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Strategic Anomalies: Art & Language in the Art School 1969-1979

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Strategic Anomalies:

Art & Language in the Art Schools

1969-1979

M. Dennis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2016

Abstract

This thesis looks at the interventions of Art & Language into the art schools of England and Wales, from the proposal of the Art Theory Programme in 1969, through to the publication of *The Politics of Art Education* by Paul Wood and David Rushton in 1979. Between these two events a series of associated projects, cadres and agitations operated both as an alternative curriculum and a critical thorn in the side of various colleges of art. These events are set within the context of the Coldstream/Summerson Reforms, the arguments around polytechnics and the changing political, curricular and theoretical context of the art school during the 1970s, in addition to the wider political context of post-war Britain.

It focuses on how the early formation of Art & Language, as editors of the journal *Art-Language*, attempted to produce a theoretically informed programme of learning around group discussion, extensive reading, essays, projects and presentations in order to instantiate a fuller, more directed curriculum for those on a Fine Art Dip.A.D., for which the new open curriculum was seen as severely lacking. It proposes that this initial effort, after various oppositions, obstacles and failures, necessarily developed into a strategy to disrupt, collectivise and incite protest among art students; a strategy which was played out by Art & Language once removed through the *SUPPORT SCHOOL* project of the 1970s.

With this history in mind I consider the conditions of fine art higher education in terms of the cultural inheritance of the art school, broad structural change in the institution of fine art higher education, the life-world of the art student and the development of art pedagogy in the 1970s. I then go on to consider how the problems articulated by the interventions of A&L are still ongoing and developing, situating them within the discourse around 21st Century art education in Britain.

Guide to Archive References

Tate Archive References are prefixed 'TGA' followed by their own classification number. For example (TGA:786/5/6/2)

MACBA references use their classification system, using AL as the prefix. For example (AL0229). According to their archivist, this is a temporary reference so it may change in the not-too-distant future. The records were consulted in November 2015.

The documents from the **Modern Records Centre** at Warwick University are given the prefix MRC followed by their classification system. For example (MRC: MSS.322/AD/5).

The Documents from The **National Archives**, following their guidelines, uses the prefix TNA and then their internal reference. For example (TNA: DB 4).

The **British Library** sound archive is denoted by the interviewee, the year and 'BL18' in which the number refers to the section of the interview from which the reference is taken.

Private Collections or Archives used from David Rushton's Collection (DRC), Michael Tovey's Collection (MTC), Lynda Morris' Collection (LMC), Paul Wood's Collection (PWC), Terry Atkinson's collection (TAC). Individual Documents used are itemised in the Bibliography.

Abbreviations for interviewees (transcripts to be found in appendix)

MB – Michael Baldwin

MR- Mel Ramsden

RvB – Rob Van Beek

MF- Mike Fyles

PS - Peter Smith

RP – Robin Plummer

DR – David Rushton

PP – Philip Pilkington

DB – David Batchelor

KJ – Kathy Jenkins

SL- Simon Lewis

AD- Alan Dyer

GH – Graham Howard

PW – Paul Wood

DH – Dave Hirons

Brackets indicate joint interview.

Other correspondences which were either not recorded or transcribed, or email conversations (referenced as 'pers.comm.' in the text):

Terry Atkinson - 10/06/16; 12/07/16

Paul Tate – 18/07/2013

Mike Chiltern – 31/03/2016

Rosalind Billingham – 04/2016

Janie Greville – 07-08/2015

David Osborne – 03/2016

Lynda Morris – 17/05/2016

Abbreviations Used

A.A. – Architectural Association

A&L – Art & Language

A-L – Art-Language

ALUK – Art & Language (United Kingdom)

ALNY – Art & Language (New York)

CCA - Coventry College of Art

CCCS – Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

C.N.A.A. – Council for National Academic Awards

Dip.A.D. – Diploma in Art & Design

H&O – Harrison & Orton

L.E.A. – Local Education Authority

M&W – Madge & Weinberger

N.A.C.A.E. – National Advisory Council On Art Education

N.A.C.E.I.C. – National Advisory Council on Education for Industry and Commerce

N.C.D.A.D. – National Council for Diplomas in Art & Design

N.D.D. – National Diploma in Design

N.S.C.A.D. – Nova Scotia College of Art & Design

PI – Philosophical Investigations

R.A. – Royal Academy

R.C.A. – Royal College of Art

R&W – Rushton & Wood

SGSL – The Sinking of the Good Ship Liberalism

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'it is probably accurate to characterise the whole Art &
Language project as wilfully problematical, and to contend
that this is its use to art-education.'
(Burn & Ramsden, *A Dithering Device,* 1972)

'Not for the first time are we being asked to remember
conceptual art. Not for the first time are we tempted to mischief
– or at least to that sense of civil disobedience which might
attend to making the whole thing up'

 (Art & Language, *Moti Memoria* in (Roberts, 1997: 54)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

Art & Language's interventions into the British art school began very soon after their initial formation and development as a group. Established in 1969, their 'Art Theory Course' has since gained a certain mythic quality as a year zero for the study of 'art theory' in fine art education. This is partly because the course was dismantled two years after its inception for being either too radical or too doctrinaire, depending on the position of the describer.[1] However, nearly fifty years have passed since its inception and a sober historical account would do much to cut through its mythic quality and offer up a detail description of its curriculum, the controversy it produced and the immediate effects of its closure.

Art & Language (hereafter A&L) consist of a complex constellation of activities to which many people have contributed, some of whom are more to the periphery of the dominant art historical account of early A&L than others, and this thesis aims to give greater attention to some of these less documented student activities. This includes those students and teachers in Newport and Hull that participated in the developing conversation from 1969 onwards and the related critical work they did concerning art education. In addition to this, little has been written about the period after the 'Art Theory Course'.

The initial historical research in this thesis primarily concerns itself with an in-depth description, analysis and interpretation of the intervention of A&L and associates into departments of fine art at Coventry, Hull, Nottingham, Newport, Leeds and the Royal College of Art.[2] The function and purpose of the research into these events is partly to bring together the disparate accounts already extant from the intervening years, which often cover the same well-trodden ground, and to consequently add complexity to the narrative and to dispel certain assumptions regarding these events.

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[1] For example (Everitt, 1972) or (Harrison & Orton, 1982) in which one describes the course as 'brainwashing' and the other describes the dismantling of the course as 'arbitrary' and 'punitive'.

[2] The thesis also makes some reference to other projects at the Open University, Leeds University, Wolverhampton Polytechnic and Watford College.

Histories of Art Education

This study sits within several contexts, the most obvious of which is the history of British art education in the mid-to-late 20th century, a period that can be seen as significantly different to those that preceded it.[3] Interest in, and studies of, institutional histories, pedagogies, radical student activity, and experimental courses within the history of art education from this period are becoming more numerous, especially in relation to the immediate effects of the 'Coldstream Reforms' (see Chapter 2). The history of art education was an expanding field in the late sixties and seventies, again partly as a result of those significant changes within public policy at the time. Perhaps the most significant of these histories is Stuart MacDonald's *History and Philosophy of Art Education* (1970), which deals in its final chapter with some of the effects of the Coldstream and Summerson Reports. As noted by Mervyn Romans (2004), still-canonical texts were all written within a ten year period. In addition to MacDonald, there is Quentin Bell's *Schools of Design* (1963), Richard Carline's *Draw They Must* (1968) and Clive Ashwin's *Art Education: Documents and Policies, 1768-1975* (1975). This list illustrates the intense interest after the 1960 reforms in narrating and explaining the history and provision of public art education in Britain, but also reiterates Roman's contention that 'Unlike almost any other branch of history one can think of, art and design education appears to have taken the first interpretation as the gospel truth' (Romans, 2004: 271). The view of the reforms that proliferated within these and many subsequent commentaries is that a dramatic liberalisation of art education centred around fine art would ostensibly lift the unpopular National Diploma in Design (NDD) up from its centrally administered, parochial and archaic skill-based premise into a modernised, liberal degree equivalent. The historical context of this thesis then is to pick up where these early, overarching histories essentially

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[3] Throughout the thesis reference is often made to *British* art education, for the sake of brevity. It should be noted that Scotland in particular developed separately from a policy and institutional standpoint throughout its history, and can be considered distinct in a number of ways today. This is not to discount, however, the many cultural similarities and mutually applicable practices that can be ascribed to the art colleges throughout Britain. The art colleges within this study are all within England and Wales.

trailed off, and to build on some of the questions that were starting to be posed at the end of the sixties.

Another interesting aspect of the history of art education is that, until recently, writing about art education after 1960 has been less in the hands of self-identifying art historians than people involved in art education itself. One extensive account of the development of art educational policy is Robert Strand's *A Good Deal of Freedom: Art and Design in the Public Sector of Higher Education 1960-1982* (1987). It offers a detailed account, from the inside perspective of the policy-makers, of the major decisions and political reforms within art education in the 1970s, with a great amount of republished primary source material. Indeed, various discussions as to how the legacy of the Coldstream reports, discussed in detail within this thesis, were to be amended, upheld or interpreted were also a large part of the discussions taking place within the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) into the early eighties (Cornock et al. 1983). A complementary account of equal significance and scope is Paul Wood and David Rushton's *The Politics of Art Education* (1979) which edits together responses to art education as it was in the late seventies but also contains an analysis of post-war art education in relation to industry, the Cold War and the more or less liberal ideology of the sixties and seventies. These all seek to develop a relationship between the experience and practices of art education and the wider social, political and administrative movements. The present thesis uses both these accounts throughout and contextualises them within the historical period of their writing.

Within the last twenty years, there have been a number of studies looking specifically at this period of art education. With more historical distance and the move of British art schools into the university sector, a new light is cast upon the effects of the restructure of art and design education in 1960. Fiona Candlin's (1998, 2001) work examines the trajectory of theoretical studies within art, now situated within the university, as the by-product of larger policy decisions. Her narrative begins with the Coldstream reforms and ends with the effects of the 1991 white paper, illustrating the changes in attitude to the relation between theory and studio practice within art schools. Naomi Salaman (2008) charts the effects of removing compulsory life drawing

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from the centre of the curriculum, as an endpoint to her exploration of the culture of the life room. She sees both the student political activity in Hornsey and the controversy of the 'Art Theory Course' at Coventry as a corollary of the evacuation of the life room as a space of theoretical discussion into the lecture theatre (Salaman, 2008: 129). Her thesis challenges the assumption that art education was devoid of history and theory teaching prior to 1960. The relationship between the studio space and theoretical enquiry is central to both of these theses and much of the present thesis seeks to continue that in relation to A&Ls radical erasing (and partial redefining) of those boundaries.

Paul Wood's essay *Between God and The Saucepan* (Wood, 2008) offers a long view account, starting with the Royal Academy, which brings us up to date in terms of university-based, twenty-first century art education and looks at both institutional change and change of content, noting that very little *has* changed in terms of the fundamental structure since the sixties. Similarly, though more extensively, Malcom Quinn's research (2013), though rooted in the 19th century instantiation of public art education, addresses many issues regarding enculturation, taste and the language used when administering art and its education.

There have also been a number of specific institutional histories written. Lisa Tickner's book on Hornsey College of Art (Tickner, 2008) looks at the occupation in the context of the Coldstream reforms and the establishment of the polytechnics with regards to their effect not just on Hornsey but the country as a whole.[4] *Creative Licence* by James Charnley (2015) looks at the history of Leeds College of Art, from the Basic Design innovations of Harry Thubron to the ultra-liberal, performance-focussed, anti-curriculum as taught by Jeff Nuttall. All of these histories will be picked up within this thesis as they form useful 'controls' or counter examples to that which was happening under the aegis of A&L. This research aims to produce a clear and detailed examination of particular moments in the history of several institutions, especially Coventry College of Art/Lanchester Polytechnic, but it will also address broader questions of art and design education in the process.

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[4] There is a section is dedicated to the 'Art Theory Course' and its relationship to the activities at Hornsey, among other courses and student movements.

A collection of projects, initiated by Tate Research under the umbrella of *Art Schools Educated*, for which there has been a closing conference and final publication (Llewelyn (ed.), 2015), aimed to introduce 'paradigm events' within British art educational history (Llewelyn, 2010). Among the authors and researchers involved in this project are many relevant theses and papers. BethWilliamson on art history teaching and experimental pedagogy (Williamson, 2011, 2013), Hester Westley on the pedagogy of Peter Kardia, the legacy of life drawing and the pre-diploma courses (Westley, 2010; 2015; 2015a) and in particular Elena Crippa's thesis, *When Art Schools Went Conceptual: The Development of Discursive Pedagogies and Practices in British Art Higher Education in the 1960s* (2014), which looks at several radical courses from the Basic Design onwards, and dedicates a chapter to, what is there termed, the 'Art Theory Programme'.[5] The research presented here goes some way to responding to Nigel Llewellyn's identification within the Art School Educated project of a need for an in-depth look at Coventry's contribution to the education of conceptual artists (again building on the work done by Elena Crippa (2014; 2016). The focus on London art schools has meant that the contribution of the regional schools has been largely overshadowed and so this thesis also helps to rebalance this London bias, and in turn problematises any sense of the legacy of the British art school as exclusively that of London 'life-style' culture or a history of unmitigated success.

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[5] I will be following the use of the term 'Art Theory Programme' adopted by Crippa in her thesis in order to give this thesis some kind of continuity with prior research, and to settle the anxiety of some as to the status of the 'Programme' as a 'Course'. I will use 'Art Theory Course' (in scare quotes) when addressing earlier accounts which use that term.

Art & Language

Art & Language can be described as formalising, to an extent, from a loose collaboration or *conversation* that began in 1966 between two pairs: David Bainbridge and Harold Hurrell, and Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin. The early work was often produced separately by these two pairings and very occasionally by all four, but to see them as a fixed and formal collaborative group would be a reductive description of a developing and complex set of relationships, as should partially be demonstrated in this thesis. The first issue of the journal *Art-Language*, edited by Atkinson, Bainbridge, Hurrell and Baldwin, was published in 1969 as a potential space and platform for discussion between participants in the group and other artists interested in similar areas, Conceptual Art still being a relatively new area of enquiry. By 1972 the group had expanded and merged with other artists operating in New York, including Joseph Kosuth, Mel Ramsden and Ian Burn, while in England contributors to the group included Charles Harrison, Philip Pilkington, David Rushton and Graham Howard, among many others. This was the point at which the indexing project began, which signified a shift to represent the conversation of A&L within a gallery context and to form an on-going discursive practice. The membership continued to grow in the early seventies through various connections but was, however, inchoate; estimates of the range of people involved vary but are between 30 and 50. Tension arose and eventually the group fragmented as the result of several years of dispute. *Art-Language* went through many shifts in style and content, spawning other journals in the United States and courting many different world-views. The group were often attacked and celebrated in equal measure for their wordiness, conceptual slipperiness, and antagonism.

A&L appear in the majority of general histories and anthologies of Conceptual Art, which are too numerous to detail here.[6] Their presence in most histories, surveys,

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[6] Though not comprehensive, a reasonable list of these publications would have to include Lippard's *Six Years: the dematerialisation of the Art Object* (Lippard, 1997), not least because of their issues with the idea of dematerialisation. The other early survey, *Conceptual Art* (Meyer, 1972) also featured early work. The later historical views are *Conceptual Art (Themes and Movements)* (Osborne, 2011); *Conceptual Art* (Wood, 2002); (Godfrey, 1998). Alexander Alberro's many works on the subject (Alberro, 2003; 2006; Alberro & Stimpson, 2000). Michael Corris'(who was a member of ALNY) *Conceptual Art Theory Myth and Practice* (2000) and Newman and Bird's edited compendium of essays

catalogues and readers, focus on their position within the art world. That tendency denigrates those aspects of their early work which were a testing out of group research and learning within and as part of their teaching roles. This thesis privileges that aspect of their work, from the initial formation within the art school to their subsequent antagonistic relationship with the art school. This shows that the 'strategic anomalies' of A&L within art education have implications much further and more critical than a straight forward institutional history. What follows is a brief outline of the broad fields of study that this research is positioned within.

Histories of the 'Art Theory Course'

At the centre of this thesis is the Art Theory Programme, as taught by three members of Art & Language at Coventry College of Art, Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge and Michael Baldwin between 1969 and 1971. Terry Atkinson continued teaching at Coventry College of Art, by then part of Lanchester Polytechnic, until 1973 when he resigned. The extent to which the course offered a programme of study in the way one would understand it today, with a timetabled set of learning activities, is controversial, and some would contest that it was never really known as the 'Art Theory Course' until after it was closed down (Salaman, 2008:125). By these standards, however, many fine art courses at the time were not circumscribed by detailed course documents and a particularly open-ended programme of general studio activity was the norm. How the course sat within the broader structure of the educational provision at the art school is one of its historical intrigues and one of the research questions for this thesis.

The course is included in many historical accounts of both A&L and art education (Candlin, 2001; Tickner, 2008; Salaman, 2008; Walker, 2001; Harrison, 2001; Harrison & Orton, 1982; Charnley, 2015; Strand, 1987; Atkinson, 1992)[7] and has developed a

by various authors *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (1999). They also feature in the more populist account by Tony Godfrey (1997) and quite heavily in the more recent Tate catalogue *Conceptual Art in Britain, 1964-1979* (2016) among many others.

[7] Although it is not an historical survey, a key text is Madge & Weinberger's *Art Students Observed* (1973), in which the conditions under which the Art Theory Programme was instantiated are recorded

reputation primarily as an extreme, radical moment in the history of the British art school. This is largely due to purposeful decimation of teaching staff associated with the course in 1971, ostensibly for the reason that there was a lack of 'tangible visual art objects' (Harrison, 1971) being produced by the students.

Much of the research on the Art Theory Programme so far has been part of studies that have had a broader aim. With the exception of Elena Crippa's recent thesis (2014), these studies have only dealt with aspects of the course's closure or implications, however, and have not included any detailed description or analysis of the content. The teaching that took place at Coventry is also well established within the narrative of A&L, not least in the writings of Charles Harrison who, though not as fully involved as he was to become in 1971, facilitated the publication and distribution of work, and later on encouraged the students' lobbying for the course's continuation, taking advantage of his position of Assistant Editor of *Studio International*. Indeed, *Studio International*, concerned as it was with art education debate (Melvin, 2013: 68-9), is in a large part responsible for the dissemination of the minor controversy that followed the closure of the 'Art Theory Course' (Harrison, 1971; Rushton, Pilkington & Lole, 1971).[8] In relation to A&L's subsequent work, however, the Art Theory Programme is seen as establishing a discursive foundation that, when expelled from education, led very directly to the socialised practice represented in the indexing project (Harrison, 2001: 70; MB/MR: 239). The struggles with the institution were a formative experience for many members of the group, informing the critical stance they subsequently took toward the institution of art schools and universities, variously by this point from outside or inside the institution (or somewhere in-between). Indeed, some students on the programme became very involved with the issues surrounding art education which, had the programme not been controversial, would possibly not have been foregrounded. Explicitly linking the educational

in detail, and the final section of which deals with the programme itself and the ramifications. A more detailed account of this can be found later on in this thesis.

[8] The main histories by Harrison which address the 'Art Theory Course', referenced throughout this thesis, are *Essays on Art & Language* (Harrison, 2001a) and *A Provisional history of Art & Language* (Harrison & Orton, 1982). The collection of interviews Charles Harrison: Looking Back (Harrison, 2011: 226) also contains a brief reference to the programme.

activities and the wide A&L practice at the time gives a new perspective on both aspects.

As intimated above, the reason for making the Art Theory Programme the central part of this thesis is that many of the standard features of the programme are still not explicitly accounted for. Not least the question of exactly how it constituted a 'course' within the wider curriculum of the college, and how it initially, before it became controversial, embedded itself within the Diploma in Art and Design (Fine Art – Painting and Sculpture) (hereafter Dip.A.D.)[9] Therefore, some of the questions that this thesis seeks to address are: What was taught, how was it taught and why? What was the relationship with the rest of the school programme, and what was actually in place prior to the programme? What is the historical relationship between the teaching programme and the subsequent political student activity? There are many differing references to the course, ranging from the nostalgic to the dismissive, and so a sober historical study of these accounts is useful in order to pick apart exactly what problems arose in terms of professional identity, political values and questions of philosophical and ideological positioning. I would stress this thesis does not pretend to 'sort them out', as it were, but to hold up these accounts for scrutiny and to explore what interesting perennial issues and contradictions arise from these positions in relation to art activity and its teaching.

Art & Language's relationship to art education after the dismantling of their teaching in 1971 is complex. In addition to the Art Theory Programme, the thesis will look at the more dispersed activities that could be counted as happening under the influence of the legacy of the Art Theory Programme and the writing in *Art-Language*. This initially includes those students at Newport and Hull colleges of art (taught by Harold Hurrell) and then, later on, the SCHOOL project as a form of student agit-prop during the mid-seventies. This continuation of certain lineages and concerns has never been researched in detail and this thesis offers up the first detailed account. How does the original position of A&L within art schools develop into the later agit-prop operation we see in the late 1970s? What was the position of the students and how did their art

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[9] Since initially posing this question Elena Crippa (2014) has gone someway to provide a more detailed account. However, I still think it stands that the social, institutional and historical context, and the full implication, have not previously been explored in as much detail as is presented in this thesis.

school experience reflect any semblance of the theoretical concerns of the earlier programme? How did the activities relate to wider political values in the students and A&L in general? How did the different practices and groups relate to each other at this time?

Finally, broader questions arise as to the usefulness of these courses, cadres and projects when thinking about more perennial issues within art and design. What innovative pedagogy did the theory course produce? What kind of agent did it seek to produce in comparison with the aims more prevalent in art education? Which disciplines and what variety of philosophy did they prescribe in the 'Art Theory Course'? How does it articulate a particular relationship between theoretical work and studio work, and how does that relate to current ideas of research?

Debates in Art Education

The main debate surrounding theory's role in art school is in terms of a divide, caused and upheld as a 20/80 weighting of art history (with complementary studies) and practical work, instigated with the Dip.A.D. (Parsons, 1999; Candlin, 2001; Wood, 2008).

Rebecca Kill (2006) charts some other aspects of fine art teaching that lead both to suspicion on the part of studio teachers toward the written component of fine art courses and, in her view, the misconception that art students dislike writing and theory. Despite ongoing calls by various practitioners, researchers and teachers to reassess this relationship over the past few years (e.g. Ryan, 2009; Kill, 2006) it seems that it is a tension that has persisted. Fiona Candlin (2001) describes a more hopeful situation across art schools today where departments and students adopt a myriad of positions to the role of theoretical and historical influence, as imminent or separate, on art activity.

The scope of theoretical disciplines which are currently taught in art schools is large and heterogeneous, reported to 'have a boundary no less than cognition itself' (Foster & De Ville, 1994: 100), and this is especially apparent when compared to the avenues commonly available to art students in the sixties (Candlin,2001: 304). Orthodoxies

have changed from the quaint days of complementary studies described in Stuart Morgan's account of Brighton College of Art in the late sixties (Morgan, 1996: 48). The translation in English of continental theory during the seventies; the development of cultural studies in universities; the advent of new art history, feminist and Marxist critiques; and the only slightly muted enthusiasm for all that exists under the banner of postmodernism in the eighties, alongside more traditional approaches mean that positioning oneself within this at art school is a complicated job.

One aspect of the art school, and one very obvious aspect of Art & Language, was the issue of gender. This includes the social relations and the developing attitudes within the art school over this period relating to issues of gender, but also as a very obvious blind-spot within A&Ls supposedly radical attitude to the institution of art education and the relations of art production. This thesis does not deal with this issue primarily because it is too big a topic, and one worthy of a large piece of research on its own, looking at both Conceptual Art and art education of this period. Hopefully, some of the material gathered and explored here would go on to be useful for such a study, but it was thought unwise to try and include it here and not give it due attention. I have detailed a few studies that are directly pertinent to this thesis and look at the issues of gender in the final chapter.

The legacy of 'theory' in art schools is one that this thesis does not aim to deal with wholesale, but it does address how A&L's idea of the relationship fits into more dominant narratives. Charles Harrison's enigmatic statement that, 'material from the 'Art Theory' course has since appeared in travestied form as a means of 'modernising' a number of art colleges and art departments throughout the country' (Harrison & Orton, 1982: 27) offers a further challenge to see in what way the subsequent development of art curricula did owe something, in their 'travestied form', to the model of the 'Art Theory Course' and how, as he writes later, did it 'miss the point'?

The problem of the relation between theory and practice and the history of that relationship can be neatly side-stepped around by emphasising student-centred learning, in the absence of any orthodox canon or content. This thesis looks at this trajectory in order to ascertain what kind of subject matter and theoretical knowledge could be considered core to an art student, informed partly by previous investigations

in how students navigate the expanded field of their subject (Mottram & Whale, 2001; ed. Bonaventura & Farthing, 2004), and partly by A&Ls fierce opposition to semiotics and cultural studies as the *de rigeur* theoretical approach of 'university art'. One of the effects of the inclusion of art colleges into the mainstream university system is that art and design has been allied with research, of which the terminology at least has trickled down into undergraduate teaching.

The models for framing, or reframing, art schools, examples of which are plenty in *Propositions for a 21st Century Art School* (ed. Madoff, 2009) show that the presumed possibilities for art schools theoretical trajectory are more varied than ever in the early twenty-first century. The relationship again between these speculative essays and the on-the-ground function of the art school is somewhat tenuous. International in scope, it is difficult to see how the ideal situations reflected on in this compendium relate to the regional university art department in England. Indeed, there has continued over recent years a divide between, on the one hand, the art world's expensive speculations on the radical restructuring of the institutions of art and its education (including the so-called 'Pedagogical Turn' (Rogoff, 2008), and on the other, the more pragmatic research on how to embolden students to become more curious and outward-looking in their work. A&L engaged with all aspects of the art and art educational world, adapting their strategy to overturn some of the insidious attitudes they perceived as detrimental to the fostering of such curious students.

The simultaneous look at the ongoing relationship A&L had with the various theoretical and anti-theoretical concerns in art education, alongside the curriculum changes and the institutional change that occurred during and after the Coldstream reforms would help to illustrate the way that, as Fiona Candlin writes:

> *'The regulation, funding and structure of art courses does not form a backdrop against which this thing called art is played out, but rather, academic management forms a leading role in constituting what art is understood to be in educational terms. So while theory and practice may have had an effect on the politics of knowledge within the university, university politics have a significant effect on the form art practice and theory can take within higher education.' (Candlin, 2001: 308)*

This thesis offers an account of an early manifestation of this process as an ongoing response to the gauntlet thrown down by the Coldstream Report, which it then argues is significant to the later developments of the content of art education, increasingly beset by its institutional determinants.

The Structure of the Thesis

For the second half of **Chapter 1**, I focus on the research method and the epistemological assumptions underlying the research. Here I have recourse to a *Critical Realist* framework and draw on the methods of *Oral History*, episodic interview techniques, and art historical method in triangulating archival, oral and published source material. This approach enables the study to be granular and detailed in its account and analysis, integrating different source materials into an overarching argument.

In order to understand A&L's intervention into the art college it is quite important to look at the broader institutional, political and cultural forces having an effect on public art education at the time. **Chapter 2** therefore deals with the inherited, or 'entrenched', culture of the art college in the 1960s, especially in its relationship to fine art and theoretical studies. This necessitates some attention given to pre-1960 British art education. This is also informed by primary research performed in various archives of the NCDAD and NACAE in order to give a vivid picture of both the top down restructure of art education and the effects this had 'on the ground'.

Chapter 3 then deals specifically with the early work of A&L, the formation of the group and the central ideas that informed their practice and, in particular, their teaching. This brings together archival material and verbal accounts to add the specific perspective of the educational experience of A&L in addition to adding detail to the early work of those involved. The chapter then looks at Coventry College of Art, going into Lanchester Polytechnic, and the conditions which led up to the

proposal of a radically new structure and content by those members of A&L who taught there, among others.

Chapter 4 focusses in detail on the 'Art Theory Course', the events that occurred at Coventry during A&Ls period of teaching and afterwards. This large chapter contains an interpretation and analysis of the main body of interviews and accounts, alongside archival documents and extant published commentaries. This is in order to evidence the many complex values and cultures at stake and see how they relate to the wider cultural shifts in art education reviewed in the previous chapter. Here the thesis goes into some detail as to the content and methods of the teaching, in addition to the reaction and its effects. It looks at the relationship with concurrent A&L related courses, such as those at Hull and Newport colleges of art, and how the course produced various discursive models of learning that existed outside the bounds of the institution. The intention here is to articulate concerns that endure both through subsequent chapters and, consequently, later debates around art education. This chapter then looks at how the course at Lanchester Polytechnic was finally dismantled and the immediate effects that followed.

Chapter 5 looks at later off-shoots and parallel movements during the mid-to late seventies by former A&L students at Lanchester Polytechnic and Newport and a second batch of students. The chapter relates the shift in attitude to art education to the work A&L did in response to the vogue for semiotics and cultural studies within erstwhile conceptual practices and polytechnics alike. The chapter focusses in detail on the student agitation at the RCA, Hull Regional College of Art, Trent Polytechnic and Leeds Polytechnic, culminating in *Noises Within Echo From a Gimcrack, Remote and Ideologically Hollow Chamber...* (1979). This is in tandem with the empirical research performed at the same time by Paul Wood and David Rushton on art education, culminating in *The Politics of Art Education* (1979). This chapter will also introduce other courses which have had an Art & Language genealogy, but which sit outside the scope of this thesis and are identified as possibilities for further research.

Chapter 6 aims to bring the concerns brought up in the previous chapters to bear upon the current state of art education. It addresses a series of issues that this research is seen to have some relevance to. These are firstly, the position of writing and

discursivity within art education; second, the role of philosophy and theory in a research-based University environment; finally, the education of artists as individualist entrepreneurs within neoliberal conditions and the corollaries of such orthodoxy.

The next section of this thesis describes how the research was conducted; what methods were adopted and how those methods were applied.

Methods for Conducting the Research

In this section I will deal initially with the process of collecting the data required to address the research questions; dealing with already extant source material in archives and published formats; and the analysis and use of these sources of information. This involves the use of both art historical and sociological methods. Secondly, I will cover the overall philosophical and sociological framework, looking at Critical Realism. This is used in order to deal with the ontological and epistemological assumptions I am working with in the study as theorised by Roy Bhaskar.

Interviews

In starting the research it was immediately apparent that interviews would provide a key source of data, providing accounts from individuals who would have had direct experience or participation in the educational programmes and group activities this thesis is looking at. Deciding how these interviews were conducted and their nature was determined by several anticipated factors, such as the authoritative knowledge of the interviewee, how they would approach that knowledge and their relationship to the topic in question. The interview schedule, style and question structure was then developed by trial and error through an initial set of pilot interviews. It was immediately apparent that very structured interviews, as are associated with large quantitative studies, would not be suitable for the small sample of people being interviewed, and there was no ambition to produce a generalizable result; the aim was to produce a nuanced and detailed account. The design of the interview schedule was largely based around some preliminary research into the experiences and area of expertise the interviewee might be anticipated to have on the topic. This is in order to guarantee a certain depth of information (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 130) and not miss opportunities through ignorance on my part. The schedule was then written merely as a list of areas that should prove fruitful; some specific questions if there are specific gaps or problems that need filling or working through with the interview; and some quotations or prompts from other sources.

One key source for methods of data collection using accounts by individuals, and one which locates itself within and addresses the awkward time frame of living history, is the

practice of Oral History. While offering very little in terms of interpretation and analysis, as it is a tradition of recording and archiving more than analysis and explanation, many accounts of oral history are useful with regards to the practicalities and ethics of interviews. Oral History developed partly out of the same impulse as social history, largely as a way of giving voice to an otherwise excluded marginality (Baum & Dunnaway, 1996). Along with the work of Catherine Reissmann (1993) on how people turn experiences into narratives and Anne Oakley on reciprocity (1981) in interviews; Oral History offered, early on, a model for conducting very long open-ended interviews, with long turns and an emphasis on a convivial atmosphere. Thompson and Perks' *Reader in Oral History* (2006) offers a varied array of practical instances foregrounding the importance of listening and being open to letting the interviewee direct the interview in order to be open to unexpected information[1]. It was decided from the pilot interviews that the transcriptions would be left relatively true to the inflections and pauses of the speaker, but with an emphasis on clarity of content as opposed to very detailed notation of hesitation, elision or extra-linguistic inflection. It was also decided, after several interviews had been performed that some broad editing out of irrelevant material would also be performed for conciseness, ease of reading and retrieval of information.[2]

The episodic and narrative interview, in addition to the life history, which is used by the British Library as part of their Oral History Archive (see British Library, 2014; Weinberger, 1995), seemed to be the most suitable model for most of the interviews I have conducted. The episodic interview as a format served as a particularly good model, as it is able to elicit a 'combination of narrative and semantic knowledge' (Flick, 2002: 105). [3] Several writers on interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) offer particularly detailed accounts of the interview process and choices for a qualitative

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[1] There is even a precedent within the history of Conceptual Art in Patricia Norvell's *Recording Conceptual Art* (2001); a delayed release of transcripts of recordings of conceptual artists and gallerists of the period.

[2] These are made clear in the transcriptions with breaks in numbering and dashes '-' or, when within one turn '…' – see appendix.

