NARRATIVE IN THE MARGINS

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Abstract

This practice-led thesis explores the process of visual notation as a means of developing narratives within the field of authorial illustration. It examines aspects of the notebook, in particular its spatial and temporal properties, and the ‘lived time’ of the author. The thesis considers the utilisation of both words and images in the notational process and, specifically, the use of marginal space within the notebook. As such it seeks to provide a greater understanding of the process.

Through the production of a digital portfolio the thesis reflects on how these qualities can be extended into screenbased artworks. It attempts to mirror the key charactistics identified in the process of notation with the spatial and temporal properties of the computer screen. In so doing it compares the lived time experience of the author with the temporal experience of the viewer.

Underpinning the thesis is a methodology which places emphasis on the keeping of research journals which provide a comprehensive record of the project’s inquiry. This methodology draws on existing approaches to reflective practice and is developed by ‘learning’ from the authorial illustrator’s process of notation.

Through its methodology and analysis the thesis seeks to contribute to the debate on the need for greater poetic inquiry within arts-based academic research, specifically in relation to the visual poetic as may be found in the author-illustrator’s notebook.

Foreword

This thesis is a joint submission, comprising portfolio and written dissertation. Both elements are contained on the CD.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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Research Questions

What are the spatial and temporal properties at work in the notational process, as exemplifed by the illustrator's notebook?

How can the visual qualities of the notebook be utilised in the production of screenbased artworks?

How does an understanding of these shared characteristics inform the development of academic research journals?

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List of Illustrations

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to consider the role and value of a visual poetic methodology within academic research, specifically within the field of the visual arts. It does so primarily by analysing the process of notation, as exemplified in the notebooks of the author-illustrator, exploring the process from spatial and temporal perspectives, i.e. the page-space and the subjective 'lived time' experience of the author-illustrator. The characteristics and qualities of notation identified are considered in relation to screenbased artworks – digital poems – developed for the thesis; as part of the analysis procedure the process of notation and the poems are considered in parallel, acting, as it were, by way of reciprocal interrogation. Based on this analysis the thesis suggests ways in which reflective journals, which may form a substantial part of an academic research project, may be creatively developed. In so doing the thesis will make the following claims to contribution:

• Through an analysis of spatial and temporal properties of the notebook, the thesis will provide a deeper understanding of the notational process;

• The thesis will contribute to the development of a research methodology that places emphasis on reflective journals;

• The thesis will contribute to the debate on the need for greater poetic enquiry within academic research.

Underpinning the research project is the view that within academic research – specifically but not exclusively in the visual arts – there is a need for a greater poetic approach in which more emphasis is placed on creative and imaginative thinking.

The context for the thesis is authorial illustration; this term refers to a practice in which the illustrator is often also the author of the work being illustrated (see *Context* for a fuller description). The author-illustrator provides a useful paradigm for this inquiry; in using the notebook as a means of developing narratives a parallel can be drawn with the researcher wanting to establish a creative methodology for a project. At the same time, as is discussed, the subject at the heart of the project – notation – is very much a cross-disciplinary process. To this end references will be made, as appropriate, to other visual art related fields.

The thesis is practice-led and consists of two elements – the written dissertation and a digital folio developed for the project, comprising electronic reproductions of the notebooks and research journals, and digital poems. The folio and the dissertation jointly make the thesis.

The methodology developed for the project has three interrelated strands – the symbiotic interrogation of the notebooks and poems; the development of supporting research journals; and, in a more informal sense, an attempt to 're-feel' the nature and character of the practice through the writing and language of the dissertation.

The dissertation begins by describing the methodology and context in greater detail, and presents a short literature review (*Chapter 1*). *Chapter 2* introduces a four stage model of the notation process which provides the basis for *Chapter 3*, which analyses the process from the perspective of the page-space, and *Chapter 4*, which does so from the 'lived time' experience of the author-illustrator. *Chapter 5* is devoted to the digital poems developed for the project. Again, these are considered in the light of the qualities discussed in relation to the notebook. *Chapter 6: Drawing Conclusions* provides a summary of the findings and considers how these may be applied to academic research journals.

Methodology

Page from *Proust's notebooks (undated)*

Page from *Livingston's notebooks (undated)*

Introduction

The methodology for this thesis is one of poetic enquiry within the context of an academic research framework. It seeks to follow the tried and tested procedural demands of a doctoral project yet also bring the strengths of an artistic methodology, i.e. knowing through making and knowing through reflection. It does this in part through the development of practice and in part by using the same creative processes (integral to the development of artworks) to develop a reflective dissertation. This, it is proposed, provides a re-feeling of the practice and in so doing answers the research questions and establishes a contribution to knowledge.

This approach has much in common with action research and parallels a generally accepted model within this context. Some reference will be made below to aspects of action research, though it is not intended to consider this in any great detail.

Concerning the poetic

To say that the methodology is one involving the poetic, and to follow it swiftly with a statement which incorporates the term 're-feeling', is enough to ring the alarm bells alerting the reader to ambiguities and non-commital statements ahead. The poetic is commonly perceived as equating with vagueness. But, as will be more fully discussed at the end of the dissertation (see *Chapter 6: Conclusion*), the opposite is true; poetry is primarily concerned with exactitude, though evolved from initially less precise processes such as intuitive thinking, speculations, approximations, serendipity:

> Poetry is the great enemy of chance, in spite of also being a daughter of chance and knowing that, in the last resort, chance will win the battle.[1 (p70)]

With the development of practice-based phds within the arts there has come the realisation in some quarters that the scientific model of research[I] may not only fail to fit with an art research project, but that this approach, in ignoring the poetic, misses out on creative possibilities and discovery:

> The institutions [of modern society and culture] ...in their flight from ambiguity, outlaw the primary mechanism of discursive creativity. Invention, after all, depends on equivocation – the possibility that something might mean something else.[2 (p9)]

The methodological stance taken in this thesis stems from the belief that an arts-based practitioner undertaking an academic research project should bring his or her creative skills of enquiry to the project, rather than leave them at the laboratory door and don the white coat. A poetic enquiry is not an idle meditation. Calvino, considering an auspicious image for the new millenium we are now in, chooses

> the sudden agile leap of the poet-philosopher who raises himself above the weight of the world, showing that with all his gravity he has the secret of lightness.[1 (p12)]

For Calvino, lightness is a intrinsic characteristic of good writing practice:

> Lightness for me goes with precision and determination, not with vagueness and the haphazard.[1 (p16)]

By lightness Calvino, quoting Paul Valéry, is suggesting the lightness of a bird, not a feather.[1 (p16)] Lightness, and lightness of thought, is the ability to act swiftly, to move freely. In the context of poetic research, this kind of action means that

> the imagination in research need not be just the site of intuitions but also of actions...The poetic can be considered as a dynamic process in which the imaginative course of practice can be developed as research....Poetic research engages with the notion of complexity, weaving together disparate elements in a complex and evolving structure.[3 (p4)]

This weaving together of thoughts and images is central to poetic activity. Walter Benjamin, in his essay on Proust, *[Illuminations:1968*] makes the etymological connection between textiles and writing with the word 'textum', meaning web. For Proust, says Benjamin, 'nothing was tight or durable enough.'[4 (p198)] His proofreading never corrected misprints in the galleys, instead all available space had been used for fresh text.

> One may even say that the intermittance of author and plot is only the reverse of the continuum of memory, the pattern on the back side of the tapestry.[4 (p198)]

The analogy of weaving to describe the creative element of research is a popular one, [II] as is the not dissimilar notion of the rhizome:

I. In being critical of conventional scientific research, it is not the intention of the thesis to set up a generalised view of science itself as a barren, uncreative field. As will be referenced during the dissertation, there are many fine examples of imaginative and poetic approaches to scientific thinking which can leave the artist way behind in the creative stakes.The scientific model of research that is being challenged here is contained within the conventional methods which move in a linear mode from problem to pre-determined outcomes.

II. For one of the most interesting uses of this analogy see Paul Carter's *Material Thinking* (2004)

> Poetic research is *rhizomatic* in nature. It sets out roots and shoots that break and reform, reproduce and transform.[3 (p4)]

Here, Rosenberg refers to poetic research that 'leaps between different points to irregular and evolving rules',[3 (p4)] echoing Calvino's poet-philosopher in action. But having proposed a case for the poetic, it is necessary to acknowledge that leaping – at some point – ideally involves landing on solid ground, and weaving needs a frame within which to operate. An academic research project which focusses solely on the poetic and ignores the value of conventional methods would, conceivably, rapidly lose its orientation and dynamic. The procedures used in traditional doctoral research provide a vital structure for the arts practitioner; they bring a rigour – not greater than but as important as the poetic – to the enquiry, and a direction. If an equilibrium can be developed between the conventional and the poetic, what does it mean in real terms for this thesis in respect of its methodology?

Stages of research

The methodology developed for, and during, this thesis is a process which seeks to utilise imaginative and creative poetic enquiry in a rigorous manner appropriate to a doctoral level of study, and to this end also earths the project within the conventions of a traditional thesis. The stages of the research process are:

1. Development of research questions
2. Establishing the field of study
3. Development of practice
4. Research reading
5. Analysis
6. Validation exercise
7. Refinement and conclusion drawing

The action research model, mentioned earlier in the introduction, consists of a roughly corresponding set of stages. In the context of action research, a project would begin with a review of current practice, identify an area of investigation, develop a way forward, review and modify through a series of iterations and in response to peer feedback (stage 6).

Though the elements of the thesis outlined above are stages, the term can be misleading if it suggests a chronological sequence. With the exception of stage 6, none of the other stages operate in isolation, but are developed in reference to one another. For example, the research questions were initially identified but are refined during the course of the project; the field of study is not finalised until near the end of the research; the practice and reading are mutually dependant; the analysis is ongoing. This, suggests Rosenberg, is typical of poetic research:

> In the case of the "poetic" the focal territory is found through a process. It is iterative, working in the space between substantiation and deviation,

> backgrounding and foregrounding happen in a dynamic process and this produces a research context. Poetic enquiry evolves its field of focus whereas conventional research sets in advance its focal channel. [3 (p5)]

Some of the stages need no greater clarification at this juncture – the research questions have already been presented, the field of study is to follow, and the term 'conclusion drawing' is self explanatory. The other stages do require further explanation; this will be done by considering three elements that make up the body of the methodology.

Three strands

1.ii.4. three strands

In stating that this project is practice-led, the thesis is declaring that not only is artwork developed as part of the research, as is common with other practice-led projects, but that the documentation and analysis are also orientated towards practice, or at least work from the experience that practice brings. As such, there are three key elements to the methodological process. Returning to the analogy of weaving, these can be described as three interrelated strands.

The first strand is the production of artwork – the sketchbooks and poems contained in the folio. Through their development these works seek to reveal answers to the research questions, as reflected in chapters 3 through to 6 of the dissertation, and to this extent can easily fit within the concept of practice-led research. But their production is not only the subject for analysis - it is also an analytical instrument in itself. As is discussed throughout the dissertation, the visual and temporal qualities of the notational process are re-rendered through the development of the digital poems, providing a greater understanding and clarification of notation. At the same time, an understanding of the spatial and temporal characteristics of the notational process sheds light upon the way the poems operate on the computer screen and in the way they are viewed. This reciprocal arrangement provides an analysis of commonalities through a symbiotic interrogation, providing information on the visual and temporal aspects behind the respective processes of production. In so doing the work seeks to establish a methodology that is not only poetic in nature but is concerned with the *visual poetic*.

The second strand to the methodology is the keeping of reflective journals throughout the duration of the research project. These, as is discussed in *Chapter 6: Drawing Conclusions*, take on board the principles and characteristics of the notational process; for example, the utilisation of marginal space, entries which are sometimes doodles, random thoughts, speculations, etc. As such, the journals fold back on the first strand, primarily in terms of the notation process but also in respect of the digital nature of the poems, and therefore become to an extent practice in themselves. They provide:

- a faithful account of the reflective approach undertaken;
- a record of the contextual and literature review searches;
- evidence of the problematizing and refinement of the research subject matter;
- a record of the evolution of the practice.

The keeping of journals is central to most reflective orientated research projects, and in the practice of action research.

> Action research is by definition *naturalistic* inquiry, in that it refers to "investigation of phenomena within and in relation to their naturally occurring contexts" (Willems and Raush, 1969:3). It is thus field study based, and can make optimum use of the principal method of field study inquiry – namely *field notes*. [5 (p10)]

The keeping of journals is not without its problems; issues around accuracy and accessibility often arise. The approach to journal keeping in this thesis attempts to go some way to resolving these matters by learning from the experience of the author-illustrator's notebook, the folding back approach mentioned above. Again, see *Chapter 6* for further discussion.

The third methodological strand is in the writing up of the dissertation.This process is an attempt to analyse the practice not through a dry analysis, overly dependent on theory, but through a *re-feeling* of the artwork. Susan Hiller, in considering research in relation to theory and practice, states

> I don't believe in theory, but I do believe in research and in experience and in knowledge that is embodied, not split off and relegated to the mind separately....What this means to me, according to my own experience, is that one needs to re-feel everything as an artist and not take up ideas and issues that are second-hand or generalized as any kind of truth to pin your work to. [6 (p123)] [III]

This notion of re-feeling resonates with the motive behind the writing of this dissertation. It is an attempt to re-experience the making of the artwork (the notation, poems and journals) not only from the perspective of analysis (though this is of central importance) but in the utilisation of a language that is empathetic to the works generated. This language returns us to the concept of poetic research, in which imagination and creativity are valuable means of revelation. Laurel Richardson (2000) argues for the writing stage of academic research to be not as 'writing up' but as creative inquiry. [7 (p929)]

> One reason, then, that some of our texts may be boring is that our sense of self is diminished as we are homogenized through professional socialization, rewards, and punishments. Homogenization occurs through the suppression of individual voices and the acceptance of the omniscient voice of science as if it were our own. How do we put ourselves in our own texts, and with what consequences? How do we nurture our own individuality and at the same time lay claim to "knowing" something? These are both philosophically and practically difficult problems.[7 (p925)]

Research by Katie Macleod (2007) into the relationship between the intellectual and the material practice in art has gone some way to answering these questions. Her research has located examples of inventive doctorates in Fine Art, such as *sidekick*, by Elizabeth Price (University of Leeds, 2000), in which 'the research art is also the research

III. At the same time Hiller acknowledges that thoughts and feelings are collective, and that there are 'social and cultural formations that generate knowledge'.[6 (p123)]

writing'.[8 (p1)] In this example, the written text is in the form of a highly idiosyncratic and reflexive address to the artwork:

> ...it [the writing] reflects on issues of value, truth, the provenance of ideas and the probity of an artist's relationship with her source material, that is, with its manufacture. It gently subverts the predicted assumptions of research data and findings, objective enquiry and consensual truths of research standards. [8 (p3)]

Whilst the writing developed for this thesis is more modest in ambition than Price's, it does attempt - in a natural and unforced manner - to use a voice which echoes that found in the artworks. The motive is pragmatic rather than posturing; it is not done for the sake of difference but in the belief that a poetic approach to writing up - with the demands of exactitude and invention that the poetic brings - can reveal more than might otherwise surface in a dry, detached process of writing. Far too little attention has been paid to this sort of approach, argues Macleod.[8 (p4)] One reason, perhaps, is the challenge of assessing such material in a research context:

> New forms of validity need to be evolved that are sensitive to poetic research; validity criteria that allow for the paralogic, the rhizomatic, the ironic and the voluptuous in creative and other practices. [3 (p8)]

One solution to this challenge is to adopt the five criteria proposed by Richardson for the justification of creative writing as appropriate to the 'writing up' stage of traditional doctoral research projects. Briefly, they are:

1. substantive contribution (does it contribute to a deeper understanding of a topic?);
2. aesthetic merit (this, she argues, doesn't reduce standards but adds another i.e. aesthetics);
3. reflexivity (how was the data gathered and how has the author's subjectivity been as both producer and product?);
4. impact (does the writing affect the reader emotionally and intellectually?);
5. expression of reality (does it seem true?). [7 (p936)]

These criteria can be seen not only in the dissertation writing but in the other two strands of the methodology – the notation-poems, and the reflective research journals. Though each strand functions in its own right, one also informs the others, not only in terms of what to say but how to say it. But with this sort of process, one language working with another, comes the potential risk, or at least potential accusation, that the methodology is highly subjective. An important element of the action research process is that of peer feedback, which can involve the setting up of a validation group to respond to an individual's research. This is a valuable way of testing the thesis's claims and methodology, and as such has been adopted by this research project. A panel of three expert readers, made up of academics and practitioners, have provided feedback to the thesis; these can be found in *Appendix IV*. The author's response to their critiques is also contained in the appendix.

Methodology as contribution to knowledge

The account of the methodology has gone into some detail, introducing important background information into current debates around the need for a poetic approach to research. This discussion is necessary at this juncture as it positions the writing and artwork that follow in the context of the poetic (in the case of the artwork, the visual poetic). In so doing, the thesis seeks to make a contribution to knowledge through the methodology adopted, as outlined below.

Contribution to knowledge

In respect of the contribution to knowledge there are three interrelated elements which centre around the thesis methodology. The research will:

• Through an analysis of spatial and temporal properties, provide a deeper understanding of the notational process. This wil be achieved through the symbiotic interrogation of the notebooks with the digital poems;

• Contribute to the development of a research methodology that places emphasis on reflective journals, based on an understanding of the notational process with its attendant visual poetic sensibility;

• Contribute to the debate on the need for greater poetic enquiry within academic research.

The above explicitly references two of the three methodological strands discussed above, i.e. the notation-poem analysis and the reflective journals. The third strand, that of a creative approach to writing up, is, in respect of its contribution, intended to be implicit. The writing will, as it were, speak for itself; it will not be the subject of analysis, but will function in a tacit manner in respect of poetic enquiry.

Contextual Review

1.iv. contextual review

Introduction

1.iv.1. introduction

Defining the context for this thesis is problematic. It may not seem a promising start to begin with such an admission, but the aim of the research project is not to manufacture false grounds and reference points in order to prove some argument which has little real value. Rather, it is an attempt to gain an understanding of the issues discussed through an honest search and candid reflection of the concerns that make up the practice submitted for the thesis. To this end, to position the project in a strictly defined arts discipline is counter to the approach – established in both the professional practice and pedadogic career – of the author. Having said that (to turn the argument back in the other direction) it is at the same time acknowledged that it is virtually impossible to proceed with a doctoral research project without first defining a context for the project.These opposing demands provide both the substance of the following discussion on context below, and a (positive) tension that underpins the dissertation throughout.

Defining a context

1.iv.2. defining a context

The thesis is by nature – by intent and execution – cross-disciplinary. Not in the sense that is currently being developed in the visual arts programmes of some UK universities and art schools, in which cross-disciplinary is little more than a tokenistic nod, but in a much more 'real' sense in which commonalities of concerns, process, materials and even contexts is acknowleged. Strip away defined borders and terms, often bureacratic in origin, and it is apparent – both in professional and educational practice – that there is often little difference in substance among disciplines. Even when it is admitted that there may be great similarity between some, the argument is put forward that it is the context that distinguishes one particular discipline from another. And whilst this may sometimes be the case, there are many instances to demonstrate the opposite. For example, David Shrigley is fine art trained but works in both a gallery context and in mainstream illustration contexts (editorial and books). By the same token, Russell Mills has an international reputation as an illustrator but also operates in non-traditional illustration situations, working with sculptural and audio installations, with an equally high international reputation in this field.

There is a need to reconsider the narrow defining of practices and to nurture a truer sense of the term 'cross-disciplinary'. One way to approach this is to consider art in terms of process. Paul Carter cites American artist Robert Morris's definition of art-making as 'a certain kind of behaviour',

> 'a complex of interactions involving factors of bodily possibility, the nature of materials and physical laws, the temporal dimensions of process and perception, as well as resultant static images'. Defined as process, the 'artificiality of media-based distinctions (painting, sculpture, dance, etc.) falls away'.[2 (p8)]

If art is, in part, concerned with originality, and if academic research is concerned with

new knowledge, then fostering a more open understanding of the arts and, specifically in relation to this discussion, of the contexts in which processes can be found, can lead to greater creative enquiry, both in terms of practice and research:

> Identifying research with process, and both with invention, they all at their best produce a knowledge that, as Serres puts it, expands 'Irregularly, from the local to the global'; a knowledge that 'pulsates, dances, trembles, vibrates, scintillates like a curtain of flames'; that establishes a ground that will 'found local inventions to come'.[2 (p8)]

Any research project which seeks to analyse commonalities of practice or process may or may not pulsate and dance, but it will to some extent be cross-disciplinary itself. This is very much the case of this particular thesis, whose concern for the process of notation and, within this, for a visual poetic approach to research, is potentially as applicable to the area of filmmaking as it is to textiles. The process of maintaining sketchbooks is almost ubiquitous in most if not all visual arts programmes, at least the healthy ones. This aligning of context with process returns the discussion to the opening statement above in regards to the problem of definition. Any attempt to define a context which spans all disciplines would be unworkable in terms of scale and would not provide the focus necessary with which to advance the research inquiry. To this end, some workable definition of a context must be established. This involves a contraction, albeit a gentle one, by considering the term 'authorial illustration'.

Authorial illustration

1.iv.3. authorial illustration

'Authorial illustration' refers to a type of illustration work in which the illustrator takes some responsibility for the content of a story. It often describes longer term projects, such as graphic novels and children's books, and can range in form from the traditional book to installation and New Media. As a term, it first gained some popularity in the 1990s (though in practice it has been around much longer). Illustration, in the eyes of many practitioners, was in the doldrums during the earlier part of the decade, subject as it was to stagnant fees, difficult contracts and the challenge of stock illustration. In 1998 Véronique Vienne called for illustrators to

> shed their artistic persona and reposition themselves as authors – as equal partners in the story-telling process.[9]

Rob Mason believes that by the late 80s and early 90s many working in this field had 'lost the authorial aspect of being an illustrator', but by the late 90s there were signs of a re-emergence of authorial work.[10 (pp 38-39)] Today, there is in Britain the growth of post graduate courses specialising in authorial illustration, most notably at University College Falmouth.

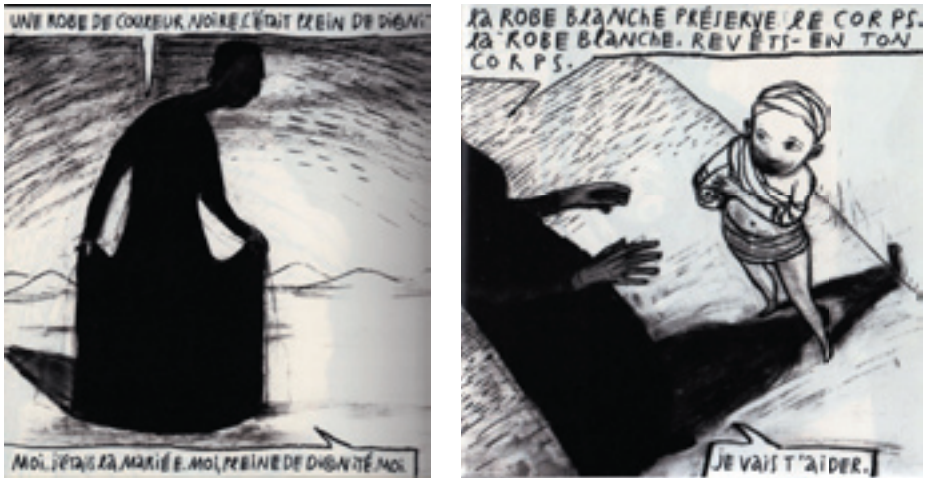
Authorial illustration is, to put it simply, concerned with the telling of stories – generally, but not by any means exclusively, visual in nature – whose narrative is commonly generated by the illustrator him/herself. If that statement is unpacked in a very rudimentary and obvious fashion, two key characterisitcs can be identified – firstly,

concern for the narrative; secondly, communicating through the (predominantly) visual. (The visual here includes not only the pictorial but the visual text – see *Chapter 3* for further discussion on this). Authorial illustration has its roots in the work of many of the great illustrators - Mervyn Peake, Edward Lear, Heath Robinson, Edward Gorey; among the many working in that tradition today are Posy Simmonds, Graham Rawle, Audrey Niffenegger, Paul Slater, Andrzej Klimowski, Henrik Drescher, Benoit Jacques, the list goes on. What has been seen - in commercial terms - as a niche market in recent years is changing. In addition to the underground, comic art and graphic novel that has retained and nurtured a cult following (for example, *Drawn and Quarterly* in Canada) there is a revival of authorial illustration in mainstream publishing. Jonathan Cape is perhaps the most notable example of this, with an impressive folio of highly original and commercially successful publications, from the hands of authorial illustrators such as Raymond Briggs, Daniel Clowes, Simone Lia, Chris Ware and Joe Sacco.

The potential difficulty with the definition of authorial illustration above is that artists and craftsmen and women working in other fields may claim that this is also what they do. Of course, this is not a difficulty but the point of the argument. Authorial illustration is inherently cross-disciplinary; produced by illustrators but also, for example, by 'fine artists'. Its ability to cross boundaries and exist in a wide variety of contexts, all the time concerned with narrative, provides a route which the project can use to negotiate a way forward. It means that while the thesis is predominantly concerned with the archetypal authorial illustrator (that is, those who operate from a starting point of traditional illustration) the thesis is able to refer to artists who may not call themselves authorial illustrators but whose work, nonetheless, provides useful parallels and may contain characteristics with the more traditional view of illustration:

Left: Boyd Webb: Lung (1983); above: Hergé: from *Red Rackham's Treasure (1945). In the great post modern cultural medley the distinctions between 'high' and 'low' art are blurred. Webb's gallery-based photographs take their inspiration from television. The graphic children's novel format (and films) of Tintin belie a complexity of form and draughtsmanship.*

But it is not only authorial illustration's refusal to acknowledge narrow discipline-specific conventions that makes it an appropriate focus for the project. The authorial illustrator is often keen to retain the language of the notebook in the final product, with its combined use of the pictorial and the written, and often sequence:



Anke Feuchtenberger: from *La Putain P Fait Sa Ronde (2003)*

Or, equally, in a single image:

John Glasham: Genius (1979)

In this wonderful illustration above, Glasham demonstrates the uninhibited freedom of drawing that the notebook offers (see *Chapter 3*) with the accompanying written notation.

