art books are gathered here, stacked neatly on the floor, out of place and time. They await the time they will be returned to the shelves from which they were taken. Lucy Lippard's book on Conceptual Art, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object*, considers the speed of transmission, communication as distribution, and boredom as an antidote to creative individualism concerns reflected in the Conceptual Writing movement.[152]

Often described as having a thinkership rather than a readership, it can be hard to define the parameters of the Conceptual Writing movement. Works are generally to be thought about rather than read, sometimes due to the asemic nature of the visual form or the vast quantity of content. To a large extent its existence has been in response to the rise of the Internet, as a way of dealing with the excess of available texts.[153] It has also been associated with the avoidance of original authorship or expressive content.[154] Appropriation, copy and paste, distribution, and shifting the context for entire texts are among some of its most familiar moves. Each original text and its conceptual method of reproduction are particular and not necessarily interchangeable, which marks a major difference between

---

151 Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing', *Open Letter*, vol.12, no. 7. Fall 2005, 108–112.
152 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.
153 Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Why Conceptual Writing? Why Now?' pp. xvii–xviii.
154 Kenneth Goldsmith builds on Marjorie Perloff's term 'unoriginal genius' with his book *Uncreative Writing*, and introduces the idea of uncreative writing by describing the process of plagiarism, copying, appropriation and moving information to produce new methods of writing in response to the internet and its glut of texts.
Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 1–2

Conceptual Writing and Oulipian constraint. Appropriated words are easily transported *via* the Internet, gluts of information exist in vast quantities, with the capacity to be copied and pasted in a way that was not possible in the early years of the Conceptual Art movement.

Another way of considering some of this conceptual work is as an exploration of structure beyond the familiar linear expectation of writing, an ordering of information or structuring of form in ways which question expected sense. Claude Closky challenges expected normative structures by representing the first thousand numbers, instead of arranging them numerically, the numbers are arranged alphabetically as words.[155] The re-ordering is a simple gesture, but questions agreed systems of organisation which are relied upon to formulate sense. Elisabeth Tonnard's *An Empty Field* contains words appropriated from Donald Trump's address to the CIA the day after his inauguration, published in book form. Laid out with a hundred and forty characters per page it follows the Twitter format used by the president, leaving a large part of each page empty of content.[156] The blank page space is not empty but loaded with readings in relation to its subject matter. The position of the text at the foot of each page suggests a footnote, perhaps indicating the once peripheral nature of the impact of social media in politics. The blank page above implies the now influential role of this form used by Trump.

Observed against the backdrop of this imaginary library system, I recognise Conceptual Writing as a potential contemporary project to bring Borges's Library of Babel into physical existence. Conceptual Writing produces iterations of existing books, appropriated, repurposed, reimagined, adapted, deleted, or rearranged. Borges describes the tiny variations between the books in the library: 'there are always several hundred thousand imperfect facsimiles: works which differ only in a letter or a comma'.[157] Consider Vanessa Place's rape victim court transcripts read as poetry,[158] or Derek Beaulieu's appropriated version of Andy Warhol's *a, A Novel*, which erases all but the punctuation or onomatopoeic words, shelved alongside their original versions.[159] Beaulieu continues to

---

155 Claude Closky, *First Thousand Numbers Classified in Alphabetical Order*, 1989. http://www.ubu.com/concept/Claude_Closky_1000.pdf [last accessed 16.11.19]
156 Elisabeth Tonnard, *An Empty Field*, Leerdam, 2017. https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/an-empty-field/ [last accessed 16.11.19]
157 Jorge Luis Borges, the 'Library of Babel', p. 83
158 Vanessa Place, *Statement of the Facts*, Los Angeles, CA: Blanc Press, 2010.
159 Derek Beaulieu, *a, A Novel*, Paris: Jean-Boite, 2017.

post pdfs of his own work online, deliberately providing content to be further remixed by other artists and writers, so the remaking process towards Borges's Library appears in this regard to be ongoing. Aymee Smith's *Methods for Reading the Illegible*, which takes the contents of Craig Dworkin's book *Reading the Illegible*, which charts the development of unreadable writing in all its forms, and makes Dworkin's text illegible by copying pages onto acetate and layering them up gradually towards palimpsestic blackness.[160] Borges's library supposedly contains every possible book, most of which are incomprehensible to readers, as 'for every sensible line of straightforward statement, there are leagues of senseless cacophonies, verbal jumbles, and incoherences'.[161] These books demanding a thinkership fulfil an imagined and durational proposal to manifest a Borgesian library collection.

My relation to Conceptual Writing has not been consistent. Working through Conceptual Poetics always implied a movement or shifting across a discipline, as opposed to a permanent residence there. I am an artist interested in text and language but my work is not solely writing. Using constraints and conceptual methods have focused my investigations. There were periods of fandom in the early days of the research while procedural methods and constraint seemed to enable a helpful generative approach as I travelled from MA research into Ph.D. territory. This procedural approach gradually became increasingly problematic in relation to the process of research, as risk and experiment – as well as trial and error – became more fruitful in testing propositions. Divergence from the rules in my practice was a step towards not knowing as a way to search for an answer, despite this taking my work on a different path from where it had originally started.

This path took another detour after the events which occurred in 2015. Controversy courted by some conceptual writers, now with plenty of notoriety, showed at best a lack of care, at worst a demonstration of ignorance given to issues of appropriated voices in relation to race, power, status and the voice of the other, which will be discussed in more

Andy Warhol's original book of the same title contained transcribed conversations, gossip, and other sounds in New York. Beaulieu removes the voices and characters from the book leaving only a score like impression of the sounds on each page, as a material version of Adorno's suggestion that punctuation is the element of language that is most like music.
160 Aymee Smith, *Methods for Reading the Illegible*, self published on Blurb, 2014.
161 Jorge Luis Borges, the 'Library of Babel', p. 80.

detail in Chapter Three.[162] Yet beyond the problematics of seemingly unthinkingly sticking to the rules, subtler work, less concerned with rigid rule application was happening still under the umbrella of Conceptual Writing and in relation to ideas in response. Even before this Drucker had already written about the probability of the movement already being over, asking what next:

> What will happen to poetry and imaginative work after the wave of conceptualisms finishes its full dismantling of received notions of author, text, originality and creativity? Conceptual writing signalled the end of the era of individual voice. Poetics of the swarm, mind-meld writing, poiesis as the hapax legomenon of the culture?[163]

For me this question appears to arise from the existing explorations of Marjorie Perloff's book *Unoriginal Genius* published in 2010.[164] Perloff charts the development of strategies associated with Conceptual Writing from Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, considering 'poetry by other means' up until 2010. Drucker's question of what next requires a consideration of what will occur to the individual voice beyond such rule based work, beyond the ideas laid out in Perloff's analysis. Poetics of the swarm might include Brian Kim Stefan's *Dreamlife of Letters*, or Caroline Bergvall's *Drift*, where words and letters act as animated concrete poetry. The digital text seems to have become unhinged from its author and taken on a life of its own.[165] Mind-meld writing seems a science fiction term, but might usefully describe works where collaborative work or co-production develops, overlapping into a writing between, where writing is no longer divided into separate authors, as with the rhizomatic non-hierarchical writing of *Thousand Plateaus*.[166] *Notes on Conceptualisms* is written jointly by Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman, and though there are sections written under each named author, the main body of the text is co-

---

162 A discussion of Goldsmith's work *Kenneth Goldsmith's The Body of Michael Brown*, and the problematics of authorial voice and ethical concerns can be found in Chapter 4, under 4.3 'Submission to the Rule'.

163 Johanna Drucker, 'Beyond Conceptualisms: Poetics after Critique and the End of the Individual Voice', https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/04/conceptual-writing-was-intriguing-and-provocative [last accessed 26.08.2018]

164 Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2010.

165 Brian Kim Stefans, *The Dreamlife of Letters*, 2000, http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/stefans__the_dreamlife_of_letters.html [last accessed 22.10.2018]

Caroline Bergvall, *Drift*, Bury Text Festival, The MET, seen on 03.05.2014. 'Performed by a collaborative team: Caroline Bergvall – overall concept / texts / live voice, Ingar Zach – live and treated percussion, Thomas Koppel – visual treatment and programming, Michele Pralong – dramaturg' https://themet.org.uk/event/drift/

166 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.*

authored, their voices blended.[167] The product is a text that simultaneously reads as a conceptual work while taking the position of a theoretical text. 'Introduction in Five Acts' is an example of a text whose authors' voices are merged with other writers, and readers. It is written as a scripted dialogue containing multiple voices of artists, theorists, and practitioners, exploring the synthesis of practice research and theory in a performative manner.[168] *Choreographic Figures*, the artist book is a co-production, a set of collaborative practices, performance, and writing as research.[169] These examples explore the production of a book object in which the different authorial voices are integrated, partially distanced by the reader's inability to separate each writer's voice. This kind of collaborative practice seems a positive step towards acknowledging and challenging the authorial position.
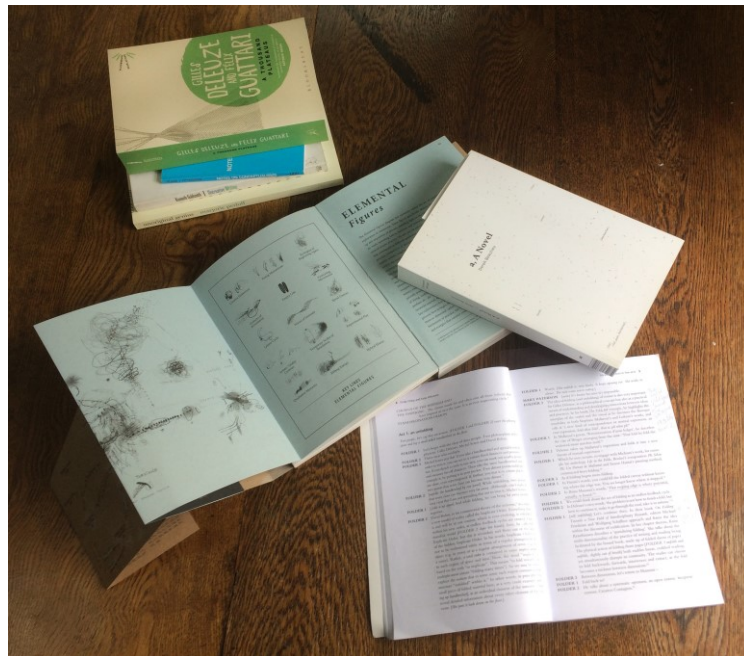
Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus,* Gansterer, *Choreographic Figures,*
Katja Hilevaara, et al. *The Creative Critic: Writing as/about Practice,*
Beaulieu, *a, A Novel*

167 Vanesa Place and Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism*, New York, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2009.
168 Emily Orley and Katja Hilevaara, 'An Introduction in Five Acts', *The Creative Critic*, Oxford: Routledge, 2018.
169 Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker and Mariella Greil, *Choreo-Graphic Figures: Deviations from the Line*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017.

1.4.7 Ideas as Books[170]

Conceptual Writing borrows methods of production from Conceptual Art, where neutral or cheap production materials enabled the idea to be paramount.[171] Whether art works were produced or remained as the expression of an imagined idea remains part of the debate, as Lawrence Weiner stated:

1. the artist may construct the piece.
2. the piece may be fabricated.
3. the piece need not be built.
   Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.[172]

This paradox engages the idea of the work being made and not being made leaving the decision in the mind of the receiver. This echoes ideas of the thinkership associated with Conceptual Writing, requiring the reader to think rather than view or read the work.

Building on the history of works that do not exist, Tonnard's *Invisible Book* is available for £0 and 'was made as a reaction to both the trend of decreasing book-sales and the trend of increasing expectations from audiences'.[173] It questions the status of the art work and takes to the limit the idea of Conceptual Writing or ideas as poems. It has no pages or words, but it still exists in the mind of its reader (thinker) as much as many other books that take a physical form, but are never actually read. A year later to make the invisible object more tangible a set of postcards was produced, *Highlights in the History of The Invisible Book*, giving provenance and historical context to this invisible book.[174]

---

170 Craig Dworkin, 'The Fate of Echo', in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, eds. Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010, xxxvii.
171 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialisation of the art object*, pp. xi-xii.
172 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialisation of the art object*, p. xvii.
173 Elisabeth Tonnard, *The Invisible Book*, published by Elisabeth Tonnard, Leerdam, 2012, https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/the-invisible-book [last accessed 21.10.2018]
174 Elisabeth Tonnard, *Highlights in the history of The Invisible Book*, published by Elisabeth Tonnard, Leerdam, 2013, https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/the-invisible-book [last accessed 21.10.2018]

More widely this approach allows for a consideration of the use of material form as opposed to 'ideas as poems'.[175] *Crux Desperationis: International Journal of Conceptual Writing*, founded by Riccardo Boglione, explores both imagined and actual writing, and invites writing under the following headings:

> literature stripped of sentiments • literature stripped of the literary • genres mis à nu • big ideas tiny texts • works against the rhetoric of the rhetoric as rhetorical • perpetual questioning of the forms of literature • parasitic and text-sucking writing • erasure and abrasion • written automatism versus automatic writing • political understatements • footnotes versus texts • abstract literature • wordless writing[176]

The journal is published online in pdf format and alternates between a Mental Issue and a Tangible Issue. The former consists of a single page containing proposed titles or short descriptions of works that may only exist in the mind of the reader. The latter allows up to a thousand words of writing by each contributor. The alternating issues seem to mirror the *verso recto* of the book structure, with the recto page frequently containing more content than the verso page.

CRUX 9, a Tangible issue, includes several pages from Derek Beaulieu's ongoing erasure of all the speaking voices from Andy Warhol's *a, A Novel*.[177] Warhol's original book holds fragmented conversations and sounds captured on tape in the Factory in 1968, transcribed by students without correction.[178] Favouring transcription over narrative, and chance over design it foregrounds processes that have become synonymous with Conceptual Writing. Beaulieu's erased version leaves only the punctuation and onomatopoeic words, the claustrophobic sound is emptied out, but what remains appears as musical score. It exists as a material production of Theodor Adorno writing on punctuation: 'no element in which language resembles music more than in the punctuation marks'.[179] The description, in the press release, of the work as 'a visual orchestration of the traffic signals' makes the link between the printed visual of the score

---

175 Craig Dworkin, "The Fate of Echo," in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, eds. Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2010), xxxvii.

176 Riccardo Boglione, statement from the Crux homepage, http://cruxdesperationis.weebly.com. [last accessed 13.08.18]

177 Derek Beaulieu, *a, A Novel,* Paris: Jean-Boite, 2017

178 Andy Warhol, *a, A Novel*, New York, NY: Grove Press, 1968

179 Theodor W. Adorno and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, 'Punctuation Marks', *The Antioch Review*, vol. 48, no. 3, Poetry Today, Summer 1990, 300–305

and the busy sounds of the city from Warhol's book.[180] This book was first distributed in stages *via* Twitter, page by page, day by day, as a writing constraint until its completion, before then being published in full as a book.[181] The book generally resides in a different room, of complete conceptual book-works, but frequently the different versions of this work end up being gathered together. Somewhere beyond my current location lies a room which contains works that take one more than one form, though these books are often replicated in multiple rooms due to their ability to shift so obviously between registers.

Sharon Kivland's *Nana by Émile Zola digested according to dirt and disarray*, was also an ongoing work in which she rereads *Nana* according to different themes. Kivland's approach to CRUX is consistent as she contributes to both the mental and regular issues with condensed versions of Nana, though in her work digested according to odour in both the mental and tangible issues of CRUX Kivland, as pointed out by Annette Gilbert, 'undermines Boglione's radical idea' of only including work that will be imagined by the reader not actually made.[182] In CRUX 10 mental issue, she announces the project's end, proposing a work entitled *La Vagabonde* in which the reader is to imagine her 'Devastated at the end of my project of reading Nana, I will roam the streets of Paris for two years, trying to find Nana, my lost object of desire'.[183]

Other works from CRUX 10 include the titles and instructional statements as work, for example:

> Riccardo Boglione's *Borges images* – 'Translate visually, word by word, any story by Jorge Luis Borges using the Google Dictionary, Volume 1, by King Zog (Jean Boîte Éditions, 2013). See what María Kodama does'.[184]

---

180 Derek Beaulieu, *a, A Novel,* 2017, https://jean-boite.fr/collections/uncreative-writtings/products/a-a-novel-by-derek-beaulieu [last accessed 13.08.18]
181 Derek Beaulieu, @derekbeaulieu, p. 200 of the erasure of *a, A Novel,* https://twitter.com/derekbeaulieu/status/725163144558030851 [last accessed 13.08.18]
182 Annette Gilbert, 'It's the Idea that Counts. On the (Work) Status of Ideas in Propositional Literature', *A Work's Coming into Being: Challenges in the Formation of Literary Works Since the 1950s,* as yet unpublished.
183 Sharon Kivland, *Reading Nana: an experimental novel*, MA BIBLIOTHEQUE, 2017.
184 This text has been translated *via* Google translate, the original text reads:
Imágenes borgianas
Traducir visualmente, palabra por palabra, cualquier cuento de Jorge Luis Borges usando el diccionario Google, Volume 1, de King Zog (Jean Boîte Éditions, 2013). Ver qué hace María Kodama.

Helen Frank's *The History of Art According to a Chameleon* – 'For reference, use a history of art book, making sure that it has large colour plates. Sit the chameleon on the page so it covers the image. Repeat this process, photographing the chameleon's translation of each work of art'.[185]

Though much of this work may be said to exist only in the mind of the receiver, the attempt to house such work in a physical library collection reveals their form. These ideas are still manifested on computer screens, or printed on sheets of paper to be framed, bound in books, or read as a journal. As this physical presentation, though slight, holds words which further contain the idea of a work that exists in the mind of the receiver it is possible to unravel the different levels of these works. Dworkin explores this complexity and layered nature of materialised language: 'If words, conventionally, are thought to clothe thought, they also [...] cover the page [...] Print clothes language; which is to say it clothes a clothing'.[186] In peeling back the layers it can be easy to forget the material substrate on which we can view the 'idea' which has meaning already encoded into it. Dworkin continues: 'although it may appear un-inked, the blank page is culturally inscribed with an indelible text'.[187] Though a different cultural phenomenon the computer screen which can equally hold these 'ideas' is culturally and temporally inscribed. It is the material substrate that holds thought, and can be considered in the same manner which I explore in relation to my own work in Chapter Three.[188]

1.4.8 Books unbound into the gallery space

My path into this room is blocked. The floor is covered with rectangular photographic fragments. It is the installation of *One Swimming Pool* by Tonnard, which holds the space of book and installation simultaneously.[189] The book is a transportable shelf-sized

Ricardo Bogglioni, *Borges images,* Crux 10 Mental Issue, https://cruxdesperationis.weebly.com/issues.html [last accessed 29.5.19]
185 Helen Frank, *The History of Art According to a Chameleon,* Crux 10 Mental Issue, https://cruxdesperationis.weebly.com/issues.html [last accessed 29.5.19]
186 Craig Dworkin, *No Medium*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013, p. 7.
187 Ibid., p. 21.
188 In Chapter Two I consider my work *Writing: An Intransitive verb*, which is a digital exploration of writing in response to Barthes's exposition of the act of writing without producing an object, and the impossibility of this proposal.
189 Elisabeth Tonnard, *One Swimming Pool* published in an edition of 9 copies and an artist proof, 2013.

swimming pool, containing 3164 pages over nine book sections bound together. Photographs of 'Pool #3' taken from Ed Ruscha's book *Nine Swimming Pools and a broken glass*, are printed in sections to reveal a full-size pool.[190] The book refers in its instructional guide to taking the book apart, and so is produced using glue that allows the work to become an installation.[191] 'Doing so will of course destroy the book in its bound form'.[192] The digital printed surface of the work emphasises the process of image making, appropriation, and reproduction. Currently laid out on the floor of the library space it echoes the writing of Lewis Carroll and Borges as they explore the possibility of maps produced at actual size; laid out over the territory, the map and location become indiscernible until the territory is the map.[193]

Referring to the map-territory relation between language and its signified, Wolfgang Iser suggests that in art and literature progress is made *via* imitation and symbolisation, which widens accessibility and reaches for the historically inaccessible. He writes:

> This is one reason why literature to a large extent always arises out of literature. It is not some sort of retreat into the ivory tower that motivates this apparently incestuous relationship between literature and literature; rather, successful visualisations of the invisible are taken over in order that their symbolisations may be used to chart new areas of the ungraspable.[194]

This is seen frequently in the work in this library as existing works are appropriated or repurposed.[195] New versions frequently re-present fragments of existing works in ways that challenge or shed light on cultural ideas across time and locations.[196]

---

https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/one-swimming-pool [last accessed 10.10.2018]

190 Ed Ruscha, *Nine Swimming Pools (and A Broken Glass)* artist published book, colour photographs, 2400 copies, 1968.

191 'The installation takes a day to complete, and measures ± 648 x 648 cm. The sheets remain loose on the floor. The image above shows an installation during 'Staged City' in Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, 2014 (photo by Jan Adriaans)' https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/one-swimming-pool

192 Elisabeth Tonnard, https://elisabethtonnard.com/works/one-swimming-pool [last accessed 10.10.2018]

193 Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, London: Macmillan, 1898

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Del rigor en la ciencia', in *Obras Completas*, Emece Editores, Buenos Aires, 1974.

194 Wolfgang Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1993, [*Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre: Perspektiven literarischer Anthropologie*, Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main, 1991], pp. 256–257.

195 Peter Jaeger's *A Field Guide to Lost Things* appropriates every image of a natural object from Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way*, the first three novels of *In Search of Lost Time* in encyclopaedic detail.

In Tonnard's work the book's binding draws attention to its potential to become an installation; indeed this act is positively encouraged through the instructional guide as to how best to unbind the book. It defies common expectations of what a book might do and shifts position between an unwieldy book object and a fragmentary jigsaw floor work.

In contrast, my book *Lines of Flight* began life with this intention; for the book to be unbound, in order to use structure to interrogate the space between a book form and a rhizomatic space. However, through the making process the book exists in a way that does not encourage such unbinding. Instead the pages are drawn or written on in each copy, pushing further thought associations and encouraging the act of adding to the content. The fixity of the binding of *Lines of Flight,* and the force of the destructive act which would be required to tear the book apart, as opposed to the invitational instructions in Tonnard's work, has led to further work on my part. The pamphlet work, *Voler: To Steal and Fly,* draws attention to the failed potential of the book. The A4 folded work steals a fragment of content, metaphorically tearing a spread from *Lines of Flight* to release it in a performative action, as the page content has the diagrammatic fold of a paper aeroplane added to encourage a folding and throwing action in relation to the work.[197] Cixous writes about 'flying [a]s a woman's gesture—flying in language and making fly'.[198] She likens women's writing to the French word *voler* and its double meaning: to fly and to steal. Writing here takes pleasure in jumbling and disorienting the order of space and taking flight. The similarities between the constantly moving rhizomatic line of flight which grows out of ruptures, and Cixous's description of women as birds and robbers entangle in their overlapping approach, a feminist perspective, allowing for the local, the personal, anecdotal, to materialise the gesture of the research. I have enacted this process

Proust's work is frequently appropriated and re-worked including erased works by Jérémie Bennequin, and performance with Karl Heinz Jeron at the ballgirls gallery in Berlin 2005.
Peter Jaeger, *A Field Guide to Lost Things,* Manchester: if p the q, 2015.
Jérémie Bennequin, *Ommage 2.1, Manuel,* Paris, 2013, last accessed [4.10.19] https://jeremiebennequin.com/ommage-editions
Karl Heinz Jeron, *A la recherche du temps perdu,* Berlin: All Girls Gallery, 2005, last accessed [4.10.19] https://jeron.org/a-la-recherche-du-temps-perdu/
196 A room is currently in construction, to house appropriated works, though this category would shift the position of many works from their current location. Entire sections could be required on the appropriation of specific artists such as Proust, and Ed Ruscha's work, with particular reference to works made after Ed Ruscha by Michalis Pichler.
Michalis Pichler, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations,* New York: Printed Matter, 2009.
 – Six Hands and a Cheese Sandwich, Ljubljana: Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E., 2011.
197 Rachel Smith, *Voler: To steal and Fly,* published by Penteract Press, 2018.
https://penteractpress.com/leaflets-page-2 [last accessed 10.10.2018]
198 Hélène Cixous, 'Laugh of the Medusa', p. 887.

my entire life, at the same time feeling shamefully deficient for my magpie tendencies, flighty methods, and seemingly unrigorous approach. Yet in doing this research it becomes clear that rigour and criticality can be built from these methods.[199]

I look across the work towards the shelves that house other works that cannot exist solely on a shelf. The nature of this art work laid on the floor has made the territory physically un-explorable as I feel bound by the gallery expectations of not walking over the art work. There are other works that might have been examined here, but only once this installation is replaced.[200]

1.5 Leaving the library, without exiting

It becomes apparent in writing this chapter that I could keep coming and going in amongst the stacks of this imagined library *ad infinitum*. Further rooms of books I have considered extend beyond this chapter and can be found in Appendix Two. There is always more work to be done. New books are continually being added or suggested, extending the quantity of unread books to the collection.

---

199 This will be explored in later chapters. By cutting through several approaches I will develop a rigorous approach that builds on existing strategies and tests them through practice. But the problem with rigour, for me, is its stiffness and rigidity. Taking a flowing or rhizomatic approach which favours movement and flexibility, allows for shooting off in different directions, grafting different approaches into the system, and never being still. This is later framed rigour, but a different kind of rigour.

200 Stefanie Posavec, *Writing without Words*, graphic visualisations of various elements of style and structure in the text *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, 2006.
http://www.stefanieposavec.com/writing-without-words [last accessed 03.12.18]
Robert Good, *A Monument to the Unread,* Bank Street Arts Sheffield, 2014. Good inscribed the unread books from his own reading onto the walls of the gallery space during his residency. People nominated books that they failed to read, and the Guerrilla writers volunteered to read these books on behalf of the audience in front of the monument. Details of the project:
http://www.robertgood.co.uk/a-monument-to-the-unread.html [last accessed 17.10.18]
Jorge Méndez Blake, *The Castle*, 2007. A sculptural installation, which uses Kafka's *The Castle* to disrupt the foundation of a mortarless brick wall constructed in the gallery space.
Derek Beaulieu, *Dante's Window*, as part of the 'Language of Lists' exhibition, Bury Text Festival, 2014
Luzinterruptus, *Literature Vs Traffic*, Nuit Blanche festival, Toronto, 2016,
http://www.luzinterruptus.com/?p=4073 [last accessed 21.10.2018]
Emmanuelle Waeekerlé, *Praeludere*, score, performance, artist book, video, prints 'This is part of a body of work (videos, prints, artist book) exploring the notion of the ballad as being somewhere in between a walk and a song; writing, drawing, seeing and walking are understood here as simultaneous acts of marking and reading (space).'
http://www.ewaeckerle.com/projectbox/PRAELUDEREdusseldorf/ [last accessed 5.1.19]

Advancing is determined with the following *caveat* -- the library space is imaginary and as such I never leave its structure, its architectural form is just less apparent in the coming pages. The chapters that follow are constructed inside the library but make use of interstitial spaces between the library rooms. As Deleuze and Guattari write, the rhizome has no exterior as it always connects to other rhizomatic systems; the visual of the library, acting as an entry point into the rhizome connects across, between, and beyond the whole thesis.

The additive nature of the rhizomatic *and... and... and* is both enticing and exhausting. Gathering resources, making connections, following associative ideas, and tracing lines of flight might be a generative process, but sets up the condition of needing to do more, putting off the detailed interrogation until later. At times this is as much a delaying tactic as a statement of intent. The *and... and...and* plays to my skittering attention and dyslexic tendencies; but I have adapted both to engage positively with the structure and my erroneous tendencies to develop a method that encompasses both, this method will be later explored in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two:

A continual state of becoming: transversing dualism
to undermine fixed positions

Having demonstrated the rhizomatic element of my methodology through the literature review, I now unravel my approach between the rhizomatic threads. A foyer and gallery space provide the locations for the practice, bringing the research from the remote and quiet library rooms to the ground floor of the library, deliberately putting it into the public domain, while many of the texts that underpin the work reside in the social science section of the bibliography shelves. An interrogation of the ideas from new materialism demonstrates how my practice embodies selected theoretical terms. Eliciting a practice-based response facilitates exploration of abstract ideas related to inhabiting between or beside. Dualism is challenged to complicate fixed positions by taking an additive approach from the rhizome and blending ideas with the entangled nature of new materialism. Practice functions to interrogate Karen Barad's new materialist terms of 'cutting together-apart' and 're-turning', terms which will be unpacked through the art works.[201]

My *Interrupteur* artist residency is explored in relation to a number of theoretical ideas, which have been developed into a methodology of working.[202] I trace the process of enacting a new materialist cut-together-apart, while critiquing Stephanie Springgay's writing on practice-based research.[203] Borrowing Anna Tsing's term 'zone of awkward

---

201 Karen Barad, 'Ma(r)king Time: Material Entanglements and Re-memberings: Cutting Together-Apart', Paul Carlile, Davide Nicolini, *et al* (eds), *How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts, and Materiality in Organization Studies*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.
'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', *Parallax*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2014, 168–87.
Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007.
202 Rachel Smith, *Interrupteur* residency, Jessop West foyer, Sheffield University, April–May 2018.
This project was devised with the support of Amanda Crawley-Jackson at the University of Sheffield with the humanities department. There is a blog documenting the project and interventions:
http://residencyinterrupteur.blogspot.com
203 Stephanie Springgay and Zofia Zaliwska, 'Diagrams and Cuts, A Materialist Approach to Research-Creation', *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2015, 136–144.
Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, 'In the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (In)Tensions, and Response-Ability in Research', *Qualitative Inquiry,* 2017, 1–12.

engagement',[204] I consider the impact of performing research in a liminal but public space. Deleuze and Parnett's dialogue ending the last chapter is developed in relation to a rhizomatic way of working with others in a practice-led approach.[205] Rhizomatic ruptures, interruptions, and distractions are explored as both productive tools and as short circuits in relation to Slavoj Žižek's critical approach.[206]

This is followed by an exposition of art works produced for the group exhibition *Phantom* to consider how re-turning functions as a practice-based activity. The exhibition was curated by Jane Boyer as part of her own practice research, and explored remaking through polyphony.[207] This led to the production of new works: *Writing: an Intransitive verb*, *Marginalia,* and *Figure and Ground* for the exhibition.[208] Later these works were rethought in *Tracing Shadows*. Re-making is explored as a de-con-structive act which involves a simultaneous building and dismantling. This is compared with and connected to Barad's term 're-turning', and Latour's critique as an additive gesture.[209] These works raise questions about the possibility of delay and deferring fixity of meaning, through erasure, re-turning, and the refusal of a coherent subject.

In contrast to the previous chapter's exploration of structure and tangible forms, this chapter focusses on undoing definitive objects. Diving into the rhizomatic middle, between the traced lines of flight, this chapter tests Deleuze's description of the middle, as a space as where things flow at speed, expand, and grow, rather than being a central zone between beginning and end.[210] It is, one might say, the research process *as it is happening*, sense-making at the point of being sought, an unfixed position, and the condition of

---

204 Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. xi.
205 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York, NY: Athlone Press, 1987, [*Dialogues*, Paris: Flammarion 1977]
206 Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void: Economico-Philosophical Sprandrels,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017.
207 Polyphony refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's literary theory of multiple and simultaneous points of view expressed using a metaphor developed from musical polyphony where the different musical melodies are simultaneously played. Bakhtin uses this concept to explore Fyodor Dostoyevsky's writing which refuses a singular authorial voice.
Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
208 Rachel Smith, *Writing: an Intransitive verb*, moving image work, 2016, *Marginalia,* digital text work, 2017, and *Figure and Ground,* laser printed photographs, 2017.
209 Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* no. 30, Winter 2004, 225–48.
210 Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 26–27.

rhizomatic blindness. While the previous chapter faltered with the stuttering of the rhizome, now I occupy the spaces or pauses between the stuttering or dotted line between the *and...and...and.*

2.1 *Interrupteur* artist residency.[211]

Poster and flyer from the residency

The term *interrupteur* holds layers of meaning across languages. The word suggests the English interrupter, something or someone who breaks a flow. In French, literally translated through the Cambridge dictionary translation, it is an (electrical) switch. The residency used *switch* to mean exchange, shift, or transformation. Work tested the idea of interruptions as generative encounters where an exchange or transformation might take

---

211 Rachel Smith, *Interrupteur* residency, Jessop West foyer, Sheffield University, April–May 2018. The blog which accompanied this residency can be found here: http://residencyinterrupteur.blogspot.com/ [last accessed 14.9.19]

place. Forging conversations and collaborations between artists and academics was at the heart of the project's endeavour. As artist in residence I was present for ten days over the period of two months working, in the foyer of the Jessop West humanities building, in the University of Sheffield, with invited artists. Each day I was present, an artist joined me to work, while expecting interruptions from conversation and unexpected encounters with people passing through the space.

