

**-becoming-#langscape-[fold here] intra-rupting  
landscape, language, and the creative act**

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## ABSTRACT

This fine art practice-led research sets out amongst the terrain of upland Britain. Impelled by the spirit of British Romanticism, Ancient Cynicism and the art of tactics in a contemporary context, the research interrogates language and employs writing to offer a new approach to landscape. Coleridge, Constable, Graham, Lanyon and Turner provide an art historical context to the idea of 'landscape'.

From an initial methodological focus on Baradian *diffraction*, attention is shifted to the employment of her concepts of 'cutting together-apart' and *intra-action*. These latter are re-purposed as the more muscular *intra-ruption* in which an exertive tearing is both uncomfortable and beneficial. Further concepts are mobilised to explore the terrains of landscape and writing: Deleuzian *becoming* and Foucauldian *parrhēsia* are utilised to re-animate human relationships to and with landscape. As a result, this thesis disjunctively combines language and landscape to propose the new term and concept of *langscape*. A term that recognises the impossibility of a (human) union with nature through words and writing whilst simultaneously revelling in the possibilities that recognition of the difference provides in a form of *becoming-landscape*.

This research further proposes exertion as a logic for the creative act by recognising and embracing the performative potential of long-distance

walking and running, and their disruptive relationship to writing and thinking. The potential of writing (as both a verb and a noun) is explored in a fine art doctoral research context with specific attention paid to the strategy of 'art writing'. Resulting from this exploration, the binaric structuring of practice/theory is short-circuited by an exertive *poiēsis* that emerges from the performative activities of the research. The terrain and form of this writing enacts (and reconceives) the relationship of art and writing in and as the thesis. The thesis is written by the *langscape*.

With a bit of madness in me,  
Which is poetry,  
I plod along like Chikusai  
Among the wails of the wind.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matsuo Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa (London: Penguin, 1966), 42.

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## SAYING BEFOREHAND

*Be mindful as you read these words that they sit in a strange 'no man's land' between an abstract and an introduction; a placement that echoes their anachronistic formulation being as they are a re-working of a performance of the words that follow on after them. In other words, these other words now seemingly precede the words that apparently bore them. A herniation of word bodies has seemingly occurred. Furthermore, these words are just one possible record of an exchange and are here rendered as an exchange between the multiple (living) voices of READING and WRITING.<sup>i</sup>*

*A grey room in a grey building. From the main window there is a view across brownfield plots towards the city's retail offer. Tables are arranged in an open square. Voices sit at each of the four sides of the square with READING and WRITING on opposite sides.*

READING: How did you come to do this project? How did you come to this point?

WRITING: The project has changed considerably since the beginning due to the emergent approach used. Some core things remain (such as Romanticism), whilst the digital has shrunk; it has moved away from a particular technological reading certainly. Other things have pushed

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*i. inspire: from in- "in" (from PIE root \*en "in") + spirare "to breathe".*

(themselves) forward as more important, e.g. running and walking; they have become vital. Also, under the term exertion, writing's suitability as a partner to running became increasingly pronounced—writing as practice became, for me, more obvious as a way of working. Writing and running are working well together. It would have been unimaginable at the outset to consider that writing would be the practice.

R: What have you made? What do you really think you have made?  
[Patting the word body] What is it?

W: It is something quite awkward: that is not to make an apology. The way it has responded to the guidelines for doctoral research whilst meshing with running, writing and everyday things (like picking the children up from school) is pleasing. It has a fractal quality that is exciting. A fractal quality that is a strength and a vulnerability. It is awkward and vulnerating ... it has the potential to expand with every re-telling.

R: Some questions around methodology. We wanted to ask about Karen Barad's diffraction as a methodology. [Gesturing to the word body.] Could you speak to the claim that you make here, that Baradian diffraction can be used as a methodology?

W: Diffraction was more important to begin with ... the emphasis shifted. Maybe diffraction was a useful concept to get things moving?

Certainly diffraction was and is preferred to reflection. Reflexivity is often cited in discussions around creative practice ... reflexively; this would not be the best way to proceed. It quickly became clear that the reflexive process would close things down; fix them into binaries, while diffraction is less predictable, more nuanced.

R: It is a big claim that that is a methodology ...

W: Diffraction is (here) used as a breaking down of things. The parsing gives multiple possibilities; and it gets away from the black and white of 'this or that' (it allows for this and that in fact); it works in an other direction and gives opportunity for disparate things to collide together. The task then became a mapping exercise; mapping the interference patterns into a surface.

R: This covers a broad range of material; what were your criteria for which material to use and which not to use?

W: The desire became one of creating surfaces, of material, a surface of investigation, rather than a depth of enquiry; creating something that could challenge the more traditional shape of the PhD. The research has a depth of skin rather than a depth to be mined. Writing (as practice) suggested certain things that would contribute to the research.

R: Can you say more about the process of choice?

W: Certain things would suggest themselves and would be suggested from other angles of the research and it became a process of navigating those events; these pockets of information that the research proposed. And building up (and then using) a map of these events ...

R: This is a practice-based PhD, there is performance, and certain writing in the appendix—can you say a little bit more about where you are locating the practice.

W: There is an interest in blurring the boundary between practice and theory through an embrace of *praxis* and *poiësis*. It was important from the outset not to have a body of words with a separate exhibition (and this became more important as the focus on the divide between practice and theory emerged). It is an attempt to lose the boundary between the two modes whilst also juggling the need to point to both practice and theory. Furthermore, there is a sense that the whole process is a performance (that is not to take it lightly) that requires a navigating. There is the performance of this exchange (here, now) [... then, there]; a performance of voices; the performing of the act of writing the writing. It all blurs exactly where the practice is and offers something to the reader to make decisions about—to judge what certain parts of the writing are doing. This is where interest in the hypertextual enters the mix.

R: [*Beginning inaudible*] ... and I wondered what you felt about non-self-identity?

W: If the author is the first reader. [*Pause.*] What would happen if a certain reading of self is ejected from the work? This research did not have an individually identifiable collaborator but it could still exist as a collaborative work (a collaboration with the supervisory team, the institutional architecture, the geology of the mountains, and so forth). This continues an ongoing interest in working anonymously—this is potentially a problem within the parameters of a PhD where the individual is named at the outset; on the cover. Diffraction helps to pose these different relationships between writers and readers and what dynamics are invented in the process.

R: Something you say at the very end [*inaudible*] Barad [*inaudible*] when you start to set up these relations [*inaudible*] reader [*inaudible*] text passes from one voice to another voice. You are producing entanglements; how do you feel about taking that responsibility?

W: Rather than ‘responsibility’ Barad proposes ‘response-ability’ (that is, permitting an ability to respond whilst attending to relational imbalances) and this mode of thought connects with the duty inherent in *parrhēsia* in that it makes both parties vulnerable; there is a risk to (and potential for) both parties, the writer and the reader.

R: What kind of risk?

W: In Foucault’s reading of the ancient Cynics, the ultimate risk is death. In this instance a risk is that it (the writing and wider methodology) is not understood; there is a risk of losing the bond with the reader. Even within hypertext, a guiding principle is to not lose the reader.

R: How does this work [*gesturing to the word body*] not lose the reader?

W: Whilst not purposefully trying to lose potential readers the writing is difficult. There is a saw-tooth profile to the writing; it leaps between different pitches and muddies chronologies. Also, some footnotes alter the traditional, hierarchical relationship, between footnote and body text. Furthermore, there is a lot of ‘visual’ information mentioned here that is not presented as illustrations (even in an appendix)—this also asks a lot of the reader. Equally, the reader might want to research certain parts, which might lead away from this body of words. The final format is potentially (although not intentionally) awkward. Any awkwardness is a result of the mapping of those interference patterns.

R: [*Alluding to an incident on a train journey*] It [*the word body*] does make people talk!

W: Yes, it could be a provocation ...

R: It is not entirely clear how *parrhēsia* functions here. It was not clear how *parrhēsia* operates and the work it is doing; can you talk more about the function that *parrhēsia* is performing?

W: Introduction to the concept of *parrhēsia* was an act of happenstance; it was during a seminar session ... there was a realisation that it could perform expanded tasks within the research. One is, as discussed above, between the writer and the reader ... there is a making vulnerable in the parrhesic game that maps onto the vulnerability of the writer/reader relationship. Crucially, the idea that the relationship need not be between sentient beings began to take shape but will require more work beyond these pages. Working with the running was a parrhesic method; the parrhesic game between running and the landscape and mapping that against the vulnerability of writing. David Abram's work becomes appealing in this light; it was part of an attempt to move *Landscape* away from the baggage of the Picturesque (to lose the capitalisation). (Ultra, that is, above marathon distance) running offered a way of working with *parrhēsia* as it immediately offers the vulnerabilities of exertion and exhaustion—and provides a *response-able* mode for discussing relationships between human and non-human.

R: I was interpreting natural *parrhēsia* as New Materialism ...

W: The discussions (and labelling) around New Materialism are a distraction and it is not the concern of these words. Barad does seem to be shifted in and out of that group and there is a tendency to place Tim Ingold in that category too so certain of my interlocutors drag things in that direction. However, the thinking of Deleuze and Foucault certainly offer a shift away from the usual names cited in those circles.

R: The idea of *parrhēsia* between the landscape and a sentient being (and so forth) is fabulous. [*Inaudible. Something about explicitness.*] How much agency do you have to respond to that, in terms of responsibility?

[*Pause.*]

W: [*Inaudible.*] ... it is a spiky thing.

R: Really fascinating. I was wondering why you do not develop it more fully in the text body?

W: [*Pause.*] ... Questions around writing are shouting loudest at the moment. So the action of *parrhēsia* was most [required] around questions of the roles of writer and the reader. Certainly *parrhēsia* and landscape has great potential for developing from this surface of words.

R: Back to questions of the writing and *cutting-together-apart*, we are all interested in what the practice was—is the *cutting-together-apart* the practice?

W: That would not be far from the case ... a link between *cutting-together-apart* and exertion as a binding from within is made. There is an obvious physicality to binding. Something physical, something violent perhaps; something uncomfortable ... and yet, productive too.

R: Is the practice also (an) entanglement?

W: Exertion, *parrhēsia* and *cutting-together-apart* do become a form of summation of what the writing is doing.

R: [*Inaudible.*] ... process, methodology, and practice.

W: The whole situation of the PhD becomes the material of the practice.

R: ... things like having a supervisor? ...

W: Yes. Also, *Cutting-together-apart* is a key part, at least a tool, if not a methodology.

R: The section on art writing [see *Chapter 2*], what work is that section doing? It forms a literature review but it is doing more than that, what is it doing?

W: It is a witness of what other people are doing with writing in and around creative arts. It forms a surface of awareness. There is a repetition through the cloudiness of the terms. And there is an attractive repetition across the discrete fields, a repetition that leaves a trace ... a pattern. It is

recognition of all that has gone before and an attempt to write into, or away from! There is a working away from something. It is a stance (and a distance?), a temporary position that can be relied on for a moment. It is a more tactical way ... a temporary start and in the duration of the PhD provided an opportunity for re-grouping. 'Art writing' gave a focus to explore and move out from. That is the point where the practice became writing.

R: Can you talk about the writing per se? What do you mean by writing?

W: Opportunities beginning to arise from the dynamic were identified; the exertion, of writing. The importance of writing as a verb and how writing goes on being written and those dynamics that writing holds also became increasingly vital (especially when considered along with the bringing into being of *poiēsis*).

R: Can you comment upon the role of landscape, *langscape*, and speak to it a little more ... if you can?

W: Simply put it is a collision of language and landscape. Both of these elements, (in certain framings) these institutions, are a concern (in both senses of the term). When language and landscape become reified it is problematic. More fluid readings of these suggest themselves through colliding language with the shaping of the landscape. Along with *langscape* it is also important to remember Deleuzian *becoming* and the

continuing, emerging relationships. Similar dynamics are found in the operation of *art writing*. Also present is the hashtag (it haunts the title of this research), it provides a cohesion for a grouping that can become populated, a group that can shift (its content, size, structure, and so forth); it does not require or request a limiting identity. It is inclusive.

R: You mean the word *langscape* does not request an identity?

W: [*Pause.*] As a process *langscape* evades that necessity. It is at once verb and noun. It performs itself perhaps. It is an unconformity (to put it geologically). It is the difference that allows us to speak and to have something to say, but does not impose barriers.

R: Haraway's 'more promising interference patterns'. [*Inaudible.*] How does *langscape* [*Inaudible.*]?

W: It is partially a working against the fixed, controlled view of the Picturesque. Whilst landscape as a term is critiqued, there is also an admission that it has this baggage and it needs to be worked with; it can't be fully undone.

R: When you are running, what happens then, with that in your mind?

W: It varies; it is multiple. It is not necessarily something that feeds through immediately in that moment. It becomes more abstracted perhaps. There is a pushing and pulling; a herniation of the rigid

boundary between the I and landscape. The potential of exertion is brought into writing to help challenge the notion of language as a fixed and dictatorial entity. The exertion also frees up thought, it makes the thought less direct, less obvious perhaps. The exertion (be it running or writing) is the difference but at one and the same time punctures that difference.

R: There is historical baggage: how you talk about British landscape and 'Britishness'; in the political moment, with worry of postcolonial melancholia, pastoralism, I wonder if we can avoid dealing with notions of landscape to do with ownership. How do you come to terms with that?

W: In different ways: for example, to be a middle-class, middle-aged white male, could be seen as an inconvenient starting point! There is a *modus operandi* at large in the 'new nature writing', the problem of the 'lone enraptured male' as Kathleen Jamie posits it, where the author will delight in a certain 'wild' landscape (or an aspect of it) but pacify it with "civilised lyrical words."<sup>ii</sup> So, that is a problem to negotiate, as is the prominence of the label 'British' (especially earlier in this research). There is an element of simple honesty here in that this is where existing knowledge lay—in the landscapes of Turner, Constable, and Palmer — but beyond this there was the challenge of how a form of identity could exist, something that could inform an adhesion, yet did not have

repellent side effects. How can these artists remain quintessentially British (or in fact English) whilst they deal with universals? *Langscape* can retain a British identity that is more fluid; it operates differently to the Venn diagram. Things can move in and out of it. It takes a longer chronological view, longer even than a remembrance of the Picts and the Celts, to something that relates to a geological framework perhaps; and then saying that there is some form of identity that sticks (but evolves). There is a hint of *ecosophy* here too; wherein care of the self informs care of wider issues, but the important point is to not become too rooted in the bloody soil.

R: So, diffraction rather than reflection. I am still wondering about the relationship with Romanticism. There is a kind of white male heroism; where do you position yourself? Are you critical?

W: As mentioned before. [*Above.*] This is something to be aware (wary) of; there were large areas of the research dominated by an impactful male presence. For example, within certain readings of the history of minimalist music you could be forgiven for thinking that there were really only Cage and co. doing anything meaningful—this gives a very limited, male-centric, occidental (despite some of their influences) view of what was happening in the field. Unfortunately the approach of this research means it can become entrapped in certain framings—perhaps this is another instance of vulnerability. It is a concern but hopefully

there are some strong voices here that move away from that viewpoint (for example, Nan Shepherd and Karen Barad). It is an issue but hopefully it is diluted, if not yet directly addressed. As another example, the work of David Abram would never be described as heroic (in the pejorative sense that we are discussing here); it could though be heroic in its challenging of societal conventions. A thought that returns us to the modes of the ancient Cynics, where a form of heroism is present but one that ignores the primacy of the ego-I. Abram, the Cynics, and so forth could return any questions of heroism back to its (possible) etymology of ‘protector’. And then there are resonances of Heidegger’s shepherd. Perhaps this is also connected to aspects of the Nietzschean *übermensch*.

R: How do you see yourself in relation to the baggage of the heroic?

W: The prominence of vulnerability addresses that, and also the rejection of the Picturesque. Terms like ‘conquering the landscape’ are often bandied about in adventure circles but it has also become something of a media myth that echoes a certain out-dated way of viewing a human / non-human relationship. Most runners would not take that stance and have great respect for the landscape they run with(in). This way of working is certainly not an attempt to be heroic, but it is through one of these forms (that could be labelled heroic in certain simplistic frames of reference) that a required vulnerability is accessed.

R: You use the word vulnerability and a risk of exhaustion, injury; can you say more about how you are theorising vulnerability and the way that you use it?

W: Running is obviously strenuous, and can lead to injury. It is an attempt to take these more overtly bodily vulnerating processes into the exertion of writing, and into the situations of the PhD itself—the sensations felt today for example—the bodily aspects of the PhD experience. The work attempts to avoid separating those facets whilst also recognising the differences. There is a potential for the shared approaches to mobilise something new; something unexpected.

R: ... and social vulnerability?

W: [*Indicating the word body.*] Some of the writing in here creates a vulnerability in this present situation.

R: Can you say more about that in terms of writing and the viva?

W: There are different ways of [*Inaudible.*] In a similar way to endurance running, in the writing you can get to a point where you are highly vulnerable. There is no point in stopping and giving up (despite the temptations). Ultra running has a similar quality (similar problems) that can be borrowed or understood. It gives endurance; an ability to sustain, to survive, the exertion of writing.

R: There is a dialogue about being in the writing. Your sense of yourself is very precarious. Is it an affect that you are after? Being lost and vulnerable and exhilarated? Is it the affect that you are after? How much is this vulnerability available to the reader?

W: It is not an affect, it is a hazard perhaps. It can come down to the level of engagement of the reader but it is trying to find tactics or techniques to share, to conjure up, that sense without replicating it, without reflecting it. Like Hamish Fulton's work. The walk has happened; the viewer cannot be there. There is a difference happening, between what the writer felt and what the reader is feeling.

R: [*Inaudible.*] ... novel, a strategy. Is that in your mind?

W: To a certain extent, although readers might not recognise that vulnerability. The writing of other parts became more difficult. It is not fully about getting the reader to identify with that.

R: It is almost like finding oneself ... it is a hope.

W: You cannot second-guess; that is where diffraction opens a door.

[WRITING *is invited to leave the room.*]

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ii. Kathleen Jamie, "A Lone Enraptured Male," *London Review of Books* 30, no. 5 (2008): 26.

## CHAPTER -1 | INTRA-DUCING

### *I | research intensions*

This research aims to:

explore the extent to which notions of *parrhēsia* and *becoming* can be mobilised in the articulation of British landscape experience through and in art practice;

interrogate whether, and how, ‘exertion’ can be deployed as a concept and/or methodology in artistic research and fine art practice;

critically examine writing in and as fine art practice, and the possibilities it might afford ‘art writing’ as thesis writing in the context of fine art practice-led research.

### *II | research meshwork*

Research is not conducted in a state of isolation (even in those periods when it is undertaken alone) from ‘external’ influence; the process and position of the research continues in a constant state of flux as relationships and linkages weave together and/or loosen. To define a research context with absolute fidelity is arguably a futile exercise (given

the preceding understanding), however it is important to here explicate the more pertinent aspects of the terrain of this research (building a context in which it may be assessed) and its meshwork of ‘intensions’.<sup>2</sup> As I will elucidate in this chapter, the following have all contributed to the formation of this thesis: individually authored sources of theoretical and literary inspiration (ranging through poetry, ‘art writing’, text in art and academic sources to offer just four examples), information and guidance; specific environmental conditions in which this research progresses (locations for fieldwork, the passing of the seasons, and life’s little ironies); administrative frameworks within which the research is carried out; and the selected and/or emergent methods and approaches (and their associated heritage).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling ‘intensions’ is preferred here (over ‘intentions’) as an acknowledgment of Deleuze’s use of intensity which concerns the “becoming of qualities” rather than qualities based on presuppositions. Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2008), 38-39.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Life’s little ironies’ is a now proverbial term taken from the title of an 1894 collection of tales by Thomas Hardy. Thomas Hardy, *Life’s Little Ironies* (Oxford: Oxford, 2008). The broader contributions outlined here could collectively be identified as “relational objects of thinking”; however, in this research the status of ‘object’ is extended to include (for example) processes and environments. Katy Macleod, “What Would Falsify an Art Practice? Research Degrees in Fine Art,” in *Broadsides 5*, ed. J. Swift (Birmingham: University of Central England, 2000), 1.

## II.i | *speaking between*

This thesis incorporates an expansive bibliography of references but within this number lie a select few individuals who provide particular energy to the research. These individuals (e.g. Karen Barad, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and W.S. Graham), their works, have been used in different ways at different times and sometimes the brevity of their reference belies the significance of their impact. For instance, works may provide a catalyst or act as a mechanism to pass (parse) a problem through or they may express an idea in a way that the writing of the research was unable to. The reference to an individual's text is not to be seen as an attempt to claim their ideas and use them in too rigid a way or to fixate on the details of an individual's methodology; instead, it is an acknowledgment "that the novelty of a thought can disturb us and lead us toward unforeseen lands, lands which are not those of the author but are *our own*."<sup>4</sup> The breadth of the bibliography becomes a meshwork on/in/with which the writing of the thesis builds those 'unforeseen lands' and beckons an artistic context.

Three broad characters (characteristics) haunt the landscapes of this research: the Romantic, the Cynic and the tactician. The Romantic has

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<sup>4</sup> François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event Together with The Vocabulary of Deleuze*, ed. Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith, trans. Kieran Aarons (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 140. It is to be hoped that the irony of using such a quotation in such a location is indicative of the humour of this research.

been a life-long companion and finds presence here for a perceived proximity to, and celebration of, nature and the role those loosely aligned with the Romantic movement have played in the significant progress of landscape art in Britain. However, the Romantic does not go unchallenged, as traits of anthropocentrism and self-absorption are identified and confronted in this writing. Further, Romanticism frequently deals with the figure of the outsider either as subject matter or as a characterisation of the artist or poet themselves. This notion of outsider begins to question boundaries, an action that is further progressed by the fuzzy nature of defining Romanticism—a precise origin is almost impossible to identify as members of the ensemble seem to be expelled as quickly as they are enrolled. This research mobilises this slipperiness of definition to move across artforms (for example sound works, writing, and text/image manipulations).

The figure of the outsider takes on stronger definition when the (ancient) Cynic is discussed; a much older figure, but one with many similarities to the Romantic. In the discussion of the Cynic, there is a challenging of the status quo, a desire to lead a simple life, and a dislike of hierarchies. But there is also humour and play within the Cynic's repertoire, a characteristic that is vital to this research (particularly their use of word-play in light of the aims of this research around *art writing* and thesis writing). Somewhat paradoxically, Cynics operate tactically, that is, their

strategy is to employ tactics. And so it is that the third of the characters states their presence in this research. Tacticians eschew rigid positionality and operate via methods of skirmish, surprise and adaptability. A ground is not required for the tactician, except for the contradictory one of uncertainty. The character of the tactician extends the research potential of the Cynic or Romantic outsider. But it also becomes a highly productive approach in undertaking ‘emergent’ research where flexibility of response and awareness of potential are vital to the ongoing development of this research.

Beyond these general characters there are a number of individuals whose thought and writings have been vital to this research and who ought to be introduced ahead of the melee of words. Gilles Deleuze finds a presence in this research for his (and Guattari’s) non-linear approach. There is a joy and vitality to his writing but also a (translated) style that demands a lot of the reader. Deleuze’s influence on this research encompasses both his way of expressing ideas and specific concepts themselves. Deleuze (and Guattari’s) *rhizome* model is highly pertinent to this research as, once more, it supports modes of thoughtful and tactful experimentation from a beginning in the middle.<sup>5</sup> The Deleuze/Guattarian notion of *becoming* has played an increasingly prominent role in this research for its potential in discussing relationship

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<sup>5</sup> Zourabichvili, *A Philosophy of the Event*, 208-9.

to landscape whilst avoiding a reduction to an idealised harmony. Although playing a lesser role, François Zourabichvili’s reading of Deleuze provides a rich inspiration and a seam that would reward much closer attention.

Despite being a rather unusual choice in discussions around landscape, the work of Michel Foucault also informs this research. His work on Cynicism is fundamental to this research’s reading of ancient Cynicism. Additionally, Foucault’s notion of ‘care of the self’ is highly relevant to this work and its use of long distance walking and running which, as methods are introduced in the context of exertion. More abstrusely the Foucauldian reading of *parrhēsia* proves very rich when applied to any relationship with landscape.

Karen Barad’s mobilisation of *diffraction* as a methodology provides her introduction into this research. However, the primacy given to *diffraction* gives way to a sharper attendance to the Baradian notions of *intra-action* and *cutting together-apart*. Furthermore, as with Deleuze, Barad employs a way of writing in a selection of her published essays, which provide useful lessons in subversion of textual structuring and formatting conventions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In particular see Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart,” *Parallax*, 20:3, (2014): 168-187, doi: 10.1080/13534645.2014.927623 for its play with temporality and reading.

The poet W.S. Graham makes frequent appearances throughout this research. His work has held a fascination for years, growing from an interest in the St. Ives' artists (and in particular Peter Lanyon whose work has also afforded a vibrant influence on this writing). Graham's humorous, dark grappling with words has been a constant boon during this period of research. It also provides remarkable insight into the creative act through the creative act—there is an exertion there that tears away at/from the page.

## II.ii | *on being practice-led*

This research is *practice-led* and is located within a Fine Art context. The concept of *practice-led* emerged from research undertaken in the United Kingdom in the 1970s and 1980s and was gaining significant traction by the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> In a 1996 paper, Carole Gray defines *practice-led* research as:

firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly

methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners in the visual arts.<sup>8</sup>

Echoing this already fairly broad definition (and acknowledging the difficulty of defining it) could be added The Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) briefer definition of *practice-led* as “research in which the professional and/or creative practices of art, design or architecture play an instrumental part in an inquiry.”<sup>9</sup> To add further fuzziness to these broad definings there is (perhaps understandably) little attempt to address the material expression of the practice and so the ‘practice’ of *practice-led* can range across an exceedingly broad terrain.

The practice of this research has no singular mode (or output) but for the most part it is occupied with forms of thinking, writing and performance (and extends into walking and running) that arise through the inhabiting of the (multi-faceted) situation of doctoral research in the context of Fine Art. Not only does the practice not inhabit a single medium but it also frequently strays into the territory of other disciplines (performance, literature and poetry in particular). The practice can be labelled *trans-disciplinary*; a stance, an approach, that removes a need to “adhere to

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<sup>7</sup> Carole Gray, “Inquiry through practice: developing appropriate research strategies,” accessed 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/ngnm.pdf>.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Chris Rust et al, “Review Report: AHRC Research Review Practice-Led Research in Art, Design and Architecture,” version 2, Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2007. Space is also given in the report to previous attempts to describe *practice-led* research (notably by Christopher Frayling and Donald Schön) along with acknowledgment of “practice as research.” 11-12.

and/or mimic” a specific field.<sup>10</sup> This approach again echoes the presence of the tactician. Furthermore, trans-disciplinarity permits an acknowledgment of boundaries without a need to be constrained by them (or indeed set its own—a counter-productive move given the spirit of this research and its work with Baradian *cutting together-apart*).<sup>11</sup>

In the context of doctoral research submissions, a *practice-led* approach often signals that the submitted thesis will combine a substantial written element along with some form of creative ‘artefact’.<sup>12</sup> The desire for a written text to accompany any other research output appears to be premised on a need for the research to be “understood and ‘read’ appropriately” (in order to be of doctoral level); the multiple readings of

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<sup>10</sup> “This tendency to be trans-disciplinary rather than inter-disciplinary in the context of art and ideas, rather than stay within a specific subject area also meant that the writing voice I was attempting to utilise had no particular disciplinary field to adhere to and/or mimic.” Kate Love, “An Exploration of Affect as a Methodology for Examining Experience and Writing as a Practice in the Context of Fine Art” (PhD diss. Central Saint Martins, 2009), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Griselda Pollock claims, “inter-disciplinarity only serves to ‘smudge’ out the interesting differences between disciplines whilst trans-disciplinarity maintains the boundaries between disciplines but hovers over them taking ideas and mixing from them at the same time.” Quoted *ibid*, 19.

<sup>12</sup> “Research projects in [professional and practice-based (or practitioner) doctorates] are normally located within the candidate’s profession. In practice-based or practitioner doctorates the candidate’s output involves practice-related materials. For example, in the performing arts, the output involves a written component which complements the practice-based element (this may be shorter than the traditional PhD thesis, and includes both reflection and context), and one or more other artefacts, such as a novel (for creative writing), a portfolio of work (for art and design), or one or more performance pieces (for theatre studies, dance, or music).” Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Doctoral Degree Characteristics* (Gloucester: QAA, 2015), 9.

an artwork can become a source of confusion, occluding the aims of the research.<sup>13</sup> However, despite the danger posed by occlusion, this research seeks to problematize this dynamic by blurring the difference between ‘writing’ and ‘artefact’ (whilst retaining the label of *practice-led* research) through the use of writing *as* practice. Therefore, within this research, the writing is to be understood in both its verbal and nominal forms; the verbal form providing a bridge to the performative aspect of this practice. This research takes its place amongst a growing scatter of *practice-led* doctoral research (emerging over the last twenty years) that questions relationships between practice and theory; art and writing; researcher and research.<sup>14</sup> These examples, and others, interrupt expectations of the textual form of doctoral research outputs in their efforts to articulate the above relationships in an appropriate way.

Research is an inherently creative process; it involves making connections, taking risks, and voyages into the unknown. At its very root, ‘research’ emphasises a running about, a wandering hither and thither (often from a position of not knowing). Whilst this discursive reading of ‘research’ may appear unhelpful in some paradigms, such an approach is crucial in

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<sup>13</sup> Rust et al, “AHRC Research Review”, 12. The Review’s authors also cite a source from the field of education requiring research to be “clear in design and dissemination through careful and systematic approaches.” *Ibid*, 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Hayley Newman, “Locating Performance: Textual Identity and the Performative,” (PhD diss. University of Leeds, 2001) and Elizabeth Price, “A demonstration of a relation between thinking and doing: sidekick; and other unfinished work; undead,” (PhD diss. University of Leeds, 1999).

the context of this artistic *practice-led* enquiry. A literal interpretation of ‘research’ then provides fuel for the fieldwork of actual walking and running so vital to this research. Furthermore, it is observed that “artists often begin something without knowing how it will turn out. In practice this translates as thinking through doing.”<sup>15</sup> The doing of running, walking, writing, performing in this research provides identifiable modes with which to enmesh thinking, or from which thinking emerges. A thinking that is entirely corporeal. Rust et al echo this quality of uncertainty so vital to artistic *practice-led* research and they suggest that it is in recognising the tension between this unpredictability and “the need to develop a rigorous framework for knowledge” that the research attains validity.<sup>16</sup>

### *II.iii | a note on doctoral research*

Given the acknowledgment of “relational objects of thinking” in Section II above, and the status of the doctoral context (as a medium) in the practice of this research, it is important to offer some (albeit brief) reference to the requirements of doctoral research and attendant conventions and environments of the host institution.<sup>17</sup> Most

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<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, ed., *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2013), 7.

<sup>16</sup> Rust et al, “AHRC Research Review,” 13.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Birmingham City University provides both ‘guidance notes’ and ‘regulations’ for research degree students.

emphatically doctoral research must either contribute new knowledge or extend existing theory in the relevant field(s) via a period of systematic scholarly and critical investigation.<sup>18</sup>

The institutional architecture and structures of supervision and assessment become a form of landscape in and of themselves or rather, in their ‘relationality’ they become a part of the terrain of this research and are not solely a context that it exists within. The impact of this context cannot be understated. For example, institutional regulations inform student progress and monitoring and examination procedures. On the latter point, they lay out the features and requirements of the physically submitted thesis (for example: line spacing, page size, method of binding, and titling). The form of the finally submitted thesis for this research moves beyond conventions whilst it conforms to regulations in a further emphasis of the terrain of the research.

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<sup>18</sup> Quality Assurance Agency, *UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (Gloucester: QAA, 2014), 30.

### III | *pursuing the medial way*<sup>19</sup>

Methodology (etymologically speaking) is the ‘collecting’, the ‘gathering’, the ‘speaking’, of the way of going. It is the logic of the pursuit and it articulates a sense of movement in the form of ‘going after’ among, amidst or between things. The ‘going after’ of this research is realised through the exertions of running, walking, writing, thinking, performing, and so forth.

#### III.i | *approaches*

In this research, ‘writing’ in its many forms (or voices) is of significant importance. The writing of this research is a malleable term: it is the thesis itself and it is a performative action. The written text forms a record of the performance of writing, that is, the (written) thesis becomes a record of a performance, a performance that is the writing (and reading) performing itself (themselves). It must also be remembered that the writing is not undertaken in isolation but is born from an intricate web of activities that engage the activity of writing in a rhizomatic

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<sup>19</sup> The etymology of ‘methodology’ is found in the root components of *meta* + *hodos* + *logos*. A translation of which offers an activity of speaking of (*logos*) the pursuit of (*meta*) a way (*hodos*). *Meta* also carries suggestions of being amongst or in the middle—a productive link with the model of the *rhizome*.

arrangement.<sup>20</sup> In the etymological depths of the word ‘exert’ is discovered a movement of attaching ‘out of’ or ‘from within’—it is a herniating action that finds an equivalence in Deleuzian *becoming* where there is a foregoing of identity for a less fixed status. Paradoxically, within this research the exertion(s)—writing, running, thinking, performing and/or walking—provides a ‘within’ from which to reach out in an action of *becoming*-.<sup>21</sup> In short, the exertive methodology of this research emerges from the research itself.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to their exertive contributions, walking and running prove vital to this research as activities of *solvitur ambulando*.<sup>23</sup> This fieldwork provides opportunities to explore ideas away from the computer screen and/or manuscript page, through a mind-body that is placed under increased physical exertion of long (mainly solitary) walks and runs in upland Britain. The rhythm of these excursions (and exertions) provides

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<sup>20</sup> For an introduction to the *rhizome* see Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2012), 3–28.

<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that ‘running’ involves both the bodily act of running and the ‘running about’ of discourse; that is, there is a discursive edge to the running.

<sup>22</sup> A brief introduction to emergent methodologies can be found in Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, ed., *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 6.

<sup>23</sup> *Solvitur ambulando*: a Latin phrase meaning ‘it is solved while walking’. The phrase is attributed originally to Diogenes of Sinope and finds echo in Friedrich Nietzsche’s declaration “Only those thoughts that come by walking have any value.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols Or, How To Philosophise With the Hammer*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1911), 6.

a form to the thinking and writing that become present in the topography of the wordly terrain. Moving with the landscape and its impact upon written composition has a heritage that is expanded upon in Chapter 3, Section XII. The diverse contexts of running and writing also place thought into a 'position' of disjunction; a conceptual arrangement that plays an important role in this research for its emphasis on difference (and addition of breadth to the terrain). Furthermore, the exertions of walking and running provide additional rationale for discussion of landscape.

As part of this research a period of training in sound recording and manipulation was funded. Poet Mark Goodwin delivered the training and in addition to the technical lessons learned many conversations fruitful to various aspects of this research were had; sound permeates through multiple aspects of this writing.

Barad describes diffracting as a *re-turning*, "not by returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew."<sup>24</sup> Barad also here cites Donna Haraway's claim that "diffraction does not produce 'the same' displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication,

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<sup>24</sup> Karen Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction" 168.

reflection, or reproduction."<sup>25</sup> *Diffraction* is an approach of differences, of how differences make a difference. Within this research a common thread is traced between exertion and *re-turning* wherein the action of exerting implies (or implicates) a somewhat reciprocal act of *re-turning*. The exertions implicit in individual methods utilised within this research are expanded to later offer both a methodology and a conceptual theme held in a form of autopoietic continuity.<sup>26</sup>

### *III.ii | intermezzi*

Cursory explorations of many of the concerns within this doctoral research pre-date the official commencement of the study, however the application process provided an intensely focused period of consideration to develop a point of immersion from which to continue (and expand) the research.<sup>27</sup> These specific factors combined with an ongoing "enthusiasm of practice" and a locus of investigation—walking, running, filming, writing, archival research—in upland mid-Wales (selected for

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 172. It was Donna Haraway who first extended the use of *diffraction* beyond classical physics and into feminist theory, data analysis, education and cultural studies.

<sup>26</sup> Autopoiesis is an action of self (*auto*) creation (*poiesis*) and was proposed by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in 1972. See Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: the Realization of the Living* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> In his manifesto for performative research Brad Haseman suggest that *practice-led* researchers "tend to 'dive in', to commence practising to see what emerges." Brad Haseman, "A Manifesto for Performative Research." *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, no. 118 (2006): 100.

the combined pragmatic reasons of accessibility and lack of existing knowledge of the area) provided the research with the required momentum and an accumulation of material with which to experiment through exercises in disjunctive groupings (of previously incongruous material).<sup>28</sup> As research progressed it necessarily shifted in content, inclination and direction, adopting a Ship of Theseus mode of being/*becoming*- where identity is maintained despite radical (or rather, rhizomatic) overhauling.<sup>29</sup> This was an arrangement that was maintained through recourse to the operational abilities of the hashtag and how it groups and identifies, yet apparently permits difference to thrive.

### *III.iii | word play*

As a titular focus and an aspect of a method (and research aim), language is vital to this research. Language is treated here as a protean, malleable substance, where its possibilities are opened up through the word play of etymology, pun, neologism, paradox, poetry and so forth—this is a play of words in and of themselves individually but also the play created

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 99-100.

<sup>29</sup> “The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned had thirty oars, and was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting in new and stronger timber in their place, insomuch that this ship became a standing example among the philosophers, for the logical question of things that grow; one side holding that the ship remained the same, and the other contending that it was not the same.” Plutarch, *Theseus*, trans. John Dryden, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/theseus.html>

between words. This word play performs the elasticity of language, an elasticity that, as is explored in subsequent chapters, is exploited by Cynics and Romantics. Rather than camouflage language, this (word) play aims to reveal a greater breadth to words and how they are used. This latter sentiment echoes Deleuze and Guattari when they state that a “language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence.”<sup>30</sup>

Within this research, metaphors (and analogies) become literalities (rather than modes of re-production); they are diagrams to inform behaviour and permit expansion of this research. For Manuel DeLanda the difference comes down to the metaphor “embodying a purely linguistic analogy [whilst a literality is] an engineering working diagram.”<sup>31</sup> A ‘literal’ mode in the thought of Deleuze (and by extension Guattari) is championed (and made his own) by François Zourabichvili who warns, “the very word metaphor is a trap”; arguing that *becoming* (to take just one example) refutes metaphor.<sup>32</sup>

The etymology of ‘etymology’ expresses a study or logic of the ‘true sense’ of a word. Etymology therefore can be read as a ‘radical’ activity, in the

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<sup>30</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Manuel DeLanda, “Homes: Meshwork or Hierarchy?” *Mediamatic Magazine* 8, no. 3 (1995), accessed 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <https://www.mediamatic.net/en/page/8931/homes-meshwork-or-hierarchy>.

<sup>32</sup> Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 139.

sense that it deals with the root of a word. Given the earlier stated alignment of this research with a rhizomatic model, this ‘radical’ reading would clash with the spirit of this research and so, instead, the role of etymologising should be seen as an opening up of the treasury of words. Not an opening up to their component parts but a celebration of the interior richness of words, a move which also exposes a vulnerability in language. The words vulnerate and are vulnerated through this writing.

### *III.iv | other landscapes*

Whilst this research has woven a singularly identifiable terrain of words through the performative act of writing this thesis (including the incorporated activities of drafting, editing, and formatting), a number of other traces record the movements of this research; traces that are just as much part of the wordly terrain as they are terrains (or voices) in their own right. These additional or alternative modalities include: an online sketchbook (utilising the WordPress personal publishing system); sound and video files; published texts and academic presentations.<sup>33</sup>

Maintenance of the online sketchbook provides a polyvalent platform that includes conveying the systematic gathering and comprehending of

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<sup>33</sup> The online sketchbook can be found at: <https://romancingthebritishlandscape.wordpress.com>. See Appendix I for details of previously published works.

research material (particularly in respect of the categories and tags that allow tailored arrangement of material in multiple form).

### *IV | speaking of words*

Specialist terms and neologisms recur throughout this thesis. Their presence is signalled by use of italics; a formatting decision that also lends the terms a form of proto-hypertextual tagging through its subtle emphasis—italicised words become slightly distanced from the surrounding text.<sup>34</sup> Where the term is that of another author, the first instance of the term/neologism is footnoted. In all cases, except *becoming-*, the term is constructed in accordance with the preferred construction of the term’s author.<sup>35</sup> In the case of neologisms that have emerged from the research it is intended that the accompanying

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<sup>34</sup> Given the printed format of this writing it can never be truly hypertextual but can begin to adopt certain tropes of hypertext. The italicizing alerts the reader to either be aware of a neologism or consult the glossary. In the case of titles and foreign words it is hoped that this use will be apparent without further consideration.

<sup>35</sup> *Becoming-* is generally discussed without the hyphen when a specific *becoming-* is not signalled. Within this research choice has been made here to retain the hyphen as it reinforces the multiplicity of the term and also adds something of a reaching hand to the work of Karen Barad. With regards to an author’s preferred construction an example here is Barad’s ‘cutting together-apart’ which is generally constructed in this way but has sometimes been constructed as “cutting/together/apart.” For example in, Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today* 3, no.2 (2010): 240–268, doi: 10.3366/E1754850010000813.

discussion will critically justify their formation. In both cases, the italicising performs a role of proto-hypertextual highlighting that identifies key strands within the research.<sup>36</sup> Italics are also used for titles (of publications, works of art, foreign words and so forth) and occasionally as emphasis. Lastly, all quoted text is formatted as per the original author's intention (including italics and so forth used for emphasis) unless indicated by the use square brackets.

As stated in subsection II.ii, awareness of 'writing' as both a noun (a body of text) and a verb (the performing of writing) is vital to this research. Where clarification may be necessary, this difference is signalled in the text by parenthesised 'n.' and 'v.' respectively. This vital distinction will play an increasingly important role as the writing proceeds.

### *V | a "view from nowhere"*<sup>37</sup>

Chapter 1 provides an overview of (British) Romanticism, ancient Cynicism and the history and use of tactics; as discussed above, the three

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<sup>36</sup> A glossary of specialist terms is provided towards the end of this thesis on pages 228-9.

<sup>37</sup> David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 75. Here Abram critiques the notional position of scientific detachment. Whilst it will be declared almost impossible to hover above (or survey) the terrain of this research in a detached way, this section provides a form of introductory outline of the successive chapters.

key characters of this thesis. From these overviews, specific characteristics are drawn out and their relevance to this research is introduced. These specifics include the fuzzy nature of defining Romanticism along with examples of specific British Romantic artists with concerns sympathetic to this research (for example, the physical exertions of Coleridge, Turner and Wordsworth in pursuit of inspiration). Within the discussion of ancient Cynicism the practice of *parrhēsia* is highlighted and expanded to explore its potential in relation to landscape. Tactics are found as a common thread between Romantics and Cynics and the action is extended here to propose a 'hands on' aspect of the tactical approach. The chapter concludes with a challenge to the ego-I.

Given the fundamental position of writing to the aims of this research, Chapter 2 explores the history and development of writing as practice and medium in fine art contexts as well as overviews of related practices of sound art, creative writing, performance writing and *art writing*. The development of hypertext and (computer) scripting are also touched upon here. Finally, the role of voice in writing is explored in this chapter, especially with regard to the contentious figure of the author. At the same time the voice of this research becomes more insistent, more pronounced even.

Chapter 3 critiques the notion of ground and then takes cultural, geological and geographical turns as it explores the development of the

concept of landscape. Here Tim Ingold's more fluid reading of landscape is introduced and is expanded to consider the notion of flow. Further forms of terrain or surface are also considered, as a connection between cartography and topography is made. The chapter concludes with the introduction of the neologistic term *intra-ruption* and consideration of *parrhēsia* in relation to landscape (and their implications for this research; once more echoed by the 'voice' of the research-writing that increasingly and (paradoxically) stutteringly enunciates the unique contributions of this research).

Chapter 4 brings together the broad terrain of gathered matter of the preceding chapters and returns attention to the original aims of this research via the dynamic of the hashtag and the impulse of *poiēsis* (rather than the division of the practice/theory coupling). In the process the potential of the concept of *lanscape* is animated via *becoming-* and *intra-rupting*. Here the voice of the research is attended to most carefully and its unique contribution is apprehended.

And finally, a comment on the format of this submission: as mentioned above (in subsection II.iii) the format of this submitted thesis stretches the conventions for a PhD thesis, yet it conforms to institutional regulations. The format of the submission is a continuation of the performance of the writing through its structure of repetition and paradoxical scales of handleability. The construction process of the

submission engaged a repetitive exertion and in turn requires a greater level of exertion (compared to a standard book format) from the reader in their encounter.

## VI | *a guide*

The Abstract, Contents Page and this chapter provide a guide to the terrain of writing that succeeds (and includes) this point (and beyond, below). This 'guide', like a walking or climbing guide, provides access points but does not preclude the exertion(s) required to move through the terrain. The greatly varied terrain of the writing encompasses zones of both intricate detail (convoluted contours, re-entrants, mazes of barely distinguishable trails) and sweeping, airy, open sections. There are changes of pace and intensity, and voice. The practice of exertion and the exertion of practice permit this research voice. This 'guide' offers to aid navigation of the terrain and will aid reading of the topography. The writing terrain of the ensuing chapters enfolds both the practice and theory of this research.

A note to the reader-listener: on occasion the verbal scatters may seem esoteric, irrelevant (irreverent?) and disjointed when set within more traditional doctoral frames of reference. However, be advised, each scatter should be seen as a strange product of half-concealed adits to systems from where rich veins are being mined. A curious form of

mining though, where there is no robbing of resources, instead there is an augmentation ... an admixing. The underground systems slowly and unsteadily emerge from this process; their own process. Processing, these early words lead paradoxically in- and outwards.

## CHAPTER 1 | DIAMOND DOGS: PARRHESIC MOVES

Our meddling intellect  
Mishapes the beauteous forms of things;  
—We murder to dissect.<sup>38</sup>

### I | #BritishRomanticism

The designation Britain (or Great Britain) is a multiple and contested one. There are three main readings of the label: firstly, and most simply, Great Britain is the largest island in Europe and comprises the geographically (including sea-level) determined landmass that contains Wales, Scotland and England (this designation may be extended to include the dependent islands surrounding the main island. To extend this label to the whole collection of islands off the north-west coast of mainland Europe is to talk of The British Isles though); secondly, Great Britain is a political entity that dates back to the start of the eighteenth century when the Acts of Union united England and Wales with Scotland (the United Kingdom being formed when Ireland, and later solely Northern Ireland, were united with Great Britain); lastly, and most complex to define, (Great) Britain is a cultural entity.

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<sup>38</sup> William Wordsworth, “The Tables Turned: An evening scene, on the same subject,” in William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 81-82.

As a socio-cultural entity Britain adopts aspects of the first two designations and adds the influences of geology, prehistoric activity, toponymy, invasion and even flora and fauna.

Geographically the definition of Great Britain occurred about 8,000 years ago when violent sea level shifts resulted in a breach of the land bridge that connected the future island to mainland Europe. Animals (including humans) and plants became detached from the mainland population and began to develop ways to adapt to the marine climate and the more limited terrain. 2,500 years ago the Ancient Greeks knew Great Britain as ‘Albion’ (perhaps a reference to the *albus* (or ‘white’) of the White Cliffs of Dover or the hibernal climate).<sup>39</sup> A little later Prettania (*Prettanikē* in Greek) took precedence: Prettania is the ‘Island of the Pretani’ which possibly means ‘Island of the painted ones’ in reference to the practice of body painting with woad among the native tribes. It is not a great phonic leap from Pretannia to Britannia (and Pretani to Britons) and it is as Britannia that the Romans would come to know Britain. The addition of ‘Great’ does not reflect the nation’s status on the world stage but originates from the means to differentiate the larger island from the smaller one (Ireland) and/or from Brittany in northwest France. Further

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<sup>39</sup> See for example Hannah Crawforth, *Etymology and the Invention of English in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 90-91 or Alexander Macbain, *Etymology of the Principal Gaelic National Names, Personal Names, Surnames to Which is Added a Disquisition on Ptolemy's Geography of Scotland* (Stirling: Eneas MacKay, 1909), 34.

complication to the question of Britishness comes when the terms British and English are elided. As noted above, England is only one part of Great Britain but sometimes the labels are used interchangeably (often mistakenly, occasionally intentionally).<sup>40</sup>

No nation sits in isolation (not even islands). As with all nations Britain's identity has been, and continues to be, reworked by a series of forces, (evolving technologies, immigration, mass media influence, invasion, and so forth). Each new force leaves a mark of its influence (on language, organisation of the social or legal system, or diet) and so the notion of a pure nation becomes a myth. As Richard Lewontin observes:

Britons, so conscious of their race, are, in fact, an amalgam of the Beaker Folk of the Bronze Age, the Indo-European Celts of the first millennium B.C., the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Picts of the first millennium A.D., and finally the Vikings and their parvenu grandchildren, the Normans .... [Hence] the notion that there are stable, pure races that only now are in danger of mixing under the influence of modern industrial culture is nonsense.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 37-8. There is a slipping between the labels English and British throughout this section, this in order to align the thinking with quoted sources and is not to suggest a wholesale exchangeability between the terms.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Lewontin, *Human Diversity* (Scientific American Books, 1982), 113 quoted in Manuel DeLanda, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Swerve, 1997), 115.

Yet, from amidst this cultural soup national identities form. For Nikolaus Pevsner language and climate are the two great premises for national identity, however, he does caution that these themes (and any others that may be used to indicate national identity, including the “nonsensical minutiae” of Sterne) are not permanent and neither will they be equally distinct at all times.<sup>42</sup> Rather than deal in simple statements, Pevsner suggests an analysis of the dynamics within polarities, for example: Turner and Constable; Decorated and Perpendicular architectural styles; or Hogarth and Reynolds. All are English in very different ways but with commonalities, for example, with Turner and Constable, Pevsner notes a focus on the atmospheric rather than bodies that is quintessentially English.<sup>43</sup> The ever-changing nature of the atmosphere of England is the stimulus and focus for both painters (and others besides): Samuel Palmer's visionary work is “gemmed with dew,” the moisture “steams out of Turner's canvases,” and “lays a haze over man and building in England which dissolves their bodily solidity.”<sup>44</sup> The moist climate, attention to incorporeality and immateriality, Pevsner suggests, may be the reason why British art has been the keenest to embrace the medium of watercolour. The instability of Pevsner's markers chimes with David

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<sup>42</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, “The Englishness of English Art: The Geography of Art,” The Reith Lectures, BBC, London, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1955.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, “The Englishness of English Art: Constable and the Pursuit of Nature,” The Reith Lectures, BBC, London, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1955.

Matless as he explores the English landscape; Matless takes something of a Foucauldian approach to national identity wishing to draw out “*historicity and spatiality*” from the “unstable heterogeneity.”<sup>45</sup>

Within the purlieu of this research the label ‘British’ is arguably more controversial than the presence of the term Romantic. Here the label ‘British’ should not be seen as a limiting device that cuts the figure off from the outside like the seeming myopic, xenophobic nationalism currently aligned with the more extreme elements of the political right. Neither is it the Majorian nostalgic take of Britain as:

the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers and - as George Orwell said - “old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist” and if we get our way - Shakespeare still read even in school.<sup>46</sup>

However, what has since become a much-ridiculed description does get closer to the point.<sup>47</sup> *British* in this research is not a repellent (in both senses of the word) badge of ownership, instead it suggests a collective of

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<sup>45</sup> Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 39-40.

<sup>46</sup> John Major, “Mr. Major’s Speech to Conservative Group for Europe,” John Major, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017, <http://www.johnmajor.co.uk/page1086.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Although the description does seem rather closer to the subset *English* than the broader *British*, and perhaps flags up the failing of the many who see the labels *English* and *British* as interchangeable as mentioned above.

cultural, geological, climatic, natural and socio-historical interactions (and *intra-actions* as later discussed) and enmeshings which, in their communing, leave traces, emitting an atmosphere that can be labelled ‘British’. Any ‘ownership’ claim therefore comes *a posteriori*, if at all, as the subject of the claim shifts and buckles. Rather than the fixed and dominating imperial model, this reading of national identity acknowledges that it is “defined by its creative chaos and fractal character, rather than by fixity and continuity” and, in the process, overturns presupposed unity.<sup>48</sup>

It is the imperialistic flag of ownership that too frequently comes bundled in with national identity that is problematic for this research; it becomes a symbol to crowd round and defend rather than embracing and celebrating the tangles and quirks of certain co-incidences that a nation distils. Certainly some of the geographical limits that define a nation are linked to apparently solid geological structures but these still have their mutability, just not on timescales that can be easily apprehended. As an

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<sup>48</sup> John E. Drabinski, “Shorelines: In Memory of Édouard Glissant,” *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française* 19, no. 1 (2011): 1-10, doi: 10.5195/jffp.2011.473 Here also, inspired by Glissant, Drabinski argues for a “poetics of the mangrove” wherein the singular root is replaced by a multiple rootedness reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari’s *rhizome* structure. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3-28. The very term *identity* here becomes a problem too, stemming as it does from the Latin for *same* an oppositional form of thinking is immediately established (and the binary of same/other) as anything or anyone dissimilar to a standard is excluded. Perhaps within the dynamic between identity and multivalence a better impression is achieved.

alternative is “a narrative of the nation without finite borders or a homogenous subject,” where multiple national identities may be inhabited and where Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s polyvalent “storytelling” can replace the “singular truth” of what has been critiqued as a linear, Western, patriarchal history.<sup>49</sup> Any truth in this model is found in caring for rather than defending an isolatable knowledge—the nationalism becomes “narrated through love and heterogeneity.”<sup>50</sup>

The above fluid expressions of national identity also support (rather than subjugate) regional and cultural variations; these apparent subsets cannot be contained by the (geographically) larger fluid identities but are able to flex and shift to permit the coexistence of mismatched components where some aspect of the minor may burst beyond the confines of its apparently larger container. There is an apparent paradox at work here: traditional Venn diagrammatic views of the situation no longer hold and the image of ‘geometrical nesting’ becomes obsolete, moving away from corraling fixed entities and towards consideration of an agency’s

potential to change topology and dynamics yet retaining a form of cohesion that permits identity; an open-ended identity of possibilities.<sup>51</sup>

In this research the logic of the hashtag is utilised as a multiple, dynamic, shifting scene that sets its own outline via its appellation. In a digital re-working of *The Ship of Theseus*, it asserts that an identity can persist even once all the (apparently) formative elements have departed or altered, or established further identities. This algorithmic thinking enables the digital and the British landscape to be brought together in the computer game *Sir, You Are Being Hunted*.<sup>52</sup> To situate their game, designers at Big Robot developed a procedural engine called the *British Landscape Generator*. This generator “is unique in that the intention was to generate a vision of ‘British countryside’, or an approximation thereof.”<sup>53</sup> In order to do this the game’s designers:

identified a number of features in the countryside that typify the aesthetic wanted, and seem to be quintessential in British rural environments. Possibly the most important element is the

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<sup>49</sup> Loran Marsan, “Trinh’s rewriting of nationalism Creating New Spaces in Third Cinema: Trinh T. Minh-Ha Rewrites the Narrative of Nationalism With Love,” *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media*, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017, <http://refractory.unimelb.edu.au/2006/07/04/creating-new-spaces-in-third-cinema-trinh-t-minh-ha-rewrites-the-narrative-of-nationalism-with-love-loran-marsan>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>51</sup> Or as Karen Barad puts it “a politics of possibilities.” Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 246.

<sup>52</sup> *Sir, You Are Being Hunted* (Bath: Big Robot, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Geoff Manaugh, “British Countryside Generator,” *BLDG BLOG*, accessed 5th January, 2015, <http://bldgblog.blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/british-countryside-generator.html>.

‘patchwork quilt’ arrangement of agricultural land, where polygonal fields are divided by drystone walls and hedgerows.<sup>54</sup>

The scripting and computations that help *Big Robot* to generate this approximated British landscape seem to be an accelerated version of the sort of physical forces that W.G. Hoskins opened a nation’s eyes to in his seminal book *The Making of the English Landscape*.<sup>55</sup> The ‘natural’ landscapes of Britain are etched, folded and piled with the traces of former or ongoing human activities. Many easily read the form of the British landscape now, as the activity that Hoskins outlined has become mainstream and not restricted to select geographers, archaeologists and psychogeographers. According to Hoskins it can now be appreciated that:

a commonplace ditch may be the thousand-year-old boundary of a royal manor; a certain hedgebank may be even more ancient, the boundary of a Celtic estate; a certain deep and winding lane may be the work of twelfth-century peasants, some of whose names may be made known to us if we search diligently enough.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of The English Landscape* (London: Hodder & Staughton, 1960).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 14.

The likes of Turner, Constable, Wordsworth and Coleridge each emerge from a certain Britishness but artistically (culturally) reinterpret this and feed further complexity into the shifting dynamic image that is British. This data set may also have the tag ‘Romantic’ applied to it.

In the introduction to his thematic exploration of Romanticism David Blayney Brown is careful not to pin down too firmly what Romanticism is or where it came from, the back cover blurb only loosely fixes Romanticism as Baudelaire’s “‘way of feeling’ rather than a style.”<sup>57</sup> Much of what is today known as ‘Romantic Art’ seems to have been retrospectively collected into a sanitised version of Romanticism, a sort of Romanticism Lite, where what is socially acceptable is reframed and pushed forward in order to woo the tourist crowds and be considered acceptable to the delicate sensibilities of the ‘Academy.’ Indeed, as Raymond Lister observed, in the ‘later’ Romantic period “people’s minds turned away from Romantic fervour into bourgeois respectability, conformity and literal realism.”<sup>58</sup>

Romanticism is frequently observed forming against the backdrop of the various political, societal and geographical upheavals occurring across

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<sup>57</sup> David Blayney Brown, *Romanticism* (London: Phaidon, 2001). Furthermore, as we know, style is “the foreign language system inside language.” Gilles Deleuze in Yve Lomax, *Passionate Being: Language, Singularity and Perseverance* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2010), 141.

<sup>58</sup> Raymond Lister, *British Romantic Art* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1973), 50.

Europe in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This act of foregrounding would suggest that there is some remove between what is happening within art, literature, music, and thought and the 'real' world. If the binaric dynamic of foreground/background is not used then the forming of Romanticism might be viewed as a reaction against something: another art 'movement'; a way of thinking; or a perceived social ill. These both appear to be very neat binaric arrangements but do not reflect the intricacies of Romanticism's spread, appeal and controversy along with the paradox of the 'style's' culturally embedded position whilst individuals are marginalised.

A mainland European origin for Romanticism is suggested by the term's Latinate etymology. The 'way of feeling', advocated by Romanticism, was certainly strong in Germany and France, but was also felt in Spain and the trade route of course reached Britain. Chronologically too the term's origin is difficult to pin down. Blayney Brown offers Friedrich Schlegel's 1798 *Athenaeum* article as an (approximate) official birth date of Romanticism but then offers the enticing idea of "pre-Romanticism", as growing for a handful of decades before this: an initial suggestion that Romanticism is ongoing and merely varies in intensity.<sup>59</sup> As Blayney Brown further observes, this 'thing' that is Romanticism, does not cleanly break from Classicism and certainly does not become a fully subscribed

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<sup>59</sup> Blayney Brown, *Romanticism*, 15.

and overriding code for its brief life (before, apparently, withering into whimsy from the mid-1840s).<sup>60</sup> Another reading: John Berger generously bookends *his* Romanticism with Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* of 1762 and Marx's *Capital* of 1867 and suggests that "historically" is *the* way to fully understand Romanticism (rather than by subject, spirit and force, or "something to do with the English weather").<sup>61</sup> This sneer towards the "English weather" definition of Romantic Art is perhaps aimed at John Piper who observes, "abiding also in the romantic painting of this country [a] sense of drama in atmosphere, in the weather and the seasons" and Raymond Lister felt the Romantic vision was greatly aided by the British landscape *and* climate.<sup>62</sup> Both Piper and Lister extracted from the nebulous haze of Romanticism a specifically British strand that was probably drizzly as well as hazy.

Romanticism is beginning to reveal rhizomatic characteristics. What emerges is Romanticism's slipperiness; its avoidance of simple designation and definition. It moves across genres and geographical boundaries, it will apparently imbue a host for maybe a decade and then disperse; and seemingly lives beyond its death. Romanticism, as with so

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Blayney Brown offers an 1846 text by Baudelaire as an obituary for Romanticism.

<sup>61</sup> John Berger, *Landscapes: John Berger on Art*, ed. Tom Overton (London: Verso Books, 2016), 106-7.

<sup>62</sup> John Piper, *British Romantic Artists* (London: Collins, 1942), 7 and Lister, *British Romantic Art*, 163. These two opinions also match one of Pevsner's premises of (English) national identity mentioned above.

many of these –isms, is not fully definable, the labels should not be seen as exclusive or oppositional: Romantics may exhibit Classical tendencies or Enlightenment sympathies for example. However, there are certain characteristics of later Romanticism that run counter to the Romantic spirit traced in this research—characteristics that re-present the Romantic (rather than embody it)—using an over-reliance on nostalgia or whimsy for example. Within this mid-nineteenth century decline it seems there can be traced three main fates for British Romanticism: firstly the forging of new forms and ideas by those openly rejecting the label; secondly the pursuit of a descent into becalmed Romantic pastiche; and thirdly the flight of the Romantic spirit.<sup>63</sup> The fleeing spirit can be framed as heritage, or a debt owed to an earlier generation, but it can also persist unrecognised in other ways.

The Romantics convened here in this writing spit on their canvasses, wander the pathless fells at all hours of day and night, and have visions of trees filled with angels.<sup>64</sup> This Romantic does share some of the

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<sup>63</sup> In the first of these fates it must be noted that certain Romantic attitudes were often adopted (but repackaged); for instance the counter-Enlightenment attitude of the Modernists. Romantic pastiche can be traced in the work of the painter Charles James Lewis and the poet Charles Swinburne to offer just two examples. Regarding the latter fate, the British Romantic spirit can be argued to have fled in the mid-1800s only to resurface with the appearance of the British Neo-Romantics almost a hundred years later.

<sup>64</sup> J.M.W. Turner is widely known to have utilised all manner of unconventional materials in his work. His spitting on his canvasses was a minor talking point after the 2014 film *Mr. Turner*. This activity is based on a number of historical records for instance as quoted by Wyllie: “[He] preferred to spit in his powder colours to damping them with water,”

characteristics identified by Blayney Brown for there is: a certain reacting against the status quo (but not in a simple oppositional sense); a constant mutating (its form, course and vision); a defining (but only partially) by what it is not; and the process of rejection once an established identity is (externally) applied.<sup>65</sup> Also present are a desire to explore the complexity of the world and to celebrate, rather than solve, the apparent confusion. Malcolm Yorke sums up this latter Romantic spirit (in his study of *genius loci*) as a desire to:

smash [the Enlightenment] clockwork mock-up of the heavens, to put magic and mystery back into things, and to turn the world adrift once more in a wild and unpredictable universe.<sup>66</sup>

Continuing in this vein, Walter Pater stated that, “The essential elements, then of the Romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty.”<sup>67</sup> The defining of beauty may have become more problematic now and the Keatsian equation of “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” is

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and Moyle: “[Turner] was the prototype for the physical painters of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in his particularly corporeal approach to work, sometimes scratching away paint with his nails, and stopping it out with a sponger or shirt sleeve. Impatient, working fast, a drop of saliva on the canvas often served its purpose. James Wyatt told Farington he had seen Turner ‘spit all over his picture, and, then taking out a box of brown powder, rubbed it over the picture.’” W.L. Wyllie, *J.M.W. Turner* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), 34 and Franny Moyle, *Turner: The Extraordinary Life and Momentous Times of J. M. W. Turner* (London: Penguin, 2016).

<sup>65</sup> Blayney Brown, *Romanticism*, 8.

<sup>66</sup> Malcolm Yorke, *The Spirit of Place* (New York: St. Martin’s Place, 1989), 15.

<sup>67</sup> Lister, *British Romantic Art*, 23.

probably not all that needs to be known for curiosity disrupts the reliance on beauty as an end.<sup>68</sup> Curiosity should not seek an end; its only end, if it can be described thus, is the seeking itself. Furthermore, embedded in curiosity should remain the sense of care that the word holds in its Latin root. This is care as attention (*viz. attend to*) where a certain awareness drives the curiosity beyond distractive definitions.