[3] Whilst undoubtedly rich in description and information, on reflection this interview technique caused several problems within the interviews. Such an open ended structure left the interview so amorphous as to cause a kind of wooliness to the information. Whilst I stuck to a schedule, in the form of a checklist of topics that needed to be covered, in many cases the topic could have been more productively addressed by a direct and formal question.

interviewer that were helpful in increasing a repertoire of techniques for the interview, such as the idea of 'opening the locks' and the use of follow-ups and probes (Rubin & Rubin 2005: 144). These helped facilitate an open discussions and, though I am aware that the instrumentalisation of a rather hollow rapport in order to get 'good data' (Edwards & Holland, 2013) is a risk, I would defend this approach; my interest in the respondents was genuine and the reciprocity was genuine, not a kind of professional technique. [4]

With qualitative interviewing, detailed and often personal information is accessed, and ethical consideration with regards to the interviewees' consent and what is done with the interview transcript are important, not least as trust is a large part of a good interview. I have abided by the university's ethical framework and the interviews were done with informed consent to the effect that the information could be withdrawn at any point should it be considered to be a misrepresentation or misused in any way. I have tried to be as transparent as possible with regards to my intentions and have anonymised any interviews if requested, though it was decided that anonymisation was not desirable as it would be ineffective in many cases; the interviewees are identifiable by their actions and would restrict the interrelations between the accounts. Whilst the subject matter is not the most intrusive, largely relating to very public events, the controversy surrounding certain historical events and animosities that still remain mean that sensitivity to these issues was important and so whenever information was given that was unnecessarily personal or even scurrilous then it was removed from the transcript. It was not my intention to fan the flames of ongoing dispute. The transcripts were sent back if requested to the interviewees and some editing took place, this was either 'pruning' more irrelevant

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[4] Oral History was brought up both in Crippa's thesis (2014) and in Nigel Llewelyn's introduction to the *London Art School* collection of essays as being 'insidious' (Crippa, 2014: 22-27) with regard to the respondents dominating the narrative with the fractious history involved and by Llewelyn as problematic with regards to the tendency for artists' testimony to dominate such histories: 'In the absence of other evidence, it is easy for the historian to privilege such individual recollections, despite the risk that they are distorted by time, prejudice or an understandable with for history to be neatly tidied up.' (Llewelyn, 2015: 11). He goes on however to note that art history is founded on an oral history and that when taken alongside other documents forms the basis of much art historical accounts. I would add that A&L have an allergy to neat and tidy histories, if anything, and that oral testimony should be considered both an equally valid source to institutional documentation (or the historian would risk writing a sanitised official history) and the Oral History approach of transcribing and making the accounts available helps the transparency of process and inference. I would also defend the approach I am taking with regards to, as much as was possible, checking the accounts against documents and published material (see next section).

material or cleaning up the speech and making it factually correct where it was not.[5] It was thought that a relatively un-doctored interview transcript as part of a separate appendix would constitute a valuable resource for future research in itself as there is a great deal of information not pulled out for this particular thesis contained in the interviews.

The 'case sampling' (Flick, 2002: 61) would be decided by availability in addition to the experience and knowledge they can add to the study, i.e. how much they were involved or affected by the course. Access to, and the co-operation of, participants was an issue with this study (Flick, 2002: 69), some of the key figures having passed away or no longer interested in conversing on the topic. The choice of participant naturally occurred through a 'snowball effect' and most interviewees would point out people who would have some relationship to the topic, which meant participants who were not central to the topic would be contactable and a more complex understanding of the initial social situation would be achievable. The size of the sample as such was decided to be around fifteen or so major interviews with the possibility of some less extensive tangential interviews, focussed on people attending the colleges Art & Language had some involvement with in the sixties and seventies. [6] This would mean that there would be a considerably richer picture of events and their effects. These unstructured interviews, where possible, were followed up by more focused questions; picking up points that were not covered satisfactorily and clarifying anything that is either vague or jarring with other accounts. The role of transcription of the interviews was seen as the first stage of analysis and getting familiar with the accounts.

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[5] This brings up problems with regards to the status of the interview as primary information, but it was judged important to have the interviewee comfortable with their transcript and the sense of the interview as they wanted it.

[6] Many of the interviews were not recordable due to specific circumstances and an unwillingness to be recorded, for these interviews notes were taken and quotes, paraphrases or the general gist was then incorporated into the thesis from these. This was also the case with the less formal, ongoing discussions with certain participants over the full three years and all are referred to as 'pers.comm.' in the text and the interviews are listed at the beginning of the thesis.

Archives, Documents and Art Historical Method

Another substantial part of the research was the investigation of material in archives, both personal and institutional. The material would range from the statistical (student numbers etc.) to personal accounts from people's papers, interviews and letters. The art colleges that were the subject of this research, on the whole, had not retained records from this period. Course documents and teaching materials tend to stay with the individuals who were teaching or taught on those courses and so some documents could be salvaged from individuals' collections. The National Council of Art and Design (NCDAD), Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE) all have archives and so the information from these sources formed a basis for the overall institutional structure, alongside the few prospectuses and reports found in private collections.

In addition, the range of writing in *Art-Language* and various publications at the time were cross-referenced with interview accounts, in order to both situate the accounts contextually, and to introduce information that was more thought-out, less anecdotal, consciously revisionist or possibly unconsciously modified by hindsight. The debates around art education at the time were pretty vigorous and so the back catalogue of articles, especially in *Studio International,* formed a useful source of information as to the most contested public debates.

The 'Art Theory Course', in addition to being an educational programme, could be considered a kind of art-work; an art work in the sense that the Documenta 5 *Index 001*(1972) was an art-work, where the subject matter was conversation and relationships represented therein. Michael Baxandall was useful in terms of method, and in his explicit exploration of method in *Patterns of Intention* (1985) he dedicates an entire text to looking at how documentation, social history, grey literature and wider historical factors, alongside visual analysis, can be triangulated to form reasonable inferences as to the emergence of human endeavours such as art works. Clearly, the study of early Renaissance paintings or Victorian bridge engineering is far from 1970s Conceptual Art, but that is congruent with the disparate selection of works to examine in the book. Nevertheless, there is a lot that is useful when thinking about the Art Theory Programme

as a discrete activity and how to describe it. These include: the techniques of bringing various sources to play in his writing in order to shore-up his argument and create a lively and vivid description (Baxandall, 1971); his prioritising of the discourse around art and what that reveals within the developing history of ideas (Baxandall, 1972); and his use of a triangle of causes (Baxandall, 1985: 35) in order to look at cultural conditions, intention and the enactment of reasoned collective activity all proved useful. With regards to the historical description, this was the main model and a good example of a methodologically clear way of presenting an historical account.

In Baxandall's use of private documents, contextual material and published commentary, he constructs a verifiable and corroborated matrix of sources. The relationship of social, theoretical and institutional contexts to the interpretation of a text is important and decisive (one focus of the hermeneutic tradition, discussed below in relation to critical realism). Likewise, the interpretation of such texts played a key role in determining intention (of A&L; of institutional moves), development (of the introduction of certain policies; of the actual use of theory in art schools), and precise dates and configurations of people. This was achieved by using charts and diagrams to map out relationships and timelines in order to make visible possible connections within the development of both A&Ls teaching and the background of art education in general. This corroborative function helps secure and situate the various accounts in the interviews.

Michael Baxandall's work, with its emphasis on the written document and the discursive, mercantile and intellectual climate as determining a painting's production and consumption, began roughly the same time as A&L's early works. The work represents an exemplar of part of a simultaneous movement within art history to develop a critical and theoretical framework different from those inherited from the earlier part of the century (although both the idea of a conscious break and a desire for a fixed theoretical grounding is a problem within his work (see Holly, 1999: 5-7)). Baxandall was in part a product of the Warburg Institute, with its history of using the written word alongside visual material. Although his work on the notion of the 'Period Eye' in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (1972) was not wholeheartedly praised by his former supervisor Ernst Gombrich, much of the work involved in his *Art and Illusion* (1960) had some

similarity with the way inferences were made in Baxandall's work. The use of a form of 'seeing as' (discussed later in the thesis) and the relating of social determinants offered a much more realistic, less romanticised and individualistic art history. This history through reframing art production and reception within a complex web of competences and social formations, not a disinterested connoisseurship, also offered a much richer idea of what an art work could tell us. The discursive and social context within which art is produced and within which the artist operates is fundamental to Baxandall's method, and in this sense has many similarities with Art & Language in how they sought conceive 'work' and the function of art.

Baxandall represents a particular shift, with a different emphasis but alongside the work being done by John Berger and T.J.Clark, in the practice of art history in Britain, which significantly challenged any idea of viewing the object stripped of any critical evaluation of context or modes of reception. Indeed, the writing of Baxandall through the seventies and eighties represent a cross-fertilisation which runs parallel to the New Art History, briefly discussed in Chapter 5, as reinvigoration of the discipline of art history. In turn, the reception of his work exceeds that of the discipline of art history, influencing as he did Pierre Bourdieu (and the concept of habitus) and Clifford Geertz within the fields of sociology and anthropology (Langdale, 1999: 17-18), and the disciplines he draws from are equally diverse. Although he remained somewhat aloof from any movement or school, his work stands out as a methodologically innovative, theoretically sophisticated and rigorous approach to art history and which developed during the same period as the subject of this thesis.

Processing, Interpreting, Understanding and Using the Information

The use of documents, artists' writing and journal articles was considered a great expansion of traditional sources for a sociological study in 1967 (Glaser & Strauss: 176) and though their use is more commonplace today, it is important to think about how to relate them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The process of taking the content of such resources as interviews, documents and other ephemera on equal footing seems very appealing, as does the mutually reciprocal relationship between theory and content that the grounded

theory method advocates in its 'constant comparative' method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In a qualified way this does not necessarily jar with some of the methodological implications of critical realism (Sayer, 1999) discussed in the next section, the main condition being that it would not follow a grounded theory approach in that theoretical assumptions would interact with the theory building taking place in the comparative process. Coding is a conventional way in which to deal with large amounts of qualitative data in relation to certain themes one would want to tease out (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) but also, conversely, as an heuristic to identify previously unthought-of connections etc. (Saldina, 2009: 7). The initial stages of transcription and coding were overlapping stages, and themes were not just indications of regularity but indications of different conceptions of ideas and events. Finding communality or discord between interviewees meant that values, attributions, social outlooks etc. could be abstracted from the material. The constant process of relating these abstractions to the material and modifying it meant that 'taxonomic' structuring, looked at below, could be avoided and the complexity and uniqueness of certain instances assessed in light of the distinction between both causation and meaning or understanding. This is in line with Glaser and Strauss' opposition to 'crude proofs' (1967: 114), meaning that the theory stays 'close to the data'.

This discussion around method and coding would, in a grounded theory, be the sole way of generating theories around the various forms of data. The simultaneous development of theory and collection of data is a workable method, but I wanted to understand this within an explicit theory of verification in order to try and avoid naïve naturalism. It is this I will address in the next section by outlining some principles of a critical realist stance towards the conceptual, historical and social problems that the testimonials in this study bring up, and how these testimonials can be viewed in and of themselves as relating to historical events.

Overall Theoretical Framework

The variety of philosophical and methodological frameworks available to the researcher in the arts is immense, sitting as it does between many disciplines – predominantly those

of philosophy proper, psychology, literary/media studies, the social sciences and more traditional humanities disciplines - all more established and comfortable with using such theories. It seemed paramount that I could find an appropriate, meaningful and useful framework within which to conduct the research. The research sits precariously between two distinct disciplines, namely those of sociology and the history of art education as a sub-set of art history, so it is also necessary that I would need to draw from approaches within both of these areas. There is some connection here with the idea of the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur*, going back to Levi-Strauss (1966, quoted in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:3) but repeated in many introductory texts on qualitative research. The concern of appropriateness to the study, and a need to 'triangulate' on several levels, is central to my methodology. However, I do not see the combination of different methods and philosophical frameworks to necessarily imply complete relativism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:3), as the selection of mutually conducive frameworks should indicate. In fact, the two ideas I outline below are not without certain similarities and overlap in many ways, as outlined by William Outhwaite in his book *New Philosophies of Social Science* (1987) and it is my intention to illustrate some similarities which, intuitively, would align with a feasible conception of an appropriate attitude to the activity of both research and sociological or historical explanation.

Critical Realism

The basic tenet of critical realism is that it has a realist ontology but is anti-positivist in that this ontology does not get confused with its epistemological assumptions, which are that our knowledge of an independent external reality is both mediated and fallible (Sayer, 1999: 1).This is what Roy Bhaskar calls the epistemic fallacy (Bhaskar, 1989: 182). As Andrew Sayer puts it: 'critical realism proposes a way of combining a modified naturalism with a recognition of the necessity of interpretive understanding of meaning in social life.' (Sayer, 1999: 3) The importance of interpretation of texts within critical realism makes it an ideal methodology in terms of dealing both with historical text and a modified idea of Durkheim's 'social fact' (Durkheim, 1984: 50) without the necessary empirical constraints (Durkheim, 1984: 60).

The thing with realist ontology that appeals most is that it tackles positivism on its own grounds (Outhwaite, 1987) and does not resort to an entirely relativist or constructivist basis. In a similar manner to the hermeneutic circle (Bhaskar, 1989: 168), where the text and context become independent of each other, a critical realist approach looks at necessity and contingency within social phenomena in opposition to regularity as being the sole determination of causation (Sayer, 1999). Therefore understanding and causation interact with each other and a distinction between that which is necessarily the case and that which is contingently the case is more appropriate to the specific instances dealt with in this study. This is also linked to an idea, which is in line with much qualitative research, of intensive research as an alternative to extensive research. Intensive research does not aim to collect data for comparability (when direct comparison is not possible) but, again following this idea of '*verstehen*' sociology, seeks to look not within taxonomic comparisons but tries to understand the specific contingencies and actual complex, causal and meaningful relationships. This suspicion of a taxonomic approach which, as explained in Sayer's *Realism and Social Science* (1999: 24), contains a clear exposition of how critical realism can be used with empirical studies, forms a particular approach to the central concern of abstraction from the specific empirical accounts to a social explanation. It is critical of how labels can cause blind spots when looking at empirical data, and that a constant comparison between observed and understood empirical data and theoretical explanation are necessary to get a complete picture. This entails both attention to the material constraints on events, causation and all the necessity and contingency therein (Sayer, 1999) and the emphasis on *verstehen* again as a way of understanding agency within structure; that the world is complex, and that society is complex, is reflected by this interplay between hermeneutical interpretation and sociological explanation (Outhwaite, 1987; Sayer, 1999).

Along with necessity and contingency, critical realism also looks at possibility, in the sense that things are only retroactively seen as inevitable, and is so it is open to a kind of counterfactual understanding of past events. This, in its most modest form, is a useful idea in terms of thinking about the trajectory of theory within the art schools and how different events came about as opposed to others; the theory that Art & Language were trying to develop being a possible alternative to that which did come about. The realist

ontology also extends to the nature of ideas and theories and their effect on history, for example in a study on the effect of the discourse of globalisation on government activity:

> *Ideas, ways of thinking, political paradigms can all produce change but whether such discourses can become effective in producing change depends on their practical adequacy, on how they relate to the constraints and opportunities of the context in which they are proposed. As realists, Marsh et al. do not reduce globalization to nothing more than a discourse, but argue that at least in part the discourse is dealing with something real.* (Sayer, 1999: 25)

With the Realist ontology as used in critical realism there is a 'stratified ontology' of 'transitive' and 'intransitive' and this is explained in basic terms by Bhaskar, in arguing the case that concepts have an objective reality, as the difference between an idea (intransitive) and a thought (transitive) (Bhaskar, 1989: 9-17). Social and historical ideas are in the intransitive domain because they both have an effect on historical and social development and in looking at them you are looking at something which is 'dealing with something real'- this is independent of anything you may want to abstract, i.e. draw out, from them. It must be said that these are very basic aspects of critical realism and, as we can see in the variety of approaches in anthologies such as *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism* (Lopez & Potter, 2001), different conception of social structure, historicity, among other things, are held within the general term. The issues outlined above, however, are a start in defining the usefulness of such a framework and such issues impinge on this study.

Summary

Whilst much of my research is empirically based, it is qualitative, has no pretentions to generalisation and regularity – i.e. they are not considered solely relevant to validity - and aims more toward a rich description. I have outlined that I will use quite standard methods of data collection (interviews) and quite standard primary historical sources (archival documents, grey material, quantitative and qualitative work from the past) and that these will be treated in both an interpretive manner (using the technique of corroboration through close reading and triangulation) and through the method of coding in order to generate constant comparisons. In relation to the role of interpreting texts and documents I have cited the work of Michael Baxandall as a key model for generating an historical account through the triangulation these various sources to develop theories of intention and causation as explicated, particularly in *Patterns of Intention* (Baxandall, 1985). This is under the basic ontological assumptions of critical realism, that the study essentially deals with an independent objective reality (intransitive domain) through subjective accounts; and with an emphasis on developing a critical stance toward the objects of study, be they the social formations, institutional mechanisms or concepts employed. This is intended to create a critical and purposeful history of ideas and the development of those ideas within the art school that is not relativist but also avowedly not 'value-free'.

CHAPTER 2

Art & Design Education: Before and After the Coldstream Report

Some Foundational and Perennial Issues in Art and Design Education

One of the first questions this research needs to address is, what factors impinged most on art education in the late sixties? What was the 'life-world' of the students and teachers within art colleges at this time, and what was the institutional structure that housed these activities like?

In this chapter I aim to build up a picture of the state of art education in 1969, when the Art-Language proposal for a theoretically-led course of study was tabled, through considering a number of different determinate historical developments in addition to consulting documents and accounts of the late-sixties art school. This will be done with particular attention to the original problems addressed by the instantiation of public art education in the nineteenth century; the changing culture of the art college and the entrenched practices within art education; the influence of different forms of Modernism on teaching in the mid-twentieth century; and the particular elements of the Coldstream reforms most pertinent to Art & Language's proposed programme of study.

In the first half of the 20th Century, the successive government administrations published several reports on education in general which all had an effect, directly or indirectly, on the nature of art education in Britain. This chapter pivots on the 'Coldstream Report' of 1960, the common term (and the one that I will use) for the report filed by the National Advisory Committee on Art Education (NACAE), chaired by William Coldstream and by far the most significant reform in British public art education since its establishment. The Coldstream Report was not a response to a single discrete problem or lack within art education, however, as it sought to encourage or redress many problems that can be traced back into the history of British art education, from its first formalisation in the 18th Century. The chapter offers a very partial account of early British Art education in order to chart tendencies and agendas that bear most heavily upon the debates taking

place in the latter-half of the twentieth century, and more specifically to those that Art & Language, and those associated with them, grappled with in relation to the art school[1].

The Royal Academy vs. The Schools of Design

The Royal Academy (RA), founded in 1768, was a relatively late instance of the formation of an academy, compared to those on mainland Europe (Pevsner, 1973/1940: 126). Accounts (Hutchinson, 1986: 26, Macdonald, 1970:28) betray a fractious and quarrelsome beginning to the institution. It was brought about by the petition of certain leading society painters and intended exclusively for the education of similar independent painters, though it was by no means the only institution in competition for the education of fine artists at the time. Under the support of the crown, it was essentially, 'in spite of its charter[,] a private institution' (Pevsner, 1973/1940, 142). Many academies instituted in this period were done so under nationalist economic reasons to bolster the quality of exports. London was one of the exceptions to this, as Pevsner notes, staying 'aloof to this new tendency' (Pevsner, 1973/1940: 157) of tying the academy to the needs of trade.

The 'Instrument of Foundation' of the Academy is largely concerned with the constitution of membership and the strictness with which applicants to the school should be judged (Reproduced in full in Hutchison, Appendix A, 1986: 245). It also details, via an outline of the human resources required, the kind of curriculum it thought was necessary and appropriate. Professors were to deliver lectures on anatomy, perspective, geometry, painting and architecture; a total of 24 official lectures a year, running alongside the drawing classes of various levels progressing to the prestigious life class. Although practical instruction happened within the design schools of the RA, the idea was that an academy 'exists for the sake of theory; rather than menial practice' (Elkins, 2001: 26), and the life room can be viewed as the theoretical and discursive centre of the *academic* model of the art school (Salaman, 2008). The putative set-up of the R.A., therefore, was a series of theoretical lectures to inform the student of appropriate histories and principles that interpolates a constant programme of drawing first from two dimensions, then three and finally from life (all centred around the human figure) with

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[1] While there is an obvious historicism in linking early art education and the conditions under which the Art Theory Programme developed, it is not to establish any idea of an historically determined set of events but merely to illustrate the factions and contradictions that underlie British public art education from the start.

drop-in advice and discussion by the assigned academician for that month. This would be supplemented by a good library provision (including prints) and an associated yearly exhibition of all the academicians (Hutchinson, 1986).

The R.A.'s foundation as a private enterprise, which in turn brought about many private preparation schools (Macdonald, 1970: 33), provided free education for a small number of artists with support from the king, but housed in public buildings (Hutchison, 1986: 60). This was a precarious situation that ripened into the quarrelsome debates regarding the purpose of a national institution of art education in relationship to the political, social and economic aims of the country. It was a conviction that the RA was not pulling its weight that partly made the argument for a different kind of institution to be set up.

The lobbying for a public school of art came to a head in the 1830s, tenaciously led by the advocacy of the history painter Benjamin Robert Haydon, a sworn enemy of the R.A. (Frayling, 1987: 12; Bell, 1963: 43). The origins of the public provision of art education, however, are complex, and sit within several agendas: those of the royal academicians and those opposed to the R.A., and those of the 'radical' and industrialist members of the select committee (Romans, 2007; Bell, 1963: 51-75; Quinn, 2012: 17-27). The instantiation of a publicly funded art school was in many ways remarkable[2] and incredibly early in the history of public provision of educational establishments (Frayling, 1987: 12). Not only were state funded art institutions an attempt to compete with the well-designed luxury goods from the continent, fine silks for example, but they were an attempt to roll out a system in which the public would have an education in taste.[3]

The relationship between the Royal Academy and the School of Design was the product of the relationship between the fine arts and those of design for manufacture. The occupation of painter was immediately excised from the aspirations of any that would attend the schools of design; applicants would have to sign a declaration not to practice as a fine artist after completing their course. This was due to the protection of the special position of the Royal Academy, and the royal academicians, and the view of many politicians that too many would-be designers for manufacture were being deluded into

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[2] And this is exactly how it was described in 1970 by Norbert Lynton (Lynton, 1970).

[3] This aim in itself contains many separate issues regarding how standards of taste are established and promulgated (Quinn, 2012: 13-44).

aspirations toward fine art. This was by no means a universally held opinion and many carried on the Reynolds dictum that an art education must first aim to produce great fine artists and thence great designers will follow (Bell, 1963: 26). Both positions, however, accepted a social hierarchy firmly in place between the value of the designer, and therefore product of the design school, and that of the fine art painter.

The tying of the education to industry was heavily influenced by the first hand research in the German models of the *Gewerbeschulen* by the then principal William Dyce. These were technical schools in which the study of principles of design was also supplemented by the study of languages, history and natural philosophy (MacDonald, 1970: 75). Unfortunately the schools of design did not live up to this kind of broad pedagogy. Their chief campaigner lamenting that the reality was just, 'nine poor boys drawing paltry patterns' (quoted in MacDonald, 1970: 75).

The provincial schools, called branch schools, after 1842 slowly grew in number over the next decade or so, Manchester being the first and most notable, not least because of the initial promotion of figure drawing and persuading its worth to some industrialists (MacDonald, 1970: 87)[4]. The schools suffered under various acrimonious relations between the central Council and the individual schools (MacDonald, 1970: 207-225) but they set the pedagogical principles of what would persist for nearly a century, as Paul Wood noted, 'namely its sheer tedium and utter restriction of any intellectual horizon' (Wood, 2008: 166). Henry Cole's Department of Practical Art, which was founded after another select committee on the state of the old schools of design, totally restructured the funding, aims and provision of the schools and expanded the provision of colleges from twenty to around one hundred and twenty (Wood, 2008:168; Carline, 1968: 81). In some respects, the system Cole set up was even more micromanaged and drawn out than its predecessor, involving twenty-three stages to complete and many students not completing all stages. It was also not considered to address the requirements of industry any better. It did produce many poorly paid art teachers, however; advanced students

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[4] The colleges dealt with in this thesis were mainly formalised around this time. Coventry in 1843, under the rationale that it would improve the decorative ribbon industry, though that did not seem to manifest itself that way in practice (Macdonald, 1970: 105; Bell, 1963: 101). Nottingham was established in 1843, under the aegis of lace manufacturers (Macdonald, 1970: 104). Leeds in 1846, which was reportedly more figure drawing friendly, and the combination of a Mechanics Institute and Literary Society (Macdonald, 1970: 110). Kington upon Hull was formed slightly later in 1861 under Henry Cole's expansion (see Book on this).

immediately being employed to teach younger students in the provincial schools (MacDonald, 1970: 144). As Paul Wood states:

> *'In the South Kensington system the teaching of drawing had the same social function as the teaching of basic literacy in the rest of the emerging programme of public education: conferring enough competence to keep the workshops of the world moving while ensuring people knew their place.' (Wood, 2008: 169)*

Henry Cole's model of art education lasted until his retirement and beyond, however. Along-side this centralised system other independent institutions also functioned, notably in the late nineteenth century the Slade and Ruskin Schools developed independent curricula. The Slade in particular, specialising in fine art and situated within a university, took much from the French atelier and a new approach to drawing. The influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement, the Pre-Raphaelites, and, less so, early Modernist practices was felt in some institutions, for example Birmingham School of Art, Manchester School of Art and later the Central School of Art and Crafts (Wood, 2008: 173; MacDonald, 1970: 297-300).

Up until the Second World War, however, central issues within art and design education that had been there at the beginning were still endemic. The level of craftsmanship for manufacture was still low, the nature of the teaching still often resulted in stultifying exercises. The ambitions of those enrolling seemed to Nikolaus Pevsner to be too enthralled with the role of the fine art painter and the values of high art (Pevsner, 1973/1940). The public role of the artist and the aristocratic assumptions of the 'tastemakers', to use a horrible modern expression, had not been challenged. The public art education that had been instantiated a century before was in need of repurposing yet again, and after the dramatic events of the Second World War and the subsequent political aims toward general public education, there was political will to do this.

This description of nineteenth century art education aimed to establish that there were problems endemic to art education from its inception and that the reforms that operated after the war were in many ways trying to deal with them. Those were problems of design skills in industry; the supply of teachers of art and design; the intellectual horizons of the students; and of the different factions of teachers and the plurality of approach. At the

centre, and often ignored by the structural reorganisations, is the problem of the definition of the content of the teaching and the role of the artist.

After the Second World War: Intermediate and National Diploma in Design

The interwar period saw a renewed attempt to yoke the activities of the art college to the interests of industry. The 1932 Gorrell Report and the 1936 Hambledon Report are a policy-eye view of an industry distrustful of the 'art school product' (Ashwin, 1975: 77) and, while diplomatic in their tone,[5] try to redress the ongoing fine art focus within many art schools; the latter report focussing on London, and especially this tendency within what was now the Royal College of Art (RCA). One of the problems this caused was that '80 percent [of the students] had expressed their intentions of becoming teachers of art' (Para 13 in Ashwin, 1975: 76), which meant not enough graduates were becoming professional designers, contributing to the refinement of industrial production. This raised concern about the usefulness of graduates from art colleges with too much fine art bias (a concern brought up within the Bauhaus – see note 15).

During the Second World War the coalition government sought to shore-up and reimagine education within England and Wales through a number of commissioned reports and acts of parliament. The Education Act of 1944, known commonly as the Butler Act, was a culmination of years of discussion and lobbying (Maclure, 1973: 222). This set a course by which, throughout primary, secondary and tertiary education, there became more national co-ordination and regulation, through the Local Education Authorities, of curriculum and assessment, more regular reports, and an increasingly 'sociological' approach to the organising of education (Maclure, 1973: 12). It also shifted some of the ideological emphasis; in a related report on technical education (the 'Percy Report') to one of both a 'liberal outlook in life' and 'an interest in administrative problems', with the intention that these should be encouraged in order to create subjects fit for 'executive responsibility' and a 'high grade of both ability and character' (House of Lords, 1945). The tone and agenda of the Butler Act very much set the precedent for the

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[5] Fine art is still recognised for its 'broadening and educative influence upon the students of design' within the Royal College of Art in the Hambleton Report (Ashwin, 1975: 77).

subsequent reports on education in post-war Britain. Education was one of the key elements entrusted in Britain's reconstruction, and this consequently effected the direction of travel for the publically administered system, inherited from Henry Cole's network of colleges.[6]

The National Diploma in Design (NDD), the art and design qualification instigated a year after the end of the Second World War, could easily be seen as the last vestige of the complicated system described in the previous section. As Christopher Frayling noted in 1987 the NDD 'certainly bore a family resemblance to its Victorian counterpart in the days of the Department of Science and Art' (Frayling, 1987: 173) in that it was a centrally administered examination system focused largely on drawing from set exercises sent for assessment, a process which one of my interviewees described as 'great piles of stuff going on to the ministry' (RP: 55), much like the 'South Kensington System' of the nineteenth century. Overshadowed by the much bolder reforms of the Coldstream council, the NDD system[7] lasted just over a decade, but it coincided with a generation of artists and teachers that were to be much more influenced by Modernist and avant-garde ideas of art production.[8] Within the first ten years of its existence the strictures of the NDD system became largely vilified from all quarters and so provided one, but definitely not the only, point from which to justify the argument for a more open and liberal approach to art education. For this reason it was an important moment in which much of the inherited art educational examination structure from the nineteenth century finally reached a crisis point.

The NDD was first proposed in the *Pamphlet No. 6, Art Education* (1946), and from this we can see the intended emphasis on both these aspects:

> *…it is first to raise the levels of public taste and appreciation both by cultivating discrimination and by cultivating art and craft activities as leisure time pursuits, and*

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[6] It was also influenced by the 1902 education act, in which local authorities had more say in the course of regional education (Wood, 2008: 174; MacDonald, 1970)

[7] Within this system there were two main exam stages, the Intermediate Exam and the NDD exam. These are part of the same system so will mainly just be referred to as NDD as that was the advanced exam, taken after roughly 4 years study.

[8] Alongside many who were very skill-oriented and, conversely, not interested in such avant-gardism.

secondly to provide the training for those who might take up artistic careers, more especially in industries which depend on good design and craftsmanship (Ministry of Education, 1946)[9]

This statement reiterates much of the emphasis of previous reforms in the focus of art education, those of 'cultivation', 'public taste' and design skill. In addition 'a liberal outlook', prefigured in the Butler Act, also looms large (R&W, 1979: 9). Rushton and Wood, in the reading of art education along-side technical education, show a parallel shift towards meeting the changing demands of industry. They make a distinction between the old technical skills of handicrafts as taught under the NDD system, and the skills required by the ensuing period of mass production. Paul Wood again has an interesting take on this, writing '…many of the skills that were taught were soon at their last gasp as the consumer society began to gather pace, and mass production in new materials replaced a wide range of artisanal skills.' (Wood, 2008: 176). Art schools were often viewed as being on the back foot with industry rather than leading it, frustrating the new need for competent and generalist designers with interests in managerial roles. Indeed, in their account, the increasing demands of mass industry and infrastructure building, coupled with the liberal enculturation of a burgeoning professional class of managers, are the two key leitmotifs of education policy from 1945 onwards and, according to Rushton and Wood, effected greatly the types of character encouraged within technical and art and design education.

Robert Strand holds the opinion that the Intermediate and NDD examinations 'did much to improve the standard of art and design training' but that in essence it was very narrow 'training' and that 'it cannot be said that the system as a whole encouraged originality of vision or approach' (Strand, 1987: 6). Stuart MacDonald gives it hardly any time in his major history of art education (Macdonald, 1970: 303) stating merely the fact that it

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[9] Additionally, this was seen as contributing also to its locality at a time when most of the students would be part time and from the surrounding area: 'Every art school must be adapted to the needs of the area it serves… [and] while not neglecting the cultural side of its work, should concentrate on the specific requirements of industry' (Ministry of Education, 1946) As Rushton and Wood note, a certain quaint parochialism also permeates parts of the report: 'The stimulus that might be given to students by such undertakings as the making of costumes and settings for a pageant, or painting decorations in a local school or hospital, is bound to be of real value.' (Ministry of Education, 1946) This reflects the ideal of an outward looking institution that serves the idea of a local community of small-scale manufacture, this was arguably not compatible with the needs of industry at the time, with its emphasis on automation and mass-manufacture, and the beginning of the increase in global outlook and managerial-level ambition.

assessed under a number of craft headings. Instead the latter sections of his history focus on the development of the Bauhaus legacy in Germany and Britain. Written three years later, however, his essay *Articidal Tendencies* (Macdonald in Thistlewood, 1992: 14) faintly praises the NDD period (1946-1963), as a 'period of increasing specialisation in designing and producing craftwork' (p.20) within a general history of fine art bias, aristocratic snobbery and art teacher timidity never once encouraging, let alone producing, good designers and craftspeople. This account was written at a time when art education had just begun to reflect the expanded field of mediums in the contemporary art world, and so reflects the anxiety this expansion caused to any defender of the learning of specific, expert manual skill within an art school. The NDD may have seemed, from that vantage point, a more productive and socially relevant approach to art and design education.