This leads to a further reason for locating the thesis, concerned as it is with notation, within the context of authorial illustration. For not only might the authorial illustrator enjoy the visual language of the notebook, but it can sometimes be the case that the content of the notebook – whether fact or fiction – becomes the published artifact:

Left: *Mervyn Peake:* from *Letters From A Lost Uncle (1948)*
Above: *Dominique Goblet:* from *Pastrami (2007)*

This diaristic approach to narrative is, again, by no means exclusive to one discipline (if 'discipline' has not yet quite melted away as a term). Contemporary fine art is currently enjoying a love affair with the diary or sketchbook as finished artifact, such as in the work of Mike Nelson, Frances Stark, Tracey Emin and Susan Hiller. Commenting on this development, Ryan says the sketchbook is:

> no longer an object of curiosity to be found in the artist's studio after their death. .....The boundaries between the private, the personal and the public are being shifted. [11]

John Vernon Lord: from *John's Journal Jottings (2009)*

The authorial illustrator may take issue with this perceived shift. For him/her, this gap between the two worlds of the internal and external was bridged a long time ago, though with more modesty, less affectation and less fanfare, and continues to be a valuable source material.

In seeking to establish authorial illustration as the frame of reference for the project, it is important to reiterate that the thesis does seek to analyse a process (notation) which is still, as said above, cross-disciplinary. To this end, to stress again, the thesis will refer to works and artists in other related art disciplines. Further,

it will also make reference to examples of work which may share the visual notational characteristics of authorial illustration but whose production may not be from within a conventional visual arts practice nor, in some examples, from within any professional context. Where it is from another professional context, this may, for example, be from the field of science or literature.The latter has a particular relevance for two reasons. Firstly, one of the appeals of illustration is its long (and distinguished) association with literature. The dissertation throughout relies on references from this field, both in terms of how writers work and what they have to say on the subject under discussion. Secondly, the artworks generated for the thesis are illustrations, but ones which use visual text. This is evident both in the examples of the sketchbooks and, more obviously, in the digital poems discussed in *Chapter 5.* The development of narratives from the sketchbooks into digital poems raises another issue that should be addressed at this early juncture. The poems are positioned within the context of authorial illustration but could equally be seen within the field of visual and e-poetry. *Chapter 5* acknowledges the influence of visual poetry on the artwork in the folio and provides some points of reference to this field, but the thesis is not primarily concerned with the practice nor the current debates within it.

The author-illustrator **1.iv.4. the author-illustrator**

Given the literary dimension to the research, it is proposed that a slight refinement of the term authorial illustration be made. The nature of the artwork generated for this research project, with its emphasis on the visual text (both in the poetry and to some degree the notebooks), and the literary leaning of the dissertation, with its references and creative approach to writing up, gives some substance to the notion of the author as writer as well as illustrator. Umberto Eco, predicting (15 years ago) the future of literature, identified one potential form as being the 'free roving scribbles' of his students, who used the page as 'a combined exercise in graphics and poetry'.[12 (p175)] This neatly epitomises the character of many a notebook belonging to the author-cum-illustrator, and to the published work that is developed from its pages. For this reason, 'author-illustrator' may be a closer approximation in seeking the appropriate nomenclature. If nothing else, it provides a mental picture of writer-draughtsman/woman, an image which the thesis is keen to maintain, partly in recognition of the importance of the writing (in the artwork and approach to the writing of the dissertation) and also to acknowledge the importance of both the pictorial and the written word. Having said that, the term 'author-illustrator' will occasionally be replaced with the terms 'artist', 'illustrator', 'author' to remind the reader of the transdisciplinary nature of the subject under discussion.

Literature Review

1.v. literature review

Introduction

1.v.1. introduction

The structure of the literature review developed for the thesis echoes – perhaps unsurprisingly – the shape of the contextual review discussed above. In the same way the latter seeks to maintain a balance between a focus on a specific context (authorial illustration) and crossing boundaries to establish a triangulated position with which to proceed, so, too, the literature review has a range of referents across diverse but related fields of study. The added difficulty for the literature review is that there is relatively little textual information to be had on the subject of illustration, let alone authorial illustration.

The structure of this brief review is constellation-like in form. This notion has been adapted from a concept used in visual poetry, firstly by Mallarmé; constellation in this context is defined as 'a playful area of fixed dimensions'.[13 (p43)] Confronted with a multitude of texts when working across disciplines, one needs to use an astronomer's gaze to identify the relevant pattern of stars among the many thousands in the night sky. In the case of this literature review, this entails identifiying specific texts which have influenced and shaped the research, both the practice and the written dissertation, and which establish four key threads that run through the thesis, namely narrative, lived time of the author, visual poetics and notebooks (with drawing). These texts act like hubs around which other texts revolve, the analogy of satellites or moons in gravitational orbit an easy extension of the constellation image. Indeed, hopefully so visual and easy on the mind is this concept that it is not necessary to patronise the reader with confusing and ugly mindmap-like diagrams which consist of overlapping oval shapes schematised in varying tonal degrees. These are often evoked at this point in a dissertation and more often than not tend to state the obvious in an unnecessarily complex and heavy handed manner.

Authorial Illustration

1.v. 2. authorial illustration

As indicated, the field of authorial illustration, though currently enjoying a resurgence of interest and activity in recent years, has as yet little supporting academic research. Broadening the subject out to illustration in general doesn't much help; the majority of texts tend to be manuals on the practicalities of being a commercial illustrator. Among these a notable example is Alan Male's *Illustration: A Theoretical and Contextual Perspective* (2007). The leaning towards the pragmatic is understandable given the vocational nature which has dominated the discipline, but this leaves the number of more in-depth analyses of the subject countable on one hand. Among these are Goldsmith's *Research into Illustration: An Approach and a Review* (1984), Willows' *The Psychology of Illustration* (1987), and Hillis Miller's *Illustration* (1992), the latter two providing some useful discussion for this thesis in regard to the inscription process (see *Chapter 3: Space and Gesture* of this thesis) and more generally to the word-image relationship. But these texts, which tend to focus on the functionality of illustrations – their perception, communication, interpretation and relationship with written texts

– do not provide the substance required for this literature review. Instead, as mentioned above, the project is reliant on research-themed hubs which connect through the constellation-like formation.

Narratology and Proust

1.v.3. narratology and proust

Underpinning one of the thesis's central themes - that of the notational process as exemplified in the author-illustrator's notebook - is concern for the narrative. It is suggested (see *Chapter 2*) that it is the search for and development of a narrative that drives the activity within the pages of the notebook (though not necessarily in a linear forward motion); that is, a coherent and externalised story is commonly the end goal of the author-illustrator who, through doodles, observation, imagination, reflection and iteration gains purchase on an idea. Though narrative as goal is not under analysis (it is, however, as suggested in *Chapter 2*, made manifest in the visual poems in *Appendix II* of the digital portfolio), it does act as a backdrop to the research project as a whole; the texts of writers and their working methods referenced throughout the thesis.

Any reader of narratology cannot proceed far before realising that all roads lead to Proust. *In Search of Lost Time* (Proust 2002, [1934]) is generally accepted as one of the major, if not the major, European novels.[I] On one level the story is epic in scale – 3,500 or so pages and with it, epic sentences. Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1972) and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1983) employs *In Search of Lost Time* as a means of analysing narrative structure. For Genette narratology is the study of the relationship between narrative and story; using as a basis Todorov's *The Poetics of Prose* (1977), Genette establishes a series of categorisations, including mood, order, duration and frequency. The latter, in which an event in a story is retold several times throughout a narrative, is a key feature of Proust, and this iterative process has some bearing on this thesis. Genette's essential concern is, as Jonathan Cullen states, with the marginal or supplementary,[14 (p13)] and it is interesting to note Genette's observation that Proust's lifelong labour with *In Search of Lost Time* was in part the product of some 80 notebooks he developed. In *Time and Sense* (1998) Julie Kristeva explores Proust's approach to notation in depth through an analysis of the final sentence in *Time Regained*, revealing the intensely complex iterative process at work, made visible in the margins and crossings out in his notebooks. These provide an intriguing insight to the architecture that underpins the sentence.

For many commentators the Proustian project is one primarily concerned with involuntary memory – Walter Benjamin explores this in *Illuminations* (1968), suggesting that it required a great act of memory on the part of Proust as author in developing the narrative (some mnemonic errors are still in evidence in the final volume, *Time Regained*). It is equally the case that, given the time required to read the entire text, Proust invokes, nurtures and makes demands upon the reader's memory. Epstein considers Proust's theory of conscious experience and the role of involuntary memory from the perspective of cognitive neuroscience in *Consciousness, art and the brain: Lessons from Marcel Proust* (2002). But Deleuze, in *Proust and Signs* (1972) suggests that the novel is not based on 'an exposition of involuntary memory, but the narrative

I. The version of *In Search of Lost Time* referenced throughout the dissertation is the 2002 edition published by Vintage (London). This is a further revised version by DJ Enright of Terence Kilmartin's revision of CK Scott Moncrieff's translation. The original volumes were published at different times, the first before 1914 and the last two after Proust's death in 1922.

The version used in the dissertation consists of six volumes. The referencing system will prefix the page number with the volume number, e.g. (i.p32) refers to page 32 of *Swann's Way*.

of an apprenticeship'.[15 (p3)] This apprenticeship is to signs, inasmuch that learning is essentially concerned with signs. The novel, suggests Deleuze, is an exploration of different worlds of signs that intersect - these worlds being worldliness, love and sensuous impressions. Arguably the greatest commentator on Proust is Proust himself, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why *In Search of Lost Time* is such a *tour de force*. For it manages to combine an analysis of memory, and indeed Deleuze's apprenticeship of signs, with a complex yet highly engaging – to put it simply – story, and throughout the thousands of pages Proust is able to step out of the narrative and discuss the former through the latter.

Time and St Augustine

1.v.4. time and st augustine

'Lived time' refers to the subjective temporal experience of both author (see chapters 2 to 4) and reader (*Chapter 5*), and as such is a key concept throughout the thesis. At the same time it is not the task of the dissertation to consider, in the broadest sense, the very nature of time itself. To narrow the scope in order to have some workable and succinct understanding of lived time, the dissertation relies on St Augustine's famous reflection on the nature of time, as decribed in *Confessions* (1992). [II] Though Augustine's underlying motive is not shared with this thesis (the latter, essentially, is only concerned with the modest notions of writing and reading, unlike Augustine's search for an understanding of eternity) his description of subjective time, with its interdependant temporal phases of attention, memory and expectation, does provide an important structure for this research project. In considering the vital relationship between time and narrative, Paul Riceour sets the Augustinian theory against Aristotle's theory of plot in *Time and Narrative* (1983). Though his central thesis is not pertinent to this research project, his analysis of Augustine's theory is of significance. Here, he describes Augustine's description as the three-fold present model of time. In his analysis Riceour references Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1926, 1962), specifically in relation to the concept of 'within-time-ness', a temporal structure that defies a linear 'flattening' of time into a series of 'nows'.[16 (p62)] The mercurial nature of 'nowness' is considered by George Kubler in *The Shape of Time: Remarks on The History of Things* (1962), an inspiring look at the nature of historical change, covering concepts such as self-signals and adherent signals (the shift in narrative descriptions through iteration) and the elusiveness of actuality. Consideration of memory has already been discussed in relation to Proust, but it is important to acknowledge here the work of Bergson, including *Matter and Memory* (2004 [1912]) and *Creative Evolution* (1998 [1911]). In *The Art of Memory* (1966) Yates contextualises Augustine's understanding of memory in the Greek art of mnenomic training. The technique involved the impressing of images and – specifically – places on memory, and Yates finds evidence in Augustine's language – 'the fields and spacious palaces' of memory' and 'large and boundless chamber' – to support this view.[17 (pp45-47)] By way of slight but pertinent digression in respect of this dissertation, Yates highlights Aristotle's use of mental association (though, as he points out, Aristotle never uses this term), which is believed to be the first formulation of the laws of association.[17 (p34)] And, as a further digression, Yates also refers to Victor Hugo's 'invisible cathedrals of memory of the past' in his use of buildings as metaphors within his novels.[17 (p124)] As illustrated in *Chapter 3* of this dissertation, Hugo's preoccupation

II. This passage is quoted in full in *Chapter 4 .iii.Tri-temporality*

with buildings is also witnessed in his paintings. Marc Augé's *Oblivion* (2004) also explores memory but as a process that remains through the erosive nature of time passing. It is, in this sense, closer to the Proustian notion of memory.

In the discussion on lived time in chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation, some consideration is given to the experience of daydreaming, both in respect of the author and the reader. Gilhooly's *Creative Thinking: Directed, Undirected and Creative* (1988) provides a valuable overview of this and other thought processes from the perspective of cognitive psychology, countering Freud's view of the phenomena in *Creative Writers and Day-dreaming* in *The Complete Psychoanalytical works of Sigmund Freud vol. ix* (1959). In respect of the physical manifestation of the daydream, that of the doodle (see *Chapter 4*), Marion Milner's *On Not Being Able To Paint* (1957) provides an analysis of what she describes as contemplative action from the twin perspective of artist and psychologist. Daydreaming also features in Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958).

Notebooks and Klee

1.v.5. notebooks and klee

The third thematic hub in the literature review's constellation is concerned with the process of notation. In the context of the thesis this process is exemplified in the author-illustrator's notebooks, and is primarily concerned with the activity of drawing. Paul Klee's *Notebooks* (1956) are for drawing and notation what *In Search of Lost Time* is for narratology. Based on articles and lecture notes from his Bauhaus period, the *Notebooks* reflect Klee's personal analysis of his own creative process.

> Nothing is further from the artist's mind than the assumption that he is producing a scientific work, what is important to him is to specify a dimension or a perspective, to recognise the limits of space and time in which one's own existence manifests itself, to reweave the weft of the universe, from the starting point of one's own ego, with its will to make or to shape.[18 (p13)]

In this way, suggests Giulio Carlo Argan, Klee is similar to Leonardo in his concern for the manner of production rather than form as an 'immutable value'.[18 (p11)] Indeed, Leonardo acts as a key influence not only on Klee but so many artists since who have sought to use the notebook as a tool for enquiry. Leonardo's obsession in this regard is self evident, and one only needs to take even a cursory glance at his notebooks to see his mind, and with it his analytical investigations, at work.The notebooks consist of five thousand pages, and were developed during the last thirty or so years of his life. As Calvino points out, with the passing years Leonardo gave up painting and articulated his ideas through writing and drawing, as 'if following the thread of a single discourse in drawings and in words'. [1 (p79)]

The *Notebooks* establishes Klee's position as artist and teacher and, in respect of this thesis, reinforces – through practical demonstration – the emphasis on poetic enquiry. Indeed, suggests Argan, Klee's poetics can be historically linked to the work of Mallarmé and Rilke, through which run the themes of elusiveness, uncertainties and the emptiness of reality. The particular interest of the *Notebooks* to this thesis is Klee's

written and visual discussion of the drawn line becoming active through the application of the pencil (see *Chapter 3*). The reflections on this are also referenced in many other contemporary texts on drawing, including *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act* (2003),which includes essays by Jean Fisher, Avis Newman and Norman Bryson, and particularly John Berger's *Berger On Drawing* (2007). There are, of course, a multitude of other texts on drawing – a list too long for this brief review. Among them, though, and worthy of mention, are Deanna Petherbridge's *The Primacy of Drawing* (1991) and Michael Craig-Martin's *Drawing The Line* (1995), both part of the South Bank Centre's National Touring Exhibitions, *Vitamin D* (2005) which reflects the more recent renewal of interest in drawing in the contemporary fine art world, Andrew Graham Dixon's television series *The Secret of Drawing* (2005) and the Tracey drawing research centre (www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ac/tracey/).

Finally, revolving around the notebook-notation hub, is André Leroi-Gourhan's *Gesture and Speech* (1993 [1964]). This influential text charts the evolution of mankind through the development of the hand and brain, specifically in relation to communication and the new technologies that shaped language, writing and art. Of specific interest to this thesis is Leroi-Gourhan's account of the birth of graphism and with it the freeing of memory.

Visual poetics and Mallarmé

1.v. 6. visual poetics and mallarmé

Though the context of the thesis is not visual poetry, nonetheless this field has some bearing upon the project given the digital poems developed for *Chapter 5* and, equally importantly, the visual sensibility at work in such poetry permeates the notebooks developed during the project. To this extent, it is necessary to briefly background the thesis with significant texts in this area. With this in mind, the hub is Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897). This poem, which is referenced throughout the dissertation, has been a source of influence on much of what has followed in respect of visual poetry and more recently e-poetry (also known as digital poetry). Among the commentaries on *Un coup de dés* is the work of Penny Florence, including her *Mallarmé, Manet and Redon: Visual and Aural Signs and The Generation of Meaning* (1986), Malcolm Bowie's *Mallarmé And The Art Of Being Difficult* (1978) and Graham Robb's *Unlocking Mallarmé* (1996). Mallarmé's work is also under discussion in *Experimental-Visual-Concrete: Avant-garde Poetry Since The 1960s*, edited by K David Jackson, Eric Vos and Johanna Drucker (1996). The book examines the major critical issues of experimental poetic texts, something which Drucker revisits in *Figuring the Word: Essays On Books, Writing, and Visual Poetics* (1998). Other important texts in this area include Mary Ellen Solt's *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (1968), Emmett Williams' *Anthology of Concrete Poetry* (1967) and Dick Higgins' *A Short History of Pattern Poetry* (1987).

In respect of digital poetry, a comprehensive range of work and criticism can be found at The Electronic Poetry Centre at SUNY Buffalo (www.epc.buffalo.edu/). *The Aesthetics of Digital Poetry* (2004), edited by Friedrich H. Block, Christian Heibach and Karin Wenz, profiles the contemporary debate on e-poetry, specifically in relation

to shifts in reception and authorship. Finally, pre-dating these texts is Yin Yin Wong's important *Temporal Typography* (1995), which examines the characteristics of kinetic screenbased text.

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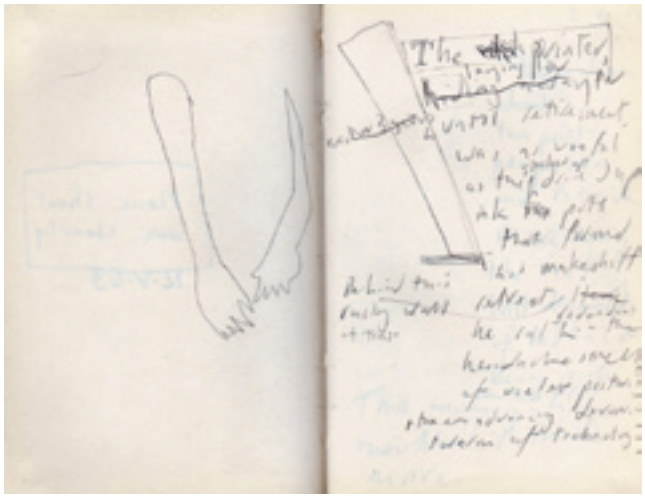
Introduction

The subject under consideration in the first part of this dissertation is the notational process found in the typical author-illustrator's notebook. The word 'typical' is used with some reservation; for every author and illustrator there may be a difference in method, however significant or minor. Indeed, idiosyncracies are part of the appeal and fascination of the artists' notebooks, each providing some glimpse of the mind and hand at work. At the same time, the variation in style and habit, reinforced by notebooks which can vary from the organised to the seemingly haphazard, present an initial dilemma if the analysis is to be in any way systematic.



Left: *John Vernon Lord:* from *John's Journal Jottings (2009)*
Above: *From the author's notebooks*

To approach the research questions posited above, a framework needs to be established which can accommodate variation but also locate commonalities. This will enable identification of the spatial and temporal qualities raised in the first question, enabling the second (of their utilisation in screenbased artworks) and third (how they might inform academic research journals), to be answered. To this end this chapter proposes a model of notation with which an author-illustrator may empathise without doing violence, or at least injustice, to his/her particular creative ways. The model put forward is a four-stage one comprising motivation, displacement, purchase and consolidation. As is discussed, it echoes a similar framework of creative thinking developed in the field of cognitive psychology. Before this, consideration is first given to the purpose of the author-illustrator's notebook. Although this again may vary from person to person, it is proposed that one common function is to feed and develop narrative ideas. As will be seen below, this basic objective – of telling a story – can be described as an 'ill-structured' problem.

Narrative and the sketchbook

Definition

n.ota.tion *n.* [< L. < *notare*, to NOTE] 1. the use of a system of signs or symbols for words, quantities, etc. 2. any such system used in algebra, music, etc. 3. a brief note jotted down 4. [Rare] the noting of something in writing – no.ta'tion.al adj.

Narrative as an ill-structured problem

The purpose behind maintaining a notebook may vary from one author-illustrator to another. For one it may be a means of keeping a shopping list of ideas, perhaps jotting down drawings or words as memos; for another it may record external objects, landscapes, etc., for future application; for another it may be a way of developing a specific fiction; for yet another it may document an event, perhaps one's own life. If there is a way of reducing these various activities into one workable and common aim, it may be said that all share an interest in using the notebook to *develop and articulate a narrative*, whatever scale (for example, a one-off drawing of an 'instant' or event, a poem, a 'short story', graphic novel, autobiography, etc.), and for whatever ultimate purpose (publication or personal record). If this is so, the challenge – and the reason visual notation can be an essential process – is in the fact that, in cognitive science terms, developing a narrative can be described as an 'ill-structured problem'. [1 (p78)]

The idea of dividing problems into 'well-structured' and 'ill-structured' was first introduced by Reitman.[1 (p77)] Goel cites tic-tac-toe, or noughts and crosses, as an example of a well-structured problem in that, as with most games, each component is well defined, such as the goal, the rules and the 'transformation function' (in this instance, to place your mark on any of the nine blank squares). Writing a short story, on the other hand, is an ill-structured problem, along with, for example, composing a fugue or designing a building. They are all ill-structured because the 'invariant characteristic is the lack of information'.[1 (p78)] In the case of the story, how long should it be, what is the plot, how will it end, what will be the relationship between image and text on the page? Following Reitman's analysis, states Goel, the design problem became identified with the ill-structured problem.

Goel uses the ill-structured design problem as the basis for arguing that, in order to solve design challenges, designers cannot rely on rigid systems of problem solving, as put forward by the Computational Theory of Mind hypothesis (CTM) [I] but need to use '*external* symbol systems that lack the CTM-properties'.[1 (p76)] In other words, they resort to sketching. This is very much in step with Arnheim's argument that

> …drawings, paintings, and other similar devices serve not simply to translate finished thoughts into visible models but are also an aid in the process of working out solutions of problems.[2 (p129)]

In a study using two groups of graphic designers and the same task (to design a

I. The Computational Theory of Mind hypothesis claims that cognitive processes are 'computational processes and require a representational medium - *a language of thought* - in which to represent information and to carry out computations'.[1 (p1)] Importantly, in respect of the present discussion, CTM is characterised as being 'rigid, precise, unambiguous and determinate'. [1 (p57)]

poster), one group had to generate solutions through sketching on paper and the other by working directly on a computer.[1 (p193)] Results from the experiment suggested that designing directly on the computer seemed to 'fixate and stifle' further exploration whereas when a new idea was generated in sketching a number of variations quickly followed. The latter approach, 'thinking on paper', plays an important role in this form of open-ended, explorative cognitive process as a result, suggests Goel, of three key properties of notation:

1) by laying down these thoughts visibly – 'a dense ordering of symbols' – distinctions can be made more easily between them;
2) visual and conceptual ambiguities can arise on the page – 'Ambiguity is important because one does not want to crystallize ideas too early and freeze design development';
3) possibilities are less likely to be excluded prematurely and these may help to 'transform one *idea* into another'.[1 (p193)]

Additionally, for the author-illustrator, the notational process can also mean 'collecting' or sourcing references (external and/or internal images) and finding new forms of expression. To achieve this the notebook can and often does play a central role. In the next part the process of visual notation within the context of authorial illustration is outlined, extending the notions of the three functions suggested above.

Stages of visual notation in the illustrator's notebook

2.iii. stages of visual notation

As has already been emphasized, the danger of attempting to analyse visual notation is that it can lead to over-generalisation for what is so often an idiosyncratic process. Over-distillation in order to find universal commonalities would be too simplistic, a distortion of practice, and of little use. The real value of notebooks – both in terms of their aesthetic and function – is rooted in individual practice. Further, as will be suggested later (see *Chapter 6)*, simplification can lead to an overly prescriptive approach to journal keeping. Having said this, nonetheless, this section of the thesis will seek to identify general stages of notation with which, it is suggested, many author-illustrators would identify and for which, as will be described below, there is some scientific support.

Four stages of notation

Visual notation is an uneven process. Periods of creative inertia and inactivity may be followed by flurries of god-given inspiration, only to be followed by moments of huge self doubt, just before the temporary and short-lived realisation surfaces of one's own unique genius. And then the self-doubt again. In homage to Mallarmé, to whom we will come in due course, the visual notebook can be likened to a sea, sometimes becalmed, other times caught up in a thrilling storm, each page a wave carrying life (sometimes flotsam), made up of stops, starts, hesitations, revelations. Looking down on these crosscurrents and changing winds it is possible to sketch out a preliminary pattern which reflects the activity within the pages of the author-illustrator's notebook. As suggested above, the

goal of visual notation within this context is narrative development. With this in mind four stages may be initially sketched out:

motivation – the initial impulse to develop a narrative;

displacement – the seemingly non-productive stage of avoiding the problem of developing the narrative;

purchase – when the narrative starts to become manifest and some degree of momentum is established;

consolidation – when the narrative is resolved into a finished form.

The first three stages might reasonably be expected to be found within the notebook, and are therefore the subject of the analysis below. The fourth, consolidation, is traditionally in a form external to the notebook: i.e. ideas/images are worked up from a sketchbook into an artifact external to the notebook and for publication or exhibition. As this chapter is only concerned with the process within the sketchbook, consolidation will not be discussed. However, it is noted that it is still an essential stage of the process; without it the notebook may (arguably) lose direction and purpose (though, given the personal nature of sketchbooks, the lack of a goal may be part of the rationale behind such a project).

As part of the analysis below reference will be made to the field of cognitive psychology. In this regard, Gilhooly cites Wallas's four stage analysis of creative problem solving - preparation, incubation, illumination/inspiration and verification.[3] (p173) These, it is proposed, can roughly correspond to the stages of notation as follows:

motivation	-	preparation
displacement	-	incubation
purchase	-	illumination/inspiration
consolidation	-	verification

As such, Wallas' model will be referenced to help gain a better understanding of the notational process.