For some Romantics this attending to was achieved through the undertaking of strenuous physical exertion. In addition to the (possibly) apocryphal episode of having himself tied to a ship's mast, and despite his often questionable health, J.M.W. Turner was not averse to walking twenty-five miles in a day "rapidly sketching all the good places of composition he met."<sup>69</sup> The Wordsworths and Coleridge too were happy to be out walking and wandering in all weathers, in all terrains and at all times of day. In fact Coleridge is sometimes credited with the first recorded rock climb when he writes in a letter to Sara Hutchinson of becoming temporarily stranded on a rock ledge as he 'gambles' on his descent from Scafell on an August afternoon in 1802.<sup>70</sup> A challenge to the binaries of culture/nature and self/other via an embodying of practice

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<sup>68</sup> John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in *Poems*, ed. Gerald Bullett (London: Dent, 1982), 191-2.

<sup>69</sup> Lindsay, *J.M.W. Turner*, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Scafell in Cumbria is England's highest peak and the ledge upon which Coleridge became stranded is Broad Stand, an infamous feature that has proven inconvenient, injurious and sometimes deadly to those who travel between Scafell and Scafell Pike.

can be described in these activities. An embodying that sums up the sensuousness of (British) Romanticism as it seeks to, "examine and revel in all aspects of human activity and the phenomenon of the world in which we live; [and] cultivate every part of the human psyche and every aspect of the bodily sensations."<sup>71</sup> This does not align with the colloquial view of the romantic artist as self-absorbed anachronism out of touch with the world—it is closer to the attuned beings that David Abram writes of in *Spell of the Sensuous* where, by acknowledging:

links between the inner psychological world and the perceptual terrain that surrounds us, we begin to turn inside-out, loosening the psyche from its confinement within a strictly human sphere, freeing sentience to return to the sensible world that contains us.<sup>72</sup>

So, rather than being out of touch with the world in its broadest sense, the Romantic is (at worst) out of touch colloquially; out of touch with the world of society (out of touch with the *typhos*). But it is not that Romantics sought to oppose popularity and public acceptability per se, it is their embodied practice that has placed them in a position of dissonance, of liminality. Indeed, this position, according to Victor Turner, permits the outsider artist/poet, "a statusless status [...]" which

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<sup>71</sup> Lister, *British Romantic Art*, 4.

<sup>72</sup> Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 262.

gives him the right to criticise all structure-bound personae in terms of a moral order binding them all.”<sup>73</sup> The ‘vagrant’ Wordsworth (for example) requires the society for dissemination of his ideas but also places himself at a distance from (or outside of) it. The ambiguity and multiplicity of liminality is particularly well-suited to the (British) Romantics, as individuals they occupy these positions in different ways (or occupy different (liminal) positions in different ways), positions that do not remain constant throughout individual lives either.

And, the society was not fixed and rigid either. Sometimes the society in question would be the art academy where only the ‘right’ type of artist might be permitted—in this place J.M.W. Turner was welcomed yet John Constable had to plead for many years to be admitted. Given the many pen-portraits of these two giants of English painting it would be easy to conclude that it should have been the other way round. Turner is pictured as the cantankerous and uncouth dauber of puzzlingly empty canvases and Constable as the genteel, c/Conservative landscape painter, friend of clergy and gentry, who painted easily comprehended scenes of rural England. In fact Turner *was* the outsider but an outsider within the establishment, a paradoxical position akin to that of the precedent of the (ancient) Cynic.

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<sup>73</sup> Victor Turner quoted in Gary Lee Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 131.

## II | ... *This Cynic This Cynic This Cynic This ...*

We children of the future, how *could* we be at home in this today?<sup>74</sup>

The Cynic and the Stoic have both been abused by history, by society, by Christian moralists and seekers of a fixed and unwavering form of logic. Today, robbed of their capitalisations, only poor shadows remains in the modern cynic and stoic—sceptical, ill-seeing and thick-skinned: descriptions not altogether wide of the mark in the cases of some individual Ancient Cynics, but certainly over-simplified. Dig deeper into this surface and broaden out the horizon to find the smear of these tribes through a history of thought. In a contest of societal acceptance the Stoic eases ahead of their ‘canine’ forebears who just show a bit too much of everything for popular taste.<sup>75</sup> Where the Cynic is accepted their image is made more respectable and their ascetism is embraced.<sup>76</sup> Through this history, the Cynic-wanderers’ knapsack (*pēra*) is turned out—the contents pillaged and scattered—while the erstwhile bearers are named and shamed and sent to the asylum as punishment for their degenerate

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<sup>74</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 338.

<sup>75</sup> Along with a possible etymological link between Cynic and dog (the Greek *kunikos* means ‘dog-like’) Foucault observes several characteristics of the Cynic that can be aligned to the canine and goes on to observe that once labelled as such certain of the Cynics played up to this role. Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 242-3.

<sup>76</sup> This is particularly the case for the ‘soft’ Cynic described below.

habits.<sup>77</sup> The critics of the Cynics take items from the *pēra* and use them for their own ends, moulding them into isolatable *truths*, whilst dismissing and ridiculing the erstwhile bearer.

As befits the territory the simplicity of the labels ‘Cynic’ and ‘Stoic’ belie a much more complex set of relationships yet a family resemblance persists. Simply put, around 400BCE Cynicism found a galvanised identity in Diogenes of Sinope, whilst Stoicism was born from this identity about a century later, as Zeno (of Citium), the progenitor of Stoicism, found his philosophical feet through listening to the teachings of the Cynic Crates. Within Cynicism can be found varying levels of dedication to the simple life as the ‘literary’, ‘soft’ or ‘hedonistic’ Cynics are peeled away from their ‘true’, ‘hard’ or ‘ascetic’ cousins.<sup>78</sup> Within Stoicism the level of adherence to Cynicism can be seen as one of the greatest variables, however, certain principles keep these two philosophies within the same general family; for instance, the exhortation to lead a “life according to nature” (*kata physin*).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Pēra* variously translates as travelling bag, purse, wallet, backpack, satchel but the word moves beyond this simple object definition and becomes something of a touchstone for the Cynic making them at home wherever they come to rest in the world (both in its geographical and societal senses).

<sup>78</sup> Peregrinus of Parium might be seen as an example of a ‘soft’ cynic whilst Diogenes of Sinope would be seen as the archetypal ‘true’ Cynic—the dog-king.

<sup>79</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of the Philosophers*, 6.71 quoted in Desmond, William, *Cynics* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2006), 132.

Live according to nature: a simple proposition. Not when it is recognised that this nature, this Greek nature, has been warped in its translation to English and the ensuing baggage that the Anglicised term now carries. The Cynic’s nature is not the Latin *natura* but, instead, it is *physis*—a much different concept. *Physis*, as with nature, is a polysemic concept but there the similarities end as *physis* reaches towards something more verbally active while the English ‘nature’ sits in solid nominal stasis or at its most extreme becomes the revered Nature. *Physis* reaches back to *phyein* meaning: “to bring forth, produce, put forth”; this is a productive, active, provocative form of nature where invention trumps discovery.<sup>80</sup> This *physis* is what drives Samuel Palmer’s ‘Valley of Vision’ and its absurdly fecund flora, albeit with a Christian gloss of the transcendent God figure.<sup>81</sup>

Yet, Nietzsche harangues the “fraudulent” Stoics who elevate this *physis* to something more akin to Nature in their “nature according to Stoa” for how can humans live according to nature when they are a *piece* of nature themselves he asks?<sup>82</sup> Exactly. Certainly the Stoics have turned their backs on shallow customs and blind obedience of conventions yet they

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<sup>80</sup> William Desmond, *Cynics* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2006), 133.

<sup>81</sup> See for instance the frothing apple blossom in Samuel Palmer, *In A Shoreham Garden*, watercolour, 1830, V&A Museum, London, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O17825/in-a-shoreham-garden-watercolour-samuel-palmer>.

<sup>82</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), 39 and 11.

have taken a simple Cynic principle and complicated it with a transcendent spirit in their quest for happiness (*eudaimonia*) despite their rejection of the notion of an external entity. The Stoics inspire their nature with *pneuma*, the breathing that binds the entire cosmos, but still Nietzsche seeks to overcome this accordance, just as the Stoics themselves had sought to overcome the very definition of nature (*physis*).<sup>83</sup> It is the organising of this nature into, “a unified whole,” that apparently suffocates its breathing into a single (final) breath.<sup>84</sup>

This exchange between the long-dead Stoics and the German philosopher comprises a swift series of blows (some faked, some feinted, some bone-crunchingly finding their target), wherein Nietzsche palpates (if the act of palpation can be undertaken with an iron fist or knuckledusters) the commitment to pull down societal barriers and not erect new ones in human likeness. In their own belief, their own self-belief, humans have strayed from their Cynic trail but concerns are similar there. Kicking against culture and custom the ragtag Cynics proceed. But when did culture peel away from nature? In the fifth century BCE the Sophists began to pull man and nature apart through

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<sup>83</sup> Was this a nature of the ‘external’ world as Cleanthes believed or the nature of personal human nature? For Sellars the tension in this apparent divide is what drives the principle, there is no barrier but the one feeds the other and this is further complicated by an ethics of selecting. See John Sellars, *Stoicism* (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), 127-9.

<sup>84</sup> Sellars, *Stoicism*, ix.

their distinction of *physis* and *nomos* (custom).<sup>85</sup> Humanity had reached a point where to be born is to be born into society and to be immediately bound by the rules of that society and in this unnatural binding liberty and happiness are compromised. The Cynics rather than reject this nature/culture split acknowledge it but explain that human beings must struggle to regain their rightful place in nature. For the Cynic this is a joyful struggle rather than a Christian post-Fall suffering struggle. As part of this struggle, humans are called to renounce the skins that separate them from nature: the city defences, the walls of homes, clothes and all the “unquestioned concatenations of customs that only lull [humans] into a different sort of sleep”.<sup>86</sup>

The true Cynic “walks abroad naked in the teeth of the wind and hardens himself to the point of feeling nothing”.<sup>87</sup> This hardening process is vital if the Cynic is to fulfil his role as the messenger who warns humanity of its own foolishness.<sup>88</sup> Paradoxically, to enact this messenger service, the Cynic puts himself at the limit of society through his actions; the Cynic

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<sup>85</sup> This division was very common in Sophistic thinking of the latter part of the fifth century BCE and can be observed in the writings of Protagoras, Hippias and Antiphon amongst others.

<sup>86</sup> Desmond, *Cynics*, 153.

<sup>87</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 130.

<sup>88</sup> I refer to the Cynic in the masculine for two main reasons: i) almost all recorded Cynics were men (a notable exception being Hipparchia) and Greek society gave primacy to the male; and ii) this emphasis, along with the use of ‘man’, references the use of the masculine form in Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

delivers a truth of sorts but this truth has been forgotten by the listener and this truth hurts. Today, this truth could be read as the human abuse of the planet: “[w]e are the killers. We stink of death. We carry it with us [...]. We cannot tear it away.”<sup>89</sup> These are not comforting words but a bloody and visceral summation of what humans have done through their blinkered obsession with *nomos* (societal customs, conventions, and laws). For the Cynic, rather than accumulate a distance, human curiosity should be engaged to explore this truth. It is too easy to cast the Cynic as a freak, despised by society. Yes, their actions may seem despicable but the reasons for their behaviour is to warn society against itself, to alert humanity to the *typhos* which conceals the true self and its present concerns.<sup>90</sup> As the Stoic Diogenes Laërtius recounts the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope: “described himself as a hound of the sort which all men praise, but no one [...dare] go out hunting [with].”<sup>91</sup>

Today, it could be argued that the *typhos* created by the egos of politicians and the power of big business has led society astray; what is now called ‘nature’ (nature fixed, nature as resource without any responsibility) can only be glimpsed through pollutant-heavy haze,

bureaucratic red tape, and rose-tinted nostalgia. All of these natures are heavily mediated—nature™, Nature Park, or nature-lite. According to Desmond, for the Cynic, “the only ‘nature’ to be known is what one experiences here and now,” but the skins that have been donned insulate us from what was once known more intimately.<sup>92</sup> Immediate experience becomes less valued as, “we shelter ourselves from the harrowing vulnerability of bodied existence. But through the same gesture we also insulate ourselves from the deepest wellsprings of joy.”<sup>93</sup> A homogenised, stupefying comfort is gained but the pin-sharp experiences of pain and pleasure is lost. This thesis asserts that it is through the vulnerability of exertion and risk that this acuity can be regained. This acuity that will cut through the *typhos*.

Humanity has been led astray by its leaders and by its own greed and this state of affairs now endangers individual selves. Humans have lost sight of how to care for themselves (in the Cynic-Foucauldian sense) and now think that this process requires ever-thicker insulation against the evils of the world; the evils of ‘nature’.<sup>94</sup> This evil of ‘nature’ comes packaged up

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<sup>92</sup> Desmond, *Cynics*, 138.

<sup>93</sup> Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 7.

<sup>94</sup> This attention to self is also fundamental in the ecosophy of Arne Naess and his followers. For Naess, self-realisation is traced back to “Spinoza’s *perseverance in suo esse*: to persevere in one’s own (way of) being, not mere keeping alive.” Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, trans. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 166. This mode of thinking is also present in Félix Guattari’s *Three Ecologies* where the *typhos* is rendered as a “pervasive atmosphere of dullness and passivity,” to be

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<sup>89</sup> J.A. Baker, *The Peregrine* (New York: New York Review Books, 2005), 121.

<sup>90</sup> *Typhos* literally means ‘smoke’ in Greek but was used by the Cynics to refer to the societal customs and conventions that should be cleared away in order to achieve *atyphia* (freedom from *typhos*) and so, self-rule.

<sup>91</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers Volume II*, trans. R.D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 35.

by the tabloid newspapers as the aggression of the gulls and foxes that attack innocent chip-eating pensioners and helpless, sleeping babies.<sup>95</sup> In this too neat summary, the exploitation of the earth's resources is all but ignored until it takes place in the backyard; even then the advice will be to look out of the front windows; averting eyes from the unfolding disaster. What is seen as the simple life is only complicating things further.

A small boy crouches by a stream, cups his hands and drinks. A bearded wanderer watches this scene and is shocked. "A child has beaten me in plainness of living," whimpers this dog-king as he throws away his cup.<sup>96</sup> A bearded, naked man is crouching at the edge of a stream. The gravel of the beach presses affirmatively into the soles of his feet. The warmth of the sun is reflecting back from the earth banks and boulders but the water is bracingly cold as he cups his hands, plunges them into the stream and drinks from the water; from the water that will not pass this

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challenged by the three-pronged articulation of "a nascent subjectivity, a constantly mutating socius and an environment in the process of being reinvented." Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2010), 45.

<sup>95</sup> Stories along these themes regularly appear in certain sections of the British press. See for instance: Mail Online, "Parents tell of horror as fox attacks sleeping baby," Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-125763/Parents-tell-horror-fox-attacks-sleeping-baby.html> and The Telegraph, "They swoop to conquer: seagulls win the ice cream war on St Ives beach" Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/tom-rowley/11038667/They-swoop-to-conquer-seagulls-win-the-ice-cream-war-on-St-Ives-beach.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Diogenes of Sinope quoted in Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers Volume II*, trans. R.D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 39.

way again.<sup>97</sup> Connections and references to Zen Buddhism, the Tao, Heidegger and Wittgenstein abound in the life and work of herman de vries but it would not be too much of a leap to also recognise certain Cynic traits in his life-work too. Beyond a cursory physical resemblance the Cynic's simple life can be heard in de vries' commentary, for instance: "nature is our primary reality. Our human environment, our human life-space in cities and factories and city streets and traffic is secondary reality for me"—surely this is firing a shot at *typhos*.<sup>98</sup> Also present is the idea that to be an artist is a way of life not just a coolly calculated career move. Like philosophy for the Cynic, art for de vries is a way of being. Furthermore, the art of de vries is not just the object that ends up on the gallery wall, it is also the theory—"his theory is not separable from his practice, nor his art from his life;" art is a verb that flows through de vries.<sup>99</sup> From the water that will not pass this way again, that same bearded, naked man will not cup his hands again. The quiet, settled scene belies a world in flux. It could be understood simply as the physics of the situation wherein the same water molecules will not flow the same way again, the river's bank and course will have changed (possibly only imperceptibly) on return, and the experiencer will have changed—will

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<sup>97</sup> herman de vries, herman, *drinking from the stream*, photograph, 2011-15. See: <https://frieze.com/article/one-take-whole-earth>.

<sup>98</sup> de vries quoted in Mel Gooding, *herman de vries: chance and change* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 43.

<sup>99</sup> Gooding, *de vries*, 24.

have learned new things, forgotten old ones and will have shed skin cells and hair. The proto-Cynic Heraclitus supposedly declared, πάντα ῥεῖ (*panta rhei*) "everything flows or changes."<sup>100</sup> This belief would be handed down to the Stoics to form the basis for a philosophy of life as struggle.

The push towards a world in flux is an attack on the fixity of being. Being ensnares the world in hierarchical binaries that privilege, "male over female, adult over child, human over non-human," but the notion of becoming destabilises these binaries, "not simply by inverting them, but by inducing a passage *between* boundaries such that both poles [...] dissolve in zones of indiscernibility as something new and uncharted emerges."<sup>101</sup> In this action any allegiances to overarching transcendence are undone and freedom from dualistic competition and compliance is attained. Instead, freedom to operate within a landscape where steady states temporarily settle and establish difference to their immanent field is possible. But caution must be retained so that this lack of certainty does not lead to inaction as Nietzsche warns with the image of the man who can only see becoming:

[he] would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flowing asunder in moving points and would lose himself in this

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<sup>100</sup> Even interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophy is prone to change but, whilst exact translations alter, the general thrust of a world in flux remains constant.

<sup>101</sup> Ronald Bogue, "A Thousand Ecologies," in *Deleuze | Guattari & Ecology*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 53.

stream of becoming: like a true pupil of Heraclitus, he would in the end hardly dare to raise his finger.<sup>102</sup>

The warning echoes on, a vital warning to alert us to the fact that although the rational self must be questioned an other *I* must retain a kind of focus. But this focus will not be in an exclusive, bounded entity. This warning will echo on and be re-encountered. Nietzsche, another Cynic. An other time.

### ***III | there's no I in parrhēsia***

Despite his societal status and his tiresomely publicised sexual frigidity (quite definitely not a man to satisfy his sexual urges in public) John Ruskin could be handed a Cynic's mantle. His championing of Turner (that vagabond outsider deep within the establishment of the Academy) showed Ruskin to be a man not of fashion but of passion. It was even Turner's later works that Ruskin would back, those works that vexed the public and Academy alike. These anti-fashion assertions grew in vehemence through the twenty years that Ruskin took to write *Modern Painters* and he followed this with an attack on Political Economy in

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<sup>102</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62.

essays such as 1862's *Ad Valorem*. Maybe only a mere Christianised 'literary' Cynic, Ruskin nevertheless wielded a sharp opinion.<sup>103</sup> A man seemingly out of touch with many aspects of society (but somehow of them too—or for them at least), he would declare:

THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.<sup>104</sup>

Although partially driven by an old-school Tory duty to the weak (based on a hierarchical birth right) Ruskin's sentiment strikes an accord with the Cynic's ability to luxuriate in the wealth of the world; not requiring owned, material wealth but, instead, the wealth to be found in truth. This stance would put Ruskin out of kilter with his middle-class audience, with the new captains of industry, and the economic commentators of the day, leaving him vulnerable to siege from the

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<sup>103</sup> For the 'soft' or 'literary' Cynic luxury is not always a forbidden land. If this luxury can be achieved from what is to hand, an opportunistic aspect to the Cynic could see them supping fine wines and eating peacock. This would, though, be frowned upon by the 'true' Cynic.

<sup>104</sup> John Ruskin, *Unto This Last and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer (London: Penguin, 1997), 222.

ongoing storms of societal customs and constructions. What use did new industry have for some abstract concept of truth? A tendency to speak his mind fits in also with the truth-telling frankness of the Cynics. It seems he was almost helpless to do anything but speak his mind; a mind imbued with all manner of themes that he would interweave in his lectures, letters and publications. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin dedicates a whole chapter to forms of truth and in the eighth aphorism he declares, "truth cannot be persisted in without pains; but it is worth them."<sup>105</sup> The ancient Cynics can almost be heard nodding in agreement: not only is the way of truth painful but it requires the ongoing struggle of practice too, as Ruskin further notes.<sup>106</sup> Here the Cynic concept of *ponos* is engaged, signalling both pain and work.

Now, whilst it is straightforward to confine the Cynic notion of *parrhēsia* to a simple frankness of speech—an outspokenness—it must be noted that the practice of 'truth-telling' has more broad-ranging implications as elucidated by Michel Foucault. In *Fearless Speech* Foucault unpicks the term and finds elements of frankness, truth, danger, criticism and duty.<sup>107</sup> But before these details emerge Foucault is quick to point out that in his

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<sup>105</sup> John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (Orpington: George Allen, 1889) 31.

<sup>106</sup> "Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of Truth cannot be will than of habit, and I doubt if any occasion be trivial which permits the practice and formation of such a habit. To speak and act truth with constancy and precision is nearly as difficult, and perhaps as meritorious, as to speak it under intimidation or penalty." Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 11-20.

inquiry he does not seek *the* truth; rather, he is interested in the dynamics of the truth-telling activity and its implications for the truth-teller (and their target). Dealing with frankness first, Foucault attends to the etymology of *parrhēsia* and its implied ‘saying all.’ From this he teases out the generally understood directness of speech and openness of heart present in the activity. Simple language is employed and the trickery of rhetoric is avoided. Further, the frankness signals that the speaker is speaking their own mind, but they are also the subject of this opinion.

Next, Foucault dismisses the “chattering” of *parrhēsia* that may arise if saying what is on one’s mind is taken too simplistically.<sup>108</sup> This is the wrong sort of truth. For Foucault, “the *parrhēsiastēs* says what is true because he *knows* that it *is* true; and he *knows* that it is true because it is really true” and in this statement belief and truth coincide.<sup>109</sup> And this possession of truth is aligned with certain moral qualities. For Ruskin this moral possession may translate as his birthright, but for the Ancient Greeks it connects with a certain vulnerability, a danger to the truth-teller.<sup>110</sup> That is not to say that Ruskin’s truth-telling would not be

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>110</sup> Foucault and Ruskin mentioned together create a sense of unease in this paragraph; an unlikely *rencontre* out here in the open landscape of the writing. Bonjour, Monsieur Foucault! Look, there is even a dog, what symbolism! But in their differing together much can be found and in his way Ruskin can be seen as a fairly typical outlier of Cynicism in its Christian form. Ruskin will continue as a touchstone as his unlikeliness reinforces the position of Cynics.

injurious to him, in fact his criticism of Whistler’s art can be seen as the catalyst for his final mental collapse. It is through the danger and risk of the parrhesic ‘game’ that the real *parrhēsiastēs* is found, for their truth is not that of the teacher, prophet or sage.<sup>111</sup> Foucault offers three examples of this risky truth-telling: in the first, the philosopher insults the tyrant and risks punishment (possibly even death); second, the *parrhēsiastēs* risks a friendship for informing a friend of their wrong-doing; lastly, the political *parrhēsiastēs* risks scandal and loss of popularity in their criticism of the majority opinion.<sup>112</sup> In his summation of the risk of *parrhēsia* Foucault underlines the relationship to the self that *parrhēsia* entails, a relationship that resonates with his fascination with the ‘care of the self’:

When you accept the parrhesiastic game in which your own life is exposed, you are taking up a specific relationship to yourself: you risk death to tell the truth instead of reposing in the security of a life where the truth goes unspoken. Of course, the threat of death comes from the Other, and thereby requires a relationship to the Other. But the *parrhēsiastēs* primarily chooses a specific relationship to himself: he prefers himself as a truth-teller rather than as a living being who is false to himself.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 15-19.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>113</sup> Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 17.

Foucault elsewhere further emphasises this point through the paraphrased voice of Socrates:

I know nothing, and if I care for you, this is not so as to pass on to you knowledge you lack, it is so that through understanding that you know nothing you will learn to take care of yourselves.<sup>114</sup>

The dynamic of the ‘game’ never settles as it is played out between the truth-teller and an other (person), the interlocutor. The need for this other is not in doubt in the parrhesic relationship and it would be assumed that they must be a human being, but maybe it could be thought otherwise. Foucault himself posits an other that is ‘polyvalent’ so it need not be assumed that the other is a sentient being.<sup>115</sup> A bond or relationship is required but why could the relationship not precede the related?

In his treatment of criticism in relation to *parrhēsia* Foucault introduces a necessary hierarchy but this could also translate as scale. In Ruskin’s writings he may be talking to those beneath him in class (and so, societal hierarchy) but he is also addressing the masses and in this mode he becomes the minority. Ruskin’s professional, societal and critical statuses are put at risk. It is important to note that in Ancient Greek society

*parrhēsia* was a right of citizens but this by definition excluded many (for example slaves, women and children). Indeed, to be a female Cynic involves a two-fold exiling. Lastly, Foucault deals with the aspect of *parrhēsia* that pertains to duty. It is in this duty that *parrhēsia* can be separated from forced truth-telling (as in through torture). As noted already, Ruskin felt duty-bound to speak truth.

Within the pale of this research the concept of *parrhēsia* is called upon in a number of ways but primarily in its relation to risk, for it leads to vulnerability yet it also requires a certain vulnerability, an acceptance of vulnerability, a shared vulnerability even. *Parrhēsia* is the courage of truth in the person who speaks and who, regardless of everything, takes the risk of telling the whole truth that they believe, but it is also the interlocutor’s courage in agreeing to accept the hurtful truth that is heard.<sup>116</sup> The parrhesic game implies a potential for ‘rupture’ in a relationship. In the work of art, *parrhēsia* could be re-purposed as an assaying device that is fed by the disjunction of *parrhēsia*’s challenge.<sup>117</sup> What if *parrhēsia* is read from a Baradian agential realist stance wherein “relations do not follow *relata*, but the other way around”?<sup>118</sup> The roles of truth-teller and interlocutor are differentiated by the parrhesic move.

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<sup>114</sup> Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 89.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>117</sup> “Art is the setting-into-work of truth,” Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 2008), 131.

<sup>118</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136-7.

Here, now, the parrhesic game can deal with the non-human; the exerting of *parrhēsia* must be tuned into.<sup>119</sup>

Societally there is discomfort and distrust at any conversing with animals let alone rocks, trees and mountains but this is if the discussion is to be limited to verbal communication.<sup>120</sup> As a first step any *sensible* contact between two parties could be considered and so the tread of running shoe on wet rock becomes a test of both parties and their relationship. For David Abram this sort of act is an exploration of kindredness of dynamism, wherein is enacted “an ancient and irrefutable eros, the kindredness of matter with itself.”<sup>121</sup> Also present within Abram’s model of dynamism is a sense of vulnerability that also accords with the parrhesic move; this vulnerability seems to allow for interweaving.<sup>122</sup> Isabelle Stengers is concerned by the “bridge-making” of Abram but his thinking has much to offer through its wonder and enthusiasm; instead

of a bridging that connects two sides, a disjunction that *cuts together-apart* will animate the discourse.<sup>123</sup>

#### IV | *is this it? Who cares?*

Rather than the Being of the *it* the Cynic adheres to a different code. The Cynic believes in a much simpler proposition where actions mean so much more than words.<sup>124</sup> The Cynic adheres to the *this*. This *this* is now; what is immediately at hand and certainly not in the lofty realms of science or the fug of the *polis*. Where the Stoics will have an opinion on matters of physics or logics the Cynic would answer with a truly down to earth response, one that pulls the ground from under the opponent and blows away the *typhos*—undermines their argument and the position it gives them. For example, on hearing somebody discoursing on celestial phenomena Diogenes of Sinope simply enquires, “How many days were

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<sup>119</sup> For Branham *parrhēsia* becomes the exercise of the freedom accorded by living ‘life according to nature’ (i.e. free from society’s customs). Robert Bracht Branham, “Defacing the Currency: Diogenes’ Rhetoric and the *Invention* of Cynicism,” *Arethusa* 27, No. 3 (1994): 346-8.

<sup>120</sup> However, David Abram does suggest that in talking to animals, plants and rocks an ‘honesty’ is required, a stance that could align with re-readings of Foucauldian *parrhēsia*. Abram does go on to note, “human speech is simply our part of a much broader conversation.” David Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 169-72.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, *Becoming Animal*, 29.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 58 and 302.

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<sup>123</sup> Isabelle Stengers, “Reclaiming Animism,” *e-flux journal* no.36 (2012), [http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article\\_8955850.pdf](http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_8955850.pdf) The “cutting together-apart” of Karen Barad will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart,” *Parallax*, 20:3, (2014): 168-187, doi: 10.1080/13534645.2014.927623.

<sup>124</sup> However, these actions may be language based but will employ language directly. Humour, pun and wordplay are the “chisel-stamp” of the Cynic’s ‘*modus dicendi*’. See R. Bracht Branham, “Defacing the Currency: Diogenes’ Rhetoric and the Invention of Cynicism,” in Robert Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, ed., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 87-100.

you in coming from the sky?”—the Cynic can only know through action, through doing; he must visit that star to discourse on it.<sup>125</sup> An apparently weak position when set in the frames of reference that require extensive knowledge but this is of no concern as the Cynic operates tactically. The strength is in the moment and being able to enjoy what is to hand (for the ‘soft’ Cynic this may be peacock meat, fine wine and gold but for the ‘hard’ Cynic this may just be the warmth of the sun).<sup>126</sup> Even for the ‘soft’ Cynic there is no desire for these luxury goods, they are simply there, ready-to-hand, accessible.

The Cynics arm themselves with the bare minimum that they need to win a confrontation. ‘Useless knowledge’ is rejected in favour of the ‘useful’—“knowledge of man and human existence” is placed on the side of ‘useful’ whilst all else becomes ‘useless’.<sup>127</sup> Foucault uses the advice of Demetrius to illustrate this point: for Demetrius, the Cynic should be a good athlete, and a good athlete is one who knows only the basic moves but knows them intimately; has embodied them. The good athlete will not be burdened with unnecessary learning but will utilise an economy of action honed through practice and self-care. Here again, the notion of

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>126</sup> Apocryphally, when Alexander the Great went to meet Diogenes (of Sinope) he asked the Cynic if there was anything he could do to help, “Yes,” said Diogenes, ‘stand a little out of my sun.’” As recorded in Plutarch, *The Life of Alexander*, chapter XIV, section II.

<sup>127</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 230-8.

‘care of the self’ and, by extension, caring for others returns, highlighting the embodiment of the concept; the Cynic really lives the Cynic life as witnessed in the concepts of *askēsis*, *ponos*, *parrhēsia* and *epimeleia* (to give just four examples). The Cynic continues to examine and test themselves throughout their life yet does not tie themselves to a fixed image: the Cynic does not adhere to a doctrine; rather it is a way of being that is the commonality.

It is clear that the Cynic is no respecter of definitions. However, stepping back a little, what this thing called Cynicism is must be called to account. It is no fee-paying members club with a comprehensive rulebook; rather it is a “body of loosely related ideas that, as a whole, remained *fairly* constant”.<sup>128</sup> This may seem a familiar concept as membership cards and oaths of allegiance are demanded from the Romantics. Although the Cynics had their teachers and their followers, and a core attitude, they were just as likely to contradict each other, as they would be to resonate together. This slipperiness of identity is further enhanced by the knowledge that very few original Cynic texts survive. What is known of the Cynics has generally been passed on through second-hand accounts or loaded (and partial) references in the writings of critics—the Cynic’s is a life of doing *this* not writing about *it*.

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<sup>128</sup> Desmond, *Cynics*, 6.

As much as their belief systems are hard to fix down so are the bodies of the Cynics. The Cynic is the wanderer who drifts across borders aware but without concern; the archetypal cosmopolitan—at home wherever they have their *pēra*. The *pēra* is the Cynic’s utopia and may be a physical bag filled with gold, wine and food (in the case of the ‘soft’ Cynic) or may be apparently absent for the ‘hard’ Cynic where the *pēra* has in fact become part of a state of mind. But in both cases the *pēra* becomes the *this*; it is *this-world* for the Cynic, very present and never referring to an over there or an over-arching principle. For the ‘hard’ Cynic this *pēra* is enfolded within them and they, within *this-world*. The cuts made in the pocket of this *pēra* create flight lines for the truths they are duty-bound to share.

The wanderer Cynic moves within a more-than-human cosmos. They wander (or are exiled) beyond the bounds of human society but their wanderings are undertaken within the cosmos which is their true home—at once they are both outsiders and insiders—and this home is also their body for their body is as much a part of this cosmos as the distant stars. In their bodily-belonging to the cosmos the Cynic becomes self-sufficient and any boundary between *me* and *not me* is made “porous and variable.”<sup>129</sup> Of course, this simple life does not come easily. There is a price to pay, there will be much misery (*talaipōria*) ... but supreme

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 179.

happiness will be the Cynic’s reward. The Cynic renounces all worldly goods (except perhaps their Cynic uniform of cloak, staff and *pēra*); severs any personal ties; leaves their family and does not even think about marriage.<sup>130</sup> The Cynic “has no family because his family is mankind; he has no children because, in a sense, he has fathered all men and women”—his devotion to this “universal family” prevents the Cynic from his own household.<sup>131</sup>

Without ties the Cynic undertakes a regimen, a life, of exercise and discipline (*askēsis*) that hardens the body and soul. Foucault identifies *askēsis* as the “short way, which is the difficult, arduous way which rises straight to the summit over many obstacles and which is, as it were, the silent way.”<sup>132</sup> The ‘silent way,’ for *askēsis* is a practical exercise of “destitution and endurance”, not one of discourse (*logos*) for Cynic actions often speak louder than words—Diogenes would undertake pointless physical exertions to underline the nonsense going on around him in the so-called civilised world but also to highlight the centrality of the body in Cynic thought (as opposed to the lofty, cerebral theory of

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<sup>130</sup> ‘Aspirant Cynic’ is something of a contradiction in terms for surely to aspire to being a Cynic is to fail. Rather the ‘aspirant’ Cynic must aspire to live life, ‘life according to nature’, and a side-effect of this may be recognition as a Cynic ... an uncomfortable form of recognition.

<sup>131</sup> Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), 158.

<sup>132</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 207.

traditional philosophy).<sup>133</sup> Whilst a life of *askēsis* is a hard one, “a toilsome and strange mode of life,” it also offers freedom from the petty disturbances of the everyday and the demands of society and its *nomoi*.<sup>134</sup> The suffering is furthered by adhesion to the pain of *athlos*. *Athlos* merges meanings to define a contest or fight with the pain and suffering of the athlete and so hints that this pain may lead to a prize. A Cynic thread trails on here (albeit heavily-laden with Christian symbolism) into the fourteenth century in Petrarch’s account of his (possibly fictitious) ascent of Mont Ventoux in Provence, France. Ostensibly this simple excursion was made purely “to see what so great an elevation had to offer.”<sup>135</sup> (Here, think back to Coleridge’s experience on Scafell, but for him the ‘gamble’ was in the descent.)

Despite this simply stated intention it soon becomes clear that Petrarch has more meaning he wishes to signify. For, even the selection of a climbing companion becomes a long, drawn-out process as Petrarch assesses the character of his many friends but finds them lacking; finally he chooses his brother. In a move symbolic of Cynic simplicity, early on in the climb the party surrender, “all such garments or other possessions

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia. How a Man May Become Aware of His Progress in Virtue*, 415, doi: 10.4159/DLCL.plutarch-moralia\_how\_man\_may\_become\_aware\_his\_progress\_virtue.1927

<sup>135</sup> Petrarch, “The Ascent of Mont Ventoux,” *The Medieval Source Book*, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014, <http://history.hanover.edu/early/petrarch/pet17.htm>.

as might prove burdensome” to an old shepherd who lives on the mountainside.<sup>136</sup> Do they also ask this shepherd, this carer of the flock, for his advice on ascending the mountain; how to look after themselves? Climbing again. The bulk of the ascent’s record is taken up with the two ways of the party: Petrarch’s brother adheres to the “direct path straight up the ridge” whilst Petrarch himself “weakly took an easier one which really descended” as it zigzagged across the mountainside.<sup>137</sup> In this cameo an analogue can be seen to the ‘two ways’ that Foucault observes in Christian Cynicism: Petrarch is taking the long way of *logos*, of discourse, whilst his brother moves via the Cynic short way (*suntomos odos*), the short cut and way of exercise and exertion.<sup>138</sup> After rest, reflection and soul-searching Petrarch finally commits to his brother’s no-nonsense approach and the party reach the summit where they are all dazed by the thin air and extensive view.

Petrarch marvelled at it all and then reflected on the last ten years of his studies and rejoiced in his “progress, mourned [his] weaknesses, and commiserated the universal instability of human conduct.”<sup>139</sup> Still arguably Cynic thoughts. By now the hour is getting late but before their descent Petrarch offers to read from the copy of St. Augustine’s

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 206-8.

<sup>139</sup> Petrarch, “Ascent of Mont Ventoux.”

*Confessions* which he has carried with him (obviously an essential item of climbing gear not to be entrusted to the old shepherd). Petrarch opens the book at random and reads:

And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains,  
and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers,  
and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but  
themselves they consider not.<sup>140</sup>

Given his desire to climb the mountain simply to see the view Petrarch is ashamed to read St. Augustine's words and berates himself for something even the 'pagan philosophers' could have taught him: "that nothing is wonderful but the soul, which, when great itself, finds nothing great outside itself."<sup>141</sup> An echo of course of the Cynic's 'useful knowledge' and a nod to the process of *epimeleia*—'care'. Shamed into silence now, Petrarch leads the party down the mountain as he contemplates St. Augustine's words. In the dénouement Petrarch offers a Christian gloss to his mountain experience, where inner truth and a teleological "journey toward the blessed life" become the moral of the tale.<sup>142</sup> However, beneath this, the Cynic process of self-training through *ponos* (labour and pain) open Petrarch up to the here, now and *this* of nature. It is

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<sup>140</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10.

<sup>141</sup> Petrarch, "Ascent of Mont Ventoux."

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

important to remember how these Ancient Cynic values, traits and actions become hidden within the trappings of more recent society.

Today, the direct honesty of these Cynic characteristics needs to be reawakened and shaken free of its comfort blanket of mis-definition. The Cynic's voice has become muffled as humans further deny their human-nature, but humanity still requires these bellwether Cynics and their uncomfortable truths. *This* must now be attended to.

"[W]ith great leaps, throwing himself through the air, crashing down the bracken and heather, skimming over rocks."<sup>143</sup>

It is quite a leap, but only a short way, from the climbing of Petrarch to fell-running, ultra running and endurance foot races but the exertion of this leap will be fruitful. To return to the Ancient Cynics for a moment ... the Cynics had no time for the pageantry of the organised games, crowd-pulling shows of strength and force, aligned to societal customs, to the *nomos*. However, there is much in the Cynic process of constructing an 'armature for life' that is a correlate of the training and attitude of certain types of athlete.

Whilst throwing oneself down a fellside at high speed does not seem the most appropriate way to care for oneself it is the caring for the self that

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<sup>143</sup> Fell-race report quoted in Richard Askwith, *Feet in the Clouds: A Tale of fell-running and obsession* (London: Aurum, 2005), 14.

ensures (generally) an injury-free race. The same could be said for long-distance endurance events; it is the regimen of care that inevitably sees the successful athlete through (be that ensuring the feet are in good condition, eating sufficiently, recovering well or maintaining a good mental attitude). This care for the self and its allied appropriate knowledge is key to minimising the possibility that an athlete becomes stranded in the mountains (so requiring the assistance of others resulting in a risk to their safety being out in potentially hazardous conditions). On the rare occasions that a rescue is required there is a mutual respect that the accident is not one brought on by lack of preparation or fitness for the hill. For the fell- and ultra runner material is pared down and an intimate knowledge of the landscape comes to the fore. So often the best runners live amongst the hills and the knowledge of the hills becomes embodied, the care and respect is present for both fells and self. Nettleton, in her article on fell-runners, suggests that both runner and landscape are ‘agentic,’ the fellrunner does not simply contemplate (at a remove) the fells but moves with(in) them—Nettleton parses the fell-running experience through a practice of the Shustermanian “somaesthetic” rather than a traditional ‘ocularcentric’ (Picturesque) aesthetic.<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately, this stance reintroduces the binary of the

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<sup>144</sup> Sarah Nettleton, “Fell runners and walking walls: towards a sociology of living landscapes and aesthetic atmospheres as an alternative to a Lakeland picturesque,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 66, No. 4 (2015): 759-78, doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12146.

mind/body apparently also present in the fell-runner’s rule of thumb for descending: ‘brakes off, brain off’. To offset this mind/body split listen to Nietzsche as he writes:

Man, like every living being, thinks continually without knowing it; the thinking that rises to consciousness is only the smallest part of all this—the most superficial and worst part—for only this conscious thinking *takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication*, and this fact uncovers the origin of consciousness.<sup>145</sup>

Here thinking becomes embodied and Nietzsche goes on to suggest that consciousness is a societal construct that might be aligned with the Cynic’s concept of *typhos* (and, by extension, *nomos*). ‘Brakes off, brains off,’ has simply become a societally acceptable shorthand for a much more complex and far-reaching process of embodied differentiation rather than separation.

Joss Naylor, arguably the greatest ever fell-runner, has lived his whole life in the Cumbrian Lake District. He is a retired shepherd and knows the fells through his job and knows the ways well as he follows the trods,

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<sup>145</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 298-9.

those half-dreamt lines of passage, of his flock.<sup>146</sup> Here, surely is an extension of the mind beyond its traditional cranial locus. The logic that underpins his athletic feats is an assemblage of the fell geology, the flock's wayfinding and his way of life. Many traditional fell races have their origins in 'guide races'; here the hill guides would race for bragging rights, increased business and sometimes monetary reward as they flaunted their knowledge of the fells and general fitness via sporting means. The appearance of 'hill guide' as an occupation had occurred due to the rising popularity of landscapes such as the Lake District brought about by the awareness raised by the likes of Turner and Wordsworth (and the Picturesque movement birthed by William Gilpin). With increased awareness came increased footfall and the new visitors wished to remain safe and so employed the help of locals who knew the land; these locals would often be shepherds too, or at least have accumulated their knowledge from that lifestyle. They were folk "for whom long days moving through the mountains [was] all part of the daily struggle for survival."<sup>147</sup> In these guides can be seen the echo of the Cynic *athletes athlios* (Foucault's "wretched athlete") and also a version of *ponos*.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>146</sup> The shepherd must 'listen' to the flock as well as command it, as Nietzsche (once more) wrote: "Concerning every party – A shepherd always has need of a bellwether – or he must himself occasionally be one." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), 104.

<sup>147</sup> Askwith, *Feet in the Clouds*, 57.

<sup>148</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 281.

Naylor's shepherding brings this writing back to Nietzsche, and then, via the flock folded on the hill in Palmer's *Coming from Evening Church*, to Heidegger and then, via the sheepfolds above Y Glonc, back to Foucault.<sup>149</sup> (The word-flock strays.) In *The Courage of Truth* Foucault summons the presence of the shepherd when he tentatively proposes that the Ancient Greek term *epimeleia* has an etymological link with the calling of *melos*. Where *melos* is a chant or a call: "For example, it is the shepherd's song (*chant*) calling back his flock or calling out to other shepherds, it is the song-signal."<sup>150</sup> Within the calling there is a sense of appealing that gives the concept a loop structure; the call is made out of care of self and for others.<sup>151</sup>

Foucault suggests, "Everyone must discover that he is in a state of need, that he needs to receive medication and assistance."<sup>152</sup> But, the treatment will be delivered by the self; in fact it is a preventative programme that must be undertaken regularly with the individual acting as a 'night watchman' challenging all entries to the city (of the self). This challenging and examination of the self leading to the unconcealed life is

<sup>149</sup> "Man is the shepherd of Being." Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*, 167; Samuel Palmer, *Coming from Evening Church*, painting, 1830, Tate Britain, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/palmer-coming-from-evening-church-n03697>. Y Glonc is an abandoned farmstead in the uplands of mid-Wales.

<sup>150</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 118-9.

<sup>151</sup> The image (and paradox) of the shepherd is discussed in greater detail in: Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 123-4.

<sup>152</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, 54-68.

termed *epimeleia heautou*. This ‘care of the self’, in contrast to an arrangement in which the gods (or physicians) will look after humanity (assuming their will and conditions are respected), brings a freedom (from a ‘greater’ entity) for the individual but it also introduces an element of concern, of anxiety.<sup>153</sup> ‘Care of self’ (or more broadly *Epimeleia*, the “great many-sided activity” as Foucault puts it<sup>154</sup>) as a way of being pre-dates the Cynics but is reworked by them to a principle in which the ‘care’ (as in worry or trouble) of the (Cynic) philosopher is “to take care of men’s care”; the philosopher becomes the physician of everyone, of humanity (‘the universal family’).<sup>155</sup> So it can be seen that Foucauldian Cynic *epimeleia* is not an exercise in self-absorption, instead discovered is a principle that ripples out to attain an ethical dimension in which life (*bios*) is privileged over the soul.

a thrilling leap down Coniston fell – something like 16 feet sheer drop taken at top speed ...<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 99-110 and Alexandre Lefebvre, “The End of a Line: Care of the Self in Modern Political Thought,” *Genealogy* 1, No. 2 (2017), doi:10.3390/genealogy1010002 Lefebvre notes that the French translation of *epimeleia* used by Foucault (*souci de soi*) translates to English as ‘care of self’, and so drops the definite article that may lead to mis-readings of an “essential self” existing in the principle.

<sup>154</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 110.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 112-14.

<sup>156</sup> W.C.Skelton quoted in Askwith, *Feet in the Clouds*, 15.

## V | *tactortactician*

In his study of *Modern Cynicism*, David Mazella contrasts the strategic approach of Platonic philosophy with tactical traits observed in Diogenean Cynicism via the writing of de Certeau.<sup>157</sup> Viewed traditionally (i.e. subserviently to strategy) tactics are of the now; they are reactive and of the moment. De Certeau in his oppositional re-reading of strategy and tactics sees tactics without “a proper locus” in contrast to the placemaking, position taking, ground holding of strategy, which without this base has nowhere “to stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids.”<sup>158</sup>

But if tactic’s subordinate role is unthought, the possibility of absolute exteriority from which the strategist pulls the strings is undone, as is the need for an oppositional dynamic or transcendent goal. To achieve this tactics move from being an approach employed by somebody (or something) to being the situation itself (that is, the situation becomes fluid and responsive, it is tactical and does not impose an *a priori*) and the art of the tactician becomes the ability to tacitly appreciate this turn of tactics itself.

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<sup>157</sup> David Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2007), 38-9. Mazella also explores here tactics’ link to Cynic *parrhësia*.

<sup>158</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 37.

But first the terms require unpicking. Starting with strategy: a dictionary definition offers that strategy is firstly, a “government or province under a strategus,” and secondly, the “art of a commander-in-chief; the art of projecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign.”<sup>159</sup> The latter meaning has a footnote that places tactic as a movement set to work by strategy, and so tactic arguably becomes subservient to strategy. The etymology of strategy is from the Greek στρατηγία (or *strategia*) the art of the leader of troops (i.e. a general) but also, more broadly, generalship. There is a further root in the Greek *stratos* that implies a spreading out—the notion of strategy acts with a breadth of impact that issues from a singular position of power external to an arena of activity. This is as true for Ancient Greek military commanders as for twenty-first century business managers.

Returning to the military arena, strategy is aligned with a whole war (whilst tactics subordinately deal with the battles) or, as the oft-quoted Clausewitz puts it, strategy is “the employment of the battle to gain the end of the war.”<sup>160</sup> Strategy is focused in ends achieved through universal means with the power ‘relation’ operating only in the downward/outward direction from the figure of authority. Certainly much planning is required in the strategic approach and there is room for some feedback to

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<sup>159</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “strategy.”

<sup>160</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War: Book III-of Strategy in General* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 1.

reconvene the thrust of the strategy, however, this movement remains unidirectional and monoptic (and potentially highly uniform in tempo and slow to change course). The strategic approach then can be likened to an optically or classically rational logic-biased regime. Where single vision and limited forms of feedback are present, the system lacks sensitivity in its imposition of its own vision of the world upon the world. The feedback becomes a form of mirroring and self-reference rather than a process to truly adjust and adapt response.

The traditional view of tactics sees them subsumed under strategy where they are highly controlled and choreographed. However, tactics can be different and could even be used to break strategies whilst paradoxically remaining a form of strategy in themselves. A dictionary definition of tactic at first merely offers us “relating to arrangement or order,” with a further, somewhat tautological reference to military or naval tactics.<sup>161</sup> Etymologically tactic passes through the Latin *tactica* to the Greek τακτική (or *taktike*) meaning ‘art of arrangement.’ With this root is uncovered some hint that the notion of tactics goes beyond an arrangement of troops (be they soldiers or business people) towards notions of *tekhnē* where a form of understanding or attunement is required to make subtle adjustments in situations, and further, that this *art* does not answer to an overriding strategy. (As an aside that will

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<sup>161</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “tactic.”

feedback below; tactic has an additional meaning relating it to touch that plays off of the Latin root of *tangere*.)<sup>162</sup>

De Certeau has made this sort of move and placed tactic in opposition to strategy rather than subservient to it. Furthermore, he aligns strategy with power, with the powerful, and so opposes this with a tactic that is the ‘art’ (or approach) of the weak and the poor.<sup>163</sup> To this set could be added the outsider, where the outsider is strangely very much within and amongst things. They are only ‘outside’ when viewed from a strategic standpoint that creates an exceptional form of outside. The panoptic strategist sits at a remove from the theatre of activity and operates upon this theatre as if it were a board game, they remain clean and detached (paradoxically, in this vectorial defining the strategist sits with the outsider it would seem).<sup>164</sup> The tactician operates within the theatre, “within the enemy’s field of vision,” and does so in a more reactive way and so with tactics come notions of ruse, surprise, “hunter’s tricks,

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<sup>162</sup> “Touch has been an object of study for centuries, going back at least to Aristotle’s momentous work on this topic. [I wish to join] with other feminist and postcolonial theorists in troubling the notion of touch as an innocent form of engagement and also, by implication, troubling its positioning in the history of philosophy as a mutually consenting act between individuals, free of culture, history, and politics.” Karen Barad, “On Touching—The Inhuman that therefore I am (v1.1),” *Power of Material – Politics of Materiality*, ed. Susanne Witzgall, 153-164. (Berlin: diaphanes, 2012).

<sup>163</sup> de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 37.

<sup>164</sup> Think here also of the wartime operations rooms where a version of the whole can be taken in in one glance. See for example Charles Cundall, *No 11 Fighter Group’s Operations Room*, Uxbridge, oil on canvas, 1943, Imperial War Museum, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/5783>.

manoeuvrable, poly-morph mobilities, jubilant, poetic, and warlike discoveries.”<sup>165</sup> Moving away from military (and to a certain extent sporting) tactics, as they are inevitably motivated by an end goal of victory over an enemy or opposition, for the tactician a victory, if it is present, is in the encounter.

Whilst strategy has individuality at its core, tactic has a versatility, a polyversality that hints at the multiple communicating encounters deployable. If the image of strategy as myopic is retained then for tactics a process that is thought through (and thinks through) the fingertips, taste buds, olfactory system, hunches, agitations, abrasions, and wonder should be imagined. This is tactics with a *tangere* root wherein no pre-planned result is aspired to and as such the agility and motility of the tactician offers the freedom of invention. “[T]o the real tactician even the smallest facts may be significant,”—underlining this multi-sensory attunement and embodied awareness present for the tactician but absent for the distanced strategist.<sup>166</sup> The cry of the *tactor-tactician* is ‘disturb not destroy’.

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<sup>165</sup> Claus von Bulow quoted in de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 37-40.

<sup>166</sup> Berger, *Landscapes*, 34.

## VI | *torque the talk*

Despite their latter day dwelling in the rarefied realms of high literature in their creative heyday William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge expressed a desire to speak (through their writing) in a more simple way. Wordsworth in the 1802 *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* explains their objective to utilise a style “really used by men” in whose domain “the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language.”<sup>167</sup> For Wordsworth there was a ‘plainer language’ born from the quotidian activities of rural labourers, a language which, “arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets”.<sup>168</sup> This criticism of capital ‘P’ Poets, by a poet, harks back to the Cynic criticism of those self-aggrandising philosophers who saw philosophy dwelling in discourse (shrouded in *typhos*) rather than being a way of living one’s life in the open air; a mode of being (free). The Lake Poets were effectively attempting to alter the shape of poetic literature in Britain. Wordsworth and Coleridge had no desire to live amongst the *typhos* of London’s literary circles; their lives were lived amongst the rural labourers and the

enfolded working landscape beyond England’s urban thrall. However, within these rural communities they would often be outsiders (particularly the London-bred Coleridge): for example, in the English West Country their politics led them to form certain bohemian acquaintances and their creativity saw them wandering the countryside at all hours, both habits that easily upset their more conservative neighbours. Even in Cumbria, despite their plainer language the poets did not speak the local dialect, they existed in a limbo state between the Poetic city and the rural domain of shepherds and tinkers. The desire of Wordsworth “to embody his thoughts in language” was challenged by “the sad incompetence of human speech,” but surely this faultline of incompetence only gives greater reason to continue improvising with language—was not this ‘incompetence’ of the language what gave the Cynics their power as they sought out weaknesses in words and used this to their advantage?<sup>169</sup>

Any declaration that the Cynics did not write is a massive oversimplification, whilst it is true that very little written evidence remains today this does not provide us with definitive proof that the Cynics were anti-literary. Yes, they excelled in the use of ‘speech activity’ to express their opinion, but they did also write. It has been suggested that

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<sup>167</sup> Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, 97.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>169</sup> William Keach, “Romanticism and Language,” in Stuart Curran, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 109. This point will be expanded later in reference to the work of Tim Robinson.

Diogenes himself, that most minimal of the Cynics, was the author of numerous texts. However, by criticizing a lack of writing there is a danger of introducing a hierarchy to the formats of philosophical discourse—history becomes the editor and dictator of value. If there is a Cynic aversion to words it is born from language’s hijacking by custom and societal constraint, so the Cynics changed the format of the discourse. In his article claiming a rhetorical origin for Cynicism, Bracht Branham notes that the Cynics shifted format away from the “familiar forms such as dialogues, symposia, epistles, memoirs, lectures, and treatises” by renewing traditional formats such as the proverb, they also exploited minor literary forms such as diaries and wills and imbued them with satire and burlesque.<sup>170</sup> For Branham, this Cynic shift of form completely re-draws the map of Greek literature (affecting both prose and verse) and provides the Cynic with yet another means to critique traditional genres of writing and thought.<sup>171</sup>

This process of re-mapping is completely in tune with the Cynic principle of altering the currency.<sup>172</sup> In shifting the literary forms of philosophical discourse the Cynics were altering, or defacing, the accepted notion of what philosophy should look like. It seems most likely

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<sup>170</sup> Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 329-59.

<sup>171</sup> Branham and Goulet-Cazé, ed., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity*, 85.

<sup>172</sup> For an explanation on the origin of this principle see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers Volume II*, trans. R.D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 23-25.

that the etymological proximity of the Greek words for currency (*nomisma*) and custom (*nomos*) provided the Cynics with all the ammunition they needed to re-locate a violent, physical (and treasonable) act of alteration into the social sphere.<sup>173</sup> The word-play much in evidence in Cynic practice was utilised to undermine the densest *typhos* of Ancient Greek society—the Cynics altered custom and accepted norms. Foucault offers ‘altering the currency’ (*parakharattein to nomisma*) as a defining principle of Cynicism.<sup>174</sup> This apparently simple principle also gives the Cynic a contradictory gloss as those customs that are open to alteration also include their very own. To expect a certain way of being from a Cynic is to expect the unexpected. This reading fits with Bakhtin’s reading of Diogenes as “a hero of improvisation not tradition,” who becomes his own “object of experimentation and representation”—in this way Diogenes evades societal processes of normalization.<sup>175</sup>

Through Cynic ‘speech activity’ the ‘technical language’ of traditional philosophy is ridiculed via the employment of plain speaking; speaker

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<sup>173</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 226-7.

<sup>174</sup> “Preparation for life,” ‘care of the self,’ study of what is useful, and living a true way of life are common to the Stoics and Epicureans so it is, for Foucault, the principle of ‘alter the currency’ that is the unique mark of the Cynic. Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 238-9. For Branham the unique identifier of Cynicism is its centralizing of the value of freedom (“and freedom of speech in particular” i.e. *parrhēsia*). Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 355. Interestingly, Branham notes that during the writing of his article he was completely unaware of “the centrality of the Cynics and *parrhēsia* to Foucault’s last work.” Ibid, n.75, 356.

<sup>175</sup> M.M. Bakhtin quoted in Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 335.

and the audience are bound together, at odds with, transversal to, the will of the *nomos*.<sup>176</sup> Aloofness of language is undermined and the delivery of the language becomes incorporated—spoken language, language at its most sensuous—is employed cuttingly, personally and violently, this is not a language to be written down and learned by rote but a language to be bent and twisted and launched at unsuspecting ears. Even the writings of the Cynics are full of life. Language is performing. As with so many Cynic ways paradox is at the heart of their use of language—they are speaking plainly but confusing and confounding listeners through their employment of “subversive wit, hyperbole,” neologisms and metaphor (the Stoics would extend this word-play with their highly creative use of etymology).<sup>177</sup> Those Cynic tongues are sharply barbed and their bark could be as bad as their bite.<sup>178</sup> In the hands of the Cynics, language is becoming a weapon; thought is becoming bodily. Thought and action (akin to theory and practice) are not placed in opposition, instead they are joined and embodied through an ongoing, iterative process of re-

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<sup>176</sup> Foucault in *Fearless Speech* prefers the term “speech activity” to distinguish the binding commitment of the *parrhēsiastēs* from the sort of commitment present in more general verbal exchange. *Fearless Speech*, 13.

<sup>177</sup> Robert Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 52. “[Etymology] enables the Stoic philosopher to recover the beliefs about the world held by those who first gave the gods their present names.” A.A. Long, *Stoic Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 71.

<sup>178</sup> For Branham it is in their “exhibitionistic or performative use of the body,” that the Cynics bring together *parrhēsia* and shamelessness (*anaideia*). Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 351.

mapping ... the cartography changes the landscape changes the cartography ... Philosophy is becoming physical and performed; there is an “irruption of intensity into thought.”<sup>179</sup> The performing is a disruption or disjunction (dis/ruption, ‘breaking’/‘apart;’ dis/junction, ‘join together’/‘apart’) or rather the disjunction is performing. The disjunctive thinking becomes an “adaptable actor” of embodied contradictions.<sup>180</sup>

Nietzsche’s literary feints (for instance, his use of aphorisms and verse, and employment of narratorial voice as provocation) can be aligned to the altering and shape-shifting of the Cynics. Marsden notes the violent physicality of Nietzsche’s writing when she likens his use of the aphorism to “a depth charge cast into the body of the reader” one that will ‘detonate’ “new philosophical thoughts.”<sup>181</sup> These ‘new thoughts’ have been uncovered because the aphorisms are also “escape routes from convictions [and] byways into the labyrinth of the unforeseen.”<sup>182</sup>

Marsden continues to unpick Nietzsche’s motivations but consistently (paradoxically?) returns to a form disrupting, punctuating, unanchoring, ... one that “has a stalling effect on the even rhythm of contemplation, forcing thought to take a new line of flight.”<sup>183</sup> Once more language’s

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<sup>179</sup> Jill Marsden, “Nietzsche and the Art of the Aphorism,” in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed., Keith Ansell Pearson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 28.

<sup>180</sup> Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 341.

<sup>181</sup> Jill Marsden, “Art of the Aphorism,” 36.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

deployment is being twisted as Nietzsche's aphorisms should not be seen as fragments, rather they *fragment* and the reader must be incorporated therein.<sup>184</sup>

Like a path in autumn, it has hardly been swept clear before it is covered in dry leaves once more.<sup>185</sup>

## VII | *kick in the I*

I have walked out of the body and into the mountain. I am a manifestation of its total life, as is the starry saxifrage or the white-winged ptarmigan.<sup>186</sup>

I should not be here. I should not be seen. I should not be heard. I should not feel. I have been warned. I should not be...I am wrong. I is wrong. I be is wrong too. I creates a clearing from which to survey; from which to look outwards. I-subject. I subject myself to I. I object. I object to this I. I subject this object to this I. The I is caught in an endless feedback loop with the not-I. The stronger I insists the more powerful becomes not-I.

I establishes a hierarchy and the capitalisation brings no doubt where I sits. I is the acme and the centre. I become the earth around which all

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>185</sup> Franz Kafka, *A Hunger Artist and Other Stories*, trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 189.

<sup>186</sup> Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006), 83.

else orbits. The not-Is give I light and sustenance. The divide persists. I loves the /. The / keeps apart but also grounds (together). I establishes a divide. I/not-I. Is this I's fault? The fault is with how I is perceived by other I's.

The I demands an other, the I only operates in opposition. The I so singular needs its binaric state. The I does not breathe air or circulate blood; the I feeds parasitically from the not-I. The I's *raison d'être* is to other. I-other: you-other, s/he-other, one-other, we-other, you-other, they-other. I needs to be rescued and saved from this subject/object stalemate.

Once upon a time, the artist had an eye-I and the poet had an I-I. And beauty was in the I of the beholder. Picturesque has an I; an I-eye that enframes the not-I in the I-eye. The not-I beats against the frame but nobody listens. No body listens. Only the I hears; an I-eye that hears but does not listen. The I, eye have it. The Romantic has an I. An I for an eye as the lazy accusations go. This apparently has been the Romantic's main fault; the Romantic cares only for the one I with no regard to all other I's: all the not-I's. To I is human.

Human is the collective I. To deny the I is to deny the human? In the process of collectivisation the I becomes the cultured human and the not-I is nature. An apportioning of blame as I tames the wild. Between the I

and the I's horizon is a safe zone. A clearing. Standing plimsoll-clad in the gymnasium, arms lifted horizontally, the I turns and defines its safe space. The not-I is pulled in, claimed.

The I is not at the back of the mind. The I goes out ahead from the middle. I leads the way. From somewhere deep within the flesh I now pierces outwards. I searches. I scans the horizon. I scans the horizon for others; not-I's that batter themselves helplessly against the invisible barrier of I.

Where did I start? A long time ago, when the Greeks began stripping the flesh from the mind. I mind. The mind isn't interior, there is a pulling deeper that constitutes mind in the same way that exchange of air constitutes the breathing organs. The body is ejected as culture battles nature. How am I? Not without body that is for sure. Not no body. Not nobody. Not being? Being is only there for the I. BeIng?

I is here. I establishes a here that is in contrast to there. An all too neat balance; a false equilibrium. There is no mythical tipping point between I and not-I; between here and there. I feel for it but it is not there. I am neither here nor there. I gives in. I give up if I give up I. I needs to be reset, not by stepping back or hovering above to espy a way forward but, through immersion and understanding of this immersion. Immersion is mid-stream not at the vanguard; I does not lead the way. I-Becoming-[ ]

The exerting I inspires. Expires. I give up if I give up I. The I needs to be reset not by stepping back or hovering above to espy a way forward but through immersion and understanding of this immersion. Immersion is mid-stream not at the vanguard; the I does not lead the way. At best, the I illuminates for the I (and for a select few not-I's). The I is divided along its length—][—and the parts swap places to offer a site for gathering—[ ]

This *I* was here but now lies under erasure. The *I* is bound as it can raise awkward questions, and even more awkward assumptions, when left to its own devices. The *I* audaciously claims an advantage, placing itself at a distance to a world that it then wishes to experience from which knowledge will be constructed. This knowledge in turn forming a defence mechanism during future forays *out* into the world. Interior to exterior; the division between the two being immutable. The interior becomes thought, it thinks, *I* thinks; and the exterior becomes a transcendental world. This is as true for Enlightenment thinking as for phenomenology furthermore. But taking a knee-jerk reaction to the subject can lead to an over-compensating focus on the object (whatever scale it be). Certainly this move can provide a healthy dose of scepticism when it comes to anthropocentrism, but as a result it merely flexes the erstwhile problem the other way around (and collaterally awarding humans with the self-appointed status of object) to an emanating object.