A far more common response to the manner of teaching and examination that the Intermediate/NDD system engendered was less positive. As Robert Medley muses, the NDD exams were 'regarded with something approaching contempt', that they were in fact 'ridiculous' and results were at the mercy of the 'preconceptions of the examiner' (Medley, 1983: 221). Norbert Lynton documents an extreme example of 'an RA sculptor whose affections did not stretch to anything post-Carpeaux' failing a whole year of sculpture students on grounds of taste. He declares quite explicitly, 'The NDD system was rotten. Good things could happen within it, of course, but they could also be stopped from happening by outside veto' (Lynton, 1970: 58). Indeed a good indication of the gap between the impression of an industry-savvy, design-oriented or even craft-based curriculum and what was actually being produced can be gleaned from some of the exercises reproduced in Clive Ashwin's book (Ashwin, 1975: 82-86).[10] The specificity and

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[10] These include anatomy exercises depicting flayed men and women playing lawn tennis, a drawing exercise imagining a swimming bath or, in Medley's account a dentists waiting room, and very prescriptive figure studies such as this one:

> *A direct drawing is required for a figure in costume which must be posed as follows: -*
> *Seated well back in an ordinary kitchen chair, left foot on the floor in front of chair, right leg crossed over the left. Model reading newspaper (folded quarter size) holding it in a natural way, with the right hand towards the top right hand corner of the paper and the left hand toward the left bottom corner. The model wears a hat and/or an overcoat, or not, as preferred.* - Paper on Costume Drawing, Intermediate examination in Arts and crafts, Wednesday11 May 1949, 10am-1pm (from Medley, 1983)

quantity of disciplines you could study was vast including knitwear, dye sinking, gold and silversmithing, book binding and painting and decorating. Rushton & Wood contest how many students were really involved in the 'silly N.D.D. exercises' (R&W, 1979: 16). The RCA's example of a liberated curriculum (Frayling, 1987: 128-147) was leading many institutions to circumvent the restriction of the qualification and 'a situation was emerging wherein colleges would be drawn to compete in offering their **own** courses' (R&W, 1979: 17), anticipating the reforms to come. The country had a wide spread of different kinds of art educational institutions.[11] The different responses and opinions of the NDD indicate that it neither satisfied the criteria for the production of advanced fine art nor the types of generalist skills required for the professional designer for industry. It also restricted the possibilities for this wide range of institution to develop their own curriculum because of its central exam system. The more experimental education that was happening outside of the system, therefore, became the model imagined in the subsequent reforms at the end of the fifties, taking effect in the early sixties.

The Coldstream Reforms

The report of the National Advisory Council for Art Education (NACAE), or the Coldstream Report as it is usually referred to after its chairman William Coldstream, is one of the most significant reforms in the history of British art education. It was due to the publication of the report that the landscape of art education was reworked to provide a self-determining system of content-autonomous colleges. The role of this restructure, within the narrative presented in this thesis, is as a deregulation of the curriculum that made the intervention of Art & Language eight years later not only possible but almost a logical development.

The lack of specific criteria in the report and the liberal approach of letting the colleges determine their own curriculum meant there were many vague areas within the new system. Norbert Lynton claims in 1970 that 'ignorance and timidity took charge in too

Whilst these are amusing in their arbitrary prescriptiveness, the appeal of a defined puzzle to be solved under academic conditions is easier to understand; it would pose a delimited and interesting challenge for an art students' technical skill.

[11] For an indication of the number of art schools and significant classes that were established in the nineteenth century see (MacDonald, 1970: 383).

many places' (Lynton, 1970:59) and indeed the account of A&L's involvement at Coventry was seen by them as a response to both of these characteristics within the art college staff and students. Because of this direct exploitation of the openness of the Dip.A.D. structure by the group, I would like to look in some detail at the reforms of the Coldstream Committee before exploring the effect it had on Coventry College of Art.

The Coldstream reforms started in 1959/60 and were an ongoing process of establishing a new broad infrastructure of professional art courses in England and Wales. After the initial report, there were subsequent reports in 1962 (on vocational courses) and 1964 (on post-diploma courses) and the committee continued to operate throughout the 1960s. The term 'Coldstream Reforms' is also used as shorthand for the activities of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD), or the 'Summerson Council'; a body that was instated by the Coldstream committee and chaired by the architectural historian John Summerson. This council's purpose was to administer and regulate this newly proposed infrastructure and I will go into their role in more detail later in this section.

The fast pace of change in art education was responsive to a wider drive to reform all aspects of education during the post-war period. There were concurrent reports in general education, such as the Higher Education Committee, or 'Robbins', Report of 1961-3, which also restructured and raised the level of higher education in other areas. There were post-war reports on technical education, secondary education and a drive towards scientific and managerial skills in the general population, which shared the same goals of creating more professionalised education that the Coldstream Reforms had with respect to art and design. The Coldstream Reforms, though liberal and deregulatory in their aims, did hold basic assumptions about what art and design entailed, with regards to attitude, aims and the relative disciplinary boundaries. One such pre-existing model was that of basic design and that is the first element of the report we will look at.

Basic Design and the 'Pre-Diploma' or 'Foundation' Course.

As mentioned above, the *National Advisory Council on Art Education* was retitled for everyday use after its chair William Coldstream, a prominent painter and teacher who was considered one of the key proponents of the Euston Road school of figurative painting, a style widely copied in (particularly London) art schools (RP: 61; Medley,1983: 218). In an interview with Lynda Morris (Morris, 2014b: 115), Coldstream claimed that it would have been more appropriate to name the Coldstream Report 'The Pasmore Report', after another member of the council, Coldstream's long-time associate, Victor Pasmore.[12] Pasmore was a co-founder of the Euston Road School but by the time of the report was published he had become a decidedly abstract artist. Along with Richard Hamilton, Wendy Pasmore, Tom Hudson, Maurice de Sauzmarez and Harry Thubron, Victor Pasmore was responsible for developing and further establishing 'Basic Design' teaching. Coldstream claimed that 'They were very successful with the Bauhaus idea and there was little I could do against the tide of opinion' (quoted in Tickner, 2008: 171). According to Clive Ashwin the members of the council represented 'the interests of art, design, education and industry' (Ashwin 1975: 93) and, although it is only conjecture, one can see the ethos of Basic Design as very amenable to all of these interested parties.

William Coldstream was a great supporter of figurative work and life drawing as a basis for art education. That one outcome of the Coldstream Report was a severe depletion in life drawing as a mainstream component of study in most of the colleges indicates just how rigged towards a more 'Pasmore' model the new system was. Indeed, Victor Pasmore was fiercely against figure-based work,[13]and actively discouraged it with his students (ed. Crippa & Williamson, 2013: 12). Many of the figurative exercises of the NDD are unlikely to have been missed by the majority of students, but the removal of life drawing from the centre of the curriculum is testimony to Pasmore's zealous cause and Coldstream's liberal acceptance.

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[12] Kate Aspinall's research on this (Aspinall, 2014) expands this central point, looking at the various people involved in the first report and looks at the various ideologies that went into it, reassessing its simplified legacy.

[13] This was not true of all Basic Design however and Harry Thubron continued to use the figure in innovative ways. See (Williamson, 2013: 9-10).

The basic design movement had a genealogical link to Bauhaus teaching in Weimar and Dessau (1919-1933). The Bauhaus was directly influential very early on in art schools and universities in the United States, having had prominent members set up continuations of the school after emigration during the thirties. The lineage from the continent was much more indirect in Britain, however, and did not become prominent until 1956 or thereabouts. In addition to the Bauhaus the artists associated with basic design drew from the writings of Herbert Read, and sympathised with much of the re-evaluation of child art (MacDonald, 1970: 320) that had been developing over the preceding decades and from natural science, especially D'Arcy Thompson's 1918 *Growth and Form*. Basic design was therefore developed on tenets roughly in line with these influences: the valuing of pre-adolescent art and intuition, the model of the industrial craftsperson and the basis of mathematical and natural form as a foundation of human invention. These tenets formed a pedagogy that, though it varied considerably with the individual proponent, was experimental; not organised around the mutually exclusive fields of drawing, painting and sculpture; generative or even aleatoric in its aims, and wholly modernist (see De Sausmaurez, 1964/1990). As a movement it was a broad church, however, and some of the conflicting interpretations outlined below are the result of many different educationalists and artists taking notably different approaches to the idea, especially following its apparent widespread adoption within the foundation course.

The reason why this early influence upon art education is relevant to this thesis is, firstly, that it challenged many entrenched lines of thinking at the time but it subsequently, perhaps more significantly, can be seen as also helping to entrench certain ways of thinking that formed a new insidious orthodoxy of 'visuality', reducing all artistic concerns to a language of visual expression, in British art education and one which Art & Language vehemently opposed. Secondly, it also represents an early model of how post-war education was left to maverick artist-educators entering 'previously moribund departments' (Thistlewood, 1992: 152) to form persuasive models of education, and perhaps offered subsequent experimental courses some idea of how to operate. Ideas such as the 'art laboratory', art education as an experiment led by a charismatic and committed artist or artists, definitely become a leitmotif of the subsequent decades of progressive art education (c.f. Yeomans, 2009) and basic design, though itself becoming

increasingly ossified, did much to introduce that element into the fabric of the art college.[14]

Regarding the first point, the most relevant point of contention that the basic design movement articulates is how it developed, in turn, the Bauhaus idea of the rational artist-craftsperson sometimes in opposition, sometimes as part of, the Romantic idea of individual self-expression. This implicit contradiction lies in some of the sources for basic design (MacDonald, 1970: 317)[15]. Much that was claimed for basic design was also as a systematic and objective methodical approach to the 'language' of art and design, the emphasis being on things such as the language of form. As Norbert Lynton describes in his evaluation of the teaching of Harry Thubron (in Thistlewood, 1992: 169-179), who taught a form of basic design at Leeds College of Art, spoke on 'Adolescent Expression in Art and Craft' in 1956 to the Society for Education Through Art at Bretton Hall. Along with Maurice de Sausmarez, he emphasised a scientific, curious, experimental and outward looking approach and this is reported to have caused friction with much of the anti-scientific and pro-romantic conceptions of art education as a student-centred path of self-discovery and expression held by the audience (Thistlewood, 1992: 172-3).[16] The most radical proponent of a reasoned approach was Richard Hamilton, whose interests were , with particular interests in Duchamp, Joyce and Muybridge, and was not in any way opposed to figurative work (Yeomans, 2009: 2, 4). He devised projects on the course at the art college which was part of Durham and then, from 1963, Newcastle University, where he taught until 1966, that 'allow only a reasoned result. Rarely presented in terms which permit free expression or even aesthetic decision' (quoted in ed. Crippa & Williamson 2013: 11).

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[14] Elena Crippa's thesis looking at the introduction of discursivity into art education in Britain starts with the Basic Design courses, charting their lineage toward programmes such as Roy Ascott's Ground Course, and therefore as part of the later developments in Britain of experimental courses (Crippa, 2014).

[15] Stuart MacDonald here quotes Gropius as warning against an 'art proletariat lulled into a dream of genius enmeshed in artistic conceit- destined to social misery – condemned to a life of fruitless artistic activity' (MacDonald, 1970: 317). It is counterpoised in Macdonald with Johannes Itten's inward looking pedagogy. This distaste for artistic isolation is in concert with Walter Crane and William Morris' idea of the useful, noble craftsman but without the option of retreat into medievalist handicrafts.

[16] Much of the Romantic notions of allowing individual development are in turn a reaction to what was seen as the excesses of Victorian and Edwardian rote learning which was still within living memory.

Basic design is not completely free of those assumptions around expressivity, however, and in this way it is why the basic design movement, under the direction of many different personalities, both challenged and entrenched recourse to intuition and expressivity within art education. Many of the views that take on a more metaphysical, spiritual or Romantic quality were adapted from specific aspects of the basic design tutors' pedagogical writings; from Johannes Itten, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky (ed. Crippa & Williamson, 2013; Thistlewood, 1992; Yeomans, 1987: 14-68), and the influence of the child-centred art education paradigm of Herbert Read. These views and assumptions are discussed later in this thesis with reference to those problems addressed by Art & Language in the late 1960s. They include the idea of a 'crypto-scientific' 'visuality' and the privileging of 'primary sensations' (R&W, 1979:13); tacit and unexplored assumptions regarding the context of work; and a residual commitment to the individual self-determined artist career-style.[17] The basic design movement is, however, also important to the pedagogy of Art & Language both because of its success, the longevity of some of its ideas and methods, and as an early attempt to start to cut through some of the anti-intellectual discourse of art education in Britain.

Basic design became the model, modelled itself on the *Vorkurs* (preliminary) course by Itten, for the pre-diploma (later foundation) course, which was introduced as a desired preliminary to the 3 year Dip.A.D. This was partly to be consistent with the 4 year Intermediate/NDD duration it replaced, but also to ensure against students' premature specialisation. The actual description within the Coldstream Report of 1960 was very open suggesting that it be a period of 'experiment in different media and different materials' (NACAE, 1960: para 19) prior to a specialisation in one of the broad areas within the Dip.A.D. options. Fine art and history of art would be part of every students' education and basic training in 'observation, analysis, creative work and technical

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[17]Recently, Neil Mulholland (Mulholland, 2013) has termed this the 'personal ontology' of the art student. Some choice quotes in *The Politics of Art Education* reveal this aspect quite clearly. Tom Hudson: 'We aspire towards a true psychological orientation of the individual. We must therefore concern ourselves with 'internal necessity' and 'external' reality. In this way we can provide the emotional basis on which the individual can operate effectively in his own unique way' (in R&W, 1979:14) The critique of Rushton & Wood, Neil Mulholland's personal ontology all go back, as is discussed in this thesis, to Art & Languages use of MacPherson's *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1964) as an analogue and critique of this conception of the art student.

control' would be delivered all through 'the sound training in drawing', considered 'implicit in these studies' (NACAE, 1960: para 3).

The foundation course was kept within further education and so could be conducted at further education colleges and was technically outside of any regulative powers of the newly created NCDAD. As Hester Westley points out, however, the lack of detail and guidance caused a certain confusion as to what and how to teach the pre-diploma, an interpretation of drawing could be anything from the old figurative tradition of the life class to a further development of 'the progressive teacher's explorations of the Bauhaus-derived concept of basic design' (Westley in ed. Crippa & Williamson, 2013: 16). The latter would have been closer to the idea of the NCDAD, however, and the Basic Design model was employed in many colleges, including Leicester, Bath and Cardiff among others. Other colleges adopted elements of the method and interpreted them in a variety of ways. Despite the openness of the NACAE guidelines, the language of visual analysis implicates a certain approach congruent with the basic design pedagogy (again, see De Sausmaurez, 1964/1990).

A good case study of the foundation course is provided by the sociological study of Coventry College of Art, *Art Students Observed* (Madge & Weinberger, 1973).[18] When Barbara Weinberger arrived at the college in 1967 to begin her study, the pre-diploma course at Coventry had developed into a place where the 'fine art orientated' were adopting 'shock tactics' to dispel any precious preconceptions of art that the new students may have held in order to encourage an 'approved' form of experimentation (M&W, 1973:30). Indeed the foundation courses varied considerably in approach and were the sites of much genuine experimentation and innovation, but also much arguably recondite nonsense. The name changed from 'pre-diploma' to 'foundation course' quite quickly, and in the 1965 addendum to the first Coldstream Report it was officially called such, largely because the number of pre-diploma students outnumbered diploma places and so it was

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[18]The students and tutors from this period that I have interviewed were all quite dismissive of the study. Graham Howard thought it wasn't particularly insightful (GH: , Philip Pilkington had no opinion on the study (PP: 60-1) and Paul Tate, who would only have caught the last moments of the study thought that there was a pre-determined narrative that the research was fulfilling, and information that did not fit with that was ignored (Tate, 2013: pers. comm.). David Hirons remember feeling like it was a kind of surveillance (DH: 68). In correspondence with Lynda Morris, Terry Atkinson wrote, that he remembered her interviewing A&L members and that they gave spoof responses (Morris, 2013: 9). Dave Hirons remember feeling like it was a kind of surveillance (DH: 68).

not possible to suggest all pre-diploma students would go on to pursue a diploma. The idea that the one year course could provide a foundation for both diploma and vocational courses was a convenient reframing and the term 'foundation' was 'to indicate the function they have in practice assumed' (see Ashwin, 1975: 102-3). It was, however, re-emphasised that they would continue to vary wildly in nature, and there was no attempt to regulate the content of the foundation courses at this stage. It is significant that the seeds of the Art Theory Programme at Coventry were sown within the undetermined final term of the foundation course, which was not mandatory or assessed, the students' portfolios having already been submitted for onward study. Particular reference to Coventry and Michael Baldwin's contribution to the foundation course is dealt with in the next section of this thesis.

The De-Regulation of the Art Schools.

The Coldstream Report did not appear without some of its principles having been previously mooted. One such principle was the move away from centrally administered examinations and a concentration, at the regulatory level, on an overall ethos and broad structure of art education, thus letting the details of course content and examinations be determined by the colleges themselves. The proposal was a dramatic one, considering the highly determined system that most of the colleges were accustomed to under the Intermediate and NDD. That it appeared in the Coldstream Report was, however, viewed as a logical development from the gradually stronger suggestions in preceding reports that the centralised examination system be eroded as colleges grew and developed during the first half of the twentieth century.[19]

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[19] This gradual movement can be traced partly in some of the reports and recommendations made over that period, as done by Clive Ashwin in his section on art examinations from 1899-1975 (Ashwin, 1975: 82-92). A brief summary of this trajectory goes as follows; In June 1911, the Board of Education's Circular 775 made elementary exams the responsibility of the schools and left the centralised examination system to more advanced candidates (Ashwin, 1975: 82). This was possibly the first break away from this central examination system at any level, albeit the most elementary. The 1947 Committee on Art Examination had a remit of looking at reforming the examination system with regards to an internal college system with a form of external regulation (Ashwin, 1975: 87) and the Freeman Report of 1952 was to represent a 'gradual shift toward college autonomy' (Ashwin 1975: 90) but fell short of granting that autonomy *tout court*.

The National Advisory Committee on Art Examinations Report of 1957 (the 2nd Freeman Report)was the first report explicitly calling for a rethinking of the central examination system, at first gradually cutting

Clive Ashwin, seeing this as the core impetus of the Coldstream reforms, questions why 'dissatisfaction with an examination system rather than concern for… educational objectives or academic quality' (Ashwin 1975: 91) should be the foundational concern of the restructure. The idea that the Coldstream reforms were born purely out of this particular dissatisfaction with the NDD, some complaints of which are included in the previous section of this chapter, is a common assumption. Much of the post-Coldstream analysis in the press tends to make this link; Norbert Lynton holds that the NDD 'created a passionate demand for self-direction which the Coldstream system was designed to meet' (Lynton, 1970: 58). As discussed in the previous section, the unpopularity of the NDD was widespread but it was content-heavy and had much to it that would have to be replaced with something else (CNAA, 1983).

The objective of having a liberal curriculum, especially one that has fine art[20] at the centre of it, and colleges that supply graduates deemed suitable for industry was most notably stated within the 1946 paper on Art Education (Ministry of Education, 1946: 27). The ideas within the Coldstream Report were a later iteration of this same impulse, as Rushton and Wood write: 'Far from the Dip AD being an isolated innovation, comprehensible solely in terms of a struggle by 'liberated spirits' against the straightjacket of the NDD system, it was part of a wave of thinking… which derived its impetus from 'modernisation''(R&W, 1979: 9) This overall picture of 'modernisation' sits within post-war reconstruction but also, as emphasised by Rushton and Wood, the rising competition between the Soviet Union and the United States as economic superpowers. Linking art education to technical education embeds the Coldstream Report within this grand technocratic scheme of modernisation. It is with some bathos then that some of the accounts referenced within this thesis could be read alongside this scheme, with the entrenched attitudes of the art school, their attendant Romantic and conservative values, still persevering in spite of this putative modernisation. That there were several ingredients to the post-war art school is most eloquently stated in *Politics of Art Education*; 'With one foot in the Atlantic, one in a country estate, its head in the

the apron strings one at a time, starting with the most mature and developed colleges. There soon became a call for a faster wholesale restructuring, with the governmental response; Circular 340 of 1958, called for all capable schools to be given the 'freedom to examine their own students'.

[20] Here very much meaning Drawing and Painting.

boardroom and its heart in an attic, art and design education since the war mirrors the gamut of forces operating on British capitalism' (R&W, 1979: 7).

With the relative de-regulation of the art schools enacted by the Coldstream Report these forces were left to play freely within the institution of the art school. The forces allegorised in the above quote have a complex relationship; a modern sense of professionalism was emphasised alongside a more broad liberal education and its concomitant values, the increasing emphasis on education for an administrative workforce was tempered by a sense that they should be well-rounded individuals. So, while the de-regulation, as I have called it, happened on an infrastructural level that was not to say that there was no sense that a broad series of values and standards had to be upheld. These values were often contradictory and it is these forces that we see at play among the regional colleges considered later in this thesis. Needless to say, some way of maintaining coherence to higher art education was deemed necessary and this could be seen, as it was by Rushton and Wood, as continuing the insidious 'oligarchic heir-line' of a ministerial coercion towards a privileging of a liberal individualism (R&W, 1979: 10-13).

The National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD) - The 'Summerson' Council

The Coldstream council instigated another mediating council, the National Council for Diploma in Art and Design (NCDAD, or 'Summerson') to administer assessment of the eligibility of colleges and the implementation of the Coldstream council's reforms on a college by college basis. The two councils' membership overlapped somewhat, but also included appointed chairpersons of each subject area panel. The membership of the committee were largely chosen by Coldstream himself, who 'wanted professional artists and designers to decide on the future shape of British art and design education rather than the professional educators' (Thompson, 2011: 481). The specific areas of training within the NDD were swept away to leave a streamlined cluster of broad areas; Fine Art 1 (Painting with Drawing), Fine Art 2 (Sculpture with Drawing), Graphic Design, 3D Design and Fashion/Textiles with Art History/Complementary Studies permeating all other 'main subject areas' (NACAE, 1960). A panel was therefore assembled for each of these areas by the chairs in the council. These panels would visit and assess the colleges

for their suitability to this new advanced qualification and it was at this point that the implementation of the reforms caused some controversy.

The first report of the NCDAD, The Summerson Report, was issued in 1964, Robert Medley was a member of one of the fine art panels and by his account the process was taken to be very serious and worthy (Medley, 1983: 222) but that is by no means a universal opinion. Rushton and Wood note that exactly one-third of the colleges were approved (R&W, 1979: 10) which they see as a sign of the nonchalant, arbitrary way the restructuring was approached. The Art Colleges Working Party of the National Union of Students (NUS) published a critique in 1964, writing:

> *Some large areas had now no provision whatever. East Anglia, Mid and North Wales, still have no Dip.A.D. courses, and the failure of Stoke on Trent College to obtain recognition for its pottery course has now become legend.* (quoted in Macdonald, 1970: 356)

The distribution was controversial in that it was weighted heavily in the south east (see MRC: MSS.322/AD/55-56; MacDonald, 1970) and many colleges that were thought to be of good standing were not given the awarding powers.[21] These omissions were gradually rectified to a certain extent through subsequent readmissions during the sixties, but this illustrates the initial apparent arbitrariness of the award and the divided landscape of 'diploma daze' that ensued (De Sausmaurez, 1963). How the colleges were judged was considered at the time, however, a little opaque. As one of my respondents, a painting tutor at the time, told me regarding the initial visits:

> *I don't think they had any criteria, I mean they wouldn't have known what a criteria was if they fell over it in the street… very intuitive. They would go in and talk to the students, and they would look at the work, and it was on that basis… and they would talk to the tutors. I mean the thing about criteria, it was remarkably missing really.* (RP: 51-55)

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[21] 'The NCDAD had considered applications from 87 colleges, 13 of which had been ruled out by the Ministry on administrative grounds not detailed in the report; a further course applicant withdrew. This brought the number standing course applications down from 201 to 182. Of these only 61 – a third – met with the approval of the NCDAD and its panels; of the 87 colleges… only 29 eventually succeeded in gaining the approval… to run Dip.A.D. courses.' (Ashwin, 1975:105) It is the missing detail and the neat numbers that seem to have caused the most suspicion from the colleges and it is these points that one of my respondents picks up on most when talking about the Coldstream Reforms (RP: 49; PW: 101).

This lack of any publicly accessible criteria and reasoning behind selection for diploma course delivery is reflected in the variety of criticisms it received. For instance Jon Thompson, who helped prepare Lancaster College of Art for their panel visit, states that the ideals of the initial Coldstream Report never materialised partly because 'the Summerson Council …approved far too many colleges, thereby threatening the whole 'specialist' enterprise' (Thompson, 2011: 483). From whatever angle the criticism came from, the divisive results of these panel visits, dividing the country's art colleges into Dip.A.D. and non-Dip.A.D. colleges, meant that many colleges had to reassess their approach as their student demographic changed. That much of the assessment was perceived as off-the-cuff was acknowledged as a danger by the panel (Ashwin, 1975: 105), but the common idea that the assessments were either totally arbitrary or the result of intuition or prejudice is uncharitable when looking at the reports (MRC: MSS.322/AD). The assessment reports of the panels largely focussed on space, teaching staff and equipment – measurable things.[22] The final report was in essence an assessment of teaching quality, art school culture and facilities. Indeed, many of the effects of the Coldstream Report that are considered good can be attributed to the Summerson Report, most notably the encouragement of the part-time artist-teacher identity. The possibility of this role was an important condition for the early teaching of Art & Language, as it was for the culture of many art colleges throughout the period.

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[22] One can now see the reports filed by the assessors for this initial phase and subsequent reassessments, in particular the so-called Quinquennial Reviews, when many courses were reassessed and more Dip.A.D. courses were allowed. When concerned with awarding Dip.A.D. status to colleges there was some detailed character assessment of the teachers and their capacity to manage a department. Other key areas that are assessed were library provision (including staffing and slide libraries), accommodation for students and the culture of the college in question (MRC: MSS.322/AD/56). The content of the courses offered was given much less attention in the report.

The Diploma in Art and Design (Dip.A.D.)

The overall aim of the Coldstream Report was that the standard of art education was to be raised to 'university equivalence'. Some of the most direct ways the report sought to achieve this were through the increase in minimum age; similarly an increase in the minimum qualifications of applicants (five O' Levels); and the introduction of history of art and an elective in another subject area or activity under the name of complementary studies.[23] These two aspects to the Dip.A.D. amounted to 15% of the total programme of study, which was later changed to the 20% that has, with more options added, persisted to the present. That the entry requirements may preclude 'academically poor but gifted students' was mitigated by the caveat that, in exceptional cases, admission could be granted on outstanding artistic merit (NACAE, 1960). The rigour and integrity of the study in general, however, was seen as one of the fundamental requirements: 'the diploma courses must be of sufficient breadth and significance to give art students an education with the equivalent discipline and the same sort of stimulus as a university course should give to an undergraduate.' (NACAE, 1960: para 10) The image of the new Dip.A.D. was keenly distinguished from a previously fringe and ostensibly either workman-like, craft-based or aristocratic taste-based area of education, represented by the histories of the School of Design and the Royal Academy respectively.

The new qualification was to form a higher level of art education that was not catered for either by the Intermediate/NDD system or by the myriad of vocational and part time modes of study that were in many respects the bread and butter of the majority of independent art and technical colleges.[24] This was nestled within a greater feeling of

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[23] During the 1960s, after an increase in scientific graduates in the fifties, a swing towards arts subjects had occurred with people who had acquired more than two A' Levels. While the percentage growth in the Sciences had increases 52% in 1961-7, in the Arts it had increased 114% (Layard et al, 1969: 45). As is mentioned later in the thesis, although this deals with only university students of a variety of arts subjects, many of the students who benefitted from the Art Theory Programme were related to this demographic, obtaining good academic results and going into art education with hope that it proves academically challenging.

[24] As described in Rushton & Woods account (1979), technical and art education were being modernised concurrently and both had subsequently had a large array of evening and part time courses. Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), established in 1956 were to be given university status and degree awarding power following the *White Paper on Technical Education*, around the same time as the Diploma in Art and Design was being thought up, creating a scientific and technical elite (see MacLure, 1973: 239). Both the new Diploma Colleges and the CATs would have a national catchment area and concentrate only on these

competitiveness in terms of university graduate numbers in general (Britain being lower than America, the Soviet Union, France and Germany at the time (Maclure, 1973: 289-91)) and the aforementioned competition within manufacture and industry that has always impinged upon art school in various guises. The rhetoric of the Dip.A.D. as being a more serious, academic qualification was incredibly divisive in the first ten years of its existence, polarising those who welcomed the liberal but supposedly rigorous University-like aims and those that mourned the loss of the artisanal, vocational and craft elements that were gradually eroded within this new ethos. The rhetoric also, however, increased the appeal to a wider range of students bringing a wider range of subject interests and should be seen as one element that made the Art & Language curriculum thinkable. Needless to say, the crux of this academicisation was in the Art History and Complementary Studies department and how that related to the studio.

Art History and Complementary Studies

The introduction of art history formally into art college curricula was primarily to address the need for an academic, assessable, written content-full component to the now putative degree-standard study of art and design. The Complementary Studies would then contribute to the 'broad' or 'liberal' outlook desirous of the graduate. This was part of a wider movement in secondary and higher education to add a 'Liberal Studies' element to many courses across disciplines, and which Eric Robinson, writing in 1968, seems particularly sceptical of state educational institutions attempting to emulate gentlemanly private education with a token 'liberal additive' (Robinson, 1968: 98).

The introduction of these 'academic' elements could also have been seen as compensating for a lack of structure or content in the studio provision of the new system, and has been seen by some as the replacement for the technical training at the centre of previous art education systems (e.g. Salaman, 2008: 108). To have such a defined place for art history and extra-artistic concerns, as were offered by complementary studies, was certainly unprecedented. However, when considering the tacit, perhaps more integral position that history and theory occupied pre-1960 within the studio, for many the imposition of a split

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higher level courses (Tickner, 2008: 107). With the Robbins Report of 1963 these would eventually evolve into Universities, opening them up, presumably to more highly qualified students.

between studio and theory caused an artificial split between the practice of the student and their inherited theoretical framework, as noted by Fiona Candlin (1998: 19). That the prior relationship between theory and practice was largely tacit, and therefore the assumption of a high quality theoretical instruction is possibly too generous an assumption to make, makes this view somewhat problematic.[25] Nonetheless, this split does represent a significant shift and a foregrounding of the practice/theory debate that still persists. What Candlin and Salaman both point out, and what is evident from the subsequent foregrounding of this theory/practice debate, is that Coldstream changed the terms of relationship, the possibilities it entailed and the site of its teaching.

As Stuart Macdonald notes, writing of the early twentieth century, 'There has long been resistance to academic studies by art teachers and students, especially to the learning of anything factual… the opposition is mainly located in the art schools.' (MacDonald, 1970: 375) This was the assumption that the Coldstream reforms wished to challenge.[26] The nature of and provision for art history varied greatly across the colleges, especially in terms of staff, of which art history staff were hitherto not part of. The provision of art historians, largely from the Courtauld or Warburg Institute, meant a wide range of specialisms were brought into the art college from what was also still a growing discipline within the university. The type of art historical education encouraged was the reasonably in-depth study of a few 'significant periods of time' (Ashwin, 1975: 98), and a focussed approach was seen as preferable to one that was broad and potentially cursory. In fact, the provision was largely at the whim of the specialism of the individuals involved and, as

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[25]The assumption that there was any meaningful relationship between theoretical work in many institutions in the years leading up to the Coldstream introduction is debatable. This is anecdotally illustrated by one respondent on post-graduate art history provision at the Royal College in the late 50s:

> 'MD: Did you have to do any art history at the Royal College?
> RP: Yes. And boy was it hopeless.
> MD: Did you have art historians teaching?
> RP: Yes we had… a great expert on Stubbs. … A charming, charming man. And I think he was the only one in the whole of the Royal College, he was looking after absolutely everybody. You had to produce an essay at the end, which was never really supervised and, you see they didn't do that before, it was only when the Dip.A.D. came along, and Darwin felt that they ought to do some, you know. Become a university, you've got to be able to write. I mean it was as naïve as that, really.' (RP: 235-238)

Another respondent Kathy Jenkins, an art history teacher at Hull College of Art states that NDD essays were, 'not rigorous in any way' (KJ: 129).

[26] And the A&L course proposal, for that matter.

some of the examples in this thesis testify, they could range from the inspirational to the entirely irrelevant. Complementary studies by its nature attracted tutors from a much wider range of disciplines and the effect of their introduction in regional colleges, including Coventry, will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

One of the most important effects of the introduction of art history and complementary studies was, as Fiona Candlin outlines (Candlin, 2001), the inclusion for a space of reflexive thought, or second order thinking, about the discipline and its conditions, historical or sociological. In the better schools this was embraced and I will cover some of the effects of this in the 1970s in subsequent chapters. As Candlin argues, the introduction of art history and complimentary studies, and hence a theoretical or written component, gave the students the means for a critique of both the discipline and the institution of art education, which very much paralleled the art world and the rise of institutional critique. In this way A&Ls teaching was paradigmatic as it aimed from the start to create a critical atmosphere, within the open situation offered by an art college, in which discussion of these problems could be addressed. The next chapter looks at the formation of A&L, their early work and how the institutional and curriculum changes described above became a context in which A&L started to think of their work as both a discursive studio practice and an educational research programme.