Motivation and the blank page

In the beginning was the word. In the beginning, for the post structuralist, was the discussion. But in reality, of course, in the beginning was neither the word nor the discussion - it was the blank:

> Mallarmé looks at a sheet of paper all day, fails to write a poem on it, sends the empty – if it may still be called that – sheet to his publisher as a poem.[4 (p164)]

Mallarmé is not alone. Few artists, whether illustrators, poets or painters, are indifferent to the blank sheet of paper, especially when it is the first page of a new notebook. The motivation stage of the notational process is suddenly arrested before thoughts and images even have a chance to become visible on paper. How individuals address the matter can vary considerably, but here are three common scenarios:

- artist spoils the page with a bold mark or two, or pastes in an object (acknowledges the curse of the first page and attempts to break it);
- artist turns to the next page (acknowledges curse, postpones dealing with it);
- artist rips out the page (in denial, but still acknowledges curse).

This motivation stage, it was proposed above, can be paralled with Wallas's preparation stage. Here, states Gilhooly

> the problem solver familiarizes himself with his problem and engages in conscious, effortful, systematic and usually fruitless work on the problem.[3 (p173)]

For the author-illustrator, a 'systematic approach' at this stage may consist of little more than clearing the desk, sharpening the pencil, removing the cellophane from the new sketchbook and turning to the first page, only to be met by the loaded blankness described above.

Reasons for lack of physical activity here may be 'merely' self censorship. For some, inscribing that first mark on the page, with all the attendant pressures of making it aesthetically, technically or expressively successful may overwhelm the ego. Whilst, it may be a space for freedom, nonetheless, in classic psychoanalytical terms, the ego functions as 'the agency of repression'[5 (p44)] and, within the pages of the notebook, no more so than on the first page. But, as with Mallarmé, the inactivity may also be caused by the nagging suspicion that the first blank page is not as empty as may be intially thought. This will be revisited in due course.

Displacement

Displacement is an activity well known to artists. It is considered an essential phase of creativity, and will more than likely involve a cup of tea. Or it may mean another task, such as a trip to the supermarket, or a game of tennis, checking emails, or a spot of tidying up the garden, all still involving that obligatory cuppa. Whilst it is easy to

be flippant about this stage, defined by Wallas as the 'incubation' stage, in which the creative job is put to one side and temporally ignored,

> Wallas suggested that this phase could be made more or less effective, depending on the intervening activity. Light work on minor problems or duties could be beneficial. Better still, he thought, was complete mental rest, coupled with mild exercise. [3 (p174)]

Many practitioners take this advice on board. During this phase, it has been hypothesized,[3 (p174)] unconscious work is carried out and as such is considered an important – vital, even – step. Despite this, however, incubation has not atttracted much experimental study:

> Incubation has largely resisted capture in the laboratory, although Murray and Denny (1969) and Fulgosi and Guilford (1968) did find some beneficial effects of incubation opportunities. Even if incubation opportunities do facilitate later solution, the mechanisms are not very clear.[3 (p194)]

Part of the problem in studying the notion of incubation is that it doesn't easily fit, from a temporal perspective, in laboratory experiments, there often not being enough time for appropriate incubation to take place. But anecdotally, artists often need to sit on an idea for long periods of time before it reaches the next stage of illumination, and, again, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the gestation or incubation period is essential. As to how incubation might profit the artist or, for that matter, problem solver, Gilhooly cites two main ideas[3 (p178)]: Poincaré (1980) suggests that ideas and thoughts, which initially surface in conscious preparatory work, continue to organise themselves in the subconscious state of incubation leading to a solution of combined ideas; by way of contrast, Woodworth and Scholsberg (1954) proposed that incubation was more a matter of 'decay' in which useless or misleading ideas rotted away during this stage.[3 (p178)] Both hypotheses, states Gilhooly, remain speculative and unresolved at present. In the meantime, the author-illustrator cannot always wait indefinitely for his/her muse. At some point it becomes necessary to break the spell of the first blank page. This may be partly achieved through simply turning to the second page of the notebook, but here the spectre of the blank page once more presents itself. There is nothing for it, inscription must take place.

Purchase

2.vi. purchase

In the beginning was blankness. For Paul Klee, in the beginning was movement:

> Things moved so to speak freely, neither in straight nor crooked lines. They may be thought of as simply moving, going where they wanted to go, for the sake of going, without aim, without will, without obedience, moving self-evidently, in a state of primal motion. [6 (p19)]

Above: *Paul Klee: Untitled (1940)*

Above: *Ceal Floyer: Ink on Paper (1999) [video still]. In this performance Floyer provides a beautiful take on Klee's notion of movement, the ink from the felt pen bleeding and spreading slowly out onto the paper over the course of one hour, the hand all the while remaining as motionless as possible.*

If we want to go back, indeed as far back as evidence will allow, it can be seen that such mobility was harnessed as far back as 35,000 BC with the first known traces of graphism. This act of inscription, says Leroi-Gourham, was crucial because it demonstrated 'the capacity to express thought in material symbols'.[7 (p187)] These earliest known inscriptions initially expressed rhythms rather than forms,[7 (p190)] setting Klee's 'point' in motion, allowing 'an essential structure to grow'.[6 (p21)]

> Shortly after application of the pencil, or any other pointed tool, a (linear-active) line comes into being. The more freely it develops, the clearer will be its mobility.[6 (p103)]

This line, from that gesture drawn by early man to today's author-illustrator, is active. Or at least that is the intention. The 20th and 21st Century pen, having waited patiently during the incubation phase to commence work, has now dried up. And here, in the illustrator's continued frustration, lies a parallel narrative. S/he is cueing up the pen, ensuring it will keep to heel, perform as commanded. But the inscription is no more than a depression in the paper's surface; no ink emerges from the dried up nib.

So the artist makes a scribble to kick start it, but still none. So the physical hand movement enlarges, speeds up, more pressure until traces of black are coughed up. Encouraged, the artist makes now makes smaller marks to establish an equilibrium but the black disappears. So larger circular movement again, and a little more ink. It stays this way until s/he is confident that now the ink is flowing, then straight parallel lines continue the good work. The illustrator has curved lines in mind to be drawn, so the nib must lean into corners and still be able to maintain the flow of ink. Confident at last that the pen will not let her/him down, the flow of ink can now bleed into the flow of narrative.

Untitled scribble by author

The first inscription is made; the curse of the blank page is broken. There may be several false starts – Flaubert rewriting several hundred times the first line of *Madame Bovary*, Proust's eight beginnings to *In Search of Lost Time* – but with sustained speculation and effort, threads of narrative begin to emerge on the pages of the notebook. These threads take the form of what might be termed 'primary' and 'secondary' texts, (see *Chapter 3*), consisting of drawings and/or written words. As they surface in the notebook so the narrative(s) gain a momentum; to put it another way, the author-illustrator begins to gain a degree of purchase on the narrative. This stage is defined by Wallas as 'illumination' or 'inspiration'[3 (p174)]:

André Francois: Self portrait (undated) [II]

> The inspiration is not usually a complete solution to the problem but points in the direction in which the complete solution may be found.[3 (p174)]

The first inscription feeds the next inscription, purchase is gained, a narrative – however tentative – begins to emerge. As Berger says in relation to drawing:

> each mark you make on the paper is a stepping-stone from which you proceed to the next, until you have crossed your subject as though it were a river, have put it behind you.[9 (p102)]

Summary

2.vii. summary

This chapter has outlined a four stage model of notation which may be commonly found in the pages of the author-illustrator's notebook. Paralleling a similar framework established by Wallas in the field of cognitive psychology, this model comprises motivation, displacement, purchase and consolidation. As stated above, these stages do not necessarily occur in a simple linear progression, and the demarcation between them may be often blurred:

> In the daily stream of thought these four different stages constantly overlap each other as we explore different problems. An economist reading a Blue Book, a physiologist watching an experiment, or a business man going through his morning's letters, may at the same time be 'incubating' on a problem which he proposed to himself a few days ago, be accumulating knowledge in 'preparation' for a second problem, and be 'verifying' his conclusions to a third problem. Even in exploring the same problem, the mind may be unconsciously incubating on one aspect of it, while it is consciously employed in preparing for or verifying another aspect.[10 (p175)]

Typically, in the case of the author-illustrator's notebook, the function of this process is

II. According to Quentin Blake, it was said that Francois would visit Parisian post offices in order to steal worn nibs that had been provided for the public. 'Whether or not the story is true, that the spirit of it is true is evident from his drawings: the more desperate and unpredictable the nib, the more alert, the more ready to live dangerously on the page, the artist has to be'.[8 (p54)]

to feed, develop and gain purchase on a narrative of some kind. This creative activity has been described as an ill-structured problem, because there is often little fixed information with which to guide such a project.

In describing an outline model of notation the chapter has sketched a framework with which the process can now be analysed in more depth. This will be done from a page-space perspective (*Chapter 3*) and from the 'lived time' experience of the author (*Chapter 4*). Using the four stage model the analysis will identify spatial and temporal characteristics as a means of addressing the thesis questions.

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Introduction

The prejudice against the 'poetic' in academic research is borne out of a misconception. Poetry, as discussed in *Chapter 1*, is often seen as a meandering language, ambivalent, nebulous. It may have its origins in circumspection and chance (Calvino) but it is a striving towards exactitude. It is through imagination and approximations that the poet gets close – perhaps never close enough – to revelation and articulation. This striving is discussed further in *Chapter 6: Drawing Conclusions*, but what is of concern here is that the author-illustrator has a similar drive and intention to that of the poet, but can harness not only words but the pictorial and the visual display of the text. Working on the page of the notebook, the author-illustrator uses a dynamic language whose vocabulary consists of spaces and gestures, and whose grammar is contained within the tension that joins them together. Thoughts, ideas and images are inscribed and evolve on paper, the positive of the object subject to the blankness of the page, answering back, demanding a reciprocal response from the margins which form around it. This visual interplay is the visual poetic of the methodology proposed in *Chapter 1*; from hastily scribbled words and tentative doodles in the margins, narratives gather momentum, striving towards - ultimately - an audience or readership which demands clarity of thought and expression.

This chapter analyses this notion of the visual poetic of the author-illustrator's notebook by unravelling the notational process from the perspective of the page-space. Using the four-stage framework described in the previous chapter, it begins by returning to the significance of the blank page, and then considers the gesture or inscription that is made as a means of gaining purchase on a narrative. The relationship this primary gesture has with supplementary, or secondary, texts is discussed, and suggests that the marginal or peripheral space of the page itself can itself be seen as an invisible secondary text.

To accompany this and the following chapter are a collection of notebooks developed for the thesis. These are presented in digitised form in Appendix I of the accompanying cd portfolio. The written dissertation runs alongside these notebooks and, where appropriate, makes specific reference to them.

The Blank Page

As suggested above, the first blank page of the notebook, as with Mallarmé's blank sheet of paper, may not be as empty as first assumed.

The notion that the first page is not empty may at first appear fanciful. After all, there is nothing on the page (except, perhaps, ruled lines). But the fact that it can provoke the diversionary tactics by the artist (spoil the page, ignore the page, rip out the page) would suggest that there resides within it, or on it, some imagined 'object' or, to put it another way, the page is 'charged' (in this context, with a narrative). The reasons may vary from artist to artist, writer to writer, but, commonly, it may be because: one, the artist does not know what to write or draw or at least where to begin (and perhaps in need of an incubation period before putting pen to paper); two, there is the realisation, consciously or otherwise, that the narrative they are about to portray has already started without them. This leads Borges to declare that 'it is enough that a book be possible for it to exist'.[1 (p78)] Or, as book artist Ulises Carrion states

> The most beautiful and perfect book in the world is a book with only blank pages, in the same way that the most complete language is that which lies beyond all that the words of a man can say.[2 (p56)]

Such lyricism can easily be dismissed as a romantic whim, the idea of a narrative pre-existing in empty space itself an empty notion. But for many writers and artists the act of apprehending the blank space or page is one of encounter with a positive.

> The space created by the poem is for Mallarmé no more empty than physical space is for Descartes or Einstein. It is rather a 'field', a comprehensive realm of interrelated energies, which are organised yet indefinitely subject to mutation and inflection.[3 (p144)]

This comes as no surprise to the contemporary artist or critic. As Gilbert-Rolfe points out, this notion had already been half-realized by Cezanne who

> saw the blank canvas as already deep, waiting to be carved out (empty and white, blank and *blanc*).[4 (p163)]

Only half realised, perhaps, because of his formal concerns with depth, perception and volume, suggests Penny Florence. She distinguishes between Cezanne and Mallarmé, the latter's spatiality seeming

> more fully contemporary. *Un coup de dés*, like almost all his later works, operates in and through a mobile and seemingly impossible articulation of space, at least the 'space' of perception, depth and volume.[5 (pp59-60)]

This view of blankness, argues Gilbert-Rolfe, is very much a 20th Century one. At one time blankness was just a surface in which pictograms were organised, and equated to silence.[4 (p160)]

> …blankness has been theorized only in terms of that to which it gives way, so that blankness is defined as space without incident. [4] (p160)

He suggests the 'contemporary is witness to the end of blankness as absence',[4] (p162) likening the difference between late 19th Century and late 20th Century views of blankness to the 'difference between wallpaper and the blank wall'.[4] (p162)

However, it is worth noting that it is not unique to the 20th Century:

The Goddess As Void, Rajasthan, ca. 1900

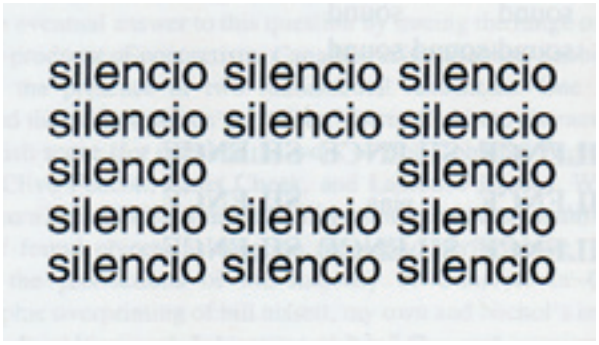
The Goddess as Void, as A. David Napier explains, is an anthropomorphic frame which defines and contains an 'image of nothingness'[6] (p.xv):

> the frame marks the bounds: it draws the line, it sets the limits within which the meaning must manifest itself.[6] (p.xv)

Poets have long been aware of the significance of the blank space of the page. Mallarmé, and those who have followed in his legacy of visual poetry, have capitalised on the utilization of the blank in their poetry, an 'active' space.[5] (p161) They are part of the process of signification, what Robb describes as 'prosodic signifiers'.[7] (p198)

In *Silencio* (below), Eugen Gomringer, playing on the tension between the visible 'positive' of the text and the 'negative' of the blank middle space, provides a simple illustration of how a blank space is by no means empty (and, therefore, not negative).

Returning to the first page of the notebook, the notion that the blankness is 'active' would suggest that whatever the artist/writer is hesitatingly about to commit to paper (a narrative, in the context of the illustrator) has already started. The blank first page is an agent in the development of the story yet to be made manifest. It may remain a blank page, itself like a loaded brush hovering before the canvas, its presence exerting a gravitational pull on the activity which will take place on the subsequent pages (beneath it, beyond it), or the author-illustrator may choose to scratch away at it, break its curse. Either way, when the author-illustrator commences to inscribe, the blank page is no longer.



Eugen Gomringer, Silencio (1953)

Gesture

3.ii. gesture

Inscription as Gesture

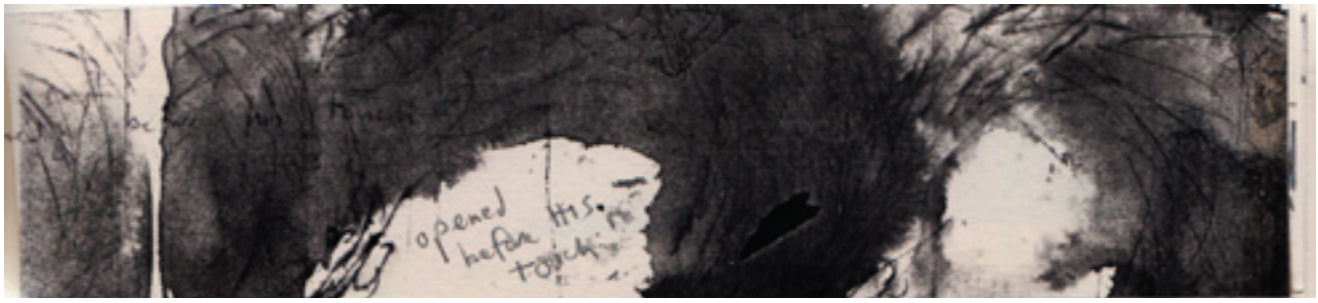
3.ii.1.inscription as gesture

The active point of Klee's line, as it inscribes into and onto the paper, breaks the spell of the blank page. 'Inscription' is a very useful term for the process of notation within the context of this thesis. It not only covers the process of notation but, as will be seen in *Chapter 5*, can also readily be used within the context of screenbased artifacts. Hayles proposes that to count as an inscription technology 'a device must initiate material changes that can be read as marks',[8 (p24)] and cites words in books, computers and telegraphy as examples. But the term can also include tools used by the illustrator working in the notebook – in the same way ink marks impressed on paper constitute a book as inscription technology, or the electrical process involved in computer displays count the computer as such, so too the pencil or pen pressing onto and into the surface of a notebook page resulting in marks must also count as inscription technology. In anticipation of the discussion below regarding text vis-a-vis the pictorial, it is worth noting that John Ruskin blurs the boundaries between the two by describing 'the primordial material act of scratching a surface to make it sign'[9 (p75)]:

> For Ruskin, not only are signs always both verbal and pictorial, but also any configurations of signs has a temporal and narrative dimension. To trace a sign is to tell a story.[9 (p75)]

'Inscription', then, provides a useful parallel for the thesis in relation to the mark created by the pencil in the notebook and the image that appears on the computer screen. At the same time it does suggest a certain formality (think scribes, think stone masons). If the author-illustrator's notebook is anything it is not formal. Eco's free roving 'semantic scribble' mentioned in *Chapter 1* provides a useful image of the notetaker at work. To 'scribble' can suggest a certain carelessness; while this may capture an aspect of notation it by no means covers all. The temporal properties of notetaking can vary, from the quick throwaway to the reflective meditation (see *Chapter 4*). In other words, its duration may vary as a result of a slow action as much as a hasty one, and may be spontaneous or considered. So while 'inscription' and 'scribble' are both useful terms, a third may also be required which encapsulates the two within the context of this thesis. 'Gesture', it is proposed, provides a much closer approximation of the process at work in the notebook, suggesting as it does both the physical act of mark making and the trace that is made. As a physical act by the experienced artist it is at once both expressive and controlled; the dexterity on the part of the artist allowing for the representational or the abstract, or anywhere on the spectrum in between:

> Gesture is a human action outside of the fixed parameters of language, anterior to language historically, independent of it conceptually.[10 (p64)]



Above and below*: From the author's notebooks*

The gesture has the ability to be primitive or refined, quiet or loud. That which remains, the gestural mark on the page, is 'a trace of the very act of production as dynamic action', suggests Johanna Drucker,[10] (p65) whether – in the context of the author-illustrator's notebook – that trace consists of a pencil or pen scribble or collaged texts and images. The broadness of the term makes 'gesture' a pertinent description of the act and its associated trace within notation, and as such will be used predominantly throughout the dissertation though, as appropriate, 'inscription' will also occasionally be used as a reminder of the parallel between the marks made by the pencil and the computer screen.

Text vis-a-vis pictorial

3.ii.2. text v a v pictorial

Within the context of the thesis the graphic element that is inscribed in the notational process may be written or pictorial. Further, it is proposed that, again within the scope of the thesis, both types of visual object will be considered as drawing. The reason for this is unapologetically simple. It is not the concern of the project to investigate the inherent hierarchy in the mind of the author. While the dominance of the visual over the written may have strong support (see Arnheim's *Visual Thinking: 1969*), it is also interesting to note that historically there was no great distinction between the pictorial and the text:

> in its origins figurative art was directly linked with language and was much closer to writing (in the broadest sense) than to what we understand by a work of art.[11] (p190)

Referencing tribal and shamanistic artworks from the previous two centuries, Susan Hiller suggests that drawing 'might actually be better understood as "writing"',

> in the same sense that the ancient Greeks had only one word for what we divide into two ideas, pertaining separatey to images and to words.[12] (p128)

While this may be of some interest and continues to be the subject of much debate, the issue is somewhat bypassed by the author-illustrator who readily and easily moves fluidly between the pictorial and the written, the latter often treated as a visual element:

Above left: *Victor Hugo: Souvenir (1853)*
Above: *Raymond Pettibon: No Title (The shrilling whistle) (2003)*
Below: *From the author's notebooks*

Finally, Carter suggests that writing, in which the calligraphy itself communicates the meaning, is a material practice and, in this sense,

> the successive poses of the dance, the grouping of dark and light patches in a watercolour, film montage and the timely distribution of voices in a sound installation are all forms of writing. In different ways, they all score space temporally, finding a line that composes it, embodying its human meaning.[13 (p6)]

This notion of writing as other forms reinforces the argument for the use of the term 'gesture' as an appropriate expression of the physical act of inscription within the notebook, though, as for reasons stated above, in the context of this thesis both writing and drawing are considered as *drawing*.

3.ii.3. gesture as purchase

Gesture as purchase

The notebook gesture, it was suggested above, acts to gain some kind of purchase on an idea or narrative. In this regard, it is in essence little different to early man inscribing – 'the capacity to express thought in material symbols'.[11 (p192)]

> By the time of the Upper Paleolithic, reflective thought – which had found concrete expression, probably from the very start, in the vocal language and mimicry of the anthropoids – was capable of representation, *so humans could now express themselves beyond the immediate present*. [11 (p195)] [my italics]

Fluidity of thought and movement – Klee's movement of thought – fluidity between the text and the pictorial, the inscribed and the collaged, frees the imagination in its search for the narrative. Speculating with thoughts on paper, open and sensitive to a serendipitious or mediated connection, words, pictures and ephemera work in concert to hunt for and gain that vital initial purchase. This is Goel's sketches of thought, and a reason why jumping too soon to the computer can limit the solving of the ill-structured problem that is narrative development.

The gestures on the page are also a search for original expression, perhaps a reason Proust, with his contempt for the cliché, deliberated and iterated so much. Here, the blank page with its implied narrative, is a page, suggests Deleuze, already covered with clichés, which have to be 'scraped away to find a space of possibliity'.[14 (p220)]

Drawing (the written doodle, the drawn sketch, the cut and pasted object), then, seeks to go beyond the cliché, to find the novelty. It is, says Berger, a process of discovery:

> And that is not just a slick phrase, it is quite literally true. It is the actual act of drawing that forces the artist to look at the object in front of him, to dissect it in his mind's eye and put it together again; or, if he is drawing from memory, that forces him to dredge his own mind, to discover the content of his own store of past observations.[15 (p3)]

Berger suggests there are three distinct ways in which drawings (and, within this thesis, the gestures in the notebook) can function: those that study and question the visible, those which put down and communicate ideas, and those done from memory.[15 (p46)] He makes clear distinctions between them (based on tense) though, within the context of the notebook, these differences are perhaps less easily identified.

These gestures are records of glimpses (of the external object or the internal image). The temporal properties of the glimpse will be discussed in the next chapter, but what is pertinent at this juncture is that this initial visible manifestation of the glimpse, this record (pictorial or written) may be described as a primary text. It is a positive gesture on the 'blank' page. The scale of this primary text, both in terms of its duration and its physicality, may vary considerably. It may very likely be followed by a second gesture which is a continuation of the first; perhaps it will be a linear extension of a thought or narrative or, in the case of a pictorial drawing, it will feed back on the first gesture. For example, referring to a life drawing exercise, Berger recounts:

> The second line altered the nature of the first**.** Whereas before the first line had been aimless, now its meaning was fixed and made certain by the second line. Together they held down the edges of the area between them, and the area, straining under the force which had once given the whole page the potentiality of depth, heaved itself up into a suggestion of solid form. The drawing had begun.[15 (pp5-6))]

This would suggest that the second line, or perhaps the second image (text or pictorial) to appear on the page, helps make sense of the first, and indeed this is often the intention and purpose. But, equally, the gesture may not be the result of a focussed observation but an unfocussed, absent-mindedness; in other words a doodle, Eco's free roving scribble. This activity will be discussed later in the context of its temporal properties, but its relevance here is that the second line or image may not clarify the first but brings an odd or unexpected juxtaposition of representations or concepts. And this is where some of the properties of sketching identified by Goel – the 'dense ordering of symbols', and visual and conceptual ambiguities – come into their own. The juxtaposition of lines or images – objects on the page – can give rise to associative

thinking, i.e. ‘a creative thinking process in which there is the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful’.[16 (p186)]

Mednick suggests that the more ‘mutually remote’ the elements of the combination of objects the more creative the problem solving process,[16 (p186)] and suggests three ways in which these remote ideas can be brought together:
i. Serendipity, i.e. the happy accident, perhaps best exemplified in the context of this thesis by Burroughs’ cut and paste juxtapositions;
ii. Similarity, in which elements may share some common aspect, e.g. rhymes or alliterations;
iii. Mediation, where solutions are the result of the mediation of associations the page objects have in common. Koestler’s treatise on creativity, *The Act of Creation* (1964), describes his bisociative theory, in which sets of associations – ‘frames of reference’ - can be set side by side to create new problem solving suggestions. [I]

The gestures – these primary texts – may relate to one another on the same page, or may continue over a series of pages. Either way, what is of interest now is that as the very first mark is made on the page, the first primary text inscribed, another visual event occurs simultaneously – the creation and defining of marginal space.

Margins and secondary texts

3.iv. margins and secondary texts

Margins as invisible secondary texts

3.iv.1. invisible secondary texts

When the illustrator, faced with the terror that is the first page of the notebook, has found the means to make the first gesture on the page, s/he not only breaks the curse of the blankness but also, crucially, transforms the way the page is perceived.