Instead the *I* must be unbound and recognised as processual in nature. However the processing is not driven by the *I*. Neither is the *I* driven by the processing. Instead the *I* is a processing amongst a wealth of processings. A processing *I* that obviates the necessity of the certainty of a fixed and unbending ground. This *I* emerges from a *point of view*;

apprehended as what it is—pure difference—only in its difference from other points of view. Alone it is only a subjective manner of representing the world.<sup>187</sup>

The deployment of representation in this dynamic offers nothing beneficial, it is the difference between *points of view* that provides an unpredictable fecundity.<sup>188</sup> In the differentiating disparity there is clarity; a clarity that bears (bares?) the *I* and permits communication (at a distance). The distance is a necessary disjunction, an unconformity. It is not an empty space, it is filled with a chattering of activity that relentlessly constitutes and disjoins the *I* with itself. Within the process of writing (and the procession of writing) the sense that the *I* remains in a state of constant disjunction is heightened.<sup>189</sup> The writing *I* is of a flow; disparately so.

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<sup>187</sup> Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 119-20.

<sup>188</sup> But this is “difference in *feeling*,” rather than a difference to the other. Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 42.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 121-26.

I am not the same person when I write as I am when I wonder about the efficacy of the text after it is written down. I am not gifted with agency or intention.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Stengers, “Reclaiming Animism.”

## CHAPTER 2 | THOU ART WRITING (VOICE)

### I | *writing (a terrain)*

The terrain of *art writing* is an appealing one in which to fold this research.<sup>191</sup> However, this *art writing* terrain is an uncertain one (if such a singular word as terrain can be used); it is fraught with distractions, polymorphous, and fluid. Indeed, editor and educator Brian Dillon has described *art writing* as “a form that shuttles among criticism, literary experiment and art as such.”<sup>192</sup> Whilst this slipperiness has an appeal it also has its problems and the issue of needing to know one’s context in order to position an argument may be the most pressing. *Art writing* can establish certain resonances that divert away from the thrust of the writing of this research.

Quickest to dismiss are those readings of *art writing* that take it in the direction of art history or art criticism. Their position is predominantly external to art and will most usually take a reflective, at-a-remove approach (albeit a highly-informed one). These forms are very much a writing *on* (or about) art as underlined by a certain read emphasis in the blurb of two prizes on offer for art writers:

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<sup>191</sup> By *fold* I intend here to evoke an image of sheep folded on a hill, protected and accounted for. This use of *fold* is in absolutely no way a reference to the work of Gilles Deleuze on that theme.

<sup>192</sup> Brian Dillon, “Style & Substance: On teaching criticism and ‘art writing,’” *frieze*, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2013, <https://frieze.com/article/style-substance>.

The Burlington Contemporary Art Writing Prize seeks to discover talented young writers on contemporary art.<sup>193</sup>

the Canadian Art Writing Prize is a juried prize designed to encourage new writers on contemporary art.<sup>194</sup>

The ‘on’ in these sentences emphasises an external, critical stance: this is so frequently a world of reviewing and certainly not one of *re-turning*. Having apparently dismissed the art historical and art critical strands it must be noted, however, that *art writing* may still be employed in those modes, so the ties must not be definitively severed. Instead, rather than straight dismissal, it is crucial to recognise how art is driving the writing (for instance, through reflection or a form of immersion ... embodiment). It must be stressed though that the reading of *art writing* intended within this research does not write *on* or *about* things as an end—the *art writing* here occurs within things but it cannot be localised or prised from its matrix without doing damage. Instead it should be said that the writing here is with and *of* art. A writing with *of*.

A further clarification is required regarding the close affinity of *art writing* to creative writing and similar takes on those forms of writing

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<sup>193</sup> “Contemporary Art Writing Prize,” The Burlington Magazine, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <http://www.burlington.org.uk/whats-on/contemporary-art-writing-prize>.

<sup>194</sup> “Canadian Art Foundation Writing Prize,” Canadian Art, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <https://canadianart.ca/writing-prize>.

that are given over to description albeit with contemporary accents. Many UK Higher Education institutions today offer creative writing courses; frequently these courses are aligned with that institution's English department and this unrolls towards a desire to learn more about the writing and publishing industries. Again, this is not a complete mismatch but certainly tests the rule of *ofness*.

For an indication of why many creative writing courses do not embrace the possibilities of *art writing*, the 2014 interview with author Hanif Kureishi in which he criticises such courses (including his own) is useful. The students “just can't tell a story. They can write sentences but they don't know how to make a story go from there all the way through to the end.”<sup>195</sup> This desire for linear narrative seems at odds with the freedoms offered by *art writing*. But before dismissing creative writing wholesale listen to author Jeanette Winterson further on in the same article. For her the job of teaching creative writing is to

explode language in [the students'] faces. To show them that writing is both bomb and bomb disposal – a necessary shattering of cliché and assumption, and a powerful defusing of the soul-destroying messages of modern life (that nothing matters,

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<sup>195</sup> Hanif Kureishi quoted in Alison Flood, “Creative writing professor Hanif Kureishi says such courses are 'a waste of time',” *The Guardian*, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/mar/04/creative-writing-courses-waste-of-time-hanif-kureishi>.

nothing changes, money is everything, etc.). Writing is a state of being as well as an act of doing. My job is to alter their relationship with language. The rest is up to them.<sup>196</sup>

This sentiment surely resonates with those artists working with *art writing* to challenge monolithic Language through—in some cases—visually disrupting accepted sense, syntactically challenging narrative style or audibly disrupting what is heard. However, writer and poet John Douglas Millar sees this possible distancing from literature as highly problematic. Millar has written two articles about *art writing* for the magazine *Art Monthly*; in the first he is, to begin with, broadly supportive of the possibilities of *art writing* but acknowledges that it is not a new phenomenon for avant-garde writing to be “embraced more fervently by the art world” than the contemporary literature one. Millar begins to tease things apart with an observation that *art writing's* rise is twofold: both as a recognised practice (and the forum for this practice being journals such as *F.R.DAVID*, *The Happy Hypocrite* and *Cabinet*) and as an academic discipline.<sup>197</sup> Millar is troubled by the apparent fancy-free editorial policy of the journals where seemingly anything goes and the editorials are rich with, “the most sludgy, grey quasi-academic language

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<sup>196</sup> Jeanette Winterson quoted in *ibid*.

<sup>197</sup> *F.R.David* (Amsterdam: de Appel); *The Happy Hypocrite* (London: Bookworks); and *Cabinet* (New York).

imaginable.”<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, the links that these journals have with academic institutions also concerns Millar as he feels that this has caused *art writing* to become, “institutionalised through academic acceptance” leading to a situation where the respective institution dictates the reading of the work.<sup>199</sup>

Millar begins to wind down his first article with a simple yet pertinent question: “Why is it ‘art’ writing and not just writing?” and further worries that “the art world has become a place where bad writers can hide.”<sup>200</sup> However, he rounds off the article with compliments for Will Holder (publisher, writer, typographer, and performer), and concludes with the accepting line, “Sometimes categories really don’t matter.”<sup>201</sup>

In 2014 Millar returns to *Art Monthly* with his pen sharpened further and makes more of an attack on *art writing* by proposing an alternative label of “contemporary literature.” Two and a half years on from his first article Millar feels that ‘Art Writing’—or ‘Conceptual Writing’—(both capitalisations and apostrophes are Millar’s) has achieved little as:

the term itself was critically unproductive and the phenomenon (if such there was) ill defined and liable to produce work that was

simply ill conceived and woolly headed rather than critically rigorous, excitingly hybrid and formally adventurous.<sup>202</sup>

Millar further criticises the term ‘Art Writing’ for its ‘opacity,’ and feels that there needs to be a move to engage with related fields: “Art and literature would do well to know each other better,” for:

It is clear that placing art in relation to writing has been extremely productive; the question now is to further that project by placing art writing in relation to literature, to bring it out from the safety of the art world’s embrace and observe how it stands up in relation to the deep critical history of writing that is literature.<sup>203</sup>

Millar recognises that the Royal College of Art may have acknowledged this situation when naming their writing MFA *Critical Writing in Art and Design* rather than follow Goldsmith’s lead and label of *Art Writing*. Certainly the alternative label will have been for differentiation purposes but primarily it reflects the differing ethos’ of the two institutions. Of course, Millar is not the only one critically stamping about in the terrain of *art writing*: curator Dieter Roelstraete produced an article questioning (and possibly lamenting) the move away from traditional image-making

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<sup>198</sup> John Douglas Millar, “Art/Writing,” *Art Monthly* 349, (September, 2011).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>202</sup> John Douglas Millar, “ART/WRITE,” *Art Monthly* 375, (April, 2014).

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

to written or “softly spoken” word and performance in art. Roelstraete evidently is not enamoured by much of the work produced in this way but he can see that it may have been driven by a move to deflect commodification or as a natural evolution away from being cinema-influenced to referencing theatre instead, or as another facet of “the renaissance of collage.”<sup>204</sup>

Roelstraete, like Millar, recognises academia’s influence on the development of *art writing* and observes a generally increasing “demand for literacy” in art education—this is in stark contrast “to earlier generations, who very often chose art as a way out of language.”<sup>205</sup> Now, Roelstraete wonders if artists are choosing language as a reaction against the inundation and devaluing of image in our daily lives.<sup>206</sup> Also stamping about is the already-mentioned Brian Dillon who waves a flag for writing style from his Royal College of Art base. Like Millar, Dillon is concerned that *art writing* is tiptoeing “around’ the subject” and is without substance, although he does note that “the field has flourished.”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Dieter Roelstraete, “Word Play,” *frieze*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <https://frieze.com/article/word-play>.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Brian Dillon, “Style & Substance.”

The need for attention to be paid to style is the point of Dillon’s article. He asks the reader, “where is the real work to be done?”<sup>208</sup> For Dillon, *art writing’s* delimiting move through “its lack of limitations,” must be made through style, which for him is

the very soul and struggle of writing (therefore thinking) itself, a hole into which all your ambitions, all your programmes and all your manifestos will fall. Here’s a task [...] quit sketching the boundaries of that void, and fall in.<sup>209</sup>

Dillon pre-empt’s Millar’s calls by a year. Artists must run to embrace literature and move with style but mind the boundaries whilst celebrating creativity.

This writing and reading with *of art writing* must be interrupted for a short while by utilising the mechanisms of the full stop.

And new paragraph.

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.* At the time of writing in early 2017 the Royal College of Art has developed three new specialisms for its Critical Writing in Art & Design (CWA&D) MA programme. One of these is most relevant to this current discussion; in the Creative Writing specialism students “will explore key literary techniques and concerns – such as ekphrasis and ‘voice’ - in their own writing practice” in order to develop “a range of writing skills across a spectrum from fiction to arts journalism”—the move towards technique and style reinforces Brian Dillon’s call in his 2013 *frieze* article; Dillon continues to teach on the CWA&D programme.

Of course, the interruption occurred before the end of the announced interruption and actually happened right at the start (or just before, in fact). But do not dwell upon that small matter. Go on. Whilst the reading of this writing may be uninterrupted the writing of the writing cannot make the same claim. The author-I found themselves continually distracted and their mood altered depending upon many external factors that, it soon became apparent, are not at all external and instead cross-cut with the shape of the author-I to make the writing an entirely collaborative work (even attempting to merge the reading and writing in some way. No, 'merge' is going too far, but there is certainly a form of intra-authorship at play). It can very certainly be said that this author-I has a debt of gratitude to you the reader but equally to the sun (to take a random but wholly fundamental example). The sun shines today after a period of days in which the weather had given up bothering to be anything much at all; a lazy sort of weather wherein observations were all negative (no wind, no rain to speak of, no sun, no frost (but no warmth either) and a sky so uniformly overcast one may also have said, no cloud). Today the sun shines and the greenness of these words seems to respond with fecundity.

In thanking the sun W.S. Graham's note of gratitude to a cloud and other players in verse five of *Enter a Cloud* is recalled; it is worthwhile quoting the verse in full:

Thank you. And for your applause.  
It has been a pleasure. I  
Have never enjoyed speaking more.  
May I also thank the real ones  
Who have made this possible.  
First, the cloud itself. And now  
Gurnard's Head and Zennor  
Head. Also recognise  
How I have been helped  
By Jean and Madron's Albert  
Strick (He is a real man.)  
And good words like brambles,  
Bower, spiked, fox, anvil, teeling.  
  
The bees you heard are from  
A hive owned by my friend  
Garfield down there below  
In the house by Zennor Church.  
  
The good blue sun is pressing  
Me into Zennor Hill.

Gently disintegrate me

Said nothing at all.<sup>210</sup>

In this pen portrait view of the West Penwith landscape (and all that this term may comprise) Graham has also re-viewed language and his relationship with it. In his ‘Thank you’, Graham is at once deconstructing the previous four verses and drawing them in tighter (in a homely sense). There is a sense of belonging to this rural community whilst also an acknowledgment that he dwells in the community of language (in the landscape of language) too. Paradoxically this second community also dwells in him and it seems to be tearing him apart as much as he tears at it.<sup>211</sup> The difference between the communities becomes the stage and the (written) page.

[the writing returns to its attending to *art writing*]<sup>212</sup>

By its very nature *art writing* does not have one single lineage; its development cannot be traced back to a sole progenitor, a single birthplace or even a specific occasion. There are numerous detectable

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<sup>210</sup> W.S. Graham, “Enter a Cloud,” in *New Collected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 2004), 216-9.

<sup>211</sup> To get an even stronger sense of this grappling a listen to Graham reciting his work is strongly encouraged. In particular his reading from 1979 is recommended for the physicality of the language which Graham wrestles: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/writingprog/archive/writers/wsgraham/231079>.

<sup>212</sup> Do not worry if Graham’s way with words has been enjoyable; he will re(-)surface elsewhere in this other word gathering.

starting points which are without clear origin and from these pointless points trails interweave and co-mingle (contradictions intentional). A strand that emanates from Goldsmith’s, University of London is selected. It was from here that, in about 2009, Maria Fusco “founded and led MFA Art Writing, the first programme of its kind internationally.”<sup>213</sup>

In 2008 Fusco wrote an article for *MAP* magazine. She immediately confessed to being a writer; but admitted that she was one who was writing when she was “supposed to be making objects.”<sup>214</sup> She is uncomfortable with the term Art Writing (Fusco, like Millar, capitalises the term) but admits that it will do for the time being, as will the definition of Art Writing as, ‘writing with art.’<sup>215</sup> After name-checking some ‘writers with art’ (John Russell, Rachele Sawatsky and Dan Starling), Fusco selects the journals *The Happy Hypocrite* (edited by Fusco herself) and *F.R. DAVID* to help her unpick Art Writing, and it is in the journal form that Fusco believes Art Writing works best as it is permitted “the ability to regenerate, to test, to stumble, to grow a constituency” in this format.<sup>216</sup> The article seems to be a defence against the criticisms that will follow from Millar and Dillon et al and celebrates Art Writing

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<sup>213</sup> “Maria Fusco,” Edinburgh College of Art, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <http://www.eca.ed.ac.uk/school-of-art/maria-fusco>.

<sup>214</sup> Maria Fusco, “Report: Contemporary Art Writing and it’s environs MAP #15 (Autumn 2008) | MAP Magazine,” *MAP Magazine*, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, <http://mapmagazine.co.uk/8823/report-contemporary-art-writi/>.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

for what J.R. Carpenter describes as its “willful unwillingness to commit to fixed definitions;” a haziness that will be both strength and weakness.<sup>217</sup>

Fusco left Goldsmiths in approximately 2013 (bound for Edinburgh College of Art where she is now Director of Research), however, the Goldsmith’s course retains a strong presence with input from the likes of Michael Newman and Yve Lomax.<sup>218</sup> Lomax studied at Central St. Martin’s School of Art and the Royal College of Art in the 1970s making a name for herself through writing, alongside the making of photographic collages exploring the politics of representation, before a turn towards ecological matters in the 1990s. Attempts “to unsettle the reader’s/viewer’s assumptions about the relations between the image and the real, metaphor and logic” have been observed in her work.<sup>219</sup> In books such as *Sounding the Event* and *Passionate Being* Lomax assumes a multiple role; she is at once writer, teacher and explorer.<sup>220</sup> And here the voice of the ‘writer’ is also that of a practicing artist and so could in the

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<sup>217</sup> Carpenter’s article is concerned with performance writing but the definition seems equally appropriate here. J.R. Carpenter, “Writing on Writing on Performance Writing,” lapsus linguae, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <http://luckyssoap.com/lapsuslinguae/2013/07/writing-on-writing-on-performance-writing>.

<sup>218</sup> The validity of the course and its teachings is not universally supported as one disgruntled ex-inmate reports in his outpourings: <https://careersuicideblog.wordpress.com/tag/goldsmiths>.

<sup>219</sup> Nigel Weale, ed., *The Postmodern Arts: An Introductory Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), 124.

<sup>220</sup> Yve Lomax, *Passionate Being* and *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue and Matters of Art, Nature and Time* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

current writing that you read here be replaced with the term ‘art writer’. Lomax enfolds a formidable array of thinkers in her writing and in the case of *Sounding the Event* it has been observed that while she “interrogates the concept of event,” the “music” of the writing itself “quite possibly, is [an event].”<sup>221</sup> The style of Lomax’s writing is immersive for writer and reader alike and succeeds in Lomax’s desire “to implicate the reader or viewer in the fragrance of the world.”<sup>222</sup> Maybe in Lomax’s work Dillon’s concern for style’s future can be allayed and *art writing* may be saved.

Despite recent changes in personnel at Goldsmiths the interest in *art writing* remains and is championed by Lomax in support of Michael Newman although the institution no longer appears to have a stand-alone Art Writing course and its place is found in the postgraduate programme. Elsewhere, *art writing* continues to retain a foothold in education. At Edinburgh College of Art, along with Maria Fusco, there is Susannah Thompson who leads the undergraduate course *Art Writing*. Although this course has a critical approach, the lens is applied to the issue of “why so many visual artists have taken up the pen and why writing continues to enjoy such a rich and challenging relationship with

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<sup>221</sup> Review by Mary Kelly quoted on the back cover of Lomax, *Sounding the Event*.

<sup>222</sup> Yve Lomax quoted in Weale, *The Postmodern Arts*, 124.

visual art.”<sup>223</sup> Thompson conducted her own doctoral research on the issue of ‘artist-writers’ in Scotland, “focusing on alternative and experimental modes of writing and post-criticism, [and] writing as a part of visual art practice.”<sup>224</sup> *Art writing* thus currently seems to be enjoying a healthy presence in Scotland.

In 2012 a research group entitled *Art Writing Writing Art* was established at the University of Bristol. The group’s intention was to “provide a place of convergence for researchers interested in the actively shifting and overlapping intersections between art, writing and art history.”<sup>225</sup> As well as an active blog, the group ran workshops, a talk series, conferences and discussions. The group’s strapline—“Art and Writing in and beyond Art History”—underlines their proximity to traditional literary forms, however certain of their events and blog posts, hint at a willingness to play with existing boundaries and maybe break new ground. However, the activities of the group have apparently been frozen since spring 2015. Beyond the British Isles, academically at least, *art writing* does not seem

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<sup>223</sup> “Course Catalogue - Art Writing (ARTX10042),” The University of Edinburgh: Edinburgh College of Art, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/16-17/dpt/cxartx10042.htm>.

<sup>224</sup> Susannah Catherine Thompson, “The artist as critic: art writing in Scotland 1960-1990” (PhD diss. University of Glasgow, 2010), 7, <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2831> and “Dr Susannah Thompson | Edinburgh College of Art,” The University of Edinburgh: Edinburgh College of Art, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <http://www.eca.ed.ac.uk/school-of-art/susannah-thompson>.

<sup>225</sup> *Art Writing Writing Art*, “About – Art Writing Writing Art,” accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <http://artwritingwritingart.tumblr.com/about>.

to attain such an obvious presence. This will of course be partially due to language variations but may also reflect cultural hierarchies.

As mentioned previously there are a number of journals that have been established around the practice of *art writing*, including: *2HB*, *Dot Dot Dot*, *F.R. DAVID* and *The Happy Hypocrite*. *2HB* has downscaled from a quarterly publication to a biannual one but continues to be “a platform for artists, writers and theorists to realise work that might not otherwise be published.”<sup>226</sup> The downscaling has though allowed for a sister (biannual) publication, *Small Black Reptile*, “which will specifically focus on critical writing.”<sup>227</sup> *Dot Dot Dot* was a New York based magazine published by Dexter Sinister that ran for a decade from 2001. The spirit of *Dot Dot Dot* has now been carried forward by *Bulletins Of The Serving Library* and is run by designer-publishers Stuart Bailey and David Reinfurt. *F.R. DAVID* was established in 2007 by London-based typographer, writer and curator Will Holder (championed by Brian Dillon as mentioned above) and was published by De Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam. It was seen as “a journal concerned with reading and

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<sup>226</sup> “2HB Submissions Open Call | Programme | CCA,” Centre for Contemporary Arts, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <http://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/2hb-submissions-open-call>. *2HB* is edited by a group of curators (Ainslie Roddick and Francis McKee, with Louise Shelley) and is published by the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow. Along with journals, *art writing* has found the internet to be a very useful mode of circulation, increasing scope immeasurably compared to the ability to produce and circulate printed matter.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid*.

writing in the arts” but appears to have stalled after ten issues. Other journals concerned with *art writing* have come and gone including *Paperwork*, *Young Fresh and Relevant*, and *Gnomerro*.

*The Happy Hypocrite* was established in 2008 by Maria Fusco as a biannual journal providing:

a brand new approach to art writing. [And] a greatly needed testing ground for new writing and research-based projects, somewhere for artists, writers and theorists to express experimental ideas that might not otherwise be realised or published.<sup>228</sup>

All of these journals (except maybe *F.R. DAVID*) and their *raison d’êtres* only seem to confirm Millar and Roelstraete’s worries that boundaries are too blurred and quality is not assured. But have these writerly activities fallen out of place and wandered off in search of a new forum or is this the messy beginnings of a specific field that will continue to make a claim for authenticity (albeit a shaky one) via institutional acceptance, counter culture publishing and the pop-up gallery circuit?

Further life is given to the phenomenon of *art writing* through activities and events such as *Project Art Writing* (2012-17) run by Aarhus

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<sup>228</sup> “The Happy Hypocrite – Linguistic Hardcore, issue 1 | Book Works,” Book Works, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <https://www.bookworks.org.uk/node/132>.

Litteraturcenter in Aarhus, Denmark; *Plastic Words* at Raven Row, London (2014/15); *Marking Language* at Drawing Room in London and New York (2013); *The Malady of Writing* (2009/10) at MACBA, Barcelona. *Project Art Writing* sought to explore “how text-based art can relate to and unfold equally with other forms of artistic practice.”<sup>229</sup> As part of Aarhus’s bid to become the 2017 European Capital of Culture the Litteraturcenter’s *Project* had both a national and international outlook. It can be very difficult to quantify the impact of initiatives such as this but during the five years a wealth of workshops, seminars and masterclasses were held with attendees visiting from across Europe and America. A further aim of the *Project* was the attempt to map *art writing* in order to create, “a contribution to the definition and delimitation of the area, [and] a visualization of its span. The mapping can besides act as a network for artists.”<sup>230</sup> Unfortunately the mapping seems somewhat limited in its results and is arguably less comprehensive than a website such as *VerySmallKitchen* with its lengthy links page.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> “About PROJECT ART WRITING | litteraturen.nu,” Aarhus Litteraturcenter, accessed 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <http://www.litteraturen.nu/artwriting/in-english/art-writing-eng>.

<sup>230</sup> “Om kortlægningen / About the Mapping | litteraturen.nu,” Aarhus Litteraturcenter, accessed 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, <http://www.litteraturen.nu/artwriting/kortlaegning/om-kortlaegningen-af-art-writing>.

<sup>231</sup> *VerySmallKitchen* was established by artist David Berridge in 2010 as a repository for “Connections of language, writing, reading and art practice,” the latest update is from April 2015, see <https://verysmallkitchen.com>.

*Plastic Words* was a series of events organised by Millar and others and took place at Rotten Row gallery in London for six weeks around Christmas 2014. The intention of the series was to “reflect on the possible overlaps, parallels, tangents and interferences between some of today’s most adventurous forms of writing and art making.”<sup>232</sup> Millar’s role seems linked to his call months earlier (in his second *Art Monthly* article) for an engagement with Literature; the Raven Row events were further billed as an attempt to “mine the contested space between contemporary literature and art.”<sup>233</sup> Millar’s role can also be seen as a fact-finding prelude to his 2016 publication, *Brutalist Readings: Essays on literature*: a “timely and significant examination of contemporary artist-produced literature [which] proposes a framework for understanding current conceptual writing.”<sup>234</sup> Rather than selfish navel-gazing these events seem like a concerted effort by Millar and colleagues to force some kind of confrontation (and conciliation) between art and literature but if they were pushing from the art side was anybody pushing from the side of literature?

A year before *Plastic Words* took place an exhibition entitled *Marking Language* was staged at the Drawing Room in London with a concurrent

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<sup>232</sup> “Plastic Words,” Raven Row, accessed 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, [http://www.ravenrow.org/exhibition/plastic\\_words](http://www.ravenrow.org/exhibition/plastic_words).

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> John Douglas Millar, *Brutalist Readings: Essays on Literature*, ed. Niamh Dunphy (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), cover.

exhibition, *Drawing Time, Reading Time*, at The Drawing Center in New York. These event were more traditionally reflective in their approach to the subject but brought the phenomenon of artists using text and language into a different arena than the contested ground between art and literature. Here, there was a concern for the future of dialogue itself:

The artists in *Marking Language* use a range of strategies to divorce language from a linear narrative, for example, by fragmenting words and phrases, or by including multiple and contradictory graphic languages, and giving form to phonetic words and expressions. The work can be seen as a reflection of the fragmentation of reality, despite the illusion of world-wide connection, and a yearning for intimate and meaningful dialogue.<sup>235</sup>

Importantly for the consideration of text in a (visual) art context it is vital to understand that the text was not there to support an image for “language and the written word [are] the subject of the work itself.”<sup>236</sup> Others had addressed this issue before (for example Hamish Fulton), but now the likes of Pavel Buchler, Matias Faldbakken and Karl Holmqvist

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<sup>235</sup> “Marking Language >> Exhibitions >> Drawing Room,” The Drawing Room, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://drawingroom.org.uk/exhibitions/marking-language>.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

were reinforcing the point for new generations. For these artists there was no wish to force the use of text towards the institutions of literature or art, instead they sought “an articulation that is on the very edge of textual and visual comprehension.”<sup>237</sup> In short, they seem content exploring and inhabiting the liminal zone without questioning their access rights to the terrain.

Stepping back a little further, to 2010, *The Malady of Writing* exploited the observation that *art writing* fails in the literary world due to the unfavourable “channels for distribution and the experimental nature of the texts.”<sup>238</sup> The exhibition took the form of a “singular library” which existed alongside traditional publishing systems, but again the familiar claim is found that the works in the exhibition are “reinventing language and writing that is necessarily related to the artist's production.”<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, there is expressed the notion of a borderland being inhabited, this description is then adjusted and it is decided that the works exist in parallel to the major publishing companies.

*Art writing* seems to exist in a state of constant flux and upheaval followed by periods of settling and bearing taking. But equally the

validity of the term *art writing* seems to glow, pulse and flicker with the slightest zephyr from academia or the art establishment. Is the term *art writing* actually required when the use of text has sat quite happily (if not comfortably) within the domain of art since the middle decades of the twentieth century? Is the desire of *art writing* one of land grabbing from the curtilage of Literature? Or perhaps the desire of *art writing* (in its manifold guises) is to carve out a new niche within the already niche-rich world of art. It may just happen that this niche is carved out in the party wall between the houses of Art and Literature; disruption might be sensed afoot—not an original motivation for art.

Before further scratching at the boundaries between art and literature it will be useful to consider some of the shared ground ‘within’ art where the use of writing has pressed in on other areas, those of performance, sound and publishing. Despite moving away (for the moment) from the head-on collision between art and literature the following areas (and individuals working with them) do offer new ways of viewing the apparent conflict.

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<sup>237</sup> Henry Rogers, “The Words I Thought I Saw,” in *I See What You're Saying: The Materialisation of Words in Contemporary Art*, ed., Henry Rogers (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2012), 15.

<sup>238</sup> “The Malady of Writing,” MACBA, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, <http://www.macba.cat/en/exhibition-malady-of-writing>.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

## II | *play, say, page*

*Art writing* frequently spirals out through the nepotic activities of performance, sound art, and book arts ... and so to attempt to discover an origin for the current trend in *art writing*, might be selected a strand of practice that emerged from Dartington College of Arts in Devon in the mid-1990s around the establishment of an undergraduate course in *Performance Writing*.<sup>240</sup> This course set out to explore the inter-relation of writing with other art practices. The course survived Dartington's subsuming by the University of Falmouth but seems to have faltered by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century and trickled to a complete halt by 2012. A spirit and desire remains amongst staff and students at Falmouth although formal recognition is in short supply.

A number of notable individuals are associated with establishing, promoting and running the *Performance Writing* course at Dartington (as well as promoting the spirit of the form beyond Devon), including John Hall, Redell Olsen, Caroline Bergvall and Jerome Fletcher. Hall continued as Professor of *Performance Writing* at Falmouth beyond the demise of the course itself and he was very active in the institution until his (partial) retirement in 2016. In 2013 Hall had a two-volume

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<sup>240</sup> Whilst the *Performance Writing* course was founded in 1994 the use of the phrase *performance writing* was already well established at Dartington and can be traced back to the late 1980s there and is very much in the spirit of the institution as a whole.

collection of essays and articles published by Shearsman Books; entitled *Essays on Performance Writing, Poetics and Poetry*.<sup>241</sup> The first volume has performance writing as its focus (along with a small section on arts teaching and interdisciplinarity) whilst the second volume is focused in poetics. Hall notes that the small-scale of Dartington as a place and institution encouraged "close conversation" between disciplines; a close conversation that would have significant impact.<sup>242</sup>

In his essay *Thirteen Ways of Talking about Performance Writing* Hall gently teases (possibly in both senses of the word) ... out ... the different weightings found in performance writing. Although to add confusion to the matter the written text of the book is a record of a lecture and not originally intended to be an essay and so Hall talks of "performing a text which [he] wrote," which by now leaves readers reading a text that was written to be read, or rather, performed.<sup>243</sup> However, Hall then points out that this stops when he breaks away from the text, for then he will be talking (not even reading aloud); the reading allowed performance of the text. Meanwhile

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<sup>241</sup> John Hall, *Essays on Performance Writing, Poetics and Poetry Volumes I and II* (Bristol: Shearsman Books, 2013).

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 11 (I).

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, 32 (I).

Caroline [Bergvall] and Melinda are performing the act of writing. They write in front of us. They write writing while I write talking and talk writing in a written talk about writing.<sup>244</sup>

In this one paragraph the intricacies and possibilities of writing are given breath and a ‘thickness’ is revealed as Hall comments (in an earlier *Way*) that “the thickness of language gives us from time to time a thick sense (a sense with density, like thick paint) of the medium in which—or, perhaps, better, against which—we perform our lives.”<sup>245</sup> Hall modestly notes that Bergvall:

not only took on the main burden of putting the proposition [of *Performance Writing*] into practice as an undergraduate teaching project, but also, from the outset, of establishing its significance way beyond any one teaching institution or, indeed, any one part of the world.<sup>246</sup>

Bergvall herself stresses this latter point in a 1996 keynote address at a Dartington symposium when she expresses a desire to see performance

writing become “a culturally networked area of investigation.”<sup>247</sup> Bergvall calls for each artistic discipline (including literature) to think outside of its own “specific discourses and histories,” and to question them “through the mental and material constructs of textual contemporaneity,” and as a result specific (and delimited) concerns become shared concerns.<sup>248</sup> As an illustration of the existing problem Bergvall observes that the (art) practice of Marcel Broodthaers, which incorporates “writerly activity,” is essentially ignored by the literary world; to challenge this situation Bergvall calls for a “shift in attitude with regards to what defines the writerly.”<sup>249</sup> Bergvall hoped that *Performance Writing* might play a part in this shifting of attitude, but she emphasises the fact that this should not be about unifying diverse fields, instead performance writing may provide a sort of lens through which to view contemporary writing and all its conflicts and tensions.<sup>250</sup>

Bergvall then shifts her attention to the conflicts within performance writing itself and the possible need to “clarify the ambiguity between performed textuality and spoken writing” but then returns to the implications that performance writing has on writing generally and the

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 24 (I). It should be noted that in the spirit of this current research Hall’s initial use of “in which” is preferable to his self-corrected “against which;” the latter seems to remove us from the *thickness* and superimposes us onto or over it—we attain a privileged position.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 12 (I).

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<sup>247</sup> Caroline Bergvall, “What Do We Mean By Performance Writing?” accessed 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.carolinebergvall.com/content/text/BERGVALL-KEYNOTE.pdf>.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid. Marcel Broodthaers famously stated that he shifted from poetry to visual art just to make money.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 3.

need to understand that “everything about a piece of work is active and carries meaning;” absolutely every aspect of writing must be considered as performing and in this performing there exists a process of destabilising. In the process of writing there is the paradoxical charge that it “questions the authority of language with language, through language, as well as beyond language.”<sup>251</sup> Bergvall’s presentation outlines the necessity to challenge language, and also calls on the students of the *Performance Writing* course and practitioners beyond the lecture room to continue to question what the boundaries of writing are (for).

Bergvall has carried her Dartington experience with her to other institutions where, whilst working on the more traditional course of *Creative Writing*, she has also furthered the development of *art writing* through involvement in initiatives such as: *Project Art Writing* in Aarhus in Denmark; an Arts & Humanities Research Council award to develop a mixed-media poetic work; as well as numerous collaborations with artists, poets, writers; along with her own individual poetry publications. Whether the spirit of Dartington attracts a certain type of person or if the spirit is imbued in people during their stay it is difficult to decide but certainly the spirit of Dartington lives on in art, performance and writing circles and the spirit passed through these forms is re-surfacing at

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

Dartington as it re-frames itself in the forms of Schumacher College and *art.earth* ‘family.’<sup>252</sup>

From the performance of text and writing it is easy to make a step into the field of *sound art*. *Sound art* as a term arose in the 1980s; however, in the preface to an article by David Toop, Futurist Luigi Russolo’s proposal to treat industrial sounds as “a new and enthralling source of musical material” is employed to push the inspiration of the genre back to the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>253</sup> In terms of this current research, the ‘phonetic poetry’ of Hugo Ball and ‘tonal poetry’ of Tristan Tzara that were being performed at the *Cabaret Voltaire* around 1916 mark a prominent moment. Here Ball played with sound while Tzara utilised “absurd encounters of meanings.”<sup>254</sup> Much of what *sound art* trades in is beyond the needs of this research but the cross-over with poetry, spoken word, language, speech and voice is highly relevant and there were many artists that would continue explorations in these areas following on from the likes of Ball’s *Karawane*, *Wolken* and *Katzen und Pfauen* (all 1916) and Tzara’s *L’amiral Cherche Une Maison à Louer* (1916). From the 1920s, in works such as *the Ursonate*, Kurt Schwitters created vocal collage that assaulted and shocked his audiences as the

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<sup>252</sup> “artdotearth | a family of ecological artists and organisations,” *art.earth*, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <http://artdotearth.org>.

<sup>253</sup> David Toop, “The Art of Noise,” *Tate Etc.* 3 (Spring 2005).

<sup>254</sup> “UbuWeb Sound – Tristan Tzara,” UbuWeb, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.ubu.com/sound/tzara.html>

Dadaists had done before him.<sup>255</sup> These works merged the worlds of music and poetry with ‘recitals’ and ‘sonatas’ carrying along experimental word collages through to the end of his life, in the English Lake District in 1948.

And already this overview of *sound art* has been hijacked by *sound poetry* and *text-sound*; the slipping between definitions is so effortless! It is with these new areas that this research most readily sits, however it would be wise to first continue a sketch of the trajectory of what is more simply *sound art*. From the 1950s John Cage would push and pull at the boundaries of music and noise although frequently remaining tied to the infrastructure of classical music through choice of venue or instruments for instance—this is the sound of *sound art* fighting its way out of Music. By the 1960s a work like Max Neuhaus’s *Listen* saw the audience moved onto a bus for a tour of a city’s sounds (by the 1970s Neuhaus was making more permanent sound interventions in the urban fabric in works such as *Times Square* from 1977). Also in the 1960s, Bruce Nauman was moving sound into the (art) gallery with works such as *Sound Breaking Wall*. In increasing waves sound was leaving the concert hall although

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<sup>255</sup> In 1986 Jaap Blonk performed Schwitters’ *the Ursonate* as the warm-up for a Stranglers concert. The performance caused hostile outrage from the predominantly punk audience but Blonk felt that this was “a nice testimony to the fact that Schwitters’ piece was still very much alive, in spite of its age.” <http://www.jaapblonk.com/Texts/ursonatewords.html>.

sound artists such as Annea Lockwood would continue to bother the canon of classical music language beyond this decade.

Happenings and sound were meeting and there was a growing realisation that the ‘soundscape’ was changing; R. Murray Schafer coined this term to allow him to address “the urgent need for a coherent method of auditing the sound environment.”<sup>256</sup> The place for sound was changing too; Toop notes that “conceptual art, land art, ecology and the aftermath of Fluxus performance were pervasive influences on sound works during the 1970s.”<sup>257</sup> Traditional frameworks were being left behind so much so that Max Neuhaus could declare that his “major jump was flipping sound out of time and into place.”<sup>258</sup> Produced, augmented or highlighted sound was homeless and free. For Brian Eno *sound art*’s home is “a place poised between a club, a gallery, a church, a square, and a park, and sharing aspects of all of these.”<sup>259</sup>

It was in the mid-1980s with the work of the likes of Dan Lander that this way of working found its label of *sound art*. From this time the

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<sup>256</sup> David Toop, “Sonic Boom,” in *Sonic Boom: The Art of Sound* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2000), 117.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Mike Zwerin, “Max Neuhaus’s ‘Sound Works’ Listen to Surroundings : Been There, Heard That,” *The New York Times*, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/17/style/max-neuhauss-sound-works-listen-to-surroundings-been-there-heard-that.html>.

<sup>259</sup> Brian Eno quoted in Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond music, between categories* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 210.

number of artists working with sound escalated dramatically and the ensuing twenty years were fertile times for the genre. By 2010 critics were still feigning confusion over the label as this newspaper article (written on the back of Susan Philipsz's *Turner Prize* shortlisting) illustrates:

An overview of the current sound-art scene is full of interest and diversity but profoundly unhelpful in defining what is a particularly slippery art form, including as it does pieces involving sine wave generators, lectures, wildlife recordings, public space, bell ringing, electromagnetic fields and even the odd folk song.<sup>260</sup>

Despite (and probably in spite of) the uncertainty, *sound art* still remains strong today as well as diverse. A recent online article listed twelve *sound artists* who “appeal to the ears, not the eyes,” and amongst them their approaches range across: making “politically-charged performances”; working at the “intersection of art, music, and science”; creating “audio collages”; “manipulating electricity”; “building custom instruments”;

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<sup>260</sup> John Kieffer, “Sound art: Artists of the new wave,” *The Independent*, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/sound-art-artists-of-the-new-wave-1970453.html>.

participatory works; using “sound as a tool for counter-surveillance”; and making sound collages using voice and eclectic musical samples.<sup>261</sup>

*Sound Art* becomes a high-level meta tag embracing finer grained experiences; the tag does not deny the existence of these smaller groupings, instead it allows for cohesion *and* mutability. Focus now shifts to two of the strands that trace a more literary line through the Futurists, Dadaists, and Schwitters. Starting with *sound poetry*, where sound is poetic and poetry makes sound, a slippery art form is encountered composed of:

rather a complex, often opposite and frequently antithetical interconnectedness of concerns - attempts to recover lost traditions mix with attempts to effect a radical break with all continuities. What is referred to by 'sound poetry' is a rich, varied, inconsistent phonic genealogy.<sup>262</sup>

In 1978, Steve McCaffery wrote an overview of *sound poetry's* development not just from the late nineteenth century onwards but also before this with the “vast, intractable area of archaic and primitive poetics.” From this generous sweeping background, McCaffery moves

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<sup>261</sup> “12 Sound Artists Changing Your Perception of Art,” Alyssa Buffenstein, artnet, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/12-sound-artists-changing-perception-art-587054>.

<sup>262</sup> Steve McCaffery, “Sound Poetry: A Survey,” in *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue*, ed. Steve McCaffery and bpNichol (Underwich Editions, Toronto, 1978), 6-18.

on to the period 1875 to 1928 when the likes of Christian Morgenstern, Lewis Carroll and August Stramm are exploring the potential of language and sound.<sup>263</sup> From here McCaffery highlights the work of the Russian Futurists Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh who “isolate the concrete, phonic aspect of language as an autonomous focus of interest.”<sup>264</sup> With Kruchenykh in particular McCaffery notes, “a conscious attempt to return language to its a-rational ground [through the use of] ‘poetic irregularities’ such as clipped words, lexical hybrids, neologisms, and fragmentations.”<sup>265</sup>

McCaffery then singles out Marinetti for his work with *parole in libertà* and especially the manifestation of the sounds on the page; unlike Kruchenykh, Marinetti was not challenging the representationality of the words but making dramatic impressions through the “dynamic field of typographic and sonographic forces.” The Dadaists (initially Ball and Tzara in particular) explode language with their “whistling, singing,

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<sup>263</sup> Readers will be familiar with the work of Lewis Carroll but may not be familiar with Morgenstern and Stramm. Both Germans, the latter pair’s writings are very different though, Morgenstern’s most relevant output is closer to Carroll’s nonsense work whilst Stramm produced direct, harsh, pared down columns and swarms of words frequently inspired by his experiences as a frontline soldier in the trenches of World War One and are very different to the works produced by the more familiar (British) war poets.

Examples of Stramm’s work can be found at:

<https://ishamcook.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/august-stramm-poems-19881.pdf>.

<sup>264</sup> McCaffery, “Sound Poetry.”

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

grunting, coughing and speaking.”<sup>266</sup> There is also the work of Henri Barzun that “emphasised the improvisatory, spontaneous and aleatoric possibilities of multivocal expression,” and, significantly, Raoul Hausmann’s *optophonetics*.<sup>267</sup> Hausmann would go on to work increasingly with Kurt Schwitters (including on their anti-dada tour).

McCaffery then gives brief mention to Van Doesburg’s *letter-sound images* and then to Lettrisme and its “full-scale lexical revolution” under the direction of Isadore Isou and Maurice Lemaitre in 1940s Paris (including their new alphabet of one hundred and thirty sounds for use in vocal performances). For Isou in particular the individual “alphabetic letter” had been reached through poetic evolution and he wished to explore the “melodic beauty of alphabetical combinations.” Francois Dufrene in an ultra-Lettrist move would push things even further by employing “sub-phonemic units.”<sup>268</sup>

With the arrival of the 1950s, advances in recording technology offered unprecedented opportunities for sound poets; the voice or the page were no longer the limits and now sound could be cut and collaged together allowing “the granular structure of language to emerge and evidence

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> “UbuWeb Sound – Isidore Isou,” UbuWeb, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.ubu.com/sound/isou.html>.

itself.”<sup>269</sup> Henri Chopin would be one of the first to explore these new technologies for his “assaults upon the word.”<sup>270</sup> But, far from the new technology overshadowing the body, Chopin realised new ways of sounding the body; his *poesie sonore* utilises amplified buccal and respiratory noises. Chopin declared in 1969, “Get rid of all those bits of paper, whole, torn, folded, or not. It is man's body that is poetry, and the streets.”<sup>271</sup> The streets appealed to Bernard Heidsieck too for the new recording technologies brought the possibility of using found sounds—Heidsieck was one of the pioneers in this area using recorded everyday sounds with his own voice or playing his live voice off against his recorded voice.

In the 1960s McCaffery notes the emergence of *text-sound art* in Sweden at the Fylkingen Group for Linguistic Arts and *Phonography* (and all of its elements) with Herman Damen in the Netherlands; Damen did not wish for fixed boundaries and instead desired “to connect with other media and explore practically the margins of aesthetic categories.”<sup>272</sup> From the mid-1960s Bob Cobbing was undertaking sonic adventures from a starting point of concrete poetry. Cobbing’s *Concrete Sound* saw “an emphasis on the physical structure of language,” and the catalytic text

of his performances could be anything, certainly not just the written word.<sup>273</sup> Cobbing declared, “Gone is the word as word, though the word may still be used as sound or shape. Poetry now resides in other elements,” and these elements were not only physical marks or objects but could also be the sounds of the body.<sup>274</sup> Paula Claire was working in the same area but also pushing at the boundary of science and she would take this work into performances where audience participation was a vital element. Sound Poetry as a distinct form continues today although often the strict definings have been dismantled and it moves through allied activities such as performing poetry. To explode once more the defining Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin’s 2009 edited book *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound* provides voyages into all the frills and spills of the many meetings between sound and poetry. The website *Jacket2* also contains useful contemporary discussion on the more recent contortions of *sound poetry*, exploring, for instance, the apparent Anglo-centric bias of much sound poetry or advice on navigating the overlapping definitions in *sound poetry*.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> McCaffery and bpNichol, *Sound Poetry*, 11.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Henri Chopin quoted in McCaffery and bpNichol, *Sound Poetry*, 48.

<sup>272</sup> Herman Damen quoted in McCaffery, “Sound Poetry.” 13.

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<sup>273</sup> Bob Cobbing quoted in McCaffery, “Sound Poetry.” 14.

<sup>274</sup> Bob Cobbing, “Some Statements on Sound Poetry,” in McCaffery and bpNichol, *Sound Poetry*, 39.

<sup>275</sup> a. rawlings, ed., “Sound poetry: The feature,” *Jacket2*, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017, <http://jacket2.org/feature/sound-poetry-feature>. One could also look to performances such as *Poetry and Sound* at London’s ICA in 2016 (see <https://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/poetry-and-sound>).

Wave upon tiny wave crash quietly upon each other as another slender thread is teased out. *Text-sound art* embraces many of the concerns and the personnel inhabiting literature, visual art, *sound art* and *sound poetry*. Here again are Marinetti, Schwitters, Tzara, Joyce, Stein, and Carroll drawn out from their literary haunts. Very much related to *sound poetry* this even finer grain *text-sound art* skirmishes at the frontier between music and poetry. As mentioned above, *text-sound art* has an emergence from Scandinavia during the 1960s but Richard Kostelanetz broadens the field out in a 1977 article for *Performing Arts Journal*; here he underlines the priority given to ‘text’ but also the importance of ‘sound’ so that this strand moves away from issues of syntax and semantics and does not become confused with visual poetry or traditional oral poetry (i.e. standard language poetry read aloud) for instance.<sup>276</sup> Furthermore, to distance *text-sound art* from music Kostelanetz notes that the work should not adhere to a musical pitch or pre-existing melody.

*Text-sound art* is not a replacement for language “but an expansion of our verbal powers,” and it is a form that has been emerging through many centuries according to Kostelanetz.<sup>277</sup> Into the twentieth century and once more Schwitters is mentioned along with Wassily Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy as early pace setters for this strand. Lewis Carroll brings in

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<sup>276</sup> Richard Kostelanetz, “Text-Sound Art: A Survey,” *Performing Arts Journal* 2, no. 2 (Autumn, 1977): 61-70.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

a literary angle and then once again Marinetti and the Russian Futurists appear. Overlapping so much with *sound poetry* the ready availability of new sound recording and playback technologies had a dramatic effect on *text-sound art* from the 1950s and can be heard in the work of (again) Cobbing, Chopin, Dufrene and Hiedsieck. In North America and Canada the work of musicians such as Cage and Steve Reich were hugely influential on the work of *text-sound artists* such as Charles Amirkhanian and computer technology would go on to inform the work of Charles Dodge.

Once again cut-up and collage techniques are readily observed and in a plain acknowledgment of influence John Giorno created a collaborative work with William Burroughs although Kostelanetz declares that this work is not *text-sound art* but instead is a form of “inventively amplified poetry (which is thus more acceptable to ‘poetry’ circles)” the bracketed comment there re-emphasising the realities of working in some of these transdisciplinary ways.<sup>278</sup> As much as it is easy for a practitioner to slip between fields and push at boundaries they can also find themselves with a different audience, or no audience at all, or at the sharp end of critical attention.

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<sup>278</sup> Richard Kostelanetz, “Text-Sound Art: A Survey (Concluded),” *Performing Arts Journal* 2, no. 3 (Winter, 1978): 75.

The V&A define artists' books quite simply as "books made or conceived by artists" but add a disclaimer stating that, along with artists, "illustrators, typographers, writers, poets, book binders, printers and many others [...] work collaboratively or alone to produce artists' books."<sup>279</sup> The 1960s saw the beginnings of artist's book production where the work of Ed Ruscha can be viewed as seminal for the genre.<sup>280</sup> A core point in the early days of artists' books was that they should stand alone as artworks and were not a means to promote or record otherwise existing artworks; this stand-alone nature may also signal their separation from poetry where collections are often published in limited, sometimes hand-made forms for small-scale circulation.

The definition of an artist's book can be extended to many works that have a sequential or narrative aspect to them and will not necessarily confine the work to one of pages printed with text and/or image ... and it could also be that artists' books will explore and disrupt the very narrative/sequential aspect just mentioned above (for example, the 'unopenable' books of Ti Parks).<sup>281</sup> Once more a genre becomes slippery. Whatever their form or content though, the rise of the artist's book has

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<sup>279</sup> "Artists' Books – Victoria and Albert Museum," Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/books-artists>.

<sup>280</sup> For example, with works such as *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, artist's book, 1963, Tate, <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/transforming-artist-books/summaries/edward-ruscha-twentysix-gasoline-stations-1963>.

<sup>281</sup> For example see Ti Parks, *7 fold*, artist's book, 1991, private collection.

mirrored a desire and willingness to circumvent traditional art markets and the constraints of the gallery space, and to democratise the circulation of work for "the inexpensive book form allowed for a more inclusive exchange between the artist and the viewer or reader to take place."<sup>282</sup> However, this accessibility can come undone as items become more valuable, collectable or simply fragile and their reading is increasingly mediated—initially white gloves will need to be worn but eventually the work will be captured and frozen in a display case.<sup>283</sup>

However, just because an artwork is somewhat book-shaped does not mean that it is in any way related to *art writing*. But even this simple statement raises more issues than are evident at first: should *art writing* be intended such in its creation or can it be declared so later in the critical response to it? Does *art writing* require a minimum word count or can it be composed of (what is more traditionally understood as) images? There is though much potential for slippage between the forms—*art writing* journals may turn up in artist's book discussions (particularly where those journals become zines), and artist's book makers may very

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<sup>282</sup> Andrew Wilson, "From Page to Page," in Richard Long, *Heaven and Earth* (London: Tate, 2009), 194. With the growth of digital technologies the opportunity to democratise art has increased further.

<sup>283</sup> This turn of events is generally against the wishes of the artist: for example, as Ruscha himself declared, "[I was] not trying to create a precious limited edition book, but a mass-produced product of high order." Ed Ruscha quoted in Maria White, "Edward Ruscha 'Twentysix Gasoline Stations' 1963," Tate, May 2013, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/transforming-artist-books/summaries/edward-ruscha-twentysix-gasoline-stations-1963>.

well employ writing in their works. There is clearly not complete overlap but much shared ground; not least the looseness of definition and the playful confrontation of existing boundaries and classifications.

### III | *proper nouns*

The fact that *art writing* utilises words and writing does not make it beholden to that monolithic presence ‘Literature’; there is not a hierarchy which Literature sits atop although there may be occasions wherein *art writing* could learn some style from Literature as Dillon insisted. It is equally appropriate that *art writing* should look to the visual arts (as well as the more experimental strands of literature) for inspiration or acknowledgment. With this spirit in mind it would be wrong and hugely distracting for this current research to conduct an overview of literature in general. However, there are certain areas and a number of ‘mainstream’ authors where overlaps and sympathies can be found.

Shaking the rattlebag of *art writing* a number of key works of what is more usually regarded as literature regularly call for our attention. The publication of these texts precede the *art writing* debates of the last twenty to thirty years but they are often cited by artists as influential on the way that they work. Some are infamous, others less well known;

James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake*, Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*, Laurence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Walter Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project*, something by Gertrude Stein, a host of works by Samuel Beckett and, of course, the entire oeuvre of William S. Burroughs. Pushing into the era of current debates, W.G. Sebald’s *Rings of Saturn* is usually taken as some sort of orientation point by a broad range of specialists.

It is of no use (to this research) claiming these works for one camp rather than the other but whilst sitting nearer to the art camp it may be useful to tease out some of the features of these works that make them so appealing to artists but also to recognise that art does not have a singular claim over the disruption of boundaries; after all, these are all recognised writers unsettling language, words, the book form, narrative structure and what it is to write. Joyce pushes language beyond its limits and does not mind upsetting people in the process; O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman* has been described as “unique in the English language.”<sup>284</sup> Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* mixes text and ‘graphic devices’; the posthumous structuring of Benjamin’s writings on Parisian life around the form of the *passages couvert* builds an ordering, sculptural quality through collage processes.

“Commercial publishers slighted [Gertrude Stein’s] experimental writings and critics dismissed them as incomprehensible,” but writers and

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<sup>284</sup> Flann O’Brien *The Third Policeman* (London: Harper Collins, 2007), cover.

artists alike were drawn to her work and she surely gained too from these relationships.<sup>285</sup> *Tender Buttons* is a fine example of Stein's style; "the book contains passages of automatic writing and is configured as a series of paragraphs about objects. Devoid of conventional logic, narration, and grammar, the work resembles a verbal collage."<sup>286</sup> The following excerpt from *A method of a cloak* shows well this collage-like approach:

A single climb to a line, a straight exchange to a cane, a desperate adventure and courage and a clock, all this which is a system, which has feeling, which has resignation and success, all makes an attractive black silver.<sup>287</sup>

Stein's life amongst the Parisian Bohemian community buoyed her attempts to become increasingly experimental in her writing, so much so that one commentator remarked "*Tender Buttons* is to writing . . . exactly, what cubism is to art."<sup>288</sup>

Samuel Beckett's plays, poems and novels are born from a paradox around language and communication; for Beckett speaking was absolutely necessary for "man cannot possibly communicate with his fellows, but the alternative—silence—is irreconcilable with human

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<sup>285</sup> "Gertrude Stein | Poetry Foundation," Poetry Foundation, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/gertrude-stein>.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (Axminster: Uniformbooks, 2012), 13.

<sup>288</sup> W.G. Rogers quoted in "Gertrude Stein," Poetry Foundation.

existence."<sup>289</sup> In 1969's *Breath* Beckett seemingly got very close to silence, but although lacking in clear spoken word the brief performance communicates fully a sense of despair and dark humour so typical of his work. Beckett would write in his non-native French for "the discipline and economy of expression that an acquired language would force upon on him."<sup>290</sup>

To read his dramatic works with their heavy punctuation and detailed stage directions starkly realises the despair of which he dealt, the characters seemingly trapped by the requirements of these devices and instructions, the halting and stuttering dialogue becomes suffocating. Dialogue begins and is almost immediately stopped by a '[Pause.]' as if the speaker never has any hope of getting to the conclusion of what they must say. Occasionally though the words are delivered as if from a machine gun, to read *Not I* is one thing but to see it performed even on screen is another thing entirely.<sup>291</sup> The reader/viewer is arrested by the starkness and intensity of *Mouth* as the close focus frames the visceral, buccal, lingual monologue to something more than human . . . more than

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<sup>289</sup> Samuel Beckett quoted in "Samuel Beckett | Poetry Foundation," Poetry Foundation, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/samuel-beckett>.

<sup>290</sup> "Samuel Beckett (1906-1989)," *imagi-nation.com*, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.imagi-nation.com/moonstruck/clsc7.htm>.

<sup>291</sup> Samuel Beckett, "Not I," in *Samuel Beckett The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 373-83. For the preferred version of *Not I* for screen see Billie Whitelaw's 1973 performance at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4LDwfKxr-M>.

words. In their necessarily stripped down minimalist feel, Beckett's later works are nearer to performance art than literature.

William S. Burroughs is best known for novels such as *Naked Lunch* through which he popularised the cut-up technique. This approach had its origins in the work of the Dadaists and Lettrists but Burroughs also saw T.S. Eliot as an early user of the technique. It was Brion Gysin who directly introduced Burroughs to the technique though; whilst trying to cut a mount for a drawing, Gysin cut through several layers of newspaper and saw possibilities in the "raw words." For Gysin, this was a way of "turning painters' techniques directly into writing" and Gysin readily shared his discovery with Burroughs.<sup>292</sup> To the cut-up, Burroughs would add the fold-in technique, taking an existing sheet of his writing he would fold it vertically down the middle and overlay it onto another sheet and read across the lines, the merged texts attaining the quality of a flashback (or flash-forwards). Through Burroughs, these techniques reached the mainstream and had a major impact on (particularly American) literature. The techniques would also be adopted by a host of artists of all genres and particularly musicians, such as David Bowie, Lou Reed and Brian Eno. Burroughs himself did not stop at the written word and he also used this cut-up technique in his spoken word and sound work.

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<sup>292</sup> Brion Gysin, *Let the Mice In* (West Clover: Something Else Press, 1973).

W.G. Sebald was very much part of the literary mainstream with a number of highly-acclaimed novels and many years in academia at The University of Manchester and then the University of East Anglia. A number of his works, but particularly *Rings of Saturn*, attract admiring glances from the art world. Maybe it is for his forensic (visual) observations, or the interweaving of text and image. In the latter his *bricoleur* approach is expanded by his detailed attention to layout wherein the traditional image/text opposition is prised apart by his production, and in this levered space the *bricolage* of content is given air.<sup>293</sup> Whatever it is about Sebald's poetry and novels it is clear that their trajectory intersects with the orbits of artists; Tacita Dean in particular has made a number of works based on or inspired by the writer and his work.

Sebald's style (mixing fiction, travelogue, art history and so forth) may be termed 'hybrid;' this is a word that appears occasionally in discussion of *art writing*. This hybridity of writing could offer a form of prose "that borrows from the practice of poetry: seriality, constraint, repetition and variation, inference, artifice, rhetoric and lyric speech, assemblage and puzzle, and recursion."<sup>294</sup> Whilst this is all very positive there is a sense

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<sup>293</sup> Lise Patt, "Introduction. Searching for Sebald: What I Know for Sure," in *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*, ed. Lise Patt (Los Angeles: The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2007), 41-43.

<sup>294</sup> "Hybrid Writing: Crossing Prose with Poetry," The University of Arizona Poetry Center, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <http://poetry.arizona.edu/calendar/hybrid-writing-crossing-prose-poetry>.

here that those techniques are being taken back to an existing field rather than running with them to see what they can offer and to carry on enriched once they have unseated the writer. *A Hybrid Writing* conference was convened at the University of East Anglia (an institution with a robust literary heritage) at the end of 2016 but here the target was to unsettle “the divide between literature and criticism” through the exploration of “work which interrogates or destabilises the established demarcation within writing.”<sup>295</sup> Whilst the intentions of hybrid writing might be highly commensurate with *art writing* there is arguably a narrative thrust that frequently becomes redundant in *art writing*.

Is the difference also here that art has stolen literature’s language? Why should art be allowed to use words as its material? But this is a highly oppositional point of view and there is no reason why words should not be part of an artist’s material palette. Prior to the early twentieth century an artwork was easy to identify and the form it took would be of paint, marble, cast metal and so on—words were used in considerations and criticisms of the artwork but with art’s utilization of words the critics’ weapon was somehow turned back on them; there were apparently no secrets to uncover for it is written out.

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<sup>295</sup> “Hybrid Writing: Literature as Criticism, Criticism as Literature,” The University of East Anglia, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, <https://www.uea.ac.uk/literature/hybrid-writing-literature-as-criticism-criticism-as-literature>.

If it can be argued that *art writing* has much to learn from literature then it can be counter-claimed that there is much for *art writing* to borrow or steal and adapt from its more publicly acceptable cousin. There is only one reason why *art writing* cannot be distributed through mainstream publishing houses and that is the perceived poor financial returns, however there are always smaller scale publishers happy to promote experimental forms that have equal validity (but smaller audiences). These sorts of smaller publishers have long been a feature of poetry publishing and the tradition is nobly continued today by the likes of Shearsman Books, Bloodaxe Books, Uniformbooks and Longbarrow Press (many of whom will also be found at artists’ book fairs).

Although poetry can be a highly competitive field it is true that there is a more sympathetic crossover from this literary strain to the art world; there is an attunement between the worlds as though the boundary between literature and art is more porous at this point. Poets and artists will often move in the same social circles too, for example, as with Gertrude Stein, the poet W.S. Graham (met earlier on Zennor Hill) immersed himself in artistic communities, first in Glasgow and then, more famously, in Cornwall amongst the St. Ives artists. Whilst reluctant to acknowledge a direct influence from the visual artists it is clear that Graham benefited greatly from the friendships he made within these communities—the lives and work of the artists are as present in

Graham's poetry as are the cliffs and moors of West Penwith. All is held together by a continual grappling with language and the page.

It can also be argued that Graham's work had an influence on the work of the visual artists he worked amongst although Alison Oldham cites a number of specific St. Ives artists who deny this to be the case: Terry Frost, Wilhemina Barns-Graham and (in particular) Ben Nicholson all "play down possible literary influence" on their work, and to reflect this Oldham goes on to quote one of the roguish Sven Berlin's semi-fictional artists opining, "They say I am too literary!"<sup>296</sup> But maybe the denials are a response to an overly direct questioning, for the kind of influence considered here is much more subtle and would occur over a longer period of time. Rather than responding to content the question of influence is more about the creative process, where the clunky word/image binary is declared obsolete and commonalities may cross the stubborn literature-art divide.<sup>297</sup>

Graham did though use a process that has, on the surface, quite a painterly approach. Back to his days in Glasgow Graham had the habit

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<sup>296</sup> Alison Oldham, *Everyone Was Working: Writers and Artists in Postwar St Ives*, (St Ives: Tate St Ives, 2002), 7-9.

<sup>297</sup> During one of the *Plastic Words* events writer and filmmaker Chris Kraus declared that her writing practice was "born of the art world but its ever-expanding sphere of influence now also takes in the literary world." Chris Kraus quoted in Laura Edbrook, "Thank you for writing to me so often, you are revealing yourself to me in the only way you can () | MAP Magazine," MAP Magazine, accessed 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, <http://mapmagazine.co.uk/9809/thank-you-writing-me-so-often-you-are-revealing-yo/>.

of pinning lines of text up on to his wall and by his Cornwall years he would form whole poems working in this way and, as Oldham reports, this approach would have more playful outputs too as he liked to play a text-based form of the 'Exquisite Corpse' game with fellow St Ives artists and writers in the pub.<sup>298</sup> These forms of sketching may seem very much of the visual art world but why should one world have primacy over another in creative tricks and techniques? One only has to look at a photo of Graham at his writing desk—Graham sits with pen poised (most likely posed but ... ) the text is expansive and the large (A3?) sheets overlap as if different passages are being blended; sketches brought together, worked up and refined.<sup>299</sup> In fact Ben Nicholson had remarked to Herbert Read that Graham's "way of working at his writing seems like my way of working at my painting."<sup>300</sup> From the other pole Tony Lopez has claimed: Graham "strove to find parallels in literature for what was happening in painting."<sup>301</sup> There is no hierarchy here; neither art form has the final claim over an approach.

It is in visual and concrete poetry where the worlds of (conceptual) art and poetry find greatest concord although Neil Powell suggests that this

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<sup>298</sup> Oldham, *Everyone Was Working*, 28-9.

<sup>299</sup> The photograph was taken by Michael Seward Snow in 1959 and appears (in a cropped form) on the cover of W.S. Graham, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

<sup>300</sup> Ben Nicholson quoted in Oldham, *Everyone Was Working*, 31.