Day 1: Begin wherever we are, 11.4.18
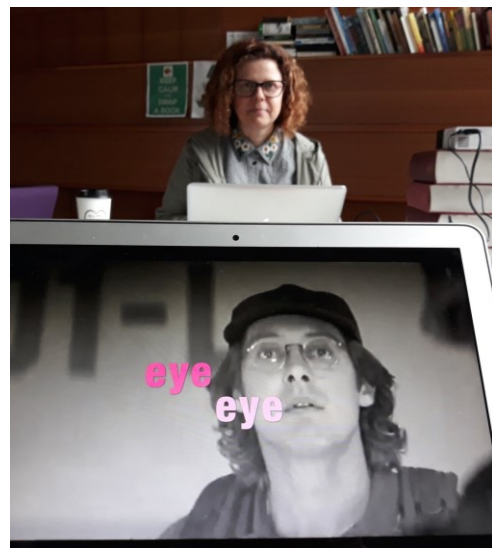
Day 2: AN ERRANT or Improper Form, with Emma Bolland, 17.4.19

Day 3: The copyist claims authorship as an act of creation, with Madeleine Walton, 24.4.18
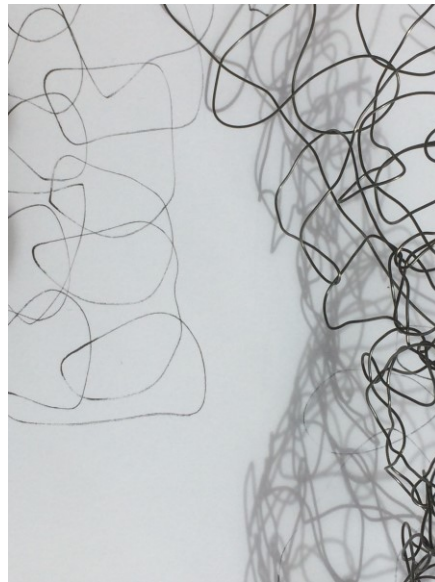
Day 4: There are things known, and things unknown, between them, there are doors,
with Claire Lee, 25.4.18

Day 5: We live in a world where there is more and more information and less and less meaning, with Bryan Eccleshall, 8.5.18
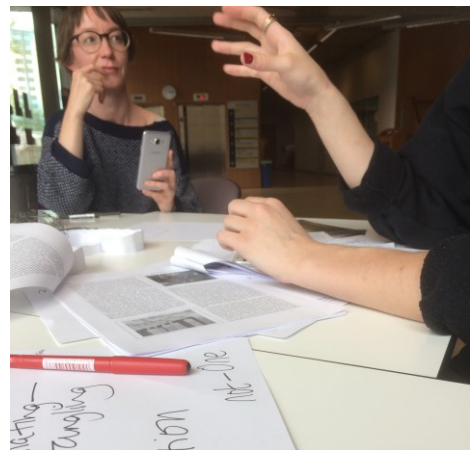
Day 6: I fight for improvisation, but always with the belief that it is impossible, with Jo Ray, 9.5.18
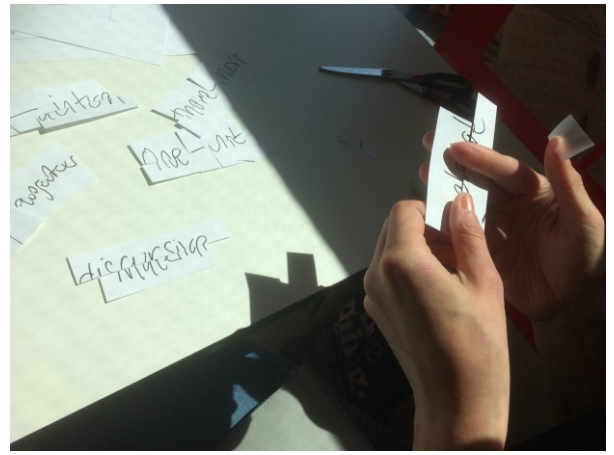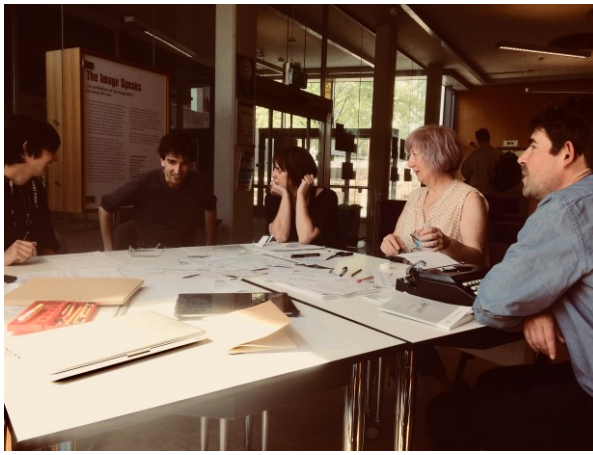
Day 7: There is freedom in constraint, with Helen Frank, 22.5.18

Day 8: Insolent in that it interrupts the text, and smitten in that it keeps returning to it
with the Roland Barthes Reading Group, 23.5.18

Day 9: An experimentation in contact with the real. The map [...] constructs the unconscious,
with Louise Finney, 29.5.18.

The intention was to explore how artists might open spaces for dialogue and collaboration
beyond expected outcomes, engaging across disciplines and inhabiting in-between spaces
of the university. In planning the residency it was important to experiment with notions of
Robin Nelson's 'praxis (theory imbricated within practice)'.[212] This term holds the inter-
relational complexity of theory and practice, as opposed to practice-led research, which
would, as Jacqueline Taylor acknowledges, imply that the 'research is led by artistic
practice, running the risk of reversing the theory/practice relation by privileging practice
and oppositional ways of thinking'.[213]

Having worked previously on *An Exchange of words with Jean-Paul Sartre* with two artists
(see Chapter Three), I wanted to use the residency to develop my exploration of
collaboration. This was to test what occurs in the space between people when they use
practice to reach for a collaborative clarity between separate ideas. Whereas *An Exchange*
involved artists who had already worked together, the residency gathered a more diverse
range of practices and interests. The Roland Barthes reading group, doctoral researchers

---

212 Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, p. 5.
213 Jacqueline Taylor, 'From 'or' to 'and' L'écriture féminine as a methodological approach for
Fine Art research', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, vol. 13 no. 3, 2014, 303–11, p.
304.

convened by Sharon Kivland, also provided some of the groundwork thinking for the residency location. By moving reading meetings from seminar spaces into cafe spaces it became apparent that the group performed differently outside a 'learning space' due to being in public, the noise and distractions, and different material environment.[214] My experience of this helped me to consider the usefulness of pushing my practice into different spaces to allow for a different performance of the work generated.[215]

Acting to test the ways that my reading through new materialism was underpinning my methodological approach, folded into and around the rhizomatic, I used the residency to demonstrate how practice could challenge oppositional positions. In her article 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', Barad writes: 'intra-actions enact agential cuts, which do not produce absolute separations, but rather cut together-apart (one move)'.[216] I am interested in how the act of cutting together-apart might be embodied in art practice. Recognising the different elements required to perform these actions clarifies the approach taken in the residency.

2.1.1 Tools that cut

In its bluntest sense to perform a cut (agential or otherwise) requires a tool used to rupture an object, space, or idea.[217] Interruptions in the residency were framed in this way and included: my physical presence in the foyer with tables, artists, and objects which distracted people as they moved past us; disruptions from the noise and cold; social media interjections; working and researching in public; conversational exchanges which broke the flow between artists and led to tangential thinking; collaborative interruptions as

---

214 Some of the reading done in response to this group formed the starting point for my book work *Marginal Reading*, which is in the set of books which form the basis of my developing library collection.
215 Working in public was something that I had done previously during my MA, working in the Bank Street Arts gallery space. This did provoke some interesting discussions with the public, but as a gallery tends to be a destination location, rather than transient space that people pass through, I was hoping to capture a different audience, and encounter. Also the gallery space is where people expect to find art, as opposed to the foyer of the humanities department, where practice is a less expected occurrence.
216 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', p. 168.
217 I use rupture both to acknowledge the language of Deleuze and Guattari and for the purposes of this research, a rupture is a pause, a distraction, anything that stops my train of thought and sends it off in a different direction. This can be seen in the practice, ruptures produce gaps but also generate differing ideas.

the specific activities or materials used provoked a shift in each other's working practices; existing research or practice objects brought into the space which disrupted expected ideas of research.[218]
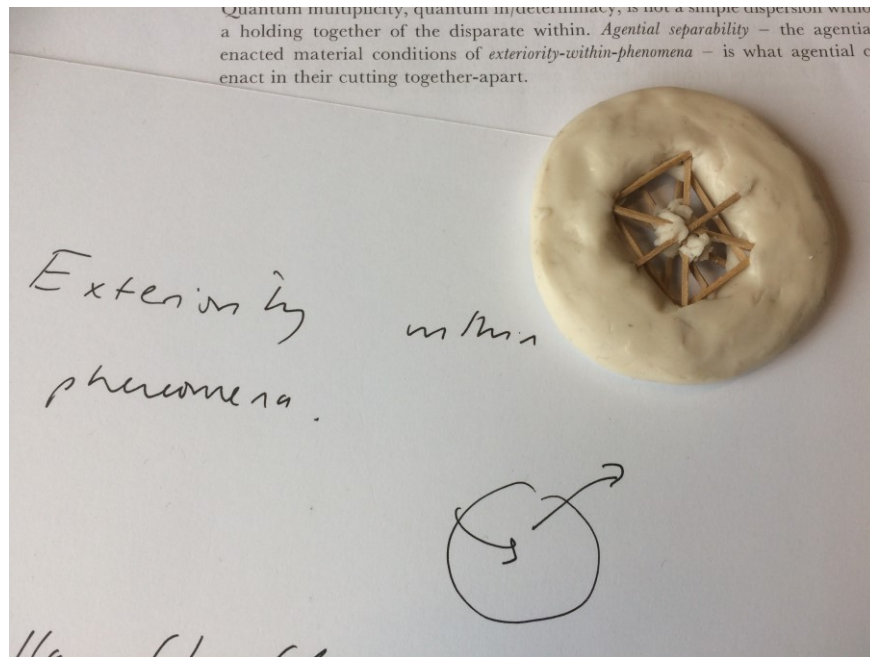
Fragment from day 5: with Jo Ray

Interruptions were considered as agential cuts into: space, thought processes, practice objects, ways of working. Agential as they affect a change, their instrumentality is in the transformation that occurs, rather than a separation. Once an action is ruptured, or diverted off-course, an opening is produced for something other to occur. The interruption then becomes enveloped or layered into the process of construction. Interruption is a tool that pushes existing thought, making, dialogue in different directions, blended into the assemblage as it progresses. I think about a knife used to make a cheese and jam sandwich. Spreading and cutting. Butter, jam, cheese, and breadcrumbs – all end up on the knife, and traces remain in the butter, the jam jar, and

---

218 As the residency progressed, some artists dropped in to interrupt other artists in the space, wanting to extend the dialogue, and to further conversations from earlier exchanges. Similarly, some students and researchers came back several times and stayed for long periods to join the practice in the making.

on the cheese block in the fridge, contaminating, influencing, leaving a taste of one thing on another. Barad explores diffraction to engage with this type of agential phenomena, both in a scientific and metaphorical manner (beyond the scientific notion of diffraction as a pattern whereby lightwaves are broken apart toward an interference between disciplines), as a way of acknowledging the enmeshed nature of knowledge, production, and maker. Diffraction allows an examination of the overlapping influential entanglements between people, locations, and things.[219]

Agential cuts are further explored by Springgay. Writing about practice-based research and artist residencies in new materialist modes of thinking, she explores the possibilities of enacting diagrammatic methods and agential cutting to analyse data.[220] She makes some useful points about activating thought *via* process and the difficulty of shifting from using diagramming as a visual representation towards a more performative approach. However, there is a clear split between the artists' residencies and the data produced from these activities, and the art residency used by the social science and humanities researchers to conclude and analyse the data gathered. It is evident in this article that when moving between fields it is easy to borrow approaches without engaging with the disciplinary problematics of the borrowed methods. Transversing thresholds between subjects must be done with consideration for existing disciplinary positions, while still allowing for the freedom to borrow and work in ways that might push ideas forward.

In considering the complexity of imbricated relations between researcher, context, objects, methods, and outputs, it should be acknowledged how this cross-disciplinary borrowing might operate. Borrowing or stepping over a disciplinary threshold enables a different kind of approach. An amateur avoids the position of expert, taking a more speculative position; there is a joy about amateurism, knowing that at any moment the tools borrowed might be demanded back. As Isabelle Stengers and Vinciane Despret note, the term 'amateur' should not be used an insult; it has its root in the verb *to love*, 'a rather special kind of love, indeed, which does not dream of fusion—but rather of the creation of a relationship with what makes the singularity of what one loves'.[221] There is a

---

219 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', p. 168.
220 Stephanie Springgay and Zofia Zaliwska, 'Diagrams and Cuts, A Materialist Approach to Research-Creation', 136–144.
221 Isabelle Stengers and Vinciane Desprets, *Women Who Make a Fuss: The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf*, trans. by April Knutson, Minneapolis, MN: Univocal Publishing,

sense of the casual and untrained about the amateur, recalling the smash and grab approach of Cixous's *voler*, or Derrida's *bricoleur* who uses 'the means at hand' and 'tries by trial and error'.[222] In a later article Springgay develops her ideas of data and methods to critique the act of collecting data as a separated thing from the researcher, encounter, and context of the research.[223] In her article, context, objects or methods are not used as intended, and adaptation is done without hesitation, a kind of *bricolage*. She writes of her own (in)tensions, which draw on Erin Manning's and Brian Massumi's 0-20 numbered propositions laid out for research creation.[224] These propositions act as a manifesto for developing speculative acts that grow out of the research enquiry as part of the doing process, rather than using pre-existing methods which are procedurally carried out. Having developed 'SenseLab' Manning worked with Stengers on the first Sense Lab research-creation event.[225] Manning writes that 'it became clear that for an "event" to be an event, it is necessary that a collective thinking process be enacted that can give rise to new thoughts through the interaction on site'.[226] What is clear from their writing is the collaborative, embodied, material, and ethical approach to their work. Seeking a similar outcome Loveless writes of 'a mode of research in which the question emerges responsively from the encounter'.[227]

2014 [*Les faiseuses d'histoires: Que font les femmes à la pensée ?*, Editions La Découverte, Paris, 2011], p. 69.

222 Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, and Play', *Writing and Difference,* trans. by Alan Bass, Oxford: Routledge Classics, 2001, p. 360.

223 Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E Truman, 'In the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism', 1–12.

224 Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, p. 83

225 SenseLab consists of a group of academics, artists, dancers, researchers, and writers. They work collaboratively to explore the space between research and creation. They are concerned with research as a 'creation in germ, and creation to produce its own concepts for thought'. http://erinmovement.com/about-senselab [last accessed 20.5.19]

226 Manning and Massumi, *Thought in the Act*, p. 90.

227 Natalie Loveless, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory: Art, Research, and the Fine Arts Ph.D.', *Canadian Journal of Communication,* vol. 37, no. 1, 2012, 93–108, p. 102.
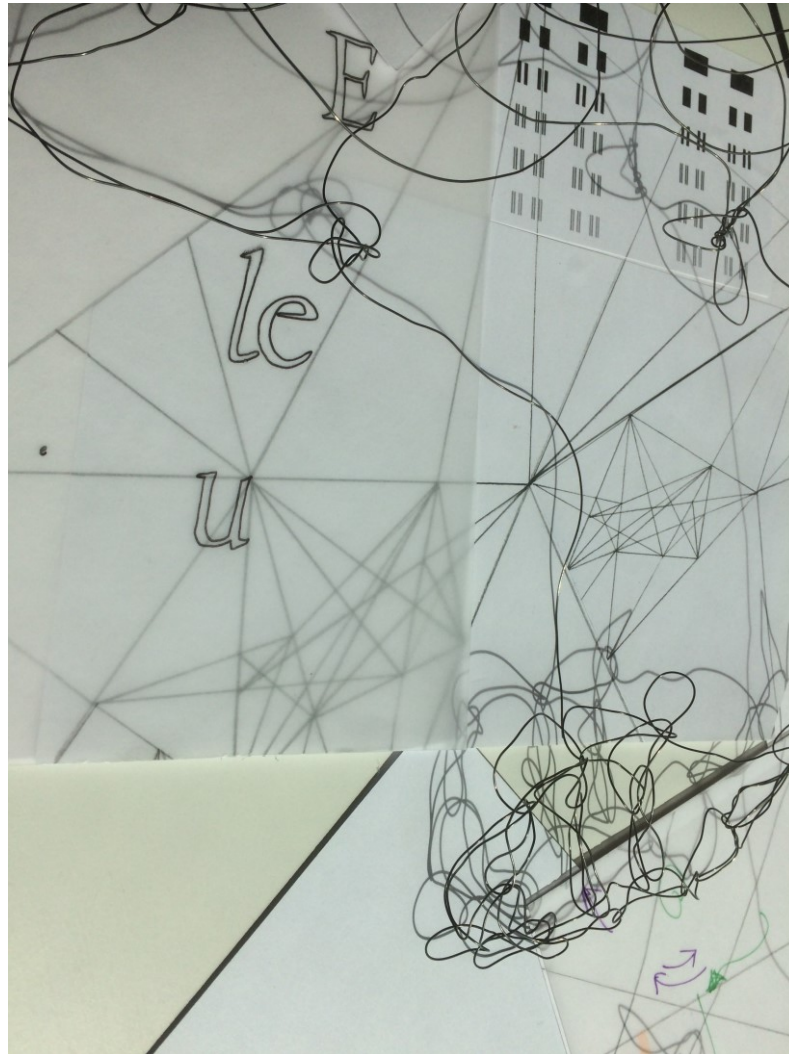
Fragment from day 4: with Clee Claire Lee

Positioning the residency interruptions as a critical tool deliberately engages with distractions and rupture to develop environments where research grows from the encounter. There are many knotted ideas woven together to support this way of working: Deleuzian rhizomatic ruptures, which grow new lines of flight, Baradian diffractions, and agential cuts, but also Žižek's short circuits, a method of crossing wires (elements of literature that might not normally touch) to produce a shock awakening the reader.[228] Žižek develops Deleuze's ideas of minor literature to de-centre major literature in this context.[229] He suggests taking a lesser or outsider approach to reframe or critique what

228 Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void,* pp. 6–7.
229 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', 13–33.

might be considered an accepted and relied upon form, and this idea will be revisited in Chapter Three. Observing the interruptions from the residency in this light allows for the folding of multiple influences into the work through the method of fragmenting.

2.1.2 Drawing attention to the space, and opening gaps

Having cut, the act of visualising the spaces between and finding ways of conceptually or metaphorically inhibiting them is at the ~~heart~~ of the work here.[230] Consequently, for the purpose of this research it is useful to draw out the different types of interstitial spaces that I consider. There are physical gaps (between objects, locations, people, margins around text), as well as metaphorical ruptures (space between ideas, or inside language) and in this project I conceptualise ways of using these spaces. Breaking a flow of attention, or interrupting speech often produces a void, momentarily allowing associative ideas to enter, or for speech to take a different line of flight.[231]

In my occupation of the foyer as a rhizomatic middle or interstitial space and exploring the act of becoming or existing between, the word *between* came under scrutiny. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick reveals subtle and problematic differences amongst the words behind, between, beyond, and beneath in attempting to avoid hierarchical pedagogy.[232] In positioning herself *beside,* she examines the possibility of a variety of elements laid alongside each other in order to provide a 'spacious agnosticism' towards dualism.[233] Her specific language demonstrates the carefulness and difficulty required to navigate a route through dualism. While using this word *beside* might be useful at certain points when articulating positioning, it does not support the overlapping or tangled account for which I aim. In-amongst, in-the-thick-of-it, concurrent, convergent, imbricated, implicated, embroiled, enmeshed – these terms have contiguous edges in relation to how I want to proceed. However, they do not fully articulate what I wish to express; their overlapping nature seems claustrophobic rather than suggesting a space opening to enable room to think.

---

230 The word heart goes against the rhizomatic methodology, yet it was written and so refused.
231 A rhizomatic rupture which allows for lines of flight to develop either along the same intended lines or shifting at right angles following a different route entirely.
232 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003, p. 8.
233 Ibid.

Loveless uses Tsing's phrase 'zone of awkward engagement'[234] to consider how fine art research might operate across 'differences between people, disciplines, and practices'.[235] The idea of a zone of awkward engagement is recognisable from the residency, seeking to engage people in the work, reaching across disciplinary discourse, devising connections between ideas, methods, and people. Despite potentially disparate disciplinary language the threads woven between ideas were productive in discussion and practice. The etymology of the word *dialogue* pulls out this experience: dia- (across or through) *legein* (speak). Speaking across someone is seen as an impolite interruption, but here interruptive breaks were encouraged, allowing a wider territory of thought to be explored. Engaging with these acts of interruption was considered as part of what enabled the *and* to occur.
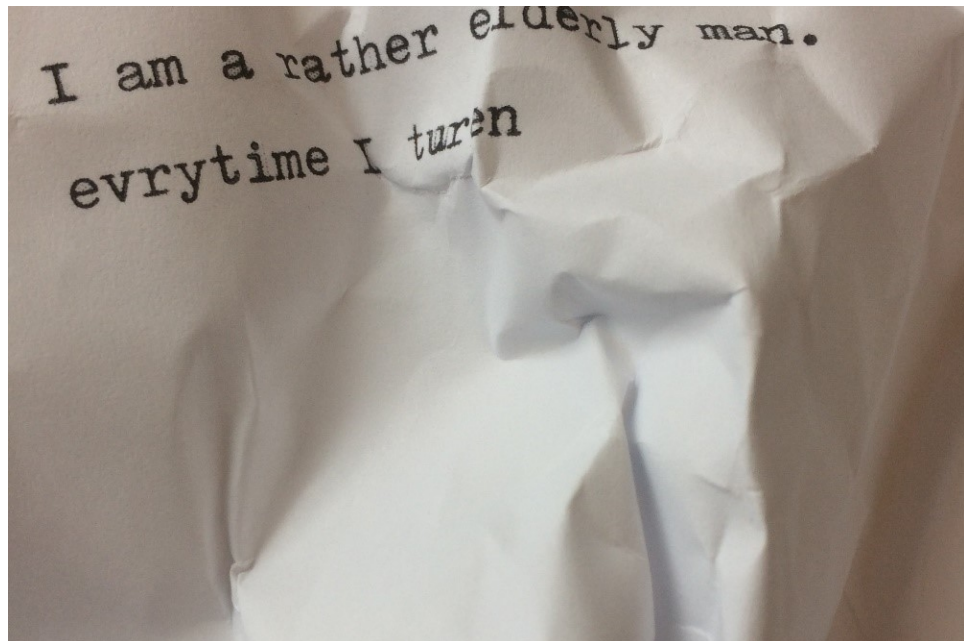
Fragment from day 3: with Madeleine Walton

234 Anna Tsing, *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. xi.
235 Natalie Loveless, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory: Art, Research, and the Fine Arts Ph.D.', p. 102.

Simon O'Sullivan uses Henri Bergson's idea of gaps made between stimuli and response to explore art production which 'interrupts knowledge—that breaks information'.[236] O'Sullivan develops this in response to Deleuze's writing on corrupt language and the act of creating as an antidote to communicating. Deleuze suggests the creation of 'vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers so we can elude control'.[237] O'Sullivan considers slowness and hesitation as the freeing consequences of the gap opened between stimulus and response, writing: 'It is through this gap that we become creative rather than reactive creatures'.[238] Parallel to these ideas the residency offered a space to test ways of communicating and not communicating through making. The activities were used to widen the gap between stimulus and response to make room to wrestle with uncertainty and follow previously unconsidered lines of flight.

2.1.3 Movement between

Having noticed or produced a space between, art practice may then be used to ravel the elements it contains. Attention shifts to the tangling and untangling action of influences between the different implicated components. Lesser details, objects, and affect become noticeable when given space for them to be observed. The interactions between actions, objects, people generate the work.

However, interaction implies a movement between two positions, a back and forth suggesting separate spatial identities, remaining in a dualistic framework. Returning to Barad, the new materialist use of intra-action tangles up the two positions, bringing them close, exploring their overlapping nature. Intra-action is explained by Barad as a constant exchange between context and object, where influences are inseparable and tangled.[239]

---

236 Simon O'Sullivan, 'From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Deleuze, Bacon and Contemporary Art Practice', *Deleuze Studies,* vol. 3, no. 2, Dec. 2009, 247–258, p. 250.
237 Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972–1990,* trans. Martin Joughin, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 175.
or
Gilles Deleuze, 'Gilles Deleuze in conversation with Antonio Negri', *Futur Anterieur,* vol. 1, Spring 1990, http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze3.htm [last accessed 29.04.19]
238 O'Sullivan, p. 251.
O'Sullivan explores the production of moments, ruptures, and gaps as events produced by the art works and relates this to Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott. Palmer, New York, NY: Zone Books, 1991, pp. 101–102.
239 See quote discussed on page p. 66.

Vinciane Despret discusses uses the word *version* instead of *vision* to draw attention to the process of acknowledging multiple possibilities rather than singular answers in a research context.[240] Donna Haraway is critical of Barad's use of quantum phenomena to describe intra-action, due to the complexity of such terms. However, Haraway also finds a useful distinction between inter and intra writing: 'inter-action [which] implies that already existing actors get together and act. Intra-action implies something much messier, much less determinate'.[241] One of the problems I have found in articulating this research is developing a way of clarifying what occurs in the *mess*, as this word conceals the specifics of what may be occurring. Inhabiting the ravelling action of intra-action mirrors the tangled confusion of the rhizomatic and the difficulty of separating ideas, theories, and practice as they are interwoven and reliant. Intra-action refuses traditional ideas of objectivity in which a researcher might be seen as separated from objects, encouraging the exploration of the entanglements which influence things in a constant process of changing relationality. Yet I believe its ambiguity requires practice to interrogate the detail of how intra-action can function.

By inviting other artists to enter the ~~liminal~~ space of the foyer, I challenged them to explore the intra-action of threads between our practices and research interests. Despret articulates this exploration with researchers from other areas as a way of re-creating and then examining the borders between disciplines.[242] Through discursive and material methods in an unfamiliar location, I sought to construct something that belonged neither to a particular participant nor myself, but which grew from our material and discursive encounters.[243]

Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', p. 168.
240 Brett Buchanan, Matthew Chrulew and Jeffrey Bussolini 'On Asking the Right Questions: an interview with Vincaine Despret', *Angelaki*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2015, 165–178, p. 170.
241 Donna Haraway, 'Cyborgs to Companion Species', in Don Ihde and Evan Selinger (eds), *Chasing Technoscience: Matrix for Materiality*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003, p. 63.
242 Vinciane Despret, 'On Asking the Right Questions', p. 174.
243 In 'Writing without Writing: Conversation-as-material' Emma Cocker explores several artist collaborations and performance projects which take conversation as material for making and reflecting on practice. She writes: 'The process of conversation-as-material involves the quest for a not-yet-known vocabulary emerging synchronous to the live circumstances that it seeks to articulate'. Cocker articulates working 'between the visible / invisible, or public / private states of not knowing within the performed act of writing'. Practice is used here as a way of opening space between these binaries. She writes about forming meaning during the event, as a co-production through conversation. Transcribing and distilling are processes that enable meaning to be retrospectively visible. Conversation is Cocker's practice, used to explore the practice methods of other artists to uncover thinking through collaborative doing.
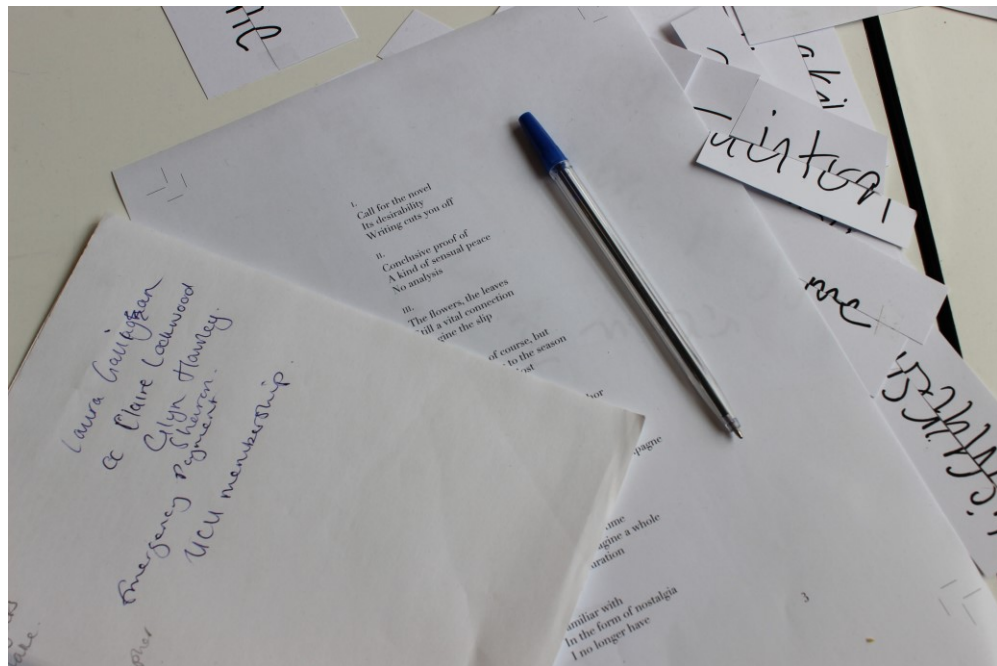
Fragment of day 7: with the Roland Barthes Reading Group

Using the beside space of the foyer revealed doing-thinking, seen in the responses gathered. It offered a perceived sense of cover that held some of the participant anxiety in the act of ad-libbing. Informal conversations with some participants revealed that in the foyer they felt no-one was really watching, despite being in plain sight. A curiosity developed about what this alternative space offered. As a location beyond the usual teaching spaces where research happens in particular ways, the foyer facilitated a more playful liberating approach, productive for associative thinking.

Intra-action enables a refusal of easy dualism of a traditional Cartesian sense.[244] Instead of two sides of a coin, the Möbius strip might help to think about confounding notions of

Emma Cocker, 'Writing without Writing: Conversation-as-material', *The Creative Critic: Writing as/about Practice*, eds. Katja Hilevaara and Emily Orley, London: Routledge, 2018, pp. 47–55, p. 49.
244 René Descartes founded the mind-body dualism, as the immaterial mind and material body, both distinct substances which interact with each other, but can be seen as separate.

dualism. Jacques Lacan's topological model of the Möbius strip demonstrates nearness and relational aspects of space.[245] It subverts binary positions by occupying the territory of inside and outside simultaneously, thereby refusing expected ideas of space.[246] However, it still has a visible edge and when the strip is static this separates the surface below from the surface above, despite these surfaces acting as one when the strip is moving. Contiguously I think about the Klein bottle, where inside and outside have no visible edges and initially they appear to function more obviously as a continuous surface.[247] In comprehending the Klein bottle, terms such as interior and exterior are still frequently relied upon. This is an issue of viewpoint, as from a particular point on the Klein bottle, the Möbius problem remains – I am on the inside surface looking at what appears to be the outside surface. Although from a wider viewpoint spatially and conceptually they are the same, if I am static, then I cannot experience the simultaneity of the surfaces. Movement becomes key. This type of problem is acknowledged by Barad as she suggests working with, through, and between dualism, as it exists in the lexicon and cannot be completely abandoned. Instead it is crucial to work to trouble them, actively muddle boundaries, repeatedly unravel the tangle, and continually shift position in order to exist in-amongst. This deft act of cutting together-apart implies a move towards a flattened overlapping, a propositional approach that forefronts complexity, and the inadequacy of separating for ease of sense.[248]

2.1.4 Shifting from *or* to *and*

During the residency it was important to embody the *and...and...and* of the rhizomatic so as to avoid the oppositional positions of the dualistic *or*. Rather than allowing separation between this *or* that, mine *or* yours, here *or* there, self *or* other, the intention was to

---

245 The Möbius strip, http://www.art3idea.psu.edu/locus/diagrams/Mobius.pdf [last accessed 13.4.19]
246 The Möbius strip is made from a single strip of paper, twisted before attaching the two ends, using a pencil it is then possible to trace a route across both sides of the paper without lifting, the shape only has one edge. It defies Euclidean expectations of two-dimensional and three-dimensional space.
247 The Klein Bottle is in mathematical terms a non-orientable space; it is a single sided surface which can be traversed without crossing a boundary from underneath to onto, or inside to outside. https://plus.maths.org/content/imaging-maths-inside-klein-bottle [last accessed 13.4.19]
248 Yet I repeatedly find myself separating ideas, words, theories into different pieces of writing in order to make sense of them, or to write them more clearly for this process. The important step is then to re-tangle the threads while acknowledging the overlapping and complex nature of the way ideas, objects, people, spaces influence and intra-act. In fact the process often feels like untangling electrical cables, and yet on returning to them later they will have become re-tangled.

embrace being in-amongst, engaging the additive. Working collaboratively with people, spaces, and objects encouraged imbrication. Tim Ingold describes human and material affectation not as 'the 'and . . . and . . . and' but 'with . . . with . . . with', not additive but contrapuntal. In answering – or responding – to one another, they correspond'.[249] I consider the stillness of *with* – sitting, listening, noticing which may have formed part of the residency experience, but the *and* is a more active mode, a discursive position. However, in either articulation I am as interested in what occurs between, in the ellipsis.

Dualism is one structure through which meaning can be constructed in language. Barthes introduces the concept in avoiding oppositional states through *The Neutral*, as anything 'that baffles the paradigm'.[250] The paradigm is the 'opposition of two virtual terms from which, in speaking, I actualise one to produce meaning'.[251] For Barthes, this opposition creates conflict, the thing that generates meaning, something he seeks to avoid. He suggests instead working towards being neutral, not as grey or indifferent but as 'an ardent burning activity', referring to intense, strong states.[252] Instead of an either/or approach, other ways of avoiding settled meaning are considered. To outplay the dualism Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin suggest shifting oppositional thinking by 'invoking a discursive practice that centres around the creation of concepts in their relationality'.[253] However, even though such discursive endeavours are an intention to 'pass through' oppositional or fixed positions, as Deleuze and Guattari write, dualism is 'the furniture that we are forever rearranging'.[254] Reconstructing and refusing fixed meaning is, for me, a continual process. Over-reliance on dualism is a habit which relies on enabling a fixed understanding of concepts, objects, and their connected relations. My production does not avoid binary oppositions entirely, but acts to gather, excessively add to, overlap, agitate, and blur separations, to acknowledge

---

249 Tim Ingold, 'On Human Correspondence', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2016, 9-27, p.18
250 Here I might equally cite Derrida's theories on dualism, and how all contain both elements, and cannot exist as an either/or, but always both/and. But as with difference the constant deferral of meaning, his writing is also continually deferred along a chain of other writers whose words paraphrase his.
251 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral,* pp. 6–7.
252 Ibid.
253 Rick Dolphijn, Iris van der Tuin, 'Pushing dualism to an extreme: On the philosophical impetus of a new materialism', *Springer Science+Business Media*, B.V. 2011, p. 395.
254 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 20-21.

complexity in the exploration of ambiguity. It is not deliberately vague or obscure, but rather, suggests multiple meanings, resists static presentations of knowledge.