> A blank page of a sketch-book is a blank, white page. Make one mark on it, and the edges of the pages are no longer simply where the paper was cut, they have become the borders of a microcosm.[15 (pp102-103)]

The first inscription when it settles on, or emerges from, the page, not only creates a ‘positive’ inscription, it also – by its very presence – defines the ‘negative’ space around it. This may be a pictorial space if the page is being viewed as an ‘all-over’ surface,[18 (p150)] the edges of the page acting as a frame. In the case of Western painting, for example:

> the painter is accountable for each and every area of the total surface…..every mark that is made must bear some kind of relation to the four sides of the frame. The frame exerts a pressure that extends inward into the image.[18 (p150)]

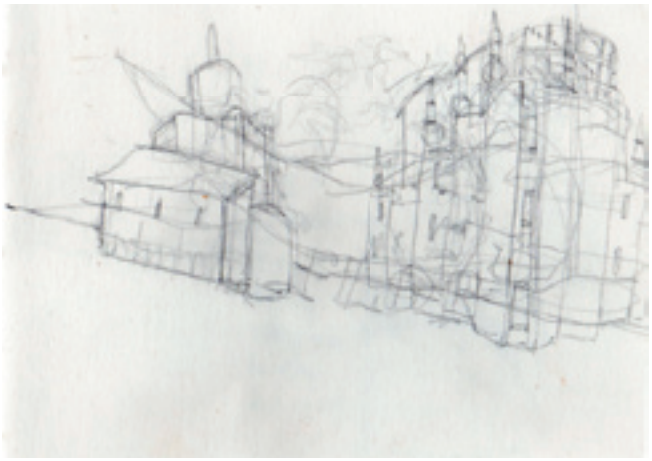
In drawing this does not have to be the case:

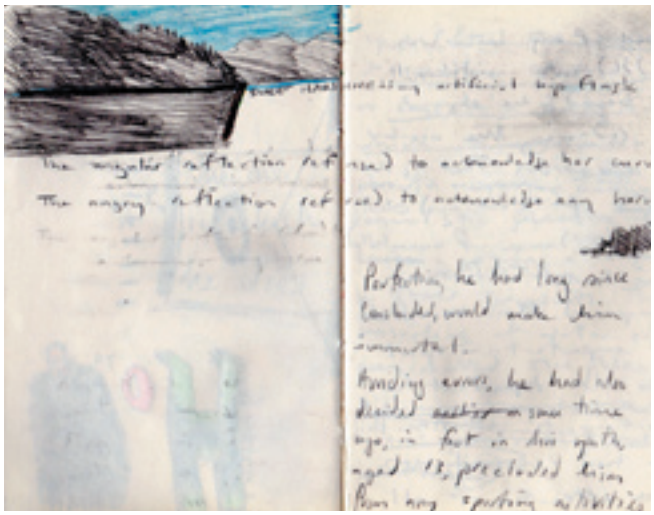
> The whiteness of white paper works within a different problematic: The law of the all-over – the set of pressures deriving from the four sides of the surface – may be observed, *or not*……drawing has always been able to treat the whiteness of

I. Cognitive science has thrown doubts on Koestler’s theory as it is based largely on case studies and not laboratory tests. Perkins has argued that Koestler’s theory is merely a redescription of creative products rather than a process explanation.[17 (p189)]

the surface in a fashion unique to itself, as a “reserve”: an area that is technically part of the image…but in a neutral sense.[18 (p151)]

If the particular primary text inscribed on the page by the author-illustrator is pictorial in nature, it does not mean the entire space on the page is pictorial. The author-illustrator may view the space as comprising of several different pictorial spaces exisiting within the same x and y boundaries but on perceptively different planes and different temporal moments. They may hint at narratives lying outwith the edges of the frame. Equally, the page may not be considered by the illustrator as a pictorial space at all but as a thinking space, as a container for the gestures to follow. Or, the page may be perceived by the author as a mix of pictorial and thinking space.





From the author’s notebooks:
Top left: *Here the page functions as an ‘all-over’ pictorial space.*
Right: *The page in this example has not been considered as a unified pictorial space but rather as a thinking environment for disparate ideas.*
Below left: *The notebook page may blur the distinction between pictorial and thinking space. In this example a landscape was initially draughted (the large ‘blank’ area representing the sea in front of a distant outcrop of land); in response to this ideas for a poem were jotted down and revised on top of the image.*

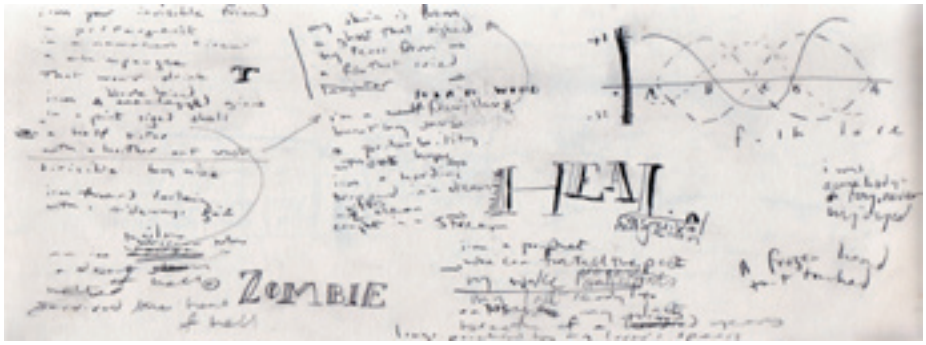
Where ‘empty’ spaces on the page are not part of the pictorial field they are peripheral to the inscriptions. If the sketchbook (page) is itself a peripheral space (in the creative process), then these new spaces may be considered as peripheral spaces within a peripheral space. Margins within margins.

In addition to blank areas within or on the page, the physical properties of the notebook provide peripheral spaces which can exert some influence on the inscription process. Often the right-hand facing page, the recto, is perceived as the dominant page, resulting in the left-hand page, the verso, being left blank. This can be for pragmamtic reasons; the author-illustrator may have it in mind to remove particular 'successful' pages later for publication or exhibition. To use the left-hand page may result in bleed through, in which an 'underneath' image may disrupt an inscription on a page. Rather than always being a problem, this mini event may act as a creative prompt. Another physical property of the notebook which can influence the inscription process is the gutter between the left-hand and right-hand pages. This may act to separate – both physically and in the mind of the author-illustrator – inscriptions on each page. Equally, the inscriptions may traverse the the two pages and ignore the gutter.

The margins created are as loaded as Mallarmé's 'blank' page, and as such may be considered as 'texts' in themselves – implied, non static narratives or images lurking on the edges of the primary text, giving form and definition to the latter, in the same way the space around a sculpture defines its form. They may remain in this state. But, if anything, the notebook is a place for visual thinking. This involves reflection and, of course, where better to reflect than in the margins.

Visible secondary texts

3.iv.2. visible secondary texts



From the author's notebooks

Margins – i.e. the peripheral spaces that surround an object – are often where the real activity of thinking and development takes place in a notebook. It may be, as suggested above, that the mere presence of margins next to an object on a page is enough to suggest in the mind of the author-illustrator another narrative, another world in which the elusive resides: As Mark C Taylor says, referring to Jabes' writing:

> The margin is the liminal space separating the written page from the page that always remains to be written.[19] (pxiii)

But the margins are also very much the place in which to doodle, to inscribe a whole array of connected or disconnected thoughts and reflections. As such, margins can encapsulate both the aesthetic and functional appeal of the notebook. These visible secondary texts can touch any point in a wide spectrum of references – at one end is the referent of the primary text object on the page, at the other end is a narrative concept

or image which has no apparent bearing upon the pre-existing primary text.[II] The former emerges out of a reflective process – an addition or supplement to the primary text, often an iteration of it. The latter, a seemingly non-connected secondary text, creates a second 'frame of reference' which, juxtaposed with the primary text's frame, provides the conditions for Mednick's (and Burroughs') serendipity.

From the author's notebooks: daydreaming

Whichever type of secondary visible text, there is a temporal gap – however great or minute – between its coming into being and the origination of the primary text. A second drawing in the margins to better 'capture' a perceived subject than the first attempt may take place in quick succession, a conscious learning from the mistakes. But equally, there may be a long duration before a secondary text is inscribed. This, too, may be the result of directed thinking (conscious), but can often be the visible trace of undirected (unconscious) thought – the absent-minded doodle. This will be discussed in more detail in *Chapter 4: Lived Time*, but suffice to say at this juncture that the margins, in this context, can also be seen as home to the daydream, a place in which thoughts can free wheel, a haven for unprecious throwaway gestures and glimpses of other universes beyond those margins.

In book design, one purpose of a margin is to protect the text from the outside physical world. But in the context of the notebook the margin, whilst it may have some bearing on the primary text on the page, also connects to the world outside of the page. Speaking of Jabes's work, Taylor states

> the intertextual weave he [Jabes] fabricates extends far beyond the limits of "his own" works. As book opens to book, the margins of writing fold and refold to produce a text that approaches infinity.[19 (pxii)]

Thus, as Fisher suggests,

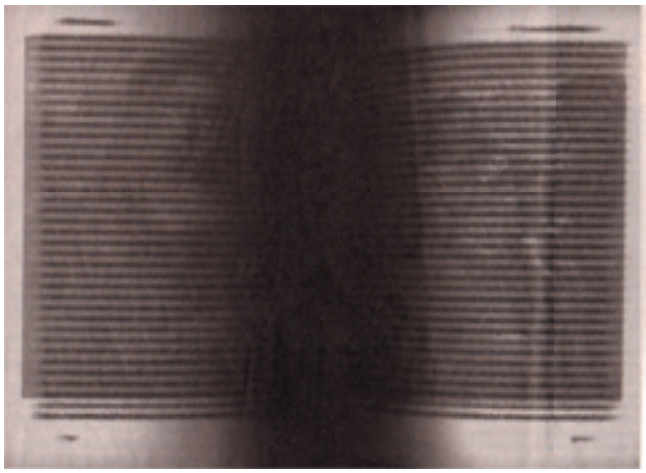
> Any individual utterance is always to an extent a collective enunciation, insofar as, to paraphrase Barthes, each one of us is a space in which thoughts and images from multiple sources are assembled.[21 (p219)]

Berger's microcosms of universes seeking parallel universes.

These visible secondary texts, these gestures in the margins, while possibly lesser in terms of scale and initial meaning than the primary text, may come to have more weight and significance than the latter. This notion of the secondary dominating the primary which will be developed later in *Chapter 4*, provides the means to extend the notion of

II. By way of minor digression, the former is part of the appeal of marginalia, i.e. notes written in the margins of published books. They can tell wonderful stories through their detail; to cite but one of the many examples from HJ Jackson's *Marginalia* (2001), the custom among prisoners at Robben Island in South Africa (at the time when Nelson Mandela was incarcerated there) was to sign their names next to their favourite passages of a Shakespeare volume that was secretly circulated among them. [in 1977 Mandela chose 'Cowards die many times before their deaths' from *Julius Caesar*]. [20 (p5)]

the primary-secondary text relationship from a two plane dynamic to three in the form of the palimpsest.



Idris Khan: Sigmund Freud's The Uncanny (2006). Not only an fascinating example of a palimpsest, this illustration also demonstrates the influence of the gutter, which through the copying process becomes a dark presence.

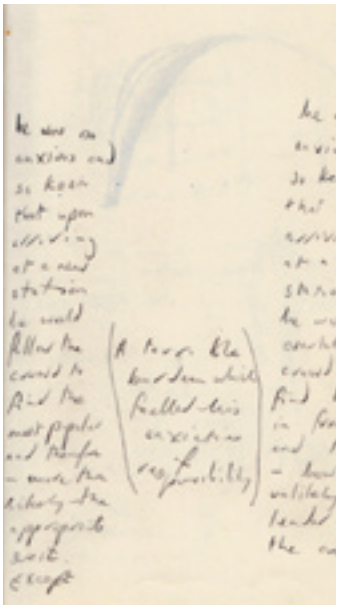
This, by way of a poetic twist, inverts the image of Mallarmé's text emerging from primeval sea. Perhaps this is what Jabes could be allluding to when he says:

> Writing is erased in writing. Black turns blank in the dark. The blank remains.[22 (p166)]

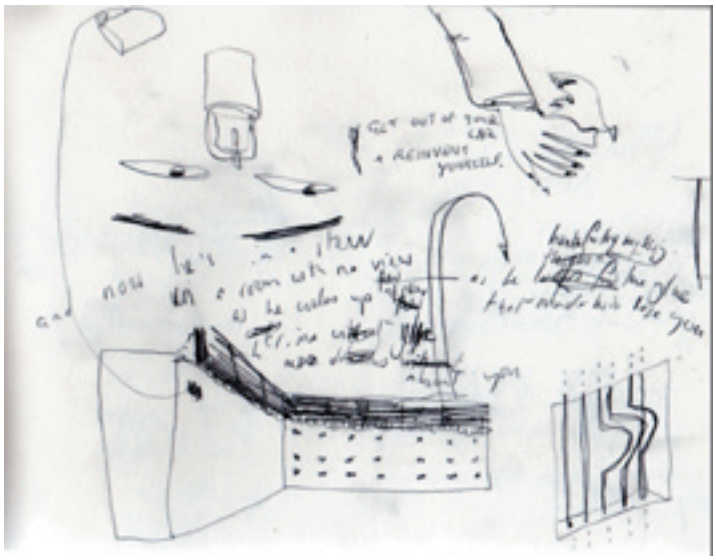
As with other analyses of the notebook outlined above, there is a risk of being oversimplistic and mechanistic in describing the primary-secondary texts relationship. As has been suggested, the secondary text may dominate and subjegate the primary on any given page. Equally, across the whole sketchbook the hierarchical relationship between primary texts and secondary texts (texts in the margins, or margins as texts) can be fluid and interchangeable. Other structural relationships are also possible; for example, one primary inscription may be followed by another primary inscription which is an iteration of the first. This has been exploited by Francis Ponge whose poem, *Feu et Cendres*, is made up of lines of poetry, each an iteration of its predecessor:

> Agile fire, inert ash.
> Sneering fire, serene ash.
> Primate fire, pussy cat ash.
> Fire clambers from branch to branch, ash squats down into a sleepy pile.
> Fire grows, ash shrinks.
> Shining fire, sullen ash.
> Hissing fire, hushing ash.
> Fire hot, ash cold.
> Contagious fire, containing ash.
> Fire red, ash grey.
> Greek fire, Roman ash.
> Fire the victor, ash the vanquished.
> Fearless fire, frightened ash.
> Fire scalds, ash scatters.
> Wild fire, ash swept aside.
> Playful fire, plaintive ash.
> Animal fire, mineral ash.
> Inflamed fire, impotent ash.
> Fire the bulldozer, ash the builder.
> Red fire and grey ash come together, one of nature's favourite standards.
>
> - *Francis Ponge: Fire and Ash (Feu et Cendres)*

Page from author's notebooks: a poem inscribed down on the left side is reiterated down the right, with varying emergent content. Note also the bleed through of an inscription on the page below.



Another example of a different structural relationship is when two primary texts come together. For example, in the sketchbook illustration below, one set of primary texts began at one end of the book and another at the other end; the illustration shows their meeting point part way through the sketchbook. At this juncture a happy accident occurred when an unexpected connection, in terms of subject matter, was made. A text, a preliminary sketch for the poem *Cliché* (see Appendix II: Digital poems) regarding a character going to prison, meets a doodle on the same subject, made some weeks earlier but forgotten about in the interim. This provides a rather literal illustration to Koestler's proposition that problem solving may not follow a linear path from problem to solution (target), or solution to problem, but by a branching out of hypotheses – of possible strategies – from one end, or both ends, until several branches meet.[23 (p651)]



Page from author's notebooks: In this example, the written text meets drawings - with a similar theme - coming (upturned) from the opposite direction in the notebook

Summary

3.v. summary

This chapter has considered the process of notation from the perspective of the page-space. Building on the four stage notational process described in the previous chapter, it has further considered the blank page and the author-illustrator's purchase on a narrative through the gesture (as both action and trace). Through this act a primary text is created, and with it a marginal space which can remain in its 'blank' state or be occupied by supplementary inscriptions. Both the inscriptions and the unfilled marginal spaces act as secondary texts to the primary. Together these form a dynamic relationship which the author-illustrator uses imaginatively in developing a narrative, juxtaposing ideas and images, both textual and pictorial. This method is one of visual poetic play, which utilises the problem solving mechanisms identified by Mednick as serendipity, similarity and mediation. The following chapter considers this process from a temporal perspective by analysing the 'lived time' experience of the author-illustrator.

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Introduction

Research projects, as any supervisor is keen to emphasise, demand good time management. Prejudice against a poetic methodology may in part be the misconception (mentioned previously, and further discussed in *Chapter 6: Drawing Conclusions*) that it is a vague process. But it is also the case that it can appear to run counter to established academic conventions in that it may be perceived as time-wasting, in contrast to time 'efficient' conventional research methods. In arguing the case for a visual poetic approach to research, based on the notational process of the author-illustrator, the thesis now considers the process from a temporal perspective by analysing the 'lived time' experience of the author. It proposes that the notebook encourages a thought process that is in fact highly productive and, to this extent, efficient, and not least when the author is in the seemingly time-wasting mode of daydreaming.

The chapter is divided into two parts. *Part I* begins by establishing a model of the subjective temporal experience of authoring, referred to as 'lived time'. Based on a three phase temporal structure, described as a three-fold present, the notational process is seen as operating within the 'nowness' of the gesture. In, as it were, the moment of inscription, the author-illustrator mentally attends to the thought being expressed on the page of the notebook. This attention does not operate in isolation; memory and expectation act upon the moment of inscription. It is these three temporal phases – attention, memory and expectation – that make up the three fold present model of time. But this description alone does not provide a complete picture of the notational process from a lived time perspective. The author-illustrator can sometimes experience a sense of timelessness, not least when s/he is caught up in a daydream. This is the subject of *Part II*, which explores the notion of the margin in the notebook as a place for the daydream. It suggests that the author-illustrator's absent-minded doodle can be a productive result of daydreaming. This section begins by exploring what constitutes a daydream, referencing poets and cognitive psychology. It considers the ideal conditions for this activity to occur, and then looks at the doodle – a 'contemplative action' – as a form of free drawing which can embody the daydream. It concludes by reiterating the lived time of the author as a tri-temporal structure.

Nowness

4.ii. nowness

A. Dohmen: Untitled postcard (undated)

The postcard above shows a memorial. Or rather it shows two memorials. The primary image, it may, for the purposes of this analysis, be called the 'primary inscription', is a photographic one depicting a monument, St George's monument, in memory of sailors killed off Zeebrugge in World War One. It is a monument typical of its era; proud, solid, phallic. On top a figure of bronze – the eternal medium. Its function is to remember those who were killed and of their sacrifice, to remind us that they live on in our collective memory. There is a duty of memory. This, suggests Augé, has two aspects: remembrance and vigilance.

> Vigilance is the actualization of remembrance, the effort to imagine in the present what might resemble the past, or better….to remember the past as a present.[1 (p88)]

How successfully this monument, as with countless others similar to it, remains vigilant is highly subjective, and is vulnerable to the changing aesthetic sensibilities of each new generation of citizens. Arguably, in this new millenium it bears witness using a dusty ancient language of bronze and stone, one that has not easily survived even a century. It remains in the past, talking to a previous generation. The past is remembered as a past.

The person who originally bought the postcard, perhaps sometime in the early 1920s, did so because he or she wanted to bear witness as much as those that commissioned the sculpture. But, additionally, s/he wanted to provide an alternative and far more modest monument. Scribbled in pencil on the image are notations pinpointing details of the battle and, crucially, a small note in the top left hand corner of the postcard

indicating, lest we forget, that British sailors were also killed in the attack. These notes, a dynamic spontaneous trace, not only had a sense of the present about them at the time of inscription but also *still* have a sense of the present. Looking at them now we can easily imagine their author carefully jotting down his/her thoughts and reflections. Through their direct and unselfconscious execution they retain a sense of the moment of their inscription, what might be described as a sense of 'nowness'. Nowness, and a definition of it, is elusive; a rough approximation might say it is a sense of the present moment. But this sense slips easily away from us like sand between our fingers, fading into the past before it can be grasped. Kubler eloquently describes the mercurial nature of the now, or 'actuality', as

> when the lighthouse is dark between flashes; it is the instant between the ticks of the watch; it is a void interval slipping forever through time; the rupture between past and future; the gap at the poles of the revolving magnetic field, infinitesimally small but ultimately real. It is the interchronic pause when nothing is happening. It is the void between events.[2 p(17)]

Appropriately for this thesis, Kubler sugests that some of the clues as to where we might locate this sense of nowness are in

> the jottings and sketches of architects and artists, put down in the heat of imagining a form, or the manuscript brouillons of poets and musicians, crisscrossed with erasures and corrections, are the hazy coast lines of this dark continent of the "now", where the impress of the future is received by the past.[2 p(18)]

Page from author's notebooks

Joseph Grigely: Untitled conversation (What else are we alive for?) (2000): The artist, deaf since the age of 10, collects and exhibits messages from his interlocutors

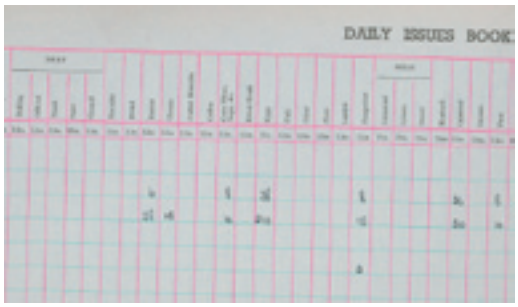
One of the major appeals of the notebook is this sense of nowness, in which an outside observer can feel s/he is witness to the moment of inscription – the gesture – no matter how long ago it occurred. It is the appeal of Klee's active line mentioned above:

> The drawn line in a sense always exists in the present tense, in the time of its own unfolding, the ongoing time of a present that constantly presses forward.[3 (p149]

It is the appeal of the notebooks of so many artists and writers. Berger comments on how Picasso so often drew with such energy and directness that

> every scribble reminds you of the act of drawing and of the pleasure of that act. It is this which makes his drawings insolent.[4] (p46)

This appeal is not restricted to artists – ephemera such as shopping lists, humble entries in official books and doodles made while on the telephone often demonstrate this sense of nowness, acting as witnesses to personal and social histories.



Narrative in the ephemera:
Far left: *Pension book*
Centre: *Hospital daily ration book*
Right: *Booking a train ticket via the telephone*

The notebook appeal is in part due to the aesthetic of a drawing or doodle, but also because, to use Berger's example of a drawing of a tree, it does not show a tree but a tree-being-looked-at:

> Whereas the sight of a tree is registered almost instantaneously, the examination of the sight of a tree (a tree-being-looked-at) not only takes minutes or hours…it also involves, derives from, and refers back to, much experience of looking.[4] (p71)

In viewing the pages of another's sketchbook the outside observer, analysing the first inscription, witnesses the moment the static point of which Klee speaks gains movement:

> As a point of impact the point is static…Tension between one point and another yields a line…Not yet discharged…Discharged…The universal cause is therefore reciprocal tension, a striving for two dimensions.[5] (p19)

The implied analogy of childbirth mirrors the visible origin of the narrative in the nowness of the sketchbook, in the present tense of the artist. The perspective of viewing a page retrospectively affords the opportunity to not only see the first line but the entire process of grappling with the narrative, of gaining purchase:

> …the drawn line presents Becoming. Line gives you the image *together with* the whole history of its becoming-image. However definitive, perfect, unalterable the drawn line may be, each of its lines – even the last line that was drawn – is permanently open to the present of a time that is always unfolding; even that final line, the line that closed the image, is in itself open to a present that bars the act of closure.[3] (p150)

Time unfolding in the present, as the point of the pencil inscribes, moving across the page, an instant in time, a point-like instant. The physical act of inscription occurs in the now, but is preceded by the mental action of time unfolding. What are the temporal phases occurring?

Tri-temporality

> Suppose I am about to recite a psalm which I know. Before I begin, my expectation is directed towards the whole. But when I have begun, the verses from it which I take into the past become the object of my memory. The life of this act of mine is stretched in two ways, into my memory because of the words I have already said and into my expectation because of those I am about to say. But my attention is on what is present: by that the future is transferred to become the past. As the action advances further and further, the shorter the expectation and the longer the memory, until all expectation is consumed, the entire action is finished, and it has passed into the memory. What occurs in the psalm as a whole occurs in its particular pieces and its individual syllables. The same is true of a longer action in which perhaps that psalm is a part.[6 (p243)]

So reflects Augustine in his well known meditation on the nature of subjective time ('subjective time' here equating with the passage of time experienced by human beings, as opposed to the objective time which co-exists with the universe). Ricoeur describes this experience of time as a 'three-fold present model of time'.[7 (p11)] His analysis of this model is developed in the context of narrative; he sees time and narrative as mutually dependant:

> Temporality is that structure of existence that reaches us through language in narrativity and narrativity.....[is] the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent.[7 (p3)]

He argues that the temporality found in narrative has less to do with the linear notion of time (as a series of instants placed along a line) and more to do with Augustine's three phase temporality.

In the three-fold present model, in the mind of the recitee the moment of attention – in Augustine's example, attention to the present of the recital – is surrounded on one side by the memory of what has gone before, and on the other by an expectation of what is to come. Memory and expectation act as temporal forces upon the moment of reciting.The result is that

> the future, which it expects, passes through the present, to which it attends, into the past, which it remembers.[7 (p19)]

Expectation and memory are 'engaged' in the process of reciting - the former as a whole before the song, the latter the part of the song that has gone by, with attention consisting of the active 'transit'.[7 (p20)]

This model of lived time can be applied to the lived time of the author-illustrator working in the notebook. In the present of the notation, the illustrator is attending to the moment of the inscription, but does so with a memory which – consciously or unconsciously – is drawn upon (the double meaning of 'to draw,' i.e. in terms of graphism and in pulling water up from a well, is not wasted on many commentators and provides a useful succinct image for the following discussion on memory below). At the same time the act of drawing also necessitates an expectation; the line (pictorial or textual) is active, it is going somewhere, temporally (if not spatially) forwards. In the notebook the three-fold present model can be seen on two levels; within the narrative that is developed, and in the very act of notation. It can also be witnessed – metaphorically – in the materials used; the blank page can be likened to Augustine's expectation of the whole, with the emerging drawing the traces of memory, the blankness/expectation all the time reducing. It can also be seen in the reciprocal object that inscribes; the tip of the pencil, a physical point that makes a visible point in time, is eroded as the drawing unfolds, the lead representing the expectation that is reduced, while the marks left on the paper the increasing traces of memory.

In practice the three-fold present model of time presents a unified experience for the author-illustrator; the lived time experience is not separated into attention, memory or anticipation. If the analogy of the pencil tip can be sustained, attention is the very tip of the point, and memory and expectation the sides of the tip. The point does not have a clearly defined top and sides, instead the curving form melds one phase into the other. Having said that, in order to gain a better understanding of the lived time of the author, in turn as a means of understanding the notation process, the temporal phases need to be considered separately. Attention to the present will be explored in *Part II* in the discussion on the daydream; below memory and expectation are considered.