<sup>301</sup> Tony Lopez, *The Poetry of WS Graham* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 21.

agreement “may only be symptomatic or coincidental,” and he prefers to focus on the causal links effected by concrete poetry between the domains.<sup>302</sup> Powell suggests a period through the 1950s and 60s for the emergence of concrete poetry (although the work of (again) the Futurists and Dadists such as Hausmann and Schwitters and the Vorticists could be cited as earlier examples or, indeed, certain carvings and texts from many centuries prior to this). Powell goes on to note the emergence of European poets such as Eugen Gomringer utilising a visual poetry from the mid-1950s, whilst at the same time the *Noigrandes* group were working in Brazil on their *poesia concreta*. Concrete Poetry’s heyday would only last until the mid-1960s due to a “wider perception that the form of the visual poem was compromised in the eyes of both literary criticism and art theory,” but despite a fading of Concrete Poetry certain individuals were able to sustain a critical relevance through this form, amongst these being Ian Hamilton Finlay who steered clear of the “irreversible tendency to decoration and over-elaboration” that was symptomatic of the form’s decline.<sup>303</sup> More recently performance artist and sound poet Nathan Walker released a collection of works (*Condensations*) the bulk of which owes a debt of gratitude to Concrete Poetry and to Kurt Schwitters.<sup>304</sup> The text works contained in

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<sup>302</sup> Neil Powell, “UbuWeb :: Concrete Poetry and Conceptual Art,” UbuWeb, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <http://www.ubu.com/papers/powell.html>.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Nathan Walker, *Condensations* (Axminster: Uniformbooks, 2017).

*Condensations* are almost impossible to verbalise as the words cloud and overlap on the page, mapping (and hiding) their origination from archival sources, original writing, Westmoreland dialect and conversation. Like Will-o’-the-wisps words appear from the clouds and the reader clings to the recognisable before being lost again in the fog of text. The works conform to the format of the page out of necessity but recall (and encourage) performance as they push language beyond a visual/verbal harmony.

In 2009 a Poetry Marathon was held at the Serpentine Gallery in London; this was one of a series of annual marathons with different focal points and so it could be argued that the arranging and curating of the marathon in itself was the art rather than the presentations of the individual participants. Caroline Bergvall viewed it as a good opportunity for poetry to reach a wider audience and as a situation “where the strict line between textual and visual exploration blissfully dissipates,” but still she was rather concerned by the whole enterprise.<sup>305</sup> For Bergvall, the event took a rather narrow and conservative view of poetry’s form and a loose one in the sense of who the participant poets were—almost anybody who writes. Furthermore, from among the participants she

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<sup>305</sup> Caroline Bergvall quoted in Fred Sasaki, “Poetry Marathon at the Serpentine Gallery, London,” Poetry Foundation, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2009/10/poetry-marathon-at-the-serpentine-gallery-london/>.

frequently detected a manifest fear of poetry (a fear that echoes through the general population of Britain Bergvall worries), as a sacred relic to be revered “rather than [a] productive, mode of functioning.”<sup>306</sup> Bergvall felt that opening speakers pointed to a potential in this event that was not realised through its delivery and legacy, for her the old saw of a literature/art dichotomy was merely reinforced and any debates about crossover were “superficial” at best and only challenged at an individual level rather than a disciplinary one. Bergvall sensed a view of poetry by art as being an outmoded and ‘functional activity,’ but wonders whether this stance merely masks an underlying fear of language; Bergvall’s final diagnosis of the situation is that there exists a “sclerosis between verbal and non-verbal arts.” Commentators to Bergvall’s article are generally in agreement with her observations and diagnosis and in a comment of her own Bergvall wonders if the current debate signals “a long-term societal restructuring of art” that needs to be “taken into account” and lived through as poets create or maintain “a conscious and radical understanding of language’s work.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

#### *IV | artists writing*

A further strand to consider in this discussion is that of recognised (usually visual) artists writing. Of course artists write—should they not? This writing can take many forms though and much of it is not a fundamental facet of the artist’s practice and so not directly relevant to this research. This latter could include letter writing or the artist describing their own work: for instance, the letters of van Gogh are highly praised and classed as world literature by some but they tend to the descriptive, detailing his daily life, his reading matter and his artistic ambitions. However, they were definitely not viewed by him as part of his practice and despite his writing skills a comment to his brother Theo in 1882 is telling: “Writing is actually an awful way to explain things to each other.”<sup>308</sup> Paul Gauguin had an alternative approach; not widely recognised, Gauguin’s writings were fairly extensive and included “art criticism, satirical journalism, travel writing, and theoretical treatises.”<sup>309</sup> Critical of the critics and their desire for an unnecessary written commentary of art, Gauguin insisted that he could “talk about painting,

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<sup>308</sup> Vincent van Gogh quoted in “199 (198, 169): To Theo van Gogh. The Hague, Sunday, 8 or Monday, 9 January 1882. Vincent van Gogh Letters,” Van Gogh Museum, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let199/letter.html>.

<sup>309</sup> Linda Goddard, “To ‘Write as I Paint My Pictures’: Paul Gauguin as Artist-Writer | Institute for Advanced Study,” Institute for Advanced Study, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017, <https://www.ias.edu/ideas/2015/goddard-paul-gauguin>. At the end of her article Goddard suggests that the role of the artist-writer is an understudied one. Perhaps it is one that is often ignored for convenience’s sake.

not as a man of letters, but as a painter.”<sup>310</sup> For Gauguin, writing was traditionally ‘civilised’ and art ‘primitive;’ he would write as a primitive savage.<sup>311</sup>

Three further artists who have extensive writings to their names are Robert Smithson, Susan Hiller and Tacita Dean. For Jack Flam, Smithson’s “art and writings are so closely related that they can be understood to be very much part of the same undertaking, which involved a reciprocal interaction between word and image.”<sup>312</sup> Flam further emphasises his point by stating that, “[t]he act of writing [...] was an integral part of Smithson’s overall practice as an artist.”<sup>313</sup> In the mid-1960s Smithson discovered the writings of Jorge Luis Borges and Flam sees this as highly influential on his practice as a whole but particularly on his writing, which became a major facet of his art; text was matter to be arranged, heaped and poured in the same way that mirrors, earth and asphalt were. For Smithson this meant that his work was not conceptual art as he treated ideas in the same ways as words, and so in the same way as earth—all was material for excavation and construction. Smithson frequently addresses geology and its processes in his work and, as the chalk heaps up and the asphalt is poured, so

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<sup>310</sup> Paul Gauguin quoted *ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> Jack Flam, ed., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1996), xiii.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

language is heard splitting and rupturing; the matter he utilised became faulted and displaced. And as much as he pushed at the accepted norms of art generally he did the same with writing, using “varied pictorial images [...] and other kinds of encapsulated fragments,” to derail any sense of narrative or linearity and replace it with spatiality.<sup>314</sup>

In 1969 Smithson and Nancy Holt made a tour through England and Wales. Smithson had primed for this trip with the study of a collection of geological maps, archaeological guides and books on quarries and mining as well as key texts of the Picturesque. As Holt reported,

we were both interested in the ideas about the Picturesque put forward by the Reverend William Gilpin, as well as Uvedale Price’s *Essay on the Picturesque* 1794. Price, like Capability Brown, understood how to work with the landscape – to work as nature’s agent.<sup>315</sup>

Evidently textual research was an overt aspect of Smithson’s working process and he felt comfortable working with and through these sources in his own artistic outputs. Similar approaches, utilizing textual and archival sources are also present in the work of Susan Hiller. Hiller uses

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, xv-xvi.

<sup>315</sup> Nancy Holt quoted in “Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson in England, 1969 | Tate,” Tate, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/nancy-holt-and-robert-smithson-england-1969>.

text, writing and language in a number of different ways in her work but she also writes *about* art as a 2008 edited collection of talks, catalogue essays and texts evidences—this selection spans the period 1977 to 2007 and includes critical, almost art historical, surveys of artists such as Kurt Schwitters, Georgia O'Keefe, Henry Moore, Yves Klein, and Jackson Pollock who have all inspired Hiller in some way.<sup>316</sup> The book also includes exhibition reviews, especially where exhibitions overlap with Hiller's original area of expertise, anthropology.

Hiller has also worked around automatic writing in her work on several occasions such as in *Midnight, Baker Street* (1983) wherein the automatic writing has almost become a pattern of repetition or scarring across the photographic portraits, or her 2011 work *Lucidity and Intuition: Homage to Gertrude Stein* in which the dossier atop the book-filled writing desk is filled with (legible) copies of research papers on automatic writing by Hiller and Stein. Hiller has made a number of these homages to artists who have inspired her, “accompanied by refreshingly frank commentaries [ ... ] acknowledging her debts to their work.”<sup>317</sup> There is a sense though that, compared to Smithson, Hiller's writing (rather than use of text) can

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<sup>316</sup> Susan Hiller, *The Provisional Texture of Reality: Selected Talks and Texts, 1977-2007*, ed. Alexandra M. Kokoli (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2008).

<sup>317</sup> “Aesthetica Magazine – The Collective Conscience,” *Aesthetica Magazine*, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/the-collective-conscience>.

become less embedded; instead it becomes an extension or layer of a work rather than fundamental to it.

Tacita Dean originally trained as a painter and now works across a range of media including film, photography, drawing and sound. Dean's use of writing is analogous to Hiller's and so the discussion has slipped away a little from the initial distinction that Smithson was achieving—his insistence about the writing being part of his practice is important, but maybe with Dean, and thirty years after Smithson, a defence for writing's presence in an art practice is no longer required; writing here is accepted—maybe it is part of that academicising trend in art education that Millar and Roelstraete note above. Suffice to say that Dean has written magazine and newspaper articles as well as textual components for her work. A survey of her practice put out in 2003 (and updated and re-issued in 2011) includes seven books addressing different facets of Dean's work—some of the books are about her work but one is a selection of her writings.<sup>318</sup> Dean finds inspiration in many locations and one focus for her work has been W.G. Sebald from whom she has been inspired to make two works (*Michael Hamburger* and a small volume simply titled *W.G. Sebald*) along with an article for *October* magazine; the texts were all variations of the work included in the 2011 survey. Moving to a different aspect of writing, Dean's handwriting can be found

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<sup>318</sup> Tacita Dean, *Seven Books Grey* (New York: Steidl, 2011).

scrawling across blackboards in works such as *The Roaring Forties: Seven Boards in Seven Days*. Despite these writings one commentator has noted that Dean's work is imbued with silence, and that her work is, "a study of silence, of what is not said, of the remainder, of the spaces or holes between experience that cannot be fully articulated by language."<sup>319</sup> And yet, in this exception that proves the rule (that is Dean as an artist writing) which was attempting to be written, it is recalled that language need not be word-based—text, word, and language too easily become synonymous—silence, if it is possible, takes its own place in/as language. And yet. And yet by writing it is meant, that use of materials to scratch and tear at meaning.

### ***V | where did all these words come from and what are they doing here?***

The term *art writing* potentially places art and writing in an opposition, which, whilst binding the two terms together, does so in an uncomfortable relationship of exclusion; one term can never quite be acceptable (or understandable) to the other. It is a form of claiming

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<sup>319</sup> Cynthia Cruz, "Notes Toward a New Language: Silence: On Tacita Dean : Cynthia Cruz : Harriet the Blog : The Poetry Foundation," Poetry Foundation, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2015/04/notes-toward-a-new-language-silence-on-tacita-dean>.

where the 'writing' of *art writing* now seems to belong to art alone; this is a major concern for Kate Love in her 2009 PhD thesis.<sup>320</sup> Here, Love observes that "the binary configuration that is known as 'art writing' does most of the work in maintaining the rigid dualism that it might actually wish to deconstruct."<sup>321</sup> Instead, Love proposes 'writing as a practice in the context of fine art,' as a replacement for *art writing*: this new term is very clear about its purpose but in its word count emphasises the problem of trying to enmesh writing as practice with/in fine art practice.<sup>322</sup> However, the shorter term *writing as practice* is too problematic for Love as she is concerned that "to call writing a practice, and leave it at that, is making things far too general."<sup>323</sup> For Love (as in this research) these discussions are being played out not only in the zone between Art and Literature but also in the arena of academia. Here the question of writing as practice collides uncomfortably with expected differentiations between theory and practice, not to mention contradictory understandings of *practice-led* research.

... but oh! how futile and wearying it can seem at times tracing and recording the inflections and movements of *art writing* and its associated forms. If a visualisation were to be attempted it would render Jeremy Deller's mapping of two musical genres stilted and underline its one-

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<sup>320</sup> Love, "An Exploration of Affect as a Methodology."

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

dimensionality.<sup>324</sup> But this weariness is not welcome here and no signs of the exertion required to undertake this task should be in evidence. Exertion's voice must be silenced ... quiet, all will be "valuable exercise" ... .<sup>325</sup>

In past readings of art, writing was not something done as part of art practice. As discussed above, certainly artists may have written *about* their work—they may have been encouraged to dismantle their work in order to provide access points for a lay audience—they may even have made working notes and writings in the course of creating work but writing in and of itself would not have been an output ... that was for poets. Art became consumed by the visual and pictorial (be it representational or abstract) and writing had no place there. It was with the rise of conceptual art that text began to find a place. Literally in amongst it getting dirty and damaged! This conceptual concern with words had arguably grown out of the work of the early twentieth-century pioneers such as the previously (and repeatedly) mentioned Dadaists and Futurists (recall Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tumb* from 1914 or, yet again, Ball and Tzara's performances at the Cabaret Voltaire in

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<sup>324</sup> Jeremy Deller, *The History of the World*, graphite and acrylic paint on wall, 1997-2004, Tate, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/deller-the-history-of-the-world-t12868>.

<sup>325</sup> Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 299.

1916).<sup>326</sup> Before this, writing in (fine) art is highly unusual, William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* from the late 1700s is a rare example, but here it could be countered that the *Songs* are simply illustrated poems or an early form of graphic design.

From the likes of Ball and Tzara the word-baton was handed on to René Magritte. His 1929 painting *The Treachery of Images* infamously has the words "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" ~~written~~ painted underneath ~~a picture, a visual representation of, a painting of a~~ ... already these words are derailed by how to describe the painting. There are two pipes in this painting—one is the painted word "pipe" and the other is the painted form of a pipe—and more pipes are conjured up by the colliding together of these two pipes. And if the veracity of the painted pipe is to be doubted because of the supporting statement then why should the painted words be believed? By moving them onto an artist's canvas and painting them are they still belonging to language or do they now simply become a further visual element of the painting? And by stressing the visual it is also brought home to the viewer-reader that they will inevitably read the painted words and possibly annunciate them. Another pipe. What right has Magritte to paint these words? What paint has Magritte to write these words? What is writing when it comes to these

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<sup>326</sup> The repeated mention of particular individuals and works underlines the slipperiness of definitions and labels in these multiple forms of art.

words? In this painting, art and writing (language) are being dismantled and the viewer-reader is forced to question what art (and writing) can be. Once more, the difference between the communities becomes the stage.

Before looking at words and conceptual art it is worth writing briefly upon 'writing' as a term. The English verb *to write* is etymologically traced back through northern European sources to the visceral activities of tearing and scratching. It is to be recalled that writing is not a sterile activity (although today, mostly at keyboards, writers are frequently immured in a clean and comfortable bubble), and although the writer's clothes may not be paint splattered or caked in stone dust, writing can be far from a sanitised act. It is also worthwhile noting that the French verb *écrire* has incisory origins as it is traced through to the Proto-Indo-European word *skribh* meaning "to cut" and also "to separate and sift". Every single word written is a small cut and from these cuts surfaces grow. A surface formed of cuts ... .

... returning to the presence of text in visual art, following on from Magritte and through the middle of the twentieth century groups such as the Lettrists, Dadaists, and Surrealists continued to flirt with language or embrace it wholesale and then subvert it to their own ends. The ragtag of Fluxus continued this trend into the 1960s. By this point the waters become very muddied as conceptual art continued to assert its presence. Whilst not purely reliant on words, conceptual artists frequently utilised

language, writing and words in their practices: this might range from the instructional elements of Sol Le Witt's wall drawings, through the analytical text in Kosuth's work such as *One and Three Chairs* or *Leaning Glass* (both 1965), to the confrontational statements of Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer.

Fronted by Michael Baldwin, David Bainbridge, Harold Hurrell and Terry Atkinson the group-movement *Art & Language* was born in the second half of the 1960s and was used as a title from 1968 to collate the collaborative work the quartet had been undertaking. *Art & Language* was a key force in the growth of conceptual art and it was a force working in different modes; artworks were produced and publications circulated. *Art & Language* would grow beyond its original founders and go on to include other artists such as Joseph Kosuth. For the artists *Art & Language* offered "a critical inquiry into the social, philosophical and psychological position of the artist which they regarded as mystification."<sup>327</sup> *Art & Language's* discussions took place in their eponymous journal as well as in gallery contexts and unsurprisingly much of their work contains some form of written content (usually cleanly printed and presented in a minimalist manner such as 1967's *Map to Not Indicate* or *100% Abstract* from 1968 in which the painting is 'replaced'

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<sup>327</sup> "Art and Language: Mother, Father, Monday | Exhibitions | Lisson Gallery," Lisson Gallery, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.lissongallery.com/exhibitions/art-and-language>.

with the chemical analysis of the paint used to create it). The discussion and critique continues today through the collaboration of Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden in works such as *Map of Itself*.<sup>328</sup>

Not all of this art text was neatly and minimally presented for words were also making their appearance in painting circles too.<sup>329</sup> Consider here Cy Twombly's frenetic and sensual painting from a similar era to the emergence of *Art & Language* (and since). Where *Art & Language* are closer to users of text Twombly's work is much more reliant upon the manual activity of (hand)writing. John Berger observed that Twombly does not just employ writing but deals with the "fundamental" relationship between writer and language; Twombly sees language "as a terrain full of illegibilities, hidden paths, impasses, surprises, and obscurities."<sup>330</sup> For Berger the writing in Twombly's paintings does not conform to the usual writerly logics of grammar and syntax, instead they are inhabited by a poetry which creates a terrain at once foreign and familiar, relating to "accuracies of tact, of longing, of loss, of expectation;" in this terrain Twombly explores "the silent space that exists between and

around words."<sup>331</sup> Or as Clare Daigle put it in a 2008 article for *Tate Etc.*, Twombly's work is "Lingering at the threshold between word and image."<sup>332</sup> For example, the handwritten letterforms of the *Nini's Painting* series rain down and splash back up in their lament for a lost friend and the viewer's desire for clarity is lost in the tear-soaked terrain.<sup>333</sup> Or, as another example, consider the deeply encrusted paintings and sculptures of Anselm Kiefer. Frequently Kiefer's work is daubed with single words or longer quotations; it has been suggested that Kiefer's use of words "serves to cancel or contradict the painting [...] to play devil's advocate with the painting, to challenge it [...] to interrogate it!"<sup>334</sup> Rather than a submission to the power of language (over image) this seems as if Kiefer is aware of the conflict and is artistically playing with the power struggles.

From a highly painterly terrain the writing moves into the unpainted landscape.<sup>335</sup> When not moving and arranging geological fragments, Richard Long may be found aligning textual ones. Right from his art

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<sup>328</sup> Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden, *Map of Itself*, multiple, 1991, Arts Council Collection, London.

<sup>329</sup> We could here cite the work of On Kawara (especially his *Today* series) to muddle and muddy this simplistic distinction between minimalist, conceptual art and painting.

<sup>330</sup> John Berger, "Audible Silence: Cy Twombly at Daros," Cy Twombly Foundation, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017, [http://www.cytwombly.info/twombly\\_writings8.htm](http://www.cytwombly.info/twombly_writings8.htm).

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Clare Daigle, "Lingering at the threshold between word and image," *Tate Etc.*, Summer 2008, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/lingering-threshold-between-word-and-image>.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Unknown author. Text accompanying Anselm Kiefer exhibition at Royal Academy of Arts, London, 27 September - 14 December 2014

<sup>335</sup> *The Unpainted Landscape* is the title of a 1987 touring exhibition and accompanying book around "new procedures for an art of landscape." Simon Cutts, ed., *The Unpainted Landscape* (London: Coracle Press, 1987).

school years in the 1960s, Long worked with text and he made his first solely printed text piece in 1969 for an exhibition in Bern, Switzerland. Since this time Long has used words in a variety of ways—sometimes text and image work together such as in *THROWING A STONE AROUND MACGILLYCUDDYS REEKS*. On other occasions text acts as a form of descriptor (see for instance his 1975 work at Cerne Abbas, Dorset); on yet other occasions the text may be a highly distilled presentation of what are apparently observations made on a walk. These words may also be arranged more concretely using simple geometric devices, such as in *ONE HOUR* wherein sixty words have been arranged into a circle above the ‘title’ and ‘subtitle’. The circular form immediately makes one think of Long’s work with stone; the uneven shapes and sizes of the word-stones carefully chosen and arranged with a drystone waller’s eye and hand; clean cut faces belie the jagged and jumbled interior.

In his early works when words were involved Long tended to use the engineering draughtsman’s device of neatly handwritten capitals in pencil held between ruled guide-lines, and typewritten text strips applied to the surface of the works in the style of a highly formalised collage or the paste-up for a magazine or newspaper spread. Since his works through the 1970s, Long has used clean sans-serif typefaces such as Helvetica or Gill Sans to give the viewer little or no emotional steer; Long’s works are certainly not poetry as it is traditionally understood—they do not have “a

narrative syntax as in poetry” nor do they “syntactically construct an atmosphere, as poetry does” and they leave the enigma of what to do with them.<sup>336</sup> Many seem to be portals into Long’s walking experience which in their distilled way send viewers off into their own reveries that have gained some traction from the content of the word-arrangement; Long’s own experience can never be repeated or be shared by the viewer but his work can leverage open a little space that despite the work’s clean, logical appearance jars against the viewers’ everyday lives.

Of his photographs of works in the landscape Long has used the term “residue;” the photographs are a record of a moment that has been “brought back into another context as one way of communicating” place and emotion.<sup>337</sup> Sometimes Long will leave these residues in a direct way; at other times he will expand and develop them into the many and varied forms of editioned book. Long’s bookworks range through postcards, hand-made limited edition books, mass-produced paperbacks and hardbacks, all have the same considered attention to content, layout and (as has been noted above) are intended as further democratisation of his art—original works available to many and at the same moment. In an essay on Long’s books Andrew Wilson observes that the book format is

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<sup>336</sup> R.H. Fuchs, *Richard Long* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1986), 103. Although a certain (distant) relationship with Concrete Poetry can be felt in much of Long’s work.

<sup>337</sup> Richard Long quoted in Mel Gooding ed., *Song of the Earth: European Artists and the Landscape* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 131.

entirely suited to Long's walking practice with its reliance on pacing and rhythm (a rhythm that can be interrupted).<sup>338</sup> Wilson concludes his essay with a quote from Long about the consistency of his work

A sculpture, a map, a text, a photograph: all the forms of my work are equal and complementary. The knowledge of my actions, in whatever form, is the art. My art is the essence of my experience, not a representation of it.<sup>339</sup>

That other walking artist, that other landscape unpainter, Hamish Fulton, at first glance works in the same way as Long. Texts and photographic images brought back from his walks are presented on gallery walls or in books and leaflets.<sup>340</sup> Fulton has been making this sort of work since the late 1960s with a more performative approach initially (including a group walk arranged with Long for their fellow St. Martin's College of Art students and staff in 1967). By the early 1970s Fulton had felt his way into a way of working; for him the walk is the work, later declared as, "WALKING IS AN ARTFORM IN ITS OWN RIGHT."<sup>341</sup> This assertion leads to confusion around his interventions in

galleries and via printed material: if these are not the artwork then what are they?

These gallery works and publications are certainly carefully crafted; as with Long, there is much attention to scale, rhythm, layout, and so forth. And whilst the words on the wall or page are not intentionally poetry there is often a quality to them that falls within poetry's purlieu. In some ways, the words have come by chance and selection—the walk put Fulton in a place to experience particular phenomena but, as he declares "there are no words in nature," he must use his wordliness to select appropriate words.<sup>342</sup> The appropriateness of words may belong to an oral or visual cadence or perhaps both such as in *Rock Fall Echo Dust*.<sup>343</sup> The four four-letter words of the title are set in upper case Helvetica and arranged in a column, one word per line, with the first and third words in red and the other two printed in black. But the kerning of each word is exaggerated so the column becomes stretched across and the letters also form a square grid, which, despite the uniformity, also suggests a jumble of letters to further summon the debris of the rock fall. Word scree. The four words are subtitled (in red) with "A TWELVE AND A HALF DAY WALK

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<sup>338</sup> Andrew Wilson, "From Page to Page," in Fuchs, *Long*, 194-99.

<sup>339</sup> Richard Long quoted *ibid*, 199.

<sup>340</sup> The relationship between image and text in Fulton's work has varied over the years, through the 1970s the text was subservient to the image but slowly the text's prominence increased and (for a while) replaced image entirely. Since the 1990s Fulton has started using images again but words and image are now given equal value.

<sup>341</sup> Hamish Fulton, *Walking In Relation to Everything* (Birmingham: Ikon, 2012), 6.

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<sup>342</sup> "<http://www.hamish-fulton.com/quotes.txt>," Hamish Fulton, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017, <http://www.hamish-fulton.com/quotes.txt>.

<sup>343</sup> Hamish Fulton, *Rock Fall Echo Dust (from Fourteen Works)*, offset lithograph, 1989, Tate, London, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/fulton-rock-fall-echo-dust-baffin-island-canada-1988-p77433>.

ON BAFFIN ISLAND CANADA SUMMER 1988,” a suggestion (or evidence?) of the walk-work from which this wall-work was distilled.

Unlike Long, Fulton leaves nothing but footsteps in the landscape (and takes nothing but photographs either) and so his practice succinctly divides into two actions: the walk (as work) and the gallery/publication presence. For Jim Mooney, the ‘gap’ between these two actions is crucial as it signifies a ‘lack’ that is also exploited in advertising; the gap between Fulton’s original experience and its signpost work in the gallery creates a desire within the viewer for something they do not possess; initially it is the viewer’s desire to experience what Fulton experienced but this also becomes a question of “our relatively impoverished relationship with the natural world,” or more precisely human’s confused relationship with (and overuse of) the culture/nature binary.<sup>344</sup> Mooney goes on to underline Fulton’s use of the “language of advertising,” noting how he “appropriate[s] it in the service of nature;” the fragility of the walk reflects the fragility of human understanding of nature (a denial that humans are part of nature—a denial that is unfortunately emphasised by Fulton’s observed lack of words in nature). Paradoxically, Fulton himself has admitted that his use of ‘commercial graphics’ is a “decoy for the subject matter”; unlike the simplicity of *Rock Fall Echo Dust*, some of

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<sup>344</sup> Jim Mooney, “Advertising Nature: The Ecosophy of Hamish Fulton,” in Rogers, *I See What You’re Saying*, 19-30.

these advertising-influenced works can appear busy, chaotic, jarring even, in their choice of typeface, design and layout and maybe in this way he further emphasises a drifting separation between the human and non-human.<sup>345</sup>

Highly relevant to this current writing Mooney quotes a review of a 1993 Fulton exhibition by Martin Gayford. Gayford notes the similarity between the work of Fulton and Long but laments the lack of stones in Fulton’s work! Gayford seems particularly confused by the extent of text use in the show concluding that in his opinion Fulton’s work “is not art, and certainly not literature.”<sup>346</sup> Obviously, Gayford is not keen on having his presupposed boundaries challenged—maybe Fulton would agree with this judgment through his view that the art is the walk and that can no longer be reached as it is “entirely unrecoverable, even by the artist himself.”<sup>347</sup>

Retreating from the wider landscape to the immured garden, and (briefly) returning to the question of gaps, the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay is encountered; the gap here is that between garden and gallery

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<sup>345</sup> Hamish Fulton quoted in Ben Tufnell “‘Specific places and particular events,’” in Ben Tufnell and Andrew Wilson, ed., *Hamish Fulton: Walking Journey* (London: Tate, 2002), 107; See for example *The Sounds of Rocks*, in *Hamish Fulton: Walking Journey*, 104.

<sup>346</sup> Martin Gayford quoted in Mooney, “Advertising Nature,” 26.

<sup>347</sup> Thomas A Clark quoted in Andrew Wilson, “‘The blue mountains are constantly walking’-On the art of Hamish Fulton,” in *Hamish Fulton: walking journey* (London: Tate, 2002), 22.

that Finlay negotiated through his pastoral artistic approach. Finlay commenced his garden at Stonypath, Lanarkshire (with his wife Sue) in about 1966; this garden, which was developed over the following four decades, would become “a garden of ideas – a combination of open-air retreat, study, studio and platform for polemical campaigning.”<sup>348</sup> Scattered through, and disseminated from, Stonypath (which would become known as Little Sparta) were a vast range of mostly text works realised in collaboration with other artists and craftsmen whom he would always credit as part of the work.<sup>349</sup> Finlay initially (albeit briefly) trained at Glasgow School of Art but he made his name as a poet, however, the definition of poetry here is not an outmoded one (such as the one that so irritated Caroline Bergvall at the Serpentine’s Poetry Marathon); it is a poetry that bleeds beyond words—illustrated well by Simon Cutts’ observation that it is “Finlay’s sense of poem and placement that exemplifies his concerns, the signs and sounds of words engrained in their objects.”<sup>350</sup>

This looser (although no less exacting) reading of poetry illustrates how Finlay (like others in this discussion) can move between or occupy

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<sup>348</sup> Nicholas Alfrey, Dr. Joy Sleeman and Ben Tufnell, *Uncommon Ground: Land Art in Britain 1966–1979* (London: Hayward Publishing, 2013), 82.

<sup>349</sup> Finlay suffered from agoraphobia for much of his adult life and was all but confined to Little Sparta. His publications were published by his own imprint, Wild Hawthorn Press, which was founded in 1961.

<sup>350</sup> Simon Cutts, “Notes on The Unpainted Landscape,” in Cutts, ed., *The Unpainted Landscape*, 12.

multiple designations. Finlay is described on his Wikipedia page as a “poet, writer, artist and gardener,” but through the website maintained by his estate, Finlay’s position is shifted to one where his “art [...] is unusual for encompassing a variety of different media and discourses. Poetry, philosophy, history, gardening and landscape design are among the genres of expression through which his work moves.”<sup>351</sup> This stance illuminates a reluctance to be labelled, but more pertinently it hints at the disciplinarily nomadic life that artists so often live. For Finlay, perhaps, the boundaries were recognised but his art work (i.e. ‘skill’ rather than ‘object’) allowed him to move between and amongst them. Even read as part of the more traditional poetic framework Finlay was using the possibilities of Concrete Poetry “to revolutionise syntax and structure—the ‘being’ of a poem—beyond anything being attempted in Scotland or cosmopolitan London.”<sup>352</sup> “Language is a part of us—but strange to us” states Finlay in his *Table Talk* and it is in the mis-mesh of familiar and strange that his art dwells.<sup>353</sup>

To this list of writers, poets, users of text and skewers of language in art could be added Lawrence Weiner, Bob and Roberta Smith, Mira

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<sup>351</sup> “Ian Hamilton Finlay,” Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian\\_Hamilton\\_Finlay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Hamilton_Finlay) and Prudence Carlson, “Little Sparta Ian Hamilton Finlay,” [http://www.ianhamiltonfinlay.com/ian\\_hamilton\\_finlay.html](http://www.ianhamiltonfinlay.com/ian_hamilton_finlay.html).

<sup>352</sup> Alec Finlay, ed., *Ian Hamilton Finlay: Selections* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid*, 203.

Schendel, Tom Phillips, Glenn Ligon, Matias Faldbakken, Robert Montgomery, and many more besides. Mention again of Faldbakken shifts focus to a small gem of an essay written by Henry Rogers included in the publication, which accompanied the exhibition; *I see what you're saying*.<sup>354</sup> Here Rogers word-journeys from his Edinburgh desk via Felix Gonzales-Torres, Michel Foucault and Magritte to the work of Faldbakken (with excursions to Poulet and Proust) whose work is “always on the cusp of readability, of being encountered in the dual registers of visual materiality and linguistic comprehension.”<sup>355</sup> Rogers wants to say the words (articulated through tape and paint on the gallery wall) but they remain just out of reach “on the very edge of textual and visual comprehension.”<sup>356</sup> What the work requires (of the viewer) is the removal of presuppositions; an attending-to that knows of boundaries but is not hobbled by them. Or maybe it is a fear of doing/saying wrong that needs to be suspended; as Rogers suggests in a conversation later in the same publication, “[g]etting things ‘wrong’ and misreading is sometimes really interesting.”<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Henry Rogers, “The Words I Thought I Saw,” in *I See What You're Saying*, 7-17.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>357</sup> Rogers, *I See What You're Saying*, 79. Here, Rogers is in conversation with Ikon Gallery director Jonathan Watkins and philosopher/writer Sadie Plant. Watkins reveals that beyond his gallery works, which play with the edge of comprehension, Faldbakken is also a prolific writer; “equally famous for his writing as he is for his art work.” Jonathan Watkins quoted *ibid*, 76.

Even further ‘out of reach’ in terms of conventional legibility is the work of Mirtha Dermisache. Here, in Dermisache’s work, writing becomes ‘asemic’—that is, without specific semantic content—in their arrangement on the page the blots, strokes and scratches of her work fool the ‘reader’ into thinking they are dealing with a written text of words. It has been written that in her attempts to sever ties to representation “if [she] wrote words, they were empty of meaning.”<sup>358</sup> Dermisache was adamant that her work should operate democratically and, like Long, was intrigued by the possibilities of the book form, preferring it to a wall-based approach to presentation. In fact she insisted that her work “has to be inside a book, to be read.”<sup>359</sup> For one reviewer, Dermisache’s work underlines “the fallacy of a shared objective language.”<sup>360</sup> To where do Dermisache’s writings push *art writing*?

In trying to keep up with the chase-the-tail of *art writing* it is all too easy to conflate the terms text, word, language, and writing but each term has a different resonance and these resonances can in turn be altered or amplified by the context in which the term is used. For instance, when a visual artist uses text it may be purely for its plastic form. Furthermore, a textual analysis in Art History may not consider a single word for here

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<sup>358</sup> Will Fenstermaker, “Mirtha Dermisache and the Limits of Language,” *The Paris Review*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/01/30/mirtha-dermisache-limits-language>

<sup>359</sup> Dermisache quoted *ibid*.

<sup>360</sup> Fenstermaker, “Mirtha Dermisache.”

the word-less painting (for example) under consideration becomes the text. The etymology of ‘text’ leads to the Latin *textus*, which is a ‘woven thing,’ alluding to allied activities such as braiding, joining and fitting together.<sup>361</sup> With this skein-like imagery it can be seen how words can alter their significance—for an artist using text a word will be given equal weighting to a picture (of a pipe for example); the elements are woven together. The relationships between and among the terms: text can be written, writing can be texted, words can be written, and so forth should also be recognised. It is in their relating that this writing’s attention will lie.

## ***VI | [art] [writing] or what to do with these words***

Much of the preceding discussion is given over to the negotiation of boundaries—those between art and literature, sound art and music, practice and theory—but to think the terrain like this already implies an external position from which the battlefield is remotely observed. The monolithic institutions of Art and Literature are in place and fire across a no-man’s land where texts lurk awaiting their chance to invade a territory (or to take their chance in their inhospitable liminal environment). Some of the word workers in the art camp seem more than happy to remain on

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<sup>361</sup> Today *text* takes on a verbal inference too.

that side of the apparent divide gently dismantling words and their meanings. Others seem to want to embrace the potential of a wider publishing deal and yet others still seem not to care and either ignore labels or happily slip between definings.

Somewhere in these negotiations a genre could be sliced out that is *text-art* or *art-with-text*; a Venn diagram selection of sorts that at once identifies and gathers but also does not deny the possibility of belonging to other groupings and identities. But why should text take up this special position; why is text not just another material for the artist to deploy, be it as a primary or secondary form in the work? Text, words, language all come with baggage, they are freighted and to use them in an art context can be confrontational but it can be the sole arena in which the certainty of words can still be challenged at a fundamental level.

“So where are we now?” asked Fusco in her 2008 *MAP* article, and those words still echo through the intervening years—little seems to have changed in the terrain of *art writing* since. Journals have come and gone; definitions have been proposed and opposed; calls have been made for a return to consideration of style. Artists are still working text. Artists are still exploring the potential of language. Artists are still writing. This writing about and upon *art writing* could not contain itself or its subject. The writing skirted around the problem and pointed off in other directions (informatively or as a distraction, though it cannot be certain).

The writing ran at the problem and away in equal measure; the non-stick surface of writing sloughed this writing off ... within the writing was only found writing. Terms and appellations came and went; they passed by. Do not look back and survey all that has written itself with its words for these words are not a survey; by claiming this as a survey would put the words (and writer and reader) in a superior position (from which they look down) to the terrain that they attempt to speak with.<sup>362</sup> Maybe these words have gathered things to themselves and this slagheap of a thing will be mined and re-sorted (resorted to) on future occasions to provide potentialities. The heap is composed of definings as opposed to concrete definitions:

Like “writing”, “defining” can best be treated as a gerund, catching the present tense of the verb up into a noun, without losing the continuous dynamic of the verb: the process of the act of defining. If the process were to end in resolution we would move the defining into definition. We would know.

We won't.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> The English word *survey* derives from the Old French *surveoir* definitions of which include ‘to look (down) at.’ Besides the survey could never be complete as Lewis Carroll’s Mein Herr shows full well (Lewis Carroll, *The Complete Illustrated Works* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1982), 727.)— Conceptual Writing could also be mentioned; to name but one overlooked and unexplored adit.

<sup>363</sup> Hall, *Essays on Performance Writing (I)*, 32.

The not knowing becomes a wanting. Try again; the words once more throw themselves to the service of the writer (and reader). The boundaries should remain but their presence must be re-viewed. There is no simple binaric division but a twisting, turning, contorted boundary that is highly nuanced, fractal even. Returning to the battlefield analogy, this is not a clean-cut frontier line on a map but the torn and fractured line of experience and the fighting and struggling of individuals. Furthermore, this line is apparently without limits but, instead of limitlessness, there is entanglement of multiplicity through which the defining occurs despite the violence.<sup>364</sup>

Try again. The preceding, unglamorous but necessary, eighteen thousand and more words can be seen as a beating of the bounds of art and language, words, text ... but it has been no circumambulation, instead the words weave a surface of varying thickness that may be folded and faulted with each new action; select a vantage point in this landscape and look out across the terrain that enfolds art and writing. Certain keywords, certain refrains, sound throughout; they do not echo their presence but build on, alter, adjust intensity, and shift slightly the terrain. The writing of this research is not simply a backward (or outward)-looking

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<sup>364</sup> “Each bit of matter, each moment of time, each position in space is a multiplicity, a superposition/entanglement of (seemingly) disparate parts. Not a blending of separate parts or a blurring of boundaries, but in the thick web of its specificities, what is at issue is its unique material historicities and how they come to matter. Elsewhere, within here. Superpositions.” Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction,” 176.

summation of findings drafted in order to establish a position to argue from and make discoveries of a clean, factual kind. This writing opens an opportunity for writing to diffractively be a creative act. The vantage point is one of immersion. It is in the shift from the nominal understanding of writing to the verbal form that the opportunities of writing hold for this research. The concern over the term *art writing* and its holding apart of the two fields can be side-stepped if understanding is shifted to see/read/hear that art is writing. How (and what) does this writing sound?

The muddy, rough, tussocky terrain of *art writing* initially promised much as a way of working, a way of practicing theory, but somehow the fixing down inherent in the term neutralises and homogenises this potential. But it is not because this fixing down brings definition, as was deemed necessary by the likes of Dillon and Millar above; instead it is the fixing down of ‘writing’ to its nominal form (and possibly for ‘art’ but, in this case, the quirks of the English language hide whether it is ‘art’ as a noun or verb). In *art writing*, writing has become written and the reader can only gaze on awkwardly assessing the passive blocks of text. Instead, emphasising the verbal state of ‘writing’ and, proceeding thus, the ‘writing’ (and the ‘art’) are becoming embodied and in this embodied state new ways of enquiring after truth are opened up.

## VII | *gentle bill*

glen burning	
eagle	
the Queen’s well	
“great sorrow”	
Ladder Burn	
cackling, ‘go back’	
into cloud	
wet wind	
cloud blind	
“B”	
gentle	
“B” cloud	
blind wet	<i>blind wet</i>
wind into	<i>blind wet wind</i>
cloud ‘go back,’	<i>blind wet wind</i>
cackling Ladder Burn	<i>blind wet wind</i>
“great sorrow”	<i>blind wet wind</i>
the Queen’s Well	<i>blind wet wind</i>
-----	<i>blind wet wind</i>

burning glen

*blind wet wind*

*blindwetwind*<sup>365</sup>

### VIII | *righting sound*

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, a nausea is rumoured to have entered the English language and the reported clamour would claim sound as undesirable.<sup>366</sup> Noise is unwanted sound, much in the same way that a weed is commonly explained as a plant in the wrong place, and its presence underlines the fuzzy, uncertain and unreliable nature of sound as metaphor, benchmark or yardstick. The optic enforces its primacy. Ever since Ulysses was sweet-talked by the sound of the Sirens' song the sonic has been seen with scepticism—the instability and multiplicity of sound opposes the fixity of the visual and the monolithic presence of one God.<sup>367</sup> For Don Ihde, the proliferation of visual metaphors and terms underlines the “reduction *to* vision” in Western thought, and although this visionary thinking has provided much, a rich way of experiencing the

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<sup>365</sup> An alternative version of these words can be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/stuart-mugridge/gentle-hill>

<sup>366</sup> Noise has an uncertain etymology: it is claimed by both the Latin *nausea* (literally ‘seasickness’ but also ‘annoyance’ or ‘disgust’) and *noxia* (meaning ‘hurt,’ ‘damage,’ or ‘quarrel’) filtered through Old French.

<sup>367</sup> Min-Qian Ma, “The Sound Shape of the Visual,” in *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 250-65.

world remains unheard.<sup>368</sup> Thought is further impoverished by “a reduction *of* vision,” powered by sensual seeing’s displacement by the science of optics; the world becomes mute and blinkered by the mechanism of metaphysics.

Sound originates from a mechanical disturbance in or to a source object in a state of equilibrium; this disturbance (as longitudinal waves) propagates through an elastic medium.<sup>369</sup> The disturbance to the source object creates alternating pulses of compression and rarefaction that is, the molecules of the elastic medium become alternately more and less concentrated. This alternating pattern proceeds through the medium until it finally dissipates (and/or reaches receiving apparatus). The speed of transmission will vary depending upon the elastic medium, most usually sound waves are experienced (by humans) as travelling through air (where they will travel at 340 metres per second).<sup>370</sup> The relatively slow speed of sound (compared to light) makes it a much more graspable phenomenon for humans to observe: the delay between an object being

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<sup>368</sup> Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 7-9.

<sup>369</sup> “The Nature of Sound – The Physics Hypertextbook,” The Physics Hypertextbook/Glenn Elert, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2018, <https://physics.info/sound>

<sup>370</sup> This assumes a dry air temperature of 15°C and measurement at sea level. By comparison, the speed of sound in sea water is 1,530m/s and in brick is 3,650 m/s. Generally speaking the more incompressible the elastic medium the faster sound will travel through it.

disturbed and the sound being received by the *observer* can easily be experienced given a suitable distance in an open landscape.

On a freakishly dry, still January day in upland Montgomeryshire a test is conducted. A lone figure stands a short distance north of the triangulation point on Garreg-hir (SN 9985 9788) and loudly but clearly announces the words ‘sound propagation’. At the same moment an equally lone figure (of identical stature to the annunciator and with unparalleled hearing) stands on the ridgeline to the north-west of Blaen-y-Cwm (SN 9836 9884). The annunciator stands at 484 metres above sea level whilst the receiver with unparalleled hearing stands 450 metres above sea level—taking into account difference in altitude the distance between the two lone figures is 1782.28 metres. Down in the valley below at Caersws, the temperature has crept above zero as the day has progressed and is currently 4.6°C. Caersws is at an altitude of 124 metres above sea level and is thus warmer than Garreg-hir by some 2.304°C and warmer than the receiver’s position by 2.0864°C (assuming a temperature decrease of 6.4°C per 1000 metres of altitude).

For the purposes of the test, the temperature at the locations of the annunciator and the receiver will be averaged to 2.1952°C. Assuming that the speed of sound is  $331.4 + 0.6cT$  m/s then at the upland temperature of 2.1952°C the speed of sound is 332.7390 m/s. From the instant that the annunciator commences his proclamation the words will

take 5.3563904 seconds before they begin to unfold in the unparalleled auditory equipment of the receiver. Furthermore, the words ‘sound propagation’ are fully announced in 1.67 seconds so this complete transmission will take 7.0263904 seconds. Whilst the test is conducted the waves comprising the words ‘sound propagation’ will occupy approximately 555.67413 metres of linear space of unknown breadth and height.

It will be useful at this point to briefly examine how waves operate, specifically in the propagation of sound, and to retain an understanding of the qualities of waves that may be transmitted into other arenas of this research. Sound waves have three qualities: *wavelength*, *period* and *frequency*. The wavelength is the distance between the repetitions of the pressure variations; the period is the amount of time it takes for a wavelength to pass a fixed point; and the frequency is the measure of the number of wavelengths to pass a fixed point in one second.<sup>371</sup> A sound’s frequency does not dictate its loudness but is perceived as the sound’s pitch. A sound wave is most easily pictured in its plane form where it may be imaged side-on and so, easily dissected for its wavelength, period and frequency. The compressions and rarefactions of the sound wave impact upon the ambient pressure (of the elastic medium) and this change in pressure is understood as the amplitude. The amplitude

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<sup>371</sup> “The Nature of Sound – The Physics Hypertextbook.”

dictates the intensity (transmitted energy) of the sound and this translates as the sound's loudness. Above a given amplitude a sound will be understood to lose its shape; it becomes audibly distorted. Distance also has an impact on a sound's loudness as the intensity of the sound decreases significantly as it travels. The words 'sound propagation' in the above scenario would be most unlikely to travel the distances described.

Sound waves do not in general behave in the model form of the plane wave and will more usually exist as spherical or circular waves. The sound source is the core of the sphere and the sound moves outwards from it. But even this is an over-simplification for the waves do not move in a linear form but expand via spherical wavefronts that create a form of surface and so the study of waves becomes a study of fractals as each and every point on a wave becomes a new source of waves. These new waves will spread out in all directions at a speed equal to that of the propagating wave(s). As sound waves meet obstructions or pass through gaps, the edges of these obstacles act as new sources of sound waves and once more these new sound waves are of the same frequency and wavelength as the original (although their intensity will be dampened). This is the process of *diffraction*. With this image in mind it can be understood how sound apparently moves around corners and fills all manner of spaces (and also how echoing sound waves complicate the picture). This is Huygen's principle of wave analysis.

Within this complex image, further complexity lies at it is posited by the principle of superposition that more than one wave can occupy the same space and time, a situation traditionally considered impossible for matter. *Diffraction* and superpositionality will be returned to in a later chapter. In this tangled image the term *phase* is also encountered; when a waveform is simply duplicated the waves are 'in phase' (i.e. the peaks and troughs of the waves align) if one of the waves is shifted out of position though they move out of phase and sounds will become thin or may be cancelled out.

The sine wave or sound wave has its peaking and troughing extremes contained by the imaginary lines of the sound envelope; this envelope is (often) called the ASDR envelope (where A = attack, S = sustain, D = decay and R = release). There is though some flexibility over these terms when comparing electronically synthesised sounds to traditional musical ones. Traditional approaches utilise a simpler ASD structure whilst digital technologies tend to recognise the ADSR structure. Whichever is chosen there are commonalities in the imaging or describing of the envelope: in the attack phase the sound form climbs steeply to a peak and then either angles down slightly to a tilted plateau of sustain or drops (decays) sharply, but briefly, then plateaus into a sustain. The sound form either then decays sharply or releases into a longer decline down to a zero point (or silence). The form or profile of the sound envelope so becomes

one visual representation of the *timbre* (quality, texture or colour) of a sound.<sup>372</sup>

For humans sound is most easily understood to be received via the ear. Sound waves are funnelled into the ear passage and meet the eardrum producing movement in the hammer, anvil and stirrup bones; the energy from this movement is transmitted to the cochlea.<sup>373</sup> The cochlea is a snail-shell like structure of three fluid-filled sections—two of these are canals that transmit pressure whilst the third, the organ of Corti, detects pressure impulses that it responds to by sending electrical signals along the auditory nerves to the brain. However, there are sounds that the human ear cannot ‘hear’. These sounds are above or below human audibility but may cause other bodily responses. In the case of low frequency sounds the vibrations of the sound waves will be felt even more ‘bodily’ and not just by a few small bones in the ear.

In the sixth century BCE Pythagoras recognised the relationship between a vibrating string’s length and the tone of the sound that it produces and he would combine this with his mathematical knowledge to develop musical instruments of varying harmonic complexity. It was

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<sup>372</sup> The word ‘timbre’ derives from the Old French for a clapperless bell, and later, the sound of a bell.

<sup>373</sup> “human ear | Structure, Function, & Parts - Cochlea | Britannica.com,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/science/ear/Cochlea#ref531841>

not long after Pythagoras’ time that the key role of vibrations in sound production and propagation was recognised. But even before these understandings the importance and value of sound was harnessed by humans (this is not to suggest that humans are unique in this ability and appreciation, but that it is most easily recognised there) and sound would be developed as modes of communication, entertainment, disturbance, and assault.<sup>374</sup>

The human body comes pre-packaged with the sound-making apparatus of the larynx. Exhalation of air from the lungs sets off vibrations in the vocal folds (within the larynx, or voice box), the pitch of this vibrating is controlled by the muscles of the larynx, this noise is then processed by the articulators—the throat, tongue, nose and mouth for instance. The micro modulations of this process allow humans to produce a complex and minutely varied range of sounds that have been categorised to produce language. Along with voice the human body provides a host of other modes of noise production (both voluntary and involuntary). The human body is extended by technologies of varying complexity to offer tools for sound production and control. Furthermore, the development of recording technologies has multiplied the possibilities endlessly.

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<sup>374</sup> It must be recalled that the English word ‘sound’ derives from the Old English for ‘swan’—‘the sounding bird’.

Whatever the complexity or simplicity, all of these sounds rely in their production and reception on vibrations and waves.

As with the science of optics the science of the sonic has a precision; there are scales to measure and define certain qualities of sound and a sound's unfolding can be laid out along a line of chronology. However, as with optics, some details can be lost in the lucidity. These sonic flashes hide things rather better than their optical cousins (the sonic and the optic have a relationship which is not always allowed to be present). Understandably, primacy is given to the sonic, the sonorous, in Jean-Luc Nancy's *Listening* yet a more *enlightened* form remains consistently, sometime in the wings and at other in plain sight, centre stage.<sup>375</sup> Nancy's sonorous has qualities not usually attributed to it: it "outweighs," it "enlarges," it "gives ... density," it even has an "outline" (one that does not feel quite the same as the sound envelope discussed above).<sup>376</sup> The sonorous trades in waviness—the sonorous swells and pulses, flows and ebbs, peaks and troughs—it resists being pinned to a point in space or time. The sonorous creates its own space (and time) and in this space can be appreciated its unquantifiable colour, its timbre. "The timbre is above all the unity of a diversity that its unity does not reabsorb."<sup>377</sup> *Looking at*

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<sup>375</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening* trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

<sup>376</sup> Nancy, *Listening*, 2.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

the sonorous is listening. The listening is not just for the sound of the sonorous but also for its timbre. This sound-colour is sound at the edge of meaning, sound as "precisely nothing else than [the] edge" of meaning/listening.<sup>378</sup> The concluding pages of *Listening* are a hymn to timbre, and phrases of the hymn lend much to this research.

Timbre creates, fills and empties a sound bowl, a hollow. If sound can be punctual it is in the gathering of the bowl. In Norfolk the 400 depressions of Grime's Graves gather and focus the song of the lark and the roar of US Air Force jets training in-above the East Anglian landscape.<sup>379</sup> The timbre of the lark song caught in the hollow is beyond measure, it has reached a totality that overwhelms and decays apparently leaving only the warmth of the April sun (out of the wind) in this sound bowl.

The sonic has a place in this research for three principle reasons: it provides a challenge to the primacy of the visual and its associated rationale of representation—sound elicits an image but does not

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>379</sup> "Grime's Graves is the only Neolithic flint mine open to visitors in Britain. This grassy lunar landscape of 400 pits was first named Grime's Graves by the Anglo-Saxons. It was not until one of them was excavated in 1870 that they were identified as flint mines dug over 5,000 years ago. [...] Set amid the distinctive Breckland heath landscape, Grime's Graves is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a habitat for rare plants and fauna." From "Grime's Graves – Prehistoric Flint Mine," English Heritage, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/grimes-graves-prehistoric-flint-mine>

represent it; sound, in the form of voice, has an unsettling dynamic with the practice of writing via its relationship to speech; and lastly, the morphology and grammar of the sonic provide a logic that undermines the quantitative by celebrating the rich ambiguity of qualities; transgressing senses as it proceeds. It must not be forgotten that the English word 'sound' has a forking definition: whilst it is concerned with all discussed above, in its verbal form it enunciates an investigation into depth, health, quality or veracity. Sound here will be looped upon itself to provide broader resonance.

## *IX | calling voice*

Of what is the voice? Of air.<sup>380</sup>

We need to speak about voice. Is it too late? We need to speak about voice? Yes, we do. Voice is becoming a crucial factor in this writing; a crux. It is as though, at times, the writing is losing its voice. But this losing is the making of another (voice); born from the expectation of the reader perhaps. A certain voice is expected here but an unexpected voice unsettles the reader from their reading of the writing's voice. One possibility: the writing's voice is a camouflage. *An* unexpected voice?

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<sup>380</sup> Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air*, 48.

Surely there is more than one voice here in this writing. Some of the voices are unexpected. All of the voices belong but they are all different and through their differing the writing creates something anew; the differing invents. Between the voices a conversation takes place, an unspoken (unheard) and unwritten conversation that allows the writings to retain their breath(s).<sup>381</sup> In this hush of writing, which is even more slight than a comma, a claiming takes place. But this claiming does not fill a void, rather the voices have allowed a filling to take place before there is even void to be filled—the voices enable the claiming to take place with them. "Listen, Stranger!"<sup>382</sup> Listen stranger. Listen stranger? Here. Hear between the words. Not an emptiness of the interstitial but the conversation, the communion of their differing. Punctuation breathes life into the word(s)' strings. The words are sentenced ... the words sentence the word's sentence.

Voice can, simply put, be the heard of vocalising ... nominally, a subject's voice could be their singing voice, they might speak with a strained voice, maybe voices can be heard in more fevered moments ... and then there is collective voice, the voice of a nation or a government or a protest group; this latter voice is strangely vocal yet remains unheard (loud and clear).

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<sup>381</sup> It is important to emphasise here that 'between' should here be read in the sense of a conversation between individuals rather than the 'between' that appears in phrases such as 'mind the gap between the train and the platform.' It is a verbal form of between; a betweening.

<sup>382</sup> Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, 6.

Verbally, grammatically, a voice is said to be active, passive or middle: the vocal organs of the speaker act upon the listener's ear, the listener's ear is acted upon by the vocal organs of the speaker, the listener heard itself speaking. And typically the word processor wishes the passive example to be made active (must the voice of the word processing software now be included in this chorus?).

And, if for no other reason, we must speak about voice because this research will reach a temporary conclusion with an examination wherein the 'living voice' becomes most vocal. Then does this living voice make the voice of the writing less important? No, no, that is not the case at all. The voices of the writing will be re-membered through this living voice. If anything it is the living voice that will be most fragile; it only has a limited amount of time to present itself (by speaking on behalf of the writing's voices) whilst the humble voices witnessed in the writing may endure. Concentrating on the living voice it is interesting to note how the living has started to leave the writing; this once verbal thing is becoming reified, nominal. The writing retains voice(s) yet its vivacity is draining away through its being named. And if the writing retains life, is this life its own or is it inspiration from the reader (speaker)? Does the reader give breath to the life of the voice of the writing? What needs to be known is this; when the writing has written itself where does it go? Does the chrysalis of writing (*v.*) become the butterfly of the writing

(*n.*)? Or does writing (*v.*) peel away from the writing (*n.*) and remain with the writer as if the writer owns the writing or the writing owes an allegiance to the writer? These questions are writing themselves as if the writing itself needs answers. These questions are writing itself. Writing asks a lot of reader (and writer).

Immediately writing is written its speaking is heard (heard through reading); writing (*v.*) vanishes once the speaking (and the writing (*n.*)) appears. One reading: the patriarchal author is speaking through the writing, controls the words and dictates their order to do 'his' will and once order is achieved writing (*v.*) can be dismissed until its presence is summoned anew. Another reading: the writer is a pilot of words, kept aloft by them but also reading their form to construct a passage.

Two forms of voice announce themselves here: the voice of speaking and the voice of writing. These two forms need not necessarily be held apart, for example, through writing the vocal voice can be indicated by appropriate punctuation. Additionally the typography and layout can give a text voice, or as Poet Susan Howe describes, "font-voices summon a reader into visible earshot."<sup>383</sup> The vocal voice seemingly has temporalised air at its core whilst the writer's voice makes a more spatial use of air. Pacing and spacing. Peter Elbow articulates five categories of

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<sup>383</sup> Susan Howe, "Writing *Articulations of Sound Forms in Time*," in Perloff and Dworkin, *The Sound of Poetry*, 200.

writerly voice in his attempt to define and defend voice in writing (rather than “literal, physical voice”): audible voice; dramatic voice; recognizable or distinctive voice; voice with authority; and resonant voice or presence.<sup>384</sup> It is only in the latter sense that Elbow feels there is ambiguity and so, possible controversy. In his comprehensive review of the speaking voice, Elbow sets out by reminding the reader of the physicality of the speech-act and that discussing (the ‘metaphor’ of) voice in writing, “is to import connotations of the body;” all the muscles, bones, nerves and organs that were discussed above (see Section VIII).<sup>385</sup> He goes on to note, amongst other points, that speaking is generally learned before writing; that voice has a manner and a sound and an enduring, unique quality but that it can be varied by intonation, imitation or through the influence of mood and feeling (Elbow also observes a link between the voice and authenticity by referencing Cicero’s observation that the voice is a picture of the mind). *Parrhēsia* must be a spoken activity to ensure the utmost honesty. And, of course, Elbow notes voice’s relationship with that common (elastic) medium the air.

Elbow’s ‘audible voice’ deals with the sensation of hearing the read words speaking or being spoken but he also acknowledges that some forms of

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<sup>384</sup> Peter Elbow, “What do we mean when we talk about voice in writing?” in K. Yancey, ed., *Voices on Voice: Perspectives, Definition, Inquiry* (Urbana IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994).

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

writing go to great lengths to remove this voice usually to give a sense of superior authority; the writing is no longer a conversation but is an instruction or command. Elbow aligns ‘dramatic voice’ with the character of the writing’s author or the character desired by the author as a certain illusion may be desired here. In ‘distinctive voice’, Elbow touches upon the style of the writer; their habitual way of writing but still, Elbow insists, this may be achieved via the craft of writing and is not the haemorrhaging of an ego or ultimate self. There is still no *I* in writing for Elbow. In ‘voice with authority’ Elbow’s writing once more comes into contact with Foucauldian *parrhēsia* as the parrhesiast “risks bringing his relationship to the other into question,” so the ‘voice with authority’ must retain a mind “that is willing to offend.”<sup>386</sup>

Elbow detaches resonance from questions of sincerity but attaches it to the relationship between the read writing and the writing’s “absent actual” writer.<sup>387</sup> The resonant voice seems to be inhabiting the gap between these two individuals but in its being there in the gap there is no gap, resonance is rather a relationship that vibrates between the text and the reader and helps to establish an identity (or identities—the resonant voice invites in multiplicity) for both. Yet, somehow resonance remains related to the gap and in this way resists being pointed out or isolated.

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<sup>386</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 12 and Elbow, “voice in writing,” 11.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid, 12.

The resonant voice is disruptive in that it challenges accepted understandings of writing and reading as it insists on a logic of the (whole) body—Elbow here mobilises William Carlos Williams and Roland Barthes to emphasise the bodily presence of the voice. For Williams voices are “the middle brain, the nerves, the glands, the very muscles and bones of the body itself speaking” and for Barthes (writing here about the singing voice of a Russian bass) “the grain of the voice [ ... is the] materiality of the body speaking in its mother tongue.”<sup>388</sup> Timbre could be an equivalent term for ‘resonance’ and not solely because of its resonant etymology; the colour of the term retains that same slipperiness that resists simple summation. A similar concept to timbre can be found in the writing style of the mature works of the Japanese poet Matsuo Basho. In an introduction to Basho’s classic *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* translator Nobuyuki Yuasa paraphrases Basho’s linking technique: Basho had moved beyond simple word association towards “aroma (*nioi*), echo (*hibiki*), countenance (*omokage*), colour (*utsuri*) and rank (*kurai*)” to moor poems together “with a fine

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<sup>388</sup> William Carlos Williams and Roland Barthes quoted in Elbow, “voice in writing,” 14. And, it must be noted, for Barthes the bodily here is not concerned with the breathing of the lungs but is found in the throat and “the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the mucous membranes, the nose,” and later ‘grain’ extends even beyond the merely vocal and includes the musician’s body ... “the pad of the [pianist’s] fingers.” Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 183.

thread of imaginative harmony.”<sup>389</sup> However, Barthes suggests that the “grain of the voice is not – or is not merely – its timbre,” for Barthes the grain is a “friction” between language and the music that leads to “the emergence of the text in the work.”<sup>390</sup> This is timbre with added, active body.

Resonance, colour, timbre, grain and so forth become hybrid terms as the reader of the writing does not simply receive the resonances of the writing (and the writing’s writer) but these vibrations will entwine with the reader’s own (bodily) presence. The ‘I’s of the writing’s writer and the writing’s reader seemingly combine in uneven accord.<sup>391</sup> Resonance re-sounds; the gaps between multiply but are always already filled. In Elbow’s treatment of ‘resonance’ there is an appeal for permission for the *I* of the author to come into the writing but this is not an explicit introduction, neither is it trickery and deceit (although it can be).<sup>392</sup> Elbow recognises the slippery problems around notions of self and identity that the *I* raises in writing and suggests that it is only in his fifth form of voice (‘resonant voice or presence’) that this truly becomes a

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<sup>389</sup> Nobuyuki Yuasa in Matsuo Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa (London: Penguin, 1966), 43-44.

<sup>390</sup> Barthes, *Image Music Text*, 185-8.

<sup>391</sup> For Roland Barthes the author as identity is ‘dead’ (and is instead a “scriptor [...] born simultaneously with the text”) and the writing, as language, should exist in and of itself to permit “the birth of the reader.” Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image Music Text*, 142-8. See Section X below for further discussion of authorship.

<sup>392</sup> Elbow, “voice in writing,” 11-12

problem; in the other four categories an agreement about voice is most likely to be reached. Elbow posits resonant voice in contrast to sincere voice and suggests that within sincerity space can be identified between what is spoken and what was intended to be spoken (clearly sincerity is not the quality that the parrhesiast is after), whereas resonance retains contact between the conscious and the unconscious. This apparent completeness can only ever express part of a person's complexity and "positively *calls for* [...] polyvocal and multivalent kinds of discourse" that "can be ironic, unaware, disjointed."<sup>393</sup> Resonant voice becomes a challenge to any notions of a unified self and leads the author instead towards "self-difference."<sup>394</sup>

In addition to this self-differing a piece of writing will typically evolve through a number of iterations via the drafting process. Unless a process of 'automatic writing' is utilised, writing is a constant exchange between inspiration, output and adjustment; this could be minor adjustments to the word order of a sentence (spelling corrections even) through to wholesale erasure of sentences, paragraphs, sections and chapters. The writing will have experienced multiple writings and the final, presented writing may contain only a small percentage of the material considered during the passage of writing. Voices may become lost but perhaps they

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Barbara Johnson quoted *ibid.*, 13.

had no place in the writing and only ever held space temporarily. Within the writing of the PhD thesis certain voices may be subdued yet other voices remain (or take over) to claim or enforce the unique contribution of the research. Certainly *this* contribution will be unique in its content but also consider that this content will be its voice or disjointed voice marshalled into an arrangement that seeks to satisfy the requirements of the format. Or rather, this voice (multiple and varying) is brought together into the writing to invent new voices and to understand the tension that flows between them; to have these voices in harmony or alignment would be an error; to have them disjointed but attuned is absolutely necessary.

Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* is subtitled 'A Play for Voices,' a claim that underlines the writer's intention that the play was created for radio performance—the voices are bodiless and the play is not for strolling players.<sup>395</sup> In fact, in an earlier form the play hesitatingly insists on its intended presentation: *Llareggub, a Piece for Radio Perhaps*. The play's richly visualised writing seems to run counter to the intention that it will only be heard: in the opening address (by First Voice) the reader is mobbed by colours, textures, sounds, and views. This barrage continues as the voices (including two further Voices) are introduced and begin to weave their magic. This disembodiment of the players seems to put more

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<sup>395</sup> Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1988).

insistence upon the listener to really listen, to listen with their whole body and allow themselves to be charmed and lulled by the construction of the sentences and the flow of language's voice. The listeners' bodies replace the lost bodies of the voices. Whilst the voices of *Under Milk Wood* are disembodied by their intended means of distribution Beckett's character Mouth in *Not I* is isolated visually, thematically and dramatically.<sup>396</sup> Here Mouth has gone beyond embodying voice and Mouth's body has become em-mouthed. The viscerality of the writing and its delivery has taken on the responsibility of the whole body and yet that power belies the wretchedness of Mouth. The distillation of body to mouth to voice is unseated by the title of the work; the very personal, intimate focus on Mouth has given up its self. The third-person, detached text-flow refuses the *I* and paradoxically makes the voice of Mouth voiceless through its vocality.

Voice calls confusedly from its root; it calls, utters, says, speaks and cries. If humans permit writing a voice then surely all phenomena must have at least an opportunity to give voice. If voice is limited to the vibrating of vocal folds (or their direct equivalent) then only suitably equipped animals have a voice but if the definition is extended to any vibrating of

elastic mediums then those phenomena with a potential voice become unbounded.

In Ian Hamilton Finlay's garden-work *Little Sparta* on the edge of the Pentland Hills in the Scottish lowlands a small carved plaque in an ash tree reads MARE NOSTRUM: here the disturbance of the wind is re-phased by the leaves of the tree and susurrates a sea-sound to this landlocked garden.<sup>397</sup> The tree 'speaks' of the sea and permits ingress of further marine references. Or is it the wind 'speaking' through the presence of the tree? Writer, producer and birdwatcher Tim Dee has become fascinated with the idea of recording 'pure wind'; that is wind that does not create sound through contact with anything else but itself. Dee admits that the presence of a "pure wind" may be all in his mind; watching himself on screen hunting the wind he is reminded of his new hearing aid and how the wind has a greater impact upon it in the open landscape and this brought a realisation:

[S]eeking a pure wind, the wind as it might sound in its own ear rather than the sound it makes when running over the sea, or through a wood, or across a field, can only truly be done with our own hearing which itself is a sounding of the wind, an account of

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<sup>396</sup> This reading is particularly clear in Billie Whitelaw's 1973 performing of Mouth. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4LDwfKxr-M>.

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<sup>397</sup> Ian Hamilton Finlay (with Nicholas Sloan), *Mare Nostrum*, carved Portland stone, 1967, Little Sparta, Scotland, <http://www.littlesparta.org.uk/archive/collabArchiveMareNostrum.htm>.

its slalom through the listening canals and corridors of our own ears, an account that can only give us a heard wind, its song and not its singer.<sup>398</sup>

Dee has heard the pressure and strength of the wind vibrating the delicate mechanisms of his ear; the sound is the ‘speaking’ of the wind through him, through his bodily presence.<sup>399</sup> This is not to insist that the wind is silent without human presence; many other presences may let the sound ‘speak’ but equally there are many more forms of sound than humans can detect. But where is the “singer”? Rather than seek a sound source the sound of the wind being its own singing should be enough.

### *X | “the noise of battle roll’d”<sup>400</sup>*

The ‘speaker’ or ‘implied author’ and ‘the real author’ are, Elbow notes, definitions introduced by the New Critics to separate the ‘dramatic voice’ of the writing from the ‘real’ human being who produced the writing

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<sup>398</sup> Tim Dee, “Into The Wind,” Caught By The River, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017, <http://www.caughtbytheriver.net/2017/04/11/into-the-wind-weather-field-recording-time-dee-richard-alwyn-bbc-four/>.

<sup>399</sup> In his collecting of wind recordings perhaps Dee begins to answer Norman MacCaig’s call: “Scholars, I plead with you, / Where are your dictionaries of the wind . . . ?” Norman MacCaig, “By the Graveyard, Luskentyre,” in *The Poems of Norman MacCaig*, ed., Ewen MacCaig (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2005), 432.

<sup>400</sup> Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Morte D’Arthur,” in *The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1898), 68-72.

(and all the baggage of that individual person, life, tastes and passions that this notion introduces).<sup>401</sup> The gap between these two figures can of course be a variable one and may even seem non-existent. For Barthes the author (in whichever form) was a problem, a problem threatening writing itself, and he offers a dramatic solution: ‘The Death of The Author.’<sup>402</sup> Barthes views The Author as a ‘modern figure,’ that has strengthened its stranglehold on writing since the nineteenth century, choking it of its ability to speak (amongst others, Valéry and Proust are offered as notable, albeit ultimately unsuccessful, exceptions to this act of suffocation). “Who is speaking thus?” demands Barthes at the outset of this 1968 obituary of The Author, for he can only see the baggage of The Author and hear the gloating of the Critics who have unmasked the speaker and withheld the text from further readings.<sup>403</sup> In this short essay Barthes rewrites the whole dynamic of writing (via Saussurian linguistics): replacing The Author with a *scriptor* (“born simultaneously

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<sup>401</sup> Elbow, “voice in writing,” 7.

<sup>402</sup> Barthes, “Death of The Author,” 142-8. Barthes’ essay is an attempt to dethrone ‘King Author’ and its title is a pun on Tennyson’s poem upon the death of King Arthur, *Morte d’Arthur*. The capitalisation of ‘The Author’ here follows Barthes’ own format in the essay. In his 1960 essay *Authors and Writers* Barthes has already questioned the role of the generator of a text; bridging the credos of Foucault and Derrida he asks, “Who speaks? Who writes?” and proposes the *author* as “the uncontested owner of language” who produces a product, whilst the *writer* uses language as “an instrument of communication.” For Barthes the *author* plays “the priest’s role” and the *writer* is the “clerk.” At the time of writing Barthes saw a new figure emerge, that of the “bastard type: the author-writer.” Roland Barthes, “Authors and Writers,” in *Selected Writings* (Oxford: The University Press, 1983), 185-92.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid*, 142-3.

with the text”), celebrating language, and “[restoring] the place of the reader” so that focus is shifted from the writing’s origin to its destination.<sup>404</sup> Later Barthes will claim: “*in the text, only the reader speaks.*”<sup>405</sup> No longer will the *life* of The Author obscure the writing and language. With the death of The Author and instillation of a vocal but historyless reader, language can become multiply-constituted; the text (or *écriture* as Barthes will term it) becoming “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.”<sup>406</sup>

A year after Barthes announced The Author’s death Foucault moved across the same terrain asking, “What is an Author?” ... the territory may be the same but the approach would be different, for Foucault a “sociohistorical analysis of the author as an individual” would not be necessary (although he does note that this point holds much interest, particularly how the author comes to be individualised).<sup>407</sup> Foucault

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 151. Later still, *author* and *text* will be replaced by “the Text;” an entity that is not confined to the covers of a book and “can cut across the work, several works.” Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text,” in *Image Music Text*, 155–64. This notion of *Text* will become more relevant in later discussions as it “coincide[s] only with a practice of writing;” creating an emphasis on the verbal form of writing. Ibid, 164.

<sup>406</sup> Barthes, “Death of The Author,” 146–8. The reader, like the *scriptor*, must be impersonal: just, “that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted,” 148.

<sup>407</sup> Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 113–38. The original lecture, entitled *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*, was presented at the Société Française de Philosophie on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1969.

moves away from focusing on the poles of author and writing in exclusion to examine the relationship between them and then to examine “the empty space left by the author’s disappearance.”<sup>408</sup> Both authorities now argue for a replacement of the author that is fluid and temporary however; Barthes seeks to supplant the figure with the reader and *écriture*, whilst Foucault wishes to heighten attention to the discourse around the author. Although Foucault does not acknowledge Barthes in his text he is certainly aware of the other’s argument and to Barthes’ demand; “Who is speaking thus?”, he replies (in the words of Samuel Beckett): “What matters who’s speaking, someone said, what matters who’s speaking.”<sup>409</sup>

Both Foucault and Barthes are required to interrogate the concept of *work* in their essays; for Barthes this is something of an aside and *work* will be replaced by *text*, the text of the *scriptor* (an later by the Text), but for Foucault *work* has greater implications and he addresses the question via Sade’s ‘roles of papers’ and Nietzsche’s ‘laundry bill.’<sup>410</sup> For Foucault the significant danger of *work* is “the unity it designates,” and in a way this poses as great a problem as that of the author; Foucault’s solution will be to circumvent both as focal points.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>409</sup> Barthes, “Death of The Author,” 142 and Foucault, “What is an Author?” 115.

<sup>410</sup> Foucault, “What is an Author?” 118.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid, 119.

Both Barthes and Foucault (the latter more so) are moving towards a fluid image of how texts are produced (for Foucault texts extend beyond Literature to encompass works of non-fiction) or, indeed, produce. Foucault's replacement of the author with the "author-function" shifts the focus of the question of authorship to the dynamic of textual production—this new figure arises from the divisive distance between 'actual writer' and 'fictional narrator' and the "resultant plurality of egos."<sup>412</sup> Within Foucault's argument there is the additional twist, "writing refers not to a thing but to speech," a comment that raises Foucault's disagreement with Derrida, who positions writing *a priori*.<sup>413</sup> According to Foucault the privileging of the writing is the privileging of the author and this allows the name of the author to define the form of a text and characterising the way the texts exist in the world.<sup>414</sup> This becomes an impossibility for Foucault, as the author cannot be *a priori* the text; the act of writing authors the author.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Foucault, "What is an Author?", 129-31. Estelle Barrett uses the Foucauldian *author-function* in her attempt to, "move away from art criticism to the notion of a critical discourse of practice-led enquiry." Estelle Barrett, "Foucault's 'What is an Author': towards a critical discourse of practice as research," *Working Papers in Art & Design*, 4 (2006), accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017

[https://www.herts.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/12380/WPIAAD\\_vol4\\_barrett.pdf](https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/12380/WPIAAD_vol4_barrett.pdf).

<sup>413</sup> Foucault, "Language to Infinity," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 56.

<sup>414</sup> Foucault, "What is an Author?" 123.

<sup>415</sup> "Therefore, I believe that it is better to try to understand that someone who is a writer is not simply doing his work in his books, in what he publishes, but that his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books." Sylvère Lotringer, ed., *Foucault*

Highlighted by the work of Foucault, Barthes and Derrida in the 1960s and 1970s, discussion around the role of the author reignited in the 1990s and has been a perennial presence in literary theory ever since for, as Seán Burke argues, even once the author has been killed their voice echoes on.<sup>416</sup> Be it as an author *or* writer, the idea of a sole progenitor for a text is put into question by the notion of hypertext. Already the stability of a text has been cast into doubt by Foucault, Barthes, et al but with hypertext even the certainty of the printed or inscribed medium is cast aside for something much more fluid. Hypertext removes the assumed linearity, boundedness and fixity of a text and replaces them with non-sequentiality, variability and reader influence.<sup>417</sup> The discussions, arguments and writings of Foucault, Barthes, Derrida and others around the subject of the author act as an arena for the introduction of the notion of *hypertext*. *Hypertext* "blurs the boundaries between reader and writer," and insists on an 'active reader' (an emancipatory move which surely Foucault and Barthes would both

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*Live: Collected Interviews 1961-84*, trans. Lysa Hochroth and John Johnston (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 404-5.

<sup>416</sup> Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>417</sup> P. Delany, and George P. Landow, ed., *Hypermedia and Literary Studies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 3.

appreciate, particularly the latter for surely hypertext is the ‘writerly’ (or *scriptible*) text par excellence).<sup>418</sup>

Hypertext utilises “the computer to transcend the linear and fixed qualities of the linear text,” and so the notion aligns itself with the development of computer and digital technologies since the mid-twentieth century.<sup>419</sup> The term *hypertext* was first proposed by Theodor Nelson in the 1960s at the outset of developing *Project Xanadu*.<sup>420</sup> George Landow suggests that Nelson’s hypertext is conceptually pre-dated by Vannevar Bush’s *Memex*; a proto-hypertext device developed by Bush in the mid-1940s.<sup>421</sup> To this one example of a proto-hypertext Landow adds the likes of Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, and Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* whilst also acknowledging that Foucault (in *The*

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<sup>418</sup> George P. Landow, *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 4-6. (Barthes raised the notion of “readerly” (*lisible*) and “writerly” (*scriptible*) texts in his 1970 book *S/Z*. A “readerly” text is “a product;” “a classic text,” whereas a “writerly” text is “a perpetual present,” and is found in “production” as the reader becomes the producer of the text. Barthes, *S/Z*, 4-6.)

<sup>419</sup> Delany and Landow, *Hypermedia and Literary Studies*, 3.

<sup>420</sup> Project Xanadu is “a high-performance hypertext system that assures the identity of references to objects, and solves the problems of configuration management and copyright control.” “Ted Nelson – Who Invented Hypertext, Web History,” Living Internet, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017, [https://www.livinginternet.com/w/wi\\_nelson.htm](https://www.livinginternet.com/w/wi_nelson.htm). For more information on *Project Xanadu* see “Ted Nelson’s Home Page,” accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <http://xanadu.com.au/ted/XU/XuPageKeio.html>. Along with the term *hypertext* Nelson also proposed the term hypermedia, going beyond text to incorporate movies, graphics and sound ... however, in post-structuralist theory these latter would already be included in the *text* and would make the need for an additional term redundant.

<sup>421</sup> Landow, *Hypertext 3.0*, 9-13.

*Archaeology of Knowledge*), Derrida, and Barthes (in *S/Z*) all conceptually close in on the characteristics and possibilities of *hypertext* (not that they term it thus) in their thinking.<sup>422</sup> These examples both suggest a lineage for *hypertext* but also flag up the shortcomings of any text that is reliant upon traditional printing processes and book structures for its functioning. Whilst there are some points of concern in the notion of *hypertext* (for example the suggestion that it transcends traditional forms of text; a suggestion supported by the etymology of the prefix *hyper*, which claims something as over or beyond) the form has much to offer this research beyond its extension of the discussion around authorship. The rhizomatic, multisequential, re-centreable and dynamic characteristics that *hypertext* carries will be brought back into these discussions later with regard to Baradian *diffraction* and *intra-action*. Beckett may now need to be re-phrased to “What matters *what’s* speaking?”

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<sup>422</sup> William Burroughs’ *cut-up* technique could also be added to this list of proto-hypertexts ... for its production rather than its product though. Beyond those named it is Richard Rorty who Landow names as the “philosopher of hypertextuality.” Landow, *Hypertext 3.0*, n.1, 383.

## XI | **writing**

In the writing of this writing a basal section was reserved at the end of each chapter document in which was placed awkward material that both belonged but could not find a suitable chapter, section or paragraph. These workspace sections carry the title of *editing suite* but could equally, and indeed more appropriately, be called *cutting room*, as they form identified areas in which sections of text await their moment ... for the moment they called and/or are called.<sup>424</sup> Inevitably some material would be cut completely, deleted from the file, but destined to linger on in previously saved versions of the ‘same’ chapter document. The content of the iterations ebbing and flowing between saved changes. A pattern of emergence formed through differences, a partial legacy of the drafting process exposed.

Some remnants remain here still as these words become writing (n.) through writing (v.) and are distantly accompanied by further notebook notes and references that have yet to find resonance or relevance. They may hang open, awaiting development, as they speak of the differences that have left them as marks. They may call to the collaborative voices of the final stages of drafting or face deletion in the face of ‘final’

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<sup>423</sup> The <h1> to <h6> tags are used in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) to define headings (from most to least important respectively).

<sup>424</sup> A *parrhesic* (and vulnerating) impulse places the tattered remnants of these already patchy bodies of words in Appendix II below.

submission.<sup>425</sup> Not all thoughts, words or phrases made it to this stage of the writing process: notebook notes that evaded the gathering eye of the writing; or those thoughts that were destined never to be written, remaining as ‘absent’ records of the fallible human mind. The electronic signals of the human body/mind falteringly attempting to make linkages.

As far back as the 1960s, coding and programming were being described as an art rather than (or as well as) a science.<sup>426</sup> In 1974, Donald Knuth described computer programming as “an art *form*, in an aesthetic sense,” and likened the preparation of a program to “composing poetry or music”; further, Knuth describes some programs he has experienced as “elegant, [...] exquisite, [...] sparkling, [...] and [...] beautiful”.<sup>427</sup> Knuth’s reading of art is hinged on an argument for aesthetic beauty and his readings of art and science are based on apparently contradictory (and oppositional) descriptions such as science=logical and art=irrational; however, Knuth does alert readers to something other than the purely technologically functional in computer programming ... something that was beginning to change language and how it is produced and distributed. It would be a while before this hidden language began to be exposed to a

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<sup>425</sup> Here, may be recalled Macleod and Holdridge’s ‘relational objects of thinking’. See note 3 in Chapter -1.II above.

<sup>426</sup> For example see: Donald E. Knuth, *Seminumerical Algorithms: The Art of Computer Programming 2* (Reading, Ma.: Addison-Wesley, 1969) and Donald E. Knuth, “Computer Programming as an Art,” in *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery* 17, no. 12 (1974): 667-673.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, 670.

wider audience. Over the last twenty years there has been significant traffic between the practices of computer coding and the arts, however, it is the trade between coding/programming and literature that is particularly rich (understandable perhaps given the common ground of written language): there are code poetry slams; programming has been described as the new literacy; and there is a growing literary criticism of code.<sup>428</sup>

Like all new art forms the definitions are vague; for example, *Code Poetry Slam* organiser Melissa Kagen explains that code poetry can be:

a piece of text that can be read as code and run as program, but also read as poetry. It can mean a human language poetry that has mathematical elements and codes in it, or even code that aims for elegant expression within severe constraints, like a haiku or a sonnet, or code that generates automatic poetry.<sup>429</sup>

Kagen goes on to note the “cyborg double coding” performed by code poetry making it readable to humans and computers alike; the

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<sup>428</sup> Mariana Lage, "First Stanford code poetry slam reveals the literary side of computer code," Stanford, 27th December 2013, accessed 15th November 2017, <https://news.stanford.edu/news/2013/december/code-poetry-slam-122013.html>; Marc Prensky, "Programming Is the New Literacy Power," edutopia, January 13th 2008, accessed 15th November 2017, <https://www.edutopia.org/literacy-computer-programming>; Diomidis Spinellis, *Code Reading: The Open Source Perspective* (Reading, Ma.: Addison Wesley, 2003).

<sup>429</sup> Melissa Kagen quoted in Lage, "First Stanford code poetry slam."

possibilities of coding are great for Kagen but she also sees the form as a way to challenge technological “assumptions and ideologies.”<sup>430</sup> In a similar way Matt Barton sees artistic coding as the art of those “engineers” who refuse “to kneel before the altar of efficiency,” instead creating scripts that will “stand the test of time” like all masterpieces.<sup>431</sup> And it is with this link to permanence that Barton recognises the issue of technological obsolescence; instead of being tied to a specific digital epoch Barton desires that a separation must be made between “*what works well in a given computer* from *what represents artistic genius*.”<sup>432</sup> This thinking could also be applied to established works of literature; the re-formatting of the works of Shakespeare, Dryden and Milton (to take just three high-profile examples) has re-written the original words which left the author’s pen (and even these would have witnessed much editing). All written works hold hypertextual characteristics but it is the framework of how they are received that installs their aura of permanence and untouchability.

Although not as open to re-formatting as literary works, great works of ‘visual’ art are open to (albeit modest) levels of re-formatting, re-interpretation and editing, be it by the conservator’s brush, the curator’s

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Matt Barton, "The fine art of computer programming," Free Software Magazine, 8th May 2005, accessed 15th November 2017, [http://freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/focus-software\\_as\\_art/](http://freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/focus-software_as_art/).

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

hanging scheme, or the interaction of viewers. These readings of artwork obviously focus on the nominal form of ‘work’ rather than its verbal alter-ego and channel thinking towards an art-as-object solution. Instead, the vibrancy and life of the digital form(s) can be harnessed to question these preconceptions. And how will the collision of the digital and the fine arts fare, particularly when taken to the level of research or criticism? With an ever-increasing presence of digital forms of literature and an ever-expanding range of approaches to *practice-led* doctoral research the format of the written thesis is being tested. For example, how can *practice-led* research that focuses on hypertextual structuring forego the expanded possibilities of *hypertext* and what it has to offer author(s), reader(s) (and/or “wreaders” as Landow puts it)—after all, the written text of the book is a technology that has only been in favour for 700 years?<sup>433</sup> In books speech and thought are set in ink in a bid to frame the truth; *hypertext* is just ‘one’ way to explode the truth of a singular objective truth. The “open-ended, expandable, and incomplete,” nature of *hypertext* is placed in conflict with the fixed positionality of the (written) thesis and the requirement of the doctoral process to provide a permanent record of any work that sits outside of the bound thesis.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Landow, *Hypertext 3.0*, 302.

<sup>434</sup> Landow, *Hypertext 3.0*, 113.

Whilst language and the medium of text have become much more acceptable (if still open to redefinings) in the context of fine art practice and research, the possibilities of coding, programming, and digital literature (and its accompanying theory/criticism) have been less obvious. In her 2015 PhD thesis J.R. Carpenter notes, “art theory has shown no sign of looking towards digital literary theory for more advanced thinking on intertextuality and the performance of code languages in digital art work.”<sup>435</sup> For Carpenter, the written thesis is to be read “in conjunction” with the viewing of accompanying works on screen, which are accessed via URLs provided in an appendix (also held in the appendices are references for print publications and performances).<sup>436</sup> Carpenter describes her PhD submission as “an assemblage of critical and creative web-based, print, and live performance outcomes that confuse and confound [...] boundaries between practice and theory,” she concludes, hypertextually, “this work remains fluid and is by no means finished.”<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> J.R. Carpenter, “Writing Coastlines: Locating Narrative Resonance in Transatlantic Communications Networks” (PhD diss. University of the Arts London and Falmouth University, 2015), 28-29, <http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/7825/>. Pertinently, Carpenter’s research plays out through a terrain that is both geographical and lingual.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid, 324.

## ***XII | breathing space (breathing's pace)***

Nonetheless, to breathe also means to be.<sup>438</sup>

Our chest, rising and falling, knows that the strange verb 'to be' means more simply 'to breathe'.<sup>439</sup>

In 1969, Samuel Beckett's *Breath* was first performed.<sup>440</sup> The script for the work runs to about eight lines consisting of three directions and is accompanied by additional explanation to assist in the work's staging. The *Breath* is an "amplified recording" that inspires for about ten seconds; holds, in silence, for a further five seconds; and then expires in about ten seconds. The breath is accompanied by the rising and falling of the stage light and is book-ended by a silence of five seconds and a 'faint brief cry' before and its mirror action afterwards. The cry is the vagitus wail of a newborn. The stage is littered with 'scattered and lying' rubbish as Beckett neatly *précise*s human life into cries, breath and light; carried out amongst a rubbish that surely stands in for Cynic *typhos*.

Within seconds of birth a newborn baby human will take its first independent breaths. Throughout life the medulla oblongata is responsible for the autonomic process of breathing. As animals breathe they are performing an exchange of gases between their bodies and their surroundings; oxygen rich air is inhaled and carbon dioxide saturated air

is exhaled (and an internal respiration system directs this exchange of air throughout the body). Those 'stupid,' light organs the lungs are the most obvious physical feature of breathing but the lungs cannot operate alone and they rely on many other body parts to permit the gaseous exchange: cavities of the nose and mouth, the trachea and bronchi connect the lungs to the 'outside' world; into the lungs run the bronchioles that funnel air to and from the alveoli; within the sacs of the alveoli the gas exchange between air and blood takes place.<sup>441</sup> But none of this would happen without the work of the intercostal muscles and the diaphragm: the relaxing and contracting of these muscles causes a shift in pressure within the lungs that pulls air in and pushes it out of the body. Body and sound are united in their reliance on a pressure initiated by vibration.

As animal bodies undergo forms of exertion the breathing rate increases to keep the body supplied with oxygen and to expel toxins. The (healthy) adult human respiratory rate averages out at between 12 and 20 breaths per minute and the average lung capacity is 6 litres and whilst the lungs are not completely emptied with each breath that remains a significant amount of gases exchanged in each respiratory cycle.<sup>442</sup> The act of

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<sup>438</sup> Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air*, 62.

<sup>439</sup> Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 39.

<sup>440</sup> Beckett, "Breath," *Dramatic Works*, 369-71.

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<sup>441</sup> Lung's etymology is found in a Germanic word indicating an organ that is light in weight. "The lung, a stupid organ (lights for cats!), swells but gets no erection; it is in the throat, place where the phonic metal hardens and is segmented, in the mask that significance explodes, bringing not the soul but *jouissance*." Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, 183.

<sup>442</sup> It should also be noted that almost 80% of the human body is of a gaseous nature.

breathing seems at once to blur and define the realms of exterior and interior. The increased respiratory rate due to exertion can be seen as an increased blurring and connecting with the world supposedly exterior to the body; the etymology of exertion underlining this describes a process that thrusts out (from within) to join up or attach. The increased breathing rate brought on by exertion sees the human body thrusting out to bind with the world. But one breath is not an isolated action and the seam of breaths should be seen as a constant renewal of the binding with the ‘exterior’ world. A reciprocity is detected but one that exists in a constant state of uncertainty; an asymmetric reciprocity.

To be out of breath is to be placed at the limit of mechanical ability; the limit of the respiratory system impacts upon many elements of the body—heart rate increases, thought becomes difficult, speech is almost impossible.<sup>443</sup> To literally be out of breath would suggest a complete lack of breath, an exhaustion of the supply of air, but in reality it signals a dramatically increased breathing rate as the body attempts to process as

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<sup>443</sup> Less outwardly dramatic than being out of breath is to be breathless; given speaking’s relation to breathing it is understandable that being speechless has similar implications. Breathlessness and speechlessness here are both less likely to be a result of athleticism than of wonderment or shock. For Deleuze and Guattari this latter form is also athleticism but not the “organic or muscular athleticism” of sporting endeavour, instead this is “an athleticism of becoming” in which the artist-athlete has seen “something in life that is too much for anyone [...] But this something is also the source or breath that supports them through the illnesses of the lived.” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 172-3.

much oxygen as possible and return to a steady state. This change of state may be due to illness, exercise or excitement caused by fear or thrill. The air is there but it is being processed in short, sharp doses through the panting and gasping of the exaggerated respiratory process.

It is not only animals that have a respiratory system, whilst not technically ‘breathing’ the process of photosynthesis in trees creates an exchange of gases as the chlorophyll of the leaves absorbs carbon dioxide from the air and combines it with water to extract nutrients from the minerals drawn up by the roots. Oxygen and water vapour are then released through the leaves to the benefit of all life forms. Proponents of the Gaia hypothesis see the exchange of gases fundamental to living things as vital to the maintenance of the active steady state of the earth’s atmosphere (in return this steady state permits life on earth).

The word *breath* has a Germanic root that links it to the olfactory but there is also an Old English allusion to burning and heat in the history of the word that perhaps owes its provenance to the air warmed by the body’s breathing. Resonances of the process of breathing reach beyond the complex bodily act of exchanging gases and take on more figurative roles. A host of words related to the Latin verb *spirare*, ‘to breathe,’ haunt the English language and give a basis full of life and air to their (often conceptual) actions: inspire, expire, transpire, conspire, aspire. With perspire and suspire matters become much more obviously bodily once

again. Humans also employ the respiratory muscles to control the rate of air expelled from the lungs in order to maintain sufficient air pressure within the subglottal region; this pressure is required for the vibration of the vocal folds as part of the phonation process.<sup>444</sup>

Human communication is not solely reliant on verbal language; a whole host of bodily actions can be mobilised and often these gestures and facial expressions can say ‘more than words’. There is also a vast array of breathy gestures that inhabit (human) language; augment it or interrupt it. These gestures press spoken language closer to its origin within the respiratory cavities and channels of the body. Through the conscious employment of the vocal organs breathing is turned to speaking, but somewhere between breath and word exists a wide range of expressions: humans huff, ho, hum, haw, wheesh, whoop, whistle and sigh.

Unsurprisingly the verbal translations of these actions frequently rely upon the more breathy letters of the alphabet, mimicking the very action they seek to define. Speech can also be diluted to an utter or whisper as words compete with air for comprehension: surded words make language gasp for comprehension, they deterritorialise the language (as Deleuze observed of Artaud’s *mots-souffles*).<sup>445</sup> Exertion’s impact on breathing and,

in turn, speaking provides a training guide for the athlete to gauge their perceived effort; breathing’s relevance to speech is underscored as language loses its grasp.

At some point the breath taken during speaking became a breather and the process of gaseous exchange began to signal a pause or rest. The spoken pause moves onto the page as word spacing and punctuation. Punctuation pierces the writing block permitting the ingress of air and allowing the words to breath, to permit comprehension and to create emphasis. Punctuation is used grammatically, mechanically and stylistically but it is also used to aid the passage of writing from page to speech by means of pauses marks or points (the comma, semi-colon, colon, ellipsis and em dash). It was as a means to insert pauses (and aid comprehension in reading aloud) that the first form of punctuation developed. In Greece around 400BCE, Aristophanes introduced a simple system of dots that broke down the flow of text into manageable sections and indicated the length of pause between these sections.<sup>446</sup> The dots were set at the top, middle or bottom of the text line roughly equating to the weight of emphasis of the modern comma, colon, and full stop. With

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<sup>444</sup> Jackie R. Haynes and Ronald Netsell, *The Mechanics Of Speech Breathing: A Tutorial* (Springfield, MO: Southwest Missouri State University, 2001).

<sup>445</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 88. John Mowitt uses the gasp to shift the focus of the subject

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from the brain to the lungs as he explores wonder and the aesthetic finding as he does “an onomatopoeic rendering of the gasp [...] lodged in the lung of *aisthesis*, the Greek term used to designate individuated perception.” John Mowitt, *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities* (Oakland, CA: The University of California Press, 2015), 18.

<sup>446</sup> Karen Cheng, *Designing Type* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006), 188.

this system it was usually up to the reader to insert the punctuation where they felt they needed it to aid their reading aloud.

Aristophanes' system fell into disuse but was resurrected by Christian writers of the fifth century onwards; such as Saint Jerome who produced the first copy of the Bible in Latin; these writers also began to introduce new punctuation such as colons and commas. A little later full stops were introduced and it was also around this time that punctuation became meaningful rather than simply a method of indicating a pause or breather while speaking. Writers continued to adjust and develop the elements and added their own marks and symbols. With the development of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century however the rapid evolution of punctuation was slowed as widespread consensus began to be settled upon. Punctuation has continued to develop since this time as the necessity to allow breath into the writing remains. These breaths of air (and nuanced emphasis) can come from the vast array of punctuation and formatting that a writer has at their disposal or may be introduced via selective use of word spacing and white-space, so offering different levels of pacing and air. The writer's intended pace can be adjusted or augmented by the typesetter's selection of font and how they choose to lay out the page. Even within the simple presence of words on the page

subtle adjustments can be made to the kerning, leading and tracking.<sup>447</sup>

The difference between (the words) 'you' and 'I' can vary just as considerably as those between 'you' as author and 'I' as reader (no matter whether that author be alive or 'dead').

The necessity of breathing to life creates an energy between breathing and speaking, offering speech an immediate and vital presence that can be more difficult to translate into writing.<sup>448</sup> Spoken words are born from an intermingling of the air and the physical body and any associated intention. Speech is made vital by the presence of the life-giving breath. Pierre Guyotat concurs: "*the breath*, it must be repeated, *continually underlies the textual work*, all the more so because it carries the voice."<sup>449</sup> In reading, the responsibility of breathing passes from the author/writing to the reader; the reader breathes the writing's breath. The apparent elusiveness of breath in reading, speaking and writing underlines the awkwardness of dividing into separate sections discussion around voice,

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<sup>447</sup> Kerning is the space between individual letters; leading is the space between lines of text (the term actually coming from the metal inserted between lines of cast type, so adding a rather weighty origin to this particular form of textual air); and tracking is the uniform adjustment of the spacing of a whole word's letters.

<sup>448</sup> The vitality of breathing to life can be highlighted by the series of congested, laboured nasal breaths (that slowly give way to the instrumentation) at the start of *'Tis A Pity She Was A Whore*, on David Bowie's ★; the poignancy of the breathing underlined by the artist's death only three days after the album was released. David Bowie, ★, RCA Columbia B017VORJK6, 2016.

<sup>449</sup> Pierre Guyotat quoted in Craig Dworkin, "The Stutter of Form," in *The Sound of Poetry*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin, 176.

breath and air; each one intermingles with the others but somehow retains distinction.

### *XIII | er here*

In *Field Landing* the tailfin of Peter Lanyon's glider is prominent and the form stands as monument to his early death as the result of a gliding accident on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1964.<sup>450</sup> The red lines arcing and looping through his late (or gliding) paintings describe the manoeuvres and flight path of Lanyon's glider, these asymptotic curves between the human and the machine, place the artist-as-human close to annihilation.<sup>451</sup> The artist has literally taken flight; his body becomes extended to include the wings, cockpit, tail, rudder, and controls of his glider. This artist-glider encounters the air as directly as possible and tilts and bends the experience to inform his canvases and constructions. Lanyon is closer to the air, closer to Turner too. For, like Turner, Lanyon is taking to the technology of the age to get himself as close as possible to a raw

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<sup>450</sup> Peter Lanyon, *Field Landing*, construction, 1964, Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London, <http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/picture-galleries/2010/december/03/an-abstract-expressionist-with-constructivist-undertones-peter-lanyon-at-tate-st-ives/?idx=9&id=9>.

<sup>451</sup> For example, see Peter Lanyon, *Near Cloud*, painting, 1964, private collection, <http://www.studiointernational.com/images/articles/l/lanyon-peter-2015/Near-Cloud.jpg> Lanyon started gliding lessons in the summer of 1959 and made his first solo flight in June 1960. He continued to glide regularly and this activity became (almost exclusively) the focus and inspiration for his work.

experience of the elements.<sup>452</sup> Through his gliding Lanyon attempted to meld himself with the air, becoming artist-as-glider and leaping up in to that so often invisible aspect of the landscape genre.

The artist senses the whole landscape to understand how he can keep his glider in flight: his glider is supported in the air by the warm, rising air of thermals and released as air temperature drops. The rough air at the limit of a thermal irritates his flight but is a necessary transition.<sup>453</sup> Lanyon's gliding experience could do nothing but reinforce his vision that the world is one in flux, "that nature is a dynamic process," an opinion further shored by his reading of Lancelot Law Whyte's *The Next Development in Man*.<sup>454</sup> Man's oft experienced, self-imposed separation from 'nature' is surely due to a denial of this dynamism and to a desire to fix everything into a "plane of reference."<sup>455</sup> This arrogance is further reinforced by the recent declaration of an "Anthropocene" era in which, absurdly, 'man' imposes a geological age that marks 'his' impact upon a

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<sup>452</sup> Apocryphally JMW Turner had himself tied to the mast of a steamship to better experience a storm at sea. Turner was also fascinated by the emerging technologies of balloon flight and steam railways and sought to understand or experience how all these activities informed our experience of the world.

<sup>453</sup> Lanyon's response to this transitory effect can be seen in Lanyon's *Calm Air*, painting, 1961, private collection, <http://www.studiointernational.com/images/articles/l/lanyon-peter-2015/Calm-Air.jpg>

<sup>454</sup> Toby Treves and Barnaby Wright, ed., *Soaring Flight: Peter Lanyon's Gliding Paintings* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015), 24.

<sup>455</sup> For a full account of "plane of reference" versus "plane of immanence" see Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 117-133.

system that has been invented by ‘him’— *in regione caecorum rex est luscus*.<sup>456</sup>

Lanyon sees through this arrogance and allows the viewer to see through him for he is becoming as transparent as the air as the artist’s ego makes way for pure encounter. The thick flesh-earthy impasto and desperate scraping of his earlier (‘land’) paintings has gone by 1960 and his canvases lighten in weight and tone.<sup>457</sup> In 1963’s *North East*, for example, the paint is applied smoothly (apart from a patch of ‘cloud’ at centre right) and, apart from a dense area of blues that wrap round the top and right-hand side of the painting, the colours are mostly thinly veiled, almost breathed onto the canvas.<sup>458</sup> As Lanyon experiences the yaw, pitch, and roll of the glider so the viewer experiences similar sensations in viewing his gliding paintings—the viewer looks at the canvas *and* looks down *through* air at Perranporth Airfield. Lanyon takes the viewer in the cockpit with him but also keeps them at a remove and so able to see Lanyon’s flight path that has brought about this moment—its red and

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<sup>456</sup> Since around 2000 various moves have been made to establish the ‘Anthropocene’ as a distinct unit of geological epochs as a result of human impact on Earth. For more information on current studies see “Anthropocene | Climate change,” British Geological Survey, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/anthropocene>. *in regione caecorum rex est luscus*, translates as ‘in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king’.

<sup>457</sup> For an example of his earlier land paintings see *Saracinesco*, painting, 1954, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, [http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/images/paintings/plm/large/ptb\\_plm\\_plymg\\_1960\\_83\\_large.jpg](http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/images/paintings/plm/large/ptb_plm_plymg_1960_83_large.jpg).

<sup>458</sup> Peter Lanyon, *North East*, painting, 1963, Beaux Arts Gallery, London, <http://www.studiointernational.com/images/articles/l/lanyon-peter-2015/North-East.jpg>.

purple line coming to the viewing eye like the light of a long-dead star. The flight line is suspended in air and a moment is suspended and enveloped in the dynamic flux. Lanyon in his glider read the thermals and painted his (red/read) line through the air.

Wind is the movement of air due to shifts in atmospheric pressure caused by temperature differentials (at global and local level) and by the rotating of the planet. Air moves (as wind) from areas of higher pressure to areas of lower pressure and the rate of flow of this air (wind speed) is dictated by the difference; the greater the pressure difference the stronger the wind. Despite its phenomenal power humans have long harnessed the wind for industry and ‘tamed’ it through classification and prediction; windmills harvest the power of the wind for human benefit, systems such as the Beaufort Scale quantify the wind through a ranking based on perceived and measureable metrics, and weather forecasting has become highly refined and can reasonably accurately warn against damaging weather. Through language humans have accorded the wind many characteristics and voices. The association between wind and breath is a broad and ancient one. For the ancient Greeks, *pneuma* was any air in motion (breath or wind), over time *pneuma* would come to signal some form of spirit, both vital bodily spirit and a more than earthly spirit (or aspect of it). Stoic “cosmic sympathy” was reliant on the all-pervasive

presence of the *pneuma*; it constituted the human soul and contributed to the moon's influence over the tides.<sup>459</sup>

Even with the notion of some form of spirit inhabiting or animating the air it is all too easy to imagine the air as an empty space waiting to be populated with things. David Abram critiques the notion that air is an empty space; for him, air “that most outrageous absence,” is a wonderful mystery and, he adds Stoically, is the “unseen bond between humans and other entities.”<sup>460</sup> This bond is achieved through the circulations and exchanges that take place in air. In a move redolent of Ingold's concept of ‘weather-world,’ Abram proposes a reinscription of the earth “Eairth” to remind humanity of the air's vital importance to the planet.<sup>461</sup> At the heart of this neologism is the ‘T’ of the self; this centrality of the ‘T’ is not a move to give greater importance to humanity but instead replaces a ground-based view of the planet that humans walk upon with an air-rich system that humans are living within (and it within humans). This multiple presence within and of the earth is a reminder of Félix Guattari's *Three Ecologies*, the relationality of Naessian ecosophy, and Foucauldian care of the self, wherein self-realisation (via social systems) is fundamentally linked to the health of the environment or cosmos (and vice versa).

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<sup>459</sup> John Sellars, *Stoicism* (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), 97-103.

<sup>460</sup> Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 225-60.

<sup>461</sup> Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 101.

For Nan Shepherd, “the air is part of the mountain,” but so often the mutable air seems to stand apart and in contrast to geology, leading to an earth-bound, or rather soil-bound, vision of the world.<sup>462</sup> Unsurprisingly the soil is fundamental to many nationalist movements (of both extremes of the political axis and all points in between (or indeed way off the axis)) and this soil will inevitably be linked to physical endeavour or bodily processes and constituents. This ‘back to the land’ mindset reinforces a geographically—geologically even—defined sense of nation with obvious (defendable) limits and borders. To consider a fluid air vision of the world negates the fixity of soil-based ideologies and suggests a more open approach to nationhood, or a complete dismissal of any notion of nation. With his links to the National Socialist party in Germany (and their adoption of *Blut und Boden*) it is easy to understand the origin of the earthy thought of Martin Heidegger and its vocabulary of ground-based activity. This burden in Heidegger's thought is noticed by Luce Irigaray in her book *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*.<sup>463</sup> As can be assumed from the book's title, Irigaray critiques Heidegger's insistence on a grounding earth and conceptually (and lyrically) breathes air into his thought, expanding his thinking as the lungs expand. Irigaray's words

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<sup>462</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, 31.

<sup>463</sup> Coincidentally, the chapter in *The Spell of the Sensuous* in which David Abram deals most deeply with air is entitled “The Forgetting and Remembering of the Air,” yet he does not mention Luce Irigaray. Heidegger is discussed in the preceding chapter though but with a focus on his work around time and no mention of his earth-bound musings.

provide a kiss of life and continue her project to inspire philosophy (in general) away from a metaphysical default position.<sup>464</sup>

The luminous, light thought of Irigaray resonates with the work of J.M.W. Turner; the nebulous glory of paintings such as *Norham Castle*, *Sunrise* seem to have almost dissolved traditional components of landscape painting into an aerial soup celebrating light and air.<sup>465</sup> With this focus on light and air came a deep appreciation of movement renouncing traditional landscape formulas for a vision of entangled air, light, colour and form, inevitably enhanced by Turner's adoption of *plein-air* experimentation. The format and arrangement of his canvases also evolved from the earlier rectangular, classically proportioned and composed works through to square and circular framings with spiralling composition. More and more elemental movement and tension was becoming the focus of his art; the movement of his subject matter was also something of a mirror of the man himself with his constant and restless trials to experience the landscape in new ways and to celebrate new modes of transport that only exaggerated the visual appeal of a world

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<sup>464</sup> For a full discussion of breathing's centrality to the thinking of Irigaray see Lenart Skof and Emily A. Holmes, ed., *Breathing with Luce Irigaray* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>465</sup> J.M.W. Turner, *Norham Castle, Sunrise*, oil on canvas, c1845, Tate Britain, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-norham-castle-sunrise-n01981> It must be noted however that works of this type by Turner are frequently seen as unfinished and that their current appearance may not be that which Turner wished for public consumption.

in motion. Turner wished to paint movement, to paint with movement, rather than simply paint the fixed effect of movement and this movement was happening in air.

Whilst paintings such as *Norham Castle, Sunrise* place Turner amongst the elementals Constable would be viewed as firmly rooted to the soil of place. Constable wished to celebrate his East Anglian roots and the soil that nourished them. However, the air certainly did not go unnoticed by him and for him it was in the form of weather that the air becomes animated. Constable was fascinated by the weather, the science of meteorology (and its associated systems of classification such as Luke Howard's work with clouds) and the potential unleashed by weather's accurate presence in a landscape painting. Constable believed that the "landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition, neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids."<sup>466</sup> Here Constable underlines the substantial nature of the air in its guise of sky. Like Turner, Constable was an advocate of *plein-air* sketching, his well-known study of 'skies and effects,' his 'skying,' providing him with a wealth of information for canvases that would be completed later in the settled air of the studio, as well as existing as works in their own right.

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<sup>466</sup> C.R. Leslie, *Memoirs of The Life of John Constable, Composed Chiefly of His Letters* (London: Phaidon, 1951), 85.

In works such as *Study of Cirrus Clouds*, Constable is clearly conversant with the morphology of clouds but in capturing their form and isolating them they lose some of their air but once Constable introduces weather into his landscapes the canvas can spit and froth as well as any Turner landscape.<sup>467</sup> Constable's capturing of the weather has become almost notorious and Fuseli's calling for a 'greatcoat and umbrella,' when confronted by a Constable canvas, well-known.<sup>468</sup> In *Hampstead Heath: Branch Hill Pond* the presence of the weather is easily observable, with rain showers sweeping across the distant landscape and frothy cumulus clouds framing a window of blue sky.<sup>469</sup> But beyond these observations the massed weight of the grey, rain-bearing cloud in the top left counterweights the rising ground in the front right and both guides the eye into the canvas and seemingly enfold beings in the 'weather-world'.

In a very different way Roger Ackling's working process embraces the weather. Ackling's early works tying him into the British landscape tradition of Turner and Constable were drawings of clouds made by "allowing their shapes to emerge as he moved the magnifying glass

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<sup>467</sup> John Constable, *Study of Cirrus Clouds*, oil on paper, c1821, V&A Museum, London. For examples of the animation by weather of Constable's landscapes see *Rain Storm over the Sea*, oil on paper, 1824-8, Royal Academy of Arts, London and *Weymouth Bay*, oil on board, 1816, V&A Museum, London.

<sup>468</sup> Henry Fuseli quoted by Constable in Leslie, *Memoirs*, 100-1.

<sup>469</sup> John Constable, *Hampstead Heath: Branch Hill Pond*, oil on canvas, 1828, V&A Museum, London.

steadily across the surface of the card."<sup>470</sup> Unlike many of his fellow Land Artists Ackling worked with the transient elements (specifically, with sunlight) rather than the more common landed forms of wood, stone, and earth. Often Ackling's work will have a temporal title testament to the duration he has spent focusing the sun's light upon (and into) the chosen material. Sometimes the work will be untitled and identified only by its physical dimensions and at other times the work may contain a reference to a place (and its concomitant history and cultural legacy). On other occasions there may be reference to atmospheric or meteorological conditions. This latter form in particular insists on Ackling's presence within the world, amidst the weather, the light and air. Unsurprisingly, given the quiet contemplative nature of Ackling's working process and the resultant work, ritual and meditation are seen as important influences and whilst Sylvia Ackling refers to a meditative emptying of mind her following words firmly weave her husband into the world via an attuned awareness of the light and air:

He empties his mind, freeing it from any logical thought process so he can be wholly receptive to the air around him; and in

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<sup>470</sup> Sylvia Ackling, "Lines of Latitude," in Roger Ackling, *Black Sun* (Nottingham: Angel Row Gallery, 1997), np.

Weybourne in the early summer this is well laced with the singing of larks.<sup>471</sup>

Ackling carried out his work in meditative stillness and tranquillity, which paradoxically allowed him to become attuned, and filled, with the world he was within.

#### *XIV | tacit's turn*

[Silence]<sup>472</sup>

[Silence.]<sup>473</sup>

Much has been said about silence. Like an aural inversion of Tim Dee's seeking of a 'pure wind', a search for (pure) silence seems impossible to realise; John Mowitt suggests that silence is the "faintest of sounds."<sup>474</sup> Apparent silence will always be compromised by something, be it through extended aurality or ever-audible bodily processes, for even in the sound-absorbent surroundings of an anechoic chamber the sound of breathing or blood moving through the body breaks the spell. Once more

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<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> Thomas, *Under Milk Wood*, 1.

<sup>473</sup> Beckett, "Come and Go," in *Dramatic Works*, 355.

<sup>474</sup> Mowitt, *Sounds*, 99. Despite the faintness (or feintness as he also puts it) Mowitt notes a "cacophony that attends to silence as a discursive or disciplinary object;" a cacophony created by the likes of Cage, Kafka, Adorno and Lyotard. *Sounds*, 18.

the human body has become the sticking point and leads to the question of presence: if there is *nobody* in the anechoic chamber (or vacuum) will it be silent? John Cage entered an anechoic chamber during the development of his infamous 4'33" and failed to find silence in this environment that is >99.8% sound absorbent—he was informed that the sounds he heard were his nervous system and the circulation of his blood.<sup>475</sup> 4'33" is provocative; Cage never intended pure silence as the result of this work and instead it is intended to promote listening and, in turn, introduce the notion that all sounds are music (and, in turn again, nudges music into being considered as a form of art (rather than music)). Cage further contended that humans live in a constantly sounding world where sound and silence are not oppositional but part of a Zen-inspired continuum (furthermore, this lack of 'silence' extends to the visual). The cultural frame provided by 4'33" defines an opportunity to listen and for the composer to claim ambient sound; the work and its milieu herniate.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 13-14. It has subsequently been observed that it is impossible to hear the human nervous system with the naked ear and that maybe Cage was suffering from tinnitus. Kyle Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 160-6.

<sup>476</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari Cage's silence is a "sonorous rest [that] also marks the absolute state of movement," it is a musical reading of the plane of immanence in which traditional musical structures have been almost completely erased. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 294-5.

A desired silence in music presumes that the work is performed in isolation from the moving world (or in a vacuum). The same can be said of the silence of white space on the written/printed page, the surrounding world creeps in, at least at the very edges of vision, and so the space can only politely request a silence in the listener's/reader's mind (through implied pause). Silence is a relative term and absolute silence is all but impossible, questioning as it does the limits of a situation. Any animate being's attempt to listen to silence will always be interrupted by the sounds of the body as Cage's experience of an anechoic chamber showed. Silence would need a spatio-temporal limit to isolate it—a second of silence allowed by the 'pauses' within the pulse of the body or the confined, isolated environment of the anechoic chamber cut off from the world around it. Bohrian questioning of apparatus and phenomena haunt this idea of an absolutely silent space, as does the miaow of Schrödinger's cat.

A dissection of the word silence in search of an original nuanced meaning is foiled as the process is fed back upon itself; the Old French and Latin meanings initially suggest 'a state of being silent'. However, the Latin verb *silere* with its reference to stillness links the word to movement and hints at a more obviously physical aspect to the notion of silence (beyond the bodily vibrations mentioned above). Stillness must be harnessed to approach silence. Silence takes effort, an exertion is required

to still the whole being and to deal with distractions in a suitable manner. In this way silence melts into allied states such as tranquillity, calmness and relaxation but somehow the effort buzzes with an intensity belying the common understanding of these terms. Silence is nuanced, it has to be given its pure impossibility; it adopts synonyms that recall this impossibility: tranquillity, peace, quiet, hush, and so forth. So often these synonyms are suggestive of instructions to still needless conflict and contact (be it physical or verbal). The hush of the library is a result of the librarian's expirant, abbreviated hush—sh!

In the arts, in music and poetry, silence (or white space) becomes material to work with. Yes, silence punctuates but these pauses have a form to them born from the relationship that precedes them; they can also become more powerful than sounds/words when used judiciously. The scale of these silent, empty punctuations can vary too, from the line-break white space of W.S. Graham's poetry, through Cage's *4'33"* (and so forth), to herman de vries' book *wit* and Robert Rauschenberg's large *White Painting*.<sup>477</sup> None of these works (or work like them) are empty or

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<sup>477</sup> For a thorough study of Graham's use of line-breaks and white space see Adam Piette, "Roaring between the lines": W.S. Graham and the White Threshold of Line-breaks," in *W.S. Graham: Speaking Towards You*, ed. Ralph Pite and Hester Jones (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), 44-62; John Cage, *4'33"*, 1952; herman de vries, *wit*, publication, 1962; and Robert Rauschenberg, *White Painting*, latex paint on canvas, 1951. To this list could also be added the pierced works of Barbara Hepworth where silence seemingly becomes spatial. However, for Jeanette Winterson the holes in Hepworth's work are spatio-temporal and allows the viewer to look "at what matter normally conceals

silent due to the impossibility discussed above. Instead their extreme minimalism, indicates an unspeakable presence, speaks of an alteration, a challenge, to the contemporary customs; the poet or artist's fear of losing their creativity, losing inspiration; or provides a response to, or appreciation of, meditative practices and Eastern thought (such as Zen Buddhism).

For the Foucauldian parrhesiast silence is not an option, the parrhesiast is duty-bound to speak, “the parrhesiast is the unlimited, permanent, unbearable questioner,” and it remains for the sage to observe silence and only speak when absolutely necessary.<sup>478</sup> However, in contradiction to the Cynic parrhesiast's constant questioning, Foucault describes the Cynic way (the “difficult, arduous way”) as ‘the silent way,’ underlining just one of the apparent Cynic contradictions but also suggesting that there exists for the Cynic an economy of speech.<sup>479</sup> The silence becomes an intensity that overpowers any meaningless speech; it does without the *typhos* of language. For the Cynic Hipparchia without the philosopher's cloak a form of silence would have been her lot as a woman in Ancient Greek society:

As a ‘political body’ in a ‘body politic,’ Hipparchia contests the spaces in which the body can speak by calling attention to the limited range of spaces available to exiled and ambiguous bodies.<sup>480</sup>

So it seems silence also connotes voicelessness. One definition of silence is muteness or enforced lack of speech (or audible animal disturbance). This is a lack that says so much. But lack is the wrong word, lack does not recognise the edgy vitality and possibility of silence; life has dribbled from lack. The notion of lack also unhelpfully sets up a binary opposition between speech and silence. Instead a rougher, grittier silence is desired. For Deleuze, silence is the outside or limit of language.<sup>481</sup> This limit can be reached in a number of ways and he notes that Beckett reaches “a true silence” by exhausting words—Beckett has become “less and less tolerant of words” and he drills into language to reveal, “what lurks behind it’.”<sup>482</sup> Here, the move towards silence is the ultimate challenge to semiotics and a move away from the closed system of sign-signifier-signified. Over a century before Deleuze was writing, Kierkegaard identified silence as a

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- everything that matter cannot express.” Jeanette Winterson, “The hole of life | Tate,” *Tate*, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/hole-of-life>

<sup>478</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 17-18.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid*, 206-8.

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<sup>480</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>481</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 113.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid*, 152-74. Jean-Luc Nancy also finds silence behind words, a noisy silence: “Silence is itself a noise; a rustle, a crumpling, a squeaking, a rumbling, an uproar or a breath, a racket or a panting. All this occurs beneath words, below words, behind them.” Jean-Luc Nancy quoted at “Listening to Philosophy, Silence & Self – IIIIXIII,” *IIIIIXIII*, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017, <http://www.fourbythreemagazine.com/issue/silence/listening-to-jean-luc-nancy>.

remedy for the sicknesses of the world; one that (only) women are able to procure for man has “so much to do with noisy things.”<sup>483</sup> However, this silence is not obtained through summoning, instead it is found through woman’s presence over time and is:

[Like] the subdued light in the cosy room, like friendliness in the humble chamber it is not a thing one remarks upon, but it is there, and it exercises its beneficent influence. Silence is like the note, the ground-note, which is not made conspicuous; it is called the ground-note just because it is underlying.<sup>484</sup>

From this silent foundation, communication may begin to take place; communication with oneself and with God. Here, once more, is an echo of Foucauldian *epimeleia* and Guattarian ecology as an attendance to oneself is transmitted to the local and onward to the universal. Silence is at once permitted by and permits listening. The silence, whatever form it takes, permits the plurality of listening.

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<sup>483</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself!*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), 70-74.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

## *XV | listening gallery*<sup>485</sup>

Listen. And silence even  
Has turned away. Listen.<sup>486</sup>

This writing, even in its silence, has created much sound; but has it listened? Listening has many subtle intonations. Is the act of listening passively or actively receptive? Is listening waiting for sounds to come to the ear or is listening a sending out (and away) in search of something? For Nancy listening is a stretching of the ear (*tendre l'oreille*) in order “to render it sensitive to what inserts itself between words, to the voice, to intonation, to vibrations.”<sup>487</sup> Listening is the pro-active counterpart to the passive act of hearing. In the move from listening to hearing there is a shift of emphasis: in a court hearing the ears of the judge and jury are open and receptive (to the defendant and their accusers), but somewhat passively and without interruption the ears of judge and jury will have their turn to speak later.

Brian Kane draws attention to two forms of listening found in Nancy’s *Listening, entendre* and *écouter*, and observes Nancy’s critique of the

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<sup>485</sup> In warfare a listening gallery or *écoute* is an underground passage that is mined beneath an enemy to listen to their preparations. It may also be packed with explosives and exploded as a hidden attack on an enemy.

<sup>486</sup> Graham, “The Nightfishing,” in *New Collected Poems*, 140.

<sup>487</sup> Nancy quoted in “Listening to Philosophy.”

former (and its root of intention) through use of the latter.<sup>488</sup> Kane calls in the phenomenological ear of Pierre Schaeffer to redouble the possibilities of listening to *écouter*, *entendre*, *comprendre*, and *ouïr*.<sup>489</sup> *Oüir* is quickly despatched as an accidental form of listening where heard sounds pass by largely unnoticed; *comprendre* is a linguistic mode of drawing out meaning and message; *écouter* is given a spatial, unreflective gloss suggesting a passive world waiting to be heard; and *entendre* thrives on its root of intention—Schaeffer listens with intent to focus on the sound alone—the sound as a pure form receives the listener’s attention and any additional semantic resonances are edited out. But, for Kane, Nancy finds this intentional listening problematic as it comes burdened with understanding and the fixity that contrives, and instead asks that attention is returned to the ear’s “tense and coiled acts of uncertain openness through listening.”<sup>490</sup> Nancy is found to judge a phenomenological approach as too quick-thinking with its ego that floats above the world constituting objects by its very presence; Nancy favours a subject born of infinite “re-sounding.”<sup>491</sup> Nancy’s listening subject is an ‘unrepresentable’ feeling subject constantly approaching but never

making intentional claims over “meaning, sound, and self.”<sup>492</sup> The listening (rather than the listener or listened to) gains attention as the thinking of Nancy creates a tension that travels through the ear, the organ that senses and makes sense.

And it is this multiple action of the ear that will occupy the attention of Foucault. In his exploration of *askēsis* in Ancient Greek culture, Foucault observes that listening enables the listener: “to take in what is said that is true [...] to be convinced of the truth” and absorb this heard truth so that it becomes ‘embedded’ in them and begins to form their “matrix for *ēthos*.”<sup>493</sup> The activity has a double life: it is both most passive (as, on behalf of the soul, it receives anything and everything “that comes from the outside world and may take it by surprise”) and most logical for it is through the sense of hearing that virtue can access the soul via the mode of ‘rational language’.<sup>494</sup> Foucault continues to trace this “ambiguity of audition” (applying the theme to the (care of the) self in particular) and also identifies further ambiguities and possibilities of ‘errors of attention’.<sup>495</sup> It is within the writing of Epictetus that Foucault finds the desire to practice proper listening—an experience (*epimeiria*) that needs to be accumulated—(whilst proper speaking requires *tekhne*) and this

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<sup>488</sup> Brian Kane, “Jean-Luc Nancy and the Listening Subject,” *Contemporary Music Review* 31, Nos. 5-6, (2012): 439-47. Nancy, *Listening*. Note that the original French version of the text is entitled *À l’écoute*. The work’s translator in her ‘note’ alerts the reader to be aware that *entendre* carries two meanings: to hear and to understand.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>490</sup> Kane, “Nancy and the Listening Subject,” 443.

<sup>491</sup> Nancy, *Listening*, 8.

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<sup>492</sup> Kane, “Nancy and the Listening Subject,” 446.

<sup>493</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 334.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 337-9.

practice trains the listener in three aspects of listening: silence; “a precise physical posture”; and the two-fold directing of attention (concentration upon the ‘referent’ and a form of memorising).<sup>496</sup> Later, Foucault finds silence and listening to be “the first basis for all the exercises of apprenticeship”; this becomes the base for the right to speak, question (and this involves *parrhēsia*) and write in order to acquire ‘true discourse’ and to be fully prepared to face “all the events of life as they occur.”<sup>497</sup> There is a tactical quality to this process where a strategy of being tactical places the listener in a respectfully receptive mode that also comprises a calmness to allow thoughtful response. This can be aligned to Nancy’s *écouter* as it comes unburdened with prescriptive expectation and instead attentively awaits an unknown.

Beyond the listening ear is the wider listening of attunement; a form of listening that moves beyond the realm of the purely sonic. Simply (and etymologically) explained attunement is to bring into harmony, but as the notion of harmony is problematised elsewhere in this research the use here of attunement needs further attention. Rather than creating an orderly alignment attuning here implies an active (reciprocal) receptivity, a sensuous beyond-ear ‘listening’ that employs a form of focus that knows not to expect certainty. The informed nature of the receptivity is not a

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid, 349-50.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid, 415-6.

mechanism for prejudging or predicting. Attunement requires a clearing away of the *typhos*; a clearing away of everyday matters and concerns to allow proper listening. Any dislike of silence must be overcome, as Nietzsche warns:

we refuse to listen to these spirit-voices. We are afraid that when we are alone and quiet something will be whispered into our ear, and so we hate quietness and deafen ourselves with sociability.<sup>498</sup>

In something of an inversion of this sentiment Yve Lomax provocatively enquires of the reader, “Perhaps you would prefer not to listen [listen, that is, to] the noise that sounds the restlessness and multiplicity of the world.”<sup>499</sup> Lomax here collaborates with Michel Serres to introduce the foreignness and ubiquity of sound into thought and to celebrate its externality and anarchy; the attuned listeners fold themselves into sound and sound into themselves.<sup>500</sup> Later, Lomax listens to (*sounds*) the writing of Jean François Lyotard to explore the relationship between attunement, timing, event, and happening; Lomax listens and hears Lyotard say

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<sup>498</sup> Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 159. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche offers reading (and writing) well and slowly as another form of attunement wherein he advises the dedicated reader (of *Daybreak*), “to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow [Foucault’s Epictetian listening echoes here] ... with reservations, doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 5.

<sup>499</sup> Yve Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 15.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid, 16.

predetermination is neutralising and controlling.<sup>501</sup> But this is predetermination based on assumptions, assuming that traditional linear, sequential concepts of time are engaged. When this stasis is put into question other possibilities open up as Karen Barad explores in regard to the actions of ‘ultraqueer critters’ (such as lightning, slime moulds, atoms and academics(!)).<sup>502</sup> In the case of lightning Barad detects an awareness that “lies at the crux of [lightning’s] strangely animated inanimate relating;” the exchange of lightning (between sky and earth, and/or vice versa) gets ‘ahead of itself’ and establishes sender and recipient only after transmission has already occurred.<sup>503</sup> The move also seemingly obviates the necessity of an (pre)attendant intention. As the roles of author and reader have been questioned above so now are the roles of speaker and listener (or listener and speaker, or listener-speaker, and so forth). The discussion here moves closer to Heidegger’s attunement, which proposes it as a condition to be in rather than a condition of being. Attunement is inhabited through proper practice (and the air of difference). For Golding (via the ‘single tongue’ of Deleuze and Guattari) attunement is ‘the task of art,’ grittily requiring “a sensitive/sensuous kind of whoring, a

discursive whoring, along the lines ‘share all reveal nothing’.”<sup>504</sup> Golding is doubtful of the ‘single tongue’s’ success and brings Heidegger into the discussion to help matters along: Heidegger’s grasping and gathering are brought to the game but are *reviewed* in, “an ‘aural’ presencing-bringing-forth-gathering [as a] multiple listening-gathering.”<sup>505</sup>

An echo. The listening gallery: at once the receptive chambers of the ear and a subterranean means to disrupt and subvert.

## *XVI | hollow words*

Where is the Art of Sorcery we want to be fooled again  
Staggered by deception charmed into submission<sup>506</sup>

Waking with that empty feeling again (again, again, again). Hollow-eyed. Open the curtains to a pre-sunrise haziness; claustrophobic ... empty. The days stretch out wearily, emptily ahead yet they will not drag, contrarily time will fly, only emphasising the lack of productivity. This emptiness is mocked by the plenitude of thought of Deleuze, Barad, Stengers ... There should be a fullness of constant intermingling, instead

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<sup>501</sup> Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 107-23.

<sup>502</sup> Karen Barad, “Nature’s Queer Performativity,” *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, no. 1-2 (2012): 25-53, <https://tidsskrift.dk/KKF/article/view/28067/24695>.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

<sup>504</sup> Johnny Golding, “Fractal Philosophy, Trembling a Plane of Immanence and the small matter of Learning How to Listen: Attunement as the Task of Art.,” in *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, ed. Stephen Zepke and Simon O’Sullivan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 142.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid*, 148.