Fragments gathered to recall the residency

In 'An Introduction in Five Acts', Emily Orley and Katja Hilevaara explore a form of script writing as criticism and practice.[255] The text unfolds theory and practice through dialogue, configuring multiple voices in a conversational approach. Through writing they call upon a range of sources to demonstrate a shifting position, each time contextualised by their gathered community. It operates as a state of becoming, a Möbius strip in motion, constantly re-turning while occupying a position through layering a host of voices.

255 Emily Orley and Katja Hilevaara, 'An Introduction in Five Acts', *The Creative Critic*, Oxford: Routledge, 2018, pp. 1-22.

They use the folding and unfolding of a handkerchief to mirror their written process. Bringing together a diverse range of artists' and theorists' ideas into a single space can be considered an echo of the principle in Eco's rhizomatic net labyrinth.[256] Traversing Eco's net enables the possibility of bringing seemingly distance points closer together *via* different routes. Analysed in this way it is possible to think about proximity as being both near and distant. All positions exist in a space which can be crumpled or torn to disrupt the sense of locational order.

In a similar analytical move to reconsider the idea of space and distance Martin Heidegger adds a hyphen to *Entfernung*, changing the emphasis in its meaning. *Entfernung* means separating or distance, but by employing the hyphen the compound term shifts towards the idea of 'de-distancing': '*Ent-fernung* does not mean overcoming a measurable sense of 'distance' or 'space'; the prefix *ent* in German has the sense of 'letting free. [...] de-distancing is the bringing near of beings in their nearness'.[257] The purpose of the residency was to test ways of exploring these theoretical ideas through practice and action.

I reach toward the previous chapter, where the rhizome began to stutter, looking again for a way to develop a new line of flight across the space between there and here. If the quotation from *Dialogues* between Deleuze and Parnett is carried across and extended below, beyond where it had been fragmented, the rhizomatic lines become specifically traced between people to produce a multiplicity that is neither one or the other:

> making a line [...] between two people [...] showing what the conjunction AND is, neither a union, nor a juxtaposition, but the birth of a stammering, the outline of a broken line which always sets off at right angles, a sort of active and creative line of flight? AND...AND...AND...
> You should not try to find whether an idea is just or correct. You should look for a completely different idea, elsewhere, in another area, so that something passes between the two which is neither in one nor the other. Now, one does not generally find this idea alone; a chance is needed, or else someone gives you one. You don't have to be [...] familiar with a particular area, but to pick up this or that in areas

256 Umberto Eco, 'The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth', *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language,* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 80-4.My own physical, drawn, and conversational interrogation of Umberto Eco's net description was performed as part of Clee Claire Lee artist residency *Regardez la Fenêtre*, in Sheffield, October 2018.
257 Alejandro Vallega, *Heidegger and the Issue of Space: Thinking on Exilic Grounds*, University Park, PN: Penn State University Press, 2003, p. 139.

which are very different. This is better than 'cut-up'. It is rather a 'pick-me-up' or 'pick-up' – in the dictionary = collecting up, chance, restarting of the motor, getting on to the wavelength [...] I am trying to explain that things, people, are made up of varied lines, and that they do not necessarily know which line they are on or where they should make the line which they are tracing pass, in short there is a whole geography in people, with rigid lines, supple lines, lines of flight, etc.[258]

The fragmentary stuttering process referred to above suggests the friction of seemingly unrelated ideas being passed between people and offers the productive 'AND' as the ideas that spark and developed between them. The *and* in this typesetting has been capitalised which carries an unexpected sense of forcefulness. I consider the act of stuttering while speaking and how words are seemingly stammered with greater energy to propel them outwards. In current text speak used in phone communication, capitalisation has become a way of denoting a louder tone, which implies emphasis, exclamation, or urgency. Shouting to be heard, or shouting enacted across a gap, the volume is increased so transmission is not lost. I am interested in the stuttering *and*, to represent moments of non-communication, where speech falters, and can be followed with 'restarting the motor' helped by another's interjection. Surprising connections are offered which produce additional routes to be traversed. Barthes writes about stammering and the misfire of language, which he sees as the condemnation of speech, but he goes on to imagine a utopia of language, which he describes as the rustle of language; working as a well-oiled machine, multiple voices speaking at once, yet in unison without becoming a loud clanging mass.[259]

However, using Barthes's metaphor, I find the generative power in the moment just before the engine runs so well again that it appears not to need tinkering with. Once running smoothly again the machinic flow offers no space for additional voices. The tension and productiveness exist in the moment of the 'pick-up' which Deleuze describes, producing a spark on the same wavelength, even for just that instant. Inhabiting the 'zone of awkward engagement' represents the desire to prolong those stuttering moments when a spark connects, before the motor returns to the ease of full function and hesitation is no longer accepted.

---

258 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues,* pp. 9–10.
259 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* pp. 76–9.

These descriptions go some way to describing the experience I hoped to enact in the residency, using making and dialogue to visualise the thinking process as it short-circuited, stuttered, and developed between people. It was important not to over-plan the activities so that events did not become final or closed, and to provide enough material or framework to provoke reactions that could emerge in the space. Allowing for not-knowing, interruption, and spontaneity, as well as the regularity and routine of my presence in the foyer space developed a gradual sense of trust required to reach for the as-yet-unspoken and, to examine the process of developing rhizomatic connections as they occur. A gesture made towards interrupting notions of individual practice and its established chronology, collapsing the spaces of design, documentation, fabrication, performance, preparation, and reflection. Research performed before it is fully thought out.

The residency was a performative act, testing process through collaborative acts, what follows explores how my individual practice operates when making art objects with the intention of refusing to occupy the binary space of process or product, presence or absence, theory or practice.

2.2 Re-turning through Practice

I now take Barad's exposition of 're-turning' to expand through practice.[260] The hyphenation opens up the possibility of the word beyond *returning* as going back to the past, rather, as a repeated action of turning something over. Barad uses re-turn to clarify ideas of diffraction, intra-action, and cutting together-apart, and employs a metaphor of the earthworm. The earthworm making compost shifts the material, burrows in it, ingests and adapts the constituent parts of the soil, 'all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it'.[261] This idea of continual motion – overlapping, blending, absorbing – echoes the complexity of the rhizome metaphor, not merely because of the gardening scenario, but also in the shifting, reworking, and constant process of becoming. The unending process of re-turning, entanglement, and ravelling to avoid dualism appears as exhausting as it is generative. The constant maintenance and

260 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart'.
261 Ibid., p.168.

unending nature of the task might explain the acceptance of duality in language or the desire for stable meaning.

As an artist I am a gardener patiently waiting for the planted rhizomatic shoots to emerge from beneath the soil in order to find the places to dig for potentially fruitful endeavour. I dig to uncover connected roots which span across the territory, following the bramble that runs wild sending out rhizome shoots colonising the entire space. There are attempts to restrain the chaos, but the process is a constant renegotiation at every meeting. Yet this analogy still separates me from the objects in the garden. Instead I am the soil in the garden, as well as the gardener. I am the weed that takes hold in the fertile soil, strangling the flowering plants with my own inadequacy. I cultivate ideas or theories read in books and journals, which germinate my own misrepresentations of the ideas that I am examining. I push material around in response to the ideas I encounter. I transplant ideas taken from others, mixing them, making them physical or visual in the practice, and undernourishing or overindulging them until they grow wildly out of shape. They become a hybrid that I call my own.

The ideas of re-turning (and cutting together-apart) intertwine with Derrida's work. As suggested by Arthur Bradley, deconstruction is not simply about breaking things down – the word contains two conflicting prefixes: de- and con-; this enables the word de-con-struction to simultaneously refer to both 'destructive and constructive' processes.[262] This way of thinking about the act of deconstruction proposes a provisional or speculative act that builds and breaks apart simultaneously. In relation to dualism, as Clare Gorman writes, 'deconstruction wrenches apart the neatness of metaphysical binary oppositions'.[263] According to Gorman, this critical act reveals them as merely self-evident, and the deconstructive challenge breaks open the boundaries by 'defying the binary either/or logic through a more ambiguous logic of both/and'.[264] This is not about breaking something down from an external position and starting again; rather, it is about revealing the embedded problematics of any structure from the inside to find new ways of assembling the pieces to explore the relational elements. Similarly Bradley explores how Derrida

---

262 Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 42.
263 Clare Gorman, *The Undecidable: Jacques Derrida and Paul Howard*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, p.14.
264 Ibid., p. 12.

works through the existing historical traditions, rather than destroying them to rebuild, stating:

> For Derrida it is only by working and thinking through this tradition that we can begin to call it into question: we must use the language [of metaphysics] *and* cross it out, preserve it *and* erase it at the same time.[265]

While this sums up Derrida's methodology, working with while acknowledging inadequacy, it also refers to the technique of writing under erasure (*écriture sous rature*), the writing and simultaneous crossing out of an existing word. The word remains visible yet the accepted meaning is refused.[266] This visually demonstrates difficulty of the associations of the term under erasure while allowing its pragmatic use. There is no ground zero, no starting afresh, only an acknowledgement of the contradictions and overlapping multiplicity of context.

To materialise this thinking in the practice, an exploration of art works follows: *Cropped Remainder, To Write—intransitive verb, Marginalia,* and *Figure and Ground*, with the later production of *Tracing Shadows*. The first four works were exhibited as part of the 'Phantom' exhibition at the Anglian Ruskin Gallery in Cambridge 2017.[267]

The premise of the *Phantom* project, devised and curated by Jane Boyer, was for each artist to make several new works by responding to an existing selected art work. Several artists were invited to contribute by submitting an existing work, chosen by Boyer, which was then used as a starting point to be reworked, recycled, re-imagined, or replicated to produce new work.[268] Boyer says the works in the exhibition:

> exemplify this idea of the *phantom*. They explore latency; making visible what is invisible, while uncovering some of their own polyphony, which has passed through

---

265 Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology*, p.56.
266 *Écriture sous rature* differs from blackout or erasure poetry where most of the original words are covered entirely leaving selected words visible allowing the writer to produce new writing or meaning from an existing text. See examples in Chapter One.
267 *Phantom*, curated by Jane Boyer, Anglia Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge, 2017.
268 Artists included Nikki Hare, Kirsty Harris, Marion Piper, Holly Rowan Hesson, Tim Skinner, and others. For more information see: https://www.anglia.ac.uk/arts-law-and-social-sciences/ruskin-gallery/phantom and http://janeboyer.com/LNoga_Phantom_JaneBoyer_lo-res.pdf [last accessed 16.01.19]

layers of translations. These works have also been put through a further transmutation, revealing latent potential in their meaning.[269]

Cropped Remainder was selected for the project, a work produced and exhibited in the beginning phase of this research,[270] part of an exploration into materialising deletions as fragments of existing images and texts. Tisseron writes about the construction of texts suggesting that 'an erasure can have meaning with respect to the word or the sentence it eliminates, but also as an element inscribed in a larger invisible network, the breathing of the text as it were'.[271] Here the photographic image reveals to the viewer a part of the process that is ordinarily hidden: the section of the photograph that has been cropped and deleted during production in order to ~~better~~ frame or compose the intended image. The unused white space acknowledges the removal of the focal point in favour of presenting the deleted section, visualising the act of cropping as a material object.

A photograph, throughout its history, has been seen as a transparent window on the world, in opposition to the idea of a constructed canvas, and though frequently challenged this idea still lingers.[272] Even if considered as transparent the fragmentary nature of that experience should be recognised. A window provides a static viewpoint and its position in a wall tends to conceal as much as it reveals. The photograph generally gives a visual slice and a fraction of a moment in time. The view from this window is seemingly blank, while only the frame is visible. The grid of twelve images appear as an abstract modernist assemblage, leaving the viewer in no doubt about the constructed nature of the image or its partial view on the world.

---

269 From the contributor information provided.

270 Rachel Smith, *Cropped Remainder,* series of 12 6x4 inch digital photographs, 2014, first exhibited in *Cut,* curated by Madeleine Walton, BSA members show, Bank Street Arts, Sheffield, 2014.

271 Serge Tisseron, 'All Writing is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies* no.84, 1994, 29–42, p. 30.

272 Barthes states 'Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not what we see.' It seems that the viewer looks at the subject or the image contained in the photograph rather than the object itself. So in the act of depicting something it seems the photograph potentially disappears. As Geoffrey Batchen puts it 'in order to see what the photograph is "of" we must first suppress our consciousness of what the photograph "is" in material terms'.
Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography,* trans. by Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 2000 [*La Chambre Claire,* Éditions du Seuil, 1980] p. 67.
Geoffrey Batchen, *Photography's Objects*, Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Art Museum, 1997, p. 2.

Rachel Smith, *Cropped Remainder*

Accepting the task of remaking this work, constructed two years earlier and discarded from the research project, compelled me to reconsider its relation to what was occurring in my practice. Retrospectively viewed, the process that followed is both a return and return. The narrative framing now adds a smooth clarity to the structure of the work that was much less straightforward at the time.[273]

Concurrent with the production of work for *Phantom,* I was also making work for an exhibition with my peer group of Ph.D. researchers: *Testing Testing,* with the intention of demonstrating practice in the midst of the research process.[274] Reading Barthes then, his influence in the work pervades. Drawing from *Cropped Remainder* I explored the periphery, the marginal elements of the writing process tidied away in moving toward a finished object. Gaps, erasure, and the deliberate production of empty space in my work required investigation. I was concerned with using the different material components of my practice (drawing, photography, and writing) to investigate how they operated together when they were being used to explore the same idea contiguously.

To Write—intransitive verb explored the act of digital typing but without revealing the text being written.[275] The blank digital screen echoed the blank photographic space of *Cropped Remainder*, referring to something mute. As the text is not visible, the subordinated details of the writing space are foregrounded, materialising my thinking in relation to Barthes's examination of desire to write without the need to produce an object: 'For a long time I thought there was a *Wanting-to-Write* in itself: *To Write,* intransitive verb—now I'm less sure. Perhaps to want to write = to want to write something → To Want-to-Write+Object'.[276] As materialisation is a substantial method of my practice, the idea of writing as an intransitive verb struck me reading this. Intransitive verbs do not allow for an object, as opposed to transitive verbs that are applied to an object; for example: 'I want to write', as opposed to 'I want to write a book'. This work considers the possibility of writing without the production of an object. The transitional state between writing and producing a text object has been expanded in this work as nothing is revealed,

---

273 As I write this I am staring at the pages of my notebook from the period, trying to remember my intentions from the scribbled notes and diagrams on the lined paper, forging new connections across time and space to formalise my fragmentary process of making into a narrative flow.
274 *Testing Testing*, Ph.D. practice-based research exhibition and symposium, SIA Gallery Sheffield, 2016.
275 The moving image can be seen here: https://vimeo.com/190543799
276 Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* p. 10 [original emphasis].

so a moment when language is seemingly as-yet-unwritten is contemplated before it becomes fixed into material text.

Rachel Smith, *To Write–intransitive verb,* Testing Testing, SIA Gallery, Sheffield

In constructing this moving image work, inevitably an object has been produced, yet it is one that never fully reveals itself. Meaning is denied even when the process of typing is activated. The main content is omitted from the digital page, and as Dworkin writes: 'omissions within a system permit other elements to appear more clearly'.[277] When faced with the seemingly blank digital screen other details appear. The pulsing cursor is demanding; even as the writing movement hesitates, the blinking appears to demand further action with no sympathy for uncertainty. The word counter steadily keeps score though nothing materialises to correspond with its tally. The autocorrect function flickers varied suggestions for the words algorithmically it is able to read as errors, leaving the red underscoring of unrecognisable mistakes to scar the white surface, as the writing process continues below the visible page. These peripheral details, normally less obvious in their supporting role to the text streaming across the surface of the writing space become the

---

277 Craig Dworkin, *No Medium,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013, p. 9.

focus. They allow for thinking about what it might be to write, rather than about the meaning of the words that are written. The work's denial of immediate coherence exists as a material gesture towards Deleuze's 'vacuoles of non-communication'.[278] Deleuze posits these units as useful for artists to develop as language has become so corrupted by money and power. The space in the work contains a potential for what has yet to happen. Yet this space is not an empty space waiting to be filled, the blank page is never blank. Bergvall agrees with Dworkin's idea that the page is permanently but invisibly coded before writing begins, and she writes of the page space as 'a loaded site which ceases to present itself as blank'.[279]

To make this work, Barthes's chapter 'Session of December 9, 1978' was revisited on several occasions. A crumpled set of photocopied pages was carried around, coloured notes added to the margins on each rereading, underlining and circling gradually encroaching into the space of the main text.[280] This was to be the substance of *Marginalia.* Two versions of the work that was submitted to *Phantom* exist: *Marginalia*, a digital image of the scanned and layered annotations, with Barthes's text erased, and *Dialogue with Roland Barthes,* which appeared first in a publication for *Testing Testing* where Barthes's text remains visible though as a palimpsest.[281] When the original text remains the dark tonal block continues its visual dominance, the page space now crowded and frenetic. Once removed, the underlining and circling become more apparent, stretching across the page space to connect the notes in the margins and lead the eye across the page, tracing the lines made by reading. When positioned next to the moving image work, this static version materialises some of the thought processes unseen in the minimal action of *To Write*, as only the misspelled words draw attention from the autocorrection suggestions.

---

278 Deleuze, Gilles, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1992.
279 Caroline Bergvall, 'The Hungry Form (G.eek Mix)', *Journal of Performance and Art*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 1999, 112-116, p113.
280 I have just lifted a copy of the book from my shelf to check my citation – this is borrowed from another researcher who also attended the reading group, and momentarily I am distracted by her notes in the margin of her book. There is some overlap with my notes, but also comments pertinent to her own interests sparked by the text. Somewhere beyond my reach are further sets of notes, each with its own connected but personal response to the text.
281 *Testing Testing Prologue*, publication for the event of the exhibition and symposium

Rachel Smith, *Marginalia*
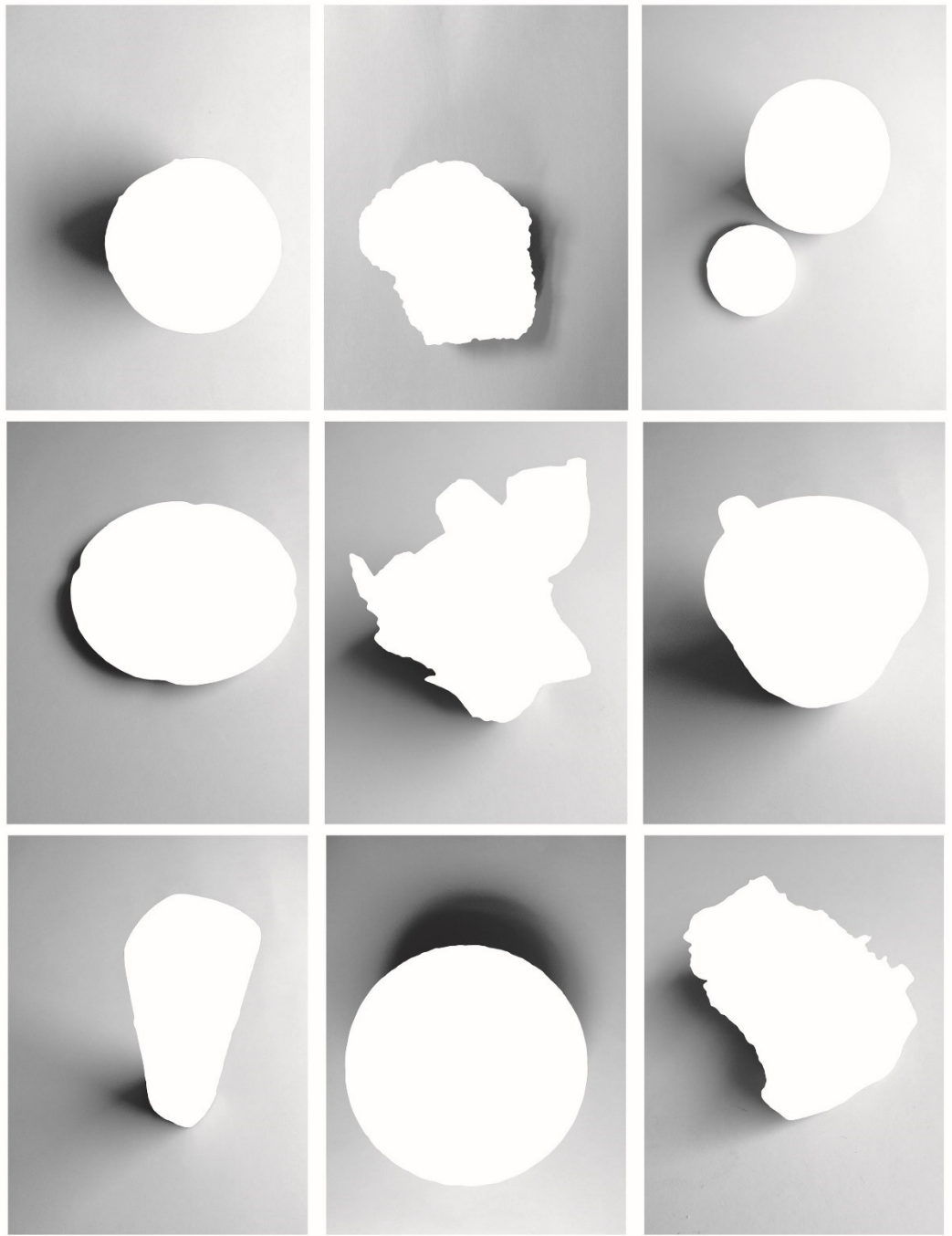
Rachel Smith, *Figure and Ground*

The final work in this set is *Figure and Ground*, a photographic typology, deleted objects appear as white silhouettes set in the remaining grey shadowed background. Perceptual organisation is challenged as many of the visual cues for recognition are removed, yet the boundaries of the objects endure, leaving a clear threshold between object and background. Unlike in *Cropped Remainder*, which brings back the deleted border from the original image, leaving the rectangular space of the finished image blank, the removal is of a more specific shape, leaving a jigsaw-like hole of a particular object. Despite the visual similarities of the works there is a subtle shift in the concept behind the construction. This occurs in developing the act of erasure, from materialising something already deleted in order to produce a product (thereby uncovering part of the process) towards deliberately removing the main part of the image or text. This calculated move reveals lesser elements that are concurrently present, though subjugated.

In a similar way to *Cropped Remainder*, both sets of images are appropriated from another project. They have another life elsewhere, drawn from my own collection. The images used to produce *Figure and Ground* were originally made for a collaborative work that will be later discussed in more detail, and hold traces of these different influences. The appropriation of material brings with it traces of its original context, part of the network of influences referred to in new materialism as objects are seen as part of a continuing process of production. As Elizabeth Edwards states:

> an object cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but should be understood as belonging in a *continuing process of production*, exchange, usage, and meaning. As such, objects are enmeshed in, and active in, social relations, not merely passive entities in these processes. [282]

The entangled nature of influence is again referred to here. A method of making might echo the idea of a continued process of production as the photograph is taken, printed, shared, re-worked re-photographed, and re-shared moving between spaces, contexts, and value systems.

---

282 Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (eds), *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 4

Phantom Exhibition, Anglian Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge

However, in re-examining Barad's terms: re-turning and cutting together-apart, doubt may be cast on the effectiveness of this work in relation to my intention. The purpose is to challenge boundaries and explore the oppositional terms to enable the inseparable and entangled influence of each on the other to become evident. In trying to disrupt specific oppositional positions of: process and product; absence and presence; text and marginalia; figure and ground in this work, I have merely reversed the power dynamic, enabling lesser elements to dominate. The thresholds persist and the territories survive. My marginalia prevails after the main body text is deleted, but still occupies marginal territory, and is handwritten, materialising the immediacy of thought rather than the considered and edited type. At best the positions remain in a state of flux as perception flickers between the object and background at the border or edges. Nick Thurston reversed these oppositional positions further in his work *Reading the Remove of Literature* by typesetting his own annotations in the font of the original book, producing his underlinings and circling as digital lines, yet the text still clings to the margins.[283] Similarly Büchler produced a work of typeset annotations taken from Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.*[284] Handwritten annotations are made digital, and the original text is removed. This has the effect of distancing the hand of

283 Nick Thurston, *Reading the Remove of Literature,* Information as Material, 2006, http://www.informationasmaterial.org/portfolio/reading-the-remove-of-literature [last accessed 21.01.18]
284 Pavel Büchler, *Walter Benjamin's Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Manchester: Wax 366, 2006.

the reader, but simultaneously raising the status of the annotations above the original text.[285]

The tension between presence and absence, text and marginalia, theory and practice, hand and digital markings are of interest here as they suggest a refusal. Troubling binary positions in arts-based research, particularly theory and practice is explored by Loveless as she articulates how reality is not divided neatly into the inert and active or other dualist categories but instead may be seen as a range of materialities continually involved in a chain of associations.[286] These entanglements, also described by Barad, move beyond the separation implied by dualism towards positions that hold the multiplicities of now, before, here, there, in a way that does not erase difference but interweaves them. Barad writes: 'a threading through of an infinity of moments-places-mattering, a superposition / entanglement, never closed, never finished'.[287]

There is an additive critical approach embedded in this terminology. In searching for a new way of expressing and moving beyond some of the problems associated with disrupting dualism, a pattern of joining or attaching through hyphenation appears in much new materialist writing:

> Together-apart, and differentiating-entangling;[288] intra-action,[289] more-than, and research-creation,[290] theory-making,[291] matter-realism, not-One,[292] moments-places-matterings,[293] exteriority-within-phenomena.[294]

What interests me most about this pattern is what might be contained in the hyphen. The use of the compound modifier in these examples demonstrates combined meaning

---

285 A new library room is momentarily manifested for works that deal with marginalia. I shake off the desire to handwrite index cards to aid this categorisation process. Alongside these examples I imagine a digital display showing images of manuscripts with authors' marginalia that clutter my Pinterest boards.
286 Natalie Loveless, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory'.
287 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction', p. 169.
288 Ibid., p.168.
289 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007, p. 141.
290 Stephanie Spinggay and Zofia Zaliwska, 'Diagrams and Cuts', p. 136.
291 Natalie Loveless, Practice in the Flesh of Theory, p. 94.
292 Rosi Braidotti, 'Afterword: complexity, materialism, difference', *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, 17:2, 2012, 169-76, p. 174.
293 Karen Barad, 'Diffracting Diffraction', p.169.
294 Ibid., p. 177.

between the words, or an attempt to adapt meaning. While the earlier example of Heidegger's hyphen split, the examples above connect. The hyphen represents the difficulty of articulation, silently acknowledging the inadequacy of the lexicon, representing the movement in-between.[295] As Manning writes of the term 'research-creation': 'how to resituate the hyphen of research-creation to locate it as much within philosophical inquiry as artistic practice and between them both and other fields'?[296] This combination of ideas represents the generative *and* space which my research examines.

I hear the rhizomatic *and...and...and*, in all these adjuncts, and draw a line of flight towards Latour's writing on 'matters of concern' as opposed to 'matters of fact'.[297] Latour's approach leads to a position without certainty or fixed positions, a recognition of the cluttered process of continual becoming in a shifting territory.[298] Writing about an additive critical approach Latour asks:

> Can we devise another powerful descriptive tool that deals this time with matters of concern and whose import then will no longer be to debunk but to protect and to care, as Donna Haraway would put it? Is it really possible to transform the critical urge in the ethos of someone who *adds* reality to matters of fact and not *subtract* reality? To put it another way, what's the difference between deconstruction and constructivism?[299]

The preoccupation with finding a way forward for critique that holds an element of care emanates from Latour's apprehension at the way critique has 'sent us down the wrong path'.[300] Instead of getting closer to the facts, critique moved to explore the conditions that

---

295 There are other uses of glyphs in Barad's writing (the forward slash and parentheses) to draw attention to the slippage of meaning, or to imply meaning beyond a word's current usage. See for example 'Ma(r)king Time: Material Entanglements and Re-memberings: Cutting Together-Apart', *How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts, and Materiality in Organisation Studies*, eds. Paul Carlile, Davide Nicolini et al, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
296 Erin Manning, Brain Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, p. 90.
297 Latour considers Heidegger's differentiation of objects and things. *Objects* are a matter of fact, complete, factual, and stable, as opposed to *things* which are a matter of concern, relational, incomplete, processual, responsive and unstable. Seen in this way, if all entities are considered as things *via* Bruno Latour due to their existence in a socio-material network, then we may consider the constantly shifting relations between things, which would include researcher, location, objects, art works, and other contexts.
Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?'.
298 'I feel the earth move under my feet, I feel the sky tumbling down...' Carole King's lyric circles my head as I write.
299 Latour, p. 232.
300 Latour, p. 231.

allowed the facts to exist. In the action of debunking facts we have arrived at a moment where nothing is to be trusted and all facts can be instantly denied or refuted. Although he does not use the terms post-truth or fake news this article touches on similar concerns.[301] He argues towards finding a critical act that, rather than challenging or adapting matters of fact, pushes facts towards becoming matters of concern. This echoes Barad's re-turning as a constant worrying action that repeats itself. As Haraway writes: '*Trouble* is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning 'to stir up', 'to make cloudy', 'to disturb'.[302] These are agitations, a refusal to let things remain fixed. Latour poses the question: 'What would critique do if it could be associated with *more,* not with *less,* with *multiplication,* not *subtraction*?'.[303] This circles back to the idea of de-construction being as much about construction as it is about destruction, as well as the additive 'and' of the rhizome, troubling ideas with the multiplicity, critique that collects and acknowledges from the structure, working with excess.

Bringing the art works back to the forefront, this traversal through theory enables me to move the work forward. The thresholds in the work continue to be problematic. The hyphen draws attention to an additive approach, which in certain parts of the research is already embedded through the rhizomatic connectivity. If addition is considered as increasing, then expanding the visual nature of the edges to blur territorial boundaries is what was required to re-turn the *Figure and Ground* images.

2.3 *Phantom* Re-fused

As the work for the *Phantom* exhibition already contained and re-turned ideas in practice I wanted to develop this work to better understand the re-turn as my own practice activity. As re-turning uses the hyphen to emphasise the word not as going back but to turn again, I have developed the term re-fusal, as both an act of refusal (to accept the original object) and of repeatedly re-fusing, combining, or amalgamating material as a transformative process using practice.

---

301 Post-truth has developed as a phenomena which describes the way facts no longer appear to have as much power to impact on the general populace as emotional content or reductive slogans. Opinion and rumour are given as much if not more weight as facts in a post-truth climate.
302 Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 1.
303 Latour, p. 248.

Re-fusing the work for *Phantom*, I wanted to experiment with the boundary thresholds in the images which resulted in *Tracing Shadows*. These images used come from the same source as the *Figure and Ground* images, originally produced for *An Exchange of Words with Jean-Paul Sartre*, a work discussed in Chapter Three. However, *Tracing Shadows* uses a different method to create a borderless and almost indistinguishable object and background. In an attempt to make the borders between the figure and ground indistinct I used computer software to remove the object, replacing it with pixels from the shadow and plain background in the image. This renders the edges less obvious, leaving a trace of the object in its removal.

Reading contiguously to making saturates my work with a material sense of the meaning under construction. If trying to understand the sense of Barthes's words influenced the way *To Write* was produced, then reading to get closer towards Derrida's ideas of the trace, even if deferred (through a process of reading other writer's expositions of his work) has been significant in the making of these photographic images.

The word 'trace' from the title of this work simultaneously refers to the act of searching or following, to drawing or mapping, and as the remnant of something left. For Derrida the trace is *différance. Différance* demonstrates that each sign is reliant on other signs for its meaning and each sign always contains traces of the other signs, none fully present yet neither fully absent, so 'we never arrive at a simple or unmediated meaning'.[304] The trace is neither present nor absent; no element of the sign is fully there or not there. As Juliet Fleming writes, 'what a signifier marks is not only 'not there' but more importantly, 'not that': the trace is not the remainder of something gone but the mark of what was never fully there'.[305] Equally it is not 'sensible or intelligible'.[306] It cannot be easily or fully seen and thought as it is the position *between*, the difference between the spoken and the written, the transversal action between ideas. It is neither subject nor object, and through Bradley's investigations it is possible to consider how the trace might recede into the past while projecting into the future without taking a fully formed presence in time and space.[307]

---

304 Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology*, p. 71.
305 Fleming, Juliet, *Cultural Graphology: Writing after Derrida,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016, p. 7
306 Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology*, p. 73.
307 Ibid., p. 74.

The photographs are of objects simultaneously absent and present, disrupting a sense of defined territory. The intention behind the production of these images resists immediate interpretation. In physically blurring the boundaries the oppositional positions of figure and ground, absence and presence, theory and practice become open for negotiation through a visually unstable threshold allowing the space to become deterritorialised.[308] The ambiguous forms are indeterminate, refusing immediate understanding.
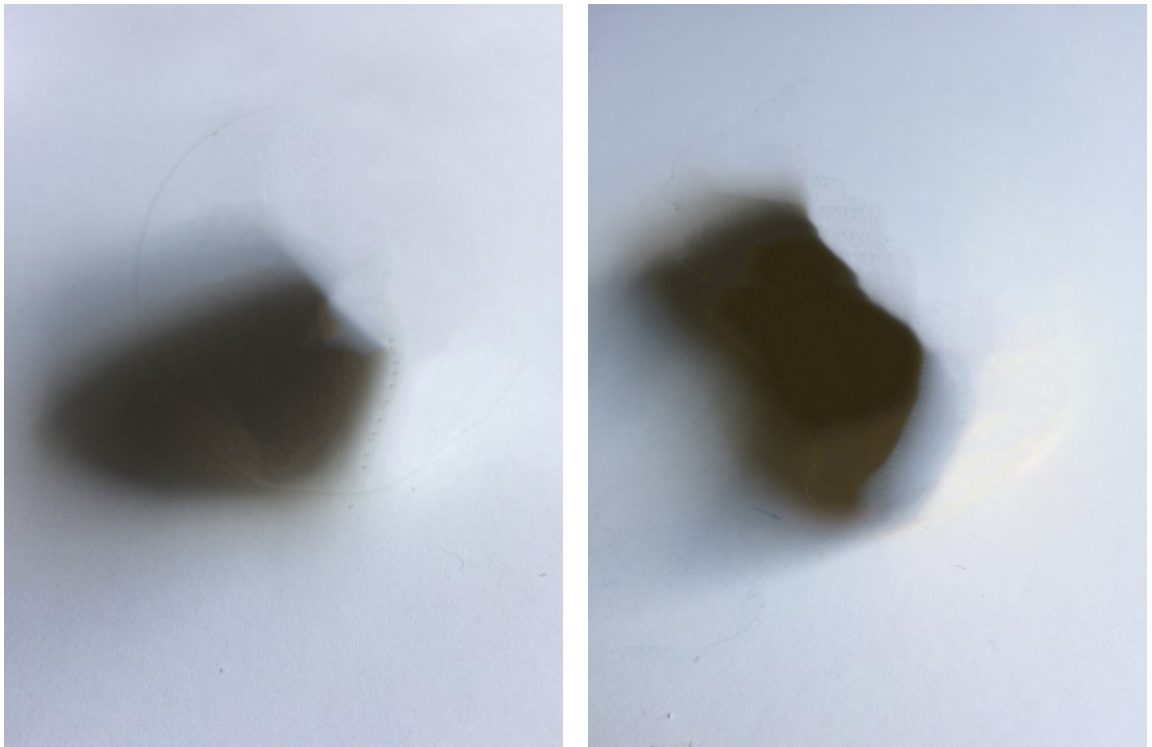
Rachel Smith, from the series *Tracing Shadows*

---

308 *Oscillate Wildly* by The Smiths is the song that today repeatedly agitates. It is the words of the title, rather than the notes of the music, that needle at my concentration.