CHAPTER 3

Early Art & Language Practice

Art & Language

A&L as a group has its roots in the various connections between the four original members during the years 1966-7. It is usually assumed that the group formalised around Art-Language Press in 1968. The title 'testified to recognition of the existence of a discursive context within which different work could be produced and criticised' (Harrison & Orton, 1982:16) and was not ever used with the intention of describing the work of four people making discrete art works. The original membership was Terry Atkinson (b.1939), Harold Hurrell (b.1940), David Bainbridge (1941-2013) and Michael Baldwin (b.1945) and the early work was largely produced under the pairings of Atkinson/Baldwin and Bainbridge/Hurrell. The art historian Charles Harrison (1942-2009) became associated with the group from 1970 onwards and wrote accounts of the history of the group at several points in its development, most notably with Fred Orton (who studied at Coventry in 1964-67) in *A Provisional History of Art & Language* (Harrison & Orton, 1982), and then subsequently in *Essays on Art & Language* (Harrison, 2001).[1] The closeness of Charles Harrison to the project invites obvious criticism and a number of writers since have commented on the dominance and/or one-sidedness of his account. This applies particularly to the period 1966-1975, where there exist many frayed edges in terms of chronology and personnel, thus engendering many claims to a revisionist stand point. There has been much less written about the work of David Bainbridge and Harold Hurrell from this period and less written work published by them, this necessitates a more fragmentary account of their work and interests. With these caveats in mind, the first part of this chapter will aim to provide some account of the influences and ideas discussed within the group prior to the formation of any conscious educational programme at Coventry or Hull Colleges of Art. It was at these colleges of art that the group initially developed their discursive practice and the educational programmes that ran along-side that, but prior to becoming teachers a 'discursive practice' had begun, and connections formed, which determined the particular concerns of the teaching programme they were to propose. In addition to Charles Harrison's accounts this chapter draws much from accounts by other members of the group; Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, Mel

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[1] See especially p.47-62 'Conceptual Art and Art & Language', and chapters 3 and 4, 'Indexes and Other Figures' and 'The Conditions of Problems' for an account of the period covered in this thesis.

Ramsden, Philip Pilkington, David Rushton and Michael Corris, and other accounts from the art historians and researchers Lynda Morris, William Wood, and most recently Elena Crippa.

Art & Language, 'was never seen as a strategy for producing artworks made by four people' (Harrison & Orton, 1982; 16). The group were all under thirty when they started to work together and, observed with hindsight by Baldwin/Ramsden/Harrison , 'Conceptual Art, in its culturally radical, relatively untransformed form, is more or less *essentially* the work of people who saw themselves as in process' (A&L, 1995: 443). The beginning of the formation of the group was then not set as a defined project with a fixed identification with or relationship to Conceptual Art, but as a group with a variety of concerns who identified a need for a more self-conscious basis for the discussion, learning and sharing of these various concerns. It was the 'scrabbling around' for appropriate tools and appropriate topics that formed this discursive practice. These tools and topics largely grew out of prior concerns developed within the context of the modernist culture of the art schools and the influx of American Modernism during the late fifties and sixties.

Terry Atkinson/David Bainbridge/Harold Hurrell

The three older members of the group - Atkinson, Bainbridge and Hurrell – all grew up in Yorkshire, had arrived at art college from working class backgrounds and brought with them a certain scepticism towards the high art values presented to them at such 'modernist ideology receiving/transmitting stations' (Atkinson, 2000: 149) as the Slade and St Martins (H&O, 1982: 17). Whilst students,[2] and then teachers, at various art colleges, the prevailing discourse amongst artists (students and teachers) was to them

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[2] Terry Atkinson studied at Barnsley School of Art in 1958-1960 (which would have functioned under the NDD system at the time) and then onto a painting course at the Slade from 1960-1964 (which functioned under the university system and had a long standing independence (see chapter 2)). Harold Hurrell studied at Sheffield College of Art, from 1961-4 and then at the Institute of Education, London until 1965. David Bainbridge also did his preliminary course at Barnsley School of Art but then 'left and found a 'regular' job as a bus conductor' (Morris, 1996) and then at Newton Abbot, a Sheffield Steelworks, where he became a shop steward and subsequently joined the Communist Party. He used his earnings there to fund his study of Sculpture at Central St Martins, 1963-1966. How they responded differently from their contemporaries to the issues of social mobility then available to them and the traditions of modernist fine art is discussed in Atkinson's 'Ancestor Worship' (Atkinson, 2000).

inadequate, un-interrogated and complacent. David Bainbridge's contribution to Barry Flanagan's magazine *Silans*, entitled *The artist/Intellectual as an ineffective (Hypocritical?) Idealist* articulates some of these concerns:

'Faced with the old interrogation of his character, his social meaning and function, he retreats shamefacedly back to his old "intangibles". The majority of artists become such in the first place because they… think themselves to be – extra-sensitive beings.'

'That the basis of our ideas is not concerned with aesthetic criteria bewilders him; that the work we produce is not essentially subjective or with limited communication-potentiality positively shocks him. This is not the way of the artist he will say. But the fact is that many of us are not prepared to follow the way of the artist.'

(Bainbridge, 1965)

The rejection of a particular artistic identity, unconcerned with the inner-world of the individual creative genius as it were, introduces one of the immediate concerns that both Bainbridge and Atkinson dwelt upon and developed long after. It also prefigures the mode of address to the 'inarticulate' and 'extra-sensitive' artist that becomes the focus of attention when addressing the status quo of the art school. This issue in particular was one of concern for all three from very early on. During the mid-sixties, however, the future menbers of Art & Language had various and disparate approaches to art production, though not necessarily working in isolation.

Terry Atkinson was associated with the group Fine Artz from 1964 -1966 alongside Roger Jeffs (b.1942), John Bowstead (b.1940) and Bernard Jennings (b.1942) and was formed towards the end of their studies at the Slade and subsequently while Atkinson was teaching part time at Birmingham College of Art.[3] The group produced events and exhibitions which held up new technology, rapid social and structural change and youth culture as something that was possibly emancipatory. The group's concerns were largely with the way youth culture had emerged as having independence through the subversion and 'kustomization' of commercial forms and, as a corollary of this, a critique of highbrow modernist fine art and its representatives within the London art scene and the art schools (Atkinson et al., 1964a/b). Their published article in the Royal College of Art magazine *Ark* declares '[the artist] has no relevant role in the new society if all he can do is play with the achievements of his more serious-minded and socially functioning fellow citizens' (Atkinson et al., 1964a: 40). They go on to form a critique of the art student, 'with hide-bound courses and wine-culture brain washing they're being turned into social misfits, living anachronisms, and proof of the inadequacy of art school diplomacy' (Atkinson et al., 1964a: 40) Harrison and Orton summarise the groups aims as intending to 'secure an avant-gardist niche for its members in the interface between Pop Art, design and 'new technology'' (Harrison & Orton, 1982: 15).[4] The group shared common reference points with the Independent Group of a decade earlier and both Jeffs and Bowstead had some affiliation with Archigram.[5] It was due to a growing disillusionment that this burgeoning rebellious youth culture and faith in technological advance could hold out any promise of a resistance to sinister commercial co-option, and an increasing disparity of concerns between himself and the rest of the group that Atkinson left in 1966 (Morris,

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[3] This was also under the aegis of a 'research workshop' at the college, presumably relating to technological development. For an account of his time at Birmingham, see (Atkinson, 1992: 45).

[4] This quote does not perhaps convey adequately the sense of scepticism towards pop art, especially pop art painting, and pseudo-scientific art (see Atkinson et al, 1964a).Needless to say there is an altogether McLuhanite hope for the dazzling techno-future which was rejected pretty soon after by Atkinson (Atkinson, 1992: 44-6)

[5] Exhibitions held were of *The Kandilac Kustomised Asteroid Action Seat* in the Young Contemporaries Exhibition in February 1964 (which involved David Bainbridge – see Fig. 2 above) and the *Miss Misty Show*, which was a 'large scale projected image' show at Birmingham's Aston University in 1966, and after which Atkinson left the group. John Bowstead and Roger Jeffs subsequently published in *Archigram*, Nos. 8 and 9.

1996; CCA, 1968; Atkinson, 1992) .[6] The reaction against some of the concerns of the group and the type of activities that were undertaken within Fine Artz would lead Atkinson to aim for a different type of group activity with the formation of Art & Language, but preserving that inherent rejection of private concerns and individualistic practice.

David Bainbridge and Harold Hurrell largely worked within a tradition of sculptural objects, heavily influenced by engineering, manufacturing and electronics; a common ground identified whilst Bainbridge was studying sculpture at St Martins and Hurrell was a technician there in 1963/4.[7] This is not, however, to say their attitude to this technology was at all celebratory, and Terry Atkinson's departure from the *very* celebratory Fine Artz was 'prompted in no small measure by input from Bainbridge and Hurrell's practices which were… critical of 'techno-progressivism' and which were more technologically informed and profound.' (Atkinson, quoted in Morris, 1996). Their approach to technology developed into something that was ironized and sceptical of the claims to modernisation and the benefits of technology and the 'interest in the world of visual luxury' typified by Fine Artz was 'abruptly reversed… where the concern was with a

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[6] 'Our Illusions were deep. We did seriously envision the likes of Chuck Berry had provided the ideological fount for a broad oppositional cultural front which would contribute to a critique of established capitalist culture and build a set of social formations in which wealth was more equally distributed.' (Atkinson in Morris, 1996) Atkinson associated his departure with disaffirming any investment in the daydream of 'swinging London' (Atkinson, 1992: 45).

Harrison repeatedly and ironically refers to the group's 'avant-gardism', and his rejection of the work done with Fine Artz as testimony 'to the persistence of his capacity for ironic and critical reflection' (Harrison & Orton, 1982: 17) and it is likely to be this avant-gardism that Atkinson would have reflected upon and rejected, in addition to the more apparent hollowness of the promise of popular culture as emancipatory.

[7] William Wood (Wood, 1992: 44, n.49) gives an account in which he suggests that by 1966, partly through the Hurrell/Bainbridge/Atkinson connection to the abstract painters at the Slade and Caro's "New Generation" sculptors at St Martins, what was to be three-quarters of Art & Language would have already convened. William Wood suggests that they were dogged by arguments around the 'entrenched positions' of all concerned, especially regarding 'Pop' painting. As is discussed later, it is likely these were anticipatory of the arguments that were to be had at Coventry and elsewhere. Terry Atkinson confirmed that there was much interaction between them and Caro, Philip King and Peter Kardia (Atkinson, 2016 (Pers.Comm.; 1995: 87-88). He also suggested that there was actually quite a lot of support at St Martin's for their practice. Frank Martin's sculpture department at that point was incredibly open to new ideas and practices (see Westley, 2010: 28-57).

minimalist functional aesthetic' (Bainbridge's description of the Asteroid Action Seat (AL0262)).[8] As Harrison and Orton write, 'Hurrell and Bainbridge preserved an understanding of practice, of 'technique' and 'technology' more compatible with the competences of the industrial working class than with the idealisations of the would-be modernised liberal culture.' (H&O, 1982: 17) Again the embrace of technology was a way of exiting the 'look' and the discourse of modernism so dominant at that point and, not unlike Minimalism's blandness, to produce artistically uninteresting objects that, nevertheless, could engender a complex set of problems and utilise other ideas not part of the modernist (or gallerist) lexicon.

The relation between the early works of Hurrell and Bainbridge and the discussion of the problems they engender is particularly prominent within early Art-Language (A-L) publications and is the subject of much of the first edition of *Art-Language* in 1969. Bainbridge's *Crane* (1966) is discussed in the Introduction to this first issue, and his M1 is the subject of the last three essays. Bainbridge's *Crane* (Fig 4a & b on following pages) was constructed at St Martins for Camden Borough Council for children for use in a playground. As reported in the introduction the crane was discussed in terms of having an unstable ontology, with reference to the Duchampian readymade. Called a 'Made-Made' the piece, 'manufactured in a high art environment' (Atkinson, 1969: 8) was dispatched into a public, non-art environment and used by children. This instability was further exacerbated by the proposal of moving the thing between supposed art institution and playground, foregrounding the importance of institutional circumscription and descriptive text with regards to reception (the later also being implicit in the essay itself) and introducing a temporal dimension. *M1*, again an actual piece, this time a little later in 1967, is the subject of description and further critique by David Bainbridge, Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin (Atkinson, 1969: 19-32), and is much more baroque in its interpretation. Firstly, as a thought-experiment using a 'what if an alien came to earth?' scenario in order to investigate the reception of art based on an entirely empirical investigation on the part of the alien as to the meanderings of gallery-goers. The work consisted of sensors, relays or switches, and rotating 'displays' variously rigged up with relay switches which responded when the sensors detected spectator(s) within a certain boundary (in M1, 3ft). Diagrams, specifications and detailed description always accompany the piece (the diagram for Mark II of the same piece can be seen in Fig 3) and the description always redirected the possible interpretation and to a certain extent ironized its purpose, rendering it more critical. [9] Michael Baldwin's interpretation then goes one step further in abstracting the assumptions of the previous writing by interpreting some of the claims through the lens of P.F. Strawson and Peter Geach's writings on identity, theories which were put to use within the classes at Coventry College of Art and which will be discussed later in this thesis. The intention of addressing these

[9] They were also careful to credit the manufacturers (Empyrium Welding Ltd., Birmingham for the fabrication and Alan Villaweaver for the switchgear) showing again the identification more with manufacturer than the artist.

two pieces by David Bainbridge here is to show how an interpretive framework was being established around the works of Hurrell and Bainbridge. Although the written pieces came later than the initial ideas, they are to be taken as the summary of a discussion that has developed over the intervening period.

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The most significant proto-A&L exhibition of this period was the *Hardware Show*, February 1967, at the Architectural Association in London and under the invitation of Cedric Price (Seymour, 1972: 69), in which Hurrell and Bainbridge exhibited together a series of 'customized furniture and electromagnetic 'installations'' (Harrison 2001a: 261, n.30). The show could be taken to be responding to the popularity of Cybernetics within art at that time, though Charles Harrison, on several occasions intimates the distance with which Bainbridge and Hurrell wanted to keep from the attitude of much of their contemporaries:

> *It was an important character of their critique that it went not merely to the casual technical incompetence of the majority of what was vaunted as 'technological art', but that it also addressed those ideological investments and agencies by means of which art was seen as 'modern' culture in the first place.* (Harrison & Orton, 1982:17)

The 'ideological investments' mentioned here include several underlying influences on technophile art at the time, but most obviously Harrison would be referring to both the technocratic call of Harold Wilson's 'white heat of technology' and the McLuhanite enthusiasms of much art and media writing and practice. This would include such movements as the Independent Group, Archigram and Fine-Artz. David Bainbridge, very definitely 'had no sympathy with the plug-in-city ideas then prevalent at the A.A.' (Seymour, 1972: 69). As Harrison was later keen to point out, 'the legacies of Pop-Art-and-technology featured little in the Art & Language agenda' (Harrison, 2001: 261, n.30). That pop art had complex origins in Britain, and that three of the future members of A&L were exposed very directly to the ideas surrounding these groups, suggests it would be disingenuous to deny any common ground.

Cybernetics' popularity among visual artists and musicians during the sixties is most clearly evident in the 1968 show *Cybernetic Serendipity* at the ICA. Interest in cybernetics within art schools and hence within British art in general, came mainly through the inheritors of the basic design tradition[10] (more particularly the enthusiasms of Richard

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[10] For a more detailed account of how Cybernetics became popular in British art schools see (Mason in Brown et al., 2008: 245-264).

Hamilton) in the form of Roy Ascott's Groundcourse at Ealing from 1964-67, which involved teachers such as Stephen Willats and visits from cybernetics experts such as Gordon Pask (Ascott in Brown et al., 2008: 13). The common root of the interest was the accessible manner in which Norbert Weiner and W. Ross Ashby popularised the central ideas of cybernetics for the lay person. There were also seminal exhibitions held in America around the same time.[11] Much of *Cybernetic Serendipity* was technically produced by experts, scientists and early computer programmers (sometimes in partnership with artists), highlighting the fact that there was something of a divide of competences. The exhibition itself was viewed dimly by Charles Harrison describing it as 'a popular exhibition of 'Cybernetic Art' which was largely composed of technical failures and malfunctions presented as artistic successes and breakthroughs'[12] (Harrison & Orton, 1982: 17). Their functionality aside, the showiness, visual focus and ideological naivety was probably what distinguished the work of Hurrell and Bainbridge in the *Hardware Show* from those works in *Cybernetic Serendipity*. Much of the latter exhibition could only have been possible through the involvement of big corporations such as IBM and Bell Telephone Company in addition to the US Air Force, which would not have sat well with their politics.[13]

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[11] For more on Systems Art and Cybernetics in relation to Conceptual Art there are a number of writers charting its influence on Conceptual Art, such as Edward Shanken's essay 'Art in the Information Age' (In Corris, ed., 2001: 235-250), and more recently Luke Skrebowski's thesis *Systems, Contexts, Relations: and alternative Genealogy of Conceptual Art* (Skrebowski, 2009).

[12] Interestingly, he was assistant editor of the publisher of the catalogue for the show at the ICA, *Studio International*, and would have been at work editing the largely celebratory texts accompanying it. This and the previous quote from (H&O, 1982) are both in reference to the Harold Hurrell piece *The Cybernetic Artwork that Nobody Broke* (1968/69), which is taken to be an ironic explication of a fool-proof basic computer command sequence. The ideas of functionality and different frameworks for failure are found elsewhere in Hurrell's writing (Hurrell, 1970: 74-76).

[13] Many different companies and individuals were involved in Cybernetic Serendipity and indeed that this kind of work was perceived as the domain of militaristic and sinister technology companies was common among many other artists (Mason in ed. Brown et al, 2008: 246). Much of the work was a by-product of more lucrative or immediately useful projects, for a discussion on this see *White Heat, Cold Logic* (ed. Brown et al., 2008: 71-93) for an account of Gustave Metzger's opposition to the reactionary content of the show see pp.165-166 of the same collection.

Cybernetics, and systems theory met DIY car mechanics in their work (PP: 226-229), their challenge to the art studio was the work shop which has more sympathy for the industrial worker than it does for the technologist.[14] The Cybernetic or Engineering works of Bainbridge and Hurrell had a complex relationship to the various discourses, trends, and means of production that they related to. They do display a certain reverence to the work of the mechanic or the engineer, but at the same time are sceptical of the promises of industry and, subsequently do not subscribe to the value-free optimism of much that was produced under the rubric of cybernetic art. The industrial materials and look of the work was closer to the 'least objects' of minimalism; visual readings being discouraged. Technical language, moreover, was intended as way of exiting or rendering useless normal modernist art discourse, as Harrison writes, 'through the appropriation of vocabularies and technical terms, hypothetical works were strategically addressed to inquisitive but non-artistic constituencies – to the world of *Wireless World*, of logical systems, or of engineering practice' (Harrison, 2001: 56). It therefore appealed to the language and work of technology as more productive and interesting than modernist discourse, but not the interests of technology's utopian promise. The actual interests inherent in their work have been singled out as an empirical testing out of ideas of 'spectatorship' (Atkinson, 1970: 61-71; Mitchell, 1976: 74) and the constitution of a work of art (Howard in Brown et al., 2008: 326). As William Wood has suggested, 'the public, not the apparatus, became the hardware of their show'[15]; the audience response, types of feedback and conditions of learning having a central place in many of their early models. Graham Howard, then a student at Coventry, who experienced Bainbridge's M1 a year later in *Vat '68* (CCA, 1968) at the Herbert Gallery in Coventry comments that, the 'work was resolutely industrial in its form while clearly cybernetic in its interaction' (Howard in Brown et al., 2008: 326). The ironic and contested framework with which the works were presented compromised any reading endeavouring to characterise the works as not straight forward instances of

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[14] Terry Atkinson writes 'Bainbridge and Hurrell produced their works in something like a machine shop milieu with strong connotations of industrial public scrutiny and trade union organisation access to the conditions of labour' (Atkinson, 2000: 144). He also relates their work to 'what today would be called the field of cognitive science' (Atkinson, 1995: 24).

[15] In (Wood, 1992: 36). Wood's thesis has an interesting take on the work as being an ironic take on 'supra artist' called for by Misha Black to transcend the tasks of design and administration; entrepreneurial in character and made for the new technocracy (see Black in Piper (ed.), 1973: 45).

interactive art or empirical spectator research. As Harold Hurrell states regarding any comparisons with other works of a similar type, 'one respects one's analogues and their inherent limitations but one is not offering the source's attributes *per se* to be marvelled at' (Hurrell, 1970: 1970: 73). In essence, the works were as much 'theoretical objects' as those that just stayed on the page.

Terry Atkinson/Michael Baldwin

The above was one clear concern that was brought to the table at the formation of the 'loose association' that was to become the first iteration of Art & Language. This was an interest in the fundamental constraints and assumptions of an art object and its determinants, an interest in Cybernetics and 'motor shop' engineering as the site of production. The work of Michael Baldwin represented another trajectory and, with Terry Atkinson, work was developed from their explorations of American modernist, literal and minimal art and (largely) twentieth century analytical Philosophy.[16] As Thomas Crow writes, by the early-to-mid-sixties the Greenbergian idea of Modernism suffered from 'threats to it [that] seemed to multiply almost to infinity' (Crow, 1996: 111). There is no more direct articulation of the idea that this orthodoxy was being challenged than that of John Latham's 1966 group mastication ('chew in') of St Martin's College of Art Library's copy of Clement Greenberg's popular compilation *Art and Culture* (Wood, 2004: 282-3). Not all challenges were as direct, and though Atkinson and Baldwin's practice centres around the increasing contradictions and anomalies of Modernist orthodoxy, it also takes the discourse around Modernism seriously. Their work began by focussing on an approach that was developed from the attempted critiques that were being mounted within Minimalism and Anti-Form in the mid-sixties, and largely consisted of discussion and experiment.

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[16] That there were two separate concerns within two pairings of authors is the common conception of 'proto-A&L', though there were overlaps in concern. 'Art & Language at that time had built a practice in which at least two main areas (David Bainbridge's and Harold Hurrell's 'cybernetic sculptures' and Terry Atkinson's and Michael Baldwin's textual/conversation work) were in an apparently uneasy (some at that time may have said eerie) relation to the by that time established model of artistic subjectivity as that a singular and solitary individual practice' (Atkinson, 2000). Again, the uneasy relationship identified here was from the start one that was to foregrounded within art education.

Michael Baldwin's education at Coventry College of Art is described by Charles Harrison to have been beset by 'parochialism', distinctly at odds with both the university-modelled ambitions of the then brand new Dip.A.D. course and Baldwin's ambitiousness with regards to finding out about transatlantic minimal and proto-conceptual art (H&O, 1982: 18-19). The dominant attitude of the tutors and students at the art school was 'authenticity' (MB/MR: 35) with very little rational or in-depth discussion, very similar to the complaints of David Bainbridge at St Martin's (quoted above). This parochialism was mitigated somewhat however by two teachers, Harry Weinberger and George Noszlopy, who taught painting and art history respectively. Both figures came from a different tradition and were to some extent part of a different cultural milieu; émigrés from Nazi Germany and Stalinist Hungary respectively, associated with literary figures and architects (Weinberger)[17] and post-war avant-gardes and Western Marxist thinkers (Noszlopy). Harry Weinberger continued teaching at Coventry for many years and his influence on the college is discussed later in this chapter, for now it is suffice to say that he was both an interested and interesting tutor for Michael Baldwin and functioned as a protector from other tutors who were less sympathetic to Baldwin's intellectual and probably antagonistic bent. Noszlopy's career at Coventry was, however, short-lived due to political machinations.[18] He was an expert in early twentieth century avant-garde art, notably Cubism; methodologically tied to the work of Irwin Panofsky and Aby Warburg (Hicken, 2011; Noszlopy, 1969); and, probably due to his reported 'wry, sardonic attitude' (Hicken, 2011), a memorable and respected teacher. His departure was sudden and the replacement with several new Art Historians in the mode of 'Linda/Peter Murray Positivists' (MB/MR: 41) had caused Michael Baldwin and Ron Reese, due to the sudden lack of any critical debate, to stop engaging with the art history element of their course, eventually resulting in both students being excluded around Easter, 1967 (MB/MR: 41; GH: 61; H&O, 1982: 15). This was partly at the behest of Anthony Hobson, the new head

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[17] For Harry Weinberger's personal history and background see (Weinberger, 1995: BL)

[18] According to the memoirs of a student, Keith West, he resigned as a result of pressure from the city council who accused him of being a Fascist for not supporting the 1956 Soviet Military intervention into Hungarian Protests and subsequent occupation. This is seen as a testament to the pervasiveness of the Communist Party's influence in the West Midlands at the time (TGA 20121/7: 14). Michael Baldwin merely commented that 'he'd been pushed out in a funny sort of way' (MB/MR: 41).

of Art History (PP: 126), but largely instigated by David Bethel, who took a headmaster-like umbrage to the students' willingness to argue their point (Atkinson, 1992: 48).

Terry Atkinson was sacked[19] from Birmingham College of Art in 1966 and applied for a position at Coventry College of Art, under the advice of Ivor Abrahams and Michael Sandle (Atkinson, 1992; Atkinson, 2016: pers.comm.). Atkinson met Michael Baldwin, then in his second year of a Dip. A.D. in Painting, and a conversation ensued, centring upon the recently read work of Wittgenstein and the work of Robert Morris (Wood, 1992: 33; Atkinson, 1992: 46-7; 1995: 90). Atkinson then began teaching at Coventry on a part-time basis, but kept up an informal correspondence with both Michael Baldwin and Ron Reese, who were both by then discovering a great deal about American Modernism and its recent developments (MB/MR: 29-33). Reese and Baldwin had been renting two very cheap, condemned houses in Coventry to use as studio spaces, which they then sub-let to Atkinson and so the conversation became more regular (MB/MR: 31). Eventually this conversation developed into a series of collaborative works.

New York Influence

The work of Atkinson and Baldwin, more directly than that of Bainbridge and Hurrell, situated itself within the various debates around the language of Modernism and the challenges certain work was posing to that orthodoxy. The initial trips to America formed the first links to the mainstream of art activity in New York City, largely considered then to be the main trading post of contemporary western art.

Whilst at Coventry College of Art in 1966, Michael Baldwin travelled to New York, using the funds from a prize awarded for a painting submitted to '*Northern Contemporaries*', in order to gain first-hand experience of the work and engage in conversation with the artists that he had been reading about in *Artforum* and *Studio International*. With an 'introduction to Ivan Karp furnished by Robert Fraser' (H&O, 1982: 19) Baldwin was able to gain access to many of the artists then associated with the Leo Castelli gallery on the fringes of Pop and Minimalism – the two main challenges to Greenbergian Modernism at the time. Atkinson also travelled to New York, among other cities in the USA, for two months in the summer of 1967, not only to meet artists, but also to foster some kind of audience for their work (Morris, 1996). Both artists' eyes were very much on America as the site of mainstream and critical art as opposed to the parochial modernism perceived to be dominant within the British art world (heavily linked in as it was to the London art school).[20] Baldwin fulfilled his desire to meet the great and the good of the New York art scene and then some; according to Harrison he was exposed to Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol – all of whom were represented by Leo Castelli at the time. Other artists encountered were Jim Dine, Claus Oldenburg, Don Judd, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris, and James Rosenquist.[21] Don Judd's

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[20] It has been observed that Britain, having had the eclectic interests of the Independent Group et al. by the 1960s was beginning to suffer from a Greenbergian orthodoxy, just as America was beginning to shake itself free of that dogma. See (Crow, 1996: 39-104).

[21] In Harrison & Orton's account, Fred Orton also remembers a performance by Michael Baldwin in the manner of Robert Morris' 'Site' (H&O, 1982: 20; 80n18). This included Carolee Schneemann as the immobile

serious attitude, laconic style and catholic interests, according to Harrison, lived up to Baldwin's idea of a 'modern artist's' attitude but many others disappointed him in their perceived lack of coherence and intellectual ambition (H&O, 1982: 20). Baldwin also started a correspondence with Robert Smithson, who later quoted Baldwin in his *Monuments of the Passaic* (Smithson, 1967).[22]

Frank Stella's polygonal paintings made the greatest impact (as for many artists who eventually became associated with Art & Language). They appeared to be painted in order to successfully subvert Greenbergian ideas through a kind of supererogation of those principles, to the extent that medium-specificity and edge-surface relations worked against each other (H&O, 1982: 20). When Atkinson went to New York a year later he made contact with Robert Smithson, Carl Andre, Lawrence Weiner, Dan Graham and began an association with Sol Le Witt and Joseph Kosuth (Morris,1996; H&O, 1982: 21; Atkinson, 1969). He took various works by Baldwin and himself, as at this point nearly all work that interested them was being produced in New York, and they were keen to engage with the burgeoning Conceptual Art scene there. It was these trips that seeded the international connections that would be an important feature of A&L in the seventies and also provide opportunities for some of the students at Coventry School of Art and Design to gain a similar first hand exposure to the most recent art of North America.

Atkinson/Baldwin at Coventry

Atkinson had been very interested in Baldwin's student work, especially the copious amount of writing he had done, alongside 'ultra-minimal' works such as the mirror pieces of 1965 (MB/MR: 33; Atkinson, 1992: 45) and, with Terry Atkinson, the *Acid Box*

Victorine posing for Manet's Olympia as Morris did 'macho' actions, such as lift sheets of wood. In another long-lasting connection, A&L would later begin work on an opera libretto (published in A-L, 1984), to be set to music by the Red Krayola, starring the same subject matter.

[22] The quote was particularly prescient of the types of questions addressed in the Art Theory Programme: 'An English artist, Michael Baldwin, says, "It could be asked if the country does in fact change – it does not in the sense a traffic light does"' (Smithson, 1967: 51)

(1966),[23] which had begun to draw ideas from analytic philosophy. Atkinson himself was writing much more, delivering lectures and starting a science fiction novella, which remains unfinished.[24] Prompted further by his discussions with Baldwin, he fervently rejected the 'philosophical charlatanism' (Atkinson quoted in Wood, 1992: 37) of the pop-based, utopian works of Fine Artz. One important body of work by Atkinson and Baldwin during this period is a collection of 'declaration pieces' which, similarly to Bainbridge's *Crane,* are developed as a critique of nominative procedure of Duchamp (which was currently being revived by Conceptual and Neo-Dada artists at the time), but which was mobilised in order to both exhaust it and drive in a new 'intensionality'. A significant part of these texts, therefore, was a sardonic expansion *ad absurdum* of a 'dematerialised' ready-made; this is not to assume that they were not also a genuine engagement with the possibilities of theoretical entities, thought experiments and speculative works which were not, as much Conceptual art at that time was (sometimes literally), merely one-liners.

These works were increasingly extended as explorations of a given set of conditions rather than just a positing of theoretical art work, in the manner of, for example, Lawrence Weiner or Robert Barry. They were produced as type-written books, prints and published essays and therefore courting ambiguity as to their commodity-status as artworks; they were both cheaply produced, content rather than materials driven, but simultaneously featured as 'limited edition' publications, and fetishized as such in galleries (eventually). To produce typed material as artwork is not exceptional for the late 1960s,[25] but the extended essays that were produced by Atkinson/Baldwin were much more involved in an internal complexity that was lacking in the more common laconic, propositional or quasi-poetic model of the conceptual artists' book. This model of texts that explore the different considerations of different kinds of entities (be they gaseous, 'Trigger's broom'-ish,

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[23]These were produced in Coventry College of Art, see DH: 50-52. An account of these works in relation to Robert Morris can be found in (Wood, 1992: 34).

[24] *The Wildthink Album* (1966), described as 'something like, 'a styled and leisured cyber-future'' (Morris, 1996: 3). A chapter of this is held in the collection at MACBA (AL0229).

[25] As Mel Ramsden noted after submitting his book *Six Negatives* into *Language III* in the Dwan Gallery, New York in 1969: 'We thought it would be the only book in the show. It wasn't. There were at least 30...' (in H&O, 1982: 24).

environmental or paradoxical etc.) in a slim publication (a format that was 'allographic, portable and easily distributed' (A&L, 2014: 31)) became the set mode of production for Atkinson and Baldwin. This type of work, already the result of an in-depth, exploratory conversation, is most usually exemplified by works such as *Oxfordshire* (1967), *The Air Show* (1967), *Hot-Cold* and *22 Sentences on the French Army* (1967-8), and *Sunnybank* (1968) in which the object discussed is a kind of future-conditional wall that may or may not be built between two places.

The ambiguity of such works was, at their most basic level, the most remarked upon function of these early works by Atkinson/Baldwin. As Michael Baldwin wrote some years later regarding the series *'38 Paintings' (1966)*, which offered fragments of conversation and philosophical dilemmas in place of pictorial content:

> *'There was still some ambiguity – an ambiguity that persisted for some years – as to whether one was nominating as art what was referred to by the text, or offering the text itself as some sort of art in itself….This ambiguity… remains either a central dilemma in what might be called the aesthetic ontology of Conceptual Art, or an aporetic complexity vital to its cultural functioning.'*
>
> (Baldwin, Harrison, Ramsden, 1999:197)

This ambiguity was being articulated and discussed in various ways by those proponents of Conceptual Art from around 1966, but as the following accounts will attest, the British art college's ability to engage with such an aporia was found lacking. Beyond this basic ambiguity, however, the writing was also weird, the tenor and vocabulary like nothing else within Conceptual Art. Charles Harrison acknowledges later on that the 'strangeness of the style… was quite important' and in fact what was interesting about the work (Harrison, 2009: 196). The character of writing in Art & Language has obviously undergone many changes over the past 50 years, not least because of the changes in membership, but the pairing of Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin's writing appears to be a kind of stylistic exemplar for future writing within the group. It was characterised by a fierce, repetitive adherence to an argument; a tendency to sardonic asides and casual turns of phrase; and a self-conscious, fast paced and scantly referenced intertextuality.

This aspect of the development of the work of Art & Language and their students will be discussed more fully in the subsequent chapter.