Memory

4.iv. memory

Within the gesture of inscription there is a looking back by the author-illustrator, a searching of memory, both conscious and unconscious. This is quite apparent when drawing on an internal image (for example, a recollection from childhood) to be depicted, but it is also true when observing an external object in the present:

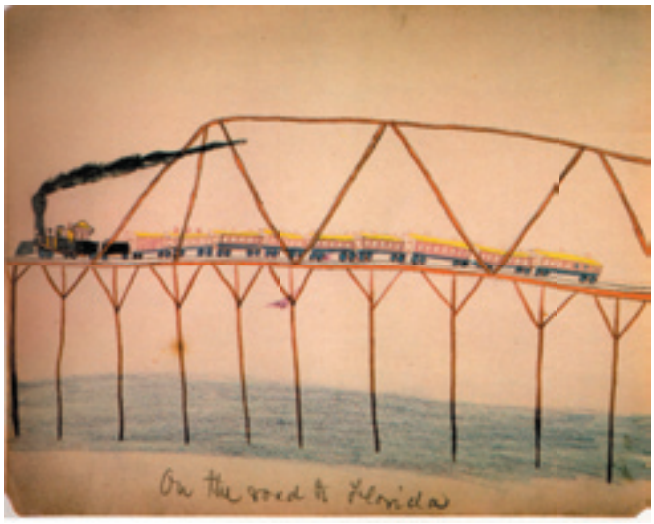
> Even before a model, you draw from memory. The model is a reminder. Not of a stereotype that you know by heart. Not even of anything you can consciously remember. The model is a reminder of experiences you can only formulate and therefore only remember by drawing. And those experiences add up to the sum total of your awareness of the tangible, three-dimensional, structural world.[4 (p102)]

Memory, whether distant or, as in the quote above, recent, is the very stuff of the sketchbook, the invisible made visible. But to consider what is meant by memory in the context of the notational process it is important to consider the distinction between voluntary memory and involuntary memory.

In his novel *In Search of Lost Time* Marcel Proust famously explores the function of involuntary memory. An event experienced unconsciously through the senses – a smell, for example, or walking over cobblestones – can be consciously experienced months or years later as if for the first time. This involuntary memory is a 'hermetically sealed vessel of time in the pure state',[8 (vi.p224)] a vessel that travels through time. On the recurrence of the sensuous experience, 'immediately the permanent and habitually concealed essence of things is liberated'.[8 (vi.p224)]

By contrast, the scribble on the postcard is a *conscious* decision to record; in the specific case of the postcard, an alternative account of an historic event. It is, in that sense, a voluntary memory. Like the involuntary, the visual note traverses time, not hermetically sealed but rather a wilfully broken vessel, and yet it nonetheless retains a potency, a sense of the past present as a present now. It is not unlike the temporal quality of a work of art which, states Kubler, is

> actually a portion of arrested happening, or an emanation of past time.[2 (p19)]



Left: *Bear's Heart: On the Road to Florida (1876).The image depicts the journey of the artist, a Cheyenne, on his way to prison in Fort Marion. There is an intriguing if uncomfortable parallel between this moment in time and that experienced and recorded 127 years later in England on the way to a detention centre by 13-year-old Turkish asylum seeker Newroz Ay in her drawing above: The Immigration Service Van (2003). In both cases the directness of inscription provides the viewer with a sense of witness, of feeling - in a temporal sense - close to the event .*

The jottings that make up this visual recording are an attempt to make visible, to reveal or to create a memory. It is the same impulse, noted above, which made Paleolithic man draw so he could express himself beyond that immediate present. As such they have a different direction and are a very different entity to the notion of voluntary memory which Proust considers inferior. For him the latter, a conscious recollection of a past event which had itself been experienced consciously, is a lesser mnemonic form because it

> proceeds from an actual present to a present that "has been," to something that was present and is no longer.[9 (p57)]

It is the 'memory of the intellect' and of little interest to him because 'the pictures which that kind of memory shows us preserve nothing of the past itself'.[8 (i.p50)] However, the visual note – a trace of a memory (however recent) – can be said to bring the past to the present, to bring it to life. This is achieved through the directness and rawness of its execution in the gesture, evoking a sense of witness to the time of inscription. But as the

author inscribes, what is s/he remembering? While remembrance is often considered to be constructive in nature, a process of bringing forward and reassembling of a memory or memories, Augé suggests it is more a destructive process of forgetting:

> It is quite clear that our memory would be "saturated" rapidly if we had to preserve every image of our childhood, especially those of our earliest childhood. But what is interesting is that which remains. And what remains….is the product of an erosion caused by oblivion. Memories are crafted by oblivion as the outlines of the shore are created by the sea.[1 (p20)]

Proust had alluded to this in *In Search of Lost Time*, saying that 'an impression' is no sooner received than it imperceptibly begins

> to descend the slope of memory...to such an extent does what we call remembering a person consist in really forgetting him.[8 (iii.p574)]

Every fresh glimpse provides a revision to the memory and 'we are obliged to correct the straying line'.[8 (iii.p574)] The notation process becomes a process of gathering. Accumulative traces.

> Without oblivion, without forgetting, these traces remain indistinguishable from each other and therefore meaningless. Oblivion throws them into relief, allows them to emerge as nuggets of consciousness.'[10 (pix)]

In the four stage process of notation, oblivion is at work in both the displacement and purchase stages. It has been suggested that these phases can be explained – to adopt information processing terms – not only using the notion of 'familiarization' with a problem but also, in respect of oblivion, with 'selective forgetting'.[11 (p195)] The gesture on the blank page is a manifestation of this paradox. In the process of a visual object being inscribed, the author seeks to recall a memory (however recent or distant) but in so doing, as was observed in the previous chapter, the blank page is suddenly no more. The space between blank page and inscribed page, suggests Jabes, is infinite, and in this space

> the eye turns back to the eye, and the hand to the pen, where all we write is erased even as we write it.[12 (p124)]

Expectation

4.v. expectation

As traces of memories become visible, so they eradicate the blank page's potential - expectation. Not only that, but memory is driven along this trajectory by the gravitational pull of the very expectation it erodes. Citing Michel de Certeau, Fisher suggests:

> Far from being the trash of the can of the past [memory] sustains itself by *believing* in the existence of possibilities and by vigilantly awaiting them, constantly on the watch for their appearance.[13 (pp220-221)]

In the present tense of inscription the active line presses forward – Klee's point, shifting onwards. Its referent is the future, and as such may be said to be a process of becoming. Unlike painting, argues Bryson, which, relatively speaking, is known only in its static state, the drawn line presents the viewer not only with the image but with the whole history of its 'becoming-image'[3 (p149)]:

> If painting presents Being, the drawn line presents Becoming.[3 (p150)]

It is for this reason, suggests Newman, 'that drawing is closer to the movement of time, to lived temporality',[14 (p96)] and it is this perception of the history of a drawing within a drawing that gives the notation process and the sketchbook such appeal to the external viewer. And it can be the same for the scribbled written, perhaps iterated, word:

> Writing knows nothing of the present. The first word breaks with the past in order to face, virgin, the demanding future.[12 (p117)]

The gesture looks forward optimistically to the future which is the space of the page, and beyond to the next page and subsequent pages of the notebook, to spatial and temporal frames which exist in an interchangeable sequence. The moment of lived time works in tandem with the surface of the blank page to give breath and space to the imagination, the latter also cognisant of memory. The duration of the moment, suggests Casey, is a scene of 'novelty, the exact place of becoming,' always receptive to the open.[15 (p91)] He references Bergson's notion of duration as invention, 'the continual elaboration of the absolutely new….'.[15 (p91)]

Here a distinction must be made between two forms of expectation in the notebook. As well as an active agent in the process of invention, the inscription, as was seen with the postcard at the beginning of this chapter, may be aligned to the future not solely in order to create something new but to record the present or past (including recent past). In other words the memo:

> written language materializes thought into form and form into history, culture and record…Memory serves us well through this material and returns embodied as the witness to our having made certain moments into a record on the page while the temporal life of writing aches towards the future, longing for the recovery which is available, again and again, through the physical form inscribed with information in the trace of the material.[1 (pp74-75)]

The memo is a reminder, for example, of outstanding tasks or food required, but it can also serve to *preserve* something of the past, whether it be jottings on a postcard, a life model, street scene, etc. An inscription can encompass time, proposing 'the simultaneity of a multitude of moments'.[1 (p71)] Referring to a drawing he made of his dead father, Berger describes how every day his father's life returns to that drawing:

> It works because being a site of departure, it has become a site of arrival.[4 (p72)]

Atemporality

The notational process, as discussed in earlier chapters, is one of visual thinking and problem solving. This process involves the fluid temporal movement in the mind of the author between memory and expectation as s/he inscribes in the moment of attention. The emphasis in drawing classes on looking is not only crucial in the life room but in the mind of the author-illustrator as s/he observes in this tri-temporal process of inscription. In this moment of lived time the illustrator-author is attempting to re-view the past and/or to catch a glimpse of the future. The notion of the glance will be discussed more fully in *Chapter 5* when considering the digital poems developed for the thesis, but at this juncture, with the lived time of the author under consideration, it is worth noting that a glance embodies the tri-temporal experience:

> [A glance] arises in the present, but only as a reflection of the immediate past of interest or desire and as foreshadowing the future of correct intention. Being tritemporal, the glance constitutes a genuine *moment* of time…[15 (p83)]

This glance puts the author simultaneously into and out of time, into 'an intense momentary time and out of a continuous, distended time' .[15 (p82)] It is as if in the moment of looking the artist has opened up the temporal space. In the same way physicists have hypothesised that time cannot escape a black hole because of the intensity of the gravitional pull within it, so too for the artist-poet time can *feel* that in the moment of inscription they are operating within timelessness:

> Drawing as experimentation...demands that the artist be susceptible to and capable of taking advantage of the uncoupling of everyday space-time and the expansion of the field of consciousness to engage in what Klee once described as "polyphonic attention".[13 (p221)]

In this atemporal experience the artist glimpses and reglimpses that which is the subject of the inscription, and with each glimpse comes iteration, a correction of Proust's straying line, a modification of Berger's drawing. The visible manifestations on the page of the glimpse gives the author-illustrator a foothold on the narrative, the necessary purchase with which to advance. In the lived time of the author-illustrator, attention to the moment of inscription means reaching back and bringing forward into the perceived future the traces, the shaping of a memory.

This may sound all well and good, but for the author-illustrator staring at an open sketchbook on a Monday morning, with that teasing blank page, the notion of freeing oneself from the laws of physics may be viewed as a bit of a tall order. As previously discussed, displacement activities may circumvent this problem as a means of establishing the second stage of notational process, but at some point the third stage, that of purchase, must be initiated. If the displacement/incubation phase of notation, with its associated activities of staring at a wall, or tea-making, or checking one's emails, has failed to provide the initial purchase on the narrrative, then the author-illustrator must adopt another strategy. These vary from author to author and involve a huge variety of

idiosyncratic habits to kick start the third stage. For some drawing 'from life' provides the necessary object with which to move forward. Another tried and tested method – not always encouraged within education – is daydreaming. This strategy, as will be seen in *Part II*, is one adopted by many – productive – artists and writers.

Part II

Lived time and the daydream

Conscious v unconscious

4.vii. conscious v unconscious

The discussion so far of the four stage process of notation has suggested a reasonably systematic approach to the process – motivation, displacement, inspiration and consolidation. This description has a tendency towards the mechanistic; the impression may be forming that the argument is placing an emphasis on the conscious approach to narrative development in the sketchbook. Even allowing for 'pools' of unconscious time and activity, for example during the displacement stage, there may be the suggestion implanted by the text of a degree of separation between the conscious and unconscious. And while clearly this is sometimes the case, equally there is also often a blurring of the two mental states during the creative process. As Walter Benjamin suggests, the conscious and unconscious faculties 'lose their mutual exclusiveness' in the creative process,[16 (p160)] working symbiotically. To attempt to unravel this interdependant relationship in any great depth is outwith the scope of this thesis, but what is relevant and in need of further discussion is the rather loose proposition put forward in *Chapter 3: Space and Gesture* that 'the margins [of a notebook] are the home of the daydream'. To consider this, some attention needs to be given to the unconscious processes at work during inscription in the notational process.

While, as stated above, considering the conscious-unconcious relationship in the creative process is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is acknowledged that artists and writers often do carve out spaces in their creative activities for either specifically conscious or unconscious tasks. In the case of the former, for example, this may be at the motivation stage in defining the problem, or at the later stage of consolidation in which conscious attention must be given to technical demands of publication. In the case of unconscious activity, this can be found not only in the displacement stage but also in the purchase stage; here, as a means of stimulating or teasing out a narrative, the author-illustrator may resort to more unconscious processes. These are often perceived as marginal activities, certainly in the metaphorical sense, but also – and this is the subject of the discussion below – in the literal sense of the margins of the notebook, the home of the daydream.

The poet and the daydream

In the beginning was not the word, nor the blank space, nor the line. In the beginning, for many societies, was the dream.[17 (p113)] For the author-illustrator, unable to find purchase on a narrative, was the daydream.

From the author's notebooks - daydreaming on paper, when the conscious mind can be said to be absent. In this example notions of fantastical beach buildings emerged while the author was taking a rest from more focussed research activity.

Umberto Eco, noting a future for literature in the doodles of his students is, presumably heartened when, during one of his lectures, he sees members of the audience go off on a private mental journey, oblivious to what he is saying. They stare down at the carpet, or perhaps become caught up in one of their 'semantic scribbles' in the corner of the notebooks, possibly on the cover itself. While other professors may despair with this lack of focus to the main event taking place, perhaps academia needs to embrace those caught up in their daydreams. [I] After all, says Bachelard, the daydream is the natural home of the poet[18 (p84)]:

> The poet lives in a daydream that is awake, but above all, his daydream remains in the world, facing worldly things. It gathers the universe together around and in an object.[18 (p84)]

For the author-illustrator this gathering is part of the activity of notation. It occurs through the reciprocal process of mental daydream and, as it were, the physical daydream in the form of the doodle. And if, as Bachelard proposes, the chief benefit of the house is that it

> shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace[18 (p6)]

so for the author-illustrator the margins in the notebook provide the same benefit for the physical daydream. The sketchbook pages allow the author-illustrator to daydream, to be absent-minded because, after all, as Marion Milner points out,[19 (p163)] absent-mindedness should only take place under safe circumstances, i.e. preferably not while driving nor sword-fencing. The notebook, and particularly the margins with their perceived secondary or minor role, provide that safe environment; the work within it is not for public consumption. Here – beside, between or over the primary text – daydreams are evoked, safe from public scrutiny in their vulnerable, half-formed state, blinking in

I.The author has suggested to his current university employer, that, in the development of a common curricular framework a daydreaming slot should be built into the undergraduate timetable. At the time of writing there has been no formal response to this suggestion.

their first glimpse of external, worldly light. The margins, no less blank than the first page discussed in *Chapter 2*, are a different being altogether than that intimidatory sheet of paper. Is it a lyricism too far to say the margins are benevolent? Probably, but in the notebook the margins are a mirror of what Bachelard calls our 'inner space', a space which 'calls for action'.[18 (p12)] The blank page has demanded action, albeit often through displacement or defacement; the margins operate in the opposite direction – they invite and nurture activity:

> we cover the universe with drawings we have lived. These drawings need not be exact. They need only be tonalized on the mode of our inner space.[18 (p12)]

Bachelard could be talking of the narratives in the margin. To cover the universe, presumably, means unfettered not to mention plentiful expression; the lack of exactness is well suited to the doodles' sometimes half-formed state, and their often rapid manifestation on the page aids the large production required. Their inexactness, rather than being a weakness, is part of their value. The iterative doodle is an approximation of an image emerging. This is why Bachelard states that

> Poetry comes naturally from a daydream, which is less *insistent* than a night-dream; it is only a matter of an instant's freezing.[18 (p36)]

Speaking of 'insistence', the discussion above has, naturally enough, leaned heavily towards the poetic. At a push, the professor of physics may be persuaded to consider it tolerable that students of art or literature may daydream during a lecture in those fields, but this would not be acceptable behaviour in one of his/her monologues. Even Bachelard believes that a scientist has 'a discipline of objectivity that precludes all daydreams of the imagination.[18 (p156)] But the history of science is peppered with evidence to the contrary. Of the many cited by Thomas West in *In The Mind's Eye* (1997), one of the most famous examples is of the German chemist Kekulé, who came upon the structure of the benzene ring while in a half sleep.[20 (p195)]

Daydreaming has often been defined as 'thoughts that involve a shift of attention away from an immediately demanding task'.[21 (p152)] [II] In Freudian terms, it is primary process thinking, that is to say, an intuitive activity not constrained by logic or reality, as opposed to the secondary process thinking, which is conscious and logical. This distinction has been made by many writers since Freud, and has been termed 'undirected v directed', 'foreconscious v conscious', 'Type I and Type II'.[22 (p150)] Its importance, suggests Milner, is that just as sleep dreaming is necessary for an individual (artist or not), so too is daydreaming 'to preserve creative being awake'.[19 (p164)] [III]

II. Freud's view that daydreams are more concerned with the reduction of 'unacceptable' drives have not been supported in tests.[22 (p164)]

III. 'Clinical psycho-analytic experience,' reports Milner, 'suggests that many of the impediments to going forward into living are the result of a failure of the child's environment to provide the necessary setting for such absent-mindedness'.[19 (p164)] Perhaps specific workshops in daydreaming within an educational curriculum are not so ridiculous after all.

Conditions for daydreaming

The ideal conditions for the poet or scientist who utilises the daydream may vary:

> As well as individual differences in frequency and style of daydreaming, situational factors also play a role. Roughly speaking, the more important it is to attend to the outer environment, the less likely one is to engage in daydreaming.[22 (p153)]

This is why Einstein recommended that a scientist take up the work of a lighthouse keeper[20 (p190)]:

> If one wishes to be really creative, it seems that sometimes it is essential to have one's time less than fully committed, to be able to follow where one's thoughts lead rather than having to succeed in a variety of tasks largely defined by one's career, one's competitors, or other outside forces.[20 (p191)]

This romantic notion forms part of Kundera's musings as he laments the passing of the pleasure of slowness and with it the vagabond, the 'loafing heroes of folk song' who would lie on a grassy bank, 'gazing at God's window'[23 (p5)]:

> Ah, where have they gone, the amblers of yesteryear?...Have they vanished along with the footpaths, with grasslands and clearings with nature?[23 (pp4-5)]

Not necessarily. They may just have taken a different form. Some may be found mentally loafing in a lecture theatre, in a fireside armchair or, as in the case of the great advocate of the daydream, Marcel – 'If a little daydreaming is dangerous the cure….is to dream all the time'[8 (ii.p488)] – Proust, in bed. In his case often facing the wall.[IV] Others, such as the flaneur, may still be ambling. Whatever the physical situation, another useful condition, in addition to, or rather as a result of a lack of interest in external events, is boredom.

> What special depth there is in a child's daydream! ....It is a good thing...for a child to have periods of boredom, for him to learn to know the dialectics of exaggerated play and causeless, pure bordeom.[18 (p16)]

There is some scientific support for this idea; Singer suggests that one of the functions of the daydream (in addition to it aiding anticipation and planning, and reminding us of 'unfinished business' which we may be trying to suppress), is in 'maintaining arousal in dull environments'.[24 (p164)] This is one of the reasons that prompts Proust to stare at the wall of his bedroom. He talks of the daily boredom of sitting down to write and wonders if some of the 'greatest masterpieces were written while yawning'.[8 (iii.pp448-449)]

IV. It has been noted in laboratory tests that during daydreaming a fixed leftward gaze is often adopted, indiciating, 'a predominance of actiivty in the right cortical hemisphere'.[22 (p152)] Could this have been Proust's position?

Contemplative action – the doodle

Boredom can give birth to the daydream, and in turn the daydream can give birth to Bachelard's action; in the case of the notebook to the doodle – during a lecture, during a phone call, during a meeting. The 'mind' is not taking part in the main business at hand; it is elsewhere, absent, wandering the streets of Milan or the breakfast conversation. [V] For example, architect Patrick Lynch describes how, for him, drawing can sometimes 'feel like dreaming'.[26]

Patrick Lynch:Untitled (2006)

The doodle, which Milner describes as a 'contemplative action'[19 (p153)] in that it requires the participation of the hand, allows those mental wanderings to enter the physical world. As they do, they do not stay in their pure state, but at some point become affected by the conscious decision-making of the author-illlustrator.

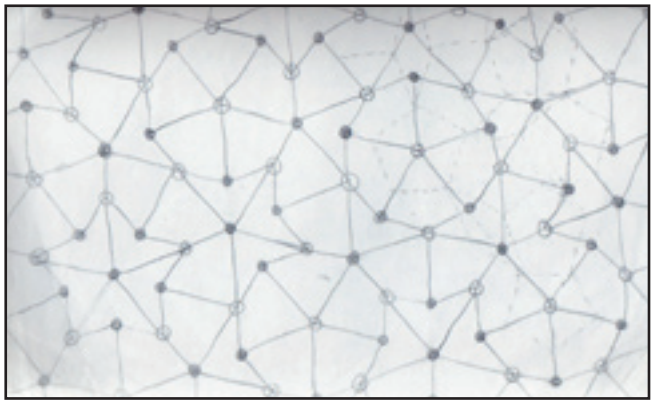
> First amongst the things to be noticed here was the fact that the mood or state of concentration in which the most expressive drawings appeared had a special quality. It was a mood which could be described as one of reciprocity; for although it was certainly a dreamy state of mind it was not a dreaminess that shuts itself off from the outside world or shuts out action. It was more a dreaminess that was the result of restraining conscious intention, or rather, a quick willingness to have it and then forgo it.[19 (p71)]

The free drawings or doodles are a tangible reflection of the 'complex rhythmic interplay and interchange' between dreams and reality.[19 (p85)] They reveal the mechanics of the lived time of the reader; a careful balancing act must be maintained between the action (attending to the moment of inscription) and the contemplation (i.e. allowing long term memory) to surface as unadulterated as possible, given the process of oblivion that has taken place and which continues to recur. But, as argued in the previous chapter, the process of notation is tri-temporal in form; in addition to the moment of attention and the drawing down (or up) of memory, there is expectation. Referring to her free drawing experience, Milner says:

V. One useful definition of absent-mindedness is: 'for conscious logic and reason to be absent from one's mind' [25 (p.xii)]

> one had to maintain the kind of attention which created a gap ahead in time and a willingness to wait and see what was emerging to fill the gap. Also to do this one had to shut out internal or external interruptions which might lead one's thought away from this framed emptiness ahead.[19 (p104)]

The notion of free drawing has found new possibilites with contemporary artists. The *You'll Never Know: Drawing and Random Interference* exhibition (Hayward touring 2006), examined drawing through avant-garde strategies for disrupting the artist's control and conscious aims. Pencil drawings barely featured – syringes, snails, the elements and toys proving more popular media. The exhibition acknowledges that the featured artists are working in a tradition that goes back beyond Pollock and back beyond the Dadaists to the 15th century.[27 (p15)] While the accidental gesture is something the traditional author-illustrator is sensitive to and willing to exploit, the distinction to be made between the free drawing in the mechancial sense and the free drawing as doodle in the Milner sense (and in the context of this thesis) is that the latter free drawing is concerned simultaneously with free thinking.[VI] This is why the daydreaming doodle is, as with the daydream itself, not peculiar to poets and artists alone: the 'freethinking' sketches of scientists such as Sir Roger Penrose, Sir Harry Krotto and Sir Colin St John Wilson demonstrate spontaneous drawing which has led to scientific discovery and invention.



Roger Penrose: Musing on The Theory of Aperiodic Tilings (undated)

In focussing on the creative possibilities of the daydream there is the danger of over simplifying its characteristics by only viewing it as a result of indirect thought process and in opposition to directed (conscious) thought process. This can be misleading, for directed thought may seek to imitate undirected thinking's serendipitous mixing of concepts by embarking upon 'fanciful' thinking.[22 (p160)] For example, an author-illustrator addressing the ill-structured problem of narrative development in the notebook may adopt a Burroughsesque approach by deliberately juxtaposing odd combinations of images. A crucial difference, however, between directed and undirected thinking, normal waking thought and the daydream, is that in the former

> images and ideas remain intact, separate wholes, while in dream-like thought, images tend to flow together and merge.[22 (p160)]

VI. It is worth noting, however, that if – as stated earlier – the notebook provides a safe haven for the artist-illustrator wanting to draw freely, unrepressed by the ego (Freud), then the work featured in *You'll Never Know* suggests this can be better achieved through the strategies used, which enable the artist to free him/herself 'from the ego in order to procure the unexpected, which you hope is more relevant, more universal, than anything you could achieve through the conceptual mind alone'.[27 (p14)]

Another major feature of daydreaming, relative to the conscious thought process, seems to be its wandering nature:

> Daydreams are not necessarily unrealistic but tend to drift from one topic to another, whereas thinking in problem solving is checked against feedback concerning progress toward the current goal and attention is 'locked' on to the problem materials.[22 (p165)]

The balancing act described by Milner – of the artist allowing unconscious images to surface through the doodle, and to do so by a loose degree of control over the process – leans towards a strategy adopted by many writers and artists who have utilised streams of consciousness. Of these Proust stands out as a chief example. The *raison d'etre* of his method was

> to free the senses from the restraint which convention or habit imposes on an impression and to enable an object to be represented, at once clearly and with an exquisite freshness, as for the first time.[28 (p.v)]

This involves dexterity on the part of the author; on the one hand sensitiveness to the unconscious while also demonstrating directed intellectual control. This process, says Hoare, is akin to psychoanalysis, the difference being that the subject and the controlling observer in the novel are the same person.[28 (p.v)] Given that this method was first developed in the late 19th century by Gertrude Stein and William James, this proximity to psychoanalysis is of no surprise. Indeed, Milner's motivation in exploring free drawing was in the context of clinical psychology. And the streams of consciousness process, teetering between artistic pursuit and self help, remains popular today in the form of books like Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way* (1992, 2002). But self help is not the goal of this thesis. Bringing it back to an artistic pursuit, the aim of this approach is to 'burn through first thoughts', [29 (p8)] to unfreeze 'the petrified imagination'.[30 (p21)]

The mental drift from topic to topic of the daydream, suggests Singer, involves attending to the normally unnoticed – 'underground' – flows of activity in long-term memory.[24 (p165)] A comprehensive understanding or even description of the stream of thought process is, by definition, suggests Epstein, profoundly problematic:

> The progression of thought is determined by an associative network which is not itself directly experienced, but only expresses itself indirectly through its effects on the imagistic representations that are supported by the sensory regions of the cerebral cortex.[31 (p24)]

In other words, the 'representations' that lead the stream of thought process are not the contents of consciousness. Epstein, who has attempted to map psychology with neuroscience to gain a greater insight into the process, refers to William James' view that the ''thoughts of relations'' that guide the stream of thought from one substantive thought to another were real, albeit elusive experiences.[31 (p8)] He cites James' well-known life of a bird metaphor for understanding streams of thought. The mental process, like a bird's life, appears to consist of alternating flights and perchings:

> The resting-places are usually occupied by sensorial imaginations of some sort, whose peculiarity is that they can be held before the mind for an indefinite time, and contemplated without changing; the places of flight are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the periods of comparative rest.[32] (p243)

James describes this process in terms of a ‘‘fringe’’ of half-felt contextual information that surrounds the more salient information in the focus of consciousness, or ‘‘nucleus’’. The fringe consists of a faint memory of preceding thoughts, a sense of the relationship between thoughts in focus and other thoughts that might be pertinent to it, and a feeling as to which direction the focus is heading in.