Petran Kockelkoren states that 'the basic metaphor for understanding the world is a coherent text. The world is legible'.[309] In response my works explore what might be communicated about the world by a work that refuses instant coherence. The texts and images occupy territory between coherence and the asemic. Bruce Nauman writes:

> I think the point where language starts to break down is a useful tool for communication [...] if you only deal with what is known you'll have redundancy; on the other hand, if you only deal with the unknown you cannot communicate at all. There is always some combination of the two, and it is how they touch each other that make communication interesting.[310]

Echoing Nauman, I have engaged in operating between the figurative (known) and the abstract (unknown), combining elements of both to engage ambiguity as a space to wrestle with meaning as it is being formed. Weaving a similar thread, O'Sullivan, in his article on Deleuze and Francis Bacon, describes how he believes an art work should occupy a middle ground between the representational and the abstract, to avoid standing still or moving so fast everything is destroyed. According to Deleuze and also O'Sullivan – total abstraction, in a similar way to figurative representation, does not 'liberate' the viewer. Instead art works must engage the ground between abstraction and representation. I have interrupted habitual reading patterns, provoking moments of hesitation in the viewer, opening spaces for the as-yet-unthought.

Iser considers the gaps in any text as 'the blanks which the reader is to fill in'.[311] According to Iser these gaps are formed by the deliberate use of ellipses in any text, where the author intends the reader to imagine the meaning from the blanks. Also these arise from the difference in our experiences which lead the reader to negotiate meaning, even if one-sidedly with a text that cannot engage in a discussion.[312] Iser uses this asymmetry between text and reader to explore how communication is constructed. The blanks in any text offer a space for the reader and what is left blank, unsaid, unvisualised, (the spaces or

---

309 Petran Kockelkoren, 'The disruption of the understanding of meaning', *Manually/Semi/Automatic #2*, 2012, trans. by Peter Mason, https://alexandraroozen.com/the-disruption-of-the-understanding-of-meaning-petran-kockelkoren/
310 Margot Heller, et al. *Incommunicado.* London, Hayward Gallery, 2003
311 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978 [*Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, Munich: Wilhelm Frank, 1976], p. 169.
312 Ibid., pp. 166–169.

gaps in the work rather than the words written) is what 'spurs the reader into action' as they navigate between the implicit and explicit use of language.[313]
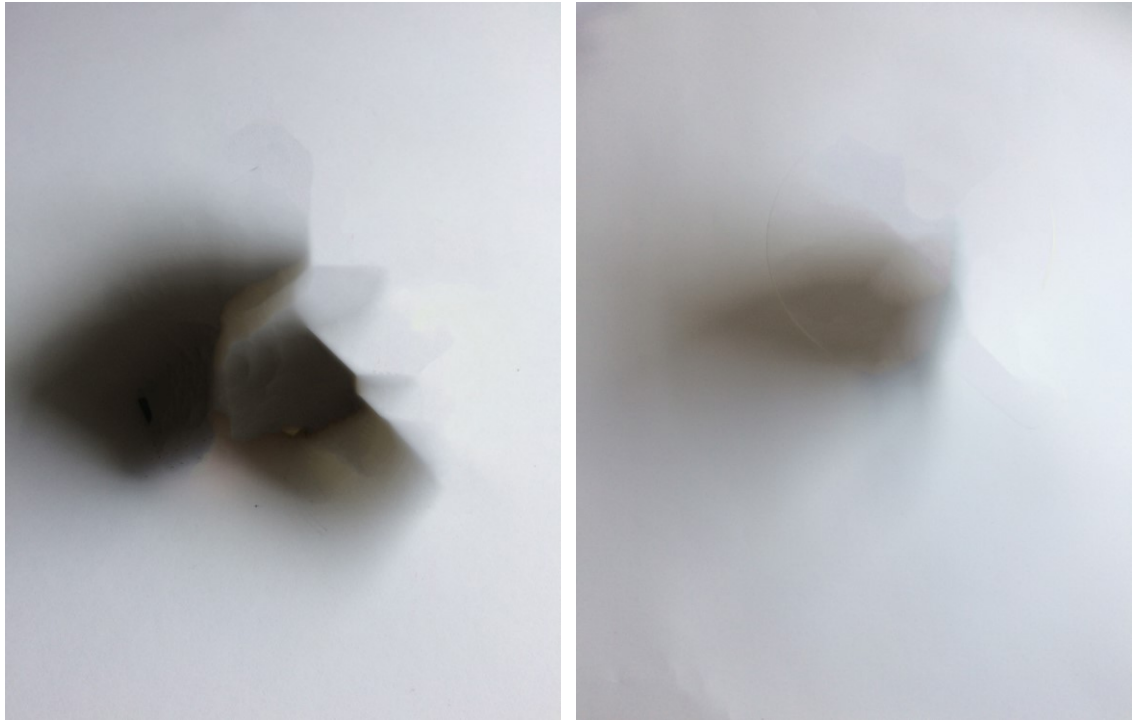
Rachel Smith, from the series *Tracing Shadows*

I proposed in the introduction that my practice 'drawing out language' is a synthesis of photography as writing as drawing. In this sense the photographs may be thought of as a visualisation of what writing or language cannot express – the shadow of language cast over the flat surface of the page. According to Derrida, writing is 'nothing but black, a shadow-writing, writing for protection', and its clarity derives from that which it excludes, that which is withdrawn, removed, outside of it, which is separate. This is meaning and truth'.[314] If writing is a protection, if it casts a shadow to provide shelter, then it conceals as

313 Ibid.
314 Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles,* trans. Barbara Harlow, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988 [*Eperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*, Paris: Flammarion, 1978], p. 21.

much as it reveals. This concealing shadow may be considered part of the drive to repeat, to keep writing, circling around meaning.[315]

Part of the ability to repeat or re-turn in practice exists in relation to the addition of new material (as the earthworm will require extra nutrients to continue its process), whether that comes in the form of theory and reading, visual stimulus, or conversation *via* Deleuze's 'pick-me-up'.[316] This is the constant state of becoming, never finalising, as there is always the potential to adapt and shift old material in different directions. I draw attention to this as I have recently had a conversation about Žižek's use of the term 'spandrels' in relation to these photographic images. Originally a term from architecture, referring to the space between a curved element and rectangular surround, Žižek uses it to refer to interstitial spaces that are used for something other than their intended use (connected to a utopian impulse),[317] as well as critical writing which operates between disciplines and never fully belongs to a particular field.[318] I wonder about the possibility of these shadows as spandrels, and how this might adapt my thinking about their function. I drift back to the corridors of imaginary infinite library space. In this part of the library spaces are being rethought in relation to their original function. Meeting rooms become silent writing zones, busy corridors are stilled by desks dragged together to act as a temporary meeting area, and library shelves become exhibition spaces, carrels become temporary studio spaces. Elsewhere rooms that have fallen into disrepair are emptied to make space for books that are currently beyond the remit of this research, far beyond my time schedule.

The material gesture of the residency reaches towards Barad's call for 'a performative account [which] insists on understanding, thinking, and theorising as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being'.[319] Observing the

---

315 If Derrida describes writing as a shadow, conversely Barthes describes the haiku form as 'setting a bell ringing' to bring clarity, and writes of interpretation as 'a *shadow* falling on the picture' – he uses this description to explore a spiralling between knowing and unknowing in three stages.
Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* pp. 78-81
316 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, pp. 9–10.
317 Lahiji Nadir, 'In Interstitial Space - Žižek on Architectural Parallax', *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1–19, 2016.
318 Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void,* 2017.
319 Karen Barad 'Meeting the Universe Halfway' *Materiality, Documents of Contemporary Art,* London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2015, pp. 213-4.

tangible space, the artists and their materials, the varied disciplinary focus of students, staff, and the public who stopped to interrupt, the distractions, spontaneity, physical making processes, the theoretical texts brought into the space for discussion provoked a consideration of the way these influences intra-act and are cut together-apart in the process of production.

The work in this chapter is concerned with producing a space to think, to experiment, to test, whether that space is a physical location or a territory that exists as part of the art work. The practice provides scope to explore and visualise thinking that goes beyond dualism, pushing past the binary or towards the multiplicity of and in both an additive and layered gesture.

In the next chapter, the ideas and methods tested here will be synthesised into a method of reading, writing, and making, with an acknowledgement of voices beyond the individual, what Haraway calls the 'sympoiesis', a collaborative or collective 'making-with' as opposed to autopoiesis or self-making.[320]

---

320 Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble,* p. 58.

Interrupting Transmission: exploring methods of disruption
to question the position of the author

Herein I address art practice as a way to explore both the position of the author and my own relation to authorship. This builds to my own method of working from the experiments carried out in the previous chapters. The practice work has been produced back in-amongst the library stacks, behind the glass walls of meeting rooms booked for the purpose of making, and the texts from this chapter are found in the language section of the bibliography. By considering Barthes's declaration of 'The Death of the Author' in 1967, and charting the death, return, authority and distancing of the author in writings that have since responded to Barthes's ideas, I construct a territory for my work.[321] In Barthes's writing the author is not a singular figure but rather, an abstract term that relates to the production of texts and the authority of meaning attributed. I explore the author as standing for authority and how this relates to existing accepted systems of behaviour in relation to reading, writing, and critique. As the author continues to re-emerge even after attempts to silence him I propose it necessary to explore ways of working that acknowledge a re-emergence of a self-conscious, doubtful, speculative self. In my practice this occurs through materialisation, error, misinterpretation, association, and writing thinking as it occurs. I question how these approaches to reading and writing might subvert authority and expectations of research behaviour. Although constraint-based working methods have been a useful tool throughout, later in the chapter I explore the development of the ad-hoc as a deliberate counter response. The randomness of the ad-hoc is a potentially useful tool to undermine authority which is enforced using rules and patterns of predictive behaviour.

Two Conceptual Writing anthologies are analysed to demonstrate how the author might not be fully distanced, and while appropriation in conceptual work may allow for a removal of a personal or expressive tone, this can have unexpected consequences if the complexity of socio-cultural structures are ignored in favour of blindly following conceptual rules devised by the writer or maker. I show that language may be stripped of its context but might not fully disengage its affect if power dynamics are not

---

321 Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', *The Rustle of Language,* p. 49.

acknowledged, which leads to a wider exploration of how Conceptual Writing and Poetics have engaged with the ideas of the death of the author.

My works: *Reading Words; An Exchange of Words;* and *Read(writ)ing Words: A Material Meandering Dialogue,* demonstrate the synthesis of ideas taken from Barthes's 'Writing Reading', Hélène Cixous's *Écriture Feminine,* and Erin Manning's writing on the Minor gesture, which are explained in more detail.[322] I propose an approach of disruptive devotion towards developing my own term – read(writ)ing – to engage with existing texts as a practice method. If reading and writing are folded into one another, then the positions of author (writer) and reader become less distinct. The dualism of author/reader is explored as a process cut-together-apart, rather than killing or distancing the authority of the author.

3.1 The Death and return of the Author

The 'Death of the Author' opens with a question of to whom the narrator voice in Balzac's tale *Sarrasine* belongs. Barthes concludes that 'we can never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, every origin'.[323] There is not a singular voice, but rather a palimpsest of overlapping positions. For Barthes, the priority given to the author comes from the idea that a text contains 'a line of words, releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God)', and that 'most critical theories try to explain why the author has written his work [...] as we try to establish *what the author meant,* and not *what the reader understands'*.[324] According to Barthes, the search for the author's intention comes from the search for fixed or definitive meaning. He explores the idea that the author is mistakenly seen as an explanation for the text that is written, a being who exists before and after the text. In order to combat this Barthes calls for the metaphorical death of the author and the rise of 'the modern *scriptor* [...] his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not

---

322 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa'
Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.
323 Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* , p. 49
324 Ibid., p. 30.

expression)'.[325] He uses the figure of a modern *scriptor* 'born at the same time as his text', a scriptor who 'traces a field without origin—or at least with no origin but language itself, i.e., the very thing which ceaselessly calls any origin into question'. By detaching the hand from the voice Barthes implies that the modern scriptor inscribes or carves out words, rather than having a personal connection to them, as if the scriptor exists only in the moment of the text being written. Language evolves over time, and each word has been reused in countless ways and contexts; as Barthes acknowledges: 'the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture'.[326] The work of the scriptor mirrors the act of appropriation used by Conceptual Writing and Poetry, connecting also to the image of Bartleby the scrivener, who copies (or refuses to copy) the words of others.[327] There is no direct or expressive authorial creation, only the gesture of writing. This echoes Barthes's sentiment of writing without the need to produce an object, explored in Chapter Two.[328]

Having despatched the author, the need to 'decipher' the text is seen as 'entirely futile' as this would 'impose a brake upon it' and return to the method of citing an author.[329] If the meaning is shifted to the language of the text, rather than left in the hands of the author, then the reader is freed from the authority of the author. In this regard Barthes turns his attention to the reader as the space of the text's multiplicity: 'the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any of them being lost, all citations out of which a writing is made; the unity of a text is not in its origin but in its destination'.[330] He ends the essay thus: 'the birth of the reader must be requited by the death of the author'.[331] Co-existence is not possible and the reader now takes control of the meaning of the text, which appears to switch hierarchical control over the text. Rather than remaining in such oppositional terms the practice work, considered later in this chapter, allows me to explore how the boundaries between author and reader may be negotiated.

---

325 Ibid., p. 52.
326 Ibid., p. 53.
327 Herman Melville, *Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street*, Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2010.
328 Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* p. 10
329 Barthes, *Rustle of Language*, p. 53
330 Ibid., p. 54
331 Ibid., p. 55

By questioning the identity of Balzac's narrator Barthes draws conclusions about the displacement of the origins of writing and its author. By contrast Michel Foucault asks 'what does it matter who is speaking?'[332] His essay 'What is an Author?' questions the importance of exploring who is communicating. By the end of the essay he wishes for only a 'stirring of indifference' in relation to his question 'what difference does it make who is speaking'.[333] The significance of who is speaking will become apparent later in my discussion of a reading by conceptual writer Kenneth Goldsmith.

Foucault argues the author is used to 'mark the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning',[334] but that even if the author's power were to be distanced this would be replaced by another constraining principle.[335] The fear of the 'proliferation of meaning' drives the fixing of sense, whether this is *via* the author's intention or through other principles brought forth by the reader for attributing a singular sense, and is what I work to disrupt. Foucault refers to the author's ongoing dispersal as requiring examination. He writes that 'we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers'.[336] By negating the author to bring forth the birth of the reader, Barthes also strips the reader of identity, describing him as being 'without history, biography, and psychology'.[337] As indeterminate figures they contribute to the gaps which Foucault wants examining. More recently Andrew Bennett in *The Author* draws attention to the missing presence of Barthes in Foucault's essay. Despite being written afterwards and clearly influenced by 'The Death of the Author', Barthes is not present in Foucault's writing, existing only as 'an apparition'.[338] This draws attention to the multiplicity of voices contained in a text, and the cultural references that might simultaneously occupy its location, explicit or implied.[339]

---

332 Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism,* ed. Jossue V. Harari, Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979, pp. 141-161, 141.
333 Foucault, p. 160.
334 Foucault, p. 159.
335 Foucault, p. 160.
336 Foucault, p. 145.
337 Barthes, *Rustle of Language*, p. 54.
338 Andrew Bennett, *The Author*, Oxford: Routledge, 2005, p. 20.
339 This kind of multiplicity is developed by Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the dialogic author, which is posed in opposition to Barthes monologic author-god figure. Bakhtin refined the idea of polyphony as a musical term to apply to different views and voices in a text in relation to literature.

In later texts Barthes hints at a return of the author: 'the pleasure of the text also includes a friendly return of the author',[340] and he acknowledges his own desire for an author despite his continued demise in *The Pleasure of the Text*.[341] This desire might be driven by Foucault's argument that the reader fears multiplicity in meaning, but in desiring this return questions are posed about the terms of this homecoming. As Séan Burke identifies, at this point the author is now 'at once both dead and alive'.[342] This 'friendly' return suggests that the author is welcomed back by the reader, but as Burke points out, the author who 'leaves by the front door only if he enters from the back [is] the uncanniest of guests'.[343] The author forced into this deft move is now at the will of the host, and must, according to Burke, do his bidding. In exploring the return of an authorial figure Barthes proposes shifting from a documentary to a novelistic position and from the singular to a plural.[344]

In *The Deaths of the Author* Jane Gallop uses Barthes' 'friendly' return in relation to the body, identifying the *person* as a singular and institutional figure, in contrast to the *body* which she describes as a plural entity.[345] She explores the death of the author in metaphorical and literal terms, addressing the physical death of actual authors and how this affects the reader's approach to a text. Gallop charts the progress from the abstract author with deity status in Barthes original text, who never really lived or actually dies, towards the return of an author who occupies a physical body and is subject to mortality: 'in 'The Death of the Author' the author is the sort of abstraction that never lives and thus actually cannot die, the author who returns is a mortal body and thus poignantly subject to

---

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, trans. R.W. Rotsel, Ann Arbour, MI: Michigan University Press, 1973 [Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo, Moscow, 1963],
p. 340. Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller, New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1976 [*Sade, Fourier, Loyola,* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971], p.27.
341 Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text,* trans. Richard Miller, New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1975 [*Le Plaisir du Texte* Paris: Éditions du Seuil], p. 27.
342 Séan Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992, p. 33.
343 Ibid.
This reference connects my thinking to W.W. Jacob's story of *The Monkey's Paw,* a magical paw that grants three wishes. A couple wish for money, but the consequence is that the money arises from the death of their son at work. The second wish is used to bring him back to life, but concerned about the form he may take the husband uses the final wish to return him to death. This story has been adapted many times in various forms.
344 Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller, London: Jonathan Cape, 1975, [*S/Z,* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970], pp. 211–12.
345 Jane Gallop, *The Deaths of the Author: Reading and Writing in Time*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011, pp.39-40.

death'.[346] However, the death that interests me is the metaphoric death of the singular, giving way to the multiple, the de-con-struction of author/reader dualism to open a space for multiplicity.

Gallop studies Barthes's writing on otherness in relation to the author, noting the similarities between the French for author (*auteur*) and other (*autre*). She expands how Barthes refers to the author as the other who exists inside the text, as opposed to a figure who exists behind the text, as this position would refer to back to the author-god.[347] This other/author, for Gallop, is 'far from being in a position to control the text, is not only in the text, but *lost in the text*'.[348] She posits the idea of the author trapped inside the text, as the reader tries to locate him, the 'other who is always there but always lost, who cannot be discounted but cannot be reached'.[349] In the act of writing the author reaches towards a reader, and in the act of engaging the reader reciprocally reaches towards the author. In 'Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader' Nancy Miller also considers this idea of reaching. She explores this reach as demonstrating the human need to be loved, the 'desire for connection'.[350] Barthes's desire for the author's return evokes both the human desire for attachment and to avoid burgeoning meaning.

If the friendly return of the author contains the desire for connection, then it is important to examine the refusal of a connection in killing the author, or distancing the author from their text. Michael Hardin poses questions about the death of the author in terms of enabling a denial of a particular element of the physical authors' self. In acknowledging the sexuality of Barthes, Foucault, and Andy Warhol and their differing work from this particular period in history, Hardin questions if the death or distancing of the author enabled these gay writers to disassociate from their work, so as to remain ambiguous in their sexuality.

---

346 Jane Gallop, pp. 40–41.
347 Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text,* p. 27.
348 Gallop, p. 51.
349 In this phrase, I am returned to the labyrinth, and have so many times thought about the reach performed in writing, the author reaching for the reader, the reader grasping after the author's intention, the reader grasping for meaning which mirrors a personal experience, readers grasping for a common sense forged inside a community of voices.
350 Nancy Miller, 'Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader', in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern, A Reader,* ed. Séan Burke, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, p. 196.

> This is the real tragedy in the death of the author, when the identity and spirit of the artist/writer is so denied by the audience that not only is the sexuality lost, but the artist as well. Let us hope that the need to be closeted, the need to maintain authorial deniability is disappearing, so that the death of the author will remain a relic of the late 1960s.[351]

If, during that period of history, it was necessary for gay authors to deny their sexuality due to its illegality perhaps the death of the author provided a convenient closet. Fragmenting the self for the purposes of deniability might have enabled particular white men to maintain their position but it reveals the difficulty of occupying marginal or non-normative positions. This opens a problem for women authors and their position to this debate.

In this regard Miller finds problems with Barthes's text and more widely with the postmodernist use of the death of the author in relation to feminism. She argues that the author's death 'prematurely forecloses the questions of agency' for women.[352] Women's relation to writing, production, and the academy is different from that of men, and she believes that because of this women 'have not (collectively) felt burdened by *too much* self, ego, cognate, etc'.[353] Equally she is troubled by the death of the author which she believes has repressed the debate about 'writing identity in favour of the (new) monolith of anonymous textuality'.[354] Writing identities anonymised through the death of the author so as to reduce the ego is addressed by Andreas Huyssen, but in denying a self the dominant ideology becomes harder to challenge.[355] As women have rarely occupied the position of genius in the arts, it seems they have little need for a denial of this privilege, and if the author no longer exists there remains nothing to push against in feminist terms.

Despite identifying problems with Barthes's text for the cause of feminism and identity politics, Miller finds intersection between feminism and Barthes approach in the use of 'pleasures, dangers, zones, and codes of reference' and 'the need to situate, socially, and

---

351 Michael Hardin, 'Was Killing the Queer Author Necessary to Liberate the Queer Text?: The Case of Andy Warhol's *A: A Novel*', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2009, 218-232, p. 231.
352 Miller, p. 197.
353 Ibid.
354 Miller, p. 195.
355 Andreas Huyssen, 'Mapping the Postmodern', *New German Critique*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1984, 5–52, p. 44.

symbolically, the practices of reading and writing'.[356] Miller points towards the need for a personal and transparent approach to writing that engages with the complexities and contradictions of socio-cultural belonging. Her solution comes in the form of a question: 'What does it mean to read (for) the woman writer when the Author is Dead? Or, how can 'reading as a woman' [...] help us to rethink the act of reading as a politics?'[357] This position recalls the birth of a reader at the end of Barthes's essay. For Miller, the birth is that of a woman reader, and her exploration of these roles is seen as a way to continue to trouble this debate. As Bennett recognises, the author tends towards a male construct, in which authority 'is itself an intrinsic aspect of patriarchy'.[358] It is important then as a female reader to engage with the metaphoric death in relation to other possible positions of the author so a de-con-struction of this authority can be continued. I take up these challenges by developing a reading practice that investigates how this might work.

3.2 Conceptual Writing

More recently Conceptual Writing has picked up some issues from the arguments outlined. As described in Chapter One, Conceptual Writing engages in the production of experimental texts largely through appropriation, where a procedural or predetermined method is followed to demonstrate a conceptual idea. The term was originally developed in 2003 on the online platform *Ubuweb: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* by Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith. This digital collection was later followed by a print anthology in 2011. The poet Robert Fitterman has defined the movement 'not by the strategies used but by the expectations of the readership or thinkership', writing that 'pure conceptualism negates the need for reading in the traditional textual sense—one does not need to "read" the work as much as think about the idea of the work'.[359] The distancing of the author provokes a distancing of the reader, the framing of the work emphasises its engagement with structural rather than subjective concerns.

Here I examine the forewords of two Conceptual Writing anthologies, *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* and *I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual*

---

356 Miller, p. 196.
357 Miller, p. 198.
358 Bennett, p. 86.
359 Robert Fitterman, Vanessa Place, *Notes on Conceptualisms,* p. 11.

Writing by Women, to open a wider exploration of how Conceptual Writing, Conceptual Poetics, and constraint-based writing have engaged with ideas of authorship, distancing of individual voice, techniques of appropriation and how this has affected my work.

Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith, *Against Expression* and
Caroline Bergvall, et al. *I'll Drown my Book*

3.2.1 *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*

This title has an authoritative tone, a manifesto might be expected to follow with a clear intent, an outline of the expectations and rules. In his introduction, 'Why Conceptual Writing? Why Now?', Goldsmith considers how the basic underlying model of writing needs to change in relation to the Internet,[360] even if results look similar to previous conceptual work. He proposes writing will be 'mimetic and replicative, involving notions

---

360 Goldsmith compares the relation between contemporary writing and the rise of the Internet with painting's crisis and development in response to the rise of photography. He explores the flood of information and new practices of text management that come with the digital age and proposes how writing may respond.

of distribution while proposing new platforms of receivership. Words might very well be written not to be read but rather to be shared, moved, and manipulated'.[361] Goldsmith championed *Uncreative Writing* as a method of working which avoids subjective expression in favour of the mechanical.[362] The author as creative genius is distanced through appropriation and conceptually devised methods of fragmentation. Yet, as in any anthology, the authors are clearly visible, and Goldsmith himself has deliberately constructed a persona of authority in relation to Conceptual Writing.

In his preface, 'The Fate of Echo', Dworkin writes of coining the term 'Conceptual Writing' as a way of demonstrating 'literary writing that could function comfortably as Conceptual Art and to indicate the use of text in Conceptual Art practices'.[363] He compares his curation of the *UbuWeb Anthology of Conceptual Writing* started online in 2003,[364] with the printed anthology published eight years later. The former assembles works from music, literature, and art to explore texts independent of genre, whereas he believes 'the book presented a far more focused genre of writing than the website, and it made a diametrically opposite argument'.[365] This anthology is about text work from a literary standpoint while maintaining a clear theoretical relation to Conceptual Art. Dworkin outlines how the anthology explores ways in which writing might rid itself of the individual as ego, avoiding unique expression, refusing 'authorial control in favour of automatism [...] and modes of non-interference'. He admits to excluding some works which, though well thought of, were 'simply too creative [...] had too much authorial intervention'.[366] The forewords demonstrate a clear position to follow, while there is an interest in the work produced at the edges of the limits set for the anthology, the boundaries are laid down, establishing an in or out group.

---

361 Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Why Conceptual Writing? Why Now?', p.xxi

362 Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age*.

363 Craig Dworkin, 'The Fate of Echo', in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, xxiii.

364 Dworkin writes about the chronology of the term conceptual writing and the development of the genre: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/04/conceptual-writing-a-worldview [last accessed 12.08.18]

365 Craig Dworkin, 'An Overview / Chronology of Conceptual Writing', *Conceptual Writing: A World View*, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/04/conceptual-writing-a-worldview [last accessed 12.08.18]

366 Craig Dworkin, 'The Fate of Echo', in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, pp. xliii–xliv.

3.2.2 *I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*

This anthology collects a range of writing on Conceptual Writing and Poetics, bringing attention to less known women while acknowledging a wider canon of work. This builds on the feminist arguments I have outlined about the lack of any requirement for the death of the female author, as women's relation to existing canons are less dominant. The book begins with I, a personal account, which may be seen as an anecdotal feminist approach – certainly the author or owner of the book is clearly visible. Drowning here refers to causing a violent death this time towards the book object rather than the author, foregrounding the death of the form. Death of the form refers to the abandoning of visual aesthetics in favour of concept. The reader or holder of the book takes control, and is prepared to extinguish it. The title is appropriated from the title of a chapter in Bernadette Mayer's *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters,*[367] in turn appropriated from Shakespeare's *The Tempest.*[368] Laynie Brown uses a longer version of the quotation from Shakespeare in her introduction 'A Conceptual Assemblage' as a way of foregrounding the concerns of the contributors inside. The act of drowning the book in Brown's words, 'becomes an unthinkable yet necessary act. This combination of unthinkable, or illogical, and necessary, or obligatory, also speaks to the ways the writers in this collection unhinge and re-examine previous assumptions about writing'.[369] Brown's use of metaphor of a text drowning implies that the text might also breathe which echoes Tisseron's exploration in his article 'All Writing is Drawing'.[370] There is an inclusive tone in her description of the works, opening possibilities rather than outlining methods designed to close off spontaneity. She writes of 'a wilful attempt to create a book which can awake the unexpected [...] to uproot, dismantle, reforge, remap or find new vantages and entrances to well-trodden or well-guarded territory'.[371] This book makes room for

---

367 Bernadette Mayer, *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters*, NY: Nightboat Books, 2017.
368 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999.
369 Laynie Brown, 'A Conceptual Assemblage: An Introduction', *I'll Drown my Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, Los Angeles, CA: Les Figues Press, 2012, p. 14.
370 Tisseron writes about the construction of a text and the process of erasures 'as an element inscribed in a larger invisible network, the breathing of the text as it were'. Tisseron, Serge, 'All Writing is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies,* no. 84, 1994, 29–42. p. 30.
371 Laynie Brown, *I'll Drown my Book,* p. 14.

minor writers, acknowledging the canon through them, and instead of cementing what conceptual work is, rather acts to 'pry open the term [...] for deeper examination'.[372]

Women constantly find themselves in the position of the minor, as other, as unspeakable. Kathy Acker writes 'I was unspeakable so I ran into the language of others'.[373] This approach to appropriation comes from a different position. From a marginal position, women have stolen language in an effort to be heard. This is the role of Echo (as opposed to Narcissus), silent unless repeating the last words she had heard. As Dworkin writes:

> Echo [...] becomes a model of Oulipian ingenuity: continuing to communicate in her restricted state with far more personal purpose than her earlier gossiping, turning constraint to her advantage, appropriating other's language to her own ends, 'making do' as a verbal *bricoleuse.*[374]

The *bricoleur* employs a make do and mend approach, less rigid than the suggested procedural and unalterable methods suggested by some approaches to Conceptual Writing.[375] Bricolage uses and adapts what is to hand, acknowledging a personal and local position. In her foreword 'A Conceptual Twist' Bergvall explores this personal position through the re-emergence of the self, though in an alienated form. She asks: 'How does one make conceptually-led work that does not do away, silence or mute some of the messy complications of socio-cultural belonging, but rather collects from the structure itself?'[376] This is bricolage with an acknowledgement of the cultural influence of the objects that are to hand. She calls for an 'engaged disengagement', one that scrutinises intentions and positions while playing conscious games. She answers her own questions, calling for conceptual writers to produce writing that 'collapses the conceptual constrictions in on

---

372 Laynie Brown, *I'll Drown my Book,* p. 17.
373 Kathy Acker, *Bodies of Work: Essays,* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1997.
374 Though this quotation is taken from Dworkin's introduction to *Against Expression,* it is used to describe Oulipian ingenuity and though identified as a precursor, work under this umbrella has been often been excluded from the conceptual writing genre as it has been described by Goldsmith as not conceptual enough, as the constraints are too open, and can be applied to any given text. From Eric Baum, 'Interview with Kenneth Goldsmith', *Read Me,* Issue 4, 2001, http://home.jps.net/~nada/kennyg.htm [last accessed 23.3.15]
375 The bricoleur, taken from *The Savage Mind* by Claude Lévi-Strauss is discussed by Derrida as someone who uses 'the means at hand' and 'tries by trial and error' objects are used, not as intended but lifted from their original context and placed somewhere new to serve a different function.
Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass, Oxford: Routledge Classics, 2001 [*L'écriture et la différence,* Éditions du Seuil, 1967], p. 360.
376 Caroline Bergvall, *I'll Drown my Book,* p. 22.

themselves and moves the text away from a morbid submission to the mechanics of the rule'.[377]

In comparison with the first anthology there is an attitude more interested in experimental rule breaking and an unruly reaction to what exists, rather than the establishment of a definitive movement or clear set of rules. In the first, there is a clear sense of the historical lineage, canon, and structure of the identified movement. In the second, there is a move towards finding ways to express both concept and self in an entangled manner. If this anthology is considered as a reaction to the first, it explores alternative moves to develop conceptual work that could offer new ways forward, beyond purely sticking to a predetermined rule.