Another body of work notable at this time was a series of maps, among them *Map of Itself* (1967) and *Map of Thirty Six Square Mile Surface Area of the Pacific Ocean West of Oahu* (1967) developed and exploring the logical puzzles of Lewis Carroll, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jorge Luis Borges (A&L, 2014: 112-114). These introduce another important strand that runs through A&L production, related in a distinct way to issues of representation and *seeing as* brought up by Wittgenstein and N.R. Hanson (discussed later on) and relations of representation as developed in both 'mapping' and 'indexing'. The most reproduced example of this type is the *Map Not to Indicate…* (1967) in which the list of US states that are not indicated in the map are the ones thrown up as the objects of consideration. This idea of the artwork as a testing out of the relations of observation, taxonomy and modal logic (the law of the excluded middle) form one of the bases of discussion within the teaching methods of A&L.

The basis of this work then, similarly to the exegesis of David Bainbridge's M1, was the consideration of certain artworks in an extended discussion of their properties, the relations of those properties, and what significance that could have. As MB/MR reflect on later in an exhibition catalogue: 'What we had in mind was a kind of text in which the interrogative is included along with the appropriative claim. The consequence was to considerably increase the detail of the appropriative gesture – the theoretical content that it wore on its face' (A&L, 2007: 289) This was to go beyond the extensional drawing out of possible artworks ad infinitum, but to start to make work with some intensional complexity and consideration.[26] These long essay-like works then sat uncomfortably, but crucially not invisibly, within exhibitions of Conceptual Art in the late-1960s. The texts were also housed within book-like formats, produced under the publication title *Precinct Publications,* often available as limited editions. This soon developed into the idea of a

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[26] This idea occupies A&L in many forms throughout the writings of many different members using many different terminologies. Charles Harrison's account (2001 & 2001a) especially, often contrasts intensional and extensional readings of artworks. It relates closely to a critique of the legacy of Duchamp, and the nominative/institutional definition of art promulgated and used since.

journal that would operate as a discursive platform external to an exhibition context. The original group was 'in active dialogue' (Seymour, 1972: 69), by 1966. It was, however, as editors of this journal, *Art-Language* that the first, loose conversation between Bainbridge, Hurrell, Atkinson and Baldwin formed in an ostensibly formal (but actually informal and expedient) way.

Art-Language

Art-Language (hereafter A-L) was first published in May 1969 and this first issue is different from all those subsequent to it, in that it contains a reasonably disconnected and, in artistic terms, varied set of texts. It signified the first commitment of the group to attempt a platform for a loosely organised community of authors/editors (formed under Art & Language press a year earlier) positing, critiquing, describing and theorising, and was the product of 8 months' work prior to its publication (Seymour, 1972: 69). At this point the editors of A-L's outward-looking and socialised view of art practice,[27] was becoming integrated and seen as commensurate with that of teaching and learning. The period from May 1968 to this publication marked both the formation of the group and the employment of all members within art schools. The discussion and the grouping around the journal were all thought of in terms of a learning community, a fact which had an effect on how the group developed and functioned over the next four years. The first issue is a collection of now seminal American texts: Sol LeWitt's *Sentences on Conceptual Art*; Lawrence Weiner's *Statements;* and Dan Graham's *Poem Schema*; alongside the above mentioned discussion of David Bainbridge's M1 device. It is said to have taken the 'sober form of a philosophical review' (Crow, 1996: 163)[28], reflecting the aspirations of the

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[27] This is a fundamental characterisation of all A&L related activity and a platitude in some respects. What I mean however, is that there is none of the scepticism towards a fully open community that prevails in much of the later work and, despite already trying to separate themselves out from many other conceptual practices, it is clearly stated that '[t]he editors[']… position is not at all seen by them to be one of isolation' (AL, 1.1, 1969: 1). The issue includes work that reflects the relationships that were formed with the artists in America and other possible publics.

[28] See also *Textual Art* (Taylor, 1976) where a direct comparison is made between the relatively slick look of *Art-Language* and the *Journal of Philosophy*. Conceptual Art's relationship to visual presentation has been taken up many times, see (Buchloh, 1999: 514-537) and (Colpitt in Corris, 2004: 28-49) for example.

editors, but is also a response to the preferred mode of presentation for many other conceptual and avant-garde practices. This form of journal production is significant in one simple way to their teaching practice; many of the students quickly took to producing publications. The journal also formed a space of shared reading and a research-like output, functioning as a basis for the activity within the art school.[29]

The Introduction to the first issue is often used within broader histories as a kind of statement of intent for the group's work (Godfrey, 1998: 139; Crippa, 2014: 244; Selby (ed.), 2009: 22; Harrison, 2001a: 18). It discusses in detail many of the works by early A&L pairings I have mentioned above as exemplars of a particular approach to conceptual art. It positions them as part of a set of 'projects' or 'theses' that function problematically in the spaces of 'art work' and 'art theory'. A significant phrase taken from the Introduction is: 'Suppose the following hypothesis is advanced: that this editorial, in itself an attempt to evince some outlines as to what 'conceptual art' is, is held out as a 'conceptual art' work.' (Atkinson, 1969:1) This statement, isolated from the essay, seems to have a straight forward relationship to an idea of text-as-art-work; a straight forward conceit of a self-referential art work that talks about its condition as art. However, within the rest of the introduction, this consideration is quickly dismissed as uninteresting in and of itself.

The essay discusses the proto-A&L work, discussed earlier in this chapter, in terms of their transformation of art-work reception and visual-ness into an act of reading, and the virtuality that ensues with that. It is the complex oscillation between art work, commentary, performative effect and an internal complexity that is the aim of much of the work.

The first half of the Introduction also concerns itself with the normative sense of how art products get singled out as such, and how A&Ls production to date could be read as a 'developed' sense of those normative categories. In other words, it is trying to stake out

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[29] This will be discussed in much more detail later. The editors of Art-Language would balk at the idea of their work being anything like academic research, however, and I do not suggest it represents such a neat formulation but the relationship between their activity as artists and editors did function something like that which would now be called research-led teaching.

the territory of what it meant for an artist to be concerned with the production of 'art theory' as art work. The theoretical entrenchment within writing about art associated with the Greenbergian critics and the 'inarticulate' painter or sculptor[30] working within the space carved out by such theorizing shared the common assumption as to the line of division that lay between their respective spheres of activity[31]. The production of 'Art Theory' as used in this introduction has ruined aspects of this pact between interpreter or critic and producer. The activity discussed above in the early days of proto-A&L has created space for a particular kind of artistic activity that has genuinely different concerns.[32]

The sense of this account of early A&L not only calls to attention the ontological ambiguity of the works made, but also identifies the possible work to be done within the 'language-use of the art society' and the 'support languages' of art. The 'art work' is liberated from any discrete object and used in terms of an ongoing project, identifying the work of the artist as sitting critically within all the activities of the art world. The course A&L developed at Coventry College of Art was widely known as the 'Art Theory' course. The introduction to *A-L* gives us some idea of what it meant to practice 'Art Theory' as developed by A&L in the initial years leading up to their association and collaboration. The following sections of this thesis examines how that model of work was both developed in and tried out in an educational context, and how A&Ls proposal for the Dip.A.D. in Painting threw up more issues in relation to art practice.

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[30] The word 'inarticulate' is used in many drafts of the course proposal for Coventry as the predominant stereotype/model of an art student that needed to be overcome. It is discussed more later on.

[31] C.f. *The Critical Terrain of High Modernism* (Day & Riding in Wood, 2004: 189-213). The absolute dominance of a critical figure like Clement Greenberg in *determining* art production has, arguably, never returned. The same attitude toward this division of labour, however, could be levelled towards the so-called critics of Greenbergian Modernism associated with October magazine.

[32] This model also attacked some of the holy cows of the neo-avant garde and other conceptualists, however. The introduction also addresses the group's negotiation of the then fashionable and rediscovered Marcel Duchamp as a sort of founding father of Conceptual Art. The 'Declaration Series' and 'Crane' work discussed above are held out as developments of Duchamp but that the artists in question do not follow the 'gospel' of Duchamp. As Mel Ramsden later reflects, from a New York perspective, in many ways Duchamp was undergoing a transformation into this seminal figure from a sort of minor Surrealist (MB/MR: 120-143).

Coventry College of Art after Coldstream

Coventry College of Art had been given the ability to award the Dip.A.D. in Fine Art (painting only) in 1962 after the first NCDAD visitation. By 1968 the College was also awarding Diplomas in Fine Art (Sculpture) and Graphic Design. As with many colleges of art before the Coldstream reforms, the vast majority of students were previously part time and many of those studied artisanal subjects. The division between full and part time students had come more or less after the war with the NDD and the emphasis on fine art within the college only came to the fore with the Dip.A.D., although fine art courses were run outside of the NDD system before 1962 (Herbert Museum, 1981: 32).[33] Aside from fine art the remit of the college after the Second World War was particularly varied, the provision including many art teachers courses, 'women's crafts', architecture, classes for nursery nurses, various commercial design courses (Herbert Museum, 1981: 33-4), all of which were part time. The number of part time students attending the college either on a day or evening basis before the war was 'fairly constant at around 110' but this rose sharply after the war to over 1,400 in 1954; by contrast there were only 92 full time students (Herbert Museum, 1981: 32). This is very typical of the trajectory of many colleges in England and Wales and for Coventry College of Art the Coldstream reforms meant a greater emphasis on Fine Art within a college that had hitherto largely served its surroundings as a place of varied artisanal training.

The transformation that the Coldstream reforms effected across the country was dramatic in terms of how these provisions were meted out. Over a decade the number of part-time, evening and short courses was severely reduced in those colleges ordained by the NCDAD (Piper, 1971) in order to focus on the degree equivalent courses, which increased the sense of a divide between the artisanal and the academic. The numbers of students on diploma courses was much smaller and the staff student ratio low (around 1:3 if the part-time staff are taken into account). The requirements of teaching within the 'broad' framework of fine art meant the day to day operations of art colleges also altered dramatically and the

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[33] These it seems have a heritage in the 'Art Sketch Club' set up in 1907 and developed, albeit in a particularly conservative manner, into a watercolour and still life course throughout the decades up to preparation courses taken for the RCA and Slade in the 1940s (Herbert Museum, 1981: 26-9).

role of the teachers and technicians shifted in the mid-to-late sixties. The types of students that colleges attracted was also reconfigured in that 'grant in aid' students would be able to apply to colleges anywhere in the country, whereas previously they would have attended their local art college. In Robert Medley's opinion 'it meant a loss of the local rootedness which had been a positive feature of the old national system, and of course it favoured London... at the expense of the provincial cities' (Medley, 1983: 224-225). It also meant that a different kind of quasi-market-like competition was first introduced into the deregulated, laissez-faire, system and, in the words of Robin Plummer, who was to be the Dean of Lanchester Polytechnic in 1970:

> *...at Wolverhampton we were getting something like a hundred people apply first choice... at Coventry there were six ... and that meant that the six that applied weren't the brightest bunch of students in the world, and the second choice students weren't the brightest in the world, and it was quite clear that if ... they had another six next year the NCDAD would say 'you can't run a course with that sort of calibre of students, we're going to have to close you up.'* (RP: 83)

In addition to the Slade, Royal College and Royal Academy, which were independent institutions, there was a high density of high profile colleges in the capital, which brought with it the life-style attractions associated with the London Colleges. This had an effect on the appeal of the regional colleges. There were aspects that mitigated this effect, such as the visiting and part time teachers that could travel around the country, the presence of charismatic teachers or reasonably well-known teachers already established in regional art departments, and the direct progression of students from their pre-diploma/ foundation course at their local colleges.[34] Coventry benefitted both from its proximity to London and some well-connected teachers. However, by several accounts (PP: 6 ,GH: 116, RP: 83), all judging the standard in different ways, the calibre of student at Coventry was often perceived as below par.

Coventry College of Art, the subject of the study previously mentioned by Madge & Weinberger, was seen as a college that was feeling the movements of educational reform

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[34] There was a disparity between Foundation Course completion and Dip.A.D. places (Ashwin, 1975: 101) which could also have meant that students would possibly stay on at the same college as a safe option. As discussed in the next section, the majority of future Art Theory students also did their foundation at Coventry.

and cultural change quite keenly. In their introduction to the study the authors find themselves initially trying to understand the effects of the Coldstream Reforms on how the college functioned, but they comment:

> *'one could expect to find discontinuity… as it turned out, this was not the only problem –the whole situation was problematic. To study at an art college at this period was to observe it changing under ones very eyes… a student who had decided to go in to an art college was entering a maelstrom.'* (M&W, 1973: 17)

Indeed, Coventry seemed to contain many of the opposing forces that bore down on art education in general which seemed to cause a polarised and hysterical environment within the study. In addition to this, in 1969 the college was also being amalgamated with Lanchester College of Technology and Rugby College of Engineering Technology to become Lanchester Polytechnic, something that the art colleges, the NCDAD and in particular Fine Artists did not necessarily welcome.

Polytechnicisation

The Polytechnics' most staunch defender was Eric Robinson, an advisor to the Labour Party on Higher Education during the time of their proposal by Anthony Crosland in 1966 (Dep. of Education & Science, 1966). He sees the Polytechnics as a viable, outward-looking alternative to the elitist university, which is bogged down with its own traditions. The emphasis on technology was also a priority for the Wilson government; that the polytechnics look toward training and educating a broader spectrum of society affiliates the movement with those reforms that went before concerning Colleges of Advanced Technology, Comprehensive Education and other progressive educational moves. His vision was for the Universities and Polytechnics to eventually be integrated into a comprehensive system. The cross-pollination of the different disciplines was also considered the major ambition of this new system (Robinson, 1967).

The reaction within the Art Colleges and the NCDAD to the proposal of the New Polytechnics was divided, but predominantly negative.[35] Both James Charnley (2015: 69-

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[35] Notably both Pasmore and Thubron were pro-polytechnic from an anti-elitist and pro-technological innovation perspective.

89) and Lisa Tickner's (2008: 20-31) history of Leeds and Hornsey College of Art respectively give prominent discussion to the effects of becoming part of a polytechnic. As described in the somewhat belated article by Patrick Heron, *Murder of the Art Schools* (Heron, 1971 in M&W, 1973: 266-268), the fear from the art sector was that it would challenge the 'specialness' of the art school, its 'autonomy', appealing to the idea of the individuality of the student and their work, an idea and condition that would be hampered when 'shoved' into a polytechnic.

As Coventry moved into a polytechnic there was not any obvious disquiet about the initial move into the polytechnics but the changes in administration did have effects on the character of the college and the staff employed (M&W, 1973: 266); the initial dean and head of fine art leaving suddenly after the college became incorporated and a certain period of instability arose. It was partly due to this instability that A&L could propose a radical change in the Dip. A.D. course content in the first place. As Atkinson and Baldwin recognise in their 1971 essay *Art-Teaching*, however, the relationship between the administration of the polytechnic and the teaching of fine art were yet to be tested out, and they rightly saw the division in language between the instrumental aims of the polytechnics and the humanistic appeals of the aesthetes as being the crux of the problem (Atkinson, 1971: 43).

Philosophy Seminars in Complementary Studies, Foundation Course, Summer Term, 1969.

In Chapter 2 the effect of the Bauhaus-influenced ideas of Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton on the direction of art education in England and Wales was discussed with particular attention on the 'pre-diploma' or later 'foundation' course. These programmes were, in fact, almost completely free of any direct coercion towards any particular pedagogical approach or specific content by the NCDAD, but tended to emulate the model set up by Pasmore, Thubron and Hamilton, among others, within Kings College, Newcastle and Leeds in the late fifties.[36] Completion of a foundation course was also an

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[36] As with many aspects of this period, a good concise account of the inception and development of these courses is available in (Tickner, 2008: 48-9) with specific reference to Hornsey College of Art.

essential component to getting in to any art school in England and Wales, and they functioned as both a testing out of different disciplines and a portfolio preparation for a Dip.A.D. interview. For this reason they were composed of two terms of intense activity and a third term of portfolio completion, applications and interviews, in which activity within the college was often more optional and tangential to the main area of study.

The general tenor of the Coldstream Reforms was that the colleges determine their own curriculum, therefore teaching styles on foundation courses were often ad hoc, dependent largely on the individuals that taught them and the culture of the college. Recognising that the foundation course represented the essence of the new liberalism of the art school, Robert Strand's assessment of the course recognises this dependence on the character of the tutors involved:

> *'Unlike anything that had gone before, unvalidated by any central agency, often controversial, test beds for innovation, experiment and, it must be said, the wilder idiosyncrasies of some teaching staff, they were to become a permanent and at their best an invaluable feature of art education.' (Strand, 1987: 9-10)*

With this in mind I would like to turn to Charles Madge and Barbara Weinberger's (hereafter M&W) detailed account of the foundation course at Coventry in their study *Art Students Observed* (M& W, 1973: 27-41) which began in September 1967 and covered two academic years. The account gives a vivid picture of the kind of environment, the attitudes of the students and the variety of teaching practices that were being conducted in Coventry at the time.[37] The interviews and questionnaires used for this part of the study focussed on how disruptive the course was and how that impacted upon the students. The report reveals a high propensity towards 'fine art' values at Coventry which valued authenticity over 'mannered', 'refined' or 'contrived' approaches to art. The latter aspects were to be identified and stamped out; the student was to shake off all the

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[37] This study, covering all foundation and Dip.A.D. years at Coventry College of Art, crops up sporadically in the literature on art education and is a direct descendant of the pre-war, Mass Observation Project. Because of this methodological lineage it gathers together a lot of information which would otherwise be completely inaccessible to a present day researcher. The study is vaguely anonymised, though many individuals can be identified with a bit of detective work, and Coventry is referred to as 'Midville', (a very Mass Observation-ish pseudonym). The declared duration of the study itself was initially September 1967 to the summer of 1969, however there are many postscripts referring to the following years leading up to its delayed write-up and publication in June 1973 (M&W, 1973: 262-277).

preconceptions that they had formed at school and through adolescence (M&W, 1973: 29). This is not to say there was any coherent idea of how one would display 'authenticity' in one's work and M&W note how many of the teachers disagreed with each other regarding the approach, further complicating the students' confused situation. In their responses to this confusion, the students identify 'destructiveness' as a dominant feature of their experience, and very few on the course found the experience wholly 'positive' (M&W, 1973: 84-85). The 'participant observation' aspect of the study gives us a description which conforms perfectly to some of the tropes of late twentieth century art pedagogy, and is worth quoting in full:

> *'September 25th. Group 4. Boys and girls separate naturally. The tutor tells them to make as many marks as possible with brush and black paint, starting from the least obvious way of using the brush end – sideways, etc. – without repeating each type of effect and without conscious control or intent. Hands, noses, hair are also to be used to produce marks. The sheets will then be assessed according to the impact the sheet of marks makes on the tutor. Some marks answer back, some are dull and inexpressive. The tutor asks that the intellect should not take over too soon as happens in modern fashionable painting which he deplores as dull because over intellectualised.' (M&W, 1973: 31)*

Two things are illustrated in this observation from September 1967. Firstly, the dichotomy between the setup of coercive parameters and the contrivance of extended painting techniques in which students are expected to engage in 'mark making' 'without conscious control or intent' and an assessment in which the tutor, intuitively, assesses the work according to the 'impact' they make on him. This is full of contradictions left unanswered from the students' perspective; the 'assessment' would essentially seem more or less arbitrary, and the uncertainty this produced in the students had taken its toll by the end of the year. Of those that were 'unapproved' by the tutors, many left the course, the confident students among this subset going on to do something else (M&W, 1973: 33, 36-37). The second issue, central to this thesis, is the anti-intellectual tradition of the art school, again with complex roots, which was a small part transatlantic Modernist connoisseurship, small part wacky experimentalism, but at root developed from a legacy of British aestheticism within the painting tradition. The foundation course then, was the

Coldstream effect at its purest; 'controversial test beds for innovation' at their best but divisive, 'destructive' and traumatic indoctrination at their worst.[38]

The last term of the foundation course, as already mentioned, was less structured due to the Dip.A.D. applications being already submitted. This last tem was essentially the space in early 1969 in which Michael Baldwin first introduced some of the material that would be central to the 'Art Theory' component of the Dip.A.D. the following year.[39] Terry Atkinson had been teaching at the College for two years by this point, had been given a full time position, teaching Fine Art, and had recommended Baldwin for some part time teaching, which in this case was two days per week[40] on the back of lectures he had previously given under the invitation of the then acting head of painting Harry

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[38] The response to the foundation tuition at Coventry was not entirely negative, and the Fine Art students that had survived and gone on to do a diploma, partly because of the self-selecting nature of that demographic, on the whole, felt more positive about their experience when looking back on the foundation course (M&W, 1973: 85). One of the students to go on to contribute to the Art & Language project, Philip Pilkington, remembers the foundation course as fun, not very challenging and a little silly:

> '*it was just a classic foundation because you remember foundation was supposed to cover all bases, you know, graphic design, ceramics and so you did about a few weeks of ceramics and so I spent about four or five weeks just pummelling clay and doing Bruce Naumans, you know, hand prints, because it was easy. 'There you are! Some art!' And another three weeks of clay pummelling to get the air out and another three weeks of screen printing and all that kind of stuff, before they go off to decide what you are going to do and after that it was six weeks of life, god that was interesting; life drawing, yeah.' (PP: 44)*

Another student, David Rushton, remembers being largely involved with the theatre department at this time and putting on plays (DR: 18). Within the interviews I conducted and those published within *Art Students Observed* there exists frequent reference to life drawing, which suggest it was still playing a role within the early part of the course, unlike at some colleges where it had supposedly been wiped from the agenda (see Salaman, 2008; Westley, 2015: 56-64). Life drawing, and moreover 'easel painting', as discussed later, was a contentious issue within the college, however.

[39] '*…since the space existed it was a space one could fill with a kind of conversation and with a kind of inquisitiveness which is, and that kind of inquisitiveness is inimical to the art school. What one was not was inquisitive, one was supposed to be obedient to the prevailing self-image of art in whatever way or the bit of it that this institution had taken on itself. And so the earliest moments of teaching that I did were taking advantage of that space and somehow it was raised that we would have these seminars that were on the edge of what used to be called complementary studies. And so I … had to nudge the complementary studies out and get the idea that it was somehow connected to real practice, trying to get that to leak in. There was great resistance to that thought. I mean, there was this very distinct bifurcation…*' (MB/MR: 69)

[40] '*Terry had got his feet under the table at Coventry and under his patronage and due to his efforts I was invited to do some lectures there, which then led to my being given a part time job, two days a week or something like that. Two days a week was about… twice as much as I was getting in the mill for working probably seventy hours a week.*' (MB/MR: 33)

Weinberger. In retrospect the people involved in removing Michael Baldwin from the college cited the fact that he had not finished his Dip.A.D. suggesting it was an underhand appointment (RP: 188). The appointment of friends and fellow artists within art colleges was not, however, uncommon at this time and there was a whole network of professional artists working on a part time basis throughout the colleges of Britain. The art community of the 1960s was smaller than today and jobs were more informally applied for and appointed.[41] Graham Howard, who was by this time in his first year of Dip.A.D. remembers one of the subjects of Michael Baldwin's initial lectures very clearly:

> *'Harry Weinberger invited him back to do a visiting lecture in my first year at Coventry. And I can still remember actually what the lecture was about which seems fairly amazing, it was actually about anthropomorphism and anthropocentricity in, mostly in Jackson Pollock, but really in sort of abstract painting.' (GH: 65)*

This potentially perverse-sounding topic apparently caused confusion among Howard's peers but he recalls finding the lecture interesting and clear (GH: 69).[42] Baldwin eventually, in addition to working on the foundation also started engaging students on the diploma course on an individual basis, among these was Graham Howard.[43] The model which Baldwin and Atkinson followed at this stage was loose and discursive:[44]

> *'So I thought what I could do was effectively engage in a kind of species of… hermeneutics with students really. This led to my giving, for example, evening talks to foundation students as well as the more grown-up… students, which were largely a semi-prepared stream of consciousness in which the views of the students were also, you know, asked - invited.' (MB/MR: 47)*

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[41] This is discussed further in (Crippa, 2014: 38, 238)

[42] Several years later Art & Language's earliest painting projects located the relation between Abstract Expressionism and Socialist Realism as the central problem, through portraiture; see (Harrison, 2001: 129-149*) 'On 'A Portrait of V.I. Lenin in the style of Jackson Pollock'.*

[43] Philip Pilkington, then a foundation student, also remembers some of the teaching contact with Michael Baldwin being on a more individual basis within the studio (PP: 66-68).

[44] In a note from early 1968, Barbara Reise, then also very new in the department, called 'Mr. Baldwin' a 'discussion Instructor' (TGA:786/5/6/5)

This indication of the initial form being a critical, social and interpretive open discussion anticipates the future model of a conversational practice and probably extended naturally from the discussion evolving in the studio between Atkinson, Ron Reese and Baldwin at the time. The 'semi-prepared stream of consciousness' delivery indicates that possibly much of the seminars were rehearsals and concatenations of newly read texts, interpretations and thought experiments that were ongoing within early Art-Language practice. These would possibly have left many of the students with scant room to contribute. The intention from the start however was to introduce 'inquisitiveness' in opposition to a perceived lack of intellectual curiosity within Coventry College of Art, there are a lot of references to the 'vacuum' or 'space' left by the lack of direction within Coventry at the time, and that Baldwin and Atkinson in particular wanted to fill the vacuum which was, in a way 'cheating the students' of their education (MB/MR: 75, 77, 86).[45] Later, this became a point of discussion within both *Art-Language* and *Studio International* with their opposition to 'laissez-faire' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971) art education and 'education by osmosis' (Harrison, 1972: 224) of which more will be discussed later on in this thesis.

The teaching method may have been improvisatory, but it stemmed from a body of knowledge and approaches both developed in early Art & Language discussions over the preceding years, and as a product of the expansive reading of Baldwin after leaving Coventry. This resulted in an idiosyncratic canon of texts from which ideas were drawn and discussed within the group. The reading and writing requirements at this stage were not that extensive, and David Rushton estimates they had only 'a few things to go away and read … I don't remember any of us being asked to do any writing at that stage.' (DR: 38) As well as trying to encourage a theoretical and philosophical 'inquisitiveness' the seminars were also an attempt on Michael Baldwin's part to drive theory into the studio (MB/MR: 69 see footnote 39). The seminars were philosophy-heavy, almost to the exclusion of established art histories and theory, but that this could constitute the work of the studio was an interesting proposition for both Baldwin and Atkinson. In contrast to other parts of the foundation course the openness to discussion and the 'straddling of

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[45] Most often this euphemistic 'space' or 'vacuum' was described in more matter of fact terms: *'one of the funny paradoxes about art schools. One of the reasons you could get away with things; get away with being inquisitive or you know, one's various auto-didactic trajectories in art school is that most of the teachers who worked there are completely bone idle!'* (MB/MR: 75)

the literary and the practical' (DR: 18-20) meant, for the students who committed to the short series of seminars, there was a more meaningful engagement with the idea of work and its constituent discourse than the projects that they had undergone in the earlier stages of the foundation.

The interviews I undertook were entirely with those who found the foundation seminars (of which there were at most six (PP: 42)) useful and interesting. It became quickly evident, however, that the type of interest required did not fit well with the interests of many of the other students; that the seminars were within the 'complementary studies' area, post-assessment, and therefore optional, would also have further de-incentivised the students to attend. As Rushton recalls the sessions involved 'sitting around and discussing a set subject, tutorial-type seminar set-up' and 'it might have been the case that eighteen or twenty people turned up to the first one… but it very quickly got down to less than half a dozen (DR:36) and as Baldwin admits, 'a great many students did not take to it' (MB/MR: 86). Those students who continued attending were David Rushton, Philip Pilkington, Chris Willsmore, Kevin Lole and David Tremmet and 'a few other people who were around' (DR: 34). The students that did find them interesting, however, all decided to stay on to do a diploma course at Coventry, with the assurance that they could continue this line of education (DR: 4, 18).

The seminars ran concurrent with the preparation for the first edition of Art-Language, the first five months of 1969 and, crucially the first Quinquennial Review of the Dip.A.D. in Painting, which required a renewal of intent for the overall structure of the course and a visit from the NCDAD. The interest which some students took in the seminars and the dissatisfaction in general with the complementary studies provision at Coventry meant that it was an ideal opportunity to intervene in the permissive and loose structure with a more purposive, relevant and content-heavy provision for the students. The full-time positions of Terry Atkinson and Michael Sandle, who was an influential figure among the staff at the time (DH: 26) and who recognised the potential of Michael Baldwin, meant that the theoretical provision could be continued into the following year as a complementary studies option. It was Atkinson and Baldwin's ambition, however, to make it much more a part of the mainstream studio provision of the college.

'The Quinquennial Review' and the 'Fine Art Policy Statement', May 1969.

The summer term of 1969 was the first time in which the three members of Art-Language, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson, were all teaching at Coventry College of Art.[46] Atkinson and Baldwin had begun to formulate certain ideas for a programme of study stemming from the philosophical topics brought up in the foundation course seminars of the immediately preceding months that would respond to the perceived lack of 'inquisitiveness', critical thinking and content within the current Dip.A.D. in Painting and Sculpture. This programme of study was envisaged as an ongoing, fully structured and purposive course of study for the whole three years of the

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[46] Harold Hurrell, the other central member, began teaching at Hull College of Art in 1967, but kept in regular contact with the other three at Coventry.

Diploma[47] in order to deliver a particular kind of education that would counter many of the values common within art colleges. It would also take some of the principles of recent developments in art education, especially the idea that students should be more aware of the development of their discipline, push them further into the mainstay of their education and arm it with a critical edge. This was made imaginable partly by the occurrence at the same time of a five yearly review of the curriculum (as determined by the college) by the NCDAD. Here, the ideas of Art & Language rub against and test directly the liberal values of the new system in order to radically re-imagine the activities of the art school as a place that focusses on discursive, collaborative, analytical, critical and politically aware activities and ideas that need not be expressed in art objects, but in an ongoing project of learning. This was in part moving into debates which could be seen as the proper domain of art criticism, art history, sociology and aesthetics, in addition to various types of philosophy; disciplinary and professional areas that had not been associated primarily with art college training.

Issues in Art History and Complementary Studies

Coventry College of Art started its Dip.A.D. programme in 1964 with the Fine Art (Painting) course. Since the Coldstream Report and subsequent Summerson reports and amendments, the differing ways in which the colleges had dealt with their new found freedom had surfaced. Dealing with the written element of the new course, art history and Complementary studies, was one of the issues of particular conflict. It was noted in the previous chapter that the Coldstream reforms aimed at introducing a percentage, essentially 20%, of time and assessment mark to Art History and Complementary Studies in order lift the Dip.A.D. up to the equivalent of a degree qualification. The teaching staff and infrastructure available for this part of the course, however, was an unknown quantity of a more or less unknown quality when the Dip.A.D. was first rolled out; again the report entrusted that individual colleges would be able to make the necessary adjustments, decisions and recruit suitable teachers. Much of the intentions and background of the reports and the council in respect to this new component have been

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[47] Dave Rushton remembers this in regards to the eventual course documents sent out over the summer in preparation for starting in September: 'the document we had over the summer as a reading list was more structured [and], I think, arose out of the discussion.' (DR:28)

covered in the last chapter, in this section I will look at how Coventry had developed its art history and complementary studies provision and how that became another problem within the college, which in turn invited the intervention of both Atkinson and Baldwin, and the art critic Barbara Reise. I will then look at the proposals for reform tabled at this juncture, 'the Quinquennial Review', in particular the proposed curriculum of Reise and the 'Fine Art Policy Statement' of Atkinson and Baldwin.

Complementary Studies ran throughout the foundation and Dip.A.D. courses, and departments varied considerably, dependant again on the staff and their expertise. One particularly vivid description of Brighton College of Art in the late 1960s, whose Complementary Studies department was 'one of the largest departments of its kind in England' (Morgan, 1996: 49) is that of the late Frieze critic and lecturer Stuart Morgan, who is remembered by Robin Plummer as having been a particularly lively, intelligent and well-liked lecturer (RP:206-208). His experience of stumbling into an art college job from the outside (he was researching a PhD in American Literature at the time) demarcates how different the art school was from the university, in particular in its attitude to learning. The Art History and Complementary Studies departments delivered an incredibly eclectic range of subjects; 'courses in Egyptian culture, Italian language, Scandinavian culture, mime and extra sensory perception' (Morgan, 1996: 49), made more distinct by the expected response to these courses, expressed most memorably by the head of the department: 'No one needs to know facts or pass exams. These are artists, Mr Morgan; their brains are in their fingers. They may not look as though they are listening but it all goes in and comes out again in their work' (Morgan, 1996: 49).The account is funny, caricatured and probably a little nostalgic, but it typifies a freedom and simplicity with which these departments were run.[48] It also illustrates the perceived notion of an art student with 'their brains in their fingers'; conduits of an alchemical and transformative

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[48] Similar amusing stories under the aegis of complementary studies can be found in Robin Plummer's account of his time at Wolverhampton, involving an entire chapter of Hell's Angels arriving at the college, among other things (RP: 210-214) He later went on to Brighton College of Art and his overall opinion of complementary studies was that the range was 'almost infinite really' (RP: 204). The NCDAD thought it desirable not to limit complementary studies at all, citing 'Psychology might be suitable, or sociology, or more factually Economics… regional studies, i.e. the geology, geography, history, archaeology, architecture, economics etc of their own region, …that also seems an excellent scheme' (NCDAD, 1963: TNA: DB 4/43).

process for which the input (especially in art history and complementary studies lectures) is more-or-less irrelevant.