> Although this contextual information is present in each moment, we are not usually much aware of it. Rather, it expresses itself only as a vague ‘‘suffusion’’ or ‘‘overtone’’ that gives a thought its particular savour and plays an important role in conveying its meaning. We are highly aware of the sensory experiences in the focus of consciousness, but only dimly sense the network of relations and associations that link the different ‘‘nuclei’’ together into a train of connected thoughts.[31] (p8)

Terry Rosenberg, citing the doodles of John Rhys Newman, Nokia senior design manager in Los Angeles, describes this process as ‘absence that thinks’.[33] (p116) Occurring during meetings or conferences calls, these absent-minded doodles, tesitifies Rhys, have a fluidity which his more conscious – and therefore hesitant – drawings lack. In the doodles fortutitious accidents can occur on the page:

> These accidents lead me to think on things I couldn’t have otherwise anticipated. They allow my imagination to take leaps.[34] (p115)

Far left: *John Rhys Newman: Damned fig. (2006)*

Left: *John Vernon Lord: Validation (2000)*

> What Rhys is trying to do, through losing himself below a liminal datum is gain new knowing...[to] break the hold of his ingrained knowing in order to embrace

> the blankness and/or noise of the possible.[33 (p116)]

Rosenberg terms these types of drawings as 'ideational drawings' i.e. thinking-in-action and action-in-thinking, process and artifact.[33 (p116)] The feel of this term is one of conceptual/design problem solving and is perhaps too clean cut for the dog-eared notebooks of the author-illustrator. Instead, the term 'doodle' will continue to be maintained throughout the thesis; unprecious, throwaway, free.

Atemporality revisited

What emerges in the descriptions above of the daydream and the doodle – a device for gaining purchase on a potential narrative – is that the thought process, the bird's life, is anything but linear. Our mental process, as Jeanette Winterson suggests, is 'more like a maze than a motorway'.[35 (p23)] It may be that in the lived moment of notation, when attention is given to the drawing activity found in the margins of the notebook (prompted by the activity in the margins of the author-illustrator's mental process), when the author-illustrator is, as Milner suggests, 'giving to the outside world the stuff of one's dreams', the memories of one's past are called upon, and the dreams are 'refashioned internally to make one's hopes and longings for the future'.[19 (p26)] But in the same way that a bird's journey may involve arcing sweeps and returns to favourite perches and feeding grounds, so, too, the notational process advances, pauses, iterates. Drawings may be hesitant or bold, drawn with commitment or sketched and retraced, over drawings perhaps. The 'framed emptiness ahead' (Milner) becomes filled with the gesture, and slips into the past; an iteration of it (next to it, beyond it or over it) sees it not as a gap of anticipation but a memory, open to reworking. It brings us back to the atemporal 'black hole' experience mentioned in *Part I*, in which time cannot escape. Patrick Lynch, speaking of his dreamlike state while drawing, says the process absorbs

> your whole attention and energy, so that you feel afterwards as if you have awoken from visiting a strange place again.[26]

The author-illustrator loses his/her sense of time in the daydream, in the margin. S/he is utilising the moment of the gesture to gain purchase on a narrative, whose reach extends back into memory, forwards into expectation. But refinement is necessary. This non-linear maze may return the explorer to a place already 'discovered' in an earlier part of his/her search. That which was an expectation has become a memory and, conversely, the memory which now lies ahead waiting to be rediscovered is an expectation. This temporal movement in the mind of the author-illustrator is in part what Dan Patterson alludes to when he describes poetry as 'the systematic interrogation of the unconscious'.[36] It is a scanning process, though it may be better likened to panning for gold, the arm and hand action of the prospector not so dissimilar from the notetaker's gesture. It is part of the search of some writers and poets for an 'unrestful, ungraspable poetry of the sheer present…'.[37 (p21)]

Summary

This chapter has considered a tri-temporal model, described as a three-fold present model of time, as a means of understanding the lived time experience of authoring. Attention, memory and expectation act in concert, it was proposed, to aid the author-illustrator in the development of a narrative on the notebook page. Additionally, the author can feel a sense of out-of-timeness, as experienced during a daydream, a process discussed at some length. Daydreaming, it was suggested, can be a highly productive thought process, and some examples to support this were provided. The process was considered not just from the perspective of the mental activity of the author-illustrator but in relation to the gesture on the page. It was proposed that the notebook's margins act as both metaphor and actual two dimensional space for the daydream, as made manifest in the contemplative action of the doodle.

In the previous chapter the gesture was discussed as a means of reaching some understanding of the idea of the visual poetic as a valuable methodology in academic research, particularly in the field of the visual arts. The analysis in this chapter of the notational process from the lived time experience of the author-illustrator provides a further dimension to this understanding, emphasising the importance of working in the 'nowness' of inscription, and at the same time allowing the mind to wander in a creative and 'productive' fashion. The application of these observations to the debate on poetic inquiry in academic research will be developed in *Chapter 6: Drawing Conclusions*, when reflective research journals are considered.

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Introduction

5.i.1. introduction

This chapter reflects on eight poems contained in the digital portfolio that accompanies the written dissertation. They were developed by using as references the characteristics of the notation process discussed in the preceding chapters. As mentioned, one analytical approach developed for the thesis is the mutual interrogation of the notational process and the poems to establish commonalities in relation to the visual utilisation of space and the lived time experience – in the case of the notebook in terms of the lived time experience of the author, and in respect of the poems the lived time experience of the viewer.

The chapter, by way of introduction, begins with a brief reference to four 'appeals' of the notebook – play, dream, thought and time, which are echoed in the digital poems. Typographic space is considered both in the context of traditional typsetting and its application in literature, and in respect of the digital poetry's use of typographic space on the computer screen. The use of visible secondary texts which interact with and in some cases dominate the primary is discussed, and how these secondary texts, operating as transitions on the screen, can help nurture a mimetic rendering of thought patterns through the poems' visual and kinetic structures. Having analysed these spatial properties of the poems, attention is then turned to the lived time experience of the viewer; this parallels the lived time experience of the author, and incorporates the glimpse as a means of viewing the work.

Notes on the poems

5.i.2. notes on the poems

The poems, selected from a body of works developed during the research, can be found in *Appendix II* of the digital portfolio. They are arrranged in three groupings - *Series I*, *II* and *III*. Each series is characterised by a different type of visual textual presentation: *Series I* is free form in its kinetic construction, echoing the *calligrammes* of Apollinaire; *Series II* is based on Times Square in which text travels horizontally into and out of the frame; and *Series III* employs Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (RSVP), in which words appear successively in place or, as it were, on top, of each other.

Four appeals

Kundera, in a defence of the novel as a relevant contemporary form, speaks of four 'appeals' which the form has to offer – the appeals of play, of dream, of thought and of time[1 (p15)]: playfulness as demonstrated by Sterne's *Tristam Shandy*; dream, as in the work of Kafka, which sees 'the fusion of dream and reality...a long standing aesthetic of the novel...[which is] a place where the imagination can explode as in a dream'; thought, as in the work of Musil and Broch, who sought not to transform the novel into philosophy but to marshal the 'rational and irrational, narrative and contemplative; and time, in the sense of Proustian memory and collective memory.[1 (pp15-16)] These appeals can be easily transposed into the sketchbook: 'Play' underpins the notational process exemplified by serendipity through juxtaposition and uncensored approach; the 'dream' as in the contemplative action of the daydreaming doodle in the margins; 'thought' in the merging of the conscious and unconscious; and 'time' as in the lived time of the author-illustrator (though the latter has been discussed primarily in the sense of the individual).

These four appeals can also be perceived in other disciplines. Little discussion has so far been given to the fourth stage of the notation process – consolidation/publication. This chapter addresses this by considering how these appeals may be utilised in the production of 'finished' artworks through the development of three series of digital poems. These poems, it is proposed, embody not only Kundera's appeals but, more centrally, the characteristics of the notation process. The poems – eight are presented in the accompanying digital folio – are to this end a 'synthetic' rendering of the experience of the lived time of the author-illustrator, in the same way *In Search of Lost Time* may be said to be a synthetic rendering of Proustian memory.[2 (p100)] Another way to describe it would be to adopt Susan Hiller's term 're-feeling' mentioned in *Chapter 1* of the thesis. The poems could be said to be a re-feeling of the notation process to the extent that their production, whilst an end in themselves, has aided the interrogation of the sketchbook by identifying and working with the characteristics of blankness, margins, visible secondary texts and the daydream. As outlined in the methodology, the working relationship between the production of notations and the poems has been a mutually beneficial one, a symbiotic interrogation of commonalities. In turn, this chapter will analyse the digital poems through a further re-feeling of the characteristics embodied in the notational process. This chapter is not an attempt to discuss the broader subject of visual and dynamic poetry, but is primarily concerned with establishing the commonalities between the two fields of notation and the visual poems.

Typographic space

An em-quad

In the beginning was the word. And the blank. And movement, and the dream. If in doubt, just ask a traditional typesetter. The word is the meat, the primary business; the blank the essential space around and between the letters and words; the movement the movable type which enables the formation of the words and spaces; and the dream may be the author's as the text becomes fixed, externalised, but also very much the meditative absorption which the process demands of the typesetter.

The typesetter performs alchemy. S/he takes solid materials - steel, lead, copper, brass, wood - and turns them into space, voids on the page. Johanna Drucker speaks of the special value in holding words in her hand as she typesets[3 (p146)]; the same can be done with space. For example, from the printer's galley take a cube of metal that represents, or rather will become, a word space and hold it between your finger and thumb – a solid lump of metal that is also space. Consider its form – the width and height (x and y) are relative to the size of the type which it accompanies. If the type is 72 point, the space is 72 point by 72 point. If 10 point, then the space is 10 point square. This proportion is defined as the em quad of its particular type size. To use it, however, would result in too wide a word space, so it is subdivided, commonly so that only a third of its width is required, termed as 3-to-the-em space.

3-to-the-em

Crucially, the depth of this metal space is less than the depth of the metal letters that flank it in the type case, thereby ensuring it does not come into contact with the paper and, in turn, does not print its 'positive'. In cross section it can be seen that the difference in depth can be represented by the depth of the character which sits on top of the letter type. The space, or gap, that sits above the metal form of the quad is only a partial representation of the word space. In other words, word spacing is created using a two-part object, in part a physical cuboid of metal and, residing above it, an invisible well, an *implied space*. When set in a type case this object, simultaneously tangible and intangible, is a gravitational force, keeping words (and worlds) simultaneously separated and joined.

Working in tandem with these spaces are the margins which surround the text. As with the margins of the notebook, they can act as a buffer to the outside world (literally, protecting the text) or may be utilised to imply or host texts. As with the discussion above regarding the notation process, the typographic spaces and margins could be said to be the secondary texts, relative to the primary which is the 'main' text. For the sake of this chapter the marginal space, along with the word, letter and line space, will be called 'typographic space'.

As the history of graphic design and visual poetry has demonstrated, this typographic space can be used as a means of easing the flow of the reading of a text or, conversely, can be manipulated to interrupt the experience.

Flow and interruption

In traditional graphic design and typsetting the function of the typographic space is to ease the flow of reading to the point where the reader is not consciously aware of its existence. Poor judgement here suffocates the text; skill and experience enables it to breath, to become airborne. Metal is transformed into golden silence, one step beyond the silver of speech. The two-part objects mentioned above – such as the metal word space or the lead line space – serve to iron out the creases of the presented text, smoothing its surface so the reader is able to attend to the content of the text without unnecessary interruption or delay. Once metamorphosized, these lumps, strips and slithers defy gravity, aid the writer determined to remove weight from the structure of stories and from language itself.[4 (p3)] The history of literature and publishing is one in which the typographic space has functioned in this way. But within this history there is also another strand of literature and poetry in which the space has not acted as a lubricant but as an intentionally disruptive device (as opposed to an unintentionally disruptive device which may also be called poor typography).

> ...no poet has gone further in the manipulation of this pause than Mallarmé in *Un coup de dés*, for every space in the poem is equivocal… each is a case of trial and error through reading...The spaces are two positive indications in one. They invite us not only to pause in our forwards reading but to develop another, concurrent reading method.'[5 (pp122-123)]

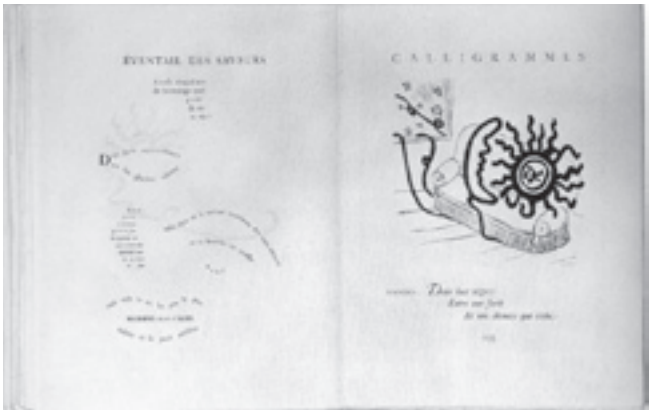
Mallarmé calls his typographical play 'espacement' (spacing). The utilisation of space in poetry was, says Carrion, 'an enormous event of literally incalculable consequences'.[6 (p57)] It was not the result of some flippant or extravagant gesture, but 'the natural, unavoidable development of the spatial reality gained by language since the moment writing was invented'.[6 (p57)] The space which operates within and around the visual poem allows, as mentioned above, words to be suspended in a gravitational relationship, pulled together, pushed apart.

Poets, suggests Paterson, are

> experts in the failure of language. Words fail us continually, as we search for them beyond the borders of speech, or drive them to the limit of their meaning and then beyond it....The object of a poem is to place a new unity in the language (an exploded view, if you like, of a new word) that results from the love affair between two hitherto unconnected terms: two words, two ideas, two phrases, two images, a word and an image, a phrase and a new context for it, so on...But poets do not consider words alone. They consider what happens when words meet other words.[7]

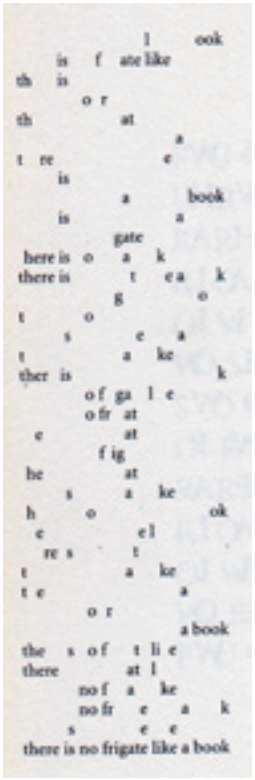
This is Jabes' dilemma – the narrative that lies beyond, the meaning that must remain in the margins of his work.[8 (p20)] The words are always elusive, poetry 'an utterance with an orientation towards expression'.[9 (p363)] A skilled poet may be said to be one who at best comes close to finding precision in the words and the meeting of words; this is what

prompts Emmett Williams to announce he is nearly a poet. The incorporation of the typographic space as an active agent in a poem, whether to interrupt the main text or to amplify it, enables that which is perhaps always elusive to be brought closer. That is to say, beyond its traditional usage, the typographic space is marshalled into the language of the poem. This is the history of the visual poem, whether in the work of Mallarmé, the *calligrammes* of Apollinaire, or contemporary poets:



Above: *Apollinaire: Calligrammes*
Left: *John Cayley: screengrab* from *Torus (2004)*

Among the different strands of visual poetry, one alluded to earlier is emergent poetry, referenced in relation to the work of Francis Ponge. This form, in which 'secondary lines are extracted from the content of the first',[10 (p19)] can also be seen in the work of poets such as Edwin Morgan and Hamish Whyte.



Hamish Whyte: Outward Bound (undated)

These poems demonstrate an iterative search for the appropriate words, and it is the culmination of the search that makes the poem. As Calvino says of Ponge's work:

> the real work consists not in its definitive form, but in the series of approximations made to attain it.[4 (p77)]

The digital poems in *Series I* operate in this tradition of emergent poetry.

Cliché builds a narrative from words which can be seen as cut-outs scattered on a desk. As the poem moves through time the words organise to tell the story. Where possible, words are recycled within the main body of the text. One of the results of this is a final fixed main poem which has an awkward completeness to it, the final reading not making sense without having experienced the movement.

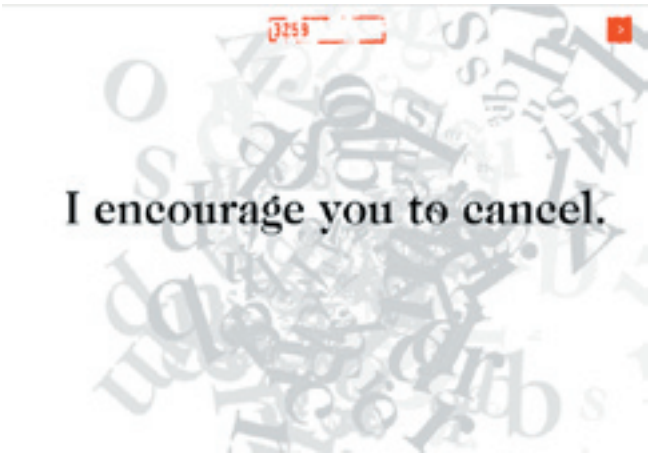
In *Dog Collar* this idea is furthered through the emergence of one poem out of another, both complete in their own right. During the shuffle that occurs from one to the other, new meanings may occur in the space, though imperceptible to the viewer's gaze. This allows new meanings in the void. The space between is a gravitational force which not only pushes the first and last poems apart but simultaneously pulls them together to form new meanings in the void.

Rocket I emerges using two sets of references. In the development of the poem the visual appearance of a given word suggested other words. At the same time, puns and associations were traded between the themes of space travel and cookery. The overriding tone of *Rocket I* and the other two poems in *Series I* is one of playfulness, as per Kundera's first appeal.

Above: Screengrabs from *Cliché*
Left: Screengrabs from *Dog Collar*

Visible secondary texts

Throughout the history of graphism, writers and poets have gravitated towards the typographic space, pondering its content. While many have used it to ease the flow of reading, and others to disrupt, others still have looked at the space and have chosen to throw into or skim words across it.



Left: *Thomas Swiss:* Screengrab from *Narrative (cited 2005)*
Above: *Jean Dubuffet:* from *La Lune Farcie*

As with so many things, there is nothing new about this use of the typographic space. Dick Higgins has traced pattern poetry, arguably a precursor to concrete, visual and digital poetry, back to Roman and Greek culture.

> In AD 325 Optatian produced pattern poems ..... sometimes called 'carmina quadrata' with secondary texts within the body of the main (field) one, cancelled out from the background so they are 'carmina cancellata' – the interior texts are called 'intexts'.[11(p49)]

There is a useful and easy link to be made here between this form and the use of margins within the notebook - secondary texts feeding and sometimes dominating the primary. Similarly, with the palimpsets:

Left: *Nico Vassilakis:* Screengrab from *Ficus Thus (cited 2000)*
Above: Screengrab from *Heart*

The structural relationship between primary and secondary texts in the early examples of pattern poetry can be seen in various forms and to various degrees in *Series I* and

III. The secondary, or intexts, while at first appearing as side products from the primary texts, dominate the overall visual poetic field, sometimes in a quiet fashion (*Dog Collar*), and sometimes more explicitly (all three poems in *Series III*).

With the development of temporal typography and digital poetry the poet has been able to add, literally, a new dynamic to the utilisation of the typographic space, and in so doing has the opportunity to manipulate the time of the poem.

> This idea [of using typographic spaces as part of signifying process] is being used by kinetic poetry, too, restoring intervals of a hidden or merely indicated text instead of using blanks. Such a text runs somewhere in the depth of the screen and appears in the foreground only partially for a short period of time.[12 (p2)]

By way of slight digression, it is worth noting that the use of the word 'somewhere' in relation to the depth of the screen highlights a problem in any attempt to truly parallel depth of the typographic space on paper with the same space on the screen. For example, citing the codeworks of Belgian-Dutch duo JODI, who transfer background code to the foreground, Roberts and Schaffner state:

> …some digital poets do not rely on visual means alone, but rather question the validity of the screen representation by making explicit the schism between the surface screen event and the processes that take place in the depth of the processing unit.[13]

At the same time, however, many writers and poets are content to utilize the *illusion* of screen depth and space:

> The illusion of complex surfaces and multiple strata of visual and linguistic signs is a specific feature of the new medium, which many digital poets exploit creatively. Digital work has the capacity to explore space as a potentially semantic element and to engage with depth and surface in a more explicit and complex way than poetry on the page. Digital signifiers are temporal processes rather than permanent marks, and space, position and duration become new elements of signification.[13]

Space, transition and mimesis

5.v. space, transition and mimesis

As mentioned above, Proust, suggests Kaja Silverman, like many other writers, who are able to 'light up' subjects with their words, does so by 'synthetically producing in the reader the effects of unconscious memories'.[2 (p100)] The word 'synthetic' is chosen carefully, so as to leave open the matter as to whether this effect is produced consciously or unconsciously.

> Drawing upon his or her own unconscious resources, but working in a form at least partly available to consciousness, a poet, novelist or filmmaker can create a metaphoric or metonymic network of images capable of precipitating in the reader or viewer an analogous apprehension of ideality to that normally

> produced in the workings of unconscious memory.[2 (pp100-101)]

Many visual poets have followed this agenda, not only utilising words but the visual with its typographic space. The final line of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*

> confirms what we may well have suspected earlier: that the poem is a model of the thought process at large.[5 (p128)]

The reader has to view, scan and absorb the pattern of words and typographic space to make sense of the poem, to find some coherence,

> to venture beneath the surface into the difficult, undifferentiated world of unconscious process, to interrupt the easy flow of horizontal perception with strenuous excursions into multi-level, all-at-once 'verticality'.[5 (p16)]

Mallarmé's own descriptions of the varying tempo and interruptions and re-formations within *Un coup de dés* reinforces this notion, stressing 'their identity with mental process'.[14 (p117)]

The introduction into poetry of movement and, therefore, of a new temporal reading, is as seismic as Carrion's introduction of space. The fixed solidity of typographic spacing is dissolved and recast as virtual, temporal, shifting. The work is unapologetically surface-orientated, allowing the illusion of depth and volume to prevail, the temporal dimension inherent in motion-based artifacts offering new possibilities for Mallarmé's blank signifiers. Digital text can be 'manipulated in ways that would be impossible if it existed as a material object rather than a visual display'.[15 (p26)] Hayles has coined the term 'flickering signifier' which she defines as

> text as a flickering image, as an immaterial temporal process rather than as a stable, durably inscribed mark.[15 (p26)]

The flickering is reminiscent of Jakobson's definition of poetry as an utterance towards expression, or even Ponge's iteration. Nothing is permanent, everything a collective approximation. This is particularly evident in the moments of transition in the portfolio's visual poems, when one word gives way to another, or when two words pass each other:

Screengrab from *Rocket I*

Screengrab from *Wild Water*

The transition can render more explicitiy this notion of mimesis. The movement between primary texts not only reveals secondary texts (implied or visible) but becomes a secondary text itself, in other words the transition becomes an intext. The digital poems have been developed as a synthetic working of James' birds' flight metaphor to describe the thought process (see *Chapter 4*). The primary texts in the poems, that is, the words which are more explicitly rendered, can be likened to the nuclei in James's model, the transition the fringe activity. In this interaction between primary and secondary, the primary act as fixed referents for the transitions which elicit moments of half remembered thoughts, future potentials.

But the poems are not solely a reworking of the thought process. They also echo the notation process, itself in turn a visible manifestation of the thought process with its marginal acitivity, juxtaposition, contemplative action, and so on. More than this, for the author-illustrator the notational process, as has been argued, is *part* of the thought process. The poems can be viewed as a logical follow on to the notation process, both in terms of them as examples of the fourth stage of notation (consolidation) and as an iteration or re-feeling of the whole process. It is tempting to suggest a linear chronology to the development of the poems, beginning with thought process, revealed in the notation and developed into the externalised poems.Though there is some substance to this lineage it is too simple; in part because of the notation process being an active part of the thought process, but also – importantly – the notation process and the finished artworks in practice often develop in concert (see *Chapter 1: Methodology)*.

If the poems do function as a mimetic rendering of the thought process and notational process, working with the space on the screen to present to the viewer primary-secondary textual patterns, the question that arises is how they should be viewed. There are two ways of approaching this – firstly, from the perspective of reading; secondly, related to this, from the perspective of the lived time of the reader or viewer.

Open reading

5.vi. open reading

It is not the purpose of the thesis to explore how texts and images are interpreted by the reader; this would be far beyond the scope of the project and is not of primary importance within the context of the thesis. At the same time, however, it is impossible to move on to the subject of the lived time of the reader without first – in passing – considering *how* they should be read.

The poems, mimetic as they are of creative thought patterns and notational activity, seek to reflect the speculative nature of the thinking inherent in these processes. To this end they require an open reading on the part of the viewer. This is a common feature of visual poetry. In *Un coup de dés* , for example, the open spaces

> indicate that the text cannot coagulate into any definitive meaning; the words refer to one another, but together they do not form a closed structure.[16]

The lack of closure on the meaning is a major characteristic of the visual poem which,

as Emmett Williams says, is a form that often 'needs to be completed by the viewer'.[17] (p.vi) Eco suggests that Mallarmé's use of blank spaces, spatial composition and typographical adjustment contribute to create

> a halo of indefiniteness and to make the text pregnant with infinite suggestive possibilities.[18] (p53)

It is this search for suggestiveness, he continues, that is an attempt to 'open' the work for a free response from the viewer.[18] (p53) The digital poems seek to exploit the open reading, even when the start and ends points may be fixed, such as in *Dog Collar*. The 'real' – albeit momentary – text lies in the moment of transition, when words pass, overlap, alter their relationships with one another. Through a rearrangement a second narrative is formed from the words of the first; during this transition a third reading is possible. This reading is shifting in every frame of its passage from first narrative to second narrative. Similarly, with the metal type poetry of Series III, the intexts are in the palimpset transitions that occur using the letters contained in the primary text, simultaneously emergent and submergent.