3.2.3 Submission to the Rule

Concern over the 'morbid submission to the mechanics of the rule' instead of exploring complexities of social belonging is further revealed in the affect of a work by Goldsmith in 2015. At a conference at Brown University, he read his new work, *Kenneth Goldsmith's The Body of Michael Brown*, a fragmented version of the appropriated autopsy report of unarmed black American Michael Brown shot by the police in 2014. Goldsmith's appropriation was read in the weeks following the police being cleared of all charges in the case, to a small live audience. It sparked a great deal of controversy.[378] As white man, in a position of power, speaking from a university platform, Goldsmith was perceived as appropriating a dead black body. This violent act poses questions about colonialism, race, power, and the position from which the author speaks. Goldsmith has argued that through appropriation, the idea of creative genius aligning with ideas of the author from Barthes's text, might be distanced. Yet this leads to questions about *which* author is being distanced in this work. There must be a consideration of framing, context, and the body that speaks, the one that occupies a position of control, and seemingly, these went unexamined by Goldsmith. Appropriation in this context has been compared to the

---

377 Ibid.
378 CAConrad, 'Kenneth Goldsmith says he's an Outlaw', *Harriet Poetry Foundation*, online, 01.06.2015, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2015/06/kenneth-goldsmith-says-he-is-an-outlaw [last accessed 22.02.2019]

colonial impulse of claiming and brutalising.[379] As Jacqueline Valencia, an experimental writer and poet, writes: 'black suffering isn't free and readily available to the public. Until the struggle is fought by those who suffer, we as people on the outside of it, must be allies and not silence black voices or speak over them'.[380] The title in which Goldsmith possesses the body is not the act of an ally, and his editing of the text, ending on the words 'the remaining male genitalia system is unremarkable', point to provocation. In this respect the work demonstrates at the very least a misjudgement, a lack of care, or unexamined sense of privilege.[381] That Goldsmith exerted authorial control over the video footage of his reading, which was never released, demonstrated that he was certainly unprepared for the uproar it caused. Much of the uproar has come from people who did not attend the event, but Brian Droitcour, who did attend, draws similar conclusions, working through the elements of reading, including the lack of discussion by Goldsmith at the end of the work.[382]

Vanessa Place has come under fire for racism also in the wake of the Goldsmith event. Initially known for her work *Tragodia*, the reading of court transcripts of rape trials, her female position and work as a criminal appellate defense lawyer provide a context for this work. Unlike Goldsmith, she had been making challenging work related to racism or racist language for several years, including her Twitter project, began in 2009, in which she rewrote *Gone with the Wind* line by line. Two book works were produced from this project: one presents the racist language from the original text, while the other reproduces the text in its entirety. Place has been direct in her approach and her motives about the

---

379 Joey De Jesus, 'Goldsmith, Conceptualism & the Half-baked Rationalization of White Idiocy', *Apogee*, online, 18.03.15 https://apogeejournal.org/2015/03/18/goldsmith-conceptualism-the-half-baked-rationalization-of-white-idiocy [last accessed 22.02.2019]
380 Jillian Steinhauer, 'Kenneth Goldsmith Remixes Michael Brown Autopsy Report as Poetry', *Hyperallergenic* 16.03.2015, https://hyperallergic.com/190954/kenneth-goldsmith-remixes-michael-brown-autopsy-report-as-poetry [last accessed 22.2.19]
Jacqueline Valencia, 'Thoughts on Kenneth Goldsmith and Michael Brown', wordpress blog 03.2015 https://jacquelinevalencia.wordpress.com/2015/03/15/thoughts-on-kenneth-goldsmith-and-michael-brown [last accessed 22.2.19]
381 Cathy Park Hong writes of the galvanising effect this event had on the already growing movement of art and poetry connected to the Black Lives matter movement, producing work that engages in social practice to call out the colonialism, and privilege.
Cathy Park Hong, 'There's a New Movement in American Poetry and It's Not Kenneth Goldsmith', *The New Republic*, 2015. https://newrepublic.com/article/122985/new-movement-american-poetry-not-kenneth-goldsmith [last accessed 22.2.19]
382 Brian Droitcour, 'Reading and Rumor: The Problem with Kenneth Goldsmith', *Art in America Magazine*, 18.03.2015, https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/reading-and-rumor-the-problem-with-kenneth-goldsmith [last accessed 23.02.2019]

work, and her own position of privilege.[383] The material she uses is clearly racist, a historical work of fiction, but the question has become if this makes her a racist. Some have argued that her distribution of racist material answers this affirmatively. Rather than finding answers in the work Kim Calder asks about how the works function: 'do these works successfully perform an anti-racist critique, or do they unnecessarily re-traumatise people of colour (and black Americans in particular) for sensationalist purposes?'.[384] Interrogating her work in this way poses questions about whether it can open dialogue about something new or, if instead, it fails as an experiment in confronting racist language. Calder examines the treatment of Place in comparison with Goldsmith who, unlike Place, continues to teach, maintaining his position, writing: 'we might read this in terms of her subject position — as a queer woman who has never had a long-term position in academia, she has less protections than Goldsmith does'.[385] Place has openly admitted to having had several scheduled appearances cancelled. Goldsmith issued a statement and never released the footage, suggesting that he was blind to his own position, realising the ramifications only after public reaction. Place has always openly admitted the ugly and difficult nature of her work, and presents her white position or body as knowingly guilty, and this seems to have led to easy vilification. Returning to the ugliness of the work, Calder examines the structural concerns of Place's work: 'in choosing the medium of social media, she also disrupts its normal functioning – if social media is a place in which we construct a self we want others to see, Place has used Twitter to make a self no one wants to see'.[386] Calder hopes that such work may enable difficult conversations rather than shutting debate down. Perhaps the problem is that in creating such violent or threatening work people disassociate themselves or look away. Place says of the art world and her own work:

> I see art that's sanitised, art that's precious, art that's playing safe, art for the market. People say they want transgression, that they're looking for the radical edge, but I'm not so sure. There's a certain amount of cruelty in what I do. There has to be. You have to touch nerves, otherwise it's just entertainment.[387]

---

383 Vanessa Place gives a detailed statement about the motives and positions she has occupied to produce this appropriation of *Gone with the Wind.* https://genius.com/Vanessa-place-artists-statement-gone-with-the-wind-vanessaplace-annotated [last accessed 29.5.19]
384 Kim Calder, 'The Denunciation of Vanessa Place', *LA Review of Books*, 14.06.2015 https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-denunciation-of-vanessa-place#! [last accessed 23.02.2019]
385 Ibid.
386 Ibid.
387 Edward Helmore, 'Gone With the Wind tweeter says she is being shunned by US arts institutions', *Guardian* online.

Place further opens this sentiment with many subtle reflections on guilt, jokes, and Echo's ability to repeat, desire, and question in her book with Naomi Toth, written as a series of email exchanges.[388]

The events as they unfolded demonstrate the problematics of work produced that does not take account of the author's position (in Goldsmith's case) and poses questions about voice, power, authenticity, race, and the difficulty of avoiding polemic positions in relation to such issues. Language cannot be completely stripped of its context or affect. Despite Goldsmith's proposal that appropriated work has no expressive tone, this only works if the text remains unedited. In fragmenting and rearranging the autopsy report, the author's hand is visible, the decisions exposed, and the effect may be questioned.

Both writers have produced work that is anti-expression, but simultaneously cultivate a particular persona that is an expression of how they wish to be perceived. The author is not dead, but instead, as Bergvall acknowledged, 'playing games', but are the games being played 'conscious' enough to engage with the reaction of the receiver?[389] To claim the death of the author with certainty, to commit to rule-based work without interrogating the author's own position, intent, and privilege is not a rigorous approach. Once a movement (even if experimental) becomes a fixed part of the establishment, its authority should be critiqued and challenged. Moreover, it demonstrates the need for a re-turning acknowledgement of position, voice, context, material, history, privilege, and their relation to the normative. Engaging with the ethical complexity through a process of cutting together-apart, enables the conscious games called for by Bergvall to be more carefully enacted. Even by Goldsmith's own admission, a work is only good if the idea is good, but consideration must occur not only at the outset, but also be continued through the process.[390]

25.06.2015, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/25/gone-with-the-wind-tweeter-shunned-arts-institutions-vanessa-place [last accessed 23.02.2019]

388 Naomi Toth and Vanessa Place, *After Vanessa Place,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2017.

389 Caroline Bergvall, *I'll Drown my Book,* p. 22.

390 Goldsmith regularly refers to Sol LeWitt's 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' for this purpose: 'Conceptual art is good only when the idea is good', quoted in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing,* p. xxii.

3.2.4 Moving through Conceptual Poetics

Over the period of the research my relation to this term has shifted. With Conceptual Poetics as part of my title I have defended the conceptual approach or at least readjusted my own relation to it in response to much of the polemic posturing that has occurred.[391] The section of my title that contains Conceptual Poetics implies movement *through,* rather than siting myself firmly in this territory. Initially I built on work from my MA, closely allied with Conceptual Writing. As my doctoral research developed I questioned how useful a pure conceptual approach was, particularly framed in a research context. One of the problems I found with rule-based working is that the outcome is considered as a machinic affair in the making and cannot be changed in the process, which implies it is unproblematic or unrelated to the author. I argue that the idea needs to be constantly examined and potentially adapted, as a continual process to prevent language, context, and meaning from standing still. Constraint-based working is blended with a more ad-hoc approach to engage with a making process that was continually re-turning work as an ongoing movement of shifting elements. Blending rule-based working with the *bricoleur's* approach, using what is to hand, as a form of collage allows for refolding assembled fragments in a way that encompasses the different elements of my practice. I have flown through Conceptual Writing and Poetics, collecting from the structures, returning to my own assembled speculative territory where I remain an artist with an interest in conceptual language work.

3.2.5 Post-Conceptual

In Chapter One I proposed books that might meet Drucker's call for what would come next after Conceptual Writing had broken apart expectations of the individual voice.[392] Place and Fitterman laid out their expectations for post-conceptualism in *Notes on Conceptualisms*:

---

[391] In this part of the library, the bookshelves are often stacked with two or three layers of books behind the covers that balance on the shelf edge. Problematic works may be relegated to a less visible position for periods of time. Shadowy figures who inhabit the dream space of my library condemn and remove such books during heated debates.

[392] Johanna Drucker, 'Beyond Conceptualisms: Poetics after Critique and the End of the Individual Voice'.

> What is an 'impure' conceptualism or post-conceptualism in writing? A post-conceptualism might invite more interventionist editing of appropriated source material and more direct treatment of the self in relation to the 'object', as in post-conceptual visual art where the self re-emerges. albeit alienated or distorted.[393]

By referring to post-conceptual as impure the writers suggest a less than perfect method and the text openly embraces failure as part of writing.[394] If adaptation allows the self to re-emerge then strategies are required to draw a new line of flight from this rupture.

Following the controversy and racist allegations aimed at Conceptual Writing, Felix Bernstein's book *Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry* (2015) picks up the thread of exploring what might come next. He appears scowling in a straight-jacket on the cover of the book, attempting to be both critical and self-aware of his own position and poetic heritage, proposing a ground zero, death of author, reader, and work. He describes Post-Conceptual Poetry as a movement to 'bridge affect, queerness, ego, lyric, and self-conscious narcissism with inherited procedural structures of the network and the concept'.[395] This demonstrates the continuing wrestling with the positioning of the self beyond the dismantling of the individual voice in Conceptual Writing. Bernstein suggests 'post-conceptual poetry attempts to explicitly bring affect, emotion, and ego back into the empty networking structures that govern us. For many, this is a resounding relief'.[396] If this is the case then care needs to be taken to avoid operating in such a binary manner, which might mean leaving procedural work behind in favour of emotion and affect.

Having briefly explored the relation of post-conceptual poets to the death of the author and ways of asserting authorship, Bernstein offers his new avenue through declaring the 'death of the work' which he describes as 'symmetrical to the death of the reader'.[397] These two further abstracted deaths, in Bernstein's opinion, remove both the production of work for the consumption of others and any reader who is analytic or discriminating, leaving only 'a less informed set of readers who are not even readers'.[398] This seems to refer to a desire for less consumer-driven work, as well as to Conceptual Writing's original

---

393 Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism,* p. 22.
394 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
395 Felix Bernstein, *Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry*, Los Angeles, CA: Insert Blanc Press, 2015, p. 22.
396 Ibid., p. 38.
397 Ibid., p. 25.
398 Ibid.,p. 26.

requirement of a thinkership rather than a readership. It asks what could rise from the ashes of the death of author, reader, and work. It also brings forth questions of how to establish a different type of reading in relation to the alienated self, which I want to explore.
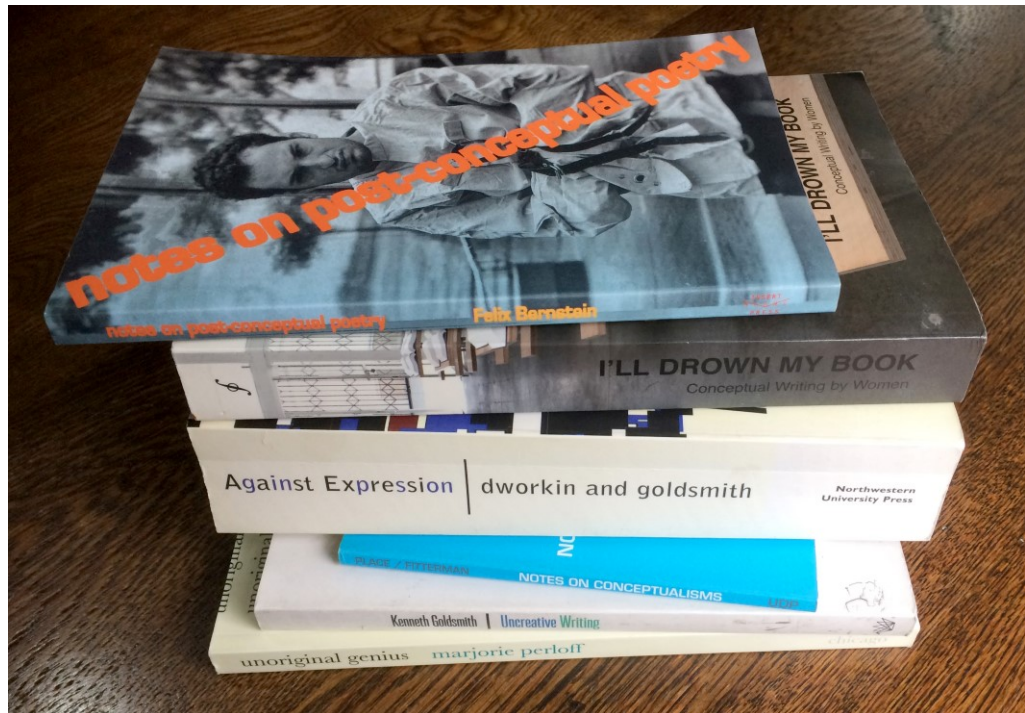
Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry, I'll Drown my Book, Against Expression, Notes on Conceptual Writing, Uncreative Writing, Unoriginal Genius.

3.3 Disruptive Devotion

Beyond these arguments, I have charted a rhizomatic path paved of gathered fragments from the writing and ideas of others to assemble my own approach. Writings considered below include fragments from Barthes, Cixous, Manning (through Deleuze, Guattari, and Žižek) with an exposition of how my ideas have developed in response.

In the chapter 'Writing Reading' Barthes writes about developing his own reading practice, further developed as a method in *S/Z*:[399]

> Has it never happened, as you were reading a book, that you kept stopping as you read, not because you weren't interested, but because you were: because of a flow of ideas, stimuli, associations? In a word, haven't you ever happened *to read while looking up from your book?* [400]

He describes this reading process as both 'insolent in that it interrupts the text, and smitten in that it keeps returning to it and feeding on it'.[401] These words have had a lasting impact on the way I think and make work. Insolent is a word from my past – the willful child learning to abide by the rules or suffer the consequences. Yet, there is also something bold, cheeky, and rebellious in the word, defiant in the face of authority. Coupled with smitten, which inflicts an emotional blow, there is a deep and passionate affectation. The word speaks of love, and there is an oscillating relation between the two that mirrors my reading, making, and writing processes. The back and forth allows for an inconsistent or contradictory position, enabling the multiplicity of *and* to function.

Taking a step further into the way a reader 'reads' while introducing the idea of error, Barthes writes how a creative work may impact its audience. Having been affected or 'inspired by' a work, he explores how he often finds he has impacted back onto the work through his own distortion, writing 'I have to define it within myself as written *for me*'.[402] The example is of a piece of music; he explains how he hears different things in the music when he plays it himself slowly on the harpsichord to allow for his level of skill. Hearing the music played at the correct speed by a professional, something is lost for him, as he describes it the work is 'being played *in itself* [...] but not *for me*: it had no meaning *for me* (Nietzsche)—and so *nothing happened, nothing was created*, (nothing was transformed)'.[403] His own most likely mistake-ridden playing holds more joy than the intended work. Kate Briggs, the book's English translator, acknowledges that one of the reasons a reader feels connected to a work is because it seems to address them directly, as if it were written for that reader specifically. It is this misrepresentation that the reader

---

399 Roland Barthes, *S/Z.*
400 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
401 Ibid.
402 Ibid.
403 Ibid.

loves and this she believes can be employed as a productive process in order to make a new work:

> A bit of the work has acted upon you. But it would appear that you have already, also, acted upon it. It addresses you. You have made it address you. And now you love it *because* it addresses you, because it reads as if it had always been written *for you*. In reading you mis-represent the work to yourself and then come to love your misrepresentation more, in a process of productive mis-attachment that is necessary if the work is going to serve as the spur (the term Barthes uses is *inspiration*) to make new work.[404]

Often a text that I am reading sparks productive ideas. I leave it to spend time developing those ideas and work grows from this encounter. Later, returning to the text, I am disappointed to find the words I remember are not as I had imagined and have been rewritten for my own purpose. The new text is a combination of the original and my own understanding, often fused with fragments from other reading blended into a new hybrid misrepresentation. This forms a collaborative production that translates the original into a new version that contains both author and reader.

David Bolter writes: 'what is true of all writing [is that] the form invites the reader to participate in a conversation and then denies him or her full participation'.[405] The one-sided conversation enacted as the reader digests the text reveals the space left by the non-present writer. It refers to a potential but unreachable dialogue, which leaves the reader unchecked in their production. However, this gap can be seen as a productive working space for the *reader as writer*, acknowledged by Barthes 'Reading Writing'. I develop this further into the *reader as writer as maker*.[406]

While I am trying to write, Kathy Acker whispers her words to me again: 'I was unspeakable so I ran into the language of others'.[407] In listening to this, I have lost my thread in the writing. I glance at the title of the document into which I am typing but this does not help me connect to the quotation. I stare down at the cover of *The Rustle of Language*, visually returning to the site where the thought originated. Slowly I drag an idea

---

404 Kate Briggs, 'Practising with Roland Barthes', *Esprit Créateur,* Baltimore 55.4. Winter 2015, 118–30, p. 118.
405 David J. Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001, p. 104,
406 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
407 Kathy Acker, *Bodies of Work: Essays.*

forward from the blank page of my mind; a way of thinking about Acker's quotation, as a method for making: I *run into* Barthes language.[408] Though his writing was the starting point for some of the early work in this research, it has become apparent that I can insert myself into any text and by re-turning a phrase that acts as a *punctum*, work is produced in response.[409]

In finding a way to navigate beyond the procedural Cixous's *écriture feminine* has influenced my practice.[410] In proposing a feminine practice Cixous acknowledges that it should never be coded or theorised in a way that makes it particular; instead it remains an experimental approach which refuses a singular definition. She searches for a way of undermining the dualism of language. As Ian Blyth and Susan Sellars write, Cixous's approach is more fluid: 'multiple, or even contradictory meanings and forms of expression are sought after and valued'.[411]

Like Barthes's ideas in 'Writing Reading' Cixous describes reading and writing as 'not separate, reading is a part of writing. A real reader is a writer. A real reader is already on the way to writing'.[412] She describes the 'real reader' as becoming absorbed in the text.[413] Cixous writes of killing off not the author as authority but the people in her life in order to immerse herself in reading (or writing), for those consuming periods they do not exist, until she returns from the practice.[414] Smitten, the reader exists in the moment with the

---

408 See the artists book *Marginal Reading* for some of my workings while reading Barthes.
409 Barthes writes of the punctum in a photograph as the 'accident which pricks me (but also bruises me), is poignant to me'. It is the thing that each viewer may connect to in the image, but not necessarily what the maker intended as the point of the work.
Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 2000 [*La Chambre Claire*, Éditions du Seuil, 1980], pp. 26-27.
410 Though this research does not hold with the psychoanalytic approach, there have been several writers from this field whose ideas have become part of my own assemblage.
411 Ian Blyth and Susan Sellars, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum Books, 2004, p. 24.
412 Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 21.
413 This idea can be seen in the material form of the writing in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*: the reader in the story is mirrored by the reader of the book as each chapter is split into two sections, as the stories fragment and blend.
414 Cixous, *Three Steps*, p. 21.

text. As Barthes writes, the reader is 'without history, without biography, without psychology'. In the moment of reading any sense of the external world falls away.[415]

However, writing a 'real' reader invokes the dualistic opposition of a false reader, an unreliable or fraudulent reader. This connotation is also present in Vladimir Nabokov's consideration of a good reader: 'a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a re-reader'.[416] This reader is kind to the author and needs an 'impersonal imagination', to avoid subjective connections to the text.[417] By suggesting qualities of good reading, a lesser approach with bad methods is implied. In *Entertaining Ideas,* Briggs sets out to explore what a good reading might look like and how to write thoughts and desires which formulate around reading and in doing so comes to terms with adaptation and change rather than perfection. A fragmentary, meandering, and engaging style is employed.

Iser writes of the relation between the 'real' and 'hypothetical' reader, the hypothetical reader being divided into the ideal (which cannot 'exist objectively') and contemporary who 'though undoubtedly there, is difficult to mould to the form of a generalisation'.[418] I believe these ideas calls for specificity and the alienated self, referred to by post-conceptualism. Positing the author as an ideal reader (of their own work) is an idea dismissed by Iser as he points to the author's lack of writing on the subject of how their own text affects them, preferring instead to focus on the author's intention or strategies.[419] Instead of proposing a good or bad reading practice I want to challenge these expectations by ravelling together different methods that engage the contradiction.[420]

In the act of challenging expected methods of reading, room is made for the expression of thought in action during reading, the grasp for sense in the moment of seeking it. Heinrich Von Kleist writes of speaking aloud thoughts that are yet unformed in order to

---

415 Picking up editing where I left off, I put my ear plugs in as a deliberate exclusion of the outside world. Even the tapping of my fingers on the keyboard is absent, only the sound of swallowing and breathing are present.
416 Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, New York, NY: Harcourt, 1980, p. 3.
417 Ibid.
418 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading,* p. 27.
419 Ibid., p. 29.
420 Sharon Kivland's 'The Good Reader' publishes works, under MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, a series that seemingly offers the possibility of being a good reader through its title, but offers a myriad of reading methods which explore a range of insolent and smitten approaches through the work produced.

bring clarity, while Cixous speaks about writing as the thought is being formed.[421] They describe a process of working something out by speaking or writing it, in the moment, instead of internally composing an idea to completion. My work leaves space for error, stuttering, stumbling around, repeatedly failed attempts as meaning is gradually clarified. Working across writing, drawing, and photography demonstrates the productive nature of shifting between media to wrestle with ambiguity and allow room for practice to articulate the as-yet-thought, an object that exists between speech and writing.

Exploring practice research as a tool to move between such binary terms Jacqueline Taylor writes of using *écriture féminine*.[422] Loveless also picks up this feminist thread to explore 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory', unravelling the complexities between theory-making and practice-making as 'messy and entangled [...] both emerge as a kind of thinking that can take many forms'.[423] Blurring the boundaries between practice and theory remain her focus, though she states a stronger case for theory-making as practice than for practice as generative of theory. Embodiment, confessional, and performative accounts are addressed as women researchers and writers bypass the hierarchy of otherness in such dualist approaches. For my approach the use of the rhizomatic '*and...and...and*', the act of cutting together-apart with people, ideas, and materials have been significant. In blending three processes of reading, writing, and making, through drawing, photography, and writing, I deliberately engage the multiplicity of *and*, rather than the dualism of *or* which may be more easily relied on when using two processes.

In the rhizomatic part of my methodology, I am reminded of the similarities between this approach and that of Cixous:

> Let's leave it to the worriers, to masculine anxiety and its obsession with how to dominate the way things work—knowing 'how it works' in order to 'make it work'.[424]

---

421 Heinrich Von Kleist, 'On the Gradual Construction of Thoughts During Speech', trans. by Michael Hamburger, first broadcast on the Third Programme, BBC, 12 January 1951.
Hélène Cixous, *Writing not yet thought*, interview with Adrian Heathfield, London: Performance Matters, DVD, 2011.
422 Jacqueline Taylor, 'From 'or' to 'and': L'écriture féminine as a methodological approach for Fine Art Research', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, vol.13, no. 3, 2014, 303-311.
423 Natalie Loveless, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory', p. 103.
424 This description of understanding in relation to how things work is considered in Barthes's *Preparation for the Novel* as Techné. Shifting from a position of Science and a desire to know 'how something is made, with a view to finding out what it is', towards Techné: 'wanting to know how something is made with a view to making it again'.

> For us the point is not to take possession in order to internalise or manipulate, but rather to dash through and to 'fly'.[425] Flying is a woman's gesture—flying in language and making it fly. We have all learned the art of flying and its numerous techniques; for centuries we've been able to possess anything only by flying; we've lived in flight, stealing away, finding, when desired, narrow passageways, hidden crossovers. It's no accident that *voler* has a double meaning, that it plays on each of them and this throws off the agents of sense. It's no accident: women take after birds and robbers just as robbers take after women and birds. They (*illes*)[426] go by, fly the coop, take pleasure in jumbling the order of space, in disorienting it in changing around the furniture, dislocating things and values, breaking them all up, emptying structures, and turning propriety upside down.[427]

Echoed in this passage is the fast-paced action of rhizomatic connections, the shifting lines of flight, made after a rupture has occurred: selecting, gathering, shifting, fast paced movement. Yet, this is a feminist perspective, allowing for the local, the personal, what is anecdotal, to materialise the gesture of the research. Referred to in Chapter One when writing about my work, *Lines of Flight* and *Voler: to steal and fly*, this sentiment mirrors how I understand the insolent and smitten approach of Barthes, taking pleasure in creating disarray, deliberately fragmenting what exists in order to steal away the shards for another purpose. What Cixous is describing is the way women work through and across the existing structure of patriarchal language.[428] This reflects ideas of deterritorialisation and minor literature described by Deleuze and Guattari.

Deleuze and Guattari write: 'a minor literature is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language'.[429] They identify three characteristics of minor literature: the connection between the personal and political; the

---

Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, pp. 12–13.

425 Also 'to steal'. Both meanings of the verb *voler* are played on, as the text itself explains in the following paragraph (translator's note).

426 '*Illes* is a fusion of the masculine pronoun *ils*, which refers back to birds and robbers, with the feminine pronoun *elles*, which refer to women (translators note)', footnote from p. 887

427 Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', p. 887.

428 Margaret Toye references Cixous to develop a 'contemporary *écriture feminine*'. Along the way she attempts to '(re)claim' Donna Haraway's cyborg by building in Luce Irigaray's ethical framework. This kind of gathering and grafting echoes Cixous's birds and robbers approach that women fragment, gather, and build while always being on the move.
Margaret E. Toye,'Donna Haraway's Cyborg Touching (Up/On) Luce Irigaray's Ethics and the Interval Between: Poethics as Embodied Writing', *Hypatia*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Winter) 2012, 182–200.

429 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', p. 16.

deterritorialisation of language;[430] and the lack of a subject, replaced by '*collective arrangements of utterance*'.[431] Slavoj Žižek develops Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of minor literature in order to de-centre major literature through a series of literary short circuits.[432] He suggests developing elements of literature that might not normally be seen in the same space to produce a shock (or crossed wires) which awakens the reader.[433] *Minor Literature[s]: stuttering culture[s]* an online journal, explores works that engage with practice embody this idea.[434]

Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'minor literature' to refer to languages of different countries and the migration of people. Extending this idea O'Sullivan considers minor literature as a glitch in how language works, as 'an experimentation with, and from within, language. A rupturing of representation. A breaking of the habit of making sense'.[435] He goes on to explore how art may also function as this glitch:

> Art, it seems to me, might be better thought of as an event that interrupts knowledge – that breaks information. In fact, art is one of the very few things we have left that is able to creatively make this break.[436]

If a minor approach acts as an interruption to the major, then taking a more generalised approach in *The Minor Gesture* Manning extends the idea further.[437] Briggs's writing in *Entertaining Ideas* might be considered in this way, as she writes her reading of another book.[438] Manning writes that if the major is 'a structural tendency that organises itself according to predetermined definitions of value. The minor is a force that courses through it, unmooring its structural integrity, problematising its normative standards'.[439]

---

430 Deterritorialisation refers to avoiding being codified or interpreted under the dominant social order. In this respect experimentation is seen by Deleuze and Guattari as a way of providing simultaneous alternatives which avoid a singular meaning.
431 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', p. 18. (author's italics).
432 Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void*, pp. 6-7.
433 This approach relates to writing in the book *Creative Critic*, where critique is blended with a range of voices, genres, and styles. This approach is seen in the development of art writing such as Book Works, Punctum, *The Happy Hypocrite*, 2HB, F.R.DAVID, MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, among others in which art and literature blend in a variety of experimental ways.
434 *Minor Literature[s]: stuttering culture[s]* is an online journal that explores experimental work related to the creative process. https://minorliteratures.com/[last accessed 30.5.19]
435 O'Sullivan, p. 249.
436 O'Sullivan, p. 250.
437 Manning, *The Minor Gesture.*
438 Briggs, *Entertaining Ideas.*
439 Manning, *The Minor Gesture,* p. 1.

She uses the idea of 'normative' to open the minor to include issues of disability, sexuality, mental health, so that the minor gesture can be understood as the other operating in normative structures but in a way that problematises given assumptions. As a dyslexic lesbian woman I often feel 'a stranger *in* one's own language'.[440] I have to manage, negotiate, and construct my particular relation to language and am flying through tracing a path, gathering, jumbling, and constructing a territory in a minor key. As Manning writes:

> The minor is a continual variation on experience. It has a mobility not given to the major: its rhythms are not controlled by a preexisting structure, but open to flux. [...] indeterminacy, because of its wildness, is often seen as unrigorous, flimsy, its lack of solidity mistaken for a lack of consistency. [...] It is out of time, untimely, rhythmically inventing its own pulse.[441]

This resonates strongly, I have taken lines of flight through different texts building a palimpsest of overlapping ideas. As Barthes writes, 'the text is a fabric of quotations'[442] (I read Manning, cut together-apart through Deleuze, Guattari, and Žižek, each time enacting feminist lines of flight, after Cixous). As the reader I feel myself as the 'site where this multiplicity is collected'.[443] The ideas digested from texts are collected, layered, folded, re-turned repeatedly through practice. Reading becomes the practice of listening for echoes.

This thinking has entangled itself in the development of the art works. What follows, explores how free association, error, misrepresentation or misunderstanding, and distractions (internal or external) are materialised in relation to reading and writing, opening a text to expand the space of dialogue. Interrupting existing systems of good practice can be seen as a resistance (or minor gesture) to normative or oppositional positions.

---

440 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', p. 26.
441 Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, pp. 1-2.
442 Barthes, *Rustle of Language*, p. 53.
443 Barthes, *Rustle of Language* p. 54.

3.4 Towards a practice of read(writ)ing

Different elements of my practice and research have developed into a set of methods. Materialising less visible actions involved in reading and writing enables an exploration of the ways in which thinking gets done. In *Women who make a Fuss* Stengers and Desprets 'assemble some diagnostic elements on the subject of what women do to thought'.[444] This study examines my own speculative position to construct a reply. In order to challenge the oppositional 'wellspring of meaning' described by Barthes, I use strategies that interrupt, delay, and are additive.[445] To understand these developments, three works will be examined in detail: *Reading Words, An Exchange of Words,* and *Read(writ)ing Words*. These have developed in response to Sartre's autobiographical book *Words.*

3.4.1 *Reading Words*

This is a book made as part of the AMBruno project *words*, 'a consideration of any aspect of the materiality of written language and of its relation to the space of the page and the space of the book'.[446] Using Sartre's autobiographical childhood text: *Words* (*Les Mots*) my book *Reading Words* is a material exploration of the thought processes and associations that form simultaneously while reading. To investigate how the internal distractions might be materialised to mirror the disruption of flow while reading I wanted to make a work that noted the associations, distractions, and thought processes that were sparked by the text. These are what form part of the network of elements that contributes to the generation of meaning while reading.

As acknowledged earlier, reading has the potential to be an immersive experience, yet at times distractions take over. The same passage can be read repeatedly, without absorbing

---

444 Isabelle Stengers, Vinciane Despret, and the collective, *WOMEN WHO MAKE A FUSS: THE UNFAITHFUL DAUGHTERS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF*, trans. April Knutson, Minneapolis, MN: Univocal, 2014 [*Les faiseuses d'histoires Que font les femmes à la pensée?*, Éditions La Découverte, Paris, France, 2011], p. 77.
445 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral*, p. 7.
446 AMBruno is an alliance of artists with an interest in the book, currently coordinated by Sophie Loss. They curate and produce a wide range of interesting projects which concern the material aspects of the book and exhibit widely at international book fairs. The words project was conceived by John McDowell and contains fourteen selected artist books. The collection is currently held at the British Library, Tate Library and Archive, and the Poetry Library in London. http://www.ambruno.co.uk/index.html [last accessed 10.10.2018]

anything as internal dialogue takes over from the text. In *The Rustle of Language* Barthes explores the experience of looking up from a book while reading, as language is constructed in the mind of the reader. In *Reading Words* I examine my disruptive devotion to explore the shifting and unstable positions of author and reader, using my internal text to physically fragment the existing text (inserting the minor into the major).
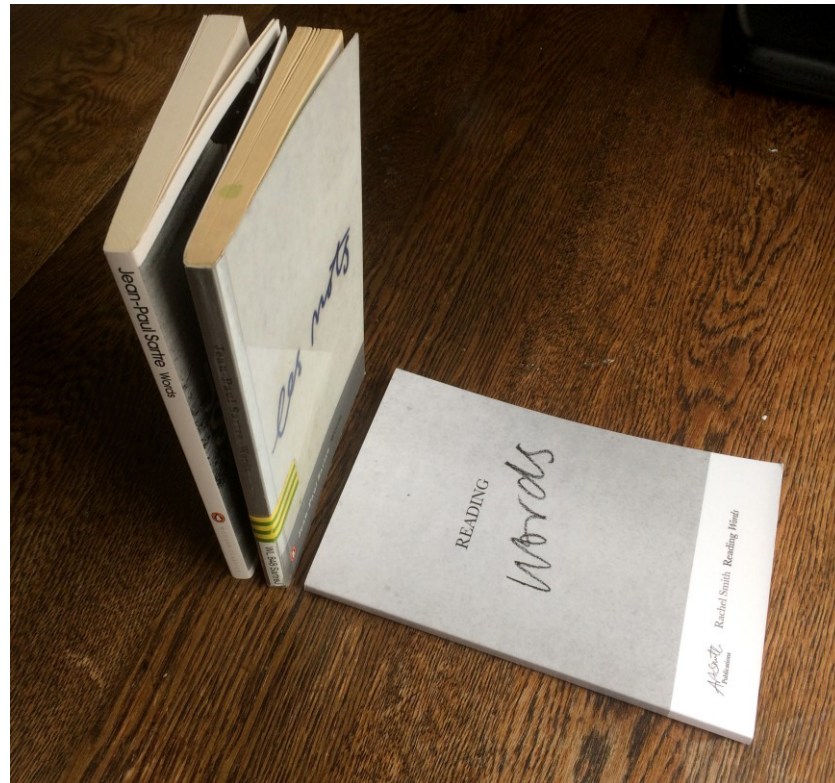
My copy of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Words*, with a library copy, and *Reading Words*

De Certeau suggests that readers have the ability to insert themselves into a work in a bid to make 'the text habitable'.[447] He describes the action of the reader as their world 'slips into the authors place'.[448] The reader transports them-self into the text, borrowing and transforming the space. Here the author is not killed, but replaced, as the reader takes ownership of the author's intention and production of meaning for the text. The work I

447 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life.*
448 de Certeau, p. xxi.

have produced is not about an interpretation of the text; rather, it is about forming ruptures and inhabiting the space produced. In considering de Certeau's ideas while making the book I focussed on how a reader silently adds to and adapts the text. The internal privacy of reading allows for a disruptive or flighty approach which in this work is made more visible and public. It is a way of experimenting with the act of inserting myself into a text, visualising the process of association and distraction as details from his life collide with my own.