<sup>506</sup> John Cale, “Zen,” in *HoboSapiens*, EMI 5939092, 2003.

there is a loose staccato of choked, stilted, slow progress.<sup>507</sup> Not a constant purple hum but instead, a scintilla of vivid colour ... a magenta let's say ... garish and so unsuitable. How can this emptiness be so heavy? It defies *all* logic. Cling to it. Maybe the focus has gone and this empty uniformity is really rich with diatoms of thought. Thought(s) that cannot be released as long as they remain blurred by wrong-looking. The emptiness is full if you do not stare straight at it. But distractions are easy to find here too.

Does the '5' look clearer on the green or red? First or second? Is the 'N' clearer with ... or without? Look at my ear. The bright column of light sways and hovers. Look right. The bright column of light sways and hovers. Look left. The brightness reflects little. Wait, there are rivers on the surface of a planet. Look up. A surface. A deep surface. Disappears. Look down. A slight change in prescription. Back out into the ... into ... into everyday. Woken.

The apparent blurring of the diatoms is so extreme that the scene becomes a fog punctuated by ill-fitting and illusory plecks. Like a will-o'-the-wisp, we follow their erratic path and we become further enmired ... further from help. Stumbling and sinking. The pleck is merely the 'foolish fire' of the will-o'-the-wisp's alter ego *ignis fatuus*. But we have

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<sup>507</sup> This staccato is of fractal complexity offering a surface smoothness that belies an intimate complexity.

made the deal and we pay the price. We have made a bond with the shape-shifters and now we must learn to live with them as they delude and mislead with their fugitive appearance(s).<sup>508</sup> The glass half empty has been spilled. The surface-ground is exhausting. Oh, how it looked so simple from afar, now, in it, the hummocks, hags and groughs almost cease progress. Unless mindless stumbling can be called progress. Maybe, just maybe. A shift in thinking. A shift in focus. A shift in scale. A shift in shape.

My eyes tire and dry out as I stare at the words on the screen. I shift my gaze and look absently at the clouds scudding across the sky above the trees in the park. It is autumn and there is a chilly, strong easterly wind. Another day of power tool excess in neighbouring houses and gardens. The sun comes and goes on the slated roof and brick chimney stack at the back of the house. I can imagine how they will feel—grainy, smooth, hard; warmed slightly. My eyes return to the words. These words, I type now. But where are the words? I will need to know as I need 80,000 of them. A dictionary has words certainly but I think their order will be too regimented, too obvious, to constitute a PhD thesis, besides, I think the plagiarism will be very obvious. The words are forming on the screen as I t...y...p...e...

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<sup>508</sup> "Will-o'-the-wisp [...] 1. = IGNIS FATUUS; *fig.* a thing (rarely a person) that deludes or misleads by means of fugitive appearances." *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. "will-o'-the-wisp."

On the screen? A lazy turn of phrase carried over from pen and paper or typewriter to desktop publishing set-ups. With paper the words are written on the paper but, depending upon the medium, may be absorbed into the paper, but in typing on a computer keyboard where are the words? Where is the writing?

In following, approaching the will-o'-the-wisp we expected that it would meet us at some point. Preferably halfway. The effort we invested must surely be rewarded in equal measure. An I for an I. The difference between us folding neatly, to press presences into absences and vice versa. A neat model where we achieve a glorious whole. We have been tricked. These will-o'-the-wisps are not things in themselves, nor are they the effluvia of some thingly action. They precede 'within' the thing, signalling possibility. They flag-up potential but the rewards must be sought elsewhere and not at the (apparent) source of the 'fire'. These fires will not be seen by all but can be seen by all. Doggedness. That is the easy part (apparently). And the dog goes back again and again. Back again to the thing. Not a thing, but enough of a thing to be a dancing partner. A dance between a thing and a not-thing; a strange dance of asymmetry. Hobbled, awkward, strained. Furious. But this dog desires a dance.

Words. Torn. Away.

## CHAPTER 3 | SURFACE CUTTING AND STICKING

a masterpiece of condensed discontinuity.<sup>509</sup>

### I | *Ground Rules*

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests.  
I'll dig with it.<sup>510</sup>

The ground lies. The ground burdens. Burdening ground. A droning echo feeding itself: endlessly, endless and duplicitous. Yet, somewhere in this endlessness a base is struck and arguments become stuck ...

grounded. The burden is doubled as the ground pulls everything towards itself in the name of a root cause. The ground *is* that burden which pulls everything towards itself. The ground is born from itself. The ground feeds itself—a cannibalistic act that ensures its survival. Thought becomes the ground's grounding and fertilises its heavy, sterile soil. The ground provides sufficient reason.<sup>511</sup>

How does the ground lie? It claims *a priori*. Does the ground precede or does it run in parallel, feeding from all that is thought and all that

remains unthought? The latter option leads to a mirroring where similarities can be lovingly represented for all eternity. The former suggests a transcending force at work; something put in place before any beginning. Lying *a priori* the ground is magnetised and provides a bedrock of orientation that seemingly never shifts.<sup>512</sup> The parallel model provides an image of a terrifying phantom that haunts every move. With every twist and feint the ground remains there, in parallel. Never within touching distance but always within sight, its influence over thought is huge. A hybrid of the two is even more monstrous in that it provides an entity which second guesses thought and dogs each and every move. A shadow projected, not cast, by reason.

Human *fondness* for ground runs deep. Perhaps it is the flattery of the reproduction that keeps humanity enthralled by it (along with the reassuring similarity that provides a comfort blanket). In this way ground becomes insulation in which humanity can immure itself, in the false belief that there will be a reinforcing, an increase in strength. Instead, humanity's walled-in position cuts it off and isolates it from any necessary 'peck of muck'. The ground becomes sanitised and stupefying; humanity, sterile and stupid.

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<sup>509</sup> Jill Marsden, "Nietzsche and the Art of the Aphorism," in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (London: Blackwell, 2005), 22.

<sup>510</sup> Seamus Heaney, "Digging," in *New Selected Poems, 1966-1978* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), 3-4.

<sup>511</sup> see n.514.

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<sup>512</sup> The conflation of philosophical ground and literal ground (*terra firma*) is made as it underlines the unshakeable, certain, place that the ground of philosophy has attained—it almost goes beyond questioning.

The ground provides an opportunity to stake a claim and the ground backs up this claim in a self-fulfilling closed circuit with the one and the other (a triadic ballet for members only).<sup>513</sup> In this closed circuit the ground underpins truth and it could be declared, “nothing is without ground.”<sup>514</sup> The ground calls, it calls so loudly, but its deception remains buried. For most. Heidegger, in a beautifully simple move, sets off in search of the ground of the principle of reason; that is, the ground of this grounding principle; declaring it the most ‘fundamental,’ the ‘highest’ and the ‘first’ principle.<sup>515</sup> Below, above, ahead ... ground establishes itself spatio-temporally (if somewhat contradictorily). It boxes in and suffocates; impoverishing questions of identity along the way.<sup>516</sup> Heidegger challenges the assumption that “being means ground/reason” (and so ‘modern science’ and ‘calculative thinking’), as he wanders the paths of ground itself, checking “every wayside nook and minute cranny,” and utilising all his senses as he goes.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *What is Grounding?* trans. Arjen Kleinherenbrink (Grand Rapids, MI: 2015), 21-24.

<sup>514</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 4-5. This is the Principle of Sufficient Reason, in which nothing is without reason or ground. Heidegger credits Leibniz with the birth of this principle but marvels at its staggeringly long “incubation period” (from the time of Ancient Greek thought).

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid*, 6-9.

<sup>516</sup> The discoveries, “The principle of reason is grounded on [a] presupposition,” and, “The principle of reason is the ground/reason of the principle,” turn this into a stifling, ever-closing circle for Heidegger. 9 and 13-14.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid*, 129 and 24.

The black and white of the binaric ground=reason equation is strong in its clarity but the junction (or interface) indicated by the equality sign is a point of weakness where the whole project of mis-information can be toppled. Place a lever in and prise. But first: maybe there is too much blood and soil in Heidegger’s turning over of the ground. David Matless wonders why so much thinking around nationality is rooted in the soil, he asks where the air is.<sup>518</sup> For Irigaray, Heidegger’s ground lacks air and she wishes to *inspire* his thinking by oxygenating the dwelling of thought upon the matter of ground.<sup>519</sup> Heidegger’s angled focus on ground ties him to a masculine (Western) metaphysics that also, suffocatingly, denies the feminine that Irigaray’s writing proposes. There are further ways to trouble the stubborn ground.

The ground is shallow and faulted; its depth relies on a certain point of view. The ground is—and this goes beyond a simple play on words—the ground is fundamental to *representation*. Its calm, steady, stable presence anchors the whole process of *representation* that gives humans their conception of the world; the dumb presence of the world out there is welcomed in and *represented* to the human mind. What is out there is identical to what is *represented* (albeit scaled down by the animal optical system). The circuit constantly closes; there is no room for other

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<sup>518</sup> Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 154.

<sup>519</sup> Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air*.

interpretations. The trees in the park seen through the window are the trees in the park seen through the window. Language is complicit in representation's sterilising process as the words humans use are also stabilised and grounded, and so 'tree', 'park' and 'window' have a steady presence that reinforces the representational move and pins them into place in the undergirding system.<sup>520</sup> For Deleuze this is the dogmatic image of thought, an image that needs to be disturbed and challenged through *difference* and *desire*. Deleuze finds a flaw in ground; ground is floorless:

Sufficient reason or the ground is strangely bent: on the one hand, it leans towards what it grounds, towards the forms of representation; on the other hand, it turns and plunges into a groundless beyond the ground which resists all forms and cannot be represented.<sup>521</sup>

This groundlessness, in representation's model, is unable to support difference, it seems to signal a "universal lack of difference," but in fact it buzzes with differences.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> Language itself can be a great buttress for the institution of representation but even this is open to movement.

<sup>521</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2009), 344.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-7.

Ground implies an absolute, certain base but in the everyday world the ground is less stable; dust gets kicked up, cliffs erode, sinkholes appear, earthquakes devastate large areas. The ground upon which humans walk is not so reliable after all. Deleuze's affirmative take on *difference* opens up the system closed by the grounding of representation into a flowering positive process where each difference "constitutes a certain point of view on all the [other differences] which in themselves are also points of view."<sup>523</sup> And, as this is not a representational form of difference (i.e. analogous, identical, and so forth), the repetition of the difference, the differing, is enabled by an asynchronous distance that lends air and expansiveness to the process. Even language, that great buttress of the institution of representation, is open to this new form of difference, perhaps best illustrated by Deleuze's interest in the writings of Carroll, Joyce and Robbe-Grillet (to offer just three examples).<sup>524</sup> Under their pens language squirms but thrives as nonsense; pun and paradox free words to run new landscapes.

Claire Colebrook frames Deleuze's ground-shattering *difference* as *desire*, not a desire driven by deficiency but a creative practice,

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<sup>523</sup> Zourabichvili, *A Philosophy of the Event*, 103.

<sup>524</sup> See Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 39.

a desire of flux, force and difference, a revolutionary desire that we need to *think* in ways that will disrupt common sense and everyday life.<sup>525</sup>

This is not the desire of a desiring subject and neither is it bound solely to a human realm; this *desire* is opened up to geology, animals and even multinational corporations. Deleuze joins with Guattari to introduce a desiring-production that opposes the Freudian unconscious model of representation.<sup>526</sup> Once more here the theme of disjunction is in evidence as *desiring-machines* function all at once,

amid hiatuses and ruptures, breakdowns and failures, stalling and short-circuits, distances and fragmentations, within a sum that never succeeds in bringing its various parts together so as to form a whole.<sup>527</sup>

In short, they, “run only when they are not functioning properly.”<sup>528</sup> But these disruptions are not lacks, they are not negative, they are productive and this productivity evidences that the designation *machine* here has

moved beyond image, beyond metaphor.<sup>529</sup> Desire is also vital to *becoming*; as the desire is not driven by lack so *becoming-* has open play and will not seek to imitate (*represent*): the *becoming-mountain* does not seek as an end to be identical to the mountain (whilst, at the same time, also expelling its original identity), instead a “block-system” of the “two asymmetrical movements” undermines the punctal imagery of representation and unleashes a productive “flight.”<sup>530</sup>

ROCK  
FALL  
ECHO  
DUST<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), xv.

<sup>526</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1-8.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid, 31.

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>530</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 323-4. The concept of *becoming-* will be considered further below especially in relation to *parrhēsia* and vulnerability.

<sup>531</sup> Hamish Fulton, *Rock Fall Echo Dust. Baffin Island, Canada, 1988*, lithograph on paper, 1989, Tate, London.

## II | *Romancier la Pierre*

Put  
a foot on rock. Choose  
one route through millions of pebbles.<sup>532</sup>

Carried by the flows, sorted and deposited in a world of sedimentation and stratification Manuel DeLanda leads “our organic bodies [ ... these] temporary coagulations,” through a history of meshworks and hierarchies (a)t(o) a geological p(l)ace.<sup>533</sup> Sorted and cemented. The trace elements within animal bodies (tin, copper, calcium) seemingly feel an attraction to their mineable equivalents in the landscape—a shared ancestry but one felt transversally, across the animate/inanimate divide which can never be crossed. Apparently.

There are others out here on the pebbled beach, the rocky summit plateau, the dry riverbed, and the crumbling Norfolk cliff. Cartographer and writer (and, once upon a time, artist) Tim Robinson wanders the so-obviously stone landscapes of western Ireland, turning stones and turning up stories to map the land, but he readily admits that his “simplistic geometry is inadequate to the elemental mix of rule and randomness in [the] topography.”<sup>534</sup> The scales are impossibly huge (for humans) to comprehend—what does 205 million years old mean to a human? ...

‘happy birthday’ mudstones of Selly Oak! A nonsense. In the depths of these timescales, activity is petrified because it seems all too impossible. For Richard Fortey “our human chronology domesticates time” it is a coping mechanism, for humans become confounded with ‘mere thousands’ let alone these hundreds of millions of years.<sup>535</sup> Humans are not even the slightest tick in this geological chronology they have created yet it was evident the ‘truth’ needed to be discovered for surely the biblical age (‘happy 6000<sup>th</sup> birthday!’) of the world was wrong.

Humans *had* to *solve* the puzzle but it still leaves them impotent in the face of all this past and so they claim it (screaming) by classification, by naming, and put themselves back at the top of the pile ... Tertiary, Pleistocene, Cretaceous, Jurassic, Anthropocene (ta da!),  $1 \times 1 = 1$ ,  $2 \times 1 = 2$ , do, re, mi ... “we need to learn it by heart because we [will] only be in a position to understand it later on.”<sup>536</sup> Yes Sir, Professor Challenger! But this past is present; it is just that humans in their important busy lives cannot see (do not want to see) the changes. Perhaps a little old-school in his comfortable, guiding armchair Hoskinian voice, Fortey does however recognise that the “world is ever in transit.”<sup>537</sup> To DeLanda “the rocks and mountains that define the most stable and durable traits of our

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<sup>532</sup> Mark Goodwin, *Steps* (Sheffield: Longbarrow Press, 2014), 9.

<sup>533</sup> DeLanda, *A Thousand Years*, 104.

<sup>534</sup> Tim Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth* (London: Penguin, 1997), 244.

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<sup>535</sup> Richard Fortey, *The Hidden Landscape: a Journey Into the Geological Past* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 9.

<sup>536</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 45.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

reality [...] merely represent a local *slowing down* of [...] flowing reality.”<sup>538</sup> It is only when this slowed-down reality speeds up a little that humans take notice—an island forms off the coast of Iceland, a long stretch of the Norfolk coast slips into the North Sea, a mega-slump appears in the Siberian permafrost, or a sinkhole opens up in an unremarkable cul-de-sac in St. Albans.

For a moment the bright sparkle of *geopoetics* appears among the clatter at the foot of the slope. Kenneth White is drawn to geography, drawn to writer and anthropologist Henri Pourrat, yet he found the latter’s writing and stance, “all too metaphorical, anthropocentric, humanist, theological;” White desired something different.<sup>539</sup> White’s search was for a way to work with landscape and the poetics of poetry that would, “effect in one’s-self a disengagement and an expansion.”<sup>540</sup> Pierre Jamet detects a contradiction in White’s geopoetics though, a “contradiction that lies in White’s predilection for doctrines of the absence of identity and the simultaneous assertion of a strong, perhaps Romantic self, as it appears in the figure of the radical poet-thinker.”<sup>541</sup> It is a knotty problem, balancing the lone figure in the landscape and a desire for the breaking down of borders. Egocentric Romantic wanderer versus organism as

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<sup>538</sup> DeLanda, *A Thousand Years*, 258.

<sup>539</sup> Kenneth White, “Elements of Geopoetics,” *Edinburgh Review*, no. 88 (1992), 173.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

<sup>541</sup> Pierre Jamet, “Kenneth White and Identity,” *e-CRIT3224*, no.1 (2009), 7.

“play of forces.”<sup>542</sup> The rational self needs to be removed from the equation, the rational self must be overcome, the one liberated from this human, all too human arm lock.

But there is a problem too with the binaric conceptualising of this situation; it must be thought instead, what is the relation between these two apparent poles and how did the relationship constitute them? White tries to solve the problem, he uses language to try; nomadically he tries (from his Celtic roots, via his French dwelling through to Eastern philosophy). White even squares up to his egotism:

Yes, of course, on what else would you centre yourself? We must focus on the ego, focus on it, and cross it to get into the open field. Without it, one is caught in all sorts of camouflaged selfishness.<sup>543</sup>

Ultimately though, Jamet feels that White fails in his bid for desubjectivization and rather harshly suggests that White’s *geopoetics* have a symmetry with ‘egopoetics’.<sup>544</sup> Maybe the root cause of this accusation

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<sup>542</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson, *Virid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition* (London: Routledge, 1997), 43.

<sup>543</sup> Kenneth White quoted in Jamet, “Kenneth White,” 14. The quotation originally appeared in French and has been translated for this text. The original reads, “Oui, bien sûr, sur quoi d’autre voulez-vous vous centrer? Il faut se centrer sur l’ego, se concentrer sur lui, et le traverser pour entrer dans le champ libre. Sans cela, on est pris dans toutes les sortes d’égotisme camouflé.”

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid*.

is White's genealogy "all the way back to Romanticism" that Jamet detects—the latter does concede that White's "naturalistic poems are still lovely landscape vistas, as from the point of view of a privileged lonely wanderer."<sup>545</sup> Not a glowing endorsement. This clinging to the Romantic is becoming ever more problematic as the Lake years of Coleridge and Wordsworth seem to emanate from a reclusion brought on by political wound-licking and descent into drug addiction.<sup>546</sup> *Romantic* seems an all too easy catch-all that can be trotted out to cut potential off in its prime. Just remember Coleridge almost stranded on that rocky Cumbrian ledge.

As a footnote ... The rush away from the rational self can be dangerous and can lead to a running away from the self and into a hopeless nihilism. Humans must not merge too far into the world, Nietzsche cautions—world as "living being", universe as "organism" or "machine"—for this is "to do it too much honour."<sup>547</sup> Nietzsche kicks and spits at those around him to see who is brave enough to follow him. Deleuze follows but cannot help glancing sideways. Provocation follows provocation. Doubling back continuously, Nietzsche attempts to throw pursuants off his trail; only the most dogged will insist on keeping up with him.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> Jamet, "Kenneth White," 14-15.

<sup>546</sup> By 1800 Wordsworth's and Coleridge's youthful Jacobin tendencies (and sympathies to Thelwall) had been surrendered to the Liberal status quo and Coleridge's addiction to laudanum was increasingly clouding his lucidity.

<sup>547</sup> Ansell Pearson, *Viroid Life*, 105.

<sup>548</sup> Cynic (κυνικός in the Ancient Greek) translates into modern English as 'dog-like.'

Nietzsche's task is not to drag humanity to the opposing pole of nature.<sup>549</sup> Nietzsche wishes to use thought "to begin to 'naturalise' (*vernaturlichen*) humanity in terms of purely, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature."<sup>550</sup> This will not though be a human nature for the division of human and nature is as arbitrary as the division between Ordovician and Silurian. Humans are one form of bodies amongst many: bodies composed of harnessed "forces, densities and intensities" and within this harnessing is the consciousness that pulls *I* out of any primordial soup.<sup>551</sup> *This I* is set on invention not discovery. Through the landscape, the runner improvises a line, through the landscape the writer improvises a line.

At the western edge of Europe Tim Robinson tries to find a way to have his cake and eat it. Jos Smith observes that, "Robinson has described his aesthetic as driven in part by a 'romantic-materialist' impulse."<sup>552</sup> Smith goes on to note that this could be problematic as it hints at a 'reunion' but that Robinson utilises a form of failure to stop short of fixing things in a simplistic harmony.<sup>553</sup> To succeed in this reunion would be

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<sup>549</sup> "man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other rather, they are one and the same essential reality." Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, 4-5.

<sup>550</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), 109 quoted in Ansell Pearson, *Viroid Life*, 105.

<sup>551</sup> Ansell Pearson, *Viroid Life*, 120.

<sup>552</sup> Jos Smith, "'Lithogenesis': Towards a (Geo)Poetics of Place," *Literary Geographies*, no. 1 (2015), 69.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

cumbersome anthropomorphising ... instead, failing “to find a conciliation between self and earth means that a labyrinth of possible ways of knowing the earth opens up, each way inadequate but each nonetheless interesting and plausible in its own right.”<sup>554</sup> There is disjunction here, or to put it geologically, unconformity.<sup>555</sup> Around this unconformity Smith quotes John Wylie and his ‘Derridean reading of Robinson’ in which, “there is ‘a displacement of land and life from each other’ but this displacement is also, crucially, why ‘we have something to say’.”<sup>556</sup> But this displacement must not be seen as abyssal, rather it is an ongoing displacing that realises, and returns, difference.

### III | *landshaping*

Landscape, that “imprecise and ambiguous concept” that defies scientific definition, “carries multiple layers of meaning” in the arts, and has accrued, “subjective meaning implied by artistic and poetic usage” for the geographer.<sup>557</sup> The widely accepted etymology of the English word

*landscape* comes through the Dutch *lantschap* to *landskip* and so to the anglicised ‘landscape’. The standard dictionary definitions have *landscape* relating to something experienced by sight: a vista or a view, a scene or a prospect. Explanation then proceeds to the generally accepted reading of landscape art as a painted scene; this reading is most highly refined in the Picturesque tradition that grew out of British Romanticism—where the tricks of the stage, *repoussoir* and *coulisse*, marshal the viewer’s attention to a specific part of the image. Here the viewer is very much observer and not participant; masterly surveyor at a remove. The geographer Denis Cosgrove confirmed the visual bias implied in the notion of landscape when he wrote:

Landscape first emerged as a term, an idea, or better still, a *way of seeing* the external world, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It was, and it remains, a visual term, one that arose initially out of renaissance humanism and its particular concepts and constructs of space. Equally, landscape was, over much of its history, closely bound up with the practical appropriation of space.<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Smith, “Lithogenesis,” 71.

<sup>555</sup> “unconformity – a contact between two rock formations (often recorded in a change in the angle of the dip of the beds), representing a considerable break in continuity, and time.” Fortey, *Hidden Landscape*, 298.

<sup>556</sup> Smith, “Lithogenesis,” 71 quoting John Wylie, “Dwelling and Displacement: Tim Robinson and the Questions of Landscape,” *Cultural Geographies* 19, no.3 (2012): 375.

<sup>557</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 13-19.

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<sup>558</sup> “Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea,” in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 10, no. 1 (1985): 45-62, DOI: 10.2307/622249.

Cosgrove expands this latter point when he notes how this viewpoint allowed “control and domination over space.”<sup>559</sup> But this spatial reading retains the broader sense of *way of seeing*, with its Bergerian social implications, when Cosgrove adds that, “landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience in a way that neither region nor area immediately suggest.”<sup>560</sup> This is focused in the role of the human “in making and experiencing the environment”—a very one-sided relationship.<sup>561</sup> Raymond Williams corroborates the optically-biased tendency of the landscape concept and its attendant power but adds a note of nostalgia as a further aspect to the concept:

The very idea of landscape implies separation and observation. It is possible and useful to trace the internal histories of landscape painting, landscape writing, landscape gardening and landscape architecture, but in any final analysis we must relate these histories to the common history of a land and its society. We have many excellent internal histories, but in their implicit and sometimes explicit points of view they are ordinarily part of that social composition of the land - its distribution, its uses, and its control - which has been uncritically received and sustained, even

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<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 16-20.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

into our own century, where the celebration of its achievements is characteristically part of an elegy for a lost way of life.<sup>562</sup>

Williams precedes this passage with the comment that a “working country is hardly ever a landscape,” and this touches upon Cosgrove’s observation that landscape is very much the concept of the outsider: the insider, the participant, will never see the landscape. Cosgrove observes that “the insider does not enjoy the privilege of being able to walk away from the scene as we can walk away from a framed picture or a tourist viewpoint” for him, the insider has become a Relphian ‘existential insider’ for/by whom the landscape is “collectively produced, lived and maintained.”<sup>563</sup> This notion of humans working and shaping landscape introduces endeavours such as agriculture, gardening, and landscape architecture. Although now more active and participatory the relationship stubbornly remains one-sided as the landscape persists as, “a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land, functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a

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<sup>562</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and The City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), 120. Whilst landscape may imply separation the possible alternative of countryside immediately sets itself up as oppositional. As Williams records elsewhere the origin of countryside lies in the Latin *contrata*, meaning against or opposite; in this case against or opposite the city. Landscape has a flexibility of usage to it whereas countryside will always be positioned in opposition to the urban. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 81.

<sup>563</sup> Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 16-20.

community.”<sup>564</sup> Small steps have been made away from the fixed viewpoint understanding of landscape but the primacy of man’s agency remains; things are being overlooked.

A first step could be made via feminist re-readings of landscape within cultural geography. Gillian Rose noted that the, “academic discipline of geography has historically been dominated by men, perhaps more so than any other science,” and with this dominance comes a means to write geography (and its constituent landscape) from the perspective of the dominant masculine gaze where the landscape has a singular history imposed on it.<sup>565</sup> But even with this re-writing, the humanistic standpoint remains (the poles of culture and nature persist) with the unifying code of landscape becoming an apologetic filter between the two uncomfortable categories. The landscape must be allowed to be multiple and rather than evolving through a linear history its coming in to being must be acknowledged to be evolving intra-actively through a form of storytelling where Newtonian causality does not hold sway.

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<sup>564</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 9.

<sup>565</sup> Gillian Rose, *Feminism & Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 1.

Landscape is not necessarily culturally produced or need be accorded visual priority though, as Tim Ingold argues in *Being Alive*.<sup>566</sup> Ingold traces the origin of the word to a process of shaping; this notion retains sympathies with the “existential insider” model but also suggests other forces at work. Ingold suggests that the English suffix ‘-scape’ has become etymologically muddled with the verb *skopein*, ‘to look’, “‘scape’, quite to the contrary, comes from Old English *sceppan* or *skyppan*, meaning ‘to shape’,” and he goes on to relate the activities of mediaeval land-shapers where the work was done:

close-up, in an immediate, muscular and visceral engagement with wood, grass and soil – the very opposite of distanced, contemplative and panoramic optic that the word ‘landscape’ conjures up in many minds today.<sup>567</sup>

Ingold is rightly nervous about using the term landscape due to its hijacking by culture and its clearly-written terrestrial burden and he

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<sup>566</sup> Tim Ingold, *Being Alive* (London: Routledge, 2011), 126. Ingold here references his debt to the landscape geographer Kenneth Olwig who has been particularly notable in moving landscape away from a solely visual (and static) phenomenon. As he writes, landscape can also be “a nexus of community, justice, nature and environmental equity, a contested territory that is as pertinent today as it was when the term entered the modern English language at the end of the sixteenth century.” Kenneth Olwig, “Recovering the substantive nature of landscape,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86 (1996): 630-1.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*

resolves this issue with his proposal of “weather-world;” a notion that moves beyond the land-bound optic and into an experiential world of “substantial flows and aerial fluxes” that humans are active *in*.<sup>568</sup> He is quick to underline that in this airy *weather-world* earth and sky “are not opposed as real to immaterial, but inextricably linked within one indivisible field.”<sup>569</sup> Ingold makes the move from landscape to *weather-world* via the optically biased world of culture (he is seeking to disrupt) by means of a thought experiment in which readers are asked to, “take a masterpiece of landscape art and cut the canvas along the horizon or skyline,” and consider if the sky’s removal makes any difference to the painting.<sup>570</sup> Of course it does, the reader and writer are encouraged to agree.

Ingold has shifted consideration of landscape from a fixed, terrestrial concept to one of fluid, Böhmean atmospherics.<sup>571</sup> Furthermore, he is moving away from an anthropocentric stance as he observes that the currents of light, sound, and feeling sweep bodies up rather than the currents being enfolded into the body. That is not though to suggest that bodies themselves cannot enfold, or embody, it is just that it must not be taken as a given. David Abram is moving in similar terrain when he

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid, 127-35.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>571</sup> For Böhmean atmospherics see Gernot Bohme, *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

proposes that an “I” is inserted into “earth” to offer “Eairth,” and in this neologism he seeks to “remind ourselves that the ‘air’ is entirely a part of the eairth, and the i, the I or self, is wholly immersed in that fluid element.”<sup>572</sup>

Lyotard moves the terrain of landscape into a different (non-)place all together; his uncanny, unnatural landscape estranges and desolates.<sup>573</sup> Lyotard parses this inverted landscape, this “scapeland,” through every possible filter bar the obvious one of *nature*; Ingold choruses, “The landscape is not ‘nature’.”<sup>574</sup> This scapeland seems a bleak place to linger, but it does not become faceless, quite the contrary—Lyotard steers his wandering fragmented words to face landscape, to the landscape of the face, the liminal surface which sits between unthought and thought. Skin deep. Rather than retreat from the grounded term landscape, within this research its reach will be altered and its cultural position challenged (but utilised) to insist that the sky, the atmosphere, (and *I*) is included and that they think through shaping and inventing.

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<sup>572</sup> David Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 101.

<sup>573</sup> Jean François Lyotard, “Scapeland,” in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 182-90.

<sup>574</sup> Tim Ingold, “The temporality of the landscape,” in *World Archaeology* 25, no.2 (1993): 152-74.

#### IV | *flux and malleability*

πάντα ῥεῖ (panta rhei or “everything flows”)<sup>575</sup>

‘Always remember, sir, that light and shadow *never stand still*.’<sup>576</sup>

David Abram observes, “the human body is not a closed or static object,” and is “utterly entwined with the soils, waters, and winds that move through it.”<sup>577</sup> He later proposes a sort of liminal image of the body as doorway “through which sundry aspects of the earth are always flowing,” and in this flowing sometimes there is no change to “the world’s textures,” sometimes they are transformed and on other occasions “they reshape the doorway itself.”<sup>578</sup>

The modern English word *flow* has Germanic origins and comes to the present-day English language via the Old English *flowan* meaning, to stream or issue; to become molten; and/or to abound. At mention of the word ‘flow’ an image of a river will commonly be conjured up, its waters moving steadily along. Alternatively the image of a busy motorway may be conceived. The act of writing may even be considered; words flowing

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<sup>575</sup> The concept of πάντα ῥεῖ (or *panta rhei*) is attributed to the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus and is believed to inform his entire philosophy with an attitude that there is no reality beyond the reality of change; the world is in a constant state of flux. From this point we reach a paradoxical state where change becomes constant and stable much in the way that the tactician’s way might be perceived as a strategy.

<sup>576</sup> Mr. West to John Constable as recorded in Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 14.

<sup>577</sup> Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 110.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid*, 230.

from the pen (or keyboard). All of these images carry dormant sub-images of start and end points—the river will be flowing from the hills to the sea, traffic will be moving from A to B and the words flow from the mind onto the page. However, these terminal points are illusory and really only form crop marks or parentheses that separate out, or hold up for inspection, segments of an ongoing flux. However, a word of warning (to be born in mind), Karen Barad challenges the metaphorical value of flow, not because she wishes to stand above the flow as an observer but because she feels that it is too easy to position this flow in a pre-established world of space and time whereas, for her, the flowing is ‘agency as an enactment’ of *intra-actions* that make/mark spacetime.<sup>579</sup>

Leaving the car park as the midges begin to bite we walk along the footpath through the trees and out onto the estate track. A gentle but insistent breeze meets us as we face up the glen; the sky up ahead looks threatening but behind us is a sky of promise—we are in for changing weather that is for sure. Crossing the bridge over Lui Water the river flows wide and steady. On the track up to Derry Lodge our legs assume a comfortable rhythm, one that acknowledges a long day of walking yet to come; we balance these needs in an uncertain truce.

After an hour of walking we reach the Lodge and turn north onto a single-track path through relict pine forest and across side streams that

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<sup>579</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140 and n.19, 429-430.

have only recently washed the path away. For now the weather is holding and as we leave the trees the Glen opens up before us. Broad here with the Derry Burn convoluted at the valley floor. Onwards, and further into Glen Derry. We drop slightly to meet the Burn and as the path begins to rise again at the head of the Glen we bear left and cross the Burn on a narrow footbridge—the water rushing beneath our feet clear and cold, “Invisible in itself, Seen only by its movement.”<sup>580</sup>

The wind is strengthening as we climb up into Coire Etchachan. The surrounding cliffs have spewed their screes down the hillsides and the wind brings the sound of the Forked Gully waterfalls to our ears. We seek brief shelter in The Hutchison Hut before continuing upwards beside the burn to the shore of Little Loch Etchachan. Here the wind is more forceful and contains rain so we shelter amongst boulders to put on extra layers of clothes before starting the steep zigzag path up onto Beinn Mheadhoin. The path’s alternate ways by turns almost throw us along and then almost stop us in our tracks as our legs are almost taken from beneath us by the force of the wind.

Up on the summit plateau the cloud is down and we can see barely ten paces in any direction. We have not memorised the exact topography of the plateau from the map and on reaching the first ‘Barn’ we are baffled by the plateau’s precipitous plummet to the north. Could we even be on

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<sup>580</sup> Nan Shepherd, *In The Cairngorms* (Cambridge: Galileo Publishers, 2014), 9.

the wrong hill? We bear further right in an attempt to stay on the ridge but are soon unnerved enough to consult map and compass. The wind rips at the map and crashes at our ears, the lack of visibility exaggerates the rushing air.

We proceed cautiously tacking from ‘Barn’ to ‘Barn’ until we are confident that the loftiest example has been reached (confirmed by a brief improvement in visibility that shows no further rising ground to our north). We drop our rucksacks and make the fifteen-metre scramble up onto this summit’s summit. The wind is ferocious now and we can do little but crawl onto the top surface of the ‘Barn’, our Gore-Tex flapping relentlessly, violently; the wind deforming our faces as we attempt to speak. Our words are torn away. Suddenly, the clouds are ripped apart and views down into Glen Derry are revealed to us—the sunlit Glen floor seems exotic and remote yet we were walking there only an hour or so ago. We retreat to our packs. We are halfway through our day’s walk.

Contemplating a flowing river Heraclitus (c.535 – c.475 BC) deduced that existence is fluid; that there is a (not quite) universal flux in which everything flows ever onwards (the nature of this flow is likely to alter too).<sup>581</sup> Furthermore, humans as part of this ever-changing world are liable to this change too. For Heraclitus and his pupil Cratylus, nature (as *physis*) is this world in flux; this world of recurrent *becoming*. For Socrates,

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<sup>581</sup> Plato, *Cratylus*, 402a.

language (and by extension culture, and by further extension man) could be rescued from this flux and placed safely beyond nature. Today nature as a concept has become divorced from itself through the insertion of the concept of *culture*. This culture is a strange thing, uncertain whether its 'nature' is benign or hostile: humans are warned to be wary of the inhuman savagery of 'nature' one moment while in the next moment there is overcompensation to a Mother Nature model of rural idylls and Disney films or a new-age spiritualism that transcends *everybody*. In both of these models an unnatural balance is sought after. David Abram is alert to the extremes of nature's image and calls on humans to live in the, "shadowed wonder and wildness of earthly existence [...] exposed and susceptible" to all that they are not.<sup>582</sup> Donna Haraway concurs and urges that humans must think of flowing nature, of the world, as 'coyote', as "a coding trickster with whom we must learn to converse."<sup>583</sup> And recall, as Gary Snyder states, "it is not nature-as-[supposed]-chaos which threatens us, but the State's presumption that it has created order."<sup>584</sup>

The language-ground of Sufficient Reason has elevated man and culture above the eternal flow and beyond its effects. From this high, dry land

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<sup>582</sup> David Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 302.

<sup>583</sup> Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 209.

<sup>584</sup> Gary Snyder quoted in Timothy Clark, *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 161-2 and 54.

man can have mastery over nature. However, many voices contend this position:

Man, however much he may like to pretend the contrary, is part of nature.<sup>585</sup>

and:

I don't recognise the idea of 'the outdoors' or of 'nature'. WE are 'nature', in our anatomy and mortality. Regarding nature as other, different, an 'outdoors', an 'environment', speaks volumes about our alienation from ourselves.<sup>586</sup>

and:

To distance oneself from nature and the 'natural' is to distance oneself from a part of that which the 'I' is built up of.<sup>587</sup>

and:

Now more than ever, nature cannot be separated from culture.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (London: Penguin, 1977), 168.

<sup>586</sup> Kathleen Jamie quoted in Deborah Lilley, "Kathleen Jamie: rethinking the externality and idealisation of nature," *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 17, no.1 (2013): 16-26, doi: 10.1080/14688417.2012.750841

<sup>587</sup> Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 164.

<sup>588</sup> Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 29.

and:

*we are part of that nature that we seek to understand.*<sup>589</sup>

The Stoics desired to ‘live according to nature’ and this desire had a dual aspect: living according to *physis* and to their own human, ‘rational nature’. This duality seemingly creates a tension but this tension is released when it is understood that the external aspect is dependent upon “correct judgements about our place in Nature.”<sup>590</sup> These ‘correct judgments’ are reliant upon humans first attending to themselves (a dynamic redolent of Cynic *epimeleia heautou*, where care of self leads to an ability to care for all of humanity). As noted above, Nietzsche castigates the Stoics for their desire to *live* ‘according to nature’, he states that to *live* is incommensurable with nature’s indifference. Nature has become a segment cut off from the flow but without any further means of flight; nature has been corralled, conserved and reserved. Nietzsche cautions humanity not to be swayed by a specific and fixed image of nature; instead the “de-deification of nature” must be completed and humanity *naturalised*.<sup>591</sup> Like Nan Shepherd’s Cairngorm stream, the

world, “does nothing, absolutely nothing, but be itself.”<sup>592</sup> But how does anything (including man) not become lost in this undifferentiated soup? For humanity, one way is to rise above it on pillars of reason but another is through creative, transversal *going beyond* that does not stop the flowing nor does it introduce hierarchies.<sup>593</sup>

Any ‘going beyond’ the human condition does not necessitate leaving the human behind instead, as Pearson puts it, the move “aims to broaden the horizon of its experience.”<sup>594</sup> And this expansive movement “introduces us into life’s own domains, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation.”<sup>595</sup> Within this flux *you* and *I* continue but they are now “fractured” and “implicated in a field of forces, intensities and individuations that involve pre-individual singularities.”<sup>596</sup> Kenneth White observes a shift towards a ‘unified existence’ (after Henri Atlan) in which the “image of man is breaking up.”<sup>597</sup> This ‘image’ is the identity “that has marked Western civilisation for centuries.”<sup>598</sup> White creates a constellation from thinkers such as Atlan, Heidegger, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari to trace his *biocosmographic* route. This move at once loses

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<sup>589</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 26

<sup>590</sup> Sellars, *Stoicism*, 127-8. In Naessian *ecosophy* and Guattarian *ecology* this care of self > care of humanity further extends to care and consideration of the whole world. Naess, *Ecology*, 168 and Guattari, *Three Ecologies*, 19-28.

<sup>591</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 167-9.

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<sup>592</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, 17.

<sup>593</sup> Both Tim Ingold and Manuel DeLanda utilise the Latourian notion of *meshwork* and use it to oppose hierarchies. See Section VII below for an expansion on this point.

<sup>594</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999), 20.

<sup>595</sup> Henri Bergson quoted in Pearson, *Germinal Life*, 33.

<sup>596</sup> Pearson, *Germinal Life*, 79.

<sup>597</sup> White, “Elements of Geopoetics,” 163-78.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

and gains; it loses the sort of *typhic* padding that the Cynics railed against and gains the *Stimmung* of Heidegger.<sup>599</sup> A being does not become lost in the flows for they have become highly attuned; however, the rational ego is ejected as a troublesome burden.<sup>600</sup>

The world is constantly alive, alive with recognisably living beings and with self-regulating systems or processes. These flows even when apparently impelled by ‘human’ agency take on a life of their own and can vary their speed of flow.<sup>601</sup> And for DeLanda it is the flowing that is key, any bodies are merely “transitory hardenings in the flows” and these ‘hardenings’ in turn constrain, restrict and redirect the flowing.<sup>602</sup> It is vital to note that when speaking of bodies Deleuze’s definition is extremely broad; a body can be, “an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea, a social body or a collective, and so on.”<sup>603</sup> And indeed, a nation, an art movement, or school of philosophy. Brian Massumi observes in his

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<sup>599</sup> *Stimmung* is often translated as ‘mood’, White here uses ‘tuning’ and ‘attunement’ is also frequently used. Within Heideggerian thinking *stimmung* (in all translations) signals a sense of belonging, relating and, contra this research, even unity.

<sup>600</sup> This attuning creates a belonging but is also what holds apart—it could be that the relating of the attuning creates the relata.

<sup>601</sup> Recounting Braudel’s three flows (that ‘defy’ frontiers and ‘accelerate’ historical processes) there is: “the inertial peasant layer, which was the source of biomass flow; the market economy, which set surpluses into motion by means of the flow of money; and the antimarket, where money detached itself from biomass, becoming a mobile mutant flow capable of investing in any activity that intensified the production of profits.” DeLanda, *A Thousand Years*, 129.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid*, 258–9.

<sup>603</sup> Deleuze referenced in Pearson, *Viroid Life*, 119.

translator’s notes for *A Thousand Plateaus* that flight and/or escape are translations of the French *fuite*—and here, in addition to escape and fleeing—can be interpreted as, “flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance.”<sup>604</sup> The terrain of Deleuze’s (and Guattari’s) philosophy is highly mutable and the concepts of flow, flux, fluidity, and so forth are (paradoxically) fundamental to his (their) writings: from the Baroque flourishing of *The Fold*; through the difference of *Difference and Repetition*; to the rhizomatic explosions of *A Thousand Plateaus*.<sup>605</sup> How does Deleuze navigate this flow country?<sup>606</sup>

For Deleuze (and Guattari) assemblages/planes cut (transversally) into the flow country, dividing it up into further flows and yet these flows themselves simultaneously cut across the assemblages and share them (co-existently) over long distances.<sup>607</sup> For Deleuze the human has become

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<sup>604</sup> Brian Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xvii. Whatismore, “it has no relation to flying.”

<sup>605</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*; and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>606</sup> The Flow Country is a large area (c.4000km<sup>2</sup>) of northern Scotland. *Flow* is, “a northern term for any flat, deep and wet bog,” and may also be termed ‘blanket bog.’ R A Lindsay et al, *The Flow Country: The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland* (Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 1988), 7–8.

[http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/pubs88\\_TheFlowCountry\\_part1.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/pubs88_TheFlowCountry_part1.pdf) Blanket bogs are an uncertain terrain where the ground gives underfoot and areas of vegetation are criss-crossed by waterways and pocked by water-filled hollows. Afforestation has been a major threat to this type of ecosystem and is responsible for a range of environmental changes that impact negatively upon this fragile habitat. The verticals of the man-made forest destroy the Flow Country.

<sup>607</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 448–9.

a component in a ‘machinic assemblage;’ this machine is not of human projection but rather one of evolving ‘monstrous couplings’ and ‘interfused cofunctioning.’<sup>608</sup> And. Or. The “flow is not only intercepted by a machine that breaks it, it is itself emitted by a machine” that is to say, “flow and break form a single concept.”<sup>609</sup> And. For Deleuze and Guattari there is an urgency to retain movement for “transcendence enters as soon as movement is stopped,” for transcendence is incompatible with living life.<sup>610</sup>

In *What is Philosophy?* chaos flows; Deleuze and Guattari argue that it is the work of philosophy, science and art (“the *Chaoids*”) to “cast planes over the chaos,” bringing back *variations*, *variables* and *varieties*.<sup>611</sup>

Others do not think to approach this chaos; it is the job of individuals from these three callings to risk their lives. Deleuze and Guattari state that, of the three, it is the artist who struggles least with the chaos but has a greater struggle with (public) opinion as the tears they make in the firmament of convention and opinion, “to let in a bit of free and windy chaos,” are rapidly blocked up by imitators and their “clichés.”<sup>612</sup> In art’s struggle with chaos it renders that chaos sensory and ignites a fire that

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<sup>608</sup> Ibid, 141 and Ronald Bogue, “A Thousand Ecologies,” in *Deleuze | Guattari & Ecology* ed. Berndt Herzogenrath (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 46.

<sup>609</sup> Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 153.

<sup>610</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 47.

<sup>611</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, Ibid, 201-8.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid, 203-4.

rips colourfully through expectations: Turner burns golden.<sup>613</sup> For Turner painting objects in space was not enough, he rejected the Picturesque approach and concentrated on “the pure elemental forces of violence and tension for themselves.”<sup>614</sup>

### *V | Land-words Ho!*

In this world of flows and change, humans desire (and construct) markers and orientation points. The terrain must be mapped. Language and attunement to a terrain can be brought together to establish hardenings in the flow that fulfil this need but also create a variable web of storytelling. Place names—or toponyms—fix a form of knowledge but in this fixing, this sticking, retains a logic of mobility that sees it shift and alter within the dynamic landscape. Where a topographical feature takes prominence in the place-name is perhaps the strongest form of toponym. This is a direct form of topography (Greek: *topos* + *graphia*)—an area of land writing itself into singular multiplicity through the activity of toponymy—where there is power, but it is in both the namer and the named; land and human placed in proximity: language distances and

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<sup>613</sup> Ibid, 205.

<sup>614</sup> Lindsay, *Turner*, 177.

binds. Toponymy as the landscape writing is a little far-fetched but there is a scratching there. Listen.

Interpretations of place-names are contested linguistically but through an understanding of the topography of the named-place the uncertainty can be agreed for toponymy is not solely an armchair activity—it requires close knowledge of the lie of the land. The toponymist needs the passion, commitment and attunement that W.G. Hoskins expects in his topographer:

By the time one has scrambled over hedges, leapt across boggy streams in deep woods, traversed narrow green lanes all but blocked with brambles and the luxuriant vegetation of wet summers, not to mention walked along high airy ridges on a day of tumultuous blue-and-white skies with magnificent views of deep country all round-by the time one has done this, armed with a copy of a Saxon charter and the 2 ½-inch maps, the topography of some few miles of the English landscape is indelibly printed on the mind and heart.<sup>615</sup>

This passion and commitment is found in the work of the great English toponymist Margaret Gelling (1924-2009). Gelling was something of a

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<sup>615</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957), 55.

pioneer in the field of toponymy: she recognised the need to look beyond the books and manuscripts and to get moving through the landscape. Through fieldwork her research established the importance to everyday life that the nuances and precision of the vocabulary of the early Anglo-Saxon settlers held, for:

in an age without maps or signposts, the distinctions between a “knoll” and a “creech”, a “don” and a “brough” or an “ofer” and an “ora” would have been very important navigational concepts.<sup>616</sup>

Gelling’s pioneering work sent place-name scholars out of their studies and into the landscape before any consideration was given to etymology. Despite the knowledge that place-names have slipped, shifted and altered through the ages (and languages) they still provide contact with ongoing relationships with non-human landscapes. Gelling focused:

upon the topographical names, seeking to show that when they used particular words for a hill or a valley, the Anglo-Saxons were giving precise descriptions of the land-form that they saw, which we can still detect in the English landscape.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> “Margaret Gelling [obituary],” *The Daily Telegraph*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/5297337/Margaret-Gelling.html>.

<sup>617</sup> “Obituary: Margaret Gelling,” *The Guardian*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2009/may/04/obituary-margaret-gelling>.

Whilst this reading has an optical bias the greater intimacy with landscape of the namers is understood and is accompanied by the realisation that their seeing was more than visual. Gelling's pioneering work was not widely accepted, as she noted in a 1995 interview with the journal *British Archaeology*:

The Anglo-Saxons had about 40 words [...] that can be translated as hill, but there are no synonyms. All of the words refer to a different shape or size of hill. It is a vast and subtle code; but Sir Frank Stenton, bless him, described these names as 'trivial and accidental'. If you go out and *use your eyes*, you see that that is the most appalling mistake.<sup>618</sup>

Gelling accused Stenton and others from the previous generation of toponymists as "[empathising] with the ruling classes".<sup>619</sup> Gelling was fighting for the voice of common folk and their common knowledge. This sort of close, sensuous and subtle knowledge of the landscape is appreciated by the authors of two recent publications: Robert Macfarlane's *Landmarks* and Dominick Tyler's *Uncommon Ground* which do not deal directly with toponymy but the vocabulary that they are concerned with, which so often becomes constituent parts of place-

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<sup>618</sup> *British Archaeology* Issue 3 April 1995 "Place-names at the barricades" <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/ba/ba3/BA3INT.HTML>.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

names.<sup>620</sup> The types of words listed in these books are mostly common words that have grown from a sensuous acquaintanceship with the local land—"a selection of language really used by men," to recall Wordsworth's 1802 Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.<sup>621</sup> However, the approach taken by the likes of Macfarlane is not universally appreciated. Kathleen Jamie feels that there is too much writing *about* landscape by a "dominant 'I'" leading to a form of representation; Jamie prefers a writing *towards* that hints at a negotiation but also allows room for imagination.<sup>622</sup> Here, Jamie walks a knife-edge as she avoids *representing* nature or seeking reconciliation with nature and instead develops a matrix of relations that offers a proximal distance to a variety of milieux: imaginative and poetic embrace of language offers attunement *and* disjunction.

Viewed broadly language can be viewed as a barrier (between culture and nature). As Karen Barad states, "language has been granted too much power": she is concerned that language has become "more trustworthy than matter."<sup>623</sup> But this is not a simple call to abandon language; instead it is a move to shift the emphasis of language's power that Barad sees as

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<sup>620</sup> Robert Macfarlane, *Landmarks* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2015) and Dominick Tyler, *Uncommon Ground: A Word-Lover's Guide to the British Landscape* (London: Guardian Faber, 2015).

<sup>621</sup> Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, 97.

<sup>622</sup> Lilley, "Kathleen Jamie," 19-20.

<sup>623</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 132-3.

analogous to scientific theory's apparent transparency.<sup>624</sup> What Barad is cautioning against is that language can become all-powerful if it is utilised without consideration of the marks that it leaves; that is, if humans use language in the mistaken belief that it is neutral, passive, and without its own distortions. Rather than be frightened of this distorting it can be remembered and embraced in a poetic disjunctive process. Furthermore, it must be recalled that language “remains tied, however distantly, to the larger field of expressive powers”; while it binds its users into “a particular community.”<sup>625</sup> These communities (be they human, insect, geological, and so forth) are held by a porous membrane that at once, permits exchange *and* creates disruption. The toponyms speak of a communion with the land but also enact a cut. The lan(d)guage speaks.

## ***VI | sk(e)in deep (or reading the map)***

As I ran one of ~~my~~ increasingly long Long Steady Runs (LSR) a couple of Sundays ago it occurred to ~~me~~ that a shift in mindset is required. It is a fairly obvious shift but until one builds up their training the reality of it does not bite. It became clear to ~~me~~ (on this pre-breakfast two-hour run) that I need to think more carefully about how I fit the run into ~~my~~ day.

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<sup>624</sup> Ibid, 194-5.

<sup>625</sup> Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 255-7.

Rather than the day dictating the run's limitations it is almost that the run must dictate the shape of the day. This became particularly apparent with regard to nutrition. I would now need to have some sort of meal before I run and take more food with ~~me~~, and this food would need to be more than gels as their sugary sweetness was becoming unbearable at times and was not doing ~~my~~ digestion much good.

This realisation also comes with an understanding that I need to reduce my speed somewhat. I would still do speed sessions at some point(s) during the week but ~~my~~ LSRs would need to be at a much slower pace than I was used to. Furthermore, at some point I would also need to incorporate walking up hills (probably when runs reach beyond four hours or the terrain for ~~my~~ training runs becomes more hilly). I was still running ~~my~~ LSRs at around 5min/km (8min/mile) pace, a pace that would be unsustainable (for ~~me~~ ... for most) over the longer, 'ultra', distances, and, as I was coming to understand, more importantly, the longer durations. Distance becomes temporal.

This shift in mindset is about pulling together mountain/hill walking and running experience. Walking in Scotland's mountains; a double-digit hour day on the feet is not so extraordinary whereas the notion of 'running' for ten or twelve hours seems almost incomprehensible at the moment. But this hints at another bit of mindset that needs to relax a little. Learning to see the long days in bits, stages, is much healthier. As

with many things in life, the whole endeavour can seem utterly daunting to the point of disarming, yet when that thing is broken down into more manageable segments it becomes much more palatable.<sup>626</sup>

And do not rush. I now appreciate that the moments taken to eat some food should not be rushed: eat slowly and well and I will be repaid later. Those seconds taken to negotiate a stile or a gate are also less pressured; they are pockets of time to grab a few extra breaths.

The rain that had started gently, barely finding its way to ~~my~~ glasses, had become a little more insistent as I headed out through the cutting below Wast Hill. Here, the spring-like green of the canopy belied the turning of the year into a credit in darkness's favour. Through this canopy the rain pattered loudly—the echoes from the sides of the cutting exaggerated its audibility. Onward and at the turn it was still only a light rain but enough to force ~~me~~ to put on ~~my~~ cap. By the time I had returned to the Wast Hill cutting the tempo and volume of the rain's falling had increased; the greens had apparently increased their intensity too. A slow

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<sup>626</sup> 'Thing?' What else would you call it? Challenge? But a challenge seems somehow bodiless, without form, yet the 'thing' definitely has form(s). It is all enveloping but can feel external although often it is recognised as being bred internally. Ruminant and over-concentration grow the thing until it spills out through a herniation and comes to surround its source. Does 80,000 words constitute a thing? Can a gentle dismantling of these sorts of things help to address them? If so what is the smallest part that they can be broken down to? One. Word. At. A. Time. Is probably too truncated; the mercilessly sharp staccato not offering any sensible cadence. Probably.

plod up through the field and a return to heavier rain as I headed through the suburbs.

Clear a space 900mm by 1100mm. From the line of magenta spines on the shelf take the sheet, unfold the cover away from you and pull open the concertina from left to right. The stiff paper creaks and flaps into a form of submission. Once fully extended allow the lower half to fold itself downwards ... possibly with a little encouragement, some shaking. Lay the sheet out. The legend inhabits the right-hand side and has become busier in recent years with an explosion in designated access land. Low down on the right is the 'Technical Information', which includes a lesson on how to give a grid reference, the differences of the various norths and 'incidence of adjoining sheets.' In the case of the bi-lingual *Sheet 136* there is a Welsh version of the legend running down the left-hand side of the sheet.<sup>627</sup>

Just below the lesson on grid references is printed a short note on "Related Publications," essentially an advert for the Ordnance Survey's booklet, "Place names on maps of Scotland and Wales", which apparently "includes a glossary of the most common Gaelic, Scandinavian and Welsh elements used on Ordnance Survey maps of

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<sup>627</sup> Ordnance Survey, *Landranger Map, Sheet 136: Newtown and Llanidloes / Y Drenewydd a Llanidloes* (Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 2002).

Scotland and Wales.”<sup>628</sup> Maybe this is some form of recompense for the reported brutalities that the Ordnance Survey delivered to these languages in centuries past. Further minor edition details fill out the foot of this column.

The whole object is the sheet but the main centre section is the map. Surrounded by a double line, the outer one several times the weight of the inner one, punctuated by latitude and longitude marks in one-minute increments with labels every five minutes (on the inner side of the double line). Outside of this double border are only a reminder of the scale and various distance rulers (kilometres, statute miles and nautical miles), copyright and publisher information (both at the base) and in the top left some obvious and some cryptic text regarding series numbers, etcetera.

Inside the double border a limbo land is inhabited by a note about heights and contour frequency, the eastings and northings for the grid lines, overspill of county and district boundaries (and their labels), and destinations of major highways (including distance in km and miles, and road number). Railways also earn a label of origination or destination here and national cycle routes and long-distance paths also have their

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<sup>628</sup> Ordnance Survey, *Place Names on Maps of Scotland and Wales: A Glossary of the Most Common Gaelic and Scandinavian Elements Used on Maps of Scotland and of the Most Common Welsh Elements Used on Maps of Wales* (Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1973). A curious relic this, the book no longer seems available from the Ordnance Survey and even on the second-hand market its availability is scarce at best.

labels extended out into this liminal space. Lastly there are cautionary notes on the various bearings and the primacy of eastings in a grid reference. Just occasionally some other landscape feature's label will slip out here into this no-man's land, this edgeland. In the case of *Sheet 136* this honour is bestowed solely on the lowly 'Nant Brwynog', a relatively minor watercourse flowing out at the lower left of the map.

A thin black border is crossed and the coded form of the terrain is finally arrived at. A landscape stripped down by the Ordnance Survey's Landranger style and colour palette (the latter simply derived from the CMYK printing process).<sup>629</sup> Overlaid in each corner in large outline type is the uppercase letter pair of the relevant Ordnance Survey National Grid square for the sheet (or part thereof). If a National Grid square boundary is covered by the map, the letter pairs will be repeated along the edge at the junction and in the main body of the map if relevant. Less obvious now, but emphasised by the eastings and northings around the edge, are the grid lines that divide the landscape of the sheet into 1,600 squares. Perhaps not *divide*, rather the grid hovers over the landscape below it. However, in conjuring up a grid reference the grid apparently drops down onto the map-landscape and freezes it in the pin-pointing

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<sup>629</sup> The Landranger Map is Ordnance Survey's 1:50,000-scale 'general purpose' map. The whole of Great Britain and the Isle of Man are covered in 204 sheets by the series. Each map covers an area 40km by 40km.

act of location ... with various levels of accuracy dependent upon the precision of the grid reference.<sup>630</sup>

A folded edition of a map never lies completely flat and ridges, furrows and buckles interrupt the map's landscape with a geology unfamiliar to that of the encoded landscape itself. Shadows are cast from crisp ridgelines, and repeated foldings and unfoldings of the map begin to wear through the paper giving furry, fibrous gaps to the knowledge. Maybe an outing's soaking will be recorded in particularly worn areas of the map's knowledge or the home edits of spilt drinks are taken into the landscape and mingle with the cartographer's symbols.

Apart from perhaps SE 83 22, most of the 300,000-plus kilometre squares across the Landranger series contain some combination of black, cyan, magenta and yellow on their white background.<sup>631</sup> These coloured lines and areas combine to transmit codified equivalents of the landscape surveyed. Returning to *Sheet 136* it is the combined power of cyan and yellow pixels, forming green areas of woodland that grab the attention (in

this case mostly coniferous woodland of farmed plantations).<sup>632</sup> Their presence is now highlighted by the purple outline symbolising Forestry Commission (or similar) ownership. Next to catch the eye are the major highways—green for Primary Routes, magenta for other A roads and orange for B roads. These lines snake across the map linking up the towns formed from clusters of 'flesh-coloured' buildings.

Magenta rights of way and the yellow and white of minor roads and tracks further knit things together as they falteringly make their way across the sheet. The whole is seasoned with the punctuations of other points of interest (mostly black): 'v's to show road gradients, telephones, and churches. Here on *Sheet 136* there are goodly gardens of wind turbines—a base, an upright and an 'x' for blades. Also, there are the strips of dagger-like isosceles triangles marshalled into alignments to denote embankments and cuttings (the latter held in order by a single black line). The geological meanderings of the outcrop symbol and the mimetic gradated fans of the scree symbol also blackly identify steep and treacherous terrain.

Also liberally sprinkled across the map-landscape is the black type of toponyms. For clarity, an adapted version of Adrian Frutiger's neo-

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<sup>630</sup> A six-figure grid reference positions the user in a 100 hundred-metre square, whilst a ten-figure reference would provide accuracy to one metre.

<sup>631</sup> SE 83 22 is often cited as the dullest grid square in the Ordnance Survey's 1:50,000 scale mapping. Apart from the lower halves of the letters s, e, f, l, e, e, and t in black ink (part of the label for the village of Ousefleet which enters the left side of the top edge of the square) the only other detail is the black line and one pylon symbol of an 'electricity transmission line' which clips the lower half of the left-hand side.

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<sup>632</sup> On the ground the lie of the map is made clear as vast swathes of these plantations have been clear-felled and in place of trees is an apparently post-apocalyptic landscape of broken trunks, deep trenches and energy-sapping tangles of cut branches and undergrowth.

Grotesque Univers sans-serif typeface spells out these place names. Varying sizes of place have their place ... mark their place. Sometimes these names have slipped slightly out of place, their meaning is lost over time; the label and the topographical feature they identify becoming detached. But for the main part they are reasonably positioned, placement usually only tweaked for the sake of legibility amongst other map features. Cities and larger towns take a bolder, uppercase whilst all the other places have lowercase labels of varying scales—larger for villages and smallest of all for farm names and the smaller land features. Occasionally a Gothic script interrupts the sans-serif world of the OS map to announce the presence of some feature of historical/archaeological importance; *Tumulus, Stone Circle, Cairn*. The exceptions in these antiquities are the Roman features, which are tagged with what looks like a light version of Univers but in an imperial authoritative uppercase.

Subtly visible in their watery cyan are the triangulation pillars (marked by an open triangle with a dot at its centre): progenitors of the very map under study ... or that was the case once upon a time. Now, as OS maps are accurately (+/- 3mm) patched together from aerial photography and digital mapping processes the pillars are redundant for the surveyors. In the landscape these (usually) concrete pillars have become loved by outdoor enthusiasts and provide vital orientation points in bad weather.

Cyan is also reserved for tourist information symbols such as the ensquared 'P' for a car park, the sunburst of a viewpoint, the silhouette of a wading bird for a nature reserve and a tent and/or caravan for campsites. Most obviously cyan denotes all watery features. Major rivers and lakes have dark cyan outlines and lighter cyan infill, whilst more minor watercourses have a single cyan line of varying weight depending upon the size of the surveyed feature. Even the rush or sedge symbol of a marsh is saturated in cyan—any user of the uplands knows the wetness of this type of grassland.

More subtly the complex convolutions of orange contours make an impact. Swirling and massing where open land angles and flexes the contours form orange streams and pools: each line symbolising a detected ten-metre gain in height and at every fifty-metres of height gain the line is emboldened. Where legibility permits, heights are cut into the lines. Where the landforms top out the contour enclosure is frequently crowned with the black ink dot of a spot height. Putting aside a few of the more recent symbols on an Ordnance Survey map the creation of the map is an exercise in paring down, reducing a landscape to components identified as vital to assist a user to move through and orient themselves in the surveyed land. A user's gaze falls (fails?) between the strings and knots of information. Between all this information is what? Look closer. Closer still. Take a magnifying lens and see how the magenta and yellow

dots are choreographed to form the orange contour lines; the ink bleeds out into the fibres of the paper. The crisp certainty of distance is replaced by a less sure offsetting. The image is *in* the paper. The blurring of the ink pigment amongst the paper's fibres reminds the user that the mapping is temporary.

Perhaps a shift in scale will help. Even the maligned / celebrated SE 83 22 becomes much more exciting when viewed at the 1:25,000 scale of the Ordnance Survey's Explorer Map. 'Ousefleet' has retreated from the scene but two minor toponyms ('Caythorpe' and 'Haverlands') now find their place in the left of the square. A pecked line has replaced the solid line of the 'electricity transmission line' and its V-shaped pylon symbol has become an open square (cut in half at this scale by the edge of the grid square). More obviously the grid square is now crisscrossed by a rectilinear grid of the cyan lines of drainage ditches and the black lines of hedges. Half way up on the right there is also the black dot of a spot height, although its accompanying figure is in the neighbouring grid square. Below this the pecked line of a path or track shyly creeps into the square for a few metres.