Such is the tempo of the transitions in several of the folio poems that the viewer can only get a hint of some other reading, some other narrative. This is akin to the purchase stage in notation in which the author-illustrator looks for hints and clues for the starting point to a potential narrative. In both cases – the transition in the digital poems and the search in the notational process – the method of perception is a tentative one. It is one of the glimpse, or glance.

Glimpsing narratives

5.vii. glimpsing narratives

In the discussion on the lived time of the author in *Chapter 4*, it was suggested that in attending to the moment of inscription, the author-illustrator draws on memory and expectation through a glimpse or glance. The same principle is employed in the digital poems; the viewer may only get a momentary visual hint, conscious or otherwise, of other narratives at work within the transitional activity and duration of the poems. This notion of the glimpse is inherent in various literary forms – VS Pritchett describes the short story as 'something glimpsed, from the corner of an eye, in passing',[19] (p277) and Aarseth points out that in the case of newcomers to non-linear narratives the text 'cannot be read, only glimpsed and guessed at'.[20] A poetics of hypermedia writing, he suggests, is a poetics of 'collected samples and glimpses'.[20] This is perhaps not so far away from Edwin Morgan's view that concrete poetry should not be confined to the pages of a book but rather should be seen every day in passing, on the way to work or school.[10] (p19) During our commute we may only glimpse the words.

The digital poems seek to exploit this form of viewing. A glance, says Edward Casey, makes us conscious of 'being in or at the moment of transition.'[21] (p83)

> A glance, much like TS Eliot's birds, *alights*; it does not settle down but perches precariously. It alights here and there and there, in no particular order or

> sequence. Just as it moves mercurially over surfaces that are not themselves contiguous, leaping over intermediate points, so the glance does not fit snugly into a gapless continuum of time.[21 (p82)]

This brings us back to James' bird flight metaphor once more, and the synthetic rendering of thought patterns and notational processes in the digital poems. And as with the doodle, the transition has a lightness of touch. The glance, too, has an inherent lightness in its action, mirroring a lightness of thoughtfulness that may be evident in, for example, the daydream. This kind of lightness, says Calvino, quoting Valéry, is lightness 'like a bird, and not like a feather'.[4 (p16)] In its lightness the glance, like the bird, can move swiftly and freely. It doesn't proceed, says Casey referencing Bergson, by '"taking snapshots of passing reality" but acts kaleidoscopically'.[21 (p96)] The computer, with its inherent 'kaleidoscopic power' enables poets, writers and artists to develop and present narratives that

> more truly reflect our turn-of-the-century sensibility. We no longer believe in a single reality, a single integrating view of the world, or even the reliability of a single angle of perception.[22 (p161)]

The visual reference in the digital poems to thought patterning is amplified by taking cognisance of the potential of the glimpse in respect of the viewer's experience and by tapping in to a kaleidoscope-like movement. The animated poetry, as with other dynamic texts,

> presents a nonsimultaneity of reading and viewing (one line of the text can be deciphered for only a moment, everything else can only be viewed but not read).[23 (p29)]

This is particularly evident in the poems in *Series III* which move at a tempo that only allows the peripheral activity a small degree of 'visibility'. Words are hinted at, but remain unfixed, at least on the first viewing. This visual presentation seeks to echo the lived time experience during the authoring stage, both in terms of the often free flowing pace of writing and in the author's glimpsing of a narrative, as discussed earlier. They are presented in such a way so as to mirror this temporal experience with the experience of viewing the works. Below, lived time experience – this time of the viewer – is discussed.

Lived time and the viewer

5.viii. lived time and the viewer

The typographic space in the digital poems seeks to utilise the typographic space as secondary texts, or 'intexts', in the same way as was observed in the process of notation with the marginal space of the notebook. In both cases the space can contain a narrative, either implied through the perceived blankness or through the visible manifestation of drawing (in the case of notation) or text (in the case of the poems). But the spatial properties were only one aspect of the analysis of the notebook, the other being the lived time experience of the author. The poems offer the opportunity to mirror this analysis by considering the lived time of the reader or viewer. In the same way

memory and expectation act upon the attentive moment of the gesture for the author-illustrator, so, too, these temporal phases operate within the subjective time experience of viewing the poems.

In order to consider the lived time experience of the viewer it is worth briefly recapping on what is meant by the 'lived time experience' of the author-illustrator discussed in *Chapter 4*, not least because – as with other properties of the notational process – parallels are sought with the viewing of the thesis's digital poems. It was proposed that the author operates within a tri-temporal experience when making notations, similar to Ricoeur's 'three-fold present model of time' in which memory and expectation act upon the moment of attention (to the inscription). Daydreaming was discussed in some length, with some emphasis on the atemporal dimensionality that can be experienced. The digital poems have been constructed with this model in mind but from the perspective of the viewer.

As has been stated, the viewing of the poems is dependant upon the viewer's glance, primarily of the peripheral activity in the transitions. A glance, proposed Casey (see *Chapter 4*) arises in the present but as a reflection of the past and as a foreshadowing of the future. He suggests

> …time alters – is alter to itself – by always mutating into two simultaneous lines, the past of its own present and the future of that 'present which passes'.[21 (p84)]

Casey speaks of the glance 'ushering the oncoming future into the present',[21 (p91)] and this is certainly true in the reading process (of static and dynamic texts) in which a scanning ahead of the text-to-come occurs.[I]

To this end the glance puts the viewer both into and out of time, a 'continuous, distended time'.[21 (p82)] To view the poems a balance has to be struck between conscious attention and unconscious peripheral vision. It is the reverse side of the streams of consciousness writing process, epitomised by the Proustian dexterity of sensitiveness to the unconscious while also at the same time demonstrating directed intellectual control (see *Chapter 4*). Indeed, evoking in the reader a sense of being in a daydream or dream is a common ambition among writers and poets. Bachelard suggests that 'to read poetry is essentially to daydream'[26 (p17)] and proposes that the great function of poetry is 'to give us back the situation of our dreams'.[26 (p15)] Paul Auster has said that his ambition is to write with such lucidity that the reader forgets s/he is reading,

> transcending beyond language, more a dream state, not just pretty paragraphs of type.[27]

This implies developing an immersive experience for the reader, a concept which has gained increasing popularity over recent years with the development of New Media. But this goal of reader immersion has been in the sights of writers, illustrators and poets for a long time – Joyce to name but one, Proust to name another. Both of these writers ask of the reader that s/he immerses him/herself in the text; to stay 'outside' of it is to resist the movement of the text and to hinder the reading process. A Proustian sentence, for

I. It is interesting to note that research into the psychophysics of reading identifies the display field, i.e. that a single glance can incorporate both central and peripheral vision without any change in fixation (to textual object): 'Although peripheral information is used to determine the next fixation, the target presently being fixated is also being analysed. Thus, two tasks are being performed simultaneously.[24 (p215)]

A research project was recently undertaken at the University of Dundee to assess how the methods and assumptions of literary studies might be used in a psychological analysis of reading processes. A state of the art eyetracker was used to obtain information about the way in which we read and comprehend poetry.[25]

example,

> is binary yet expansive, [and] incorporates many subordinate clauses that delay the closure of the logical and syntactic totality, either by returning to preceding themes and linguistic items or by developing the themes and items contained in the sentence itself.[28 (p291)]

Furthermore, these sentences can stretch to over a page in length.[II] The newcomer to the text can easily feel daunted by the task at hand. The novel, some 3,500 pages in length, is an intricate weaving made up of these micro structures. What the author and the text demand of the reader is not that s/he should hesitate, stop at every grammatical occurrence, but rather enter the flow of the word stream, to immerse him/herself in the water, to go with its current. To do this the reader must let go of the side of the bank:

> Following Freud's notion of the secondary processes, these purposeful delays and syntactic ambiguities could be seen as the equivalent of the opening of the word-sign toward what Proust calls an 'impression', which precedes and exceeds signs in favour of sensation.[28 (p291)]

The reader, and this is the Proustian project, must trust his/her memory. The experience of reading Proust can be similar to that of the dream, whether night-dream or daydream, and it is no coincidence that Proust refers to these throughout his novel. It is pertinent to note that Proust had wanted his novel be printed in one volume in two columns and without any paragraphs.[30 (p198)] It could be imagined that this sort of design might well exaggerate this notion of the immersive dream-like experience of reading. [III]

Visual and digital poetry often invites an equally immersive experience for the viewer, and has the added advantage of dynamic text to accentuate this notion:

> as Kurt Brereton suggests, the poem has shifted from a flat, constructed surface to 'a virtual unfolding in time'.[32]

The bird's flight metaphor of daydreaming, with the movement between nuclei and fringe, foveal and peripheral, is easily mapped by the temporal typography of the digital poems. The digital poems, with their demand upon half felt, unconscious peripheral activity imitating thought patterns, aspire to synthetically recreate the daydream within the lived time experience of the viewer, enabling him/her to be 'in harmony with the irrationality of the depths'.[26 (p18)]

Returning to Proust's preferred two column structure, there is inherent in this proposed layout of a suggestion of endlessness, endless in the sense of Brancusi's *Endless Column* sculpture. The sculpture, though visually and physically finite, alludes to the infinite. *In Search of Lost Time* is perhaps a literary equivalent – the fact that Proust was endlessly revising his text raises an intriguing image of Proust, were he working today, with a laptop. Given the easy – arguably, too easy – facility the software affords authors to write and revise freely, would the work ever see the public light of day, would the potential of New Media make the ceaseless iteration *the* text? But of course, his great

II. As Alain de Botton has pointed out, the very longest example, if arranged along a single line in standard-sized text, would run on for a little short of four metres or, put another way, stretch around the base of a bottle seventeen times.[29 (p32)]

III.To get some idea of this a more recent example is Bohumil Hrabal's *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced In Age*, a 100 page novel consisting of one sentence.[31]

skill, as Benjamin points out, is his ability to play with time within the reading of the static text, stretching and then condensing temporality. In the final volume of *In Search of Lost Time*, says Benjamin, Proust brings off

> the tremendous feat of letting the whole world age by a lifetime in an instant.[30 (p207)]

The structural use of the infinite can also be seen in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*:

> the book is molded into a curve that bends back on itself, like the Einsteinian universe. The opening word of the first page is the same as the closing word of the last page of the novel. Thus, the work is finite in one sense, but in another sense it is unlimited. Each occurrence, each word stands in a series of possible relations with all the others in the text. According to the semantic choice which we make in the case of one unit, so goes the way we interpret all the other units in the text.[18 (p54)]

In *Fictions* Borges predicts some of the possibilities offered by New Media, referring to the notion of a book with an infinite number of infinitely thin pages.[33 (p80)] The digital poems in the thesis folio reference this notion of the infinite in two main ways; firstly, by utilising the typographc presentation modes of RSVP and Times Square, and secondly, by the need for re-viewing the work.

The poems in *Series II – rocket II and III* – utilise the Times Square mode of visual presentation. Unlike the other poems in the folio, the poems' texts fill the entire window in which the poems are viewed. The words spill out beyond the frame, provoking a sense of a potential universe of words outside of the window, an endless supply of images. In *Series III* the poems utilise the Rapid Serial Visual Presentation mode of text display. Here, too, there is a sense that there could be an endless surfacing of words, this time using a different axis to the Times Square mode.

The idea of the infinite is also expressed through the idea of the loop. The works necessitate re-viewings in order to grasp the layers of words and possible permutations.

What is pertinent about this idea of the infinite is that it is reminiscent of the 'black hole like' experience of the contemplative action of drawing in the notation process, when the author operates from within a daydream. In this black hole, it was suggested, time does not escape - the author loses a sense of time. Similarly, in addition to the visual mimesis of thought patterns, the digital poems seek to synthetically recreate this atemporal sensation of the daydream through its play with the possibility of the infinite.

The poems, particularly those which make up *Series III*, invite a re-viewing. When this takes place the viewer, familiarised with some word fragments in the first viewing, can be said to be *opening up time*. Working still with the three-fold present model of time, the viewer has already attended to some of the text which was anticipated in the scanning process and now retains a memory of them. In remembering them in a

subsequent viewing s/he is, effectively and somewhat lyrically, remembering the future i.e. s/he knows the words that are to come. This, of course, is a familiar experience to someone rewatching a movie or rereading a favourite book. Rereading, suggests Augé,[34 (p63)] is 'reliving without anticipation' but is this is not necessarily so. Because of memories gained from the first viewing or reading, the viewer of the poems (and the moviegoer and book reader) may not anticipate what is to come in terms of what s/he already knows but s/he knows there are other texts, images, details, fragments still to be consciously perceived. Because of the first memories, s/he is free to explore this other activity; in effect, given her familiarity with some of the activity, s/he now has more time to spend looking elsewhere. It is as if, within the life of the viewing of the poem or movie or book, s/he has created time, or opened up time through the utilisation of memory and expectation.

Summary

5.ix. summary

This chapter has analysed the digital poems developed for the thesis through establishing parallels with the notational process. Key characteristics have been considered, including the use of marginal or peripheral space in the poems' articulation and the relationship between primary and secondary texts, whether these be implied or visible. The artworks serve a mimetic function through a synthetic re-rendering of the lived time experience of the author; through the presentation of the poems this becomes the lived time experience of the viewer, who draws upon memory and expectation while attending to the moment of reading. To this end the poems, some of which seek to convey a dreamlike quality, play upon the notion of the glance by establishing tempi and transitions that reveal or hint at a given narrative, in turn at times demanding a re-viewing of the artwork.

As well as articulating characteristics found in the author-illustrator's notebook, the poems have also acted to help gain an understanding of those aspects of the notational process considered in previous chapters. This has formed the basis for the mutually beneficial two-way interrogation outlined in the methodology (see *Chapter 1*), and as such contributes to the research aims. This is considered further in the next chapter.

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Introduction

7.i. introduction

As outlined in *Chapter 1*, the methodology developed for the thesis has consisted of three interweaving strands – the artwork contained in the folio, the research journals, and the dissertation writing. Each have attempted to pursue the research in terms of a poetic enquiry; in the case of the artworks and the journals this also extends to the visual poetic. The case for the third strand, that of bringing a creative and imaginative voice to the writing up, was made in *Chapter 1*, and it is not the intention here to explore this further in any great detail.

Below is a summary of the findings of the analysis of the notational process and the digital poems. This is followed by further discussion on the term 'poetic research', which leads on to consideration of the research journals developed for the project in the light of the observations on the illustrator's notational process. The chapter finishes with a conclusion which sums up the thesis's claims to contribution.

Notation and the screenbased artworks - a summary

7.ii. notation and screenbased artworks - a summary

The preceding chapters have explored the characteristics inherent in the process of notation, exemplified by the author-illustrator's notebook, and have identified these same properties in the development of dynamic visual poems. The methodology for this exploration has been one of symbiotic analysis; through the mutual interrogation of the notation process and the production of the poems, in which one has been used to analyse the other, a deeper understanding of the commonalities has been sought. Both procedures – notation and poem development – are concerned with narrative purchase and articulation; in seeking an understanding of how this concern is addressed, the mutual interrogation process utilised two key referents – visual space (the page of the notebook, the field of vision/screen of the poems) and lived time (in respect of notation the author, and in the case of the poems the viewer). These served to provide a triangulated view of the shared properties. The elements under analysis were:

- implied narratives in the blankness of the page;
- the utilisation of secondary 'texts', whether visible or implied in the blank spaces, including margins;
- the relationship between the primary and secondary texts;
- the iterative process;
- tri-temporal experience (of authoring or viewing) using memory, attention and expectation;
- the daydream, through the contemplative action of the doodle within the notational process, and as a creative aspiration for the experience of viewing the poems.

These elements, it has been argued, act in concert to aid the articulation of a narrative, both in terms of the notational process and the poems. Through the spatial and temporal interaction, fragments of narrative are generated and developed through:

• speculative actions, such as streams of consciousness acted out on the page and screen through visible traces (doodles, words in transition);
• juxtaposition of images and concepts, whether on the notebook page or computer screen;
• iteration of thoughts, re-viewing of work.

The temporal dimension to writing and viewing has been considered; this aspect is a three phase subjective experience, when memory and attention act upon the moment of authoring or reading. At times, it has been suggested, there can be a sense of timelesness in the mind of author or viewer, such as when one is lost in the atemporal experience of the daydream.

Through these shared properties and similarities of experience, the notational process and the digital poems both embrace the same mode of enquiry, which may be characterised as one of visual poetics and reflection. It was suggested in *Chapter 1* that a poetic enquiry had a valuable contribution to make to academic research, and it was also proposed that an understanding of the shared characteristics of notation and poems could contribute to the development of the second methodological strand, that of research journal keeping. Before this latter point is considered, some more attention will be given to the concept of poetic research.

Towards a visual poetic

7.iii. towards a visual poetic

As briefly discussed, in *Chapter 1* with regards to the methodology, the problem of discussing the poetic in the same sentence as academic research is that the two terms are all too often viewed as mutually exclusive. The former can suggest a vague non-commital play with images and words, the latter a serious, unimaginative procedure:

> From the seventeenth century, at least, the guardians of knowledge and their political masters have stigmatised poetic wisdom as a rebel against reason....Poetic wisdom, the capacity to yoke apparently dissimilar things through a striking figure of speech, has been denigrated.[1 (p9)]

This separation is not only unnecessary but unhelpful; it reduces the potential of enquiry by limiting it to plodding, uncreative thinking. It is in part the result of a lack of proper understanding of the terms ‘poetry’ and ‘research’. Research in academia is all too often considered valid only if it takes a non-poetic approach, in which imagination is not invited to the party. When research is termed as ‘creative’ it only serves to emphasise the problem inherent in contemporary research thinking:

> .....while ‘creative research’ ought to be a tautology, in the present cultural climate it is in fact an oxymoron. A research paradigm prevails in which knowledge and creativity are conceived as mutually exclusive.[1 (p7)]

This paradigm maintains a reductive empiricist notion of research, which

> by insisting on the outcomes in advance, defines the new in terms of a present

> ‘become more extreme’, now influences the framing of research questions across all disciplines.[1 (p9)]

Yet, says Carter, citing Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico, reasoning is poetic:

> Vico defined *ingegno*, wit or the gift of invention, as ‘the faculty that connects disparate and diverse things’.[1 (p9)]

The preceding chapters of the thesis have in many ways been an analysis of this notion of *ingegno*, the ‘wit and gift of invention’ not only articulated through notation but also an intrinsic part of the process that nurtures such mental dexterity. The visual poetics at work in the notebooks are thinking-in-action, or thinking-made-visible, through the imaginative and often unexpected connecting of objects, images and narratives. It is the visual thinking of Arnheim, the ill-structured problem solving described by Goel, it is the serendipity at work in the cut and paste procedures of Burroughs, and it is evident in the reflective doodle of the daydream which allows the mind to wander unfettered, to see and make new associations. This visual sensibility, working in conjunction with the space of the page and the lived time experience of the author, provides the necessary imaginative skill and sensitivity to articulate narrative fragments into dynamic digital poetry. Indeed, as a process and with this goal occasionally in view, the notational process contributes to Carter’s notion of ‘poetic wisdom’. But if this is pertinent to academic research, further understanding of what is meant by the ‘poetic’ is required.

Several definitions of poetry have been alluded to during the thesis – from Paterson’s ‘systematic interrogation of the subconscious’ to Jakobson’s ‘utterance towards expression’, and – specifically in relation to visual poetry – as Emmett Williams’ something ‘to be completed by the viewer’ and Morgan’s ‘something glimpsed’. These definitions speak of a movement, a journey, a search; the words and images may ultimately lie beyond language (Jabes) and poets may be experts in the failure of language (Paterson). This heroic struggle for the elusive does not much sound like the common image of poetry which views the art form as vague and non-commital (the image of the poet wandering lonely as a cloud, whilst beautiful, may have a lot to answer for). But the contrary is a truer picture. The holy grail of poetry is precision. There is no room for lazy thinking. Calvino cites Paul Valéry’s definition of poetry as a ‘straining towards exactitude’.[2 (p67)] For the ancient Egyptians, reports Calvino, exactitude was represented by a feather that ‘served as a weight on scales used for the weighing of souls’.[2 (p55)] Today this feather could be from the creature in James’ bird metaphor of thought patterns, or from Eliot’s bird alighting – the visual poems’ desire to portray the mind at work itself a representation of no more than a sliver of the deep mental processes at work. But if the poetic is struggle for precision, where does it leave the ambivalent gesture in the sketchbook, Proust’s wandering line, the vagabond thought? This paradox is neatly resolved in the Calvino quote used in *Chapter 1* on methodology:

> Poetry is the great enemy of chance, in spite of also being a daughter of chance and knowing that, in the last resort, chance will win the battle.[2 (p70)]

The absent-minded doodle and the throwaway thought jotted down on the page of

the notebook, not to mention the accidental mark, are the creative unruly origins of exactitude. The page of the notebook and the lived time of the author provide the necessary space to allow the author open readings and reflections, to perceive possibilities and connections, to nurture the narratives towards a clearer, more concise, resolution. Remove the visual speculations and approximations, and you remove the potential of invention, the possibility, as Carter says that in equivocal invention something might mean something else.

The notebook of the author-illustrator provides the necessary fertile ground for a visual poetic through its visual and temporal provision which allows its author

> to perceive analogies existing between matters far apart and, apparently, most dissimilar...[the artist] mythopoetically creates 'poetic wisdom'.[1 (p7)]

The journals

7.iv. the journals

Given the above, the notebook provides a valuable paradigm for the academic research journal. All too often the latter is seen only as a record of research. And even in this role, which has an essential part to play in documenting the journey of a research project, the journal can be problematic:

> Diary research …. does have all the problems of recording actions after the event, when espoused theory may not match theory in action. Practitioners will record only the aspects of their practice that they recall when they are writing in their diary, and that may be quite some time after the event.[3 (p78)]

Indeed, many students and researchers take a school-like attitude to the keeping of research journals. And this is most worrying in the context of visual arts education, where a sketchbook-like approach ought to be easily nurtured (as was seen from examples in *Chapter 5*, often scientists can demonstrate clearer visual thinking than artists).

Developing a notational process for a research journey based on the experience of the author-illustrator offers the potential to develop a research process which is at once creative and rigorous. As suggested above, the spatial nature of the notational process (through the dynamic of the primary-secondary text relationship, the use of margins and peripheral space, etc) is a vital agent for a visual poetic inquiry. And the lived time experience of the author, with the tri-temporal dimensions of memory, attention and expectation, can resolve the diary issue highlighted by Jarvis. The notebook entries by the author-illustrator reflect this three phase experience – directness of the gesture in the now of thinking, the iterations and revisions that refine an idea. If journals are to be a true account of a research journey they need to be developed, as it were, in the *present tense*; as immediate thoughts, as memories emerge, as expectations come into view. This provides a sense, as discussed, of Kubler's nowness, of bearing witness to the moment of inscription, reinforced by the aesthetic of the direct gesture. And if the notebook is home of the daydream, safe in the knowledge that thoughts can be recorded and generated without censorship, a greater freedom in the visual thinking

and reflection can be had in the journal, too. This applies even with throwaway, obvious and silly thoughts – there are many ways of presenting the journal for examination without contradicting this lack of censorship.

Academic journals can reflect the four stages of notation outlined in *Chapter 2: Notation process* – motivation, displacement, purchase, consolidation – which, as was seen, correspond to Wallas's more general account of creative thinking. They can also enjoy Kundera's four appeals (see *Chapter 5*) of play, dream, thought and time.

The journals developed during the thesis (see *Appendix III* in the digital portfolio) are an attempt to take cognisance of the experience of the author-illustrator's notation process. To this end the journals have been kept as if they were sketchbooks. What has this meant, in practice?

The research journals display several key characteristics identified as of central importance in the author-illustrator's notebook:

• Firstly, the entries are uncensored and, as much as possible, unselfconscious. They have been made as if they were making up a personal, private notebook;

• This has enabled speculation to flourish. The lack of censorship means the anxiety that often accompanies research – the need to be clever and correct at all times – is removed. This is conducive to more creative and inventive thinking, in which that 'what if?' approach can flourish;

• This lack of inhibition, safe in the margins of the journal, can foster free flowing thought processes, even at times those borne out of the daydream and the contemplative action of the doodle;

• Utilisation of the page space. Being conscious and even modestly inventive with the layout of a research journal can also provide creative possibilities. In the case of the journals for this thesis research, a simple device was used. Research references were aligned to the left, and the author's thoughts and reflections, to the right (there is a tentative parallel here between the discussion on primary and secondary texts of the notebook in *Chapter 3*). In practice, this elementary design proved invaluable – the author was able, when scanning the journals retrospectively, to distinguish his own thoughts from those of others, thereby enabling swift access to the information being sought. Also, importantly, this system, ensured proper accreditation of a particular statement[I] ;

• Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the above characteristics functioned through the author adopting the same 'lived time' experience of the author-illustrator making notes in his/her notebook. Thoughts, ideas and reflections were entered contemporaneously, To this end the journals lived with the author in the same way a writer or artist lives with a notebook or sketchbook – close at hand, and with its owner at most times of the day (and often night). In other words, the journals were developed in the *present tense*. It

I. How sobering it can be to think one has come up with a highly original and imaginative phrase or thought, only to later realise it belonged to someone else and somehow became adopted as one's one nugget of wisdom.

meant that the three-fold present model of time (see *Chapter 4*) occurred naturally, with memory acting upon the attendant moment of inscription, and with expectation driving the thought and inscription forward. In respect of the cyclical aspect of lived time, the re-viewing reveals a continuity of inquiry, sometimes missed at the time of inscription. This characteristic, of working in the present, counters the criticism made above by Jarvis that the normal retrospective journal entry fails to reflect a true account of the research journey. In the case of the journals developed for this thesis, the characteristics outlined above (uncensored, free flowing, speculative) testify to the accurate nature of the journals as record. As such they provide an honest account of the journey, with its tentative beginnings (and middles and on, occasions, ends), its developmental thoughts, its references, its detours, asides, emerging themes, connections, dead ends, and small moments of revelation.