Some of the authority given to the author resides in the object itself and the form of the writing. An object's materiality reveals its value and hierarchical position. The type of paper, font, cover, size, and other attributes contribute to its weight of influence or context of understanding. In *No Medium* Dworkin analyses the way material exerts its power as meaning is inscribed in the slightest of material works, even when the maker is attempting to avoid form. He builds de Certeau's description of the blank page as already culturally inscribed to explore works such as Aram Saroyan's blank ream of paper, published in 1968 by Kulchur Press as 'the form of a book to be'.[449] Dworkin's detailed exposition clearly demonstrates the way in which media as a collective of 'analyses of networked objects in specific social settings' and 'nodes of articulation along a signifying chain'.[450] Material has to be figured as part of the way language is read or understood.

Dworkin extends this understanding to include 'the act of reading, despite being so often figured as disembodied, also always involves a material interaction'.[451] Demonstrating this directly, Dworkin's *Twelve Erroneous Displacements and a Fact* constructs a tautology while challenging the idea of what a fact might be in the current climate of post-truth. He lists the exact ingredients of all the materials used to produce each poem. He describes the poems in book as erroneous, as they are no longer true: describing individual poems which now that they are gathered and reproduced in this anthology are no longer correctly described. The fact contained in the book refers to the poem of the material substances needed to read the poem, but only silently. In reading his poem aloud at a 'Whenever We Feel Like' event he reveals the problematics, as in speaking the words

---

449 Craig Dworkin, *No Medium,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013, p. 13.
450 Craig Dworkin, *No Medium*, p. 32.
451 Ibid., p. 30.

aloud the material substrate is not acknowledged.[452] To remedy this he adds a poem which lists the material needed for him to speak the written words from the printed book. The book and subsequent readings question how static facts might be, and how much of the truth they contain may be contingent on the context or form of presentation.

Dworkin, *No Medium*, Lawrence Sterne's Blank Page, and Dworkin reading *Twelve Erroneous Displacements and a Fact* on my laptop

---

452 Craig Dworkin reading at 'Whenever We Feel Like it', Kelly Writers House, 2017, http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Whenever-We-Feel-Like-It.php [last accessed 29.5.19] Craig Dworkin, *Twelve Erroneous Displacements and a Fact*, York: Information as material, 2016.

To return to the material aspect of '*Reading Words*', the paper, font, and cover design mimic the volume that I read. Much of the material aspect of the book production has been developed with a devoted attitude, reflecting the original author's work in the remake. The flow of writing across the page surface is significant. Though much of the original text is removed, fragments of Sartre's original text remain in their original position on the page, in order to highlight the splinters of text that provide a *punctum.*

IN Alsace, round about 1850, a schoolmaster, *schoolteacher,*
agreed to become a grocer.   *and*
                                                      greengrocer

a mirroring of familial roles

                                                                        copied his father
                        he went into trade and did well at it.

a childhood dreaming of working in the shop
              the family business

sitting on itchy hessian sacks,
            a wall of bagged potatoes, drinking cup-a-soup for lunch
                                                      head pressed into the ceiling

                                                                        The
answer lay in teaching.

well, an answer,
      not sure it really is
The answer,

a little late now

Rachel Smith, cover and page from *Reading Words*

The spaces between Sartre's writing and my added fragments leave room for further readers to write their own reading. These remnants are joined by my own writing, materialising the responses of internal dialogue and at times by external dialogue overheard, appropriated phrases, as well as other sensory distractions. These are the more disruptive elements that interrupt and erase the major text, replacing it with a minor gesture.

Fragments or the process of fragmentation can be seen as a disturbing process as they can be hard to classify. Leslie Hill writes: 'the fragment is customarily described [...] not according to what it is or might be, but to what it already is not'.[453] In this respect they tend to engage in the dualism of wholeness. Yet fragments are harder to define as they are frequently defined in relation to absence. Hill describes the disruptive potential of fragmentation *via* 'the continuity it interrupts, the unity it breaks apart, the authority it contests, the norms it breaches'.[454] The breach is a result of the disruptive process in relation to fragments. If fragments are explored as an interruption to continuity, a fracture to the smooth seamless surface of the perceived whole, then they have potential for disruption or resistance. Sophie Thomas writes about this resistance and disruption:

> fragments (slipping into the plural) are disturbing entities [...] suggesting more than what they are, while reminding the viewer or reader that this putative "more" can never be recovered or fully experienced. Fragments thus simultaneously raise and resist the possibility of totality and wholeness.[455]

The reminder of incompleteness demonstrates the manner in which fragments refuse the desire for completion or fixity, allowing for rupture. Disruption through fragmentation breaks apart an object which opens gaps for exploration. In using fragments and spaces around them, the additive process begins, developing fragments beyond any relation to a whole, unhinging their potential binary relation.

In *Reading Words* both Sartre's and my fragmented writings occupy the main textual space in the book; author and reader are visibly present – each voice remains identifiable by its form, as italics have been used for my additional text. The placing of the italicised sections often signify the position of my eye on the page while lost in thought. Between the dialogue of fragments, there is still space on the pages for further additions to be made by subsequent readers. In fragmenting the original text and adding snippets of my own thoughts I am reversing the process of writing as Flusser describes it:

---

453 Leslie Hill, *Maurice Blanchot and Fragmentary Writing: A Change of Epoch*, London: Continuum, 2012, p. 2.
454 Ibid.
455 Sophie Thomas, 'A review of *The Fragment: Towards a History and Poetics of a Performative Genre* by Camelia Elias', *Hyperion,* vol. 3 no. 3, 2008, 66–73. http://contramundum.net/assets/hfa_3.3_2008.pdf [last accessed 25.5.15]

> As I type the sequence of thoughts in the language 'appropriate' to them, I make a series of negative choices. I eliminate word and thought associations as they press against my surface. Which shows again that writing is more akin to sculpture than drawing: it consists of constant chopping.[456]

Instead of eliminating, I welcome the 'thought associations as they press against my surface'. Flusser's description of writing puts the writer in the place of the paper surface. Words are pressed into her surface, following the act of ancient writing described by both Flusser and Derrida. Instead of rejecting and refining the thought associations, I write them in the present, noting the associations as they occur while reading. I have developed this from a description by Barthes, of the process 'Notatio'.[457] He develops the possibility of writing a novel in fragmentary form, writing '*fluently* [...] with one eye on the page and the other on "what's happening to me?"'[458] This method allows the spontaneous and ad-hoc to coincide with the pre-determined system of production.[459]

Contiguously, Sol LeWitt suggests making visible the steps between the idea and finished product, as they may hold interest in conceptual work.[460] In developing his own version of LeWitt's manifesto Kenneth Goldsmith appropriated and adapted LeWitt's words for Conceptual Writing:

> If the writer carries through her idea and makes it into visible form, then all the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made apparent, is as much a work of art as any finished product. All intervening steps – sketches, drafts, failed attempts, versions, studies, thoughts, conversations – are of interest. Those that show the thought process of the writer are sometimes more interesting than the final product.[461]

This instructional model may be used as a strategy for materialising processes that are omitted from the final object, since they have the potential to reveal the process of thinking and sense-making.

---

456 Nancy Roth, 'A note on "the Gesture of Writing"', p. 34.
457 Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* p. 18.
458 Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* p. 17.
459 Kate Briggs develops Barthes's ideas of writing as a way of noticing what is happening in her article 'Practising with Roland Barthes' using a theme from a theoretical text and pushing it into practice is a generative endeavour. She uses Barthes's ideas around misrepresentation of a work, and the short form of *notatia* to enable writers to explore experimental ways of writing.
460 Adachiara Zevi & Sol LeWitt, *Sol Lewitt: Critical Texts.*
461 Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing', *Open Letter: Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory,* edited by Lori Emerson and Barbara Cole. Twelfth Series, No. 7, Fall 2005, 108–111.

Beyond my own spontaneous associations, the text is not simply a pure appropriation of Sartre: there are further appropriations from television, music, and other references throughout. The text contains a multiplicity of voices, which may be extended.[462] The process is *disruptive* – it breaks open a text by a major writer to add a minor voice, and *devoted* – it retains original phrases which refer back to the major. In this way the work echoes the form of the original object. There are some phrases from his text have been re-read so frequently that I have used these words in conversation, forgetting they are not my own.

Having materialised my own reading and associative thought processes in relation to Sartre's *Les Mots* in *Reading Words*, I endeavoured to add further specific voices into the opened spaces. Having worked together on several projects in the past, as HMRCollective, artists Helen Frank and Madeleine Walton were invited to collaborate.[463] Producing a variety of projects which predate this one, we were already comfortable with managing our individual working practices as well as a collaborative approach, and this made our working partnership an ideal testing ground for the work that follows.

3.4.2 *An Exchange of Words with Jean-Paul Sartre*

To develop a consistent strategy for the collaboration we decided to make our own individual material reading of Sartre's book, so that we began with three independent visual objects. This gave the other two artists a chance to develop their own way of approaching reading in relation to the material. Madeleine listed all the foodstuffs from the book.[464] Helen drew the French words from her version, using her own style of text drawing.[465] Each work was then passed between us and responded to further using

---

462 This has proven to be the case. While manning the book fair stand for AMBruno, people who have picked up or bought the book have asked about certain appropriated fragments to see if they have correctly recognised the source of a phrase, and then have relayed their own associative thoughts in response.
463 Having worked extensively through the MA Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam with Helen and Madeleine using appropriation, constraint-based methods, and art writing, our overlapping interests led us to form an artist collaborative group: HMRCollective.
464 As an existing practice constraint, following Madeleine's contribution to Kate Briggs and Lucrezia Russo's *The Nabokov Paper* project, reading Ulysses *via* the foodstuffs.
Kate Briggs and Lucrezia Russo, *The Nabokov Paper*, York: information as material, 2013.
465 Helen's text drawing technique was in development for a potential Oupeinpo project at the time.

drawing, image, and text, referring to the source text and each art work in turn. The work became more insolent as it strayed further from the original text, gradually becoming a response to each other's reading as much as Sartre's text.
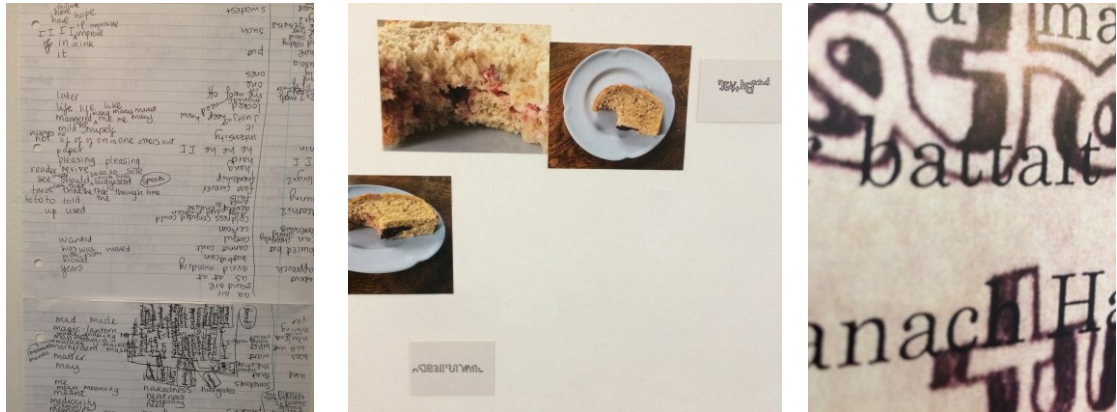
Details from the exhibition *An Exchange of Words with Jean-Paul Sartre,* Bank Street Arts, Sheffield

These drawings and writings may be thought of as marginalia to the main text, yet in producing them in a space beyond the physical margins of the book, the process strays from the original focusing instead on the generative element of the fracture. They are the scribbled notes that reflect the engagement with a process of reading. Tisseron acknowledges the importance of the 'stricken words, scholia written in the margins, scribblings, and quick memos'[466] on the author's manuscript as decoding the 'illusion of a text immediately cast in its final material form'.[467] Though the materialised notes and drawings of our project are not the author's in relation to the development of a final text, they exist as the final text, revealing reading as a continual and negotiated process. This ongoing process of production re-fuses a fixed position of an object. The complexity may be explored by acknowledging the continually evolving nature of awareness and content in relation to any object. This has been important in the making and remaking of all my work during the Ph.D.

---

466 Serge Tisseron, 'All Writing is Drawing, p. 29.
467 Ibid.

Exhibition view and readings by HMRCollective

The work continued over several months towards a pop-up exhibition at BSA.[468] During the three-day takeover in the gallery space we responded further to each other's interventions while installing and occupying the gallery space, with a series of reading performances closing the exhibition. This collaborative work enabled an exploration of the spaces opened by a disruptive negotiation while reading. It was intended to open the text to voices beyond my own, in a generative and experimental process.

468 Bank Street Arts, Sheffield, *An Exchange of Words with Jean-Paul Sartre,* pop-up exhibition 5–8 October 2016.

3.4.3 *Read(writ)ing Words: A Meandering Material Dialogue*

This book re-fuses material from the exhibition to consider the relation between making/reading/writing, reader/writer/author, and drawing/photography/writing. After the exhibition and reading performances this work lay dormant for some time, though the intention was to produce a book work from elements of the work. Re-fusing this work continues the process of rethinking and remaking existing work to develop the movement of continual becoming. This has led to further collaboration and the generative energy of this work has been regained. Time and space away before returning has enabled a refocussing of the intention and methods. A book has been produced that more explicitly explores the cut together-apart nature of the writer, reader, and maker.
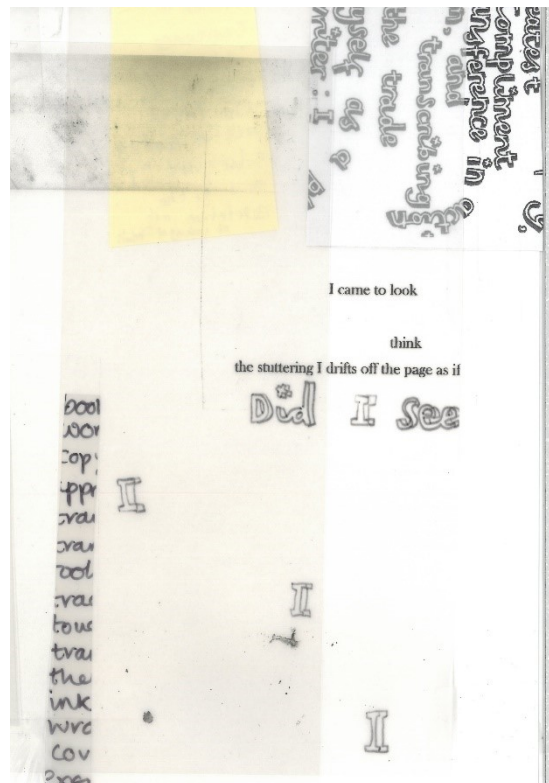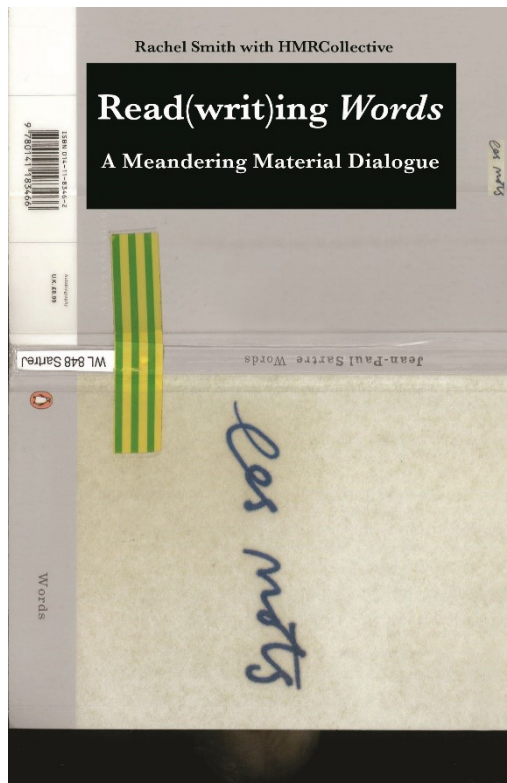
Rachel Smith, cover and page from *Read(writ)ing Words*

In the previous gallery-based iteration we focussed on passing our work back and forth, allowing the work to productively stray from the original text. In this new iteration we wanted to become more devoted, bringing the work back towards the original text, considering how our individual responses in relation to Sartre's work to think about reading, writing, and making, and how they might be enmeshed to challenge the binary positions of author and reader.

Sartre's original text is divided into two sections: Reading and Writing; this structural approach influenced the development of our work. Reading is considered as a searching and locating activity, a fragmentary process and a glancing action. Writing is viewed as an accumulative act, appropriating, collaging, tracing, and following associations. Making is embedded throughout in the material nature of the processes undertaken, but also includes the collaborative assemblage of the material gathered.

By developing a 'collective utterance' (as a minor gesture) the intention was to dislodge the author's position, experimenting with a cutting together-apart of the author, reader, and maker to produce a multiplicity, or something besides these positions. Questions were posed about how disruptive the reading and making processes would become (how far would the work stray, fragment, or disrupt the original), or if it would remain devoted (tied visibly or thematically to the text, respectful of the original source). Art practice may be read as a minor gesture when it reframes lesser positions by activating them. Antonia Pont writes in 'Philosophising Practice' about 'active laziness' in order to challenge the binary of discipline and laziness.[469] She uses relaxation to challenge this dualism, as one of her criteria for 'doing-inflected-as-practice' because it 'disturbs the logics at play [...] reframing the second term by unsettling the way it can be mobilised within the habits of thought'.[470] This is similar to my own approach in avoiding the terms 'good' or 'real' reader, which despite not specifying the negative aspect still implicitly engages in the dualism of productivity *versus* stagnation. By engaging and materialising flighty or immediate associations, errors of memory, and glancing as reading, I mobilise these as useful tools for interruption and activation.

---

469 Antonia Pont, 'Philosophising Practice', p. 31.
470 Ibid.

This book work visualises interactions between reader and text using conversation and collaboration. Yet Iser writes of the difficulty of describing the interaction between the reader and text, writing: 'the two partners are far easier to analyse than is the event that takes place between them'.[471] An interest in this interaction is what has driven the work. Throughout, I have used practice (drawing, writing, and photography) as processes to examine the *event* between reader with a text, at times beyond the singular towards a collaborative and discursive dialogue between readers who are makers. The dialogue for this work always took place within physical reach of the original text, which acted as a place marker to remind us of the original fragmentary dialogue with Sartre's text. The conversation moved on, though echoes of the original writer can still be found permeating the work. Words and phrases are assimilated until it is hard to recognise who wrote or said what. Similarly Briggs writes of the translator 'who refuses to let go of her translations until she feels she has written the books herself'.[472] The process of producing *Read(writ)ing Words* mirrors this experience, yet ownership is claimed and given up in the same act. There is an acknowledgement that the words and work belongs to us only collectively, speculatively, and momentarily before being re-fragmented and the broken slivers are repurposed again. The work uses the fragment to unhinge words from their original context so experiments can shift around in the space between the coherent and the asemic. This process reveals the overlapping and enmeshed positions of writer-reader-maker in relation to authorship, self, and the other. The lines of flight that extend between these relations are constantly being ruptured and redrawn, enabling a less static positioning of the minor inside the major territory.

---

471 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading,* p. 163.
472 Kate Briggs, *This Little Art,* London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017, p. 311.

Drawing towards a close: concluding observations

In concluding, I consider the scope and implications of the study and its potential for future work. Continuing the premise that there is no conventional starting point to this thesis, I now argue for a completion reached in a similar manner. I opened the introduction chapter from a position of the middle, based on Deleuze and Guattari's description of the rhizome and the fast-paced action of the middle.[473] However, through the writing of this thesis I have amended my selection of the word *middle* as it might suggest a particular location in regard to the idea of existing between. Whereas the *middle* implies a central location between points, using the term *in-amongst* suggests being in the thick of it, associated with or surrounded by something. In-amongst is not singular in its site, it is less specific, allowing for the various possibilities which act as beginning or finishing points, and the constant coming and going between them. In-amongst enables the act of deliberate lostness which I discussed in Chapter One in relation to Eco's labyrinth. This lostness is enacted in relation to the in-amongst lacking reference to a specific position. By providing multiple rhizomatic threads as entry sites, suggesting that there is no singular starting location, I find myself not in the middle but always in-amongst.

To finish this project I acknowledge another potential beginning that might have been used as an entry point in the introduction, but was rejected. This missing opening, now a closing, outlines the original contributions of my research in terms of its five aims, followed by a section on future work.

---

473 'The middle is not an average at all – far from it – but the area where things take on speed. Between things does not designate a localisable relation going from one to the other and reciprocally, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement carrying away the one and the other, a stream without beginning or end, gnawing away at its two banks and picking up speed in the middle.' Deleuze and Guattari, *On the Line*, p. 58.

4.1 Examining the book as a challenge to fixity

In Chapter One I analysed the ways in which the book form may be used to explore the partial nature of communication and to challenge the fixity of meaning implied by dualism in language structures. This investigation grounded the development and production of the book works which accompany the thesis.

I have analysed works that trouble oppositional or static presentations of meaning through their conceptual or structural presentation of content. By synthesising characteristics of certain books examined in Chapter One and developing my own reading and writing methods, addressed in Chapter Three, I have made work that encounters and challenges oppositional ideas, those of: material/language, theory/practice, author/reader, writing/reading, rhizome/linearity, internal/external, figure/ground, self/other, presence/absence. This has led me to propose a new way of working as a read(writ)er, which I describe as a disruptive devotion to the appropriated texts or selected source objects. My term read(writ)ing, combines the words reading and writing, with the brackets functioning to represent the making or construction element. I have designed a method that cuts together-apart the position of the author, maker, and reader, which engages with collaborative and layered approach to avoid oppositional sense.

One set of practice submission books includes: *Lines of Flight, Ravelling Eco's Net*, and *Promise the Infinite II*. Each responds to writing on the rhizomatic by different authors, materialising and developing my thinking in response to different texts. *Lines of Flight* is explored in Chapter One. The second book combines drawing, photography, and text made while thinking about Umberto Eco's labyrinth description of the encyclopaedia. The third book manifests unreadable pages drawn from the first page of Borges's story, 'Library of Babel'. The works bring the idea of rhizomatic or infinite and the closed linearity of the page into a single space to engage such contradictions. Bergvall describes the page in her own work as 'an environment which makes explicit the many material dimensions available to writing and breaks down habitual patterns of reading'.[474] In my work familiar reading patterns are broken down using techniques from my read(writ)ing method: fragments are appropriated from relevant sources and collaged with associations, visual and literary; the material nature of reading becomes a visual sensation through

---

[474] Caroline Bergvall, 'The Hungry Form (G.eek Mix)', p. 112.

drawings and photographic fragments. These techniques draw together the act of thinking rhizomatically, use my dyslexic traits as strengths, while visualising a continuing search for sense, and demonstrate how an additive model can refuse dualism or static presentations of meaning. In these ways it contributes my neuro-diverse approach to Conceptual Poetics, extending the form of working beyond existing methods.

The pair of books *Reading Words* and *Read(writ)ing Words: a meandering material dialogue* explore the material gesture of reading, writing, making as entwined and inseparable processes. Here I develop the term read(writ)ing to describe the ongoing process of using practice to disrupt and reveal processes in-amongst reading and writing. *Reading Words* acts as a material insertion of my reading into Sartre's autobiography and this idea was extended to include collaborative voices, using ideas of a minor gesture which unsettles the major from its position in *Read(writ)ing Words*. Studious methods of reading are fragmented to open room for a meandering, error-ridden digestion, embracing distractions and interruption. The work re-fuses the dualism implied by reader and author through the combination of collaborative voices reading and making in response to an existing text.

In the collaborative practice sought for producing the second book, it is relatively easy to attribute credit to the two artists involved. However there is a wider audience interaction which impacted the development of the work, which is more challenging to articulate. Part of the cutting together-apart of all the works involves a reach towards an audience. Beyond the expectation of the lone writer or artist who crafts a product and reveals it to an audience, I have produced work publicly, published unfinished work, and sought out audiences during the production and development of my work. This is not through the more expected forms of focus or test groups which can be experienced through design research, but following a deliberately ad-hoc meandering, and associative approach developed in the practice. I have taken the crit-style discussions that exist in the art community out into public to engage with wider conversations while the work has been in production. The generosity and support of **MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE** and AMBruno in this regard enabled me to produce work as part of wider projects, discuss ideas with other participating artists while manning the stalls, and to engage with a readership directly. As works submitted to these calls were not considered complete, but rather as works in a constant state of becoming, it has enabled me to disseminate work in progress to

163

audiences, synthesising their responses into the development of re-turned work as it is re-made and reformulated; this discourse has enabled me to implicitly include a multiple readership into the production, though their voices are implied rather than named. This discursive part of the production is an important part of my read(writ)ing method.

4.2 Interrupting dualism through practice

The practice works demonstrate an experimental endeavour to interrupt dualism through practice methods: author/reader, writing/reading, theory/practice, material/language, rhizome/linearity, internal/external, figure/ground, self/other, presence/absence.

Static presentations of meaning reside in the oppositional terms of difference – it is easier to rest on an understanding of words if they work in a binary model of sense as it anchors them. I have explored how the spaces between terms might be used to challenge a reliance on dualism.

In among the process of interrupting dualism I have encountered my own habitual tendency to rely on an either/or approach. When two terms exist in relation to one another it is easy to slip into a comparative and hierarchical process of evaluative worth. Here I will refer to practice and theory, but the distinctions can be applied beyond this single example of dualism. I have explored ways in which the *and* taken from the rhizomatic may be extended beyond the Deleuzian structure to resist the seemingly binary nature of theory/practice in research. In developing a praxis approach I interrogated Nelson's attitude to arts research of imbricated elements of theory and practice as feeding each other.[475] Through Loveless's writing on practice in the flesh of theory I have analysed how these terms might be used to experiment with the ways practice and theory can come together or overlap, albeit that her approach suggests that theory be seen as a making process, and so still left the hierarchical distinctions somewhat intact.[476] Through this analysis I have developed my work to further trouble the distinction between theory and practice by re-fusing techniques from practice into the writing or theory making, and bringing theoretical thinking into the making of practice work.

---

475 Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, p. 5.
476 Natalie Loveless, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory'.

164

I positioned the research rhizomatically as it provides the conjunction 'and...and...and', which I use as an additive tool to gather and assemble fragments.[477] Ideas *and* theories *and* objects *and* art works *and* making processes have been interwoven to form a territory of possibilities. In gathering diverse resources inside the rhizomatic structure other connected approaches were grafted onto the existing system and their different influences blended in my methodological approach. The possibility of a constant state of becoming troubles static presentations of sense, as the work has been remade or reworked. However, using the *and* only as a gathering term became problematic as it allowed me to continually add to the network, rather than address the material gathered in greater detail. To respond to this I used the *and* as a combining tool that forces the contradictory elements of oppositional positions into a single space, overlapping and contorting terms to behave like their binary pair. In this way I have used *and* as an overlapping and folding approach so that it implies both rather than functioning as a separating device between practice and theory. The *and* literally sits between the oppositional terms and so has the potential for dividing the terms or joining them in an imbricated manner. It functions in-amongst, having the capacity to act as an opening to adapt the way of working and thinking.

I have deliberately pushed ideas and objects together that are habitually understood in oppositional pairs. This can be seen in the rhizomatic diagram cut apart and forced into a linear book structure, both occupying the same space to act as a challenge to opposition. I have demonstrated how error can be used as a tool to cut together-apart binary terms, forcing seemingly opposing objects, ideas, or acts to take on attributes of the other. In the practice, thresholds between figure and ground, or presence and absence are made ambiguous as sections of photographic images are deleted or replaced. Writing as a moving image which never reveals its content can be considered as visualising thinking-in-action, or the moment of anticipation before an idea is communicated. I have constructed objects exploring the dichotomy of speaking and writing, both in the thesis and the practice. Speech and writing made to take on qualities seen as exclusive to the other: writing that cannot be erased only added to, as if speaking; using performative speech auto-corrected by a second voice, as if being edited while writing. In these examples I have made work to explore how theory making and art making challenges the idea of difference, while producing work that resists easy categorisation. By the act of unravelling

477 Deleuze, and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 27.

ideas, processes, and making in a continual process of reworking I allow for moments of ambiguity, failure, and association which visualise the wrestling process while sense is sought.

The irony of having to present practice and theory in seemingly separate forms at the end of my project is not lost on me, revealing the assumption that practice is seen *as* material and theory is seen *as* language. This returns to Loveless's point that theory is a making practice, without managing to provide a case for making as a theoretical tool.[478] Despite the separation I have shown how the practice and theory are interwoven, inter-reliant, and imbricated in this project. The practice has shed light on theory and driven the direction of the theoretical thinking; it has pushed me to develop my writing as part of my practice as demonstrated in the examples above. The theory has informed and grounded the practice. It is woven into the art works and the thinking which has informed the way objects have materialised. My practice has become a material gesture of the process of ravelling theory and practice into a single space.

4.3 Employing fragmentary techniques

A significant graft made into my version of a rhizomatic system was the new materialist term 'cut together-apart' re-turned in relation to the making process.[479] By interrogating these terms inside my art practice I have been able to think beyond the idea of layering as a way of blending theory and practice, towards how folding, cutting, and fragmentation function to enmesh such oppositional terms. I have worked with techniques related to collage, distraction, and interruptions to re-fuse existing works. The selected fragments of practice, theory, images, and texts form rhizomatic assemblages which encourage hybridity and complexity, resisting modes of singularity. I have used fragmentation as a mode of rejecting immediate coherence, avoiding fixing or claiming a position, thus opening spaces to reflect on minor processes of sense-making.

If, as I propose in Chapter Two, the human tendency is to rely on oppositional sense to allow meaning to appear ordered and complete, then gaps and complexity are glossed

---

478 Ibid.
479 Karen Barad. 'Diffracting Diffraction'.

over for the sake of 'the comforting of an ordered space'.[480] I use fragmentation to open gaps, producing voids, to unsettle singular meaning. While the spaces developed in the practice may contain no visible language, they are not empty, possessing a latent energy. They occupy the space between abstract unknown and the figurative known. They are the spaces inhabited by the other, the as-yet-unwritten, the as-yet-unread, the as-yet-unspoken, or the as-yet-unheard. They imply an incompleteness open for debate or adaptation. By breaking apart existing forms of language and materialising different aspects of reading, writing, and making in response, the processes of sense-making or thought-in-action are exposed.

4.4 Materialising language as a method of disruptive devotion

In Chapter Three there is an exposition of practice methods used to materialise language using drawing, photography, and writing. I reveal less visible processes associated with writing, reading, speaking, listening, and thinking, taking a lead from Barthes towards developing my own method of disruptive devotion.

The chapter 'Writing Reading' in *The Rustle of Language* led to a reading of Barthes *S/Z,* as the manifestation of his reading method proposed in 'Writing Reading'.[481] From this I have taken the relation between two words 'insolent [...] but smitten' as the strategy or model of my approach. The words felt as if they had been written for me, the sentiment spoke so directly to the heart of my engagement.[482] Frequently my research followed writers describing studious, good, and careful readings that suggest accuracy and understanding. By pointing towards correct or preferred ways of reading there is a suggestion of erroneous reading. The oscillation between these two seemingly oppositional positions has led to a productive exploration of reading as a generative and revealing gesture, one that may be taken as a model for others.

Similarly, Bergvall's call for Conceptual Poetics of engaged disengagement offers a parallel suggestion, using seemingly contradictory terms to push the user to operate between. In

---

480 Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero,* trans. by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, London: Cape Editions, 1968 [Le degré zéro de l'écriture, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1953], p. 15.
481 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language,* p. 29.
482 Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel,* p. 134.

her proposal of an 'engaged disengagement' she points to rule breaking as a way forward for conceptual work that acknowledges the complexity of lived experience.[483] Making work while holding these ideas in mind has led to a disruptive devotion to reading, writing, and making which are enmeshed in the practice, folded into each other, ravelling and unravelling dualism through an additive approach which is manifested in the artwork submission of artist books.

The works presented with my thesis are re-fusals of existing works. There are works that are not always included in the main discussion but referred to in the appendices and footnotes. One of the areas of discussion inside the Ph.D. community has been the status of the art works – if they exist as art works or remain as research artefacts. Concerned with process and the challenge to the idea of fixity (or the act of claiming certainty), I have explored and blurred the boundaries between definitions of what an art work might do, as opposed to a research artefact. The binary distinction between process and product here is indeterminate as the produced art works exist as objects in a constant state of becoming. At times the work has gone out into the world named as art works, despite remaining unfinished and being later reworked. Other objects, diagrams, and art works exist that are less visible in the presentation of this thesis, remaining in the studio as objects driving the research. There are some art works whose status is less clear, due to their existence somewhere between the research object and the art work. The idea that the art work is constantly changing as its production continues after it leaves the hands of the artist is explored by Edwards and Hart in *Photographs, Objects, Histories* discussed in Chapter Three. I have taken the idea of the constantly changing object and materialised it into the production of my work by re-making, adding voices beyond my own, and presenting work in different contexts. Synthesising ideas about additive critique from Latour foregrounded in Chapter Two in relation to Barad's term re-turning, I have adopted an approach which re-fuses. This making exists as a refusal of the initial object, and re-fuses new work through a praxis response.