There is an equally vivid, if very different, picture of the Complementary Studies and Art History department in *Art Students Observed*. The main difference being that the study questions the students, not the staff, about their opinion of 'Liberal Studies', as it was termed, and also of Art History and Complementary Studies separately (M&W, 1973: 202-211). Complementary Studies as such fares more favourably in the simple questionnaire responses, roughly two thirds of the students feeling positive about it.[49] The question of relevance to studio work does crop up in some of the more qualitative, lengthy responses, however (M&W, 1973:205, 206) and it is on this subject specifically that a staff-student meeting in called in June, 1969, and which was documented in the study's appendix (209-211). The main complaints the students brought to this meeting were that of a non-relation between studio work and 'Liberal Studies'[50] and a lack of stimulating subjects or teaching. It suggests at this point, the same time as the Quinquennial Review, Complementary Studies and Art History were, from the students' perspective, inadequately provided for. Within the Fine Art department in 1968-69 only 8 out of 66 students felt favourable towards their Liberal Studies lectures and seminars (M&W, 1973: 204). Some of the comment earlier in *Art Students Observed* would lead the reader to think that this is from an anti-intellectual perspective, students not wanting to learn about history of art or sociology et cetera, however, it shows the group represented in this meeting proactively advocate a more stimulating, more adventurous and more challenging provision within the Art History department in particular.

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[49] It must be noted here that the data was only drawn from students spontaneously distinguishing Complementary Studies from Art History in their answers, and so is both based on small numbers and subject to a number of inherent biases. It should also be noted that the Design History course for Graphic Design students was much more favourably received (M&W, 1973: 206)

[50] The terms here can be confusing. I am following M&W in that they use Liberal Studies to mean Art History and Complementary Studies, part of the same department. Often when asked about Complementary Studies, however, students are in effect talking about art history, as that gets most of the criticism, but as M&W point out, many of the responses are contradictory (p. 206). In terms of relevance to studio work, however, it is safe to assume that this fundamental criticism was meant across the board.

This critical viewpoint is in line with some of the criticisms discussed during the art college sit-ins of 1968 (Tickner, 2008: 47-48, 133), and some of the comments in the Summerson reports of the mid-sixties (in Ashwin, 1975: 113) and the 'Joint Report' of 1970 (NACAE/NCDAD, 1970).[51] Although the Hornsey movement was against the compulsory addition of art historical studies, largely viewed as a tokenistic addition, and much more focused on the recognition of the artisanal, the issue of relevance was what linked all criticism. As both Tickner and Summerson state, and has been stated earlier in this thesis, the provision for art history was highly staff dependant and the staff that had been introduced at Coventry seemed, from many perspectives, to be unsuitable. Robin Plummer, when looking back at his time in Coventry, views it in stark contrast to Brighton and Wolverhampton, the two other Polytechnics he has experienced, as lacking the 'calibre of staff' and having poor provision[52] (RP: 106, 110). The department was big, consisting of 11 regular staff and 5 visitors (TGA: 786/5/6/1) but the lack of relevance and lack of stimulating information seems largely to have been the result of the kind of staffing issues partly addressed in the *Joint Report* in which university-educated lecturers would find it difficult to adjust to the art college environment. Art history was largely an unreconstructed discipline at this point in time, and it seems that the attitude of many art historians at Coventry, whose specialisms were not particularly congruent with the fashions of the day, was a very traditional one. The student forum, in which several students called for a complete change in staff, and the negative comments received by M&W put into question the lecturers' ability to run the course and create a meaningful programme.[53]

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[51] 'The conception of complementary studies and historical studies in terms of subjects has sometimes led to these studies becoming too easily separated from the students' main studies and so to an unnecessary division... We see a prime objective of complementary studies as being to enable the student to understand the relationship between his own activities and the culture within which he lives as it has evolved.' (NACAE/NCDAD, 1970: para38)

[52] Coventry benefitted from a strong theatre department (RP: 148, 110), which provided one option for complementary studies. In fact other accounts of complementary studies seem to revolve around improvisation workshops and physical theatre (DH: 8; DR: 18).

[53] This data was presumably from 1968 and 1969, before any real efforts toward change became noticeable by the students.

The ex-students that I interviewed tended to be just as critical of the Liberal Studies department as those students in M&W's study, but this was expected in many ways given their involvement with A&L. Michael Baldwin, Dave Hirons and Graham Howard started their Dip.A.D. courses at Coventry College of Art in 1964, 1966 and 1967 respectively and so they have reported on the art history provision from the beginning of the Dip.A.D. to the Quinquennial Review. Tony Hobson, in particular seemed to be stymying any progressive or relevant learning within the art history department, having a 'penchant for teaching heraldry' (TGA: 786/5/6/11). Peter Webb, although liked by some students, was also another conservative figure.[54] Philip Pilkington, David Rushton and Kevin Lole all started their foundation course at Coventry in 1968, they all went on to be the strongest student advocates of the restructured Dip.A.D. programme A&L introduced. Their memories of the art history and complementary studies lecturers at Coventry were not complimentary. Philip Pilkington remembers:

> *'Oh my goodness me, what a bunch of know nothings. Neil Stair and Tony Hobson, I never came across him, I think he left.' (PP: 122) 'These people didn't seem to have any qualification for anything… I don't mean formal, but I do mean formal and informal. I mean really dumb.' (PP: 130)*

Rushton described them as 'middle career, dyed in the wool, if you like, complementary studies teachers who taught the same kind of thing, year in year out, Renaissance to whatever' (DR: Pt. 2, 66)[55] Indeed those students that wanted much more

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[54] 'Tony Hobson taught me on the foundation course, and you can't believe what he taught. He taught Heraldry! This was 1965, almost the height of British Pop art and he taught heraldry. I've still got my copious notes on heraldry.' (DH:46) for an account of Peter Webb see also (DH: 16) and West in (TGA20121/7/1).

[55] These comments are included really to emphasise how dysfunctional this side of the students' education was. Robin Plummer, who is more inclined to defend the importance of an awareness of tradition in art education, and despite being much more diplomatic, still intimates a sense of the ridiculous: 'Tony Hobson, who was the head of Art History and he was a very nice man he wrote a very good book on Waterhouse, you know was a sort of …Victorian, you know, tits and bums' (RP: 42) His book on Waterhouse was published in 1980. The students themselves were also very critical of the staff, Pete Smith remembers that:

> 'the attitude to so-called contextual studies [sic] was pretty merciless really. Certainly at Coventry… The idea of some posh, Courtauld-educated art historian telling you… what kind of history to read is not how you go about it, you know? …and the idea was that … you were in the process of becoming better educated and sharper than they were… I'm not necessarily defending it

intellectual rigour in their course were those that were drawn to the type of subject matter and teaching that was brought in by Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson in particular. It was in this environment that Terry Atkinson and Michael Sandle proposed to change the emphasis and the relation to the studio work (Appendix B1, TGA:786/5/6/6). This would in turn be a prototype for the more formal proposals submitted to the Quinquennial Review panel.

A Statement on Liberal Studies, was presumably written in early 1969, and it states a case for a structured and content-heavy Liberal Studies provision; an extended 'range of types of information and the depth to which the information is understood'. It proposes this through a restructured provision of 'cadre-courses' which develop analytical and technical skill in a 'networked system'[56]. The methodology of the proposed liberal studies teaching was as a sociological and philosophical analysis of culture, which would sharpen the students' analytical tools and increase their social awareness.

The proposal is in response to another circular within the college by the senior lecturer in design history, John Heskett, which in turn seemed to have addressed the comments of Nikolaus Pevsner in the *Sunday Times* (see Tickner, 2008: 133, n.79) suggesting that Liberal Studies makes up for the lack of intellectual challenge in studio work, 'intellectual bite' as it is referred to in the Atkinson/Sandle paper.[57] The challenge of the proposal is that there should be no false dichotomy between an intuitive, non-theorised studio activity and a dry academic lecture theatre activity. It argues that one 'side' of art college activity, when practiced at a sophisticated enough level, should largely rest upon and interlace with the other. As part of this, technical training and greater theoretical resources are all called for in order to give the students more to work with in

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now. I mean, there was a kind of arrogance and those attacks were ad hominem and they were unpleasant.' (RVB/MF/PS: 192-198).

[56] This term possibly reveals the influence of the Hornsey students' call for a Network System throughout art education (Tickner, 2008: 50-52). There is some difference in scope and ambition here, and also the degree of flexibility.

[57] Nikolaus Pevsner concern would largely have been the history of design and its provision in art colleges, a field of study which did not have the entrenched history that history of art had, and one for which there was a great deal of demand among art colleges at this time.

general. Two other notable fine points are, firstly, the statement 'The end product of an Art Activity (which may or may not be a visible object)', and, secondly, that idea that an art school is set up in order to 'make art a possibility' and that an art student is an 'open ended concept'. These introduce two central ideas as to how A&L conceived what being an artist could be expected to include and that a producer of art objects was perhaps not the most interesting ambition or role for an art student. There is little to no information as to how this proposal was received, but much of what was written specifically in relation to Liberal Studies was reproduced in the proposals to the NCDAD later that year, about which we know more of their effect (APPENDIX C).

Barbara Reise

The general studies department came across another agent of change in 1969. The department employed a young American art critic and historian, Barbara Reise (1940-1978) in the summer of 1968 with a 'carte blanche to design [a] programme relevant to students and other departments' (TGA: 786/1/9). Reise had studied painting and then gone on to study art history at Columbia University, for which she wrote on ''Primitivism' in [the] writings of Barnett Newman and the ideology of Abstract Expressionism', among many other subjects. She then went on to conduct research, whilst teaching, for a PhD in art history on 'Turner's Concept of Venice' (TGA:786/1/9/010577) and in 1966 travelled to the UK on a Fulbright Scholarship and conducted research at the Courtauld Institute. Her range of interests, historically, was wide, ranging from pre-Columbian art to Minimalism and Conceptual art, and she was personally acquainted with many of the American representatives of these movements. She was suspicious of Coventry College of Art from the start, recognising it as a divided and highly politicised place[58] but soon became a popular lecturer with the students, if not with all the staff.

The changes that Reise brought to Coventry General Studies department were essentially to introduce contemporary art to the syllabus in a meaningful way and to get

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[58] In a letter to Michael Kitson talking about her recent employment she writes 'I don't trust Bethel much more than Hobson but can always quit' (TGA786/5/6/1)

students passionate about the subject in a way that neither the more traditional-minded art historians nor the incredibly critical A&L-associated teachers, with their very specific set of concerns had been able to do. Her articles for *Studio International* (Reise, 1968) also linked her with Charles and Sandra Harrison, Peter Townsend and, in a circuitous route, back to the growing discourse around art education within that magazine, and eventually an involvement with the concerns of A&L. Her journalism and criticism fed into her lecture subjects, including lectures on the influence of Greenberg, on Immigration and Abstract Art, and on what she termed 'Minimaliststylehood'.

Her contention within Coventry College of Art was that art history, complementary studies and studio practice should become integrated, similar to the Atkinson/Sandle proposal. As a senior lecturer in art history it was more within her purview to put this into action, however, and she set about designing a 'block course' in which, over five terms issues surrounding art, from a variously psychological, historical or sociological perspective, would be dealt with. She also set about designing projects in which certain art historical tropes or artists' methods would be treated as a studio project and other writing projects that bordered more on artistic and creative writing.[59] As will be discussed later in the thesis, many of these projects dovetailed successfully into the Art Theory Programme and Barbara Reise's antagonism with A&L was predominantly healthy and productive.

The specifics of how the course ran will be discussed later on but the proposal, written just after the Quinquennial Review (APPENDIX B2), for which a diagram of a sort of *Bildung Lehrjahre* for art students in which they proceed from a solipsistic standpoint through various stages over the five terms, moving from psychological and personal concerns out through sociological concerns of the role of the artist to those concerns of natural science, language and philosophy deemed appropriate, moving ultimately toward 'thought qua thought'. This would represent a widening of their 'cosmos'. The programme clearly shows the influence of, or a congruity with Art & Language, but also more concern for, or recognition of, the adolescence of the students, drawing from slightly different schools of thought and entertaining a much freer, even poetic response. It took into account the subjective development of the young student

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[59] For examples of student essays and comments on them, see the Tate Archive (TGA:786/5/6/8).

and, judging from its visual similarity, drew some influence from Walter Gropius'
Bauhaus curriculum.

That the most significant problems occurred first of all within contextual studies
and art history were, as we have seen, partly a result of adjusting to the Coldstream
system and university educated art historians getting used to the less orthodox
atmosphere of the art school. In this respect Coventry was not unusual, but could be
considered a particularly clear example of this tension, in that two extremes became
apparent in 1969, causing the divisions to be played out directly within the submission of
the 'DAD Fine Art Policy Statement' and what could be considered its precursors
discussed above. Before we look at that proposal I would like to emphasise the point that
the proposal did not come from nowhere. There was a sustained discussion among the
staff about the inadequacies and problems of the initial five years provision for the
Dip.A.D., and a small number of staff (Sandle, Atkinson, Bainbridge, Reise, Baldwin and
Harry Weinberger, to a certain extent) also wanted to address the perceived lack of
congruity with studio practice and interesting approaches within the Liberal Studies
department programme. Liberal Studies as much as the painting studio, if not more, was
the target of the initial interventions by these teachers and that department was where
much of the antagonism continued during the short period these teachers tried to
influence the programme. Reflecting on this David Rushton states:

> *'the lecturers whose mandate was essentially ... seen as the theoretical part, these guys*
> *were the ones that were under most flak from the Art & Language people because the*
> *intellectual rigour of what they were wanting to offer was suspect, and therefore those*
> *people ... most threatened by a course that was heavily theoretical (even though the*
> *course was not seen as 'that's where the theory is that's where the practice is')...'* (DR:
> Pt.2 64)

In the initial proposal, the appeal to academic rigour written into the Dip.A.D.
was taken seriously by both the tutors and, eventually, a small set of students who had
been introduced to this 'open ended' concept of what an artist could be. Charles Harrison
suggests that the shift in educational thinking enacted by A&L at this point disabused
those students of certain Romantic assumptions regarding fine art and the accepted

cultural etiquette that came with it (H&O, 1982: 26). I now want to focus on the proposal that sought to enact this shift.

A Proposal for a New Course

In the last part of this chapter, I will look at the formal intervention of the *Fine Art Policy Statement* (APPENDIX B3) and discuss how this challenged both the culture engendered by the Coldstream report and the art schools' development in the few years that followed it, and how specifically the statement sought to deal with problems that cannot be generalised beyond Coventry College of Art. It is this 'policy statement', rather than the de facto operations of the course, that most closely relates to certain conceptions of what the course entailed and so I would also like to discuss how this formal intervention (the *Fine Art Policy Statement*) on its own is a significant pointer in the development of how A&L thought the art college could go about educating its students.

The relationship between the details of studio practice, art historical knowledge and other types of knowledge and skills required by the art student was hotly contested within certain groups of staff at Coventry College of Art. All the proposals mentioned above were an attempt to integrate historical, theoretical, philosophical study into the art students' education as something useful and explicit as opposed to a separate activity with only a mystical or intuitive relation to the production of work. In May 1969 the aforementioned 'Quinquennial Review', in which the college would be assessed on its progress over the last five years of delivering the Dip.A.D. was an opportunity for the tutors who were dissatisfied with how things were, to gain some official recognition and input into how the courses could be structured in the future. Despite the fact that there was an official proposal already drafted, by Harry Weinberger and other unidentified members of staff (RP: 77), which was submitted to the college administration in advance, a proposal by the staff associated with A&L, written by Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson, was submitted last minute to the NCDAD panel for approval.

At this point Coventry College of Art was in the process of becoming part of Lanchester Polytechnic, therefore the proposal would officially require sanction from the new Polytechnic management (RP: 79), as was the case with the former proposal. The

move on the part of Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin had meant that their 'addendum' to the Dip.A.D. proposal circumvented this new administration, and was delivered straight to the NCDAD panel, removing some possible obstacles to its acceptance. The official status of the proposed course is contentious; the approval by the NCDAD is equivocal and leaves everything to the newly appointed Dean, Ernest Hoch's 'ability to retain a sense of balance' (NCDAD, 1969: APPDNX). This reflects, ultimately, the non-interventionist, liberal nature of the board, with its remit to let the colleges determine their own curriculum (criticised as being too liberal in this instance, by Robert Strand (1987: 98)). For those at the college who did not support the new proposal, this was an illegitimate action; especially the manner in which it was submitted. Reflecting these concerns Robin Plummer, Ernest Hoch's successor, recalled 'I don't think anybody recognised the Art-Language course at all, they just ran it.' (RP: 174) The manner of the eleventh-hour submission was seen, from an administrative point of view, as something akin to being uncouth; he describes it as 'very underhand. You don't do... you don't *do* that sort of thing...' (RP: 81).[60] From the point of view of Michael Baldwin, this was necessary to try to carve out a space within studio practice to work more discursively, and the proposal was instrumental toward that goal and not much more.[61] The A&L *Fine Art Policy Statement* acted as a sharp intervention into the process of the Quinquennial Review and was not without support outside the members of Art & Language; the majority of the staff was in favour, though not all (Strand, 1987: 98). It was facilitated by Don Foster, a 'rather permissive head of department' (MB/MR: 106), on the basis of the

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[60] The lack of legitimacy was a major concern for Robin Plummer and many of the staff he spoke to when becoming Dean. It was brought up several times in the interview and some passages are worth quoting in full: 'there were two submissions, one was the official submission that had gone through the faculty board, and the other was a submission that had been made up by the Art-Language people... and of course they didn't know what the hell to do with them. And I think they went away and it was: 'we're not going to look', you know, hehe.' (RP: 5-7) In a review of *Art Students Observed* (Plummer, 1975) he mentions many of the aspects that de-legitimised the course, for example Michael Baldwin's lack of a completed Dip.A.D., Don Foster, head of Fine Art's, disciplinary transgression (he was technically a Graphic Designer). One key one was its status as an Addendum, interpreted as a 'subsidiary' to the course.

[61] He holds a dim view of the value of such documents: 'let's be clear about these proposals for courses. I mean they are not worth the paper they're written on.' (MB/MR: 99) see also following discussion in appendix. (MB/MR: 99-108)

seminars for foundation students that Atkinson and Baldwin had been conducting,[62] and had been 'engineered' by Terry Atkinson who by then held some sway within the department. That several of the foundation students (including Rushton and Pilkington) had been enthusiastic about the seminars it was thought that it would be possible to extend it into the Dip.A.D. (DR: 6).

> *'So the proposal was made as it were on the basis that …there was something de facto in the institution, and this could in some sense be made official, and in order to be made official it had to have names; it had to have subdivisions, it had to have categories, you know - it had to have a taxonomy.' (MB/MR: 106)*

The Policy Statement was therefore seen by Michael Baldwin as trying to satisfy the authorities that the programme would fit into their idea of an educational programme. Their efforts to show a coherent planned programme in effect overshadowed the original, officially-sanctioned proposal for the continuation of the studio teaching as normal; it is not mentioned in the Quinquennial Review and even Robin Plummer when asked about the initial proposal was 'sure it was actually terrible' (RP: 79).[63] In effect the bold manoeuvring of Terry Atkinson,[64] his support for Michael Baldwin, and their joint proposal of a theoretical and discursive approach to teaching at this point proved successful, in that their 'addendum' was approved, with reservations, by the panel.

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[62] Terry Atkinson was friends with Don Foster, who is mentioned many times with regards to his louche, permissive sensibility, alcoholism, love of American Modernism and culture, and eccentric behaviour. It is the consensus that the submission of the course and the staff's ability to propose such a radical change was wholly dependent on his very liberal attitude and taste for extremity. (See PP, 116; RP, 5; DR: 181; MB/MR: 106 also CCA, 1968; Atkinson, 2011, confirmed by Atkinson, 2016: pers.comm.). Michael Baldwin describes him as 'unpleasant', probably referring to his lack of sense of any responsibility to the students. The conditions under which Don Foster was head of fine art were described as a kind of chaos, and anecdotal stories abound regarding his disregard for administrative protocol and rock star behaviour. Terry Atkinson's comment that 'he was practically all social exchange' (Atkinson, 2011) gives some idea of his character, as does Michael Sandle's comment to Barbara Reise on her impending employment, describing Foster as 'the kind of hyper-thyroid person who cannot be talked to… he is unable to hold a serious conversation' (TGA:786/5/5/1).

[63] In actual fact, because these original documents have not resurfaced and the review panel did not comment on them, we have no way of knowing how terrible it was. Robin Plummer had never actually looked at them.

[64] See also (PP: 116)

Despite the incredulity and opposition of some staff, others saw this as a promising and potentially significant innovation, taking advantage of the new liberal structure of art education.[65]

Alongside the *Fine Art Policy Statement* was another proposal, related to the documents discussed above, that the general studies and art history teaching be 'integrated' with that of studio teaching. A major contributor to this proposal would have been Barbara Reise, and this probably helped to foster a sense of credibility in the overall thinking of the fine art provision and was complementary to the aims of the *Policy Statement*. The report reiterated the complaint, documented in M&W and above, that the History of Art and Complementary Studies courses were not relevant to the students and that the students preferred that the survey-like art history should be confined to foundation studies (NCDAD, 1969: 2, M&W, 1973: 207), a view with which the NCDAD were largely in agreement. I have not been able to locate this part of the submission but it is talked about briefly within the panel's response, and could largely have been based on the documents discussed earlier in this chapter by Terry Atkinson, Michael Sandle, and Barbara Reise.

The *'D.A.D. Fine Art Policy Statement'*, to give it its full name, was predominantly concerned with the lack of definition of art as a discipline and the lack of structure and content within the Dip.A.D. course:

> *'The present situation makes too many demands, because of its loose structure, on single individuals to combat apathy and mediocrity. We hope by adapting a positive attitude to the structuring of the course we can do much to overcome the myth of the inarticulate artist and concomitant fear of knowledge.'* (DRA, Policy Statement, n.p. 1969)

In their study of Coventry College of Art, 1967-1969, Madge & Weinberger dedicate a substantial section to 'Independence as Student Value' (M&W, 1973: 104-122). This addressed the problem of the (self-) identification of the fine art student as special or distinct from their peers, i.e. who do not take up fine art (both graphic design students and peers in other walks of life). A corollary of this was a tendency to focus on the idea of

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[65] A brief contemporary account of these events can be found in *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973: 207-8 and 262-3).

self-reliance and self-direction in their work, assuming an atomised culture and fiercely individualist artist. The explicit tensions born out within the educational context are best summed up in this paragraph:

> *'The two major values were an over-riding belief in the need for individual freedom and autonomy, and an equally strong belief for rational explanations and a questioning attitude. The two values were often in conflict and this contributed to the tense atmosphere on the course, and particularly to the lack of confidence in the staff shown by a majority of the students. All the students accepted and greatly appreciated the value of individual freedom… constant questioning by staff of their motives and meanings was often fiercely resented and looked upon as an unwarranted attack upon private thoughts and fantasies.'* (M&W, 1973: 43)

It was this tension that the *Policy Statement* addressed, leaning heavily on the side of 'rational explanations and a questioning attitude'. It attacked the 'laissez faire' system of education partly because it rendered students without the necessary equipment and facility to deal with the interrogation of their work, resting as it did on what was seen as their only resource - their 'private thoughts and fantasies' – and trusting the acquisition of this ability to a notion of individual development, precluding cooperation and group work. The 'apathy and mediocrity' of the course reflects more on the nature of the life-world of the students and their social relations, rather than the quality of the objects an individual would produce. It was therefore proposed that more structure and more theoretical content be introduced into the course in order to instil a more content-full, discursive first five terms that dealt with problems of language that pertain to thinking about the nature of art as an activity, linguistically circumscribed, and, ontologically and socially, as a thing with certain relations of production. Having something to discuss outside of their private thoughts and fantasies would induce a more purposive and collaborative education.

The policy statement did not detail the course content exactly, but was relatively detailed in its aims and in terms of the general areas that would be taught.[66] The course was to be

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[66] Philip Pilkington states 'I mean I think it was probably written by Mike as a kind of structure, … not a structure that you would understand it now in looking at how a curriculum could be approved. It was an

structured into two separate halves, the first five terms (i.e. the first year and two terms of the second year) would be dedicated predominantly to directed theoretical study and in the final four terms, in the words of the statement, 'it is envisaged that there will be a gradated movement towards practical studio work in the second term of the second year, a rationale of craft… After the fifth term, cadre-groups and projects will be set up to ensure the transition from close supervision to responsible autonomy we envisage in the third and final year.' (NCDAD, 1969) This relates directly to the proposed 'cadre groups' of the Atkinson/Sandle proposal mentioned above, a noted method being used by other colleges at the time (e.g. Bradford). The overall structure is clearly 'radical'[67] in the sense that the students would have to concentrate on becoming competent in handling certain ideas and traditions, many of which would be quite alien to them, before any concentration on the 'craft' of their study. The structure reflected precisely A&Ls concerns that 'handicraft' was being performed without much attention given to the supporting intellectual framework of production, which was commonly assumed to be intuitive and personal.

Another aspect of the structure proposed in the statement divided the diploma course into 5 different strands: Technos, Audio Visual, Romanticism, Epistemology and Art Theory[68] These five areas would be parallel strands throughout the first five terms and, though

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aim or a mission, as it were; I suppose you would call it that now. It was a general ethos about what it might be, but again it wouldn't be described in the way that you would talk about an ethos now in higher education.' (PP: 78) That there was a kind of structure at all is an important statement in itself, but it is a caveat that runs throughout this section that I would not wish to give the impression that the course was highly structured and the content totally determined from the start. The commonalities between the statement and present day module descriptors et cetera are close to nil.

[67] Radical in the sense that, through its terminology and focus, it opposed and wiped away an approach to art based on an ethos focused on technical classes and individual development. The structure was not radical in the sense that the 5 term/4 term split aligned pretty much with the already extant provision of projects and classes that covered the first 5 terms of the Dip.A.D. already (appdx. 1967 syllabus) with the last 4 terms left entirely to individual practice. In structure it could be considered conservative.

[68] There are several references to this structure, most notably in the initial publications regarding the recriminations towards the students in (Pilkington, Rushton, Lole, 1971: 120 – see appdx.) – with the addition of Art History and the exclusion of Audio Visual; Lynda Morris' MA thesis on the topic (in Morris, 2014: 29-50) which offers a description of each section of the course; and Charles Harrison's 'Essays on Art & Language' (Harrison, 2001: 269). It was used in the introduction to the student publication 'Statements' in which many of the essays were purported to have been produced as assignments within these components.

heavily theoretical, would not preclude object making but offered a sufficient shift in tone as to how the student would go about that object making. The intention was that Technos and Audio Visual would be the practical compliment to the historical and theoretical work undertaken in Romanticism, Epistemology and Art Theory. The *Policy Statement* is not clear on the exact content of each strand of the course; Philip Pilkington does remember these parts within the course (PP: 118) but Rushton also remembers this structure breaking down quite quickly (DR: Pt. 2 14-16). With the caveat that most of the interviewees memories of these components were partial at best, I will look at some descriptions of how they actually functioned in the first year of the course in the following chapter.

The study texts that were proposed in the first five terms corresponded exactly to those that members of Art & Language had been discovering and using over the preceding few years, with an emphasis on the philosophy of language. The appendix to the statement states:

> *'In order to deal with the information that we will make available a method of analysis of language (in its widest sense) will be implemented to deal with first principles of formal routine for abstraction/concretisation and techniques for metaphor and analogue i.e. the introduction to category systems and analytic vocabulary; and examination of semantic modes and syntactical structures.'* (DRA, 1969: np)

The analysis of language, more than any other activity, was believed to offer a way out of the otherwise ineluctable conditions of the dual mysticism of Modernism and entrenched art school attitudinal habits. This is a significant factor of all early A&L writing and the main resource that was brought to bear upon this problem was that of linguistic philosophy, logical positivism, following Rudolf Carnap and Bertrand Russell et al. in their assessment of philosophical method, language and the frameworks of philosophical problems in order to rid their work of the insidious influence of Romanticism and Metaphysics. It is this aspect that seemed most out of place in an art school and one that contained the possibility of breaking the entrenched Romantic language and the attendant assumptions seen to pervade art education. It was also seen as a tool kit that

would be useful to all students as an aid to more general critical thinking - something which was also seen as lacking.

The name for one section, Romanticism, which was a large part of what was to be taught by Michael Baldwin, was chosen in a semi-ironic reference to Hegel, whose philosophy did not actually appear very much on the course, but it specifically brought to mind his critique of Romanticism and his subordination and dissolving of art into philosophy.[69] Romanticism itself was looked at, and the material for the course often paraphrased from Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (Russell, 1946: 701-818), taking Rousseau as a starting point. As with Russell, the programme was to examine the legacy of the Romantic tradition and how it can be found as surviving in much of the pseudo-problems of later philosophy well into the twentieth century. Though not couched in the same political trajectory as Russell did, who was writing during the Second World War, it charted the same divisions and set up the same contrast between the insidious ego-driven philosophy of the Romantics and the elucidating, emancipatory potential of rational analysis. Linguistic philosophy and logical analysis were but part of the range of topics covered here and the nature of the different types of ideas and their manifestations in the rolling out of the programme are discussed in the next chapter. As stated above, much of the subdivisions and course rationales were instrumental in trying to reassure the authorities of the validity of the course, but much of the terminology used, and the way topics were framed clearly belied any attempt to disguise the antipathy towards art education as an institution which, no doubt, sat uncomfortably with many in the panel.

One thing that is central to the accounts of Art & Language's presence in art schools for many involved or affected by it is its legitimacy; the policy statement is clearly a bid for a sense of *de jure* legitimacy on the basis of the *de facto* activities mentioned above. Any legitimation conferred on the programme by the NCDAD was qualified by the council's liberal, 'laissez faire' approach. That the art college could determine its own curriculum would mean the hierarchy of the college of art, in particular the requirements of the new polytechnic structure, would eventually hold greater authority. Nevertheless, these institutions were still deferential to the NACAE and NCDAD for guidance and approval.

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[69] This is infused into both Hegel's aesthetics and phenomenology, but much has been written on extracting Hegel's relevance to the condition of Modern and Contemporary art; especially relevant are those writings of Arthur Danto (Danto, 1999) and Peter Osborne (Osborne, 2011). See also (MB/MR: 108)

In light of the intentions and the contents of the *Policy Statement*, 'getting it past the authorities' would be both a challenge and a significant coup when one considers the members of the panel were representatives of the attitudes the proposal aimed to criticise. Indeed, Robert Strand reflected later on that 'it appears to have been the one case in which the Council's otherwise sensible and liberal approach to new developments could be seriously faulted' (Strand, 1987: 98). Looking it from the other side it shows that the proposal was a good test of the liberal notions of the NCDAD, revealing its hidden assumptions, and questioning its ability to administer such an inchoate and protean institution as art education. The panel included Peter Murray, a traditional (in A&L speak 'Taine-like'[70]) art historian; Edward Pullee, chief officer of the NCDAD, principle of Leicester College of Art and instrumental in the original Dip.A.D. assessment; Morris Kestelman, head of Painting and Sculpture at the Central School of Art; and Robert Strand, among others. All were senior members of the NCDAD and long standing professionals within art education. Their review of the college is on the whole positive, albeit with the guarded, neutral tone of a report (see Appendix C) betraying both interest and concern in equal measure.[71] The report paraphrases much of what is in the policy statement itself. It describes 'two vital proposals for changes… which will have considerable effect on the courses' (NCDAD, 1969: 2). Indeed the reception of the panel to the environment of the college is an interesting comparison with the M&W study, which focused on the lack of enthusiasm. The staff are 'almost all young with a keen outlook and enthusiasm' (NCDAD, 1969:1) within 'an atmosphere of frankness among both staff and students, which is indicative of generally good morale' (NCDAD, 1969:5) and 'students… of excellent calibre, intelligent, well-motivated and articulate… and the impression gained was of a healthy ferment of ideas.' (NCDAD, 1969: 6). Robert Strand covers the reception of the *Policy Statement* in some detail and reveals that the panel had no knowledge that the *Policy Statement* had not been approved by the academic board of the polytechnic and that at that time (i.e. in the wake of the sit-ins of 1968) the benefit of the doubt would have been given, in spite of many reservations, because the panel would be 'anxious… not to appear reactionary and unreceptive to new thinking' (Strand, 1987:97).

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[70] (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971: 26)

[71] The reports held in the NCDAD archives were all marked confidential, so we can assume that they were not read by the staff at Lanchester Polytechnic.

This is the most plausible explanation as to why the panel approved the proposed programme as the report is repeatedly charitable to the proposal and overly trusting of the staff. This extended to the apparent weirdness of the proposal itself:

> *Members of the board found it difficult to assess the likely outcome of these changes as their formulation has only just been completed. Part of the policy statement presented was so turgidly expresses as to be almost incomprehensible and in this form appeared very pretentious. However, after discussion, it was apparent there is much sincere and anxious thought behind it, and that the phraseology, though unfortunate, is probably the result of haste.* (NCDAD, 1969:3)

The writing and terminology appeared 'pretentious', 'turgid' and hasty, despite Atkinson and Baldwin's attempt to tailor the proposal to the review panel. The idiosyncrasy and sarcastic tone of Baldwin/Atkinson writing was not suppressed enough, it seems, to have been acceptable as an official proposal; one of the many examples of a clash of semantic worlds. What is apparent, however, is the charity with which the board view the proposal; expressing concern but never wanting to condemn.