The writing dips and reaches a Carrollian terrain where *Mein Herr's* mile-to-the-mile scale map provides no use at all for it will "shut out the

sunlight" as it is unfolded.<sup>633</sup> Maybe the trail has reached *The Bellman's Map*; it is easy to understand for it is a "perfect and absolute blank."<sup>634</sup> Or maybe the map should be unfolded and the light blocked out as Suarez Miranda reported? but this map is redundant and remains only as tatters in the Deserts of the West.<sup>635</sup> Or perhaps examples are recounted until the terrain is an unmappable one of non-maps.

'How big is all this place?'

'It has no size at all,' the Sergeant explained, 'because there is no difference anywhere in it and we have no conception of the extent of its unchanging coequality.'<sup>636</sup>

No, take the given map and improvise a way through for the map is not *the* landscape; it is *a* landscape inscribing itself through an assemblage of human effort and technology, the surveyed topography, a plotting process, and so forth. Take the train to Caersws, walk north into the hills, stand at the triangulation pillar on Garreg-hir (SN 99889 97788) and turn to gaze south-west, this is not *the* landscape; there is no fixed landscape. Instead this is a landscape inscribing itself—*landscaping*. The landscape of the Ordnance Survey map is just one of so many possibilities

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<sup>633</sup> Lewis Carroll, *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1939), 556-7.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid*, 683.

<sup>635</sup> Jorg Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," in *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), 325.

<sup>636</sup> O'Brien, *The Third Policeman*, 138.

that may exist. Even Google Street View cannot fix all this in place (and time)!

When navigating, the map becomes a terrain and a prosthesis: the map is placed in addition to, the map is an additional place. The user enters into the apparatus of the map-mapped landscape, a further extension of the originating assemblage where the map is thrown back at its landscape and forced to prove some level of accuracy dependent upon needs.

Despite the dominating overtones of cartography even here a different way may be improvised, neither with nor against the flows but cross-cutting them, angling into them, instead.

A map is a fluid *hypar* continually cutting across and cutting any number of hyperbolic paraboloid-like surfaces.<sup>637</sup> The mathematician's hyperbolic paraboloid appeals; however, it is most often encountered seemingly isolated and presented in the grip of a graph's axes, with notional coordinates tethering it stubbornly in place. This textbook visualizing implies external force, a creator sitting aloof or separate from the curving, folding world. Instead view the axes as means to an end (without end), rudimentary locating devices that flex and shift with the surface but fail

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<sup>637</sup> Architect Heinrich Engel introduced the term *hypar* in his 1967 book *Structure Systems*. A *hypar* is defined as a section cut from the "full infinite surface" of a hyperbolic paraboloid. Erik Demaine, "Hyperbolic Paraboloids (Erik Demaine)," Erik Demaine, last modified 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, <http://erikdemaine.org/hypar>.

any test of rational logic. There is no depth to the *hypar* but the depth it cuts through.

Roger Ackling's work occurs at the surface but he is aware "that the spirit is often hidden within like a shadow in the darkness" furthermore, John Haldane observes of Ackling's work, "the surfaces have depths."<sup>638</sup>

Deleuze observes that it is Paul Valery who has proposed that the skin is most deep.<sup>639</sup> Deleuze goes to Lewis Carroll (again, still, anew) to corroborate this but also to distance himself from the depths of his own earlier writing-thinking.<sup>640</sup> With Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno* Deleuze finds that the previous depth has been "flattened out, and becomes a surface alongside the other surface" on-in which "the diversity of nonsense is enough to give an account of the entire universe."<sup>641</sup> Deleuze has not forgotten Carroll's maps. As if to acknowledge a map's ultimate impossibility of pure representation Deleuze uses maps in a different way, he opposes mapping (and its surfaces) to the depths of an archaeological approach: Deleuze uses maps to evaluate *displacements*.<sup>642</sup> In the folding of the map a surface-depth is established; and each fold thinks more

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<sup>638</sup> Emma Kalkhoven, ed., *Between the Lines* (London: Occasional Papers, 2015), 3 and 21.

<sup>639</sup> Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 10.

<sup>640</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Lewis Carroll," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 21-22.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>642</sup> Deleuze, "What Children Say," in *Essays*, 63.

depth at the surface. And even in this superficial terrain there is depth enough to dig, delve, mine and go to earth.<sup>643</sup>

## VII | *www.org*

‘and ... and ... and ...’<sup>644</sup>

A network can be defined as a system of interconnected points and these points may be people, railway stations or computers for example. In the latter example computers may be networked together for communication purposes, file sharing or data access. Individual nodes can also be networked together to increase power potential. The Internet is the most obvious example today of a network and is in fact a network of smaller networks networked together. For Foucault the network is the means through which power is diffused: the “network that connects points and intersects with its own skein” replaces notions of pre-formed things in

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<sup>643</sup> “In this book you will discover a ‘subterranean man’ at work, one who tunnels and mines and undermines. You will see him – presupposing you have eyes capable of seeing this work in the depths – going forward slowly, cautiously, gently inexorable, without betraying very much of the distress which any protracted deprivation of light and air must entail; you might even call him contented, working there in the dark.” Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 1. Is the footnote the preserve of the “subterranean man”? Remember, “Between my finger and my thumb / The squat pen rests. / I’ll dig with it.” Heaney, “Digging.”

<sup>644</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 27.

isolation and hierarchical impositions of authority.<sup>645</sup> Foucault’s power networks produce and transmit “variable and relative” unities: think here of a book ... it is a held object, but it is also “caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network.”<sup>646</sup> Although networks are easily viewed as top-down, hierarchical structures that wield power and stifle difference they can also be the matrix for a discourse that produces, transmits, reinforces (but also undermines and exposes), power.<sup>647</sup>

The image of the network is problematic for Ingold; he argues that it focuses attention to the lines of connection joining the nodes and promotes “a relational perspective.”<sup>648</sup> Rather than lines of connection Ingold wishes to focus on the lines as flow; lines “*along* which life is lived.”<sup>649</sup> The network is positioned by Ingold as an indication of top-

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<sup>645</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986): 22.

<sup>646</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 23.

<sup>647</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), 101.

<sup>648</sup> Ingold, *Being Alive*, 70. David Abram is close to this relational model but shifts the movement elsewhere when he explains, “each entity [...] is held within an interdependent lattice of relationships, a matrix of exchanges and reciprocities that is not settled within itself but remains fluid and adaptable.” *Becoming Animal*, 300.

<sup>649</sup> Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2010), 80-81. Here Ingold uses the concept of meshwork and lines to distinguish two modes of movement: transport and wayfaring. In the former the traveller is spirited from A to B with little awareness of what lies between whilst the wayfarer’s line “has no beginning or end” but it contributes to the world’s “weave and texture,” 81.

down governance (and dominance) that rides roughshod over the lived lines of the meshwork.<sup>650</sup> For Ingold the fundamental problem with the image of a network is that it creates a distinction “between things and their relations.”<sup>651</sup> By using the concept of meshwork Ingold introduces a thing-as-relation model and this leads to much greater complexity (and potential) than the structure of the network. In its entangling this move also rejects the possibility of a bounded environment *in* which this flowing and tangling take place: instead, the movement weaves the world and establishes “the *conditions of possibility*.”<sup>652</sup>

Rather than place meshworks in an opposition (to networks for instance) Manuel DeLanda augments them with hierarchies. DeLanda observes that hierarchies homogenise components before articulating them whereas meshworks “articulate heterogeneous components as such, without homogenising” (but there can also be a meshworks of hierarchies and hierarchies of meshworks).<sup>653</sup> Whilst not favouring one term over the other DeLanda identifies the heterogeneous articulations of the meshwork as holding most hope for the future of the world; further

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<sup>650</sup> Ingold acknowledges a debt to Henri Lefebvre for the term ‘meshwork’. *Being Alive*, 84.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-73. In the opposition between networks and meshworks there is resonance with the dynamics between strategy and tactics, where strategy maps onto network and the wayfaring of meshworks can be aligned to tactics.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>653</sup> Manuel DeLanda, “Homes: Meshwork or Hierarchy?” *Mediamatic Magazine* 8, no.2/3 (1995), <https://www.mediamatic.net/en/page/8931/homes-meshwork-or-hierarchy> and *A Thousand Years*, 32.

suggesting that humans can learn a lot from birds and rocks.<sup>654</sup> DeLanda and Ingold both owe a debt of gratitude to Deleuze and Guattari in their thinking (a debt that is paid in credit). For Ingold, it is the concept(s) *haecceity* that becomes most useful, although Ingold favours an image of mycelium over the *rhizome*.<sup>655</sup> But image used here is a lazy term, for these structures are not to be seen but to see with; to feel with, to hear with, to “perceive *with*.”<sup>656</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari’s *rhizome* is perhaps their most famous concept. The *rhizome* model is contrasted with the tree. The orderly, vertical (hierarchical even), locally rooted structure of the tree offers no hope of flight, it is grounded and mutely reciprocal. This is a simple image of a tree and more akin to a genealogical tree than its distant arboreal cousin, although Deleuze and Guattari insist that they refer to a tree of the wood for the most part—they were not arboriculturists! Back to the middle. “A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*.”<sup>657</sup> The *rhizome* spreads outwards, across, never down; it makes its own surface, it is its own surface ... a surface of *ands*. The *rhizome* rejects origins and *a priori* assumptions in its making of multiple connections and rejects the why? and the what? in favour of a

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<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>655</sup> Ingold, *Being Alive*, 86.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>657</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 27.

how? The *rhizome* is a tool to be customised and worked with— depending upon how it is used the Internet can remain a rigid, relational structure or it can animate *how?*, *and* and *or*.

The choice between network and meshwork could be a semantic one, as the selection of one term over the other ties thinking into a cultural reticulation that may or may not support the relevant line of thought. In origin both terms link to a prefix of binding, knotting or knitting attached to the suffix of an act or something done. But once again the dominant nominal form has taken over and risks clouding the potential of both. Certainly with network it has the feel of a rigid matrix snapped into place that can at best be plugged into but with little hope of influence and with the reciprocal fear of traceability. The business-world model of networking interrupts the rigidity of the image but then falls back on assumed pre-existing entities meeting (with a goal to their intentions); something has still been lost. The *rhizome* retains an appearance of a network or meshwork but the tissue-like surface that it weaves is not of fossilised remains but of fluid chains of ... and ... or ....

## VIII | *fieldwork*

And birds and trees and flowers without a name  
All sighed when lawless law's enclosure came<sup>658</sup>

Any consideration of the British landscape cannot pass by without mentioning fields. For over three thousand years fields have been a defining feature of the landscape of Britain; the fields may be bounded by stone walls, hedges, or wood or wire fences and they may enclose arable or pastoral land but all are united in the same formative processes of clearing and defining. In the far west of Cornwall, Bronze Age farmers cleared fields and heaped the stones at the edges into vast stone hedges; in large areas of central England the commons were enclosed by thousands of miles of hawthorn hedge; in upland areas dry stone walls clamber improbably across terrain to denote land ownership limits; today the farmer, poor of time and money, resorts to wire in its manifold forms. Sometimes it is questionable if the bounding form keeps, contains, protects or repels.

The word 'field' is rooted to the topographical feature and originally had a specifically flat quality to it but from the mid-1300s a field could also signal something less obviously tangible: "an area or sphere of action, operation or investigation" or a "space under the influence of [...] some

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<sup>658</sup> John Clare, "The Mores," in *John Clare: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Merryn and Raymond Williams (London: Routledge, 2013), 90-93.

agent.”<sup>659</sup> Now there are fields of vision; fields of knowledge; fields of study; disciplinary fields; force fields; and so forth. Crops and stock are no longer enfolded here. But how does this newer type of field come to be cleared and defined? In most cases the finite boundaries are overcome as the fields will have the potential to expand and contract; they may also overlap, interfere or merge. These fields are no longer discrete and yet they may remain closely guarded. New meanings overlap and share qualities but the agential zones of physics do not map directly onto the concept of disciplinary fields. In both senses power is what establishes and sustains the field (this is also true for the agricultural field) and this power comes *a priori* the field. As Foucault explains (in specific reference here to natural history ... and language):

This *a priori* is what, in a given period, delimits in the totality of experience a field of knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field, provides man’s everyday perception with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions in which he can sustain a discourse about things that is recognised to be true.<sup>660</sup>

But can disciplinary fields be sustained without *a priori* forces? The dry stone walls of upland Britain allow the wind to pass through them

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<sup>659</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “field.”

<sup>660</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2006), 172.

(structural porosity?), the great stone ‘hedges’ of West Penwith become habitats for a diverse range of creatures, as do the wooded hedgerows of southern England. Inverting the image of the field, the boundaries become the point of focus and provide opportunities for communication and sanctuary. At the edges are not limits but zones of friction and life. There is a danger of over-doing the metaphor but, as Barad explains, within science a one-time image became a recognisable presence:

While the idea of a field may seem like a convenient fiction, and was in fact originally introduced as an imaginary construct to facilitate calculations, physicists in the nineteenth century began to embrace the idea that fields are real.<sup>661</sup>

So in physics, a field comes to be defined (bounded and enclosed) as “something that has a physical quantity associated with every point in space-time,” or is a “pattern of energy distributed across space and time.”<sup>662</sup> In the field that Barad is cultivating a notable change is taking place, the field is being formed of its constituents rather than they coming to populate a pre-existing enclosure (provided by an *a priori* force); now the field “is a way to express the desires of each entity for the

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<sup>661</sup> Karen Barad, “Transmaterialities,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 21: 2-3 (2015): 418, doi: 10.1215/10642684-2843239.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid*, 394. Defining, by its very definition, is a process of limiting; a complete enclosing.

other.”<sup>663</sup> Thinking fields through Quantum Field Theory (QFT) brings parity between the field and its matter in a world of flux and ephemerality. The field of QFT brings trouble though, put simply it “radically deconstructs the ontology of classical physics” by undoing the reductionist ground of particles and voids.<sup>664</sup> Barad finds that these troubling fields are fields of desire, or better, desiring fields; the desiring animates the field ... is the field.

Barad’s exploration of the ‘raging amplitude’ of desiring fields seems underpinned by matter. However, the matter of Barad’s thinking is not what it may first appear to be; the meaning of matter (the matter of meaning) is put into doubt as the matter of matter (the meaning of matter; the meaning of meaning) is parsed through “nothingness” via the vibrations of a drumhead:

A field vibrating at a particular frequency or energy is equivalent to the existence of particles of matter with a particular mass.<sup>665</sup>

Meaning has intention at heart and in intention is a stretching towards, whilst matter has forever been substantial. Epistemology is elastic; ontology can appear solid and unchanging. Words and things. Here, now

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<sup>663</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>664</sup> Ibid, 401.

<sup>665</sup> Karen Barad, “What is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, Justice,” *100 Notes – No.99 Karen Barad* (Ostfindern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), 11.

(there) in Barad’s writing, the established definitions of matter and meaning are revealed to be distractions; now matter (as energy) holds the intention of desire and “meaning is an ongoing performance of the world in its differential intelligibility” and indeed, the world (cast here by Barad as “nature”) “writes, scribbles, experiments, calculates, thinks, breathes, and laughs.”<sup>666</sup> The field fizzles and cracks with ‘mattering,’ with *becoming-*; with life. But in this apparently undifferentiated life soup how is a mark made ... a gesture that holds together but does not bind (bound (define))?

## ***IX | //c/u/t/t/i/n/g// and disjunctive intra-rupting***

What line separates the horizon of the visible from the invisible harmony?<sup>667</sup>

The caesura cuts down into a body of music or verse: the cut leaves a (silent) pause. Cut to the chase. Filmmaking is scored with the sight and sound of cutting. In non-digital filmmaking the film is literally cut; cut to edit out material, cut to save film stock, cut ready to splice material

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<sup>666</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 335 and Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today* 3, no.2 (2010): 240–268, doi: 10.3366/E1754850010000813.

<sup>667</sup> Kostas Axelos quoted in Gilles Deleuze, “The Fissure of Anaxagoras and the Local Fires of Heraclitus,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 159.

together. This bladed act of cutting now becomes lost among the various forms of transition that have been named cuts (for example, jump cuts, cross-cuts and L-cuts); time becomes the medium cut and cuts now join rather than separate. Deleuze was fascinated by the possibilities that cinema offered to thought—the world could become multiple and/or disjointed—and cuts were a big part of this fascination: “cuts no longer indicate continuity solutions but variable distributions between the points of a continuum.”<sup>668</sup> As cinema developed the notion of continuity was questioned. Borrowing from mathematics, Deleuze introduces the idea of the *irrational cut*:

Sometimes the cut, so-called *rational*, forms part of one of the two sets which it separates (end of one or beginning of the other). This is the case with 'classical' cinema. Sometimes, as in modern cinema, the cut has become the interstice, *it is irrational and does not form part of either set, one of which has no more an end than the other has a beginning*: false continuity is such an irrational cut.<sup>669</sup>

These irrational cuts may now “appear in their own right,” cuts are liberated as they create “relinkages of independent images” and narrative becomes properly false.<sup>670</sup> This move also disrupts the traditional registers

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<sup>668</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 121.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid, 181.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid, 214 and 277, and Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 124.

of film as sound and image diverge to their limits only to (re)converge “in the incommensurable relation of an irrational cut.”<sup>671</sup> Irrational cuts are *cutting together-apart*.

In Barad’s thinking, the hyphen frequently plays the rôle of the caesura and the virgule—the hyphen makes ‘as one’ as her diffractive moves *cut together-apart* in “(one move).”<sup>672</sup> This ‘one move’ operates differently to Deleuze’s ‘irrational cut’ that seemingly initiates a lengthier process and rather cuts apart-together; but both cuts offer a similar return (although a jump cut of thinking needs to be made between cinema and phenomena in the broadest sense). The cuts that Barad speaks of “are agentially enacted not by wilful individuals but by the larger material arrangement of which ‘we’ are a ‘part,’” rather than Cartesian cuts that reinforce the “inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known.”<sup>673</sup> The agential cut is happening locally and *within* phenomena permitting an objectivity that has otherwise been undone by the rejection of classic ontological exteriority—exteriority is now *within* phenomena.<sup>674</sup> Rejecting the Cartesian cut also rejects (objective) distance as subject and

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<sup>671</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 279.

<sup>672</sup> Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction,” 168. Heidegger and Nancy are two other great proponents of the hyphen. Barad occasionally uses the construction “cutting together/apart.” See Barad, “Quantum Entanglements.”

<sup>673</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 178 and “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no.3 (2003): 801-31.

<sup>674</sup> Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 815.

object become entangled into phenomenon and with this togetherness comes “accountability to marks on bodies”—a *response-ability* wherein there is an ethically required ability to respond.<sup>675</sup> This is something of a *becoming-response*. The distance established by a cut is other than spatio-temporal; the distancing cut installs togetherness.

It is easy to consider the agential cut as an action that interrupts an existing relationship; an interruption to a conversation disrupts the relationship between speaker and listener. That this interruption could be viewed as a positive or a negative act is not the point. With this image of interruption it is presupposed that the speaker and the listener pre-exist their conversing. In one sense these individuals exist but they do not exist as speaker and listener without the apparatus of the conversation. The defining of the cut also needs to be shifted so that the conversing becomes the cutting agency that *cuts together-apart* the two elements of speaker and listener.

An interruption is inserted between, *inter-*, (current) speaker and listener (to take the example from above) and the *-ruption* appears etymologically violent, it is a rupture, from the Latin verb *rumpere*, to break. The

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<sup>675</sup> Karen Barad, "Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers," *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, accessed 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/11515701.0001.001/1:4.3/--new-materialism-interviews-cartographies?rgn=div2;view=fulltext> and Karen Barad, "Intra-actions," *Mousse* 34, (2012): 81.

interruption breaks something that had existed between two or more elements constituting a singular activity or to move the terminology closer to the terrain of Barad, the entities (speaker and listener) would be interacting through their conversation. Now that the conversation has become the cut it becomes illogical for it to be understood as a breaking between (or even an acting between). For Barad this has become an *intra-action* in which “intra-action goes to the question of the making of differences, of ‘individuals,’ rather than assuming their independent or prior existence.”<sup>676</sup> Rather than the acting between of interaction, Baradian *intra-action* is an acting (from) within; the *a priori* independent individuals of interaction are exchanged for ‘individuals’ emerging from within the *intra-action* (wherein agency also emerges).<sup>677</sup> Once more the hyphen appears as a visual mnemonic that the cut holds *together-apart*.<sup>678</sup> This short, horizontal bar performs a hyphenic holding together on different horizons. Now, instead of interrupting, there is an *intra-rupting*, a breaking or tearing from within, as each *intra-action* herniates possibilities; fractally the surface expands as cuts are made within cuts.

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<sup>676</sup> Karen Barad, “Intra-actions,” 77.

<sup>677</sup> That is, “there are no independent relata, only relata-within-relations.” Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 334-5 and 465.

<sup>678</sup> Doubling the visual weight of the hyphen to an equals sign a similar dynamic is at play in Heidegger’s famous interrogation of  $A=A$ , here the double bar of the equality sign holds  $A$  and  $A$  *together-apart*. Deleuzian *difference* multiplies the relationship further and signals an asymmetric multiplicity of together-aparts. See Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 22-41.

The notion of harmony is disrupted by *intra-action*—the everyday reading of the term harmony emphasises a feeling of accord and agreement, where a peaceable and pleasant unity is established.<sup>679</sup> This unifying, static harmony is often perceived in nature; labelled as the ‘Balance of Nature’, the idea has remained largely unchallenged for the last 2,500 years. Nature here is seen as the stable constant that man disrupts during *his* laying down of the Anthropocene. However, particularly since the 1990s, increasing numbers of ecologists have come to understand the world as not in a state of tranquil homeostasis but in a state of constant flux. The world is in a state of *discordant harmony*.<sup>680</sup> In the act of *cutting together-apart* there is a harmony of sorts; one that might be called *discordant*.

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<sup>679</sup> Even in the ancient Greek root of the word (*harmonia*) where the emphasis is on the joining (specifically the joined (caulked) planks of a ship) some sort of unity is desired even if it is modular.

<sup>680</sup> Daniel Botkin is seen as a forerunner in this paradigm shift. Daniel B. Botkin, *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). Unfortunately the thinking here persists with the presupposition of a human/nature binaric opposition. A stance that could benefit from adoption of Baradian *intra-action*. John Wylie also criticises the “fantasy of belonging” and suggests that distance is a necessity in any world relationship and in particular reference to landscape he tempers the distancing of the Picturesque with a landscape for *perceiving-with* that creates a tension between “self and world.” John Wylie, *Landscape* (London: Routledge, 2007), 217. From a different angle Stengers and Prigogine explore how thermodynamics has led to the realisation that “Stability is no longer the consequence of the general laws of physics,” as they look for hope alongside the threat of instability. Isabelle Stengers and Ilya Prigogine, *Order Out of Chaos: Man’s New Dialogue with Nature* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984), 140 and 312-3.

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze worries at the harmony in the thought of Descartes (and Kant to a certain extent); a harmony between faculties that produces an “ideal orthodoxy” which hinders philosophy (in its desire for correspondence, common sense, and integration).<sup>681</sup> Instead Deleuze proposes a ‘discordant harmony’ between faculties wherein, “each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others.”<sup>682</sup> *Discordant harmony* could perhaps be swapped out for Baradian *intra-action*. Deleuze’s thought is rich with discord and Zourabichvili describes (Deleuze’s notion of) *disjunctive synthesis* (or *inclusive disjunction*) as “the principal operator of Deleuze’s philosophy, his signature concept above all others”—a concept that forms one of the two elements of ‘Deleuzian irrationality.’<sup>683</sup> Disjunctive synthesis harbours a *becoming-* where the outcome (if such a term can be used) is not an *either/or* or even an *and*; instead it is an *and/or* that “does not reduce two contraries to an identity of the same,” neither is there confinement “inside contradictions,” instead the move allows for a “drifting from one term to another and following the distance between terms.”<sup>684</sup> Disjunctive synthesis breathes life as it makes series “resonate and ramify” through their *differentiation*, through

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<sup>681</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 169-74.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>683</sup> Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 170. The other element is the “refutation of grounding.”

<sup>684</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 75-77.

their relating.<sup>685</sup> Binaric opposition disappears “as something new and uncharted emerges.”<sup>686</sup> A relating that is carried back (again and again) to a different place.<sup>687</sup> This misplacing in the relating of disjunction denies a ground of *a priori* rationalities but allows for infinite invention and improvisation rather than the closed loop of representation.

Deleuze describes a feel for “discordant harmony” in the thinking of Kostas Axelos.<sup>688</sup> Axelos’s use of aphorisms indicates his interest of the fragmentary but this is not a simple state of something *or* other, instead Axelos celebrates the *and/or*. This mode of thinking has an ancient pedigree in the thought of Protagoras (as interpreted by Sextus Empiricus (as interpreted by Arne Naess as part of his ecosophy)). Naess terms this Protagorean mode as the ‘both-and’ theory; a logic of apparent contradiction.<sup>689</sup> Contradiction also clearly haunts Nancy’s *Being Singular Plural*.<sup>690</sup> Nancy’s *Being* is a ‘being-with’ within. Nancy interrogates the

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<sup>685</sup> Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 234 and *Difference and Repetition*, 295.

<sup>686</sup> Bogue, “A Thousand Ecologies,” 53.

<sup>687</sup> The word *relate* derives from the Latin *relatus*, ‘to carry back’.

<sup>688</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, n.12, 211.

<sup>689</sup> Naessian ecosophy structurally seems to have much in common with Baradian *intra-action* and Deleuzian *discordant harmony*, for example, Naess states “the relations which define the thing conceptually converge at the same junction.” and the belief that “whole and part are internally related.” However, Naess also clearly states, “By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium.” Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 55–6 and Naess quoted in Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue, ed., *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Publishers, 1995), 8.

<sup>690</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

terms *with* and *together* and finds that they fail to settle definitively but exist in equilibrium between separation and union: the term equilibrium here seems an odd choice as the terrain oscillates.<sup>691</sup> But the equilibrium here could refer to an equality, an egalitarian move that sees Nancy afford equal rights to everything, to every body, “whether they be inanimate, animate, sentient, speaking, thinking, having weight, and so on,” where these bodies are always in “dis-position” to each other as they move from self to self.<sup>692</sup> Barad has these bodies, these selves, touching ... “touching all others” including “the strangers within.”<sup>693</sup>

Distance is a standing apart but by being considered to be apart there is togetherness. In the geological unconformity the distance is temporal as the two aspects of the feature touch each other; it is the touching that makes them distant ... without the touching they would not be considered ‘together’ and so would not be distant. This is a landscape of tactile encounter where to be together is not to be the same; the latter merges whilst the former maintains distance. Touching becomes an

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<sup>691</sup> Ibid, 59–60.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid, 84. Nancy has acknowledged his proximity to Deleuzian thought but it is arguably in the formulation “being-with” that their proximity is at its most distant as surely Deleuzian thought would replace this with something akin to *becoming--with*? For one example of Nancy’s acknowledgment of Deleuze’s force see Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Deleuzian Fold of Thought” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 107–13.

<sup>693</sup> Barad, “On Touching,” 7. Barad here uses Derrida to critique Nancian touching.

ecotonic zone that defies integration as an aharmonic reciprocity is put into play. Analysis draws together in its loosening.

## *X | and vulnerability*

one seeks only if one has already found the minimum enveloped—a sign—that draws thought into a movement of searching.<sup>694</sup>

In *On Touching*, Karen Barad notes that, according to dictionary definition; “Troubling oneself, or rather, the ‘self,’ is at the root of caring.”<sup>695</sup> Caring and *response-ability* provide ethical touchstones for Barad as she goes on to note that in the touching of *intra-action* the “sense of exposure to the other is crucial and so is the binding obligation that is our vulnerability, our openness.”<sup>696</sup> A thought that returns this writing to Foucauldian Cynical *parrhēsia* and its concomitant risk.<sup>697</sup> The risk within *parrhēsia* is born from an imbalance (a distance) between the speaker and the one spoken to (between inferior and superior) wherein the risk to both parties is potentially fatal. The risk-full parrhesic move cuts the interlocutors *together-apart*; they are bound in a mutual vulnerability, which at once exposes their singular vulnerabilities. But

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<sup>694</sup> Zourabichvili, *Deleuze*, 85.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>697</sup> See Chapter 1.III.

without the vulnerability the exchange becomes one of mere rhetoric and not an exercise in seeking or expressing truth(s).

The Cynic more generally inhabits vulnerability as he places himself in a kataskopic position of observation deep in enemy territory; the Cynic excludes himself from society for the good of that society (he becomes a bellwether for humanity) and even if he successfully returns he will then (fearlessly) undergo the risk of telling society (humanity) of its wrongdoing.<sup>698</sup> Todd May identifies Deleuze’s approach as slightly different; here experiment and expression are the source of vulnerability; that is, vulnerability “to the experiment itself.”<sup>699</sup> Reinforcing this sense of vulnerability, May elsewhere suggests that “Deleuze’s ontology is not for the faint of heart [...]. To experiment is to expose those lines of flight that are both of us and not of our identity.”<sup>700</sup> It is a question of how one *might* live and the realisation that the experimental approach is risky-joyous.

Cage wrote of experimental working: it is not an act “to be later judged in terms of success and failure but simply as of an act the outcome of

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<sup>698</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 167

<sup>699</sup> Todd May, interview with Richard Marshall, *3:am Magazine*, “the poststructural anarchist,” accessed 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/the-poststructural-anarchist>. Experimentation is also vital to the problem of *becoming- and becoming-* holds offers risks.

<sup>700</sup> Todd May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 171-2.

which is unknown.<sup>701</sup> Both success and failure require an external metric against which they are to be measured; success implies closing in on, nearing, following after, pursuing (?), an end or aim. There is an obvious teleology at play in success, an expected pattern of approach. Failure is more deceitful as it hides a (later) breaking apart; a loosening that might not be out of place in discussing the fragmentation of analysis. But success and failure are alien to research when the seeking that is implied is carried out by a wandering hither and thither. Within successful research it is possible to note paradox at play as it must be acknowledged that the success of the research is in its wandering rather than in its end. The wandering of experimental research, without the security of an end, can induce a sense of vulnerability.

And yet, doctoral research *is* measured against a metric of descriptors and it will be understood to succeed or fail when held against that metric. But is doctoral research to be judged for its wandering, its reaching a goal, a position, or both? Doctoral study requires that a thesis (position) be defended. If that position is a wandering then can success be judged?<sup>702</sup>

*Parrhēsia* is enacted as research and examiners are bound in a mutually

vulnerating stand-off.<sup>703</sup> Vulnerability may seem like a game of the open expanses where every move is monitored (remotely) and the slightest weakness is exposed and exploited but there is also a disruption of something more ... internal.<sup>704</sup> There is a need to extend the exposition of exposure from expression and experimentation to exertion. The exertions of thinking, writing, walking and running are vital to this research but how do they perform? All offer the exposure of vulnerability as they draw something out from within (*ex-*). But exertion is also a binding (*serere*), a joining carried out from within; it is a mode of entangling that replaces (or at least augments) self-reflection with self-connection (and self-touching?). A comfort zone is herniated as within is becoming *withof*. *Of* does not know whether it is coming or going (a suitable ally for *research* and *discourse*) as the motility of *of's* etymological evolution shifts it from a preposition of distancing to one of belonging (but not of identity).

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<sup>701</sup> John Cage, *Silence*, 13.

<sup>702</sup> There is a tactical force at play here where the strength is in not holding a position. And here in this non-position Theseus's Ship can be hauled ashore and its planks continuously renewed—a harmonious undertaking.

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<sup>703</sup> The category of *examiners* may also extend to the supervisory team but the trace of this encounter will most likely be expunged through the draft-writing process.

<sup>704</sup> However, this internal/external structure is not oppositional or exclusive, it is not a "frontier" of separation, instead it is a face of articulation. Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 125.

## *XI | fall*

If you fall, remember no one will see  
You tumbling lonely down. Only  
I through this bad focus will see.  
Why do you imagine Gravity lonely?<sup>705</sup>

## *XII | à last uttering*

He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line.<sup>706</sup>

This writing is uneven in its form, faulted in its trajectory; it moves through phases of quasi-aphoristic brevity, falteringly rigid prose and poetry of great economy. A terrain of folds and re-entrants that are as likely to disorient the writer as the reader. This is no affectation but instead forms a mapping of the many and varied events of the writing's duration; events which leave marks through this writing body. The duration of the research does not produce a steady-angled line of development, instead movement is akin to "punctuated equilibria," where

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<sup>705</sup> W.S. Graham, "The Don Brown Route," in *New Collected Poems*, ed. Matthew Francis (London: Faber & Faber, 2003), 174-76.

<sup>706</sup> William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt XVII*, ed. P.P. Howe (London: J.M. Dent, 1933), 113. Hazlitt comments here on the walking style of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

ideas develop spasmodically through the various *intra-rupted* exertions of the research process.<sup>707</sup> A sporadic stop-start, staccato, stuttering, and stammering intra-stitally.

The stuttering of the exertion of writing, choked, gasped, ... grabbing at words, the pauses, the breath, the breath becoming voluble and meaningful; part of the language ... part of the voice. The stuttering is beyond language, beyond a Lacanian lack erroneously hollowed out between the human-animal and language's logic. This stutter is 'more than' lingual. Stuttering is verbal.

William Hazlitt observed "a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer and disarms the judgement."<sup>708</sup> However, Hazlitt further noted that this "chaunt" was not evenly disposed between the "manner" of the two poets: "Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal."<sup>709</sup> Hazlitt traces the genesis of Coleridge's

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<sup>707</sup> Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould, "Punctuated Equilibria: An alternative to phyletic gradualism," *Models in Paleobiology*, ed. Schopf and TJM Freeman (San Francisco: Cooper & Co, 1972), 82-115.

<sup>708</sup> Hazlitt, *Complete Works XVII*, 118.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid. Elsewhere, Coleridge's character is described as "sporadic, fragmentary, pervious;" further indication of a Romantic not versifying in splendid isolation. Stephen Bygrave, *Coleridge and the Self: Romantic Egotism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 42. It has been suggested that Coleridge constantly compared himself to Wordsworth and this (one-sided) competition fuelled an anxiety within Coleridge; an anxiety that may have contributed to Coleridge's desire to increasingly extend himself physically (for instance in his epic day on Scafell Pike). Donna Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting,*

“dramatic” poetical character to his preference for composing “while walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the struggling branches of a copse-wood,” whilst Wordsworth’s “equable” and “lyrical” form was preferably constructed “walking [uninterrupted] up and down a straight gravel-walk.”<sup>710</sup>

The variable terrain of upland mid-Wales lends much to the stutter and stumble of this writing and the terrain finds a kinship in a broken, disjointed, staccato running style—morphologies that bleed into the writing as varied voices, clipped sentences, interrupted lines of thought, and other syntactical unconformities. Logic becomes disrupted but this disrupted logic paradoxically provides a new form of logic.<sup>711</sup> It is rational but without the logic of the cogito; a rationality oozing and tumbling from the tussocky bogs around Carneddau and Hyddgen and beaten out by an uneven but effective gait.

The thesis is declared through the writing but not the words. Claims are made through the tissue of the writing rather than in the words of the writing: to paraphrase Deleuze, the *writing is doing*.<sup>712</sup> Here the stammering has moved beyond speech and infects language (and

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*Walking and Ecology in English Literature, 1671–1831* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 220-22.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid, 118-9.

<sup>711</sup> Note “the dialectic pull of the stutter, its paradox of suspension and falter.” Craig Dworkin, “The Stutter of Form,” in *The Sound of Poetry*, ed. Perloff and Dworkin, 181.

<sup>712</sup> “*saying is doing*.” Gilles Deleuze, “He Stuttered,” 107.

thought) affectively and intensively; the writing does not say, it does.<sup>713</sup>

Nobody (no body) is in control; instead the stammer reveals a collaboration across multiple agencies (“where agency is an enactment, not something someone has, or something instantiated in the form of an individual agent.”).<sup>714</sup> Fractal but seemingly fractured the cuts disrupt any possibility of a seamless flow. Progress splutters and stumbles; the surface appears to hesitate and stutter ...

climbing out of the t-smell odour in the woods  
peppery woodland ing and scratching shins  
undergrowth wett of summer  
a heavy greening gh the heavy green summer’s heavy greening of  
tunneling throu  
summer ace (early on)  
re(s)training pphills  
walking the u polytunnels  
red sand and/v at the tarmac’s edge  
golden strav/ires of willowherb, climbing  
magenta spers punctuating the view  
rain show f harebells  
patches oof blue

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<sup>713</sup> Ibid.

<sup>714</sup> Barad, “Intra-actions,” 77.

pockets pening and repeating  
Hill's o Hill, Hill  
Hill, ound  
all ar dropping  
and own<sup>715</sup>

### **XIII | *weaving and binding a terrain (with words)***

HAMM: [Angrily.] To hell with the universe! [Pause.] Think of something.

CLOV: What?

HAMM: An idea, have an idea. [Angrily.] A bright idea!<sup>716</sup>

A brilliance blinds; binds. This tongue (*cette langue*). This word-play, this play of words, alters the currency of language; undermines it and celebrates its elasticity. Language's words are an elastic medium through which vibrations of thought are propagated. The writing, this writing, these speaking words: the online sketchbook, the presentations and all the other excrescences propagate to buckle, fold and *re-turn*.<sup>717</sup> A terrain is in the making; words as *becoming-terrain* (both 'author' and 'reader' as

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<sup>715</sup> An alternative version of these words can be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/stuart-mugridge/malverns-run-hill-reps>

<sup>716</sup> Beckett, *Dramatic Works*, 114.

<sup>717</sup> The online sketchbook can be found at: <https://romancingthebritishlandscape.wordpress.com> For an explanation of *re-turning* see Chapter -1. III.i.

*becoming-n*).<sup>718</sup> This not-quite-terrain, this surface of words, has neither depth nor breadth; instead it is "extensive and intensive" (drawing a map of itself).<sup>719</sup> But beware! The convolutions are likely to entangle and trip the unwary (be they multiple author or active reader) as the increasing exertions also increase uncertainty in this slow(ing) motion race with Zeno to the deadline finish line. The hachures of the self-mapping not-quite-terrain provide a grating through which passes (parses? diffracts!) the questioning of this research: the triangulating grouping of author, text, and reader temporarily provides a grid from which to identify (but not interpret) trajectories. The grid does not overlay the terrain but runs through it and will alter with each new combination of author, text, and reader.

The writing is performing, the writing is a performing, an exerting. Performing speaks of *poiësis* as it makes and brings about. Predominantly it is writing that performs the position of the thesis; the words run the terrain. But also, the thinking, running, speaking, breathing ... the Mein Herr fault of a full-scale map. It would once have been a performing of the situation (the context of the doctoral research) and position (*thesis*) but now the terminology has shifted towards an "ethico-onto-

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<sup>718</sup> And in this terrain, this depthless terrain, footnotes become a subterranean world for mining and undermining. Much can be made of the leaf litter.

<sup>719</sup> Deleuze, "What Children Say," *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 66. Note however, that the in-text directions to "see above" or "see below" offer a depth without depth; they are of the writing (n.) that the writing (v.) has inevitably been cornered into.

epistemology” that speaks of phenomena.<sup>720</sup> Phenomena rich with the feedback of enacting and cutting (*together-apart*). The elasticity of language, of doctoral research, of landscape; all permit the enacting of tactical cuts, which speak of their differences and differences being made. This research is (is *becoming-*) part of “the world’s ongoing reconfiguring”—“part of the world-body space in its dynamic structuration.”<sup>721</sup>

A methodology of art-making (*poiēsis*) *slightly* flees the freezing of space, so requiring a change of instrument, a change of register, into which voice enters (not the voice of politics and culture but of wind, birdsong and mud).<sup>722</sup> This *practice-led* research is placed in the field of academia but enfolds to an exteriority that outwardly makes it ‘out of place’; further made evident by, i) a failure to occlude the writing and, ii) its tactical ‘anti’-method of productive inefficiency.<sup>723</sup> Vulnerability is announced and intensified by these actions.

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<sup>720</sup> Barad declares, “ethics, ontology, [and] epistemology [are] not separable.” Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 90.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid, 341.

<sup>722</sup> *Slight*, the poor thing, somehow comes crawling from smooth origins and becomes nasty, bad and wrong on its way to its small, feeble general usage today. This older form of *slight* fits well in the tacticians toolkit. *Slight* is finely nuanced, imperfectly balanced in its *within* phenomena enacting, this (more-than-Janus-like) *slight* looks and feels in multiple ways. *Slight*’s smoothness and slenderness allows it to operate ‘below the radar’ and in close proximity as it deflects unwelcome glances.

<sup>723</sup> Place lingers on to emphasise that the shift from static representation does not infer a blinkered focus on movement.

Exerting and performing carry a vulnerability that is also found in the game of *parrhēsia*. The vulnerability is to loss: loss of face, loss of bond, loss of life. Foucauldian *parrhēsia* is premised on inter-human relating, “challenging the bond between [...] the person who speaks the truth and the person to whom this truth is addressed.”<sup>724</sup> This challenge frequently reveals (and relies on) the dynamic of societal hierarchy, as ‘inferior’ takes the initial risk of speaking the truth to their ‘superior’. The process seemingly emphasises and reinforces the hierarchy, in fact it constitutes it; subjects become constituted by the move, the game. Or, rather, subjects are *becoming-* constituted as the dynamic of the relationship (of the relating) is one of continual emergence. Truths emerge and take shape to fuel the further seeking of truth creating relations without relata.<sup>725</sup>

The traditional image of a human moving (running or walking) through a landscape can be shifted by a *parrhēsia* of *becoming-*. The traditional image of a writer marshalling words onto a page can be shifted by a *parrhēsia* of *becoming-*. The infinite finitude of landscape and language take on the ‘superior’ role in the parrhesic game but are also part of the parrhesic phenomena from which runner or writer is cut (*together-apart*). But twist further, *re-turn*, to propose a parrhesic seeking of truth between

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<sup>724</sup> Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 11.

<sup>725</sup> Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 334.

a *becoming-writing* and language as a fluid, mutable 'system' or between a *becoming-landscape* and a landscape that scapes and is not a fixed visual spectacle or a kind of environmental container. The 'reply' (*re-turn?*) of language or landscape informs the intensity and extensity of the *becoming-* and the subsequent levels of exertion. The writing tongue of language merges with the scaping landscape to offer a new *langscape* of *becoming-language* and *becoming-landscape*. Just for a moment it sticks, it makes (a) sense.

## CHAPTER 4 | SHUT UP

Shut up. Shut up. There's nobody here.  
If you think you hear somebody knocking  
On the other side of the words, pay  
No attention.<sup>726</sup>

### *I | on a fragile vessel*

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter.<sup>727</sup>

The fragile vessel which I once held so proudly has fallen from my hands and shattered on the rough, stony ground. The many separate pieces no longer make any sense together; the cohesion has gone and I am left facing the labelled fragments of skin, air, breath, sound, landscape and so on, and wondering what I once had. Not believing, in fact, that I ever held anything. Surely I was only ever sifting fragments, shards and grains through my fingers—occasionally being scratched, at other times enjoying the feel or surprising heft of the particles.

Maybe I should never have looked away from the vessel and I have broken its spell but other things have come between us, stolen attention and distracted any hope of attunement. Time has now entered this heady mix and added to the detachment. I try to re-enter the fray but ... the

starlings are now calling discordantly from the surrounding trees. I think they are nesting in the leylandii. I wonder how I can re-connect to the vessel. I take a closer look at the fragments and the one implying 'a skin' blooms fractally out in many directions. It is a suffocating breadth of a thing and excites and dispirits in equal measure ... how can ... I ...?

The cold-face of the screen is not seeming like the right place to work. Here the words sit detachedly, not hovering but held rigid in a nest of forms and tables. I walk away and words leap at me unexpectedly. Unexpected words leap at me. Where did this 'vessel' come from? A strange word, vessel: a fragile, decorative container that sails the high seas; a fragile, decorative container that once housed the soul. Did my vessel ever hold (a) soul? Surely this vessel, my vessel, contains what it is made up of and not some separate entity. More vessels (blood-vessels?) seem to communicate 'between' the parts to form the assemblage. Interstitial vessels, fractal and paradoxical.

I begin to feel my way back into the structures. With/in the structures is a *meta hodos*.<sup>728</sup> The fragments heap up and press in and spelaeologically I am pressed to proceed between and amongst them, but also communicating with them.<sup>729</sup> Communicating *with* them. There is usage

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<sup>726</sup> W.S. Graham, "The Beast in Space," in *Collected Poems*, 157.

<sup>727</sup> John Keats, "Ode On A Grecian Urn," *Poems*, ed. Gerald Bullett (London: Dent, 1982), 191.

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<sup>728</sup> *Method*, from the Greek *meta* (pursuit) + *hodos* (a way).

<sup>729</sup> Down here there is a reminder of Nietzsche's "subterranean man" and his tunnelling, mining and undermining. A process to topple would not be an unfortunate model to follow. The element of surprise could be useful. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 1.

in the with/in. But, oh the irony that I started out inspired by the open air of the #BritishLandscape and here (now) I find myself in (not even under) its skin. The air, however, is one of those fragments—it has weight, gravity—and I realise that this skin cannot be sectioned and analysed by the logic of the cogito.

We commenced in parallel to the skin, avoiding direct contact and daunted by its expanse. It was the skin as barrier. Diving into the skin we realise that it is much more rich and complex and is not simply a barrier. It is, instead, a Heideggerian boundary; one that does not “block off” but rather highlights or “brings to its radiance what is present.”<sup>730</sup> It also forms a vessel as it holds (together) through itself. A vessel that self-herniates to hold itself, and holds itself in contact with. It *with-holds*?

To address the skin sectionally is only to approach it in parallel once more. The sectioning has though made us aware of the riches. Maybe we must re-section the section and cut that tactile corpuscle transversally rather than longitudinally. We should perhaps take our body into the workshop of Lyotard as we commence our journey through it.<sup>731</sup> Fleshy skin, geological skin; we present ourselves squarely to both and we can manoeuvre into them through this sectioning process, maybe eventually

describing a small enough turn that we fold back on ourselves. Selves. Self.

Self as skin? A pellicular I. How should we gain a proper grasp of this when often it seems invisible, and when not invisible it is surely impossible and illogical. Yet the ego persists with its presence. The ego prevents dissolution of a body into the flows. Traditionally the self resided in the castle of the skull, protected by bone and looking out through the eyes (I, I, I, I ...). The look was dominant and piercing, a look of observation and surveillance. No room even for reception and influence coming back the other way. The option of a pellicular I perhaps presents a flimsy film of nothing which pulses in and out from the flesh-skin and like the flesh-skin is sensitive and vulnerable. This is though a skin of *with* rather than *on* or *in*. With this skin relationships are percussed, not percussed in a rhythmic beat but in a medical way to sound out (to the percussion we add auscultation) the boundaries and constituency of a world. The percussing action itself does not occur in isolation but is propagated by or from itself—this pellicular I allows the percussing to take place and, in turn, the percussing *brings forth* that skin. The propagated waves form a hyperbolic paraboloid of potentiality.

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<sup>730</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Basic Writings*, 137.

<sup>731</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1-3.

## II | *practicing theory* (terms and conditions apply)

Science and poetry are equal forms of knowledge.<sup>732</sup>

Prior to the 1600s, and the settling of the term, *theory* (from the Greek *theoria*) signalled the activity of looking at or seeing (*horan*) a view (*thea*). A spectator becomes implied in theory and this implication imposes a distance, a separation, inherent to theorising: detached and at-a-remove, it runs counter to the hands-on performing and doing of practice. The spectators of theory (the theatre-goers) are being questioned on how they became detached from what they view (from the stage and its activity). Furthermore, the viewpoint of the theorist becomes doubly distanced through the inherent representation of the theatre, for the play on the stage is merely a representation of an exterior world.<sup>733</sup> And practice in its representational form becomes the players on the stage. This stark, non-communicative oppositionality between practice and theory is problematic (but so too is dissolution of this differentiation).

In undertaking this *practice-led* PhD in Fine Art where writing is the practice, the language of this practice encroaches on the territory of the

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<sup>732</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 18. Furthermore, Landow, in speaking of analogic and associative machines, notes, “[Vannevar] Bush, we perceive, assumed that science and poetry work in essentially the same way.” Landow, *Hypertext*, 13.

<sup>733</sup> Lyotard utilises the etymological kinship of *theory* and *theatre* to critique the forms of knowledge which produce a closed inside and an outside that “will have to be conquered.” Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 1-16.

theory.<sup>734</sup> Writing, which once belonged to theory alone, has now become an accepted mode of production within Fine Art. Writing in this form, in this field, skews the simple binary described above, as it becomes at once practice *and* theory.<sup>735</sup> The move kicks up a dust that hides other details. Ostensibly, theory and practice are taking place at one and the same time. In combining the practical and theoretical elements of the thesis into one document it is possible to employ tricks of topo-/typography or layout (for example, chapters could alternate between what is recognizably written theory and what is writing as practice, or the use of italics or other typographic trickery could be employed to point out different voices) to identify the two registers. But as Love has stressed, this can get too close to treating the reader as overly passive and unable to make judgments as to what the writing is doing.<sup>736</sup> Love hopes that her unwillingness to separate out theoretical and practical voices in her

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<sup>734</sup> Katy Macleod observes that the question of what writing is “will always be posed in the context of art,” it is an outsider form but not one that should be used to “[underpin] the mute weight of the edifice of practice.” Katy Macleod, “What is writing?” last accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, <http://www.katymacleod.org.uk/whatiswriting.html> Elsewhere, Macleod has identified three functions of writing in higher degree practice research, namely: “type A which is defined as positioning a practice; type B defined as theorising a practice and type C which has been given the in-progress definition of revealing a practice,” which echoes the categories outlined at Goldsmiths above. Katy MacLeod, “The functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions,” *Working Papers in Art and Design 1*, 2000.

<sup>735</sup> It is also worthy of note, the practice of ‘creative writing’ at doctoral level also (traditionally) requires an accompanying written commentary. Even the practice of writing needs the support of theory’s writing.

<sup>736</sup> Kate Love, “An Exploration of Affect as a Methodology,” 17-18.

research through typographic or organisational trickery gives “the reader the agency to ‘live through the living through of language’ that is experience,” and by enjoying the flow of the text the reader will become ‘caught up’ in the practice of the reading of the writing.<sup>737</sup> Love also observes (more than observes ... writes into relevance) that traditionally, the ‘theory writing’ is most readily received by academia whilst the writing as practice is performative and absolutely requires the other and the difference must be explicitly stated.<sup>738</sup> Love states early on that writing is her Fine Art practice ((at the time of her writing) an uncommon approach), however, she rejects the term *art writing* for its “work in maintaining the rigid dualism [between art and writing] that it might actually wish to deconstruct” (preferring ‘writing as a practice’ or ‘writing as an artist’).<sup>739</sup>

The contemporaneous performing of theory and practice could simply be solved through a realisation that they are outwardly alike (words on a page or screen) but are semantically, grammatically, syntactically (and so forth) very different and so their work, it is realised, is being performed

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<sup>737</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid, 16-17. “[The] possibility of *writing as an artist* [provides] the possibility of making a kind of writing which functions like an art of deliberately indeterminate meaning.” 16. Diffracting through a Baradian grating it is noted that the term *art writing* cuts *together apart*, a subtle distinction (from cut *together-apart*) where the loss of the hyphen polarises difference and allows words to drift apart rather than permitting a focus on their difference.

synchronously. Both forms of writing retain their identities and so are able to be pointed at and labelled ‘theory’ or ‘practice’; a stark discernibility remains in place. This stark division maintains a problematic dualism like the term *art writing* does according to Love. Instead theory and practice are collaborating within a poietic dynamic of potential and unknowability. The only sure knowledge is that something (no matter how insignificant) will arise from the relating and offer an original contribution. *Poiēsis* alters the currency of practice and theory. Theory and practice are angles of subtension that offer different intensities to/from a trajectory of a life. The trajectory is both the former of the theory and practice *and* formed by them. The trajectory is *poiēsis*. With the aid of *poiēsis*, the differing registers of theory and practice are brought into contact and a trace or echo reports their disjuncture; a trace or echo recorded as marks or scars through the tissue that is the writing.<sup>740</sup> This writing.

In the Ancient Greek world, the now binaric modes of theory (*theoria*) and practice (*praxis*) were accompanied by the ‘making’ of *poiēsis*: these three modes aligned with theoretical, practical, and productive knowledge. *Theoria* is the universal knowledge; *praxis* or practice is skill applied; whilst *poiēsis* is an action of transformative making, a ‘bringing-

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<sup>740</sup> It must be noted that although *poiēsis* and poetry share an etymological kinship the presence of poetry does not always bear/bare the mark of *poiēsis*. White, “Elements of Geopoetics,” 171-2.

forth,' a 'revealing;' or what herman de vries describes as a "perpetual becoming."<sup>741</sup> The simplicity of defining *poiēsis* as 'making', slowly evolved to become specifically artistic production (the creative act) and, later, particularly the literary making of writing (thus poetry). The poet of today and their poetry retain a hint of *poiēsis*, but 'poetic' has been wrought asunder and is now a simple indication of the presence of the mechanisms of poetry in a lay sense. For example, Kenneth White seeks, in his attempt to construct a geopoetics, an "activity which has poietic characteristics, but which has little in common with what is habitually known as 'poetry'."<sup>742</sup> This is not to say however that all poetic production is devoid of *poiēsis* but it is worth being aware of this dilution of the term. *Poiēsis* tears at language rather than works with it. Can this be stated more strongly? *Poiēsis* uses the foundation of humanity to question this world. *Poiēsis* uses language as a stalking horse to invade itself; a tragic act.<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>741</sup> In *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger names *poiēsis* as "bringing-forth," "the arising of something from out of itself;" and this "bringing-forth" can arise from handicraft, art, poetry, and (in its "highest sense") *physis* (nature). The *poiēsis* of Fine Art is identified by Heidegger as *technē*. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings*, 217-29. Furthermore, Mel Gooding has suggested that de vries' "theory is not separable from his practice, nor his art from his life." Mel Gooding, *de vries: chance and change*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 24.

<sup>742</sup> White, "Elements of Geopoetics," 172.

<sup>743</sup> [sotto voce] And this writing, this research, constructs such a tragedy through a repetitious flexion that causes moments of intensity, placidity, and/or vulnerability.

I say this silence or, better, construct this space  
 So that somehow something may move across  
 The caught habits of language to you and me.<sup>744</sup>

For Macleod, theory is open to 're-envisioning' and "new identifications [...] as they arise in and through art."<sup>745</sup> Macleod proposes "the entity of art/writing [...] to mobilise ideas about art, theory and the practice of writing."<sup>746</sup> As part of this mobilisation Macleod explores the suitability of 'art/writing' to a *practice-led* doctoral researcher, art theorist, and an 'experimental' doctoral researcher.<sup>747</sup> Across the three Macleod observes a common trope wherein "description is played off against scholarly writing."<sup>748</sup> Macleod suggests that her 'entity' of 'art/writing' can capture the emergent theories of art practice and provides "an analytic description of its own purposes, which propose new understandings of art."<sup>749</sup> However, in the terrain of this research, the virgulate slash that persists

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<sup>744</sup> W.S. Graham, "The Constructed Space," *Collected Poems*, 162.

<sup>745</sup> Katy Macleod, "A Singular Encounter with Art Theorisation: A Speculation Concerning Art/Writing in the Context of Doctoral Research," in *Reflections on Creativity: Exploring the Role of Theory in Creative Practices* (Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College, 2007), 3 of 17.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid*, 1 of 17.

<sup>747</sup> The three bodies of doctoral research are: Elizabeth Price, *sidekick* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2000); Mieke Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider the Architecture of Art-Writing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); and Deborah Robinson, *The Materiality of Text and Body in Painting and Darkroom Processes: An Investigation Through Practice* (Plymouth: University of Plymouth, 2003).

<sup>748</sup> Macleod, "A Singular Encounter," 14 of 17.

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid*, 16 of 17.

here between ‘art’ and ‘writing’ seemingly reinforces the tendency to keep the two concepts apart.<sup>750</sup> Or perhaps the slash is equivalent to a Baradian cut as it “cut[s] together-apart (one move).”<sup>751</sup> This ‘agential cut’ differentiates *and* entangles at one and the same time. For Barad this cutting is an action rich with ethical obligation, responsibility and accountability.<sup>752</sup> The cut comes from enacting itself. Here, in this submission the writing (both n. and v.) is found to enact the cuts that differentiate and entangle practice and theory, wherein practice performs theory and theory is heard to practice itself (and other selves). But writing (v.) also enacts cuts that differentiate and entangle an ‘T’ and a form of the writing (n.).

### III | *playing fast and loose*

The watchwords ‘analysis’ and ‘rigour’ are rightly ever-present in good (doctoral) research: ‘analysis’ signals a detailed and methodical examination of material while ‘rigour’ encourages that this analysis be carried out thoroughly and demandingly. Explained in this way they seem a perfect coupling of terms to ensure solid research outcomes.

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<sup>750</sup> Furthermore, and problematically for this research, Macleod’s insistence on ‘art/writing’ as an ‘entity’ ties it to the notion to ‘being’ rather than *becoming*-.

<sup>751</sup> Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction,” 168.

<sup>752</sup> Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 826-7.

However, the origins of the two terms hold a disparity that creates a dynamism useful to this research. Rigour’s etymology is straitjacketed by conditions of numbness, stiffness and hardness.<sup>753</sup> Analysis, by contrast, reveals its origin in actions of breaking apart and loosening. And so in ‘rigorous analysis’ is encountered a phrase that etymologically pulls itself apart.

For the Ancient Greeks, the *analysein* of ‘analysis’ signalled the loosening of a ship from its mooring; what a thought that ‘analysis’ echoes to the freeing of a vessel (a fragile vessel?). Care is required though for it would be wrong to use ‘rigour’ as a fixed spatial anchor from which analysis can play out its line, instead the push and pull of the pairing offers a tactical repurposing of rigour and provides an energy, a dynamism, that drives this research through its creative enquiry. Related to this *analysein* is the play of the words as they play out their lines. The play of words is both intentional and ‘wild’; word-play has been embraced but equally words continue to play out the line of their meaning, offering a slack to the intension/intention/tension.

Robert MacFarlane is a critic of rigour and underlines the word’s proximity to *rigor mortis*.<sup>754</sup> Instead of rigour MacFarlane’s writings have

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<sup>753</sup> ‘Rigour’ comes from the Latin *rigorem* meaning numbness, hardness and stiffness as is perhaps best evidenced in the term *rigor mortis*.

<sup>754</sup> See for example MacFarlane, *Landmarks*, 101.

been identified as a celebration of precision and, equally, the writings he acclaims he does so for their apparent writerly precision.<sup>755</sup> In his criticism of MacFarlane's *Landmarks* Daniel Fraser extends his concern about the writer's precision beyond the stylistic to something more fundamentally present in much new British nature writing—for Fraser this precision is symptomatic of an “alienated and static gaze” which is fixated on ‘things’ and, in the flowing word forming case of MacFarlane is the jizz of some ‘suspect politics’.<sup>756</sup> Bundled with MacFarlane's precision Fraser sees a worrying nostalgia and a suspicious attempt to turn towards nature via preservation; to seamlessly merge language and landscape or assume a ‘direct correlation’ between them.<sup>757</sup> Here in this research language and landscape are correlated in their disjunction. Fraser concludes his criticism with the suggestion that the space between language and landscape is a lacuna or ‘constant lack’; this is the disjunction of this research and is “why we have something to say” as Wylie puts it.<sup>758</sup> The lack is the impossibility of eternal, idealised, harmony. And even in the crevice of this disjuncture nature can be found.

<sup>755</sup> Daniel Fraser, “Wordcaves Not Word-hoards: On Robert MacFarlane's *Landmarks*,” *berfrois*, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018, <http://www.berfrois.com/2015/11/daniel-fraser-on-robert-macfarlanes-landmarks>.

<sup>756</sup> *Ibid.* The jizz of a bird has been defined as “the indefinable quality of a particular species, the ‘vibe’ it gives off.” Sean Dooley, *The Big Twitch* (London: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 78.

<sup>757</sup> Fraser, “Wordcaves Not Word-hoards.”

<sup>758</sup> See note 555 on page 138.

#### *IV* | #=#

there seems to be no adherence although there is an adhesion. There you go ... *my* sentence is already tripping me up. Tangling and confounding in the self-destructing act(ing). I sit alone with these words and hope that by discussing lack of stick I will be able to sidle up towards it (secretly, sssshhhh) and ...

... ambush ...

... it ...

... amber shit ...

... the stick beats and binds. The shit bleats and blinds (not dazzlingly). This is the adhesion. Letters shuffle, drop in and out. Surfaces adhering abnormally rather than the ‘normal’ adhesion of scar tissue. An abnormalisation that sticks the leaves together. Abnormal and normal leave together—their binaric coupling is not served here. I sit alone with these words. I slit a one with these words. A one is slit by a sleight. Off hand. Throw away. Through a way. I go at it again and again to find a way through, not from one side to the other but within. Burrowing. Borrowing words to burrow through. The spoil heap builds up (scar tissue i/on the surface) convening through this act surface and surfacing

at once. At twice. At *n*. Let's fall from this point of grey to a new paragraph

a quantum leap brought us here. Us? I was alone just now. Well, the words and I. *My* words. My mined words. I and my mined words are now joined by you (the reader-viewer). Joined by you as in the suturing act. Your eyes provide hyphens, your *is* provide points, my I has no point. No point to fall from. Keep going on this calligram of stepping stones or monkey bars. I reach for words but the words make me (w)retch(ed). Am I regurgitating them? I don't remember them but then again my memory has been dulled to de-/re- flection. Try some old tricks with these new words ...

(another paragraph) there is alone towards the adhesion. Adhesion normal words. Through other scar twice. There is a loan towards the adhesion (a loan that must be repaid or measures will be taken) but through adhesion normal words re-scar (otherwise). Re-scar eh? I've been marked and warned. Have the words also just been on loan? The words and adhesion are a lone. How can that be? Reader! Reader! Viewer? Shine a light this way. I want to alight this way but I'm pulled back (taken aback?). I do not see a way from this next point onwards.

This is becoming a game. A lazy trick to thread one paragraph to the next. The threads will not hold you know. Is that 'you' you or I? This I

sees that but hears the tricks of the words (tricolage). We've been woven into these surface words. Too passive. At once victim and executor.

Terms to be carried out against our wills. We weave this surface from our own grounds (no, I meant to say words). A Wittgensteinian slip. Quick, to the fortress doors! Prepare for an assault!

[a figure exits stage left holding a duckrabbit] Phew! I don't think he saw us. Don't do that again! They know you know. They know you know.

They don't know that I don't know. These words we weave are a minefield, be careful where you tread my friend(s). Do you see where it said "burrowing" up above (earlier-on-but-still-there-now)? That could easily have induced the Frenchman. No, not that one, the other one, no, the other other one. Maybe both, all three or more. Our field that is a minefield must be mined. Burrowing ("Qui est à l'appareil?") and authoring both. I/we have created this minefield and now we must live within it.

There will be times when I am too scared to move. Maybe then I can just enjoy the view (endure the *vous*). Wait for the weather to turn. I would like that luxury of time very much. When did time and money become so ... so ... when did this adhesion between time and money take place? No matter we must attend to these words. A magpie looks me in the eye. I have no words for it. Eye have now words *forêt*. What is going on hear? It is as though the paragraphs are being pulled through themselves, by

themselves. Words have become infected with some virus. The eyes have been pecked out [say it]. Our home built of words is as blind as a mole (“though moles see ...”). Can we live with the constant threat of this explosive act?