Reaching back for Barthes's insolent approach of the associative reader who looks up from the text, continuing to construct their own language in response to a text, I have developed this analysis technique in the art works produced. Rather than writing a method of the reading that occurs, I have developed my practice as 'drawing out

---

483 Caroline Bergvall, *I'll Drown My Book,* p. 22.

language', a practical synthesis of photography as writing as drawing to explore the events of reading through making. Errors and misrepresentations, associative connections, interruptions, and distractions are generative in both the process of reading and the search for sense, forming part of my 'disruptive devotion as method'. Gaps, blank pages, and spaces left after erasure leave room for further associations, acting as holding spaces for the as-yet-unthought, or as-yet-unwritten, implying the imminent re-turn of the work as those ideas are working into existence.

I have developed a reading method which has been applied in library settings: for instance, as part of the Leeds Library Intervention projects; in response to individual books, such as *Les Mots* by Sartre; as well as fragments of texts and individual phrases. I propose the new term read(writ)er, which can be understood through the practice as the enactment of 'reading as writing as making'. My term linguistically holds the position of writer and reader, but also maker, symbolised by the brackets which manipulate and construct the term.

The practice methods of my read(writ)ing process fold together processes related to reading/writing/making. This in turn engages the processes of drawing as writing as photography. This method enables me to make work which challenges expected reading behaviour and finds generative power in error, interruption, and distraction.

I have produced book forms as a way of holding writer, reader, maker, and page space across temporal locations. Bergvall refers to the restrictions of page format and existing digital text programs, and their influence on the development of her work as 'having to approach the development of any new piece of writing as one would approach the development of any site-specific installation or performance'.[484] Considering the page as an installation or performance suggests the book form as a site that holds influence in how the work can be manifested. It is not a transparent vessel for containing content but an active element in a network of relations. I use these ideas to foreground the associated network of relations in my work to disrupt settled ideas of dualism.

I have explored ways of using the page space and fragmented text to challenge the compulsion for definitive answers and the reliance on oppositional meaning or binary

484 Caroline Bergvall, 'The Hungry Form (G.eek Mix)', p. 112.

sense. Rather than re-presenting vast quantities of data, instead I have chosen to empty out my work, to embrace ambiguity, not as a way of deliberately misleading or to produce opacity, but as a way of recognising complexity and the need to have space to wrestle with thoughts and ideas. In undertaking this research, I have learnt that personally I cannot think if there is any background noise – the noise becomes my sole focus. To make work, to read, or to write, I have removed myself to quiet, solitary places. In this respect the work produced engages with removal, erasure, and gaps as a way of opening up a space to think, to approach a speculative dialogue, rather than re-presenting or responding directly to the continual flow of information.

4.5 Using the read(writ)er to re-fuse the position of the author

In Chapter Three I interrogated the position of the author by exploring how Conceptual Writing has engaged with ideas of the death of the author and the distancing of authorial voice through rule-based appropriation. This allowed me to consider ways of working that acknowledge a re-emergence of the self through association, error, materialisation, and misinterpretation.

I examine the condition and position of the author, charting the death, return, authoritative position, and conceptual distance achieved since the author's original death declared by Barthes in 1967. It is clear that an author(ity) repeatedly re-emerges. Attempts to kill, silence, or neutralise the author have been unsuccessful, as I have shown. The author, as a figure, is associated with authority, singularity, ego, and expressive voice; though these frequently need challenging, they will persist. As I propose, the death of the author denies agency to those who still require their voice to be heard,[485] and so it is important to acknowledge aspects of the author's presence, question the motives, and challenge the positions taken, rather than to claim 'his' death. The potential danger of claiming the death of author, reader, or text is that this position becomes less material, allowing it to escape critique, refusing to acknowledge its agency, as well as denying a possible position to those that need to claim a voice/position. Once a movement (even if experimental) becomes part of the establishment, then it becomes a part of the authority

---

485 Nancy Miller, 'Changing the Subject', p. 197.

which requires challenging.[486] This shifting position in relation to authority demonstrates a need for a re-turning acknowledgement of the complexity of position, voice, context, material, history, privilege, and relation to the normative. This is the continually fluctuating process of matter, as I have argued.

If these objects, art works, and books belong to a continual process then they require re-turning, to be subjected to what Latour calls an additive critique as opposed to a deconstructive one. Fragmenting, rethinking, re-making, constantly rebuilding, act to tear down and rebuild simultaneously. Finding material processes that enable the act of cutting together-apart has been productive in dealing with all the entangled and contradictory elements, and I propose this re-fusing as a strategy for production.

I have asked how the methods of this research may produce work that questions the author's hierarchical position. Using erasure, interruptions, and fragmentation, allowing distractions, associative thinking, and uncertainty to be visualised, provokes a moment of hesitation in the reader that produces a space to consider. If reading and writing are folded into one another, using making to cut together-apart, then the positions of author and reader become ambiguous in a way that disrupts the oppositional relation. As the work is re-fused these further iterations encourage a shifting perspective on the relation between reader, writer, maker, and work.

By engaging in processes which disrupt established reading methods, allowing for interruption, distraction, error, association, these minor processes are used to question authority or normative ways of producing sense. A constant process of re-turn and renewal should be enacted, as experimental art and literature become enveloped into the canon, as part of the authority that was originally challenged, which then requires re-challenging. I propose that my method of read(writ)ing performs a re-fusal of the positions of writer, reader, and maker, to challenge the position of author, developing a method that enables a self-conscious re-emergence of the author through association, collective voice, error, and other minor gestures which can interrupt the major model of reading and sense-making.

---

486 The example of Goldsmith's unconsidered authorial voice demonstrates the danger of imagining that the author might be distanced, that situation opens a space for unexamined voices to gain momentum without questioning their motive or position from which they speak.

In the Introduction I outline the importance of voice in this research, and both the residency work in Chapter Two and the collaborative practice in Chapter Three have enabled voices beyond my own to enter into the work. However, often the voice articulated therein is a silent or internal voice, related to the thought in action as it is being developed, the grasp for sense in the moment of seeking it. In Chapter Three I develop an argument for error from the ideas of Kleist and Cixous and their proposal of speaking or writing thoughts that are yet unformed in order to bring forth clarity.[487] They describe a process of sense-making by taking as yet unformulated ideas which are then developed in the act of speaking or writing. In response I suggest that room must be made for error, stuttering, repeatedly failed attempts, as meaning is gradually clarified. Following this thread I have developed a method of using writing, drawing, and photography as overlapping tools, and by frequently switching medium to explore a continuous idea I am able to wrestle with ambiguity and to visualise the search for sense. These developed methods produce a space which enables my neuro-diverse voice to participate as a useful addition to the conversation.

Silence might be seen as the lack of oral presence but does not represent complete absence. It is a parallel to the visual voids in the work. The *Tracing Shadows* work acts as a material gesture of an absent presence. As Maggie Maclure writes: 'Silence confounds interpretation and manifests, intolerably, the illusory status of speech as full "presence" or living voice. Yet it also incites the search for meaning and is therefore productive'.[488] Maclure describes silence in a similar way to fragments as they operate in relation to presence or a whole, engaging in binary terms. Yet in my work I engage silence, blank spaces, or voids as a way of resisting immediate interpretation and engaging ambiguity. The material production of silence in my art works operates as a presence that questions the answers that might otherwise be expected.

---

487 Heinrich Von Kleist, 'On the Gradual Construction of Thoughts During Speech'.
Hélène Cixous, *Writing not yet thought*.
488 Maggie Maclure et al, 'Silence as Resistance: Or, on Not Opening One's Mouth Properly', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2010, 492–500, p. 498.

4.6 Future Work

Throughout this research the library has provided material and structural support, from the physical library spaces and people who run them that have supported the production and display of my work, writing and research, to the imagined collection I have developed supported by existing literary authors' descriptions. However, I have not undertaken a study of libraries, or used the full potential of library spaces that could have been explored. The library as subject remains underdeveloped, as instead I have focused on the production and study of objects that may be housed in library spaces. Returning to work in and with the matter of libraries provides future work to be generated after this project is complete. Having developed strategies that enmesh reading, writing, and making through working with existing texts, these methods will be explored further in response to library settings and collections.

Beyond the library space there are texts which also provide future potential for the methods developed. It has been suggested by other practitioners that my work could extend more directly into the social and political language which exists following the lead of artists such as Elisabeth Tonnard in *An Empty Field* and Robert Good in *Breaking: A Year of Google News Headlines,* who use topical language to directly explore or represent the social or political climate.[489] Certainly in the current climate of post-truth, mass information, polemic language, and a growing lack of certainty, the material aspects of language should be interrogated, rather than accepting presented truths or un-contextualised answers. The methods of working constructed during the project have the potential to be extended now beyond the scope of this research through the dissemination of this method as a tool for artists to use as a praxis approach to reading.

The longevity of this research has provided challenges in remaining pertinent; durationally this has led to developing methods in response to existing texts that have permeated the theoretical research, rather than collecting constantly shifting new data as the basis for new work. Though my work does not directly engage with political or news-based material, I will use these methods in the future to challenge and explore the post-truth and polemic language climate more directly.

---

489 Elisabeth Tonnard, *An Empty Field*, Leerdam, 2017.
Robert Good, *Breaking: A Year of Google News Headlines*, Peculiarity Press, 2019.

In concluding I have argued for an enmeshed praxis approach to practice and theory, while acknowledging the difficulty of the final submission of this research requiring both a thesis and art works. The separation of these objects does lean towards the distinction between theory and practice. This leaves future work to experiment with how the thesis and artworks may be further integrated in the form of a book which more fully integrates them as a praxis object, as another way of disseminating my research and model of read(writ)ing.

Having acknowledged the importance of voice and its relation to silence in the practice work there is further work to do in relation to the development of the performative voice in my work. In the several readings where I have performed my work, another layer is added by the nuance and tone of voice, there is a direct contact with the audience which also feeds back into the performance. Future work will include developing collaborative readings from the *Read(writ)ing Words* project, adding more content to be re-turned into the material work.

Work continues...

The stacks nearby are currently quiet, devoid of human life

I reflect on my role as potential librarian or curator of the imaginary library that spreads

between reality, memory, and conjured possibilities

my reluctance is telling

as supposed architect of this conceived space, it stalks my dreams

with nightmarish proportions

taunting my limits

I am no librarian

truth be told the structure is not yet my own

this palimpsest's underwriting is bold, it still belongs to Borges

the previous owner's mark on any territory takes time to fade

pick out another coat to wear

bibliophile: a lover of books

running a nail across fabric weave of the hard-bound book surface

the fresh inked smell rising on the draft of flickering pages

some flirtatious reveal of a hot pink cover from beneath the more serious slip-jacket

a title that pricks curiosity but follows with disappointing content

Indigestion (a memory of chewing inedible gristle)

the same line of text is repeatedly followed without a flicker of recognition

It's a thin line between love and hate

reminders of inadequacy are stored between the pages

a *promise* of *the infinite*

unfulfilled potential

a refusal, re-fusing as disruptive devotion

Reality bites

piles of books are strewn around the house, frustrating any ability to visualise

beneath the chaotic jumble

lies a much loved collection

assume the role of other in-amongst an unruly space

library *come undone*

Books about books

It appears that this room holds all the books written about artists' books. The history of artists' books has a long lineage covered extensively in such literature such as *The Century of Artists' Books* by Johanna Drucker, who questions what constitutes a definition for an artist book, and explores the intersectional space between disciplines where she believes the artist book resides.[491] Clive Phillpot differentiates between artworks in which the book merely acts as a container for the work, and book-works where the form and content are equally dependant,[492] and *Artists' books: the book as a work of art 1963-2000* by Stephen Bury explores the artist book in relation to technological advances and its part in the development of art movements across the period.[493] Arnaud Desjardin's *The Book on Books on Artist Books* presents a bibliographic reference of books written on this subject.[494] More recently Amaranth Borsuk has written *The Book*, exploring different categories of book, including those beyond the page in her chapter the book as interface.[495] Whether books are used as visual form, narrative or non-sequential exploration, document, conceptual space, or performance, there exist examples beyond the scope of this research. However, in acknowledging the importance of the artist-made book in the production of this research it is productive to explore a limited number of examples which demonstrate the scope of this research. This room is the longed-for set of catalogues described by the librarians of both Borges's and Musil's libraries. I have reached their goal in my first visit. Yet, contrary to their position, I want to dive into the book content, to get lost, overwhelmed by what they contain, and avoid spending too much time with anthologies as they cloud my vision – they have already traversed territory way beyond my remit. I seek examples closer to hand.

---

490 Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*, p. 78.

491 Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books: New York, NY, 2004.

492 Clive Phillpot, *Booktrek: Selected Essays on Artists' Books since 1972*, Zurich:Jrp Ringier, 2013.

493 Stephen Bury, *Artists' books: the Book as a Work of Art 1963-2000,* London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd, 2015.

494 Arnaud Desjardin, *The Book on Books on Artist Books*, London: The Everyday Press, 2013.

495 Amaranth Borsuk, *The Book*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018.

Disfigured books

The work herein connects to the structural concerns in one of the earlier rooms. Existing forms are disrupted through physical manipulation, obliterating, reforming, physically altering the pages or somehow damaging a book to reveal a new work. I glance along the shelves, past Tom Phillips's *A Humument*, with its altered pages obliterating and revealing new poetic narratives over the original pages of W. H. Mallock's 1892 novel *A Human Document*.[496] As I look toward the book I am hoping to select I think of Marcel Duchamp's *Unhappy Readymade*, an instruction for his sister and her husband to leave a geometry textbook out in the rain.[497] The original book is now presumed lost or destroyed, but photographs and a painting of the object subjected to the wind and rain still exist somewhere in this room. Whimsy and chance permeate this work, as the readymade is given human emotion, and the object is left to the unpredictable elements of the weather, described by Duchamp as 'an amusing idea'.[498] Euclidian geometry is seen to be undone, ripped apart, and scattered. The method of this work is re-activated by Riccardo Boglione's *It is Foul Weather in Us All*.[499] Boglione sent copies of *The Tempest* to twelve artists in the language of the country in which they reside, asking them to leave the book outside in the weather for a time-length of their choosing. The battered pages are then reconstructed into a new version of the play – this collaging made more apparent through the move between languages. Fragments are readable, while some pages appear more like concrete poetry. The reader is left to examine the crumpled pages and wonder about the causes of the damage. Its photographic form gives status to the tattered pages which sit as images on each page, framed as artefacts, as if from a museum. The work leads me to ask questions about authorship, readership, and the value of the book object exploring the layered interventions that have gone into the production of this work, rhizomatically connecting and containing multiple voices and hands across the volume.

---

496 Tom Phillips, *A Humument*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1970.
497 Marcel Duchamp, *Unhappy Readymade*, geometry textbook hung outside and exposed to the elements, lost or destroyed, 1919, https://www.toutfait.com/unmaking_the_museum/Unhappy%20Readymade.html [last accessed 17.10.2018]
498 Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* trans. by Ron Padgett, Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 1979. p. 61.
499 Riccardo Boglione, *It is Foul Weather in Us All*, London: MA Bibliothèque, 2018.

Book as performance

Steve Perfect's book *Shunt,* part of the *Words* project by AMBruno, is 'to be read aloud so that the reader experiences the texture of words in the mouth'.[500] The photographs that accompany the text are over-magnified, and the images include a dusty surface, drawing attention to the surface of the image rather than the content. Both the blurred images and the feel of the words read aloud press home the different physical aspects of encountering a book. The text and image mirror each other in their pairings through the book. The repetitious 'sh' sound, made when reading the words aloud, connects this listener back to experiences of the forced quietness in a library. Mouthing the words refer to the material aspects of the reading experience, a physical as well as mental experience.

Midamble is a poem that reflects Peter Jaeger's involvement with his walking practice and his tracing of pilgrimage routes. The work consists of two bands of text; the top section contains experiences of walking, while the bottom layer appropriates text from a variety of religious texts. Described as 'a poem that is clearer than crystal, [it] possesses a musical quality that is comparable to seminal and contemporary minimalist music',[501] Jaeger reads the work as a durational performance. The audience is invited to engage with the work for as long as is needed, whether momentarily or for longer periods of time. This lack of a 'fixed entry or exit point' connects it conceptually to the rhizomatic.[502] Its durational performance materialises the devotion required in concentrated reading. The audience interaction mirrors a more fragmentary approach.

Shifting beyond any connection to a physical book object, Performance as Publishing, led by Nicole Bachman and Ruth Beal, hold events as publishing, to explore artists' work that engages with the relation between text, image, and voice. 'Rhythm as Thought' at the Whitechapel Gallery brought together a range of these practices.[503] Philip Ewe's *So, you're here for direction?*, is described in the programme as 'a one-man montage exploring

---

500 Steve Perfect, from the text on the AMBruno website: http://ambruno.co.uk/words.html [last accessed 13.08.18]

501 *if p then q* book launch, https://ifpthenq.co.uk/2018/04/22/peter-jaegers-midamble-published-today [last accessed 15.10.2018]

502 Ibid.

503 Performance as Publishing, http://performanceaspublishing.com/#events/whitechapel-gallery [last accessed 21.10.2018]

mixed messages, mixed narratives and mixed salad'.[504] In contrast to earlier performances which conformed to expected structures in which a performer addresses a seated audience, Ewe broke down the audience/performer barrier by having the audience moved from one room into another between performances. As the audience stood hesitantly in the space, not given a clear starting point, he moved into and through the audience. Verbalising a stream of consciousness, at times he addressed the audience directly, asking questions of individuals, leaving them unsure if his questions were rhetorical or to be answered. The audience moved with him around the space, some attempting to avoid eye contact. Despite knowing that this was most likely a carefully planned performance, there was a feeling of spontaneity; an unpredictable space had been opened up in which anything might happen. This immediacy of delivery extends beyond the use of language where words purely acquire meaning from their relation to other words. Physicality, tone, and rhythm play a part in the acquisition of meaning or interpretation in relation to spoken language. By comparison I witnessed a performance reading by Vanessa Place as part of the Transmission Lecture Series in which she read a suicide note appropriated from the Internet as poetry.[505] Her voice and presentation took the affect of a poet, reading with a controlled tone and rhythm that can be heard at poetry readings, to mask the author's actual voice and tone. The environment set up a clear spatial divide between poet and audience. Both provoked an uncomfortable reaction from the audiences, Ewe's because of his directness and physical use of space, Place's because of the content of the reading and her unapologetic stance on this content.

Also as part of the Transmission Lecture series, I attended Emmanuelle Waeckerle's workshop on *Reading (Story of) O* which the group then performed at the end of her lecture at Sheffield Hallam University.[506] We were instructed to silently read from the

---

504 Philip Ewe, *So, you're here for direction?* Performance, London Artist Book Fair, Whitechapel Gallery, London [seen 12.09.2015.]
505 Vanessa Place, chaired by Sharon Kivland, Transmission Lecture Series, *An Unsentimental Education*, at Sheffield Hallam University [seen 25.11.2014]
https://www.sitegallery.org/event/transmission-programme-201415-lecture-series/#content [last accessed 13.03.19]
506 Emmanuelle Waeckerle, chaired by Sharon Kivland, workshop and Transmission Lecture Series, *The Mutable Artist* at Sheffield Hallam University [seen 24.10.17]
The workshop was testing Waeckerle's *Reading (Story of) O* which comes from: 'The famous erotic novel *Story of O* began as a series of love letters written by Anne Cécile Desclos to her lover Jean Paulhan. It was first published in French in 1954, under the pen name Pauline Réage, and the official English translation appeared in 1965.'
http://www.ewaeckerle.com/projectbox/Obook/

original text speaking aloud only the words that contained the letter O as we encountered them while reading at our own pace and from starting different points in the book. The act of voicing the O words, and the spontaneous overlapping timing of the words spoken drew attention to the individual and collective nature of the event of reading privately and in public.

The book transformed to a digital medium

This section signals an edge of the territory that I have explored. Its contents are beyond the scope of this research, though there is one project with which I have spent time: the AMBruno project *Book Acts* and the relation between moving image and the book objects in this collection of works.

> For *Book Acts* artists perform the concept and essence of one of their existing book works. The performance itself might be video recorded or be realised as a primary work through the mediation of film, using the camera as the medium for this re-presentation just as the book was the appropriate medium for the original of the work.[507]

What interests me is the potential dialogue in the space between the two forms. The moving image works allow for an acknowledgement of lack in each media, recognising deficiencies and affordances in differing forms and modes that language can take. In this way the works appear speculative, less finalised by their iterative process, offering the possibility of remaking beyond the initial book. This process opens a space for reading as a negotiated encounter between maker, book, film and reader, shifting the dynamic of the book space. It makes the negotiated encounter more apparent and draws out what interests me about all the volumes stored in this imaginary space: the refusal of operating in a single register; the crossing of boundaries between different genres or methods; the challenging of existing systems of knowledge or production.

---

507 Sophie Loss, AMBruno project *Book Acts,* 2014, from materials supplied by Sophie Loss and from conversations about her curation of this project.

Conceptual Art

Standing in this room I could call to mind conceptual artworks that have diverted or influenced my thinking during this research. Joseph Kosuth's presentation of photographic image, object, and text were my first encounter with Conceptual Art.[508] The simplicity of these constructions, and the slippage between the different forms draw attention to different modes of meaning. An exhibition of Danica Phelps, *Income's Outcome* comprises a set of conceptual and durational drawing charts income earned from making drawings and the outgoing expenditure from the income made from the drawings.[509] Green stripes represent dollars earned, red stripes money spent, alongside drawings of what her money was spent on.

Materiality in the Photographic Image

This space contains photography works that foreground the materiality or objectless of the photographic image. Here I might write about the material nature of Wolfgang Tillmans's camera-less images from his Lighter series.[510] I could explore the digital glitch of an image as the dust that reveals a material quality to the seemingly immateriality of digital work.[511] Instead I consider the work of Anne Collier as an exploration of both subject and object in relation to images, enabling the photograph as cultural object to be examined. Collier re-photographs images, following appropriation artists such as Sherrie Levine. However, Collier's images are also based in a still life tradition as she pays careful attention to the material carrier or context of the image, which is stripped from Levine's work. Collier mainly uses existing commercially printed forms from 1960s, 70s, and 80s popular culture – posters, records, magazines, and calendars, then she re-photographs them against crisp plain backgrounds. Her use of the slick methods of advertising draws attention to the inferences and attitudes embedded in these objects. The images she produces scrutinise the acts of looking and owning images, the male gaze, and the

---

508 Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1945.
509 Danica Phelps, *Incomes Outcome*, ongoing series of drawings in watercolour and pencil on paper, 2014 onwards.
510 Wolfgang Tillmans, *Lighter Series,* chromogenic prints, 2005-2018.
511 The use of digital glitch is explored in work by artists such as Sabato Visconti's, *Silver Threads* http://www.sabatobox.com/silver-threads or Azadeh Fatehrad's *Ornament of Damage*, Sheffield: Gordian Projects, 2017.

commodification of the female body in the media. All the while she keeps the viewer's attention focused on the materiality of the photographic object, as she explores the physical forms that carry these images in popular social culture. They appear to demonstrate an idea expressed by Kim Timby who writes 'the physical aspects of a photograph (including both process and presentation) are inextricably tied to the meaning of the work (the photograph as a socially salient object)'.[512]

Her image titled *Folded Madonna poster, (Steven Meisel)* tells us directly what we are looking at and by including the original photographer's name in the title we also are aware of the differing commodity value of the original image compared to the lower status of the easily folded poster. The fold in the image repeats the message in the title, reminding us that we are looking at an existing object. By re-photographing the poster another layer of meaning, value, and looking is added.

In her ongoing series 'Woman with Camera', she explores the dynamics of power in the act of taking a photograph. This image of Faye Dunaway is a publicity shot for the 1978 film *Eyes of Laura Mars*, the text describes the female character and then lists all the men involved with the film production. Here the woman potentially has the ability to take back control of the looking process as she holds the camera.

Another image in this series is a fashion shot of Marilyn holding a camera in a glossy photo book. Here the camera is merely an accessory, a symbol of the male gaze that consumed the actress, held in a way that covers her mouth but not her eyes. The book in Collier's image is covered in brightly coloured post-it notes, place markers for images that require re-examining or further investigation by the imagined owner of this photo-book. Added to their viewing is also Collier's gaze as she adds another layer of scrutiny. As do we the viewers of her images. Here it is possible to see why Régis Durand sees the photograph as an object that 'lacks all certainty' because it requires so many different acts of looking, durations of engagement and types of attention.[513] Collier's images seem to acknowledge that complexity.

---

512 Kim Timby, 'On the Materiality of Images', *History of Photography*, 30:3, 2015, 272–274, p. 273.
513 Régis Durand, 'How to see (photographically)', *Fugitive Images*, MadisonWI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Despite the historic nature of these images, her work seems highly relevant as our culture continues its obsession for celebrity images and sharing of portraits in a social context even though in newer digital formats. Collier's images seem to question how far our attitudes have actually changed in regard to the way that women are seen and looked at in popular culture, all the while focusing our attention on the physical and cultural object that we hold and consume. Joanna Sassoon writes of the photograph being a 'multilayered laminated object' reminding us that 'we need to consider the relationship between, content, context, and materiality'.[514] Collier's images seem to embody this idea layering subject, image, surface, production values, cultural context, and the different levels of gaze.

Requested Items

A number of books unavailable in the nearest library have been conjured up from distant unseen spaces. Often these books arrive carefully packaged with a demanding set of rules as to their use. A request for *I'll Drown My Book* arrived in such a manner and a work was made in response to these restrictions.[515] Craig Dworkin's *Reading the Illegible* was requested at a later point in the research to check back on the thread of an argument based on earlier notes taken from the book. The 'pending' status for this book remained in place for many months, until its status was changed to 'lost'. Further time elapsed before all hope of seeing this book again was abandoned, and the only course of action was to make a purchase. By the time the purchase finally arrived the urgent need had faded, and it sits unopened on my window ledge.

Books currently on request:
Mapping Queer Space(s) of Praxis and Pedagogy
Experiments in Life Writing: Intersections of Auto/Biography and Fiction
Writing academic texts differently: Intersectional feminist methodologies and the playful art of writing

---

514 Joanna Sassoon, 'Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction', *Photographs Objects Histories*, p. 189.
515 Rachel Smith, *Borrowed Reading*, is the book work made in response to the imposed rules which led to a fragmented and rushed reading process.

Carrel

This study booth is one of the many spaces I have occupied for the making and writing of this research. The temptation is to remain in this space and move back and forth to traverse rooms that are not yet fully articulated in this document. Instead I stand and stretch before scooping up the books I am about to start reading once this project is submitted: Nat Raha, *Of Sirens, Body and Faultlines*, Kate Zambreno, *Appendix Project*, and Laurent Binet, *The 7th Function of Language*. I pack my rucksack and wander away, leaving the booth empty for its next reader.

November 2019
Live reading and drawing performance of *Lines that Echo*, for Emma Bolland's 2nd launch of Sheffield Cities book, Rutland pub, Sheffield
Ravelling Eco's Net artists book completed

October 2019
Lines that Echo, in the Sheffield Dostoyevsky Cities Imprint, edited by Emma Bolland
Promise the Infinite, included in Prosaic Mosaic, group show Bloc Gallery Sheffield
Marginal Reading and *Promise the Infinite II* artists books released at Sheffield Artist Bookfair

Sept 2019
Read(writ)ing words: a meandering material dialogue, artists book completed

June 2019
Eco's Net: Rhizome I, shown in Prosaic group exhibition, Coterie Gallery, Rotherham, curated by Sean Williams and Bryan Eccleshall

October 2018
And And And, Reading: Writing Reading two works included in Concrete and Constraint Anthology published by Penteract Press

Sept 2018
Exploring Eco's rhizomatic net as part of *Regardez la Fenêtre* - Clee-ClaireLee shop-front residency collaborative practice day developed from the work started at Interrupteur in Sheffield
Voler: To steal and fly, Pamphlet published by Penteract Press

April–May 2018
Interrupteur: Artist residency at the faculty of Humanities the University of Sheffield

Mar 2018
The Desire for Haiku, haiku pamphlet produced by the Roland Barthes Reading Group published by MA Bibliotheque

July 2018
Tracing Shadows produced as a re-fusal of Phantom

Apr 2017

Intention Correction included in *Crux Desperationis 9*, International Journal of Conceptual Writing, edited by Riccardo Boglione

Mar 2017

A Memory of Dreaming part of the book *The Dreamers* published by MA Bibliotheque
Lines of Flight: artist book, part of the AMBruno *sic* project exhibited at artist book several fairs including Leeds, Berlin, and New York

Feb 2017

Words are According to Intentions: Spoken Word Performance with Madeleine Walton, The Enemies Project's North By North West poetry tour, BSA, Sheffield

Jan-Feb 2017

Phantom Exhibition: group show, curated by Jane Boyer, Anglia Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge
Discursive Panel Presentation, Phantom Symposium, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

Oct 2016

An Exchange of Words with Jean Paul Sartre: collaborative exhibition and performance reading with HMRCollective, BSA, Sheffield

Aug 2016

Testing Testing exhibition: group show of Ph.D. practice research, SIA, Sheffield

Mar 2016

Reading Words artist book made as part of the AMBruno *words* project, exhibited at several artist book fairs including Leeds, Berlin, and New York

Oct 2015

Recovering the Deleted in *Crux Desperationis 7,* International Journal of Conceptual Writing, edited by Riccardo Boglione
On Reading and not Reading The London Artists' Bookfair, Whitechapel published as part of Sharon Kivland's *Good Reader* project, MA Bibliotheque

July 2015

Drawings included in The Lighthouse Journal, Issue 9, East Anglia, edited by Scott Dahlie *et al*

Mar 2015

Command Backspace Delete: artist book made as part of Sharon Kivland's *The Editions* Project, Leeds International Artists' Bookfair, performed at the Tetley Gallery, Leeds

Feb-Mar 2015
Drawing out Language: artist residency at Leeds College of Art Library as part of the Intervention projects

Dec 2014
Deferring to Derrida in *Crux Desperationis 6,* International Journal of Conceptual Writing, edited by Riccardo Boglione
Command Backspace Delete in *Regulate* Exhibition: group show Montgomery Building, Sheffield

Oct 2014
Documenter in Residence, at *Wrought* one-to-one performance festival, Sheffield
Whats your View on Thinking? Durational performance with HMRCollective, at the English Faculty Library, University of Cambridge, as part of the A.L.L. Festival, Cambridge

Aug 2014
Cropped Remainder in *Cut* exhibition: group show at BSA, Sheffield
White Noise in *The Other Room Anthology 6,* Manchester, edited by Tom Jenks and James Davies Summer
Drawing by Definition included in *The Lighthouse Journal*, Issue 5, East Anglia, edited by Scott Dahlie *et al*

May 2014
Typing Twitter included in *The Language of Lists*, group exhibition at the Text Festival, Bury

Mar 2014
Library Interventions: Sharon Kivland, Rachel Smith intervention. Performed at Art College Library, Leeds for the closing event of Kivland's residency
White Noise included in *The Card Index as Writing Machine*, curated John McDowell. The Tetley, Leeds

Dec 2013–Feb 2014
Make, Read, Write, Think HMRCollective: Collaborative three month artist residency at BSA, Sheffield

This text comes out of conversations during our group making sessions, and a reflective discussion at the end of the Read(writ)ing Words project.

We (Helen, Madeleine, and Rachel) have been producing work together as HMRCollective since 2012 and in building a collaborative practice we have experimented with different ways of working together. We all have our own individual practices but working collaboratively allows us to bring different elements into an experimental and dialogic space. Previously we have tested methods which include: working remotely or individually in shifts using predetermined instructions to construct work; working beside each other in the same space; passing work back and forth; making unfinished responses with the intention of passing them on for additional work by other group members; deliberately working over and through each other's work.

In discussing the place of authorship in relation to the group dynamic we have explored the need for recognition in the process and how work made is not about the individual ego, rather a collective response. Our collaborative work holds an interest in the collective endeavour of making. The work produced by HMRCollective forms a collaged responsive dialogue which allows for any conversation to take meandering turns, encounter stuttering moments of difficulty, as well as flowing moments of eager agreement. Over the period of working together our experimentation with generative processes has developed a level of trust and generosity which allows us to work over, cut up and adapt elements of each other's work through negotiated agreement which has become more instinctive and less overt as we have built confidence in our group process. As we are often away from the work for lengthy periods of time, the return to develop any project frequently means that it can be hard to identify our own individual contributions on the page. These moments of faulty memory provoke curiosity as well adding to the ease of passing work forward for someone else to develop. During past projects we have at times chosen to deliberately to leave an identifiable mark of our individual labour where at other times we have mimicked each other's methods leaving it impossible to tell who has done what.

We endeavour to work through Rachel's reading of Roland Barthes 'insolent' and 'smitten' approach, not only with the source texts or material we use, but also in relation to each other. There is a respectful validation of each other's contributions as we all read, write, and work in different ways and the exploration of incidental elements of reading writing making enable us to value making before any object becomes fully formed. Initially we agree methods of working, though we are aware and accept that time apart allows room for error and straying from any established methods.

The project for the purpose of Rachel's doctoral research has culminated in the artists' book *Read(writ)ing Words.* All work done for this project has been under her planning and organisation. This meant that the work expanded from her starting point: the book *Reading Words* and continued to use Jean-Paul Sartre's text as source material. We all constructed our own response to Sartre's text and these were then passed to each other in turn to instigate further works made in response. At this stage the work remained individual, produced remotely, though as fragments were gradually appropriated and formed part of an ongoing dialogue elements become lifted gradually from one place to the next. During the pop-up exhibition *An Exchange of Words with Jean-Paul Sartre* we worked together in the gallery space and the work became overlapped, traced, and cut-together through collaborative working. This process took several months culminating in several days in the gallery space before the work was then packed away for two years. Rachel initiated work to re-make and refuse earlier iterations of this project in the final artist book. This process involved selecting fragments from the earlier work, where we deliberately chose fragments that were less obviously authored by a single person. Each artist then subjected these fragments to further reading, writing, and making processes in sight of the original text, conscious of the need to be both insolent and smitten in relation to the original words. The visual (scanned) pages in the Read(writ)ing section of the book are produced through our collaborative process. Any other images or typeset text throughout the book is gathered and produced by Rachel as the collaborative work made has been framed as part of her research. The authorship of Rachel has been foregrounded in agreement with Helen and Madeleine for the purposes of authoring her doctoral research. Future work is likely to return to a more intuitive working process which experiments with individual and collective authorship as we work to form collaborative responses as a way of exploring process and dialogue through making.