The main problem the panel had with the proposals' content was largely with a perceived lack of balance. The reports reservations were that the proposals for integration of studio teaching and 'liberal studies' had been given 'insufficient thought', and it expressed concern regarding such a dramatic shift. This is maybe unsurprising given that, within the very liberal structure, the one reiterated stipulation of the Coldstream reforms is the 80:20 division between studio and 'academic' studies - the important word here being *division*. In addition to the apparent hastiness of the proposal, concerns were expressed regarding the work-load, the 'over-crowding' of the programme, and the complexity of the subject matter proposed for study. It states, 'it is open to doubt whether Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* can be read with profit in the third term of the first year as has been proposed, even by a student reading Honours Philosophy.' (NCDAD, 1969: 5) That there is was course on Epistemology struck the panel as too taxing for art students (NCDAD, 1969: 3) and that in general, the amount of work required would take up time that should be dedicated to 'studio work'. The nature of the work was seen as overly scientific, which would cause two problems. Firstly, the teachers

wouldn't be able to teach such analytic and scientific stuff effectively and secondly, it would 'damp the spark of creative invention' (NCDAD, 1969: 4). At no point did the panel really acknowledge that the course of study described would actually constitute 'studio work', worrying as they did that the courses structure would mean they would not ' have adequate opportunity to create a sufficient body of work in the three year period' (NCDAD, 1969: 3). The work involved – reading, discussing and writing – was considered by A&L to constitute an activity proper to a group of art students and teachers and would constitute a 'body of work'. This is an idea that just did not signify as a possibility to the panel and was a premonition of the putative reasoning behind the curtailment of the course: the lack of product at the end.[72]

Summary

Art & Language as a group emerged as a discursive entity in the mid-to-late sixties through different trajectories, and within different art schools. The first part of this chapter sought to account for their early works within the background of their art education, which was largely under the auspices of Greenbergian Modernism and British Pop Art. Their critical position towards Cybernetic Art, Pop Art and late Modernism and with the rhetoric around such movements led to a common interest in critically engaging with the object as circumscribed by language; both their own and other artists'. In their various trajectories through art schools, we see, as with much to do with Art & Language's history, the development of a position *via negativa* to what the members experienced within the various art college milieu. Their formation as a group, it must be reiterated, was neither neat nor some kind of 'meeting of minds' and many different interests and emphases were apparent from the start.

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[72] A vivid anecdotal illustration of this impasse came from Terry Atkinson who was present when the board made their visit. A member of the board asked him what would happen if a student just wanted to paint flowers, to which Atkinson replied that they would not be accepted on the course. This apparently bewildered the panel member, presumably under the assumption that a good flower painter should be accepted on any fine art course, no matter the emphasis (Atkinson, 2016: Pers. Comm.). It was clearly the intention of Atkinson to develop a course that would attract a certain type of artist which would not include traditional painting. Atkinson's argument must have been persuasive, however, as the potential of a specialist course is one of the positive aspects highlighted in the NCDAD's review of the course proposal (Appendix C).Further complaints of this nature can be found when addressing the NCDAD/NACAE joint report in (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971: 30). As is discussed in the next chapter, the students already accepted on their portfolios for that year included some flower painters.

Along-side this account of Art & Language, I also looked at the effect of the Coldstream Reforms on Coventry College of Art, its environment and the tensions that were produced. Later on in this thesis I will look at other art colleges, but Coventry is symptomatic of the tension that A&L articulated between the various values of the art college which had been challenged and reordered to greater and lesser extents with the 1960 reforms. The members of A&L at Coventry served as a catalyst for a certain articulation of dissatisfaction within the college of art that eventually became the basis for a number of proposals. In addition to this negative critique, they had begun to influence the teaching of certain aspects of the foundation course and take on board certain students that showed a tendency towards the production of works relating to Conceptual Art and an interest in philosophy. The staff at Coventry were a mixture of extremes: Art Historians who had come from very specialist and traditional Courtauld (or Courtauld-like) training; craftspeople concerned predominantly with the technical aspects of their work, who had often come from the NDD system; Modernist painters who had deeply held aesthetic principles and patrician attitudes, often high-flying Royal College of Art graduates; and vociferous conceptual artists who sought to challenge all of these positions. The effects of the Coldstream Reforms, the ensuing Polytechnic amalgamations and more generally the crises in Modernism, with its various defections, were felt strongly within the art colleges in England and Wales. One was a total breaking-apart of administrative structure for art and design, with a hitherto unknown emphasis on the creative autonomy of fine art, the other was a fracturing of the narrow principles that had guided the mainstream of such disciplines.

The Quinquennial Review was a point where those with the ideas for reform within Coventry College of Art could make a bid for legitimacy and, because of the liberal remit of the NCDAD panel and the shrewd manoeuvrings of Terry Atkinson, a completely new structure for Dip.A.D Fine Art was approved by the NCDAD visiting board. This board represented precisely the type of cultural gatekeeper that Art & Language sought to disenfranchise and so the approval of the establishment of the course would have been seen as a real coup (or 'palace revolution' as Robert Strand terms it (Strand, 1987: 98)). The establishment of such a programme with its focus on structured discourse around topics not necessarily directly concerned with art, but in which a sense of group discovery and learning is integrated with a more focussed set of projects was a dramatic shift from a

programme that, apart from setting the occasional project, contained almost no explicit theoretical material and was directed by a sense of finding a stylistic authenticity and individuality in the student product. The radical nature of the course proposal was not only that it denigrated object making to just one component of the course, or that it was theoretically highly prescriptive and structured, but also, that it was opposed to and cut through the fundamental precepts, language and assumptions of British, Modernist art education.

In the next chapter I will look at how the Art Theory Programme operated for the first year and then how it eventually developed, after its formal disassembly, into a student led operation of auto-didacticism and ad hoc learning. I will also look at how two other courses at Hull and Newport colleges of art ran alongside that at Coventry and the differences between them. This will then lead on to a discussion of the immediate shifts back to normal art teaching after the short-lived courses crumbled, and the immediate reputation and effects of the Art Theory Programmes at both Hull and Coventry.

CHAPTER 4

The Art Theory Programme

Epistemology Romanticism Art Theory Audio-Visual Technos

So far we have been concerned with a pre-history of A&Ls formal involvement in art education. The documents examined at the end of the last chapter show the intention and the ethos of the proposed restructure of the Dip.A.D. in Fine Art and the context in which it was approved. This chapter deals with how those intentions were carried out. It looks at how the structure outlined in the *Fine Art Policy Statement* initially functioned on the ground, the details of what was studied, and considers the day-to-day activities of the staff and the students in the college. The first part will look at the first two years, when the programme is considered to have properly functioned. Here it examines how the topics were covered, the different facets of the students' education and their varying reactions to it, and how the college adapted to the new syllabus. I will also look at how the Art History and General Studies department engaged with the Art Theory Programme, after the suggestion by the student forum, various circulars, and in the *Fine Art Policy Statement* for their absorption of the department into the studios. This will also examine how they, along with other departments besides Fine Art, continued to function otherwise and alongside it.

This chapter also looks at the Art Theory Programme's increasingly precarious position within the art college in contradistinction to both A&L and the course gaining a greater reputation, through producing publications and other activities stretching beyond the college walls to other art colleges, galleries and institutions. In particular it focuses on Hull College of Art and Newport College of Art whose students, in very different ways, felt the effect of A&L's teaching from 1969 onwards through various networks of students, tutors and publications. The chapter then goes on to examine the various ways the nature of the Art Theory Programme changed until its disassembly between 1971 and 1973, through various manoeuvres on the part of the newly formed Polytechnic administration to remove the influence of Art & Language from the Fine Art department. In the final section this chapter will look at the aftermath of the closure of the course, reflect on why it was closed, and its immediate effect.

What the *Fine Art Policy Statement* proposed was dramatically different from what an average art student would have expected to encounter on a Dip.A.D. course in several ways. There were many examples of radical departures from the traditional drawing, painting and sculpture attitude in isolated pockets across the UK and abroad,[1] but the particularly theoretical nature of the programme on offer at Coventry in 1969 signified such a break with the usual operation of an art school, that it would have been completely unexpected by many of the students arriving in that autumn term. This posed a problem from the start and, as a quorum of staff able to teach the proposed curriculum was unlikely to be achieved, the tentative approval of the course from the NCDAD panel did not really give it the full legitimacy it needed.

One set of students that had been privy to the upcoming curriculum, however, were those that had been on the foundation course at Coventry, especially those that had attended all, or most of Michael Baldwin's seminar sessions. Among these were Kevin Lole, Chris Willsmore, Philip Pilkington, David Rushton, Susan Beeby, David Tremmet and Graham Mileson[2] (see DR: 18, 34; Rushton & Pilkington, ed., 1970: 4). Attendance figures at the art theory seminars however decreased, from initially nearly the whole first year fine art students attending, which was around 20, to only between 4 and 8 students continuing throughout the year (DR: 34; MB/MR: 86). This resulted in two distinct routes through the Dip.A.D. programme; the first involved a traditional studio programme for painting, drawing and sculpture, and the second constituted those that followed the Art Theory Programme. The Fine Art Dip.A.D. was therefore split, with the Art Theory Programme functioning as a course-within-a-course.[3]

This state of affairs could have been brought about by a 'working party under the Head of Foundation Studies to draft a revised fine art course' (Plummer, 1975: 60), which could

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[1] Some of these instances can be found in the account of the development of the British art school in Chapter 2, more detailed information on radical courses and pedagogical approaches can be found in (Crippa, 2014; Morris, 1973; Mullholland, 2011; Tickner, 2008; Allen, ed.: 2011; Llewellyn (ed.), 2015; Coyne, 2010)

[2] Two other students, already in their second year, who would also benefit from the teaching and exposure to Art & Language ideas were Graham Howard and Alan Villaweaver (GH: 2).

[3] This is not to say that there were not students who 'dipped in' to elements of the programme as some elements ran like the aforementioned 'cadre courses' (see previous chapter).

have provided the non-theory inclined students with the semblance of a course structure.[4] Robin Plummer, when discussing his view of how the course was accepted into the Dip.A.D. programme, insisted that it was only a 'subsidiary option' and because the NCDAD did not release their report 'considerable friction' between staff arose (Plummer, 1975: 59). Unfortunately the results of this working party haven't surfaced, but this issue is one of several that arose when these considerable frictions came to a head and will be expanded on later on in this thesis.

That the first intake was, therefore, largely a group of unsuspecting students, who had not intended to enrol on such a theoretically-orientated course, which to David Rushton's mind was the cause of many of the subsequent problems:

> *'…those students who'd applied to Coventry… would have already applied on the basis of … their work being accepted, i.e. their portfolio. And their portfolio would have included no essays on Bertrand Russell or anything like that, why would it? So the implicit contract that got students into Coventry, I think, was faulty, … It had a structural fault which was that large numbers of people didn't sign up to it and felt that they didn't need to [do it] as much as we **did** sign up to it and felt that we should continue.'* (DR:44)

So the manner in which the course was instigated, as a kind of coup, carried with it the problem that, with no warning of such a radical change in direction, the staff could not interview prospective students (which would have happened before the Quinquennial review) with such a curriculum in mind. This was a test of the flexibility of such a liberal and college-determined model of public art education, but there was space, resources and time for this to function at first with a grey-scale of students and teachers: the fully committed, the curious drop-in attendees and the completely opposed.

The Art Theory Programme is usually described as consisting of five sections (Audio Visual, Technos, Epistemology, Romanticism and Art Theory); the 'taxonomy' of the course which was partially to satisfy the NCDAD and Dean of the College (MB/MR: 106). Many of the existing staff compliment were employed in teaching on one of the five

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[4] Reference to this working party is obliquely made in a letter written after the course had been dismantled. The results of this working party however, were seen merely as the addition of the cautionary note in the NCDAD's report (Appendix C) which hardly amounts to a rewrite of the course.

components of the Art Theory Programme. Other than the members of A&L (Atkinson, Bainbridge and Baldwin) the tutors Dave Hirons, John Mitchell, Andrea Moering, Steve Furlonger, Brian Love, Tony Hepburn, Ronnie Reese, Stuart Knight and Donald Mears all contributed to various components of the programme (PP: 30; MB/MR: 156; DH:184). The more practically orientated tutors could teach either on the Technos component or the Audio-Visual, both of which were seen as the theory-laden making components of the course. In addition to this, in the first year, the art historian Barbara Reise did much to engage with the course from within the (supposedly now integrated) General Studies department, often engaging the students in projects which both dovetailed into and challenged those seminars held by A&L. People in disciplines that were mostly unaffected by the new proposals, such as printmaking, continued offering their facilities as normal (MB/MR: 101, 162). With this situation in mind I want to first of all look at the details of the A&L programme and what it offered for those students that availed themselves of it in the first year.

A member of the first cohort of students, David Rushton, remembers the structure being quite loose and not really applying from early on in the life of the programme (DR, PT2, 14-15) and, from his perspective as a student, doesn't remember too much distinction between the five components. Philip Pilkington does, however, remember these components as being distinct and remembers different staff teaching different projects and components (PP: 118). Despite this apparent contradiction, there is some information as to how this structure functioned at least in the first two terms.[5] A near contemporary account by Lynda Morris uses the structure to describe the course contents in her MA thesis (Morris, 1973, in Morris, 2014: 49-50), and Elena Crippa uses this as the basis for expanding it into an outline of the curriculum in her PhD thesis (2014: 248-253).[6] The following section is indebted to the research behind both of these theses.

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[5] One piece of information that gives a tangible sense of a real official structure is a timetable. A glimpse of this is recorded within the diaries of Barbara Reise, from the 26th of January 1970 she notes down the classes in 'Theory of Art' on Tuesday and Thursday, Audio Visual on Wednesdays (TATE:786/5/6/8).

[6] Lynda Morris errs on the side of being a little too keen to attribute to the 'Art Theory Course' a well-established programme, which I would speculate is due to its proximity in time, the injustice of its closure being fresh in her mind. Elena Crippa's description picks up on one or two of the errors in her reporting of the various components. Judging by her recent book, *Genuine Conceptualism*, in which her diary entries and thesis are published, the information for this part of her thesis would have been gathered from Pilkington

Epistemology

The course that caused the NCDAD the most concern, considered in their report as 'fearfully ambitious and would tax most art students excessively' (NCDAD, 1969: 3), was the course titled Epistemology. Envisaged for two hours per week, it consisted of a seminar discussion and a smaller group tutorial in which a student paper would be read. The reading list attached to the course (Appendix D2) gives some idea of the scope of the first term, which in the first instance looked at variations of, and positions on, induction and causation, and then covered other aspects of the problem of knowledge. The natural starting point was taken from the 18th Century Empiricists, initially David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, but also Berkeley and Locke, and then to move on to contemporary discussion of the topic, largely within the domain of the logical positivists and the philosophy of science. The reading list significantly included much of N.R. Hanson's *Patterns of Discovery* and R.B. Braithwaite's *Scientific Explanation* alongside the Stephen Toulmin's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (see discussion in next section). It contained other standard and popular introductions, such as John Hosper's *Philosophical Analysis* of the type one would get in an undergraduate course on philosophy, along with P.F. Strawson's *Introduction to Logical Theory* and Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*, all of which contain various short introductions to induction. Different chapters from these same texts are then cited late on in the term for the sessions on 'Determinism and Scientific Laws' and 'Logic and Mathematics' (Appendix D2), focussing on deductive logic, rules of logic and different ideas of 'necessary', 'innate' or a priori knowledge, this time drawing from Kant[7] and the Idealist tradition. The following terms were intended to be equally busy: the second term covering questions of the external world (again proceeding largely from Berkeley and Locke) and philosophy of

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and Rushton (Morris, 2014: 1), although she has also informed me that it also came from conversations with Terry Atkinson and visits to Coventry. Similar sources are used in both Elena Crippa's and this thesis. In general the confusion around many details within the course is partly symptomatic of the lack of any detailed documentation of the content and practice of the programme (a problem which is negotiated unevenly throughout this thesis) and partly because the Art Theory Programme was undoubtedly quite off the cuff much of the time.

[7] Kant seems to have featured slightly more than the reading list betrays; Peter Smiths remembers an essay set on the Categorical Imperative (PS: 17)and possibly would also have come up in relation to Greenberg.

mind, focussing on the work of John Wisdom; the third and final term looking at the Verification Principle through various logical positivist philosophers, then looking at theories of truth and on to knowledge of universals.

It was, I imagine, not dissimilar to a first year philosophy course.[8] The course was mostly taught by Donald Mears, who was a philosophy graduate from Birmingham University and had been employed in the 'General Studies' department at the college since 1965. He had only graduated a few years earlier and it is likely that he drew directly from his own undergraduate course material. The delivery was very much straight philosophy, less discursive than other sections, and also less idiosyncratic in the material it covered (Appendix D2; MB/MR: 156). The ambitious reading lists and lecture programme was not implemented thoroughly, however. According to Philip Pilkington in an interview with Elena Crippa (in Crippa, 2014: 250) it consisted of a basic explanation of syllogistic logic, a close examination of Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* and anecdotal information on other famous philosophers.[9] In its delivery it did not fulfil the ambitions set out in the course material in many ways, but the performative gesture of redefining the language and concerns of an introductory course was successful in radically undermining any sense of pre-theoretical or non-critical art activity.[10]

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[8] I did not look at any 1960s philosophy course handbooks but, as courses are much more open about their contents today, I did compare it with some 2015 courses, all of which, despite obviously including more up-to-date references, contained the same central themes and also recommended the preliminary reading of *The Problems of Philosophy*.

[9] The structure of the course does relate closely to that of Russell's book. It also cites every chapter in the reading list, more than any other text, often taking the themes directly from it. This is not necessarily a criticism. Pilkington described the seminars in the interview I conducted as 'hilarious' (PP: 118), perhaps because of the anecdotes. These somewhat disparaging views are the perspective of the most conversant and advanced students on the course and it may have had more educative value for others.

[10] When referring to the course in Epistemology, Mel Ramsden, though not involved in the course, gives a good account of the effect that was intended by such a course:

> MR: *Reading lists, right? … Having people read, having students read, certain philosophical works, whether it's Rudolf Carnap or Wittgenstein or whatever, and having things called Epistemology was starting to move the language away from the traditional and comfortable artistic terminology, right? And that was threatening, and still is. You still have people going round saying, 'oh that is beautiful, there's real beauty in that!' Yeah but, 'Epistemology', and what are you talking about? … which is always one of the most interesting aspects of Art-Language is that suddenly there was this philosophical discussion…*
> MB: *A shift of cognitive style in a way. (MB/MR: 109-110)*

Nevertheless, the reading list was ambitious, but it was also precise and helpful, directing the student to relevant passages that are both quite accessible and to the point. The three three-month terms of two hours per week were probably over-crowded, having to cover so many fundamental precepts of philosophy in such a short amount of time, and with students who would probably not have much background knowledge with which to make sense of the texts. The point of the course was not really rote learning however, but, perhaps obviously, to look at how epistemic validity can be reached in different ways and to compare and assess these various positions. It would have had a very close relationship with some of the more immediate questions being asked in other parts of the course. Lynda Morris describes the purpose of this section of the course:

> *'the value of this section would be to discuss the nature of that questioning as a separate subject in its own right…Epistemology was intended to develop the students' ability to argue, prove and reject precisely those points which appeared otherwise accommodated by art theory'* (Morris, 1973/2014: 50)

The content of the intended component, and to a certain extent some of the material that was probably delivered on logic and scientific reasoning, would have functioned partly in this way; arming the student with the basic tools of thinking and articulating in a precise manner. Much is the aim with many first year philosophy courses.[11] It would also, partly as a corollary of these thinking tools, have introduced a critical attitude towards simplistic assumptions that could have been extended to questioning the validity of 'visuality' as the fundamental and unquestionable bedrock of an artist's practice[12]. The entire programme of study would have led to a discussion on the inadequacy of intuitive assumptions that are drawn from experience.

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[11] One can compare it with the benchmarking standards of such a course (QAA, 2015: 9-11) in which these various skills are expected. It is also worth noting here that, while a fundamental aspect of many disciplines such as Natural Sciences and Law, this document recognises that philosophy *enquires* into 'literature and the arts' but does not 'underpin' it as a discipline.

[12] This view is encouraged by the inclusion of texts such as Hanson's *Patterns of Discovery* (Hanson, 1958/2010) within this section of the course regarding the theory-laden nature of observation and, by extension, looking at art.

Within this discussion on the Epistemology component I would like to take the opportunity to discuss other aspects of the philosophy of science which were central to their teaching and discussion in general. In particular to expand on Karl Popper's rejection of induction, which isn't prominent within the Epistemology document, but was an important early influence on A&L, and Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* which, while dealing with slightly different issues to those above, was of central importance to A&L and their students from very early on (H&O, 1982: 21).

The influence of the Philosophy of Science

Charles Harrison (H&O, 1982: 21) states that 'the Philosophy of Science generally offered more epistemologically adequate characterisations of theoretical and practical crisis than the Philosophy or History of Art'. Indeed, the philosophy of science as a descriptive language was one way of counteracting the literary and humanistic language of art history and even worse the intuitive and anti-theoretical language of the art school. In addition to the material in the intended course on epistemology, the then relatively new and exciting debates around the philosophy of science were eagerly discussed. All the members of A&L were familiar with the ideas of Karl Popper on refutation and falsifiability, expounded most comprehensively in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Popper, 1959/2002)[13] and *Conjectures and Refutations* (Popper, 1963/1999). They were particularly interested in the account and development of these ideas within the work of Imre Lakatos (Lakatos & Musgrave (eds.), 1970) with regards to the function of the research programme (see later section). If these ideas were convincing in terms of their methods and epistemic claims, then the broader historical concerns of Thomas Kuhn's challenge to the related, but distinct, idea that science is merely an 'ever growing stockpile' of facts and theories and the result of a 'piecemeal process' (Kuhn, 1996: 1-2) offered something directly applicable to the normative functions of art and how they are constituted. Indeed, several of the concepts from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962/1996) were utilised explicitly in both A&L and student essays and can be seen as more generally influential from around 1970 onwards (see note 18).

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[13] This is the date of the first English edition. To give some idea of how seasoned the ideas were in the late sixties it is worth noting *Logik Der Forschung* was first published in 1934.

Firstly, the characterisation of scientific development as at least partly determined by discursive activity (Kuhn, 1962/1996: 94) made it much more analogous to art's almost entirely discursive and consensus-based development, and Kuhn's foregrounding of the social aspect of scientific development was useful to A&Ls development of a socialised practice.[14] As Graham Howard states, 'It started to become clear just how dependent upon the conversations of the scientific community science was for its validation' (Howard, 2008: 329).Kuhn's account of the history of science, in terms of communities that attend to an incontrovertible paradigm offered a convincing description of practice as a normative, problem-based activity, rather than one of individuals acting out of inner necessity, as it was with art practice. This was useful not just for Art-Language practice but also to describe and critique the 'normal art' activity under the banner of Modernism.

Secondly, both Popper and Kuhn, albeit from completely different standpoints, significantly developed the epistemological grounding of science and the fitting of theory to experiment, and this also spurred on much of the simple, but radically different, relationship that theory had to practice within the A&L model of art activity. Popper's 'Falsificationism' as practiced is entirely the result of a rigorous testing, attacking one's own theory and celebrating its rejection as an advance in the creation of a more robust (though always approximate) representation of the world. Popper's fundamental reassessment of the 'groundlessness' of 'justificationist' conceptions of scientific theory's truth claims (his separating 'heuristic power' and 'absolute truth' (Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970:)) and its influence on Gombrich, one of the few art historians that A&L found a use for, meant that this methodology was of early interest to members of A&L. The imagining of conjectures that drive this testing relies, for Popper, on an 'intellectual intuition' or 'Einfühlung' (Popper, 1972: 46), and therefore it is not his concern - it is the concern of the specialist psychologist. This has a direct relationship to the aims of early A&L to make the claims of the artist, the art work and its would-be interpreter corrigible in the same way; to separate out the areas within which one can make sensible

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[14] Kuhn is seen as fundamental in forming this model of practice by William Wood in his thesis of 1992, explicitly seeing it as seeding the development of the Indexes (Wood, 1992:68). For a later reflection on this aspect of Kuhn's account see the Postscript of 1969 in (Kuhn, 1996: 176) 'Paradigms and Community Structure', this adds more nuances to the idea of how a research community is formed around a paradigm and what that means.

statements; and make the content of artistic problems more intersubjective.[15] The early work of Karl Popper came out of the Vienna School of logical positivism, largely as a critique. There are several areas, however, in which both Popper and Carnap/Neurath are on a similar train of thought, and one basic one is the opposition to psychologism when looking at statements of experience (Popper, 1959/2002: 76). A&L very much brought on board the suspicion and absolute lack of concern with psychologistic statements (of which art students are especially prone to make) and a desire to bypass this psychologism with the use of both historical analysis and the tools of linguistic philosophy and the specific historical and conceptual problems addressed in the philosophy of science; two areas that both offer an alternative descriptive language.

Thirdly, the conception of the relationship between observation and description, and the further relationship between practice and theory that Popper developed in his anti-induction argument offered a detailed and satisfying model for thinking about the role of theoretical concerns within art practice. The stance that a theory is not built from a generalisation from a mass of experiences was, by analogy, refreshing to a world where theoretical extemporisation was often viewed to come from the art historian/critic looking at a lot of pictures (observations) and synthesising some generalisation about the oeuvre of various artists. This was an idea internalised by most artists, where a certain kind of stylistic continuity was still seen as important. What is more, the view held by Popper, but which is central to the writings of N.R Hanson[16], that there is no observation that is not theoretically informed and the absolute denial that a pre-theoretical language could exist, 'that observation is always *observation in the light of theories*' (Popper, 1959/2002: 37, n.1), served nicely as one of the first principles of the A&L project.

Finally, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, introduces or develops several concepts of scientific activity where A&L found descriptive power and theoretical utility. The most obvious idea from Kuhn's book, the one that has seeped into many other areas of life

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[15] For a retrospective discussion of A&L thought on the types of (objective) problems seen to face the artists of A&L see Charles Harrison's 'The Conditions of Problems' in *Essays in Art & Language* (Harrison, 2001).

[16] Again in *The Patterns of Discovery* (Hanson, 1958/2010) we find a critique of Popper. It is not the place here to look at the differences in their conceptions of scientific activity, but to emphasise the different aspects of philosophy of science that had the most utility to Art & Language at the time. N R Hanson was also a central writer for A&L and will come up in a discussion of the use of Wittgenstein and 'seeing as'.

since, is that of the 'paradigm' and the 'revolution', or 'Paradigm Shift', within a discipline's development. Usually exemplified by the Ptolemy-Copernicus or Newton-Einstein shift in the history of science, it is most popularly seen as something which irrevocably shifts the course of the field and the type of attention a discipline pays to its object of study. Indeed, as William Wood points out, the elegance of this account was immediately appropriated by A&L (Wood, 1992: 68) but I would say, along with the elegant overall idea, that some of the specific details of the book were also adopted in different ways.

The heuristic devices found within *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* were largely directed by A&L toward the dominance of Modernism, whose gradual breaking apart over the late sixties seemed to fit the notion of a crisis of a paradigm. As previously discussed, mainstream Modernist commitments included aspects such as medium specificity (within painting and sculpture, but mainly painting), opticality or the primacy of the visual, individual expression embodied by the heroic artist-inventor (grafted from Romanticism) and the primacy of taste developed through experience and intuition. The breaking apart and gradual shift away from certain of these priorities, and the increasing plurality of the types of production that marked the late 1960s (i.e. the paintings of Frank Stella, Ad Reinhardt, Jasper Johns, minimalist works, the increasing prominence of anti-art strategies and conceptual works) could be seen as analogous to an increasing number of anomalies occurring in a crisis within a scientific community (Kuhn, 1962/1996: 52-91). Therefore, the depiction of how scientific revolutions occur, developed from normal science to extraordinary science to revolution, depicted one that fitted the art world in London and New York (with a Coventry-eye-view) in a rough and ready but nonetheless productive way (H&O, 1982: 21).

A&Ls main use of the idea of the paradigm shift and its attendant concepts, however, was to explore the fundamental assumption of object making within art. This was approached through taking on board the ideas of Richard Wollheim, a philosopher of art who stayed within A&L's lexicon for a while as epitomising and being the clearest articulator of the object/beholder relations of Modernism. In looking at the idea of physicality as a paradigm (and whether the idea really holds up at all), it was done explicitly using his terms and attacking his assertions. In *The Work of Art as Object* he states:

'My suggestion then is this: that for the mainstream of modern art, the appropriate theory is one that emphasizes the material character of art; a theory according to which a work is importantly or significantly, and not just peripherally, a physical object. Such a theory, I am suggesting, underlies or regulates much of the art activity of our age... the concept of art under which most of the finest, certainly most of the boldest, works of our age have been made, the connotation of physicality moves to the fore.'

(Wollheim, 1970: 232)

Wollheim goes on to define the physicality mainly in terms of painting surface, largely in line with the writings of other Modernist critics such as Michael Fried. This bold (and old, in a way)[17] assertion of a general theory of all mainstream art, was a great statement from which a critique could be formed by A&L, and it was abbreviated as firstly Material Character Physical Object Paradigm and then elaborated as Essentialist/ Material Character/ Physical Object Paradigm (E/MC/POP) in an article in *Studio International*, appropriately where Wollheim's original essay appeared (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1972). Several essays were subsequently written explicitly using the thesis as a 'heuristic device' to try to form a picture of whether art could be seen as shifting from something like a paradigm.[18] As Brian Mitchell, in a very early thesis on this period of A&L, is at pains to point out, however, what was an extensively researched and well developed explanation for scientific revolution throughout history, in A&Ls hands became merely a heuristic tool with which to guide an initial development of a practice (Mitchell, 1976: 89).[19] The

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[17] His need to defend such a conception of art was partly due to its lateness; this conception of art was heavily under attack from many alternatives by 1970.

[18] The essays by A&L and students around this time that deal explicitly with Kuhn, Popper, Lakatos, Feyerabend, Hanson and Braithwaite are: 'Don Judd's Dictum and Its Emptiness' (Pilkington & Rushton, 1971); 'Le Pensée avec Images' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971); On the Material Character/Physical Object Paradigm of Art (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1972); 'Interim remarks' (Hurrell, 1972); Some Post-War American Work and Art-Language: Ideological Responsiveness' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1972a). The concepts and methods encountered in this initial look at the history and philosophy of science clearly inform much more of the writing of this period within A-L in other, perhaps more indirect, way. Paul Wood recalls finding the A&L work on paradigm shifts of prime importance to the students when at Newport (see the later section on the Newport students).

[19] Here Brian Mitchell deals in detail with the essay 'On the Material Character/Physical Object Paradigm of Art' (Mitchell 1976: 80-97) and Wollheim's argument in terms of Kuhn, who is not explicitly mentioned within the A-L essay. They do criticise Wollheim's problematic inductive logic, the boldness of his claims

exploration of this particular candidate for an art paradigm has resonances with the NCDAD injunction to produce 'tangible visual art objects' (see the later section in this thesis 'Terminated Contracts and Tangible Objects') within the programme at Coventry and the commitments to a certain attitude toward objects that was acceptable.[20] This dogged A&L throughout its early career as both an area for further exploration and also a site of annoyance and simple minded criticism. This exploration of Wollheim's theory describing the dominant paradigm was an attempt to coherently push away from such assumptions. As they say at the end of their article in *Studio International*, in the 'Art-Language programme map the term 'paradigm-shift' describes only the action of shifting *from* a paradigm' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1972: 167 (my italics)). This shifting away was seen as started by late Modernist artists but Art-Language was seen as a significant and conscious development of that shift without any real goal; they were still trying to establish new methods of working.[21]

Although the Epistemology course was perhaps not as intensive or comprehensive as the documentation suggests, from student essays that followed we can see that much of the material covered was put to use further down the line. In addition to those essays mentioned (see note 18) perhaps the most explicit use of all these influences by the students at Coventry is in the collaborative work of Rushton, Pilkington, Kevin Lole and

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and interrogate them. For Art & Language, these essays form an example of 'theory-trying' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1972: 167).

[20] In *Art-Teaching* (Atkinson/Baldwin, 1971: 27) they characterise the NCDAD as having a 'lame', 'Khunian' concept of art practice as a discipline as 'a function of certain commitments'.

[21] At the same time as A&L were reading Kuhn's book there appeared a debate within the pages of the Cambridge journal Comparative Studies in Society and History (Hafner, et al., 1969) looking at the comparison of modern science and art. It is, on the whole, a reasonably quaint and stuffy discussion of the value of creativity of both, the similarities of both discipline's obscurantism and the nature of problem solving. It draws on very different aspects of Kuhn's thesis than those that A&L do. It should be noted that, seven years later, the book was being used left, right and centre to examine different disciplines for its explanatory power of their implicit patterns of development, but moreover that in Kuhn's contribution he remarks that the book emerged from thinking about the history of science in ways that art historians had for a long time thought about artistic movements (Hafner, et al. 1969: 403), though perhaps with a different vocabulary. Perhaps because of this origin Kuhn's account naturally seemed an appealing fit to both A&L and the Journal of Comparative Studies, but in the journal Kuhn himself finds too much easy comparison of how artists and scientists practice 'unsettling'. Indeed, the adoption of the theory was both wholesale and uncritical.

Pete Smith, *Concerning the Paradigm of Art*[22] (in Rushton ed., 2014: np) written in late 1970. The essay is a useful indicator in that it is an enthusiastic synthesising of much recently learnt information, from the discussion of non-existent ('Meinongian') objects and alternative ontologies, to deontology and ethics, induction and causality, and the formation of paradigms. From this range of topics it is apparent that this first year was indeed a bombardment of many different philosophical areas, very few of which were commonly discussed in art colleges at the time, introducing whole new approaches to thinking about art, among many other things, within just one year. That this should cause a kind of cognitive indigestion is to be expected. Epistemology can be seen as a subsidiary component to the main body of the course, however, named *Romanticism (Theory of Art)*, which involved a great deal of discussion around a much wider array of subject matter and none of the disciplinary boundaries that were adhered to by Donald Mears or Bertrand Russell. It was perhaps here that many of the ideas we can read in the student work were absorbed. In advance of this it is significant to note the influence of certain central ideas for both early A&L and the inception of the Art Theory Programme, those of Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and subsequently the complex relationship between the group and Marxism.