Take precautions. Act fast. Get down fast. When you see the flash there is no time to run ... Stay down for at least a minute. But what if we are the flashing of the flash? How can we get down faster than ourselves? You are still with me ... that’s a comfort. If you are not still here are these words

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Over 800 words from a lack of adhesion. Formally attack adhesion. I can sense a terminal point but can we put it off a bit longer by other means than a quantum leap? Well done! Oh, and again it worked; a double-blow for life beyond the point (or indeed beside the point) which may give us some wiggle-room ... a little more breath ...

a strange foretelling that the eighty-thousand words will calligramatically form an empty vessel. Not seaworthy. Well, I certainly will not put to sea in it. Is this here vessel worthy of seeing riddled as it is with wholes that never quite amount to very much (certainly not the sum of their parts). A wholesome vessel beyond seaing but maybe perfectly adequate for a little

hearing with three good ‘men’ and true. (Why did I not include any footnotes?).<sup>759</sup>

[-80x magnification]<sup>760</sup>

The hashtag (#) hides in the title of this research; it is a vital relic of an initial proposal that would have taken this research much deeper into the realms of new technologies (Artificial Intelligence, gaming, and so forth) and a danger of being dazzled by the treasures therein. Instead, the hashtag was salvaged from these ruins, retaining a certain mystique of the digital and yet speaking of something much broader (or indeed is part of the breadth of ‘digital’ and ‘technology’); much more widely applicable. The characteristics of the hashtag find resonance in Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is Philosophy?* And especially in the chapter entitled “Geophilosophy.”<sup>761</sup> In this chapter the authors explore ways in which terrains (or planes of immanence, fractals, envelopes, etcetera) become established. A curious form of identity where seemingly disconnected elements are considered within an embrace. Consider the pattern of water spilled from a cup. The main pool is rich with fractal complexity, it “evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil.”<sup>762</sup> And beyond this reservoir there

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<sup>759</sup> This text is written in pyrrhic pent amateur.

<sup>760</sup> A version of this text appears in *Uniformagazine* 8 (Winter 2016-2017): 8-10.

<sup>761</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 85-113.

<sup>762</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 8.

are droplets separate from the ‘main’ body of water yet these droplets retain a connection but a non-geometric one; the connection is rhizomatic and the hashtag embraces this force.<sup>763</sup> This is how the hashtag operates, it claims ownership and identity but constantly exchanges ‘content’ through its admixing and *intra-actions* to make a multiversal (not unified) whole. Like the sound envelope in which sound defines its own limits, the ‘contents’ of the hashtag are not permanently fixed but shift and blur with friction and movement; their cohesion is enacted by the #.<sup>764</sup>

The hashtag does not observe vertical hierarchies as its connections are made laterally and at varying speeds. The hashtag is the fractal descendent of the Venn diagram. In the latter the fields are limited by

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<sup>763</sup> This model finds further resonance in the uplands of mid-Wales (and many other rural parts of Britain for that matter). Up in what were once deemed waste lands the allotment of land parishes can appear quite haphazard so that portions of a parish are entirely detached from the main body. These outliers can sometimes take on their own character but will remain part of the mother parish or in future streamlining will be aligned with a more simplistic geography. These outliers may have formed historically around an individual farmstead and its lands and date back to the times of the great religious houses and beyond. This is certainly seeming to be the case around Carneddau where the nearby Bryn yr Ysbyty (‘hill of the hospital’) harks back to the land ownership of the Knight’s Hospitallers, and to a time when land ownership was not quite so precise as it is today. These outliers formed from the interweave of ownership entitlements and today’s parish boundaries often still record these movements in their erratic lines. This structure also has an analogue at county level where exclaves (or detached parts) sit in isolation amidst another county, on the whole, since the 1844 *Counties (Detached parts) Act*, these inconsistencies have been homogenised.

<sup>764</sup> The instant that it appears it decays and “fades away into its permanence.” Nancy, *Listening*, 2.

their bounding ellipses; only permitting a very controlled form of merging by way of (bounded) overlap. But this marking is not a naming as this would fix the form in a move of stasis. Instead, the hashtag betrays the presence of *poiēsis* implicit in itself. The hashtag is never graspable although its ‘contents’ may be; it is like The Ship of Theseus—even when all the parts have been replaced it continues to hold together(-*apart?*).

The twinned horizontal dashes of the equals-sign signs equality; the sign levels and makes uniform ... it offers answers. It is all too easy to believe and leave unquestioned; but what is the sign actually doing? If there is a sameness present, is not one half of the equation enough; if “A=A” then why not just replace the whole equation with “A” for *A is A*?<sup>765</sup> Instead attention must be paid to the twin lines of the sign; they perform the logic of cohesion. Although visually to a double value, they operate as Barad’s hyphen, binding and pushing apart all at once. Constituting and identifying through difference(s) that create affects. The ‘equation’ is the apparatus, the assemblage, from which differences are made and from which a poietic or artistic truth can *make* sense. Language=landscape.

The hashtag is a shape-shifter. Stick with it.

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<sup>765</sup> Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 23–41.

## V | <b1>writing</b1><sup>766</sup>

And about here it has been suggested that the writing should return (re-turn?) its attention to the aims or ‘intensions’ of this research as stated at the start of Chapter -1.<sup>767</sup> Each aim and component thereof must be addressed and the existence of each element of the research title must be fully reasoned. The title has become something of a *pēra* for this research, it can be opened up to contain the whole world of its bearer; a quality also present to some extent in the structure of the Ordnance Survey map and further echoed in the structure and form of this thesis.<sup>768</sup>

This research, this writing has (been) written (by) a *langscape*. A declaration that apparently contains a duality; is the writing or the *langscape* the operative? Is the declaration a simple case of coexistence, the mutuality of the terms providing an ongoing harmony? No, instead the truth is suspended somewhere (not halfway) between those two alternatives or even, without (in all senses) these two alternatives.

The final draft-writing process has involved responding to print-outs of drafts annotated with the handwritten marginalia of suggested revision.

To comment on this in this (for now) unedited section of text awakens

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<sup>766</sup> The title of this subsection echoes that of Chapter 2.XI. However, the ‘h1’ designation of this subsection suggests a greater emphasis or importance here than in the earlier one.

<sup>767</sup> See page 7.

<sup>768</sup> The *pēra* is the Cynic’s travelling bag. See glossary.

awareness of a continuing fractal expansion of the writing. How long might this trade in suggestions continue? With each re-framing of *art writing* the writing here also (in)flexes. Concurrent with the final drafting process of this writing, Emma Bolland published a short text on the subject of *art writing*. Artist/writer Bolland initially enjoys the possibilities that *art writing* offers (to the artist) through a casting off of ‘certain responsibilities’.<sup>769</sup> However, Bolland is concerned that “the idea of art writing is being slowly shrunk to mean *only* a creative criticism, erasing its aspects as writing *as art*.”<sup>770</sup> Putting a spatial spin on the matter, Bolland worries that the writing of art writing is being quietly marshalled ‘alongside’ or simply consigned to being ‘about’ art.<sup>771</sup> So, Bolland herself is troubled by the label of *art writing* or calling herself an ‘art writer’ and, in a dream-like state, declares, “*I will simply be an artist and a writer, writing without writing somehow—it is like writing without responsibility.*”<sup>772</sup> This shedding of responsibilities is all well and good when *art writing* is its own end but it is problematic for the responsibility-full practice of ‘theory writing’.

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<sup>769</sup> Emma Bolland, “OR IN THE WAY WE WRITE IN A DREAM. Do you see? – Corridor8,” 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, <http://corridor8.co.uk/article/way-write-dream-see>.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

<sup>771</sup> Ibid.

<sup>772</sup> Ibid.

In a 1994 essay, David Miller examines the notion of the prose poem and “the very ambiguity of its oxymoronic name.”<sup>773</sup> This accusation could also clearly be applied to the term *art writing* as it is seen to rip itself apart when viewed through the language of “clear-cut, stable definitions.”<sup>774</sup> And so, utilising Miller’s framing, could *art writing* be both art *and* writing? But the problematic echo remains that *art writing* seems to emphasise the separation of practice and theory when discussed in the context of doctoral research. Outside of this field *art writing* retains potential albeit with the possibility that it needs rescuing from the hijacking by a singular alignment with a form of art criticism (and the expanding context of art writings). Retaining the spirit of Love and her desire to “complicate the difference” between practice and theory this writing will keep writing but attempt to slip the confines of definite categorisation; after all, this discussion of categories has only been brought about by the writing itself.<sup>775</sup>

Whilst, for this research and its guiding questions, *art writing* has not become fully convincing or productive—there seems to be more *art writing* about *art writing* than there is for any other purpose—Bolland does raise an interesting idea towards the end of her article; one that is

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<sup>773</sup> David Miller, “Interrelation, Symbiosis, Overlap,” in *Interaction & Overlap: From the Little Magazine and Small Press Collection at University College London*, ed. Geoffrey Soar and David Miller (London: workfortheeyetodo, 1994), 1.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid.

<sup>775</sup> Love, “An Exploration of Affect as a Methodology,” 2.

highly relevant to this research. Bolland suggests that *art writing* can be a “means of interruption, a movement across systems that stretches the edges of art, stretches the edges of art’s purpose.”<sup>776</sup> Writing as an art practice (to mis-echo Love’s ‘writing as a practice in the context of fine art,’) does (continue to) interrupt expected forms in practice-led fine art doctoral research. However, for this research, interruption is re-read as *intra-ruption* (as discussed previously in relation to Barad’s *intra-action*) where, rather than the writing happening *between* art and writing, it happens *amongst* art. Even to completely join the two aspects of art and writing in ‘artwriting’ retains divisions but, through acknowledgment of the title of the ‘book-space’ *workfortheeyetodo*, something of the playfulness and required exertion of this writing is foregrounded.<sup>777</sup> To take things a step further/too far, perhaps this research performs ‘awriting’, where ‘writing’ is quite literally amongst ‘art’. Or maybe, to convene Bolland and Love, this writing is ‘writing without responsibility within the context of Fine Art doctoral research’. Rather than writing *to* responsibility this is a writing from which responsibility emerges (or,

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<sup>776</sup> Ibid.

<sup>777</sup> *workfortheeyetodo* was organised by Simon Cutts, Maggie Smith and Erica van Horn in London through the early 1990s. However, in personal conversation, Colin Sackett of *Uniformbooks* has mentioned that he came up with the idea of the shop’s name whilst socializing with Cutts and van Horn. Of further relevance to this research is the observation that the removal of word-spacing mimics the formatting of tags; dualisms become smudged and unclear and hierarchies are undermined.

better, from which ‘response-ability’ emerges).<sup>778</sup> Focussing on the verbal form of *art writing*, the exertion of art, of *poiēsis*, is made apparent through its writing (which could equally be painting (v.), or sculpting, or filming albeit with a higher resolution of difference). As Mark Goodwin would have it, all this writing is poetry anyway.<sup>779</sup> Whether written by an artist, or a poet, or a philosopher, or a Cynic, or a Romantic.

What *has* become clearer through this writing is the importance of exertion. In the poietic tearing (the poietic intra-rupting) of exertion there remains (or, there is created) a trace (an ephemeral trace) of the bodily muscular tearings brought about by (and echoing, and literally, and performed by) the strenuous exertions of (long-distance) walking and running. Exertion reveals (or re-turns) the disjunctions that (in a form of imbalanced reciprocity) give the artist ‘something to say’. The writing is just one of multiple exertions within this research that constantly recombine in unequal measure to enact this writing (n.), but this is not to propose an ‘art exerting’, instead it is a reinforcing of the notion of the creative, or poetic, act of art as a verbal possibility in its own right. In its own write.

<sup>778</sup> According to Barad, ‘response-ability’ is a form of responsibility that makes “it possible for the other to respond.” Barad, “Nature’s Queer Performativity,” 48. Surely, the most productive purpose of doctoral research is to provide a body of writing and thinking upon which responses may be made.

<sup>779</sup> Mark Goodwin, personal conversation, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## VI | “*Folding the last sheep*” or, *no place for a thesis*<sup>780</sup>

“Above/All, shut up. Give him your love.”<sup>781</sup>

To conclude originates in actions of ‘shutting up’ or ‘enclosing’, only later taking on its more common and precise meaning of (finally) settling a discussion, argument or debate.<sup>782</sup> This enclosing act forms an initial move in the defence of the thesis (where ‘thesis’ is a ‘position’) at the *viva voce*.<sup>783</sup> This terminology becomes rather combative and may not be appropriate for most research projects and is certainly not the motivating intention of this research. And so, concluding cannot remain passive with such treacherous material as words; Foucault for one warned of the duplicity (the multiplicity?) of words.<sup>784</sup> A sentiment further echoed by Deleuze when he warns “As long as we stick to things and words we can believe that we are speaking of what we see, that we see what we are speaking of, and that the two are linked.”<sup>785</sup> How to conclude?<sup>786</sup>

<sup>780</sup> Samuel Palmer, *Christmas or Folding the last sheep*, etching, 1850, Victoria & Albert Museum, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O827227/christmas-print-samuel-palmer>

<sup>781</sup> Graham, “The Beast in the Space,” *New Collected Poems*, 157.

<sup>782</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “conclude.”

<sup>783</sup> Commonly a *viva voce* is described as a defending of the thesis (for example see: “Defending your doctoral thesis: the PhD viva - Vitae Website,” Vitae, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018, <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/completing-your-doctorate/your-viva>.) however, in reality it is as much an opportunity to articulate the arguments within the thesis.

<sup>784</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

<sup>785</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 55.

The writing of this research sits uncomfortably as its accomplished terrain. True, words apparently pre-exist the writing, but they are only at-hand as hollow containers (and empty vessels) that await filling by their freshly written context (and yet they attempt to retain an individual authority); at once, offering nothing *and* offering sensible meaning. This research, this writing, this exerting, this running around has run at matters only to be propelled in new directions. This gives the terrain of words a disrupted quality.<sup>787</sup> A linear approach to reading this writing (as inferred by the format of the presented submission) leads to a scramble along a sawtooth ridge of inclines and sharp drops. As a reader this may be rather disconcerting but it has been (and remains) vital to the writing.<sup>788</sup> A further note: the writing (n.) has been written tactically and with the sensitive touch (and attendant ear) of the tactortactician; thus, the direction of the writing has been shaped by sway of the lie of words. Here, the shaping (*scaping*) of the tongue is close to the (under)mining of language.

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<sup>786</sup> The notion of a *becoming-conclusion* could be offered but this would not *be* a conclusion in the most common sense. It could prove entirely appropriate here though. Or, to invoke Deleuze in another way, maybe the conclusion is stuttering. See Chapter 3.XII.

<sup>787</sup> Augmented by the fact that the writing (v.) of this writing does not stand alone from all other quotidian necessities but has suffered and benefitted from them.

<sup>788</sup> The presence of an abstract, hierarchical page and footnote numbering, in-text indications of additional material within the body of writing, and the framing of the whole by Introduction and Conclusion all add grist to the mill of a linear narrative.

As befits the wordly terrain this conclusion proves (provides an) unending. As I cursed the conditions (and my own failings) on Cam Fell that January night I now curse conclusion and introduction (I swear loudly at and in their presence). The finish is (cartographically at least) proximate but it holds little current reality. Conditions are once again disorienting and deceptive. I am haunted by the shades to my sides that smother for my attention. The claustrophobia of the elements is uncanny. Awkwardly, and urgently, a pressure impels me forward as the wind did on Cam Fell; but this urging only forces me into wrong turns and faux pas. Briefly righted. Sgraffito word-steps suggest a way onwards; they lull with the knowledge that others have been this way recently and might be cautiously accepted as some form of guide. The steps are erased and Gates offer nothing but reflected light and a swirling influx of darkness. Slowly. The certainty of the one surface is found to be duplicitous, easing me into a world of reflected topography. I re-turn a place I do not know and try again. The scenarios are deceptively analogous. Analogy is deceptively scenic.

A Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* rails against representation and destroys analogy with his Spinoza-inspired univocity; he speaks of repetition and *becoming-* rather than identity and being.<sup>789</sup> A different

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<sup>789</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 376-8. A Deleuze writing with Guattari also troubles the analogous when they introduce their “plane of immanence or univocality opposed to analogy.” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 280.

Deleuze tempers his anti-analogy fury when he explains the elevating “expressive movements, para-linguistic signs, breaths and screams, and so on” of the relational ‘languages’ of painting and theatre.<sup>790</sup> However, Deleuze here underlines that this analogy has no relationship with the symbolic and is instead “produced ‘sensually,’ through sensation.”<sup>791</sup> This is what Deleuze terms ‘aesthetic Analogy’ and is not premised in *a priori* assumptions and overarching laws.<sup>792</sup> Deleuze calls to the ‘sonorous’ and offers the example of the analogue synthesizer (*contra* the digital) and its ability to establish immediate “connection between heterogeneous elements” hence offering a limitless potential for sensual connectivity.<sup>793</sup> A connectivity that can be mobilised through exertion.

To claim language and landscape (or writing and running), in this research, as analogous is erroneous; to claim that this writing is *like* a terrain is misleading. This writing is a process that leaves a trail of markers: word-steps that move through difference. With its (paper) trail, the writing is (paradoxically) reaching out towards landscape whilst landscape for its part reaches out (for something else), in an act of

*becoming-.*<sup>794</sup> The writing will never be landscape; it will never achieve that steady state. It embraces difference as a *becoming-landscape*; the nearest it will achieve is *langscape*. A *langscape*, which can be inhabited, played with, and moved through. Furthermore, it repels attempts at hovering over, instead, to understand it, is to move (or live) ~~with~~ it; occasionally gaining a broader understanding from a particular elevated terrainly feature of the layout. In a letter to Ruth Hilton, W.S. Graham observes (of his poetic challenge), “The thing is to find or create (in this case the same thing) a language, a timbre of thought or voice, which I will live in.”<sup>795</sup> This ‘living’, this *askēsis*, is the exertion that forms (from) the disjunction (and continues to extend (with) the terrain). A word of caution though, this terrain of words is no *terra firma*, instead the land- and lang- flow (they scape) in an ongoing processual enlivening. This is the lie of the *langscape*.

In the enclosing (that is this unending) there is an enfolding that is a creating. This fold can never be closed as it is a *becoming-.* Deleuze brings air to this inside noting, “the interior is only a selected exterior, and the

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<sup>790</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 113-4.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid*.

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<sup>794</sup> This reaching of *becoming-* is, in its potentially vulnerating exposure. Also, and crucial to the argument of this research, a parrhesic move.

<sup>795</sup> W.S. Graham quoted in Michael and Margaret Snow, ed., *The Nightfisherman: Selected Letters of W.S. Graham* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1999), 210. Graham further noted that the language is “alive, changing and organic.” *Ibid*.

exterior, a projected interior.<sup>796</sup> Deleuze's words find resonance in Barad's claim, "intra-actions enact 'agential separability'—the condition of exteriority-within-phenomena."<sup>797</sup> Folding and cutting *together-apart* claim a commonality; a commonality that evidences the conceptual and methodological potential of exertion in the creative act. The attaching from within of exertion at once connects and defines a separation (cuts *together-apart*); exertion's role in folding provides a (temporary) stance for (further) exerting. The tactility of the (climber's) stance is echoed in Barad's suggestion of a 'touchstone,' ... "solid and tangible [...] rather than anything as immobile/immobilizing as an anchor" (or a ground).<sup>798</sup>

Over your head the climbing blue  
Sky observes your lonely foot.<sup>799</sup>

Among the talus deposits of this slope of words further formations are found.<sup>800</sup> The prefixing '#' signals a grouping (in the manner of The Ship of Theseus) that is determined through *intra-ruption* and in which *becoming-* replaces being.<sup>801</sup> The # also provides a nod to the online sketchbook employed in this research. Whilst it is evidently a form of

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<sup>796</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 125.

<sup>797</sup> Karen Barad, "Intra-actions." *Mousse*, 34 (2012): 77.

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid*, 80.

<sup>799</sup> Graham, "The Don Brown Route," *New Collected Poems*, 174-6.

<sup>800</sup> Talus is an alternative term for scree slope.

<sup>801</sup> In *intra-ruption*, Barad's *intra-action* is given a rougher edge as boundaries emerge through tearing rather than cutting.

world-facing record keeping the blog has provided most value in its role as an "aware practice" in a similar way to that played by letter writing for Graham—the blog posts are a way of breaking the silence.<sup>802</sup> It is now further recognised that the blog is also a *becoming-landscape* with its multi-media terrain and hypertextual reality.

The '[fold here]' of the title of this research contains nods of acknowledgment to the Deleuzian Fold, to Heidegger's shepherd of Being, and to those pastoral architectural features so often encountered when walking or running in (especially) upland areas of Britain.<sup>803</sup> But above all, this fold exaggerates the work of the titular colon—it introduces a physical (topographical) presence and interrupts (or rather *intra-rupts*) the one-dimensional flow of the word line. In its modest way, the work done by these two words (and their attendant brackets) introduces the task of the writing (n.) of the thesis. In short, the language (the writing (n.)) of the thesis is a *becoming-landscape*. The words, the writing, strives to be (but never will be) a landscape; they fall into the disjunction that is *langscape*,<sup>804</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Snow, *The Nightfisherman*, xiii-xiv.

<sup>803</sup> Deleuze, *The Fold*; for Heidegger's shepherd see note 148 in Chapter 1.IV; and a fine example of a sheepfold can be found on the slope of Y Glonc at SO 00246 98942.

<sup>804</sup> In a similar way, this printed writing can never be truly hypertextual. This writing continues to perform through its reading, or continues writing, as readers (in their multiplicities) become collaborators in the performance (and so the task of the research continues). In its proto-hypertextuality, the writing (n.) exists as a *becoming-hypertext*.

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Furthermore, the writing (v.) of this thesis is an exercise in mapping disjunctions or “evaluating *displacements*”; the ‘map’ is not to be interpreted (retrofitted with meaning) but instead it is used to identify potential trajectories. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 63

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## APPENDIX I

### *published work*

#### i. “B([r])e(at[h])ing or Breathing In | Sounding Out (a Langscape.”

The publication of this short performed text in print apparently presents a problem: the words have stepped down from the stage and onto the page (or screen); the voice and setting have changed, the context is lost. Nothing is in fact lost, instead the text is loosed; set free to move in new ways. The audience has become the presenter by proxy. The you must become the I and the you. Furthermore, this I-you will inhabit the “whole” journal and all its vibrant and varied articles. This text (and its accompanying files) becomes an interlude amongst the other articles, yet this interlude does not represent a lack or (clean) break; rather it is a change in pace or intensity. The geological unconformity of the paper bursts through here and impacts the journal-as-landscape.

And so the text retains its vital performativity, working tactically to make its point. Etymologically tactics take us through the Latin *tactica* to the Greek τακτική (or *taktike*) meaning “art of arrangement.” With this root we begin to uncover some promise that takes the notion of tactic beyond an arrangement of troops (be they soldiers or business people) and towards a notion of *tekhne*, where a form of understanding or attunement is required to make subtle adjustments in situations (Note that this *art* does not answer to an overriding strategy). As an aside, tactic has an additional meaning relating it to “touch” playing off of the Latin root *tangere*.

The tactics of disruption are enacted through resonance and disharmony; a polite jarring. Romantic, Cynic, British, I, geology, and so forth are

fragments reclaimed and diffracted. *Diffragments* which re-turn.<sup>805</sup> These *diffragments* are slight—seen head-on they may easily be missed or mistaken. Instead we must glance past the usual associations and confining definitions to set up new assemblages and possibilities.

[SOUND FILE: *wind on Garreg Hir*—2’ 00]

[breathing]

[IMAGE 1: screenshot reflections]

I should not be here. I should not be seen. I should not be heard. I should not feel. I have been warned. I should not be...I am wrong. I is wrong. I be is wrong too. I creates a clearing from which to survey, from which to look outwards. I-subject. I subject myself to I. I object. I object to this I. I subject this object to this I. The I is caught in an endless feedback loop with the not-I.

We must focus on the ego, focus on it, and cross it to get into the open field. Without it, one is caught in all sorts of camouflaged selfishness.<sup>806</sup>

[IMAGE 2: stone wave]

recovered from the soil matrix between the stones.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> I am indebted to the work of Karen Barad for the concepts of *diffraction* and *re-turning* and more besides which help me to explain what I intend in the performance of this speaking-writing. For a fine overview of the two terms see: Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart,” *Parallax*, 20:3, (2014): 168-187, doi: 10.1080/13534645.2014.927623

<sup>806</sup> Kenneth White quoted in Jamet, “Kenneth White,” 14. Original: “Il faut se centrer sur l’ego, se concentrer sur lui, et le traverser pour entrer dans le champ libre. Sans cela, on est pris dans toutes les sortes d’egoïsme camouflé.” Jamet, “Kenneth White,” 14-15

At a western edge of Europe cartographer and writer Tim Robinson found a way to have his cake and eat it. Jos Smith reports that “Robinson has described his aesthetic as driven in part by a ‘romantic-materialist’ impulse.” Smith goes on to note that this could be problematic as it hints at a “reunion” but Robinson utilizes a form of failure to stop short of fixing things in an unnatural harmony. To succeed in this reunion would be anthropomorphizing; to fail “to find a conciliation between self and earth means that a labyrinth of possible ways of knowing the earth opens up, each way inadequate but each nonetheless interesting and plausible in its own right.”<sup>808</sup>

There are unconformities here.

[IMAGE 3: grey/]

Richard Fortey defines an unconformity as

a contact between two rock formations (often recorded in a change in the angle of the dip of the beds), representing a considerable break in continuity, and time.<sup>809</sup>

The ground isn’t fixed; land slips, land slides, land *scapes*. Language can be seen as a fault line, an indication that man and nature are divided. But language has its own fault lines that can be invented and exploited to feed us back through landscape, acknowledging and side-stepping that word’s cultural baggage, we explore *langscape*. *Lang scapes*. With/in the

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<sup>807</sup> Alex Gibson, S. H. R. Aldhouse-Green, H. A. W. Burl, A. E. Caseldine, J. Crowther, P. Q. Dresser, A. J. Legge, R. J. Silvester, S. Stead, M. J. C. Walker & J. L. Wilkinson, “The Excavation of Two Cairns and Associated Features at Carneddau, Carno, Powys, 1989–90,” *Archaeological Journal* 150, no.1 (1993) 1–45, doi: 10.1080/00665983.1993.11078053

<sup>808</sup> Jos Smith, “‘Lithogenesis’: Towards a (Geo)Poetics of Place,” *Literary Geographies*, no. 1 (2015), 71.

<sup>809</sup> Richard Fortey, *The Hidden Landscape: A Journey into the geological past* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 298.

landscape (non)sense overflows and takes us away from simple representation.

[IMAGE 4: gwynt shift]

[*greywindgwynt*—1’ 22”]

[IMAGE 5: rhosyn y gwynt]

A note to the listener (whether that listener is you or I or eye): on occasions the lithic scatters may seem esoteric, irrelevant (irreverent?) and disjointed when viewed in traditional frames of reference. However, be assured, each scatter should be seen to mark half-concealed adits to underground systems from where rich veins may be mined. A curious form of mining though, where there is no robbing of the Earth’s resources, instead there is an augmentation...an admixing. The underground systems slowly and unsteadily are invented by this process.

To quote Nietzsche, here I go:

forward slowly, cautiously, gently inexorable, without betraying very much of the distress which any protracted deprivation of light and air must entail; you might even call [me] contented, working [h]ere in the dark.<sup>810</sup>

[MOVING IMAGE 1: kneeage film] + [heather burning—2’ 04”]

Press the eject. Erase the files. The Romantic is dead, long live the Romantic. A dumb misunderstanding and an outmoding makes the Romantic’s frilly cuffs unstylish in certain parts of town. We dress down accordingly but retain the opiated giggles in a sort of Bate update.<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>810</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the prejudices of morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>811</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the environmental tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991). Bate is seen by some as the progenitor of the ecocriticism movement. Timothy Clark’s highly readable *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the*

Multiple re-readings still leave Samuel Taylor Coleridge stranded on a rocky ledge in the Lake District. Who will really know if the I or the eye got him there?

“B([r])e(at[h])ing or Breathing In | Sounding Out (a Langscape,”

*Environment, Space, Place* 9, no.1 (2017): 63-69.

## ii. “Stick with it.”

See Chapter 4.IV.

“Stick with it.” *Uniformagazine* 8 (Winter 2016-2017): 8-10.

## iii. “Romancing the #BritishLandscape: exertion as a methodology for re-binding with the ‘out-there’.”

### Abstract

Apocryphally, J.M.W. Turner had himself tied to a ship’s mast to better understand the light of a sea storm. Through his art Turner generated a new approach to ‘seeing’ nature and did so without dividing intelligent comprehension from the sensory experience. Complicating the situation there are new attitudes to landscape brought about by new technologies such as global positioning systems (GPS) and gaming software like the *British Countryside Generator*, which provides “aesthetically recognizable rural British landscapes” where terrain becomes backdrop to any given *gamespace* (Big Robot: 2012).

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*Environment* provides a useful update and overview of all that has happened in ecocriticism since Bate published *Romantic Ecology* in 1991.

Despite Turner’s move and the potential re-readings offered by the digital there remains a strong reliance on binary division and static enframing of the senses, in the response to landscape in the British visual arts all of which enforces a perceived chasm between *culture* and *nature*. However, simultaneously, a new wave of British nature writing (e.g. Jamie: 2012 and Macfarlane: 2008) sensitively springing from the likes of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) and Richard Mabey’s *The Unofficial Countryside* (1973) has done much to challenge the myth that we humans are separate from or above nature.

Our relationship to the land urgently needs to be addressed on a wide front and our ties to landscape celebrated whilst being wary of the “foreshortened definition of ‘nature’” (Jamie 24). Through a combination of the *parrhēsia* of Diogenean Cynicism, the sense of wonder of British Romanticism, ecosophical principles and creative attunement a *herniation* of the *culture/nature* divide may be achieved that leads to a deeper understanding of how our lives are lived both with and in landscape.

Keywords: British Romanticism, Cynicism, ecosophy, herniation, landscape, parrhēsia

### Where Was I?

When we consider landscape in the context of the digital we will more often than not think of virtual environments: “a computer-generated, three-dimensional representation of a setting in which the user of the technology perceives themselves to be and within which interaction takes place”.<sup>812</sup> From this we are likely to imagine goggle-clad users engaged in training simulations, ‘walking’ through a reconstruction of a long-lost heritage site or immersed in a gaming scenario.

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<sup>812</sup> Dictionary.com, “Define virtual environment.” Web. Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2014. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/virtual+environment>

Virtual environments have moved a long way since the early home gaming environments such as Atari's classic late 1970s releases *Air-Sea Battle* and *Night Driver*. However, both of these managed to conjure up different takes on what a landscape is often seen to be in an art historical context. In *Air-Sea Battle's* 'anti-aircraft' variant a slender green horizon of land provides a base for the gamer's anti-aircraft gun to shoot down the enemy aircraft that pass to and fro in the stratified blue sky above. The stratifications of the sky giving a feeling of elevation and air in what is really a classical landscape painter's technique for depicting sky-space and pictorial depth.

Where *Air-Sea Battle* offers a side-on, arms-length, Picturesque removal from 'reality' *Night Driver* arguably provides a more immersive experience as the gamer is charged with steering their 'invisible' car along the road ahead of them, at night, guided only by pixel equivalents of reflective poles. To offer some context occasional roadside houses and trees are glimpsed in the headlights as the 'driver' guides their vehicle at varying speeds via the game console's paddle. The car is of course 'invisible' because we view the landscape through the TV screen-windscreen but, just for a while, the driver is within the landscape; passing through the landscape skilfully and at speed but immersed in it nonetheless.

In the case of both *Air-Sea Battle* and *Night Driver* the aesthetic landscape lineage that started with the Dutch School (in, for example, the work of Jacob van Ruisdael) could be traced through them and onwards to the work of artist Julian Opie in landscapes such as *There are Hills in the Distance* (1996) and *Winter 32* (2012).

Of course gaming is just one small part of where virtual landscapes were born from and they have moved on to a point where we can now

immerse our gaming selves in a wide range of hyper realistic terrains (as well as enjoy retro-thrills in modern takes on those 1970s classics). The landscapes are now so 'life-like' that Andy Kelly was moved to pen an article for The Guardian newspaper entitled *GTA V to Skyrim: the 10 most beautiful walks in gaming* in which the landscapes from games such as *Dear Esther's* rendition of a Hebridean island were selected on aesthetic grounds to offer a destination bucket-list for the enthusiastic gamer.<sup>813</sup> Even more relevant to this article is *Sir, You Are Being Hunted* from game developer Big Robot based in Bath, England.

To situate their game Big Robot developed a procedural engine, which they have called the *British Landscape Generator*. This generator "is unique in that the intention was to generate a vision of 'British countryside', or an approximation thereof" and in order to do this the game's designers:

identified a number of features in the countryside that typify the aesthetic [they] wanted, and seem to be quintessential in British rural environments. Possibly the most important element is the 'patchwork quilt' arrangement of agricultural land, where polygonal fields are divided by drystone walls and hedgerows. (Manaugh)

The scripting and computations that help Big Robot to generate this approximated British landscape must surely only be an accelerated virtual version of the sort of physical forces that W.G. Hoskins opened a nation's eyes to in his seminal book *The Making of the English Landscape*. The *natural* landscapes of Britain are etched, folded and piled with the traces of former or ongoing human activities. The forms of the British

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<sup>813</sup> Andy Kelly, "GTA V to Skyrim: the 10 most beautiful walks in gaming," *The Guardian*. 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. Web. Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/gallery/2014/may/05/gta-v-to-skyrim-the-ten-most-beautiful-walks-in-gaming>

landscape are easily read by many now as the activity that Hoskins outlined has become mainstream and not restricted to a few geographers, archaeologists and psychogeographers. We can all now appreciate that a commonplace ditch may be the thousand-year-old boundary of a royal manor; a certain hedgebank may be even more ancient, the boundary of a Celtic estate; a certain deep and winding lane may be the work of twelfth-century peasants, some of whose names may be made known to us if we search diligently enough. (Hoskins 14)

And so from twelfth-century peasants we are thrown towards Tim Ingold's favoured etymology of *landscape* where the mediaeval land-shapers and their exertions viscerally and sensuously bonded them to 'their' land and shaped it into the land we move within today (126). Gregory Chaitin's notion of *natural software* that he expounds in his 2012 book *Proving Darwin* can be seen as a fusion of gaming software and landscape evolution. Chaitin proposes that software has been with us all along but it was only with the invention of computer software that we could recognise this fact (20). To put it another way: DNA, as the body's *natural software*, could not be discovered until computing software had been invented.

### Where Am I?

Beyond the virtual environments of gaming, warfare and training simulation the digital's presence in discussion of landscape must also be considered in regard to the proliferation of navigational aids and performance monitors on the market. We can monitor our movements via Global Positioning System (GPS) units and modulate our physical endeavours via heart-rate monitors (HRMs) and power meters.

GPS has (as with so many of these technologies) its origins in military contexts. With precursors evolving through the 1950s and 60s GPS as a

realistic concept was born out of the US Department of Defense in 1973 with the full 24 operational satellites being launched between 1978 and 1994. Initially military use was given primacy and civilian use was intentionally restricted through a limitation of the accuracy of the positioning data. Today, accuracy for civilians is in the region of +/- 5 to 10 metres (15 to 20 metres height) 95% of the time according to Britain's Ordnance Survey.<sup>814</sup> The military continue to have slightly greater accuracy.

A GPS unit receives signals from a number of satellites and calculates the time difference between transmission and reception of the signal. From these differences the distance to the satellites is then calculated and a triangulation performed to locate the user on the earth's surface on both the x- and y-axes.

When walking in the mountains of Scotland I carry a hand-held GPS unit in addition to my map and compass. I now also wear my GPS-enabled wristwatch. During the walk the latter acts simply as a watch but also stores a record of my walk for later download in the form of a route overlay and a selection of statistics about the day (distance covered, elevation gain/loss, average pace, etc.). My hand-held unit generally stays in my rucksack and is only consulted in moments of poor visibility or complex terrain. However, when these units are used, the accuracy levels are noticeable – there may be inexplicable peaks or cut-offs in pace, or the route overlay may suggest that I walked through the air of a corrie when in fact I held firmly to the solid ground of the ridge.

A recent athletics cross-country race that I participated in provides a good illustration of the simple reflection of the changes in topography

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<sup>814</sup> <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-and-government/help-and-support/navigation-technology/gps-beginners-guide.html>

impacting upon the body's performance. In the image below can be seen the data from my GPS wristwatch which overlays pace and elevation. Within the four-lap race each ascent of the two hills on the circuit reduced my pace. If I had been wearing a HRM it is certain that the line for that read out would have provided an increased heart-rate for each ascent – a line that steepened slightly after the ascent, peaked over the top and settled back slowly as the contours flattened off.

Of course, these inaccuracies can be worrying and they underline why we should not rely solely on new technologies when navigating complex terrain, but look again and these pockets of data-loss could also point to where the sensuousness of exertion lies hidden. This GPS data-overlay and heart rate line could be simple ways to see the binding-with-landscape that exertion unfolds but for the viewer, particularly if they were not participant in the race or activity they will have little knowledge of the broader context: conditions underfoot, meteorological considerations, ability levels of other participants, and so forth let alone more ephemeral considerations and the current fitness of the participant.

Much remains hidden in this exerting but maybe this is partly due to the individual nature of the approach. We are dealing here with the 'self' and its relationship to the 'not-self' at the very least. First though we need to understand more about what exertion does. The dictionary etymology of 'exert' is a helpful starting point:

[–exert–, pa. ppl. Stem of L. *ex(s)erere* put forth, f. *ex-* Ex-<sup>1</sup> + *serere* bind, entwine, join]. (Onions 701)

So we have an unbinding happening during exertion. Popularly this unbinding might be seen as the one who is exerting becoming increasingly detached from the world and moving only inward as they concentrate on their struggle. While running one can enter a sort of autopilot mode where the mind might drift off yet seemingly the body will remain in control of motion and foot placement. But there is a

danger in this approach where the directly reciprocal in the exerting can become misinterpreted into a binaric opposition and so become added to those old (un)couplings of *culture/nature*; *in here/out there*; and *mind/body*.

### Defining

Stalking the shadows of this article are two figures: one is the Romantic and the other is the Cynic. Both of these figures have contested meanings, more specifically, common meanings, which don't fully explain the characters and, in some ways, even contradict the true models. A clue to the misreading of the models is the use of the lower case 'r' and 'c' – 'Romantic' becomes 'romantic' and 'Cynic' becomes 'cynic'; a Romantic is thus watered down to the unpractical and starry-eyed romantic and a Cynic becomes the cynic who is morosely sceptical of everything.

For the Romantic must be reclaimed the qualities of rebel and visionary and this may be achieved through an alignment of the Romantic to the Cynic – they certainly share common traits – via an exploration of the British Romantic Movement and the Foucauldian Cynic. For an image of the true Cynic I refer to Michel Foucault's *The Courage of Truth* (2009). In his exploration of the notion of *parrhēsia* Foucault dedicates a number of lectures to the *parrhēsia* of Greek Cynicism and within this discussion he draws out what it is to be a true Cynic (particularly in the Diogenean mould) (198).

As with many of the art '-isms' those individuals identified with British Romanticism didn't choose to be so. Instead a general spirit and certain specifics of their work aligned with a rising mood of the time. British Romanticism shared a lot in common with its continental cousins yet had a specific mood of its own. In simple terms Romanticism can be seen as a rebellion against a particular sort of neoclassical order and control that subjugated free expression and imagination. However, Raymond

Lister notes that British Romanticism was highly moderated in comparison to Romanticism in other European countries (12). Maybe this moderation is tied to the, generally, less extreme nature of the British climate and the gentler nature of the landscape.

Within the context of economic globalization, rapidly shifting national boundaries, unprecedented imm/em-igration and worrying trends in nationalism the tie to a British identity in the title of this article could appear problematic. However, the British landscape retains an identity beyond the nation's shores; an identity that has evolved historically and in unison with the shaping of the landscape – emulating the quintessential patchwork English rural landscape the national identity holds together as a series of identifiable yet dynamically interweaving localities. Big Robot employed this landscape identity in the development of their *British Landscape Generator* but as the name implies, this identity doesn't preclude the generation of 'new' versions of British landscapes.

Before we get too far a gentle defining of *landscape* is required for this article. The widely accepted etymology of the English word *landscape* comes through the Dutch *lantscap* to *landskip* and so to the anglicised *landscape*. The standard dictionary definitions have *landscape* relating to something experienced by sight: a vista or a view; a scene or a prospect. From here we proceed to the generally accepted reading of *landscape* art as a painted scene – this reading is most highly refined in the Picturesque tradition which was enfolded within British Romanticism.

However, Tim Ingold argues in *Being Alive* that the derivation of the word *landscape* is actually founded in a notion of shaping. The suffix *-scape* has become etymologically muddled with the “verb *skopein*, ‘to look’.” ‘Scape’, quite to the contrary, comes from Old English *sceppan* or *skyppan*,

meaning ‘to shape’” (126). Ingold goes on to relate the activities of mediaeval land-shapers where the work was done:

close-up, in an immediate, muscular and visceral engagement with wood, grass and soil – the very opposite of distanced, contemplative and panoramic optic that the word ‘landscape’ conjures up in many minds today. (126)

This notion of shaping within landscape could bring us closer to endeavours such as gardening, landscape architecture, and even architecture itself all of which have an appeal in themselves. But, more importantly, as will be seen later, the shaping could be much more about how we engage and enmesh with the landscape, as we are active within it. Indeed, how the landscape shapes us as much as we it.

As a background to British Romanticism the very way of the nation was changing – increasing industrialisation saw mechanisation of agricultural processes and a pull of rural workers away from the soil and into the new manufacturing urban centres. It could be that this shift was the tipping point that caused a reappraisal and re-valuing of the British landscape among certain members of society.

Landscape was considered a very poor subject for artists until the late eighteenth-century but the work of artists such as Richard Wilson and Thomas Gainsborough whilst not completely shifting the stance of the art establishment did enough to fire up the enthusiasm of a new generation of artists such as J.M.W. Turner, Thomas Girtin, and John Constable. These artists were able to consider Classical approaches yet combine them with (for instance) the approach of the Dutch School to chart a new course for British artists and a new way of ‘seeing’ the landscape. For Turner this required that “a clear classical structure [be] merged with movement of light and air” (Lindsay 108). And if this aesthetic rebellion ruffled a few establishment feathers along the way

what did it matter? More important matters needed the attention of the landscape artist: “a new concept of nature, a concept that totally rejects the old mechanistic system of connexions and relationships, and which sees instead a highly complicated field-of-force in action” was needed (122).

In the course of this rebelling the Romantic artist would “examine and revel in all aspects of human activity and the phenomenon of the world in which we live; [and] cultivate every part of the human psyche and every aspect of our bodily sensations” (Lister 4). This doesn’t sound much like the common image of the *romantic* artist as self-absorbed and out of touch with the world - it sounds more like the sort of attuned being that David Abram writes of in *Spell of the Sensuous* where, by acknowledging:

links between the inner psychological world and the perceptual terrain that surrounds us, we begin to turn inside-out, loosening the psyche from its confinement within a strictly human sphere, freeing sentience to return to the sensible world that contains us. (262)

Frequently for the Romantics their attunement to a situation came about through the undertaking of strenuous physical activity. In addition to the possible episode of having himself tied to a ship’s mast, and despite his often questionable health, Turner wasn’t averse to walking twenty-five miles in a day “rapidly sketching all the good places of composition he met” (Lindsay 26). The Wordsworths and Coleridge were happy to be out in the world walking and wandering in all weathers, in all terrains and at all times of day. In fact, Samuel Taylor Coleridge is sometimes credited with the first rock climb when he became stranded on a rock ledge as he descended Scafell (in the English Lake District) on an August afternoon in 1802.

In his book *Mountains of the Mind* Robert Macfarlane recounts Coleridge’s story as one instance of the poet’s *gambling* (81-84). This gambling involved a literal reverse of that undertaken by Petrarch’s brother in the poet’s recorded ascent of France’s Mont Ventoux. For Coleridge the challenge was in the descent - he would pick a mountain at random, climb it and then descend ‘where it is first *possible*’ to do so and not to seek out the ‘easy’ option (82). For Petrarch and his brother it was all about the mode of the ascent.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1336 Petrarch set out with his brother and two servants to climb ‘Ventosum’ ostensibly to simply “see what so great an elevation had to offer” (Petrarch). However, the account of the expedition (if it actually happened, which many scholars doubt) became a vehicle for Petrarch to discuss the human preference for looking at views rather than facing spiritual calling. By chance Petrarch carried various texts by Saint Augustine with him and he sits down at the summit to read them and, allowing the pages to fall open at random (‘gambling?’), he is confronted by the saint’s direction to “not go outwards, but travel into yourself, for truth lives in the interior of the human being”.<sup>815</sup> Implicit in this way of thinking are the directly reciprocal, restrictive and unhelpful binaries of *in here/out there* and *mind/body*.

For now though there is another aspect of the story which is relevant: Petrarch recounts how he continually seeks out the longer yet easier route which zig-zags lazily up the mountain side, whereas his brother struggles directly upwards via a ‘short cut’. It is the choice of two ways. In his deep study of Cynicism Michel Foucault discusses “the theme of the two ways [which] is frequently found in Antiquity” (207). Within Christianity there are also two ways: of life and of death. The Cynics also recognised

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<sup>815</sup> Shayne Gipe, “Petrarch’s Ascent” *Essai*. 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2013. Web. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. <http://essaiproject.org/blog/2013/5/15/petrarch>

two ways, the first of these is through discourses and learning (*logos*). The second way is the short cut but it is not easy for it is the “arduous way which rises straight to the summit over many obstacles and which is, as it were, the silent way” (207). This latter can also be described as “the way of exercise, of *askesis*, of practices of destitution and endurance” (ibid). And, of course, it is this latter way that the true Cynic follows.

The direct struggle up the steepest gradient of Mont Ventoux that Petrarch’s brother followed may have been the opportunity for inner struggle and understanding and so the view ‘outward’ from the top becomes some sort of reward for this process of internalising. By going deeper inwards a *herniation* occurs; the ‘outside’ folds inwards and so oppositions merge to give greater clarity and colour - so the view from the summit becomes ever more magnificent.

In a beautiful instance of happenstance Chaitin has subtitled one of his book chapters *Random Walks in Software Space* and as the mathematics becomes ever more complex he warns us that things will get “a bit technical, a bit tough.

We are going up a steep mountain, but I will try to explain everything in words as best I can, not just with formulas. But if you can’t understand something, please just skip it and continue onwards and upwards. Just look at the scenery and try to get an overall feeling for what I am doing. (27)

His Petrarchian moment over, we climb ever higher with Chaitin, to discover that he has been working for several decades to bring mathematics and biology together in the form of *metabiology*. In developing his claim Chaitin notes that “biology is actually all about constant creativity and change [...and] sex greatly speeds up creativity” (36). Furthermore, “metabiology emphasizes biological creativity, not

selfishness, and it opens the door to a completely new interpretation of Darwinian evolution” (ibid).

### **Herniating**

In attempting to visualise this process of *herniation* we might depict a reniform shape trying to turn itself inside out in a movement that is both enveloping and pushing through. Distant cousin maybe to Deleuze’s Foucauldian *fold* the form is under-going a process of *herniation* but it is impossible to *see* if the hernia forces inwards or outwards (97-101). We are fooled though as the form cannot be depicted like this; the form is a process of *herniation*. We need to feel to understand its movement for this is not a static form but a dynamic process that herniates itself and invents its own course and its own orientation. It virally mutates as it turns its Romantic wanderer’s cape in on itself before unfolding it in a blatant mimesis of the bullfighter’s moves. Red! Attack me now! Darkness. I have gone.

This process of *herniation* has some commonalities with Barthes’s *punctum*...certainly when the *punctum* is read at its simplest level as a detail that breaks (out from) its surroundings (*studium*) and takes on greater resonance (26-7). Maybe this concept when applied to landscape could be home to the mythical concept of *place*? A landscape holds a general appeal but a poignancy arises through the co-occurrence of features, atmosphere, history, and so forth and wounds the skin of the *studium* - place then glows into being. Maybe. But also maybe this simple reading hides the truth of the *punctum* in the same way that a basic reading of the reciprocity of *herniation* could lead to a binaric dead-end.

Instead must be imagined something “like a pineal gland, constantly reconstituting itself by changing direction, tracing an inside space but coextensive with the whole line of the outside” (Deleuze 100-101). It is also vital to note that the outline of this herniating process is not solid; it is permeable or breathable. Like the GORE-TEX® fabric of a mountain

walker's waterproof a certain amount of exchange is allowed to take place and GORE-TEX® becomes what it is through a process.

Returning briefly to the digital, it is much like the processes involved in metadata tagging. Keeping in mind Chaitin's *natural software* we could consider how metadata tagging operates and organises information - how the hashtag for instance can fold into itself multiple meanings yet it leaves those meanings to be themselves; it is just that in the process of enfolding new identities and new possibilities are born. The same processes are at work as the landscape becomes (re)arranged through activity at all different scales of time and space.

In a 2012 essay Jim Mooney identifies an ecosophic angle in Hamish Fulton's art-walking. *Ecosophy* is a combination of ecology and philosophy and as a concept was first proposed by Arne Næss in the 1970s "to serve as an individual's philosophical grounding for an acceptance of the principles or platform of deep ecology" (38). Around the time of Næss's declaration British landscape art was most highly focussed in 'Land Art'. Or at least that was where the rebellious artists were at work as they fought the commodification of the art object through a physically scaled-down version of what artists were doing in the wider expanses of the American landscape (e.g. Robert Smithson's 1970 *Spiral Jetty* which required the modelling of thousands of tons of rock in Great Salt Lake, Utah).

While British artists of a previous generation such as Ivon Hitchens retained their commitment to painterly techniques a new generation were experimenting with photography, film, sculpture (frequently using found *natural* materials), installations and walking. Many artists were using walking as a means to an end but two artists in particular were using walking as an end in itself. In 1967, while still a student at London's Saint Martin's School of Art, Richard Long created *A Line Made by Walking*.

Long made this work by simply walking to and fro in a straight line across a grassy Hampshire field until the grass became flattened enough that the sunlight highlighted it, he then took a photograph of the line as a record of the activity. The work remained in the landscape (and in the past), free of ownership, whilst the photographic record became the object for the gallery. The simple action for this work would become the foundation for his artistic career and freed up the minds of many artists in considering what art could be – no longer did it need a plinth or even any physical materials to form it.

Fellow Saint Martin's student Fulton was working in this way too when, also in 1967, he tied together a group of his colleagues and tutors and led them on a walk through the streets of London. For Fulton this action and subsequent student walk works would convince him that walking was the way to make art. Where Long re-engaged with more traditional materials in a high proportion of his work Fulton maintained a strict adherence to the notion of the walk being the art - the *artwalk* manifest in the gallery only as a distilled text or photographic signpost to all that Fulton experienced during the walk.

Within Fulton's gallery presence Mooney suggests that a gap (or Lacanian *béance*) between "our contemporary cultural concerns and our relatively impoverished relationship with the natural world" is highlighted (21). As Mooney goes on to suggest, the viewer can never truly experience what Fulton has but in providing these gallery signposts maybe the artist can help the viewer move towards a position where they can recognise there is a gap and begin to address this on a personal level. This personal level gap-bridging is a key tenet of ecosophy where "Self-realisation through identification [connects] the individual's unfolding to that of the whole planet" (Naess 163).

In maintaining his practice via his dictum of 'no walk no work' Fulton undertakes walks of exceptional duration, distance and endurance. His exertions in the walks rarely make it through to the text of the gallery

wall but they are vital to what Fulton is doing. Both Fulton and Næss are mountaineers and not afraid to stretch themselves and we could simply consider Næss in this article for an equation that he included in his treatise on *ecosophy* where well-being (W) unfolds from a careful balancing of bodily pain (P<sub>b</sub>), mental pain (P<sub>m</sub>) and 'glow' (G):

$$W = \frac{G^2}{P_b + P_m}$$

Næss goes on to say that:

the usefulness of the equation [...] depends on its ability to make people try to find out what they deeply and eagerly want and thus to make them risk some pain and discomfort in its pursuit. (81)

This belief then is what Richard Askwith is subscribing to when he writes, at the end of the first chapter of *Feet in the Clouds*, of how, after a long run, he descends the fells towards the sanctuary of his car:

Thoughts of hot baths sap my every slack-legged stride. Finally, I fumble my way into my car, collapse on the passenger seat, half-change into the dry clothes I have left there, close the door, and fall asleep.

This, I should add, is what I do for fun. (6)

Or perhaps as long-distance runner and PhD student Zoe Anderson explains “this was just about me being in an extreme environment, an environment in which I was so gloriously happy that I did not want it to end, even though I was at a peak of pain, even ecstasy” (Anderson).

The 'glow' wins out. But in the most testing of moments in the landscape something happens. As an exchange that bridges a gap these moments are perhaps only 'felt' within the memory of the muscles that propel one through the landscape or as a memory recalled from the comfort of that hot bath or a public bar. But surely there is something hidden in that glow, that fun, that ecstasy. Robert Macfarlane, in a recent BBC

Scotland TV programme about poet Nan Shepherd, notes a sensual, possibly even sexual, “fizz” to Shepherd’s writing and thinking on being in the Cairngorm mountain landscape of Scotland (“The Living Mountain”). Macfarlane goes on to observe that Shepherd was “writing in a time [circa the 1940s] when candour about physical pleasure was regarded with real suspicion, especially from a woman” (ibid). Whilst her candour may not have suited her time it would have found a home within Cynical *parrhēsia*.

In *The Courage of Truth* (record of his 1984 lectures at the Collège de France) Foucault lingers long on the notion of *parrhēsia*. *Parrhēsia* simply stated is “frankness in speaking the truth” and Foucault charts its presence through Ancient Greek culture and on into Christianity observing as he goes how its usage shifts slightly and meanings multiply with each turn yet the concept retains its kernel of meaning. In *Fearless Speech* (record of his 1983 lectures at the University of California) Foucault makes it clear that his quest isn’t about the essence of truth but about the activity of truth-telling and the consequences that this may have (5). For truth-telling is not without its risks: in fact *parrhēsia* has risk at its very core as the parrhesiaste “risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)” (19).

This risk is undertaken by the individual through “moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy” (20). However, the “parrhesiastic game” is not undertaken alone and the parrhesiaste’s risk must be matched by “the interlocutor’s courage in agreeing to accept the hurtful truth that he hears” (2009 13). With dynamism evident in this ‘game’ *parrhēsia* can be seen as a fluid relationship process (I, not-I, not-not-I) in which the weight shifts with every fresh step. The relationship evolves and, like Deleuze & Guattari’s *rhizome*, it is a living one actively “coming and going rather than starting and finishing” (28).

Given the interlocutor's complicity in the parrhesiastic game it could be seen as problematic to analogise this relationship to the one between the Romantic and the landscape (between *culture* and *nature*). However, if we can pull ourselves away from the static enframing of these terms by exertion in the landscape we can through a herniating process reach a situation where the stumbling blocks of *culture* and *nature* are left behind and we enter a fluid relationship

Perhaps like Chaitin and his notion of *natural software* we must recognise that *parrhēsia* existed long before humans - that there is a *natural parrhēsia* - and it sees the landscape demanding something of us (as much as we of it) and this demand is only opened up to us through our landscape exertions be they in the form of running and walking, or ditch-building and harvesting.

Yet still more caution is required for:

The idea that direct productive involvement with the land, unmediated by the market, results in being in some obscure sense 'close to nature', and the hope that such apparent immediacy is equivalent to being in a better position to *know* nature, are products of misguided desire on our part. (Reason 27)

Landscape (and so *nature*) doesn't demand anything of us. Landscape doesn't care about us but neither does it not care. Landscape (and *nature*) are social or *cultural* constructs and they stand-in for what is *out there* but in this standing-in they also stand in the way of what is *out there*.

Through our sensual physical exertions we begin to *herniate* the divide that we have created and "place and a mind interpenetrate till the nature of both is altered" (Shepherd 6).

Through physical exertion we are skewing, turning aslant, muddying the reciprocity. It's the sideways-forward glance that is required and this must surely be achieved through closer appreciation of the sensual. This isn't about our mind and body unbinding from each other or our 'whole'

selves unbinding from reality; we must look closer to be able to see that the unbinding is taking place differently. This unbinding is in actual fact a freeing up of our receptivity:

one walks the flesh transparent. But no metaphor, transparent, or light as air, is adequate. The body is not made negligible, but paramount. Flesh is not annihilated but fulfilled. One is not bodiless, but essential body [...] I have walked out of the body and into the mountain. (Shepherd 83)

This attunement to sensuality is part of our parrhesiastic relationship to landscape and through this relationship "we begin to turn inside-out, loosening the psyche from its confinement within a strictly human sphere, freeing sentience to return to the sensible world that contains us" (Abram 262). One way to achieve this attunement is through art. In a 1999 review of a Hamish Fulton exhibition John Haldane expresses concern for the neglect of landscape in contemporary British art. With artists such as Andy Goldsworthy and Chris Drury Haldane identifies a "coffee-table" appeal that loses the urgency of the topic to their "highly aesthetic surfaces"(8). Alternatively landscape art can slip towards Jamie's "foreshortened definition of nature" where we ignore "the bacteria that can pull the rug from under us" (24). Haldane's hopes for landscape are lifted by the work of Long and Fulton and he focuses his attention on Fulton in particular, lamenting the lack of a major British retrospective of his work.

This lack has now been addressed (by Tate Britain's *Walking Journey* in 2002) yet somehow "new thinking about art and the land" has not been stimulated in the way that Haldane hoped for and treatment of the land, when it is there, in British art can become trapped within the gallery walls and the associated aesthetic override or side-tracked to 'coffee-table' acceptability (10). A new wave of British nature writing is blossoming and reinventing our relationship with landscape and, as with the original

Romantic Movement, perhaps we can hope that the visual arts will follow the literary lead. Turner followed in Thomson's footsteps.<sup>816</sup> Long and Fulton are pioneers but others must follow.

Put  
a foot on a rock. Choose

one route through millions of pebbles. Follow  
clearly seen, sometimes pain-filled paths, or abandon  
people's spoor & artefact. (Goodwin 9)

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<sup>816</sup> J.M.W. Turner was heavily influenced by the poetry of James Thomson (1700-1748). For Turner Thomson's approach opened up a "mode of vision that looked always for movement, light change, contrasts of all kinds in landscape [and] the system of art-values that lay behind this mode" (Lindsay 60). Moreover, Thomson in his poetry "wants the image that impacts and expresses motion, change" - a sentiment that finds much sympathy in the ground covered by this article (64).

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## APPENDIX II

### *editing suite*

de vries: our use of language is at the cost of a loss of unity “but still i am talking”<sup>817</sup>

Tim Robinson, as he listens to the wind in Connemara concentrates on “the language we breathe”

Sound elicits an image...doesn't represent it. Deleuze, *Image of Thought*

For Derrida the pneumatological link between breath and speaking becomes problematic as it sets up speech (or voice) as privileged in Western thought since Socrates (at the expense of writing which becomes, in the words of Rousseau, “That dangerous supplement”); speech reinforces the metaphysics of presence that phenomenologically moors meaning to a privileged subject.<sup>818</sup> Derrida will use writing to challenge this arrangement.

Derrida's *La Voix et le Phénomène* has been translated into English as both *Speech and Phenomena* and *Voice and Phenomena*. The decision of one translator to translate *voix* as ‘speech’ rather than ‘voice’ removes the

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<sup>817</sup> Gooding, *de vries*, 15.

<sup>818</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 17-18 and 141-64.

slipperiness of this latter term (that Elbow has been exploring). The other translator's choice emphasises the physical, bodily act of speaking rather than embracing the polyphony of beyond-body meanings present in the term ‘voice’.

Voice as more/other than style (Deleuze)

“to be a sort of stranger *within* his own language” D&G on Kafka (26)

Subtend: from Latin *subtendere* "to stretch underneath," from *sub* "under" + *tendere* "to stretch," from PIE root \*ten- "to stretch."

### *VIII | on edge*

Messiness / roughness (Mandelbrot) but ‘perfectly’ formed

fractals. *Logic of Sense* [9-10]

Exertion (as fractal?) resistance

anxiety – from L. *angere, angere* "to choke, squeeze," Anxiety forming from ‘nothing’ – cause of its own symptoms

risk of failing

TENSION, INTENSITY

Intensity: intense + ity. Intense: early 15c., of situations or qualities, "great, extreme," from Old French *intense* (13c.), from Latin *intensus* "stretched, strained, high-strung, tight," originally past participle of *intendere* in its literal sense of "stretch out, strain".

Askwith [*Feet in Clouds?*] on fell-running's dissatisfaction with a summit-only blinkered approach [5]. Also Nan Shepherd in *Living Mountain*

Golding and poesis

mention Kate Briggs and Professor Tracy Mackenna.

Change of pace (exertion), variable, varying, detached, disconnected

embodied? research

Parrhesia – ability to sway influence (flow) NOT intuition

For many people, philosophy is something which is not 'made', but is pre-existent, ready-made in a prefabricated sky. However, philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object. It is no more abstract than its object. It is a practice of concepts, and it must be judged in the light of the other practices with which it interferes.<sup>819</sup>

It is at the level of the interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events.

[Cinema 2, 280]

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<sup>819</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 280.

## APPENDIX III

### *online sketchbook*

The online sketchbook can be found at:

**<https://romancingthebritishlandscape.wordpress.com>**

As of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 the blog contained 370 posts accumulating 2,990 views from 1,170 visitors.

## APPENDIX IV

### *glossary*

*askēsis*: Greek. This term translates directly as ‘exercise’ or ‘training’. This exercise has in turn come to imply a strict self-discipline as evidenced in the term ascetic (which also conveys a sense of austerity).

*athlos*: Greek. An *athlos* was a labour and in its adjective form implies pain and suffering. The root of the later term ‘athlete’ is found in *athlos*.

*becoming*: In Deleuzian thought *becoming* replaces being; the fixed, certain and stable world of being is replaced by the flow of *becoming*. *Becoming* is premised on what is not yet; *becoming-landscape* would not be fixed on the teleological certainty of one day being (or conquering) landscape but is instead concerned with permitting an awareness of difference.

*Cynic*: Cynicism was a school of thought that existed in Ancient Greek philosophy through the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C.E. However, definable characteristics of Cynicism can be traced through Stoicism and on into Christian thought but none of this has any direct relation to the modern word ‘cynic’ which in its decapitalisation is literally a beheading of the Cynic. See Chapter 1.II for a fuller discussion of the *Cynic*.

*epimeleia*: Greek. Care or attention and in the specific instance of *epimeleia heatou* (as explored by Foucault) is ‘care of the self’.

*logos*: Greek. Simply translates as idea, word or reason and is the root for the modern term ‘logic’. As an organised system of reason the Cynics distrusted *logos*.

*meta hodos*: The modern term ‘method’ derives from the Greek *meta* (‘in pursuit of’) and *hodos* (‘a method or system’).

*nomos*: Greek. The accepted customs of a society embracing such things as dress, diet, etiquette and even political or religious structures.

*parrhēsia*: Greek. A form of free speech or truth telling that requires a certain fearlessness (and trust) between speaker and receiver. It is a mode readily adopted by the Cynics and would be utilised in communicating with slaves and kings alike. See Chapter 1.III for a fuller discussion of *parrhēsia*.

*pēra*: Greek. Literally translating as ‘purse’, this is the Cynic’s travelling bag and contains all their worldly goods. More conceptually it comes to suggest the life of the Cynic and the beliefs carried with them.

*physis*: Greek. This term is simply translated into modern English as ‘nature’. However, this is an over-simplification of the original term which carries with it connotations of growth and is a much more fluid

concept when compared to a static nature to be gazed upon, conserved or abused.

*pneuma*: Greek. Literally ‘breath’, *pneuma* in Stoic thought is the life force (or spirit) of the world, of life.

*poiēsis*: Greek. Simply, it translates as ‘to make’. This is the activity of bringing into being something which did not previously exist (or was hidden). See Chapter 4.II for a fuller discussion of *poiēsis*.

*ponos*: Greek. This is both the ‘pain’ and the effort of work, of labour and was an important component of Cynic *askēsis*.

*talaipōria*: Greek. A term related to *askēsis*, *athlos* and *ponos*, being suggestive of hard labour, hardship and associated discomfort.

*tekhḗ*: or *technē*: Greek. Literally translates as ‘craftsmanship’ or ‘art’. Philosophically it indicates a knowledge that is applied through doing rather than abstract understanding. For Heidegger this informed skill is vital in *poiēsis*.

*typhos*: Greek. Literally translated *typhos* is ‘smoke’ but for the Cynics this ‘smoke’ is the haze induced by the fashions and conventions of society; a haze that obscures true thought.

TRIGGER: This old broom has had seventeen new heads and fourteen  
new handles in its time.

SID: How the hell can it be the same bloody broom then?

TRIGGER: Well here's a picture of it; what more proof do you need.<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>820</sup> *Only Fools and Horses*, "Heroes and Villains," directed by Tony Dow, written by John Sullivan, BBC, 25<sup>th</sup> December 1996.