H:

M:

R:

Sheffield Hallam University

Drawing out Language: From Or to And, Disrupting Dualism through Conceptual Poetics.

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

	YES	NO
I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.	✓	
My understand how I will participate and any questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. Also I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.	✓	
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal.	✓	
I understand that I may decline to answer any particular questions or undertake particular tasks in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	✓	
I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	✓	
I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet	✓	
I consent to be involved in the project, provide information and take part in practice activities for the purposes of this research study, and consent to remain anonymous.		✓
I consent to be involved in the project, provide information and take part in the practice activities. I consent for my identity to be acknowledged in the the study.	✓	

Participant's Signature: _Mcwalton_   Date: 2015 / 2019

Participant's Name (Printed): M. C. WALTON

Contact details: m_walton@blueyonder.co.uk

Researcher's Signature: _Rachel Smith_   Date: 2015 / 2019

Researcher's Name (Printed): Rachel Smith

Contact details: rachelsmith999@hotmail.com

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Participant Consent Form

Sheffield Hallam University

Drawing out Language: From Or to And, Disrupting Dualism through Conceptual Poetics.

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

	YES	NO
I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.	✓	
My understand how I will participate and any questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. Also I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.	✓	
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal.	✓	
I understand that I may decline to answer any particular questions or undertake particular tasks in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	✓	
I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	✓	
I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet	✓	
I consent to be involved in the project, provide information and take part in practice activities for the purposes of this research study, and consent to remain anonymous.		✓
I consent to be involved in the project, provide information and take part in the practice activities. I consent for my identity to be acknowledged in the the study.	✓	

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: 2015 / 2019

Participant's Name (Printed): HELEN FRANK

Contact details: helenfrank_art@btinternet.com

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: 2015 / 2019

Researcher's Name (Printed): Rachel Smith

Contact details: rachelsmith999@hotmail.com

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Bibliography

What follows are the library shelves of my bibliography in relation to the methodology of my literature review. The books in this library have been read, re-read, glanced at, and sometimes ignored or forgotten. In this regard there are some that I have carried with me through the entire research, and they might be found in any room, or propped up on any shelf, as their influence has extended beyond any single point. As with any library there is a pile of books on the return trolley, and the books packed into my rucksack as I leave the carrel where I was just working, having finished this thesis.

Initially I sought to follow the Dewey library system used by this University to produce a bibliography – a way of retaining some form of appropriate shelving convention, while disrupting the expectation for a bibliography. Despite this being a starting point for the referencing, the rooming system employed in the literature review starts to assert itself in places. This is, after all, my imagined library and follows my route through an ever growing collection of sources. There are other categories that could be employed and the addition of further books may require the rethinking of categories in order to house them.

Libraries contain multiple copies of popular books, and here some references begin to repeat themselves as they gravitate towards alternative categories. It is at this point (as the books start to repeat) that I will end my intervention. Any categorisation fails to an extent as books are sorted in a way that adheres to a clear either/or approach, whereas I have argued for the multiplicity of the *and*. Lists of references might be reconfigured endlessly as books appear several times to cross categories. New rooms may be imagined to rehouse different sets of books which unsettle their position in any system.

Philosophy: 100-199

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *On the Line,* trans. by John Johnston, edited by Silver Lotringer, New York, NY: Semiotexte, 1983

Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York, NY: Athlone Press, 1987, [*Dialogues*, Paris: Flammarion 1977]

Robinson, Keith, *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections,* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009

Vallega, Alejandro, *Heidegger and the Issue of Space: Thinking on Exilic Grounds,* University Park, PN: Penn State University Press, 2003

Žižek, Slavoj, *Incontinence of the Void: Economico-Philosophical Sprandrels,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017

Social Sciences: 300-399

Barad, Karen, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007

Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. by Sheila Faria Glasier, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994 [*Simulacres et Simulation,* Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1981]

Braidotti, Rosi, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002

– *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006

Bruner, Jerome, *Acts of Meaning,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990

Carlile, Paul, Davide Nicolini, et al,. (eds), *How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts, and Materiality in Organization Studies,* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013

de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. by Steven F. Rendall, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011 [*L'Invention du quotidien,* 1. : *Arts de faire* et 2. : *Habiter, cuisiner,* éd. établie et présentée par Luce Giard, Paris : Gallimard, 1990 (1ʳᵉ éd. 1980)]

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* trans. by Brian Massumi, London: Continuum, 2013 [*Capitalisme et Schizohrénie, Tome II, Mille Plateaux,* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1987]

Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Winchester: O Books, 2009

Haraway, Donna, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016

Don Ihde and Evan Selinger, (eds), *Chasing Technoscience: Matrix for Materiality.* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003

Latour, Bruno, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 30, no. 2, Winter 2004

Manning, Erin and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*, Minneaplois, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003

Stengers, Isabelle, and Vinciane Desprets, *Women Who Make a Fuss: The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf,* trans. by April Knutson, Minneapolis, MN: Univocal Publishing, 2014 [*Les faiseuses d'histoires: Que font les femmes à la pensée ?,* Éditions La Découverte, Paris, 2011]

Tsing, Anna, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000

Weedon, Chris, *Feminism, Theory, and the Politics of Difference,* Victoria: Abe Books, 1999

Language: 400-499

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984

Baron, Naomi, S., *Speech, Writing, and Sign: A Functional View of Linguistic Representation,* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981

Barthes, Roland, *The Rustle of Language,* trans. by Richard Howard, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986, [*Le bruissement de la langue*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984]

– *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation,* trans. by Richard Howard, London: Blackwell, 1985

– *Writing Degree Zero,* trans. by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, London: Cape Editions, 1968 [*Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, Paris: Seuil, 1953]

– *Image Music Text,* trans. by Stephen Heath, London: Fontana, 1977

– *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Course and Seminars at the Collège de France* (1978-1979 and 1979-1980), trans. by Kate Briggs, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011 [*La préparation du roman I et II. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France 1978-1979 et 1979-1980*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2003]

– *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography,* trans. Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 2000 [*La Chambre Claire*, Editions du Seuil, 1980]

– *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France* (1977-1978), trans. by Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 [*Le Neutre: cours et séminaires au Collège de France* 1977–1978, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002]

– *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller, London: Jonathan Cape, 1975, [*S/Z*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970]

– *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller, New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1976, [*Sade, Fourier, Loyola,* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971].

Bennett, Andrew, *The Author*, Oxford: Routledge, 2005

Blyth, Ian and Susan Sellars, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum Books, 2004

Bradley, Arthur *Derrida's Of Grammatology*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008

Burke, Seán, et al., *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998

Cayley, John, *Grammalepsy: Essays on Digital Language Art*, New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018

Cixous, Hélène, *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007 [*Insister. À Jacques Derrida*, Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2006]

– *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994

Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference,* trans. by Alan Bass, Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2001 [*L'écriture et la différence*, Paris: Éditions du Seuill, 1967]

– *On Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998 [*De la grammatologie*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967]

Eco, Umberto, *On Literature,* London: Random House, 2005

–*Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986

– *Umberto Eco, Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*, London: Orion, 2004

Fleming, Juliet, *Cultural Graphology: Writing after Derrida,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016

Flusser, Vilém, *Gestures*, trans. by Nancy Ann Roth, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014 [*Gesten: Versuch einer Phänomenologie*, Braunschweig: Bollman Verlag, 1991]

Gallop, Jane, *The Deaths of the Author: Reading and Writing in Time*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011

Gill, Stephen, *Language and Marginality,* Exeter: New Bank Publications, 2000

Gorman, Clare, *The Undecidable: Jacques Derrida and Paul Howard*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015

Harari, Jossue V., (ed.) *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism,* Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979

Heller-Roazen, Daniel, *Echolalias: on the Forgetting of Language,* New York, NY: Zone Books, 2005

Hill, Leslie, *Maurice Blanchot and Fragmentary Writing: A Change of Epoch*, London: Continuum, 2012

Hoffman, Frederick J., & Samuel Beckett, *Samuel Beckett: The Language of Self,* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962

Iser, Wolfgang, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, [*Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre: Perspektiven literarischer Anthropologie,*Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991]

– *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978 [*Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, Munich: Wilhelm Frank, 1976]

Manguel, Alberto, *The Library at Night*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008

Misak, Cheryl J., *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

Nabokov, Vladimir, *Lectures on Literature*, New York, NY: Harcourt, 1980

Ong, Walter, 'The Writer's Audience is always a Fiction', *Interfaces of the World: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*, 1977, pp. 53–81

Pressman, Jessica, *Digital Modernism: Making it New in New Media*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014

Ricoeur, Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. by Robert Czerny, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978 [*La Métaphore Vive*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1975]

Saussure, Ferdinand de, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1966

Wood, Sarah, *Without Mastery: Reading and Other Forces,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014

Woolf, Virginia, *The Common Reader: Second Series*, Vancouver: Read books, 2012

Yates, Francis, *The Art of Memory,* New York, NY: Random House, 2011

Art: 700-799

Books on Art

Benjamin, Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* trans. by Harry Zohn, Harmondsworth: Penguin 2008

Barthes, Roland, *Image Music Text,* trans. by Stephen Heath, London: Fontana, 1977

– *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 2000 [*La Chambre Claire*, Éditions du Seuil, 1980]

– *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation,* trans. by Richard Howard, London: Blackwell, 1985

Burton, Johanna, *Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing,* London: Phaidon , 2005

Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay : How Art Reprograms the World,* trans. by Jeanine Herman, New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005 [*Postproduction: La culture comme scénario: comment l'art reprogramme le monde contemporain*, Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002]

Cabanne, Pierre, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* trans. by Ron Padgett, Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 1979

Garrett, Craig, & Matt Price, *Vitamin D2: New Perspectives in Drawing,* London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2013

Godfrey, Tony, *Conceptual Art,* London: Phaidon Press, 1998

Heller, Margot, et al., *Incommunicado,* London: Hayward Gallery, 2003

Jones, Amelia, *Self-image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject,* New York, NY: Routledge, 2006

Johnstone, Stephen, *The Everyday,* Documents of Contemporary Art, London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2008

Larsen, Lars Bang (ed), *Networks*, Documents of Contemporary Art Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2014

Lippard, Lucy, *Six Years: the dematerialisation of the art object from 1966 to 1972*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997

Merewether, Charles, *The Archive,* Documents of Contemporary Art, London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2006

Meyer, Ursula, *Conceptual Art,* Boston, MA: E.P. Dutton, 1972

Morgan, Robert, *Art into Ideas: Essays on Conceptual Art,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996

Springer, Anna-Sophie, and Etenne Turpin, (eds), *Fantasies of the Library*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016

Books on Artists

Banner, Fiona, et al*., Banner,* Dundee: Dundee Contemporary Arts, 2002

Barney, Matthew, *Drawing Restraint, Vol.1, 1987-2002,* London: Walther König, 2005

Bochner, Mel, et al*., Mel Bochner: If the Colour Changes,* London: Ridinghouse, 2012

Büchler, Pavel, et al*., Absentmindedwindowgazing,* Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2007

Cage, John, *Every Day is a Good Day: The Visual Art of John Cage,* London: Hayward, 2010

Cross, Susan, & Denise Markonish, *Sol Lewitt 100 Views,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009

Davenport, Philip, & Summerhall, *The Dark Would: Language Art Exhibition,* Online: Apple Pie Editions, 2013

Davies, Jo, & Leo Duff, *Drawing: The Process,* Bristol: Intellect, 2005

Gansterer, Nikolaus, Emma Cocker and Mariella Greil, *Choreo-Graphic Figures: Deviations from the Line*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017

Nauman, Bruce, *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and Interviews,* Cambridge, MA: MIT. Press, 2005

Randolph, Sal, & Silas-Kenyon Gallery, *Free Words*, Provincetown, MA: Highlala, 2001

Schwarz, Dieter, & Agnes Martin, *Agnes Martin: Writings,* New York, NY: Cantz, 1991

Smith, Bob and Roberta, *Make Your Own Damn Art,* London: Black Dog, 2004

Twombly, Cy, *Poems to the Sea,* Munich: Schirmer-Mosel, 1990

Warhol, Andy, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again,* London: Penguin, 2007

Zevi, Adachiara & Sol LeWitt, *Sol Lewitt: Critical Texts,* Rome: Incontri Internazionali D'Arte, 1994

Writing about Art Practice

Attiwill, Suzie, Terri Bird, et al, *Practising with Deleuze: Design, Dance, Art, Writing, Philosophy,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017

Edwards, Elizabeth and Janice Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images,* New York, NY: Routledge, 2004

Elkins, James, *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art,* Washington, DC: New Academia, 2009

Ferrara, Alessandro, *Reflective Authenticity: Rethinking the Project of Modernity,* London: Routledge, 1998

Hilevaara, Katja and Emily Orley, (eds), *The Creative Critic: Writing as/about Practice,* London: Routledge, 2018

Manning, Erin, *The Minor Gesture,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016

Nelson, Robin*, Practice as Research in the Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

Orley, Emily, and Katja Hilevaara, *The Creative Critic,* Oxford: Routledge, 2018

Sontag, Susan, *Against Interpretation,* London: Vintage, 1994

—*On Photography,* London: Penguin Books, 1979

Sullivan, Graeme, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010

Literature: 800-899

Books on books

Philpott, Clive, *Booktrek: Selected Essays on Artists' Books since 1972,* Zurich: JRP Ringier Kunstverlag AG, 2013

Borsuk, Amaranth, *The Book,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018

Bury, Stephen, *Artists' Books: The Book as a Work of Art, 1963-1995,* Menston: Scolar Press, 1995

Drucker, Johanna, *The Century of Artists' Books,* New York, NY: Granary Books, 2010

– *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994

– *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination,* London: Thames and Hudson, 1995

Desjardin, Arnaud, *The Book on Books on Artist Books*, London: The Everyday Press, 2013

Moeglin-Delcroix, Anne, *Little Books & Other Little Publications,* Tipperary: Coracle, 2001

Books about Conceptual writing

Bergvall, Caroline, et al., *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, Los ngeles, CA: Les Figues Press, 2012

Bernstein, Felix, *Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry*, Los Angeles, CA: Insert Blanc Press, 2015

Dworkin, Craig, & Kenneth Goldsmith, *Against Expression an Anthology of Conceptual Writing,* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011

Dworkin, Craig, *No Medium,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013

– *Reading the Illegible,* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003

Goldsmith, Kenneth, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age,* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011

Perloff, Marjorie, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century,* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2012

– *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*, Evanston, IL: North Western University Press. 1999

Place, Vanessa, & Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism,* New York, NY: Ugly Duckling Press, 2009

Conceptual writing

Beaulieu, Derek, *How to Write,* Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2010
– *Kern,* Los Angeles, CA: Les Figues Press, 2014.
– *a, A Novel,* Paris: Jean-Boite, 2017

Claude Closky, *First Thousand Numbers Classified in Alphabetical Order*, 1989

Drucker, Johanna, *Diagrammatic Writing*, Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2013

Craig Dworkin, *Parse*, Berkeley, CA: Atelos, 2008

Goldsmith, Kenneth, *Kenneth Goldsmith's The Body of Michael Brown*, 2015

Good, Robert, *Breaking: a year of Google news headlines*, Peculiarity Press, 2019

Place, Vanessa, *Statement of the Facts*, Los Angeles CA: Blanc Press, 2010

Smith, Aymee, *Methods for Reading the Illegible*, self published on Blurb, 2014

Nick Thurston, *Reading the Remove of Literature,* York: Information as Material, 2006

Constraint

Dworkin, Craig, *The Perverse Library*, York: Information as Material, 2010.

Etherin, Anthony, *Aelindromes (φ−π−√2)*, Penteract Press, 2017

Etherin, Anthony, (ed) *Concrete and Constraint*, Penteract Press, 2018

Howe, Susan, *The Nonconformist's Memorial,* New York, NY: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993

Perec, Georges, *A Void*, trans. Gilbert Adair, New Tork, NY: Vintage, 2008 [*La Disparition*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969]

Queneau, Raymond, *Exercises in Style,* trans. by Barbara Wright, London: John Calder, 1998 [*Exercices de style*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1947]

– *One Hundred Million Million Poems*, trans. by John Crombie, Paris: Kickshaws, 1983 [*Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1961]

Mathews, Harry, Alistair Brotchie, (eds), *Oulipo Compendium,* trans. by Ian Monk, London: Atlas Press, 2005

Walser, Robert, *Microscripts,* New York, NY: New Directions Publishing/ Christine Burgin, 2010

Fiction

Beckett, Samuel, *Molloy: Malone Dies. The Unnamable,* trans. by Samuel Beckett, New York, NY: Grove Press, 1958

Borges, Jorge Luis, 'Library of Babel', *Labyrinths*, London: Penguin, 2000

Calvino, Italo, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, trans. by William Weaver, London: Vintage, 2002, [*Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, Turin: Einaudi, 1979]

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, London: Macmillan, 1980

Markson, David, *This is Not a Novel,* Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2001

Melville, Herman [1853] *Bartleby the Scrivener, a Story of Wall Street*, New York, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2010

Kafka, Franz, *The Trial,* trans. by Idris Parry, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000

– *The Castle,* trans. by Idris Parry, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009

Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, trans by Sophie Wilkins, London: Picador, 2017

Perec, Georges, *Life, a User's Manual: Fictions,* trans. by David Bellos, London: Vintage, 2003 [*La vie mode d'emploi*, Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1978]

– *A Void*, trans. Gilbert Adair, New York, NY: Vintage, 2008 [*La disparition*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969]

Sterne, Laurence [1759-66] *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman,* London: Macmillan, 1992

Digital media

Bell, Alice, *The Possible Worlds of Hypertext Fiction,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010

Bolter, David J., *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print,* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001

Cayley, John, *Grammalepsy: Essays on Digital Language Art,* New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018

Hayles, N. Katherine, *Writing Machines,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002

Stacked on the Return Trolley:

Acker, Kathy, *Bodies of Work: Essays,* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1997

Kate Briggs, *This Little Art,* London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017

Taleb, Nassim, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable,* London: Allen Lane, 2007

Miller, Daniel, (ed), *Materiality,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 200

Fusco, Maria, *Give Up Art,* Los Angeles, CA: New Documents, 2017

Packed in my Rucksack:

Barthes, Roland, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Course and Seminars at the Collège de France* (1978-1979 and 1979-1980), trans. by Kate Briggs, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011

Raha, Nat, *Of Sirens, Body, and Faultlines,* Norwich: Boiler House Press, 2018

Zambreno, Kate, *Appendix Project: Talks and Essays,* Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2019

Journals printed and stuffed into labelled box files:

New Materialism

Barad, Karen, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Towards an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter', *Signs,* vol.28, no. 3, 2003, 801–831

Barker, Stephen, 'Nietzsche/Derrida, Blanchot/Beckett: Fragmentary Progressions of the Unnamable', *Postmodern Culture,* vol. 6, no. 1, 1995, 11–35

– 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', *Parallax,* vol. 20, no. 3, 2014, 168–187

Braidotti, Rosi, 'Afterword: complexity, materialism, difference', *Angelaki: journal of theoretical humanities*, 17:2, 2012, 169–176

Despret, Vincianne, Brett Buchanan, Matthew Chrulew and Jeffrey Bussolini 'Asking the Right Questions', *Angelaki*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2015, 165–178

Dolphijn, Rick, and Iris van der Tuin, 'Pushing dualism to an extreme: On the philosophical impetus of a new materialism', *Springer Science+Business Media*, B.V. 2011, 387–400

– 'The Transversality of New Materialism', *Women: A Cultural Review*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2010, 153–171

Haraway, Donna, 'A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century', *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. New York, NY: Routledge, 149–181

Latour, Bruno, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* no. 30, Winter 2004, 225–248

Spinggay, Stephanie and Zofia Zaliwska, 'Diagrams and Cuts: A Materialist Approach to Research Creation', *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, 15:2, 2015, 136–144

– and Sarah E Truman, 'In the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (In)Tensions, and Response-Ability in Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*,vol. 24, no. 3, 2018 [2017], 203–214

Toye, Margaret E. 'Donna Haraway's Cyborg Touching (Up/On) Luce Irigaray's Ethics and the Interval Between: Poethics as Embodied Writing', *Hypatia*, vol. 27, no. 1, (Winter) 2012, 182–200

Art Practice

Belcher, Shaun, 'Can grey ravens fly?: Beyond Frayling's categories', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education,* vol. 13, no. 3, 2013, 235–242

Busch, Kathrin, 'Artistic Research and the Poetics of Knowledge', *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods,* vol. 2, no.2, Spring 2009, 1–7

Frayling, Christopher, 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers,* vol. 1, no. 1, 1993/4

Goddard, Linda, 'Artists' writings: word or image?' *Word and Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2012, 409–418

Honan, Eileen, 'Writing a Rhizome: an (im)plausible methodology', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* vol. 20, no. 5, 2007, 531–546

Hughes, Rolf,'The poetics of practice-based research writing', *The Journal of Architecture,* vol. 11, no. 3, 2006, 283–301

Huyssen, Andreas, 'Mapping the Postmodern', *New German Critique*, vol. 33 no. 3, 1984, 5–52

Kockelkoren, Petran, 'The disruption of the understanding of meaning', *Manually/Semi/Automatic #2*, 2012, trans. by Peter Mason,

https://alexandraroozen.com/the-disruption-of-the-understanding-of-meaning-petran-kockelkoren/

Lamarque, Peter, 'On Not Expecting too much from Narrative', *Mind and Language,* vol. 19, no. 4, 2004, 393–408

Lovatt, Anna, 'The Mechanics of Writing: Sol LeWitt, Stéphane Mallarmé and Roland Barthes', *Word and Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2012, 374–383

Loveless, Natalie, 'Practice in the Flesh of Theory: Art, Research, and the Fine Arts PhD', *Canadian Journal of Communication,* vol. 37, no. 1, 2012, 93–108

Meißner, Hanna, 'Conversing with the Unexpected: Towards a Feminist Ethics of Knowing', *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, Issue 30, (2016), https://doi.org/10.20415/rhiz/030.e05

O'Sullivan, Simon, 'From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Deleuze, Bacon and Contemporary Art Practice', *Deleuze Studies,* vol. 3, no. 2, December 2009, 247–258

Taylor, Jacqueline, 'From 'or' to 'and': *L'écriture féminine* as a methodological approach for Fine Art research', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Eduction,* vol. 13, no. 3, 2014, 303–311

Townsend, Christopher, 'On Drawing', *Art Monthly*, no. 355, 2012, 5–8

Veostko, Roman, 'Form, Grace and Stark Logic: 30 Years of Algorithmic Drawing', *Leonardo,* vol. 43, no. 3., 2010, <www.swetwise.com>

Concept or Constraint

Bergvall, Caroline, 'The Hungry Form', *PAJ: A journal of performance and art,* vol. 21, no. 1, 1999, 112–116

Briggs, Kate, 'Practising with Roland Barthes', *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2015, 118–130

Brimmer, Nicole 'Lost in the Information Age', *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge,* online Issue 34, 2018, https://doi.org/10.20415/rhiz/034.e02

Buchloh, Benjamin, 'Drawing Blanks: Notes on Andy Warhol's Late Works', *October*, no. 127, 2009, 3–24

– 'Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art', *ARTFORUM,* vol. XXI, no. 1, 1982, 43

Drucker, Johanna, 'Beyond Conceptualisms: Poetics after Critique and the End of the Individual Voice', https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/04/conceptual-writing-was-intriguing-and-provocative

Goldsmith, Kenneth, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing', *Open Letter: Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory*, edited by Lori Emerson and Barbara Cole, Twelfth Series, No. 7, Fall 2005, 108–111

Hilder, Jamie, 'Concrete Poetry and Conceptual Art: A Misunderstanding', *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 54, no. 3, Fall 2013, 578–614, <DOI: 10.1353/cli.2013.0034>

Motte, Warren, 'Constraint on the Move,' *Poetics Today,* Vol. 30, No. 4, 2009, 719–735

Perloff, Majorie, 'The Oulipo Factor: the procedural poetics of Christian Bök and Caroline Bergvall', *Textual Practice*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2004, <DOI: 10.1080/0950236042000183250>

Roubaud, Jacques, and Jean-Jacques Poucel, 'Perecquian OULIPO', *Yale French Studies,* no.105, Pereckonings: Reading Georges Perec, 2004, 99–109

Language:

Abbott, H. Porter, 'Reading Intended Meaning Where None Is Intended: A Cognitivist Reappraisal of the Implied Author', *Poetics Today*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2011, 461–487

– 'Unreadable Minds and the Captive Reader', *Style*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2008, 448–467

Adorno, Theodor W. and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, 'Punctuation Marks', *The Antioch Review*, vol. 48, no. 3, Poetry Today (Summer, 1990), 300–305

Cixous, Hélène, 'Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976, 875–893

Deleuze, Gilles, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October,* vol. 59, no. 3, 1992, 3–7

Deleuze, Gilles, Félix Guattari, and Robert Brinkley, 'What is a Minor Literature?', *Mississippi Review,* Vol. 11, No. 3, 1983, 13–33

Dennett, Dan, 'Why everyone is a novelist', *Times Literary Supplement,* 22 September 1988

Fleming, Juliet, 'Wounded walls: Graffiti, grammatology, and the age of Shakespeare' *Criticism,* vol. 39, no. 1, Winter 1997, 1–30

– 'Whitewash and the scene of writing', *Shakespeare Studies,* vol. 28, 2000, 133–138

Hardin, Michael, 'Was Killing the Queer Author Necessary to Liberate the Queer Text?: The Case of Andy Warhol's *A, A Novel*', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2009, 218–232

Hume, Kathryn, 'Voice in Kathy Acker's Fiction', *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2001, 485–513

Kolb, David, 'The Revenge of the Page', *HT08,* June 2008, 19–21

Meretoja, Hanna, 'Narrative and Human Existence: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics', *New Literary History*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2014, 89–109

Maclure, Maggie, et al., 'Silence as Resistance: Or, on Not Opening One's Mouth Properly', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 6, July 2010, 492–500

McAllister, Bryan J., 'Narrative in Concrete/ Concrete in Narrative: Visual Poetry and Narrative Theory', *Narrative,* vol. 22, no. 2, May 2014, 234–251

Nadir, Lahiji, 'In Interstitial Space - Žižek on Architectural Parallax', *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2016, 1–19

Porter Abbott, H. 'Reading Intended Meaning Where None Is Intended: A Cognitivist Reappraisal of the Implied Author', *Poetics Today,* vol. 32, no. 3, 2011, 462–487

Roth, Nancy, 'A note on 'The Gesture of Writing' by Vilém Flusser and the Gesture of Writing', *The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2012, 24–41

Savolainen, Reijo, 'Filtering and withdrawing: strategies for coping with information overload in everyday contexts', *Journal of Information Science*, vol. 33, no. 5, 2007, 611–621

Scholes, Robert, 'Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative', *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 7, no. 1, 1980, 204–212

Stoyanova, Silvia, 'Fragmentary Narrative and the Formulation of Pre-Digital Scholarly Hypertextuality: G. Leopardi's Zibaldone and its hypertext rendition', *Proceedings of the 3rd Narrative and Hypertext Workshop,* Paris, 2013, article no.2, <doi>10.1145/2462216.2462218>

Strawson, Galen, 'Against Narrativity', *Ratio*, vol. XVII, no. 4, 2004, 428–452

Thomas, Sophie, 'A review of The Fragment: Towards a History and Poetics of a Performative Genre by Camelia Elias', *Hyperion,* 2008, vol. 3, no. 3, 66–73

Tisseron, Serge, 'All Writing is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript', *Yale French Studies,* no. 84, 1994, 29–42

Weiss, Gail, 'Reading/Writing Between the Lines', *Continental Philosophy Review,* vol. 31, no. 4, 1998, 387–409

Wolfe, Joanna, and Neuwirth, Christine, 'From the Margins to the Centre: The Future of Annotation', *Journal of Business and Technical Communication,* vol. 15, issue 3, 2001, 333–371

ART WORKS:

Art works
Attia, Kadar, *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder,* London: Whitechapel Gallery,
2013

Beaulieu, Derek, *Dante's Window,* 'Language of Lists' exhibition, Bury Text Festival, Bury, 2014

Bergvall, Caroline, *Drift*, Bury Text Festival, The MET Arts Centre, Bury, 2014

Blake, Jorge Méndez, *The Castle*, 2007

Darboven, Hanne, *Kulturegeschichte 1880–1983 (Cultural History 1880–1983)* New York, NY: Dia: Chelsea, 2017

Good, Robert, *A Monument to the Unread,* Bank Street Arts Sheffield, 2014

Isgrò, Emilio, *Lettera bianca,* acrylic on canvas, 2005

Jeron, Karl Heinz, *A la recherche du temps perdu,* Berlin: All Girls Gallery, 2005

LeWitt, Sol, *Wall Drawing 86, Ten thousand lines about 10 inches (25 cm) long, covering the wall evenly.* Black pencil, June 1971

Luzinterruptus, *Literature Vs Traffic*, Nuit Blanche Toronto Festival, Toronto, 2016

Martin, Agnes, *Agnes Martin,* London: Tate Modern, 2015

McCulloch, Nise, *F451 Hands*, burnt book page, 2018.

Rauschenberg, Robert, *Erased de Kooning*, erased drawing on paper, 1953

Sanders, Sarah, *I used to,* Bury Text Festival, Bury, 2014

Waeekerlé, Emmanuelle, *Praeludere*, score, performance, artist book, video, prints, http://www.ewaeckerle.com/projectbox/PRAELUDEREdusseldorf/

Book works

Allen, Felicity, *The Disœuvre: An Argument in 4 Voices (WASL Table); 6:27,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2018

Beaulieu, Derek, *Kern,* Los Angeles,CA: Les Figues Press, 2014.
– *a, A Novel,* Paris: Jean-Boite, 2017

Jérémie Bennequin, *Manuel, Ommage 2.1,* Paris, 2013

Briggs, Kate, and Lucrezia Russo, *The Nabokov Paper*, York: information as material, 2013.
– This Little Art, London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017

Büchler, Pavel, *Perfect Love*, York: information as material, 2018
– *Walter Benjamin's Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Manchester: Wax 366, 2006

Drucker, Johanna, *Diagrammatic Writing*, Eindhoven: Onomatopee 97, 2013

Etherin, Anthony, *Aelindromes (φ−π−√2)*, Penteract Press, 2017

Etherin, Anthony, (ed) *Concrete and Constraint*, Penteract Press, 2018

Fusco, Maria, *Give Up Art*, Los Angeles, CA: New Documents, 2017

Goldhill, Judy, *In the Beginning,* edition of 18, Tilted book block, 2017

Goldsmith, Kenneth, *Kenneth Goldsmith's The Body of Michael Brown*, 2015

Good, Robert, *Breaking: a year of Google news headlines*, Peculiarity Press, 2019

Jaeger, Peter, *A Field Guide to Lost Things*, Manchester: if p then q, 2015.
– *Midamble*, Manchester: if p then q, 2018.

Sharon Kivland, *Reading Nana: an experimental novel*, MA BIBLIOTHEQUE, 2017

MacDowell, John, *Ellipsis*, open edition, cloth-covered boards and laser printed endpapers, 2017

McCarthy, Penny, *LA BIBLIOTHECA DE BABEL,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2018

Pester, Holly, *Go to Reception and Ask for Sara in Red Felt Tip,* London: BookWorks, 2015

Pichler, Michalis, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, New York: Printed Matter, 2009
 – Six Hands and a Cheese Sandwich, Ljubljana: Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E., 2011

Place, Vanessa, *Statement of the Facts*, Los Angeles, CA: Blanc Press, 2010

Ruscha, Edward, *Nine Swimming Pools (and A Broken Glass)* artist published book, colour photographs, 2400 copies, 1968

Smith, Aymee, *Methods for Reading the Illegible*, self published on Blurb, 2014
Gerry Smith, *Essential Reading,* artists book signed in an edition of 50 copies, 2004

Nick Thurston, *Reading the Remove of Literature,* York: information as material, 2006

Tonnard, Elisabeth, *We are Small*, artist book, 2012
– *The Invisible Book*, Leerdam: Elisabeth Tonnard, 2012
– *Highlights in the history of* 'The Invisible Book', published by Elisabeth Tonnard, Leerdam, 2013
– *One Swimming Pool*, Leerdam: Elisabeth Tonnard, published in an edition of 9 copies and an artist proof, 2013
– *An Empty Field*, Leerdam: Elisabeth Tonnard, 2017

Toth, Naomi, and Vanessa Place, *After Vanessa Place,* London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2017

Trettien, Whitney Anne, *Gaffe/Stutter,* New York, NY: BABEL Working Group, an imprint of punctum books, 2013

Walser, Robert, *Microscripts*, New York, NY: New Directions and Christine Burgin Gallery, 2010

Online works

Bogglioni, Ricardo, *Borges images,* Crux 10, Mental Issue, https://cruxdesperationis.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/5/3/28534301/crux_desperationis_10.pdf

Frank, Helen, *The History of Art According to a Chameleon,* Crux 10, Mental Issue, https://cruxdesperationis.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/5/3/28534301/crux_desperationis_10.pdf

Self, Will, 'Kafka's Wound', *London Review of Books*, online, 2012, https://thespace.lrb.co.uk/#i-am-guilty-of-an-association-of-ideas

Stefans, Brian Kim, *The Dreamlife of Letters*, 2000, http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/stefans__the_dreamlife_of_letters.html

Zawinski, Jamie, 3D digital model rendering of the 'Library of Babel' by Jorge Luis Borges. https://hyperallergic.com/330489/an-attempt-to-3d-model-jorge-luis-borgess-library-of-babel