This frank record does raise a potential negative. To display the journals openly is not just to reverse the tapestry; this would be fine if it displayed a master craftsman at work. But in the case of this research journey, as – probably – with many others, particularly those adopting a poetic approach, the reverse side of the research reveals fumblings, inspired moments of crassness, an abundance of clichés in need of exorcism, and statements of the obvious. Given that these entries were made in the spirit of trust (between author and self), displaying these openly in public may might be seen as a breech of this pact, and reveal all too clearly the limitations of one's abilities. At the same time it is important that the journals are evidenced, given that the approach developed for them is one of the contributions to knowledge being claimed. The solution offered by the thesis has been to re-present the handwritten journals digitally. The intention behind this electronic archive is to illustrate the above discussion, balancing the need for evidence with the need to retain the 'confidentiality' of the free-roving thoughts inscribed on the pages.

Conclusion

7.v. conclusion

This thesis has explored the process of notation, as exemplified in the author-illustrator's notebook, as a means of contributing to the development of a methodology that is both visual and poetic in its inquiry. This, it has been argued, provides the potential for an innovative and creative approach to research, specifically – but not exclusively – in relation to the visual arts. The research has been a combination of practice and critical reflection. Through the practice of keeping notebooks, key characteristics and factors were identified which influence the notational process. Within the practice these were analysed using a symbiotic interrogation between the notebooks and digital poems developed for the thesis. The observations noted through the practice were developed through critical reflection in the written dissertation, which referred to a wide variety of sources and which itself could be said to be towards the poetic in form.Through the research the thesis makes the following claims to contributions:

A greater undertsanding of the notational process

This has been achieved through an analysis of the author-illustrator's notebook from the interrelated perspectives of page space and lived time of the author. Narrative development which, commonly, it was suggested, is specific to the illustrator's intent, was considered as a four stage process consisting of motivation, displacement, purchase and consolidation. Support for this analysis was provided from a wide variety of sources, including cognitive science, drawing theory and literature. Within the activity of notation, spatial factors which influence and shape the narrative on the page were identified and discussed; these consisted of the blank page, margins, primary inscriptions and secondary inscriptions. Together, these devices encourage a playful approach to notation; the graphic arrangements that they allow can foster the visual poetic through, for example, the serendipitous juxtaposition of ideas or images, or emergent works through iteration in the margins. Further understanding of the notational process was provided through consideration of the lived time experience of the author-illustrator. This was was analysed using a three-fold present model of time, in which the temporal phases of memory and expectation act upon attention to the moment of inscription. Within this discussion on lived time some attention was given to the value of the daydream; in the context of the author-illustrator this, it was suggested, is evidenced in the doodle, described as a contemplative action. This analysis has been used to inform the second contribution:

A greater understanding of what a visual poetic methodology might be within the context of an academic framework

Conventional research methodologies, it has been suggested, often lack an imaginative dimension as a consequence of a school of thought which places emphasis on knowledge over, and even instead of, creativity. This thesis, through the practice and critical reflection, has proposed a visual poetic approach to research. This entails a process which is inventive and playful in nature; concepts are not fixed at the outset but evolve through speculation and iteration, through approximations and iterations, through ambiguity and serendipity. In respect of the notational process this is primarily achieved through visual thinking, allowing gestural juxtapositions and the emergent in the margin. During the course of a research project ideas and images are brought into focus in the same way, as was discussed, the poet seeks exactitude and precision in the poem's 'final' expression.

The development of creative academic journals

The thesis has attempted to apply the argument for the visual poetic approach to academic research through the development of research journals which echo the process of notation used by the author-illustrator. Utilising factors identified above, journals have been kept throughout the lifetime of this project. In so doing they provide an insight into how journals can:

• Reflect the research 'journey'. This is possible through adopting the author-illustrator's approach to notation, in which thoughts and observations, however tentative and half-formed, are inscribed in the notebook. This requires a lack of self-censorship on the part of the researcher, as it does the artist. It can be achieved through working in the present, the 'nowness' of thought and inscription, as was discussed at some length.

This method, with its emphasis on the contemporaneous, also provides a true and faithful account of the research inquiry;

• Function as a creative tool in the research process. Research journals, as it were, can learn from the artist's notebook, with its emphasis on visual and mental play. The graphic devices discussed – the utilisation of page space and the first-secondary inscription relationship, including juxtaposition and iteration – can be adopted by the researcher who seeks to use the academic journal as a dynamic element in the research process;

• Provide an accessible store of information. The challenge that many research journals present is the difficulty in accessing information which may have been gathered over several years. This information can be lost in a sea of densely inscribed pages which makes it difficult to locate; further, the intensive packing of large quantities of information does not nurture reflection. In contrast, the author-illustrator's notebook, can be highly engaging, to both its author and the external viewer, and images and references easily retrieved. This is achieved in part through its visual wit, that is, the use of page space and graphic layout which gives room and creative structure to inscriptions. Academic journals could also employ these devices to provide greater accessibility for reflection and, where applicable, assessment. This accessibility, in conjunction with the uncensored and contemporaneous approch to notetaking mentioned above, can provide the means for reaching a rich source of material for reflection.

The thesis makes two further and minor contributions in regard to the following:

The value of timewasting

Some attention has been given in the dissertation to the value of what may be seen as timewasting. While not advocating laziness or apathy on the part of the researcher, some support has been identified on the useful role that non-direct effort can sometimes play. This was evidenced in the second stage of notation, displacement, in which incubation was seen as an important factor in the creative process. Also, the case for the daydream as a creative device has been given; artists, designers, writers and scientists have often employed this approach as a means of problem solving and invention. In regard to the author-illustrator's notebook, and by extension the academic journal, this may take the form of the doodle, also described as a contemplative action.

Creative approach to writing up

An important part of this research has been to develop a creative approach to writing up. Having proposed the case for this in the project's methodology and then, more importantly, developed it through the very production of the dissertation, the thesis contributes to the debate on the need for greater creative approach to dissertation and academic writing.

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Appendices

The following first three appendices can be found on the accompanying portfolio CD:

Appendix I: Notebooks
Appendix II: Digital poems
Appendix III: Academic journals

Appendix IV: Expert reader feedback. *See below*

Appendix IV: Expert reader feedback

Introduction

An important aspect of the project's methodology was to establish a panel of expert readers to provide feedback on the research. The criteria for inviting experts to act as readers was :
a) area of expertise – though the thesis is primarily concerned with authorial illustration, it also touches upon other related areas, such as drawing, poetry, typography and screenbased artifacts. Establishing a panel which reflected this range was deemed desirable;
b) availability – the readers' willingness and ability to participate. Fortunately, the 'first choice' experts, despite very busy schedules, all agreed to participate.

The panel comprised:
Russell Mills – internationally renowned illustrator, multimedia installation artist, musician and teacher;
Dr Johanna Drucker – book artist, visual theorist and cultural critic, whose areas of interest include letterforms, typography, poetry and artists' books;
Dr Donna Leishman – holds a PhD in illustration and screenbased environments, and is Head of Illustration at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

The panel was asked to provide feedback on the draft submission and portfolio. The feedback guidelines invited the readers to either critique as they felt appropriate or, if they preferred, to respond to some general 'prompt' questions set by the author. Below is the guidelines text sent to the readers:

'In terms of the feedback, this is quite open and I leave it up to you to comment as you feel appropriate, and to whatever extent you wish. Ideally, If you want any pointers, I would be interested in feedback in the following areas:
Do you think the thesis is actually pertinent/useful in the first place?
Does it make a contribution to knowledge in the ways that I propose?
Are there other more relevant contributions it is, or should be, addressing?
What do you think of the project's methodology?'

Their responses are reproduced below. These are followed by the author's response to their critiques.

From Dr Johanna Drucker

First, congrats! It is all very nicely done and put together and has a good, complete feel to it. The poem-pieces are elegantly done and I particularly liked the Heart piece, Wild Wind (I'm doing this from memory, but that is the title I remember) and the Rocket pieces. I think they use the unexpected aspects of the space/movement in more interesting ways than the Cliche piece, which, though nicely timed and put together, still feels more like an animation and less like an activation of the space. One question is of course how these might expand to sustain interest or build into spatial relations or scale changes that would allow other kinds of relationships to form among the elements.

The dissertation and notebooks are well-thought out, and you don't really need much input on that part of this. My thoughts are that the attention to process is well developed, and I was particularly charmed by the discussion of line. The citations, control of the literature, and composition of the work all show a level of competence that shows you've done thorough work and sorted through much material and made good selections, edits, and so on. I am slightly less clear on what the *argument* is -- in the sense that a thesis might have a hypothesis to prove or test. And in that regard, I thought you might deal with the tensions or dialogue between process and formal expression. You pay less attention to the actual look, design, layout than to the theoretically informed approach to the processes involved. I wonder if there is something to learn about the relations between these activities and aspects? I spend a lot of time thinking about book space these days, and was struck by the dramatic ways you break the frame of the page with your drawings, but not with your texts -- though in the animated poems you do engage with frame issues as part of the surprise and activity of the word works. This in itself is an interesting contrast. I'm not sure where you would go with this, but I think if you were to keep working with these materials, that moving away from some of your sources, cited authors, and such and into analysis of features that haven't had the attention paid to them that other areas have would be exciting.

All the best,

Johanna

Feedback from Dr Donna Leishman

Narrative in the Margins
Expert reader response.

Is the thesis relevant?
Academic proposal for the poetic enquiry valid, interesting and current with the ongoing practice-based practice-led research agendas. I.e. how does epistemology form, the role of imagination…

Does it make a contribution to knowledge, and if so how?
Yes, by establishing a critical framework for describing and discussing the potential of notional practice (allied to authorship in particular). The thesis also lays out a compelling argument for the role of poetic enquiry within academic scholarly research.

Question 1:
What are the spatial and temporal properties at work in the notational process, as examplifed by the illustrator's notebook?

You extensively describe, contextualize and list the properties of the notional process. However I feel the purpose of exploring the illustrator's notebook as vehicle somewhat arbitrary, it would seem that you are looking within the thesis at visual/ spatial poetics output often pointed at poetry or indeed literature.

Simply put: the journals' as 'examples' are not discussed as vehicles for illustrated narratives per se. Furthermore the practices you cite and submit in this thesis are digital and entirely typographic visual not pictorial poems. I think visual artists' looking at authorship would suffice and or 'authorial notebooks' as the field.

Question 2:
How can the visual qualities of the notebook be utilised in the production of screen-based artworks?

Is the practice illustrating your argument to the viewer, or a phenomenologically appropriate time-based (re) mediation / articulation of the notional process? I think the non-authorial notional experience is tricky conceptually, as it's a re-experiencing and thus prone to facsimile/ ersatz qualities.

I read the two practices (digital poems and notebooks) as having parallels and the new knowledge you have attained is the 'drawing out' of these associations and juxtapositions. It would seem you as researcher have reflected upon this in your academic journals (as method) and been able to see and articulate analogies as part historical theorist and part practitioner, this is evidenced in the writing in the thesis and not in the objective viewers 'open' experiencing of the portfolio.

How does an understanding of these shared characteristics inform the development of academic research journals?
Yes the rationale laid out within the summary is solid, essentially the reassertion of poetic practice as a practice of exactitude and the articulation of the various stages in knowledge forming which pivot between uncertain and creative to attaining precision (and acknowledging play). This process is clear and communicable to other researchers.

Methodology
The role of the portfolio needs more clarity around the reader's reception and the

function of our readings in the thesis.

You suggest that the portfolio of poems function as experiential processes for the reader/viewer who is not practising notational authorship. Thus they claim to articulate in another language the proposition of the thesis. “The poems, mimetic as they are of creative thought patterns and notational activity, seek to reflect the speculative nature of the thinking inherent in these processes”

My reading is that: the thesis is essentially a Meta / philosophical comparative overview, the knitting of multiple threads, with lots of ‘rich’ framing quotes and citations of historical and contemporary practice as the wool. As it stands the argument seems not primarily grounded (or perhaps it’s a secondary grounding) by your ACTUAL experience as the practitioner.

I wonder is this separation is because of physical separation of the portfolio, and the fact that you don’t in the thesis text deconstruct the academic journal’s process of illuminating the notional process rather it is submitted for the reader as evidence (and indeed only 4 sample pages). This in effect removes this from the reader’s deep understanding. You use examples from ‘the authors notebooks’ but don’t discuss the process in these actual examples (you do at a Meta level) and how that confirms or otherwise the critical quotes you drawn down on. In this sense there is a gap that requires the reader to trust your theoretical proposition. You state that the style of the thesis is intentional and reflexive however it is a fine line between the freedom of the subjective experience as reader and establishing with certainty the PhD benchmarks. Inference is interesting but challenging!

Practice as method, in my understanding of descending prominence:
1 Keeping notebooks:

1a Academic notebooks. Where you attain your comparison, points of juxtaposition et al.
1b Narrative based visual pictorial notebooks.
Not content tied to your thesis, nor deconstructed in the thesis out with the spatial visual properties.

2. Digital Poems
Helped you to ground the understanding of the poetic epistemology and value. Iterated back within the academic journals where you reveal similarities.

Regards
Dr Donna Leishman

From Russell Mills

I've read through the whole thesis, albeit only once due to lack of time and, also due to lack of time, my responses will be pretty sketchy but well intentioned. I hope that they are of assistance or interest. If they only massage your ego or allow you to breathe more freely having received some confirmation of all your good work, then well and good.

Overall your thesis is really, really good and very pertinent to the present cultural climate, not only within the art school scenario but also in the whole of our media landscape. It is both pertinent and it contributes, via valuable insights and asides, to our knowledge.

Taking a journey through notebooks to daydreams to the conscious/unconscious via memory and onto tangential and associative thinking, you are also making justifiable claims for more attention to be paid to the facts that 'cross-disciplinary' and process based heuristics are the future, which cannot be denied. The old meaningless tool-based boundaries have been blurred beyond any distinctions; the jealous, protective and insular fiefdoms of craft have dissolved. Ranting again - stop it Mills!

Actually I'd like to see you take the argument for 'cross-disciplinary' practice/process even further. Place it in a wider/broader context i.e. all areas of creativity, within all media. Relative to notebooks and cross-disciplinary thoughts there are, I think two really glaring omissions from your thesis who I think are or should be, pretty central to your thesis on many levels - Leonardo da Vinci and Kurt Schwitters. Think about it.

I like your argument for the poetic throughout too. It is needed. Quoting Calvino and others backs this up eloquently and succinctly. This is so important and yet is actively discouraged within and without of art schools. In art schools poetic thinking is not encouraged and processes to encourage the imagination are a mystery to most who teach. And in the art world, which sets the agenda for all the wannabe students, "cool" is cool and cynicism is badly disguised as irony. Bad work, especially lousy drawing is so bad it's good - if you get my drift. The art world is full of fakes and charlatans desperately bolstered up by each other, pretending that they're onto something new, special, jaw-dropping.

Perhaps you could strengthen your arguments for the 'authorial' and the poetic by considering giving the whole piece and the individual chapters more poetic titles?

Is there a place for some negative broadsides against aspects of so-called authorial practice? For instance as demonstrated by Tracy Emin's self-centred endless outpourings of celebratory. masturbatory misery? Autobiography as myth or vice versa. Clumsy, weak, 20th hand ideas posing as conceptual breakthroughs. The infamous bed ...Rauschenberg beat her to it, far more powerfully in the early 50s. And her awful fucking drawings to boot! The Emperor's new clothes comes to mind.

Suggestions of others you might have included references to and examples from, are:
- T.S Eliot's original MS of "The Wasteland", which is peppered with notes, references, amendments - evidence of a mind at work, in real time as well as in retrospect.
Walter Benjamin's "Archives" - a fantastic, obsession with observation and the importance of notebooks. Great images too.
John Cage - for his manuscripts, musical notations and his etchings produced by chance procedures; also see his essays on creativitycontained in wonderful notional mental amblings.
Brian Eno - his numerous and rich notebooks, which whilst they contain drawings are more important for showing his magpie mind winding and threading ideas from diverse directions and sources. These cover everything from art, music, cybernetics, lyrics in the making, observations of certain female physical qualities, shopping lists, studio equipment lists, ideas towards his famous "Oblique Strategies (Over 100 worthwhile

dilemmas)" cards, etc., etc.
Erik Satie's writings - batty but prophetic, similarly diverse in subject matter and littered with weird drawings.
More from Berger on drawing.
More from and on Burroughs, possibly as part of that lineage from Schwitters - from Schwitters' radical and poetic collages from the everyday and his poetic experiments including the "Ursonate" (phonetics), to Burroughs' cut-ups onto Bowie's appropriation of the same techniques to achieve song lyrics, etc. (This subject, as I call it "the collage principal", from Picasso/Braque's first moves from the 2D surface, through Schwitters, Duchamp, Dada to the worlds of multimedia, the web, photoshop, after effects, quick editing cuts in film, TV, video, comedy, radio, etc., is massive as it affects every area of the media world and touches us every day. Someone, can't recall who, said that collage is the most important cultural idea of the 20th century. I agree. It's history needs writing and I keep thinking about doing it and have been asked by some publishers to do so, but it's so daunting and to be quite honest I'd rather concentrate my energies on making new works rather than trawling the past. Maybe one day, in my dotage ,,,)
Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation" - a must in the fight betweenpoetic creativity and dogma/theory.
David Lynch - another obsessive doodler and associative thinker - see Twin Peaks and his writings on his films in which he talks of dreams feeding into what he does.
Kurosawa - another genius who kept notebooks and drew all the time. His films came out of these humble beginnings.
More on Victor Hugo's process-driven drawings and the materials he experimented with including, it is rumoured, his own semen.
Topically, regarding the ambler, the flaneur - Richard Long. His practice is thoroughly process-driven and thinking through walking is very appropriate for the associative thinking aspects of your thesis as well as adding to the 'cross-disciplinary' angle.
Another top flaneur, out on his own, the 'novelist' W.G. Sebald.extraordinarily obsessive, precise, poetic, associative books that merge fact and fiction seamlessly.

Slight but important aside; no actually, a minor aside of major importance ... I also love your suggestion for a daydreaming slot to be added to an art school's curriculum/ schedule. Although opponents of the art school would accept this as a gift, claiming that this is all of what goes on in an art school all the time!

Your notebook examples are great too, as are your poems, in both static form as well as on the screen. They back up/support your arguments strongly especially, specifically, as they are your work. I like the poems in their own write, they stand up on their own. There is a good balance between examples of the works/notebooks of others and your works. The methodology displayed/employed works well too, keeping the narrative flowing coherently.

So overall, I think it's great. 10 out of 10, if you consider some of the other possible references I've listed above. It's pertinent, contextually anchored, process-driven, witty, knowledgeable without being dry and dusty and it's written with feeling, which demonstrates part of your argument. Don't know what else I can say without pickingover every phrase, every line and unfortunately I, and I suspect, you, don't have time for that.

Hope these thoughts and suggestions might help and if I can add more, please ask. I don't know when your deadline is or whether you've got the mental puff left to make too many more amendments/revisions, but if I can help more and if there is time, I'll do what I can.

Russ

Response to feedback

Introduction

The process of obtaining expert reader feedback proved to be a valuable and important exercise. The critiques were diverse in tone and content, and raised some important issues. These are addressed below. Where applicable, sections of the readers' critiques are quoted (in italics).

The argument

*Drucker: I am slightly less clear on what the *argument* is -- in the sense that a thesis might have a hypothesis to prove or test. And in that regard, I thought you might deal with the tensions or dialogue between process and formal expression. You pay less attention to the actual look, design, layout than to the theoretically informed approach to the processes involved. I wonder if there is something to learn about the relations between these activities and aspects? I spend a lot of time thinking about book space these days, and was struck by the dramatic ways you break the frame of the page with your drawings, but not with your texts -- though in the animated poems you do engage with frame issues as part of the surprise and activity of the word works.*

This criticism has highlighted the need to make more explicit the thesis's argument. To this end there has been a slight iteration to the dissertation's introduction to establish the claims and justification of the research, and a rewriting of the conclusion to clarify the contributions the thesis claims to make. The following statement has been added to the introduction:

'In so doing the thesis will make the following claims to contribution:
• Through an analysis of spatial and temporal properties of the notebook, the thesis will provide a deeper understanding of the notational process;
• The thesis will contribute to the development of a research methodology that places emphasis on reflective journals;
• The thesis will contribute to the debate on the need for greater poetic enquiry within academic research.' (p11)

The conclusion has been subject to a more extensive rewrite. The conclusion sent to the expert readers was more general and reflective in nature and arguably lacked the clarity which the redrafted version, with its discussion of specifc contributions, possesses.

In regard to Drucker's follow-on suggestion to this issue, concerning framing, this is certainly an intriguing subject and one which has been touched upon by the research, specifically in relation to some elements of practice developed during the course of the project. However, the decision was made not to include these works, which consisted of short story sequential narratives in book form. These artifacts, along with other practice (drawings, films) were judged to be outwith the scope of the thesis. At the same time

they provide a potentially fertile basis for further research; Drucker's own particular interest in the subject lends support to the value in pursuing this in the future.

On Authorial Illustration

Leishman: You extensively describe, contextualize and list the properties of the notional process. However I feel the purpose of exploring the illustrator's notebook as vehicle somewhat arbitrary, it would seem that you are looking within the thesis at visual/ spatial poetics output often pointed at poetry or indeed literature.

Simply put: the journals' as 'examples' are not discussed as vehicles for illustrated narratives per se. Furthermore the practices you cite and submit in this thesis are digital and entirely typographic visual not pictorial poems. I think visual artists' looking at authorship would suffice and or 'authorial notebooks' as the field.

Mills: Taking a journey through notebooks to daydreams to the conscious/unconscious via memory and onto tangential and associative thinking, you are also making justifiable claims for more attention to be paid to the facts that 'cross-disciplinary' and process based heuristics are the future, which cannot be denied. The old meaningless tool-based boundaries have been blurred beyond any distinctions; the jealous, protective and insular fiefdoms of craft have dissolved. Ranting again - stop it Mills!
Actually I'd like to see you take the argument for 'cross-disciplinary' practice/process even further.

Defining a context for the thesis has presented some difficulties, as was stated in Chapter 1: Contextual review. The balance needed to be struck between considering the cross-discplinary nature of the notebook and at the same time not being so all encompassing that the thesis lost focus. To this end the context of 'authorial ilustration' was established, which has attempted to balance focus with an openness to influences outside traditional illustration. Mills's suggestion that the cross-disciplinary argument could be taken even further can be taken as vindication of the thesis's position even if, as he implies, it hasn't gone as far as he thinks it could in this regard.

The thesis does regard illustration, specifically authorial illustration, to be a highly appropriate context. As has been argued, the author-illustrator provides a valuable description of the visual artist who uses both text and image and who is primarily concerned with narrative. S/he is able to utilise text, image, or text and image freely in this regard. Further, illustration, as has been stated, has a long and valuable relationship with literature, one which the thesis both celebrates and utilises, through its citations in the dissertation and, importantly, its influence in the practice. To this end the notion that the author-illustrator's notebook is, according to Leishman, 'arbitrary' is refuted. She goes on to state that the practices cited are 'digital and entirely typogaphic visual not pictorial poems'. This is not entirely accurate as the notebooks are not digital but digitised for the sake of distribution. But, more importantly, it suggests that Leishman therefore

considers these practices outside of illustration. This is also rejected; the notion that ‘typographic visual not pictorial’ is not illustration is an outdated view. One only needs to look at examples of contemporary illustration practice in which visual text is the dominant or sole language, or take a cursory glance of leading cutting edge illustration courses in Britain in which non-visual work can meet course assessment criteria and, indeed, is actively encouraged. This contemporary view of what illustration is, or might be, does not devalue the importance of the conventional role of the illustrator producing pictorial work for commission, but neither does it limit it to this kind of engagement.

Omissions

Mills makes the observation that there are some omissions in the thesis, the most ‘glaring’ being Leonardo da Vinci and Kurt Schwitters. He is right. The lack of direct reference to them may appear to be erroneous. It should be stated, however, that these omissions are not the result of ignorance; on the contrary, their work, particularly Leonardo’s sketchbooks, have been a major source of inspiration for the author (as for so many others) for many years prior to and leading up to this research, and indeed was included in the initial proposal for the project. Their omission is the result of a ‘taken for granted’ approach to their significance, the two acting as invisible presences. This assumption is, of course, unhelpful; specific reference to Leonardo is made on page 29 of the amended dissertation.

Other main criticisms

Leishman makes several specific criticisms which need addressing:

Firstly, she questions whether the practice, and by this she means the poems, are prone to ‘facsimile/ersatz qualities’? In response to this, it is claimed that while it is true, as has been stated, that the poems are a re-feeling of the processes at work in notation, they are not facsimiles or examples of ersatz. The poems are not lesser for building upon the experience of notation but seek to expand upon this through the media and visual language developed in conjunction with the observations regarding ‘lived time’ experience. Whether this succeeds may be debatable; Leishman may be less convinced but the other expert readers would appear to be broadly supportive of the poems. Drucker suggests they engage more in terms of her interest in the frame than the notational work, and Mills enjoys the poems in their own right, stating that they ‘stand up on their own’.

Leishman suggests the argument is not primarily grounded by the author’s ‘actual’ experience as a practitioner. This view is rejected by the author. The initial motive behind the project emanated from questions regarding the practice, and the practical work provided the main motivation and substance to the inquiry. As such it is the subject – the ground - for the crticial reflection. Leishman suggests that her view of this may in part be the result of a physical separation of dissertation and folio. This opinion pehaps needs to be kept in the context of Leishman’s own practice and research with its screen orientation. This thesis has been intentionally designed to have physically

separate components so as to give weight to each. It takes the position that in practice it doesn't take particularly great mental agility to read the separate elements and see the relationship between the two.

Leishman questions the 'style' of the thesis. The implication is that it lacks the clarity of 'PhD benchmarking'. This view is exactly what the dissertation opposes. Does academic writing (and speech, for that matter) have to be encumbered by a language that is so laden by verbiage that it demands re-reading, not for the sake of expansive expression (as has been argued for in the case of the poems developed for this thesis) but for the sake of trying to comprehend the basic message in the first place? Arguably, this approach to writing is more inaccessible and elusive than the 'poetic' proposed by the thesis, and runs the risk of clouding rather than clarifying issues. The approach of this thesis to research and writing up places emphasis on the imaginative and expressive but not at the cost of sacrificing rigour of thought and articulation which is the hallmark – and value of – good PhD practice. The 'style' of the thesis, to quote, Mills, is 'knowledgeable without being dry and dusty and it's written with feeling, which demonstrates part of your argument'. This supports the rationale behind the writing up process described in *Chapter 1: Methodology*, specifically in relation to the position of MacLeod and Richardson.

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