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[22] This essay is written in the context of the course becoming more precarious and structure breaking down, described later in this chapter, but the essay was perhaps more purposeful than just the rehearsal of concepts learnt, in that their course of education was facing opposition, a situation that could be seen in terms of two world-views. Rushton mentions the essay a couple of times: 'why we started on things like the Paradigm of Art, based on Kuhn, was to look for the nature of the revolution, the process from which any paradigm changes from one to another and how the nature of a scientific process as an analogue in art was essentially based on a consensus [that] we were not part of, we saw ourselves as dynamically changing that consensus, forcing that consensus to change so that what we were representing would become the consensual plan.' (DR: 3.6) Another relevance of Kuhn's idea of incommensurability is that within competing paradigms the two parties 'are bound partly to talk through each other' (Kuhn, 1962/1996: 148); this issue of the incommensurability of the languages of each paradigm is wholly applicable to the opposing conceptions of the role of art as a complete (and sometimes wilful) misunderstanding seemed to characterise much of their exchange. This was a point on which Robin Plummer, a man instrumental in opposing A&L's programme, on reflection, agreed (RP: 42-44).

Russell and Wittgenstein

Atkinson and Baldwin started working together around the central subject of the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell. The radically anti-Cartesian Wittgenstein and Russell, deflating metaphysics and posing those problems with regards to language, started to open up a new trajectory to both of them (Atkinson, 1995: 14). Atkinson had read Russell's *Mysticism and Logic* many years ago, which clearly outlines areas of intelligibility in philosophy and the role of scientific enquiry and mathematics within philosophy to get at problems of knowledge and understanding (Russell, 2007: 95-119; Atkinson, 1995: 94). This approach, coupled with his radical political views, made him both a public personality and a model of virtue for A&L and indeed the same was possibly true of the ascetic Ludwig Wittgenstein (PW: 75).[23]

Atkinson and Baldwin very early on began to discuss Wittgenstein in depth, and much of the reading that was done at Coventry started with Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein. Within the group, the idea that Frege offered a more realistic idea of 'sense' and 'reference' to the more popular 'semiology' of Barthes was one aspect that drew them to the analytical tradition (PP: 422). Wittgenstein heavily influenced those ideas in N.R. Hanson's *Patterns of Discovery* (1958/2010), especially with regards to 'seeing as' (Hanson, 1958/2010: 4-30) which appears in the second half of *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein, 1978: 193 Pt. 2, xi). Graham Howard in particular cited this section as influential on his writing and what he did for his diploma show which centred around the picture of a cuboid in that section (GH: 87-93). A specific use of Wittgenstein in A&L is Atkinson and Baldwin's use of maps (*Not to Indicate…* etc. – see Chapter 3) in which one element is Wittgenstein's discussion of a map of nothing or a private map (Atkinson, 1995: 104; Wittgenstein, 1978:166 ¶653-4).[24] Other ideas from the PI that become central to A&L students' work are related to the private language argument (and refutation

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[23] This moral standard in many ways lies under much of Art &Language's actions within the art college; many of the criticisms I am paraphrasing and quoting within this thesis are of a moral type, and the belief was that there was a sort of moral malaise at the heart of the art school which did not exist within the philosophical project of Russell and Wittgenstein. Indeed, the deflation of metaphysical questions to those of science and logic was in itself an ethical project.

[24] These were the product of an independent set of thought experiments and do not merely illustrate a Wittgenstein concept. An approach Kosuth warns the reader against in his article *Intentions* (Kosuth, 1996: 466). A&L, again in retrospect, are more blunt regarding this tendency in Conceptual Art: 'little Wittgensteinian conundra rendered slightly aesthetic. Absolutely tiresome shit.' (MB/MR: 478).

thereof) (Wittgenstein, 1978: 88-91 ¶243-54) which was discussed in *Analytical Art* (Rushton & Pilkington (eds.):1971).[25]

Their interest in late Wittgenstein mirrored his move from the propositional, object and syntax model of language (in PI the Augustinian picture of language (Wittgenstein, 1978: 2 ¶1) to a more speculative, incomplete and pragmatic model of language. Indeed, this mirrors in many ways the shift from the discrete essays or works to a more open ended incomplete discourse of texts which does not resolve contradiction (Wittgenstein, 1978: 50 ¶125). In fact the two sides of Wittgenstein, represented by the *Tractatus* and PI show the two interests in early A&L. In the first work the reduction of language to a set of objects and syntactic relations was useful in that it was anti-psychologistic and anti-metaphysical. This involved an interest in a second order discourse, the language of logic, assisted in cutting through the metaphysical humanistic approach of the art school and the aim of constructing, through cannibalising logical positivism, some new grounds on which to discuss art as a proposition (c.f. Kosuth, 1969). PI however, offer the sense of communication being a rule following, pragmatic, shifting and complex phenomena, and the puzzles in PI bear a resemblance to the exercises written for the Art Theory Programme (reproduced in *Statements*). Terry Atkinson reflects on the developing ideas around both texts within his and Baldwin's discussion and it is worth quoting at length:

> *…in the PI Wittgenstein had ditched truth-conditions as a means of sorting out the world. Wittgenstein's picture of the relation of language to the world seemed to turn into a notion that anything was linguistically illegitimate was somehow past the limit of the world. We were impressed by Wittgenstein's language use in the PI but I think by 1969 we were asking ourselves questions of it. If there was a crux, it was perhaps this, whether the idea of being objective points beyond the intersubjective agreement….Insofar as language may reach beyond itself, then what it may reach can only be formulated by using language (…language… being a means of representation) – this, seemingly, was the post- PI rub for A&L.*

> (Atkinson, 1995: 107)

So, following Atkinson, the central problem for him that Wittgenstein posed, was the problems of the idealisation of language, which had ramifications on their programme as a learning community, and the truth-value of 'intersubjective agreement'.

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[25] Analytical Art No.2 collects together a number of essays which are concerned with working out some of the implications of working out Wittgenstein's Private Language argument and of rule-following more generally, both of which were to become crucial and on-going concerns of the group. Indeed by 1972 Art & Language would write that: 'Public Paradigm and the repudiation of the 'private language' is basic and central as a methodological thesis of the Art-Language institute (A&L, 1972: 17-18).

Marxism and Political Philosophy

The influence of Marxist thought on Art & Language is complicated in that it comes from several sources which in turn have different traditions. The initial influence on the teaching at Lanchester Polytechnic did not contain many explicitly Marxist texts in its curriculum. These were the *German Ideology* and its famous prologue, the *Theses on Feuerbach* (Tucker, 1978: 143-200). Atkinson cites the *German Ideology* as the first indication of the importance of language as a descriptor of conscious acts (Morris, 1996: np). With phrases such as the famous 11th thesis, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point, however, is to change it' (Tucker, (ed.), 1978: 145), these texts formed an accessible provocative introduction to Marx's writing for young students. The relevance of both of these closely associated texts to the concerns of A&L is clear with phrases such as 'Language is as old as consciousness. Language is practical consciousness... Consciousness is therefore a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all.' (Tucker, (ed.) 1978: 158). It was a tool for introducing the practical use and force of language as a mode of work, and to dispel the idea of some intuitive, pre-linguistic mode of consciousness in actions such as art-making.

There was more of a cultural influence of Marxism(s) on the practice and pedagogy of A&L, as Coventry was at the heart of the motor industry with a heavily unionised working class culture and strong presence of shop stewards within the local council (Lancaster & Mason, 1986). The Communist Party was very prominent within the city, as were bookshops, cafes and pubs with socialist affiliations (PP: 362). In addition to this, more student-led movements such as International Socialists were also flourishing around the country at the time (PW: 29). This kind of practical, union-based socialism was represented most strongly by David Bainbridge, who was well-versed in Marxist writings (Atkinson, 2016; 1992), but elements of it permeated the attitude of the group.[26]

Political philosophy did play a part of their curriculum, but it was not always particularly Marxist (Rawls' *Two Concepts of Rules*[27] for instance). In fact, the philosophy

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[26] Philip Pilkington very much counters this view, having a dim view of the seriousness and hypocrisy of much Communist Party and soi disant Socialist activity, this is no doubt reflected in his involvement in *Dialectical Materialism* works (see Chapter 5).

[27] For A&L use of this work see (Burn & Ramsden, 1972: 28-37)

that was looked at in the core of the course, was politically distant from the concerns of Historical Materialism. Deontic logic, a brief history of the Social Contract (in Romanticism), and earlier political philosophy was covered within the course documents (Appendix D3), however, one aspect of this was the book analysing the political climate of Hobbes, Locke and the Levellers, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* by C.B. MacPherson (1964) which, though not in the course documents I have accessed, became important as it provided a vivid picture of the art student as the possessive individualist par excellence. Indeed, much of the argument of this thesis, implicitly accepts this idea that the Modernist conception of the professional artist is someone who alienates their person through the idea of possessing their talents and their imaginative world. Most students vividly remember the phrase 'possessive individualism' as recurring throughout (PP:152; RVB/MF/PS: 579; DH: 156). The argument stems from Locke's statement 'every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself' (MacPherson, 1964) and examines the social conditions under which the idea of labour and self-hood as property could develop. This links many ideas of bourgeois ideas of property, the politics and psychology of wage labour and, in A&Ls adoption of it, the gleeful role artistic activity plays within the Modernist framework of individual creativity. Michael Baldwin remembers the argument being 'powerful' and offering up an acute analysis, not only of the psychology of the art student/ artist, but also of some of the self-conceptions of American Modernism.[28] Lecture notes on *Natural Reason* from 1970, which essentially summarises the argument, focussing predominantly on Locke, from MacPherson. It ends: 'Both Hobbes and Locke impute to society a permanent conflict of interests between individuals… because of their postulates of possessive individualism men's rights and real freedoms are, in Hobbes, completely non-existent…

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[28] His response is worth quoting in full (slightly abridged):

> *'MacPherson was certainly a text, it was seen as a very important text in that sense… I remember, being very struck by it… it's a very powerful argument …Conclusions are a bit weak, but the actual analysis is excellent. But I remember him, MacPherson, coming up in conversation with strange people. Cliff Slaughter….A Trotskyist, pretty dyed in the wool … I remember having a conversation with him about MacPherson and even that fragment of the rather exaggerated left. I have always been something of a political sceptic, ironist, myself. But that text of MacPherson was even something that Cliff Slaughter could entertain as really constructive and useful. So it scanned quite a range, if you like, of political interests. But because it was a pretty fearless analysis for its time, if you think, and it puts its finger on some of the ramifications on, not of the psychology of authenticity, but upon the social implications of authenticity …and certain aspects of American Possessive Individualism… after which some aspects of Modernism were constructed.' (MB/MR: 522)*

and in Locke grossly inequal.' (AL0243 – after MacPherson, 1964) This was at the heart of how the programme tried to instil a sense of political agency in the students' conception of the possible roles of the artist.

In their essay *Art-Teaching* (1971) Atkinson & Baldwin are more explicit about this connection:

> *The evolution of (particularly) the Lockean influence on British education can be seen as fastened in the central 'desiderata': 'liberality', 'choice' etc…Art education is seen by some as a special embodiment of these notions…Art education is seen in Britain as legislating for the possibility of artist and art student taking a 'neutral' (possibly solipsistic) position toward the political (in some cases social) institutions.* (1971: 25)

Political quietism is linked directly to the market relations and choice of the education system through this idea of a Lockean possession of one's creative abilities as ones only social function it 'requires that the proprietor enters into none but self-interested contractual relations with others' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971:28). This essay introduced the ideas to the Newport Group (PW: 77) and clearly would have helped form important counter arguments to the insistence that they produce individual work. Indeed this idea was the strongest and simplest, with all those involved, for exposing the paradoxical nature of the Liberalism of the post-Coldstream art school, as the essay *Art-Teaching* is testimony to.

Romanticism and Art Theory

As discussed in the previous chapter, Romanticism as a title was partly a flippant nod towards Hegel, (MB/MR: 108) but the use of the name had more significance for the content than this. The course document (Appendix D3)[29] hangs caveats on the title: 'The appetence of Romanticism as a rubric is arguable. The term is multiply ambiguous. The point is that it comprehends a set of contemporarily efficient 'esthetic' problems.' The appeal, if you like, of Romanticism as a 'rubric' of the course was that it could be used as an umbrella term to explore a variety of topics, most of which are partly the concern of

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[29] The document I include is from Barbara Reise's collection, held in the Tate Archive and her annotations display both her engagement with the course and her dismay with organisation and pomposity with which it was delivered. I talk about this more when discussing the programme's relationship with art history.

'esthetics' in order to sort them out and interrogate or discard them within the ensuing discussions. The position on Romanticism, as mentioned earlier, was roughly in line with that of Bertrand Russell, who in his *History of Western Philosophy*, sees Romanticism as an inescapable influence on much philosophy going into the twentieth century and the reason for much of its errors and evils (Russell, 1947: 701, 746). Lynda Morris characterises this part of the course as critiquing 'the mythology of the arts', the cult of individualism, personal expression and motivation behind art production, and a commitment to phenomenology' (Morris, 1973; 2014: 50). A particular inheritance from Romanticism is what characterised their immediate surroundings in art education, as Atkinson and Baldwin write on reflection three years later:

> *The way behavioural romanticism comes through in the 'art schools' is in a very first orderish way… The art student will know more about the physical (i.e. 'natural') characteristics of romantic objects than he will about, for example their historicity, or ontology, or the ontogenesis of these objects…*

> *…The clash between intellectual depth and the art educational 'phantom-people' called 'Goethe', 'Byron', 'Novalis', 'Hegel' etc. as constructed by the Art-History/ Complementary Studies departments in particular and many less specialised sections of the Art Society. The art school system has generated a phantom-'theory'… of 'Romanticism' which places behavioural 'imitation' or banausic exegesistics as a higher priority than, e.g. hermeneutic 'understanding'.* (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971: 25-6)

Romanticism, therefore, was partly a way to characterise the condition they found themselves in in the art school and, by extension, the condition, as they saw it, of the art world (or 'art society'). Elena Crippa makes the salient point that much of the efforts of the basic design movement had also been to rid the formal decision making and production of art works of the spiritual and metaphysical baggage of expressionism in favour of rationality and objectivity (Crippa, 2014: 251). This was not completely the case, however, as discussed earlier in the section on foundation courses, as much intuitive understanding and rather mystical thought leaked into the thinking around basic design. The A&L mandate was much more extreme. In many ways the detachment from the 'phantom-'theory'' of the art school was a fundamental reason the course existed, and so was pursued much more consciously and thoroughly than ever before, and arguably since.

The introductory course documentation is also at pains to dispel any idea of an historical or historicist emphasis. In other words, an account of people and historical movements was not to be the subject, nor was any sense of a neat deterministic historical process or 'history of ideas' being brought into focus. It was more an introduction to essential ideas, again much like Epistemology, to increase the toolkit of the student and to deepen that knowledge with a socio-historical awareness. The 'rubric' then was to be clarified by the sub-heading 'Theory of Art'. Within the five categories often mentioned, 'Romanticism' and 'Art Theory' can be considered one and the same (PP: 76) with Romanticism being the original title of what then became commonly known as the 'Art Theory' Course. The teaching of 'Art Theory' then can be seen as near identical with that which was planned for the Romanticism (Theory of Art) course as it was originally named. This was the section of the course that was almost exclusively taught by Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson but, as it seems to have been the backbone of the new curriculum, some of the other tutors mentioned at the beginning of this chapter also either contributed or attended. The different styles of the teachers caused greater diversity and there were marked contrasts between Michael Baldwin's off-the-cuff discussions, Terry Atkinson's more formal lectures, Stuart Knight's more phenomenological interests ('a philosophy graduate from Essex who introduced a certain dimension of glimpses and fragments of academic philosophy rather distinct from those provided by Don Mears' (MB/MR: 156)), and David Bainbridge's problem-posing, thought experiment method (Crippa, 2014: 248-250). Peter Smith, a student on the second year of the course describes the general tenor of the teaching, reflecting that 'it wasn't obviously didactic. It was more conversational, in relationship to something we might have read' (RvB/MF/PS: 13). The centrality of reading stems throughout the course as the backbone to the discussion.

When writing about 'Art Theory'[30] in her thesis of 1973, Lynda Morris suggests that that component was;

> *…basically a discussion of Duchamp up to the present day… by covering the work of American artists such as Robert Morris, Don Judd and Kenneth Noland they hoped to deal with the tendency of students to copy trends on a more comprehensive level. Their*

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[30] Just to make it clear here, when previous commentators talk about 'Art Theory' they are referring to what I am calling 'Romanticism (Theory of Art)', as that seems to be what it was called originally.

understanding would be based upon the theoretical background rather than the superficial end result. (Morris, 1973/2014: 49)

Naïve identification with any style or movement, then, was supposedly dealt with by investigating the theoretical background or exposing its theoretical vacuity. Robert Morris' *Notes on Sculpture (1966, 1967 & 1969)*[31] were definitely part of the syllabus, and Morris has already been identified as an important figure for Michael Baldwin, though not in a straight forward, celebratory way. Marcel Duchamp is a controversial figure to envisage as part of the syllabus, as though his position within the discussions of A&L was prominent as figure for critique, often from outside the group A&L would have been seen as direct descendants of his legacy (much to their annoyance).[32] The inclusion of Don Judd and Kenneth Noland will be more properly dealt with when considering how the Art History and Complementary Studies department dealt with the new syllabus.

Notes entitled *Theory of Art* (AL0641) from 1969, produced for the course and 'circulated to students', explain the gradual overcoming of epistemological concerns within Logical Positivism[33] and the shift towards the analysis of language use, from Russell through to Carnap and then Wittgenstein. This would suggest the Theory of Art element was also highly dependent on philosophical rather than art historical sources.

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[31] See (Harrison & Wood ed., 2000; 828-835, 881-885).

[32] For discussions on Marcel Duchamp see (MB/MR: 120-148), it is their contention that they had to 'negotiate' Duchamp, partly because of the revival of Duchamp's legacy at the time, but it was largely in a 'negative' way. Robin Plummer linked Duchamp explicitly to their idea of the paradigm shift (RP: 36-40) and while he is maybe over-emphasising the importance of Duchamp to their thinking this does indicate as to what came across to those outside the group as their major concerns and their perceived pre-cursors, and why Lynda Morris' description of the 'Art Theory' syllabus starts with Duchamp. It is fair to say their relationship with Duchamp was a troubled one, and Mel Ramsden's description of the ready-made concept as a 'fucking nightmare' (MB/MR: 140) is the clearest articulation of their position. In many ways this was Terry Atkinson's problem, and Duchamp is prominent within some of his early writings. For instance, the Introduction to *Art-Language* (Atkinson, 1969: 1-10); a lecture delivered in 1968 for the Vat '68 exhibition which was described as 'some comments concerning Duchamp's Bottle Rack' (CCA, 1968) and there are many notes concerning Duchamp Bottle-rack in MACBA's archive which, though dated 1975, are probably the notes for this lecture (MACBA, AL209). He directly addresses this misconception in *From an Art & Language Point of View* in (Atkinson, 1970: 25-60) and there are certain moments of *mea culpa* in *Tarrying Art After Philosophy* (Atkinson, 1995) (which acquired the subtitle *Wittgenstein is Smarter than Duchamp*). There are also many works which fervently deny the significance of 'Duchamp Reception' to early A&L however, so the misconception was more a matter of lack of investigation into their writing.

[33] It is interesting that the introduction would concentrate on this; it was possibly a way to differentiate itself from 'Epistemology'.

The actual events, contents and delivery of the Romanticism section no doubt bore an oblique relationship to the course documentation (Appendix D3), but it is significant that reading lists and a thematic structure for learning seem to be a basic principle of A&L's approach. The Romanticism (Theory of Art) component was the dominant and most characteristic of the programme, typifying as it did the highly discursive method and involving so many of the tutors and running throughout the year. The topics and structure I set out below did not appear to occur as written, but I include it in order to give a sense of the ambition of the course and also some indication of the type of material that was in some other way discussed in the seminars held.

The course structure, as spelt out in the documentation, started with a connected block of three sub-topics, under the heading 'Classification'. These are 'Taxonomy', 'Differentiae of the Aesthetic Domain' and the ''Internal' classification'. A&L were largely disparaging of the taxonomic impulse in art history, especially on purely visual grounds but that was coupled with an interest in alternative defining and classifying systems, especially ones that admitted to a more complex or changeable relationship between whatever has been 'sorted out'. Identifying different types and ontologies of objects and their intensional aspects were a central concern, and much of this section seems to be looking at how art objects may become identified, how else they might 'come up for the count' and how useful these determinates are. So, in this section we have references to works on (Axiomatic) Set Theory, Woodger's *Axiomatic Method of Biology (1937)*, also stuff on reference and the singling out of objects, from an analytical point of view, such as Strawson's *Individuals* and Peter Geach's *Reference and Generality*. Here also the aforementioned *Notes on Sculpture* provide an art world starting block to think about the aesthetic considerations of recent minimal and anti-form sculpture.[34]

After this there are a couple of sessions or topics on 'Aesthetic Theories' and 'Aesthetic Constructs' respectively. The first is very much a pure interrogation of aesthetic ideas (largely 19th Century) and an assessment of their 'cognitive content'. There is some setting-up of straw men here, or at least sitting ducks, in the form of Bradleys *Oxford*

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[34] Robert Morris seems to be centrally important to much of the early thinking of Baldwin and Atkinson. Terms cribbed from his notes on Sculpture appear in their assessment of art education 'Art Teaching' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1971: 25-50)

Lectures on Poetry, fused as they are with appeals to feeling and sentiment, and it is here we see content that is a direct critique of the Romantic sensibility. The range of sources is very broad and, though I do not wish to speculatively go through in detail all the different positions hinted at by the reading list, the range of topics must have been quite daunting to the incoming student. The treatment of aesthetic ideas goes from the lectures of Ruskin, through Tolstoy and T.E. Hulme and on to information aesthetics, which had been developed in the 1960s. The usual dismissal of aesthetics by A&L at various points does not in any way undermine the fact that they researched and examined it closely as a discipline in order to pull it apart.

The next section deals with 'properties of fiction; fictional and defective concepts', which seems to draw on ideas of non-existent entities, possible worlds and actual literary fiction (Romanticism being first and foremost a literary movement (Russell, 1947: 704)).[35] Following on from that, a slight overlap with Epistemology, there is a topic with the description 'Causality, superstition, essentialism again. These rubrics indicate the study of the largely unclarified notions of 'Creativity' and freedom.' (Appendix D3) Texts such as Ascombe's *Intention* (Anscombe, 1957) would have very direct and novel applications to the giving and asking of reasons that occurs within an art college. The Russell chapter on Romanticism and Rousseau (Russell, 1947: 701-727) is featured here under the subheading 'superstition'. The idea of freedom within one's actions as an artist, the assumption that an artist is a boundlessly free agent, would have been the object of the attack here. It goes beyond this 'rubric' however to propose that this section looks at time, causation, coincidence, determinism and events. One would suppose some correspondence between 'creativity' and 'intentionality' was explored which would further problematize the conviction of a freely acting heroic artist.

Finally, and consequently, there is a section on Historicism, represented variously by R.G Collingwood, A.J. Toynbee (both then celebrity historians) and Hegel. The obvious

[35] In the notes from Barbara Reise's archive she writes 'is there an implicit equation here!?' next to 'fictional and defective concepts'. This articulates one question regarding the interest in fictional entities here as language dealing with fictional entities etc. is a very problematic area within the philosophy of language, exemplified by Russell's *On Denoting* (1905) which has much relevance, and explanatory and deflationary import, toward a lot of early conceptual work, such as that of Lawrence Weiner and Robert Barry. A&L, with the thought-experiments of *Sunnybank* (1967) et al., were also interested in these issues. The rejection of the 'literary', however, within their writing has also been an aspect of A&Ls work (see Harrison, 2001: 3-34), as has a suspicion toward literary theory.

counter to this was looking at Karl Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism*.[36] The reading for this was particularly voluminous and potentially would have been a great source for discussion. The last topic is 'Metaphor', here we see another description of the continuities of Romanticism and Modernism in Frank Kermode's *Romantic Image* and texts on medieval poetry, 19th Century Aesthetics, metaphor in literature. It also includes, perhaps eccentrically, a book *Recursive Programming and Production Response* by R.H. Day which I assume is to relate the idea of modelling as metaphors and pictures of things. Again a reasonably idiosyncratic and wide-ranging bibliography, which, had they all been read assiduously, would have contributed to a provocative set of seminars.

This account of the programme for Romanticism shows how wide the resources (and the flexibility of the 'rubrics') were. Judging from Baldwin's dismissal of proposals and syllabi, these documents were always designed as a rough structure to foster discussion, and within which several members of staff could operate. Arguably, the documentation has a problematic relation to the de facto operations of the course, but the very act of creating these book-lists and having expectations and courses of study was both important to those involved and a significant shift from the previous pedagogical style.[37] In actuality Michael Baldwin conducted his seminars in a much more *ad hoc* manner, relating them to work being done at the time (Crippa, 2014: 249; MB/MR: 192). The idea of an influx of possible topics for discussion is raised within its conception:

> *Assertive pedagogic chatter should be confined, in situations involving the whole group, to the identification or the raising of topics for discussion. No discussion or inspection of a topic should be arbitrarily shelved so as to keep up with the calendar. Individual student's interests (as upshots of the course) will be supported in papers, delivered to the smaller seminar groups.* (Appendix D3)

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[36] Karl Marx's *Thesis on Feuerbach* would have added another angle regarding the relationship between history and political action.

[37] 'A lot of this sort of discursive stuff involved giving people booklists and getting people to read things before seminars and that sort of thing. All these kind of strange sort of quasi-academic practices were being inaugurated in the context of the studio.' (MB/MR: 101) Reading-lists were provided to a certain extent by the History of Art department for summer reading (see later section), but they were unknown of within studio practice.

The topics for discussion were the core of this highly discursive course and things would not be dismissed or 'shelved' for arbitrary reasons, but sorted out within discussion. The topics would be of inter-subjective concern, not personal interests, though personal takes on such topics were covered in the papers presented. Through informed rational discussion the course would hope to explore real problems of the type adumbrated above via the reading lists. The need to confine the subject is interesting in that a control over the topic was seen as necessary, it was not a free for all and there was an implicit rule as to what was interesting and what was not (what 'came up for the count' in A&L terms). Things that were tacitly (or maybe not so tacitly) considered uninteresting were largely an uncritical stance on those things seen as symptoms of a traditional art school attitude (the 'personal fantasy' of the Sandle/Atkinson Proposal) and personal projects for individual art practices. This central part of the discussion was, therefore, a programme which one would have to subscribe to its framework or not engage with at all. The wider discussions were in actuality also never confined to a session or class, and happened in many spaces with many different combinations of attendee. Terry Atkinson mentions that much of the discussion happened in social spaces such as the canteen or the pub afterwards (Atkinson, 2011; 2016: pers. comm.) and Philip Pilkington remembers, for the committed, the class discussions lasting all day on a regular basis and then continuing into the pub (PP: 38). This was the discursive world, made possible only by the enthusiasm of a few tutors and students, that orbited unevenly around the formal class outlined in the paperwork examined in this section.[38]

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[38] Barbara Reise, who has annotated her copy of the reading list, notes both that there is a singular 'course controller', which to her mind undermines the 'group' activity and reveals what presumably she suspects is an autocratic exercise. On the same page, however, she also seems to be lamenting the lack of control and sprawling nature of the discussion, seeing 'no evidence so far of <u>anyone</u>' fulfilling the title. The conclusion we can perhaps draw from this is that sessions both seemed geared very much toward a certain set of topics drawn up by a small faction, but at the same time did not seem to be a structured class in the conventional sense, and to range widely from topic to topic (see APPENDIX D3)

Audio Visual and Technos

One part of the course did seem to at least pay lip service to the incorporation of those tutors who did not engage fully with the course. The Audio Visual part of the course is in many ways the least clear regarding the contents, and this is largely because it was the part of the course where business could more or less carry on as usual. Dave Hirons, who started teaching at Lanchester Polytechnic in 1969 after being a student at Coventry College of Art from 1965-68, remembers this part as largely being two dimensional visual work - it 'subsumed' painting - and was under the direction of the painting tutors, the most memorable of which were George Wall, Brian Love and Andrea Moering (DH: 80),[39] with the hope that it would develop into the use of photography and the then very new medium of video. Barbara Reise noted down those who taught on the course, which was programmed in for a Wednesday, and her list also included the printmakers Arthur Hillyer and Maurice Heap (TGA: 786/5/6/8). In Dave Hiron's words it was a 'hotchpotch' of different teachers and seems to have been a way to keep those tutors whose practice was not entirely compatible with the theoretical ambitions of the course meaningfully employed at the college. New technologies were possibly embraced and visiting teachers such as Margaret Benyon, who was a pioneer of holograms, could have contributed (DH: 80; Benyon, 1996), and early pieces of new technological art could have co-existed with more traditional painting and print making, all with the hope that a more curious or theoretically informed practice would develop with the influence of the other courses. Lynda Morris describes it as a 'practical section' where, 'rather than allowing students to 'play' with technology it was used as a means of recording and reproducing extensions of the ideas that emerged from the Art Theory section (Morris, 1973/2014: 49).[40]

The relationship between Conceptualism and visual material perhaps informs the possible position of Audio Visual (and Technos in many ways – see below) within the programme. John Roberts' essay on iconophobia within conceptual practices sees Wittgenstein's 'seeing as' notion as the perfect philosophical backing of iconophobia (Roberts, 1997: 22-

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[39] Both Dave Hirons and Terry Atkinson remember Andrea Moering, a painter, being an incredibly astute and valuable addition to the teaching and thinking on the course (Atksinon, 2016: pers.comm.).

[40] There is little evidence of what type of culture was actually produced within the Audio Visual aspect, and it was not part of the course that members of A&L or the theory students gave much attention to. The relations with some painting tutors, as is described in the next chapter, became strained.

23). Photography and film were used as much as text within the wider Conceptual Art movement and, as Roberts writes, 'knowledge through perceptual acquaintance haunts the debate on the visual within conceptual art' (Roberts, 1997: 23). Art & Language write, in the same collection, regarding early conceptual art:

> *…there are images here, pictures here, representations, icons, allegories, symbols, aesthetics, but they were **ghosts**… The point here is that we did consider pictures in various guises. The difference which seemed important was a) the 'use' to which any item was put…what had to be resisted was first order artistic interpretation of aestheticisation. This led to b) the rejection of surface treatment or production which could confine or interrupt the first objective… we were concerned (insofar as we were concerned at all) with pictures which had little physical presence…* (A&L, 1997: 61)

This is not to confuse the picture, which as listed above could exist as a number of different forms of 'picturing', with visual representation. It does, however, articulate an approach to visual material that could have been both acceptable to A&L and incorporate pictorial representation and processes. This was potentially a component that concerned itself with the virtual aspects of image-use, and resisted both aesthetic and materiality discussion. There is a strong connection between this and the types of projects proposed for the related 'sculpture' course, Technos.

The Technos course was written largely by David Bainbridge and Terry Atkinson. Michael Baldwin states:

> *'There was a course for example, a component of the whole thing, which was designed to satisfy the authorities, called 'Technos'. Because it was supposed to satisfy them that there is something practical being done, and that was … true, there was something practical being done. The sculpture department just functioned like the sculpture department ever had! With a few cybernetic embellishments provided by Dave Bainbridge.'* (MB/MR: 101)

The course did have a little more to it in practice than 'a few cybernetic embellishments', but this typical understatement was again to protect against the course being 'over-dignified with memory'. The course was taught in the main by David Bainbridge, John Mitchell, Dave Hirons and Steve Furlonger and was a block course (of six weeks) that was

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compulsory for all students, who attended it on a rotational basis. A detailed rationale of the course is to be found in a draft for its introductory project (Appendix D1). In it the authors set out a polarity between, on the one hand, adopting a traditional technical mode of reporting experience and on the other inventing a novel 'meta-language' for the purpose. This polarity causes formalism on the one hand and obscurantism on the other, therefore the course's agenda is '…to focus successfully on 'modes of report' both traditional and otherwise with a view to underlining some of the virtues and the shortcomings that attend them' (Appendix D1). The importance of the integration of theory and practice within this course was paramount and, as with Audio Visual, it was not to be seen as the practical component, in isolation from the rest of the course.[41] The explicit 'theory-laden'-ness of these projects was what was different from 'traditional' art school making, which contained little theoretical prescription, and the important shift in thinking this part of the course represented.

The draft for the course mentions many types of projects that 'precluded conventional reportage' and posed problems of regarding the conveyance of specific information. These included the differentiation of imperceptible differences of obscured or containered objects, instructions for driving a car, changing a blade on a bandsaw or a description of the movement of a pendulum.[42] These projects were part of a draft document, so these projects were perhaps not all delivered to the students, but they give some indication of the expectation of the authors as to the kind of activity within this section of the course. These relate in some ways to the approach to projects indicated by a drawing project, supposedly set by Terry Atkinson ('Coutts') from November, 1967 (M&W, 1973: 223)

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[41] The Technos document states 'cross references with the parallel Theory of Art and Audio Visual courses are legion' (APPENDIX D1) and the Romanticism document states '"Teknos' and theory of art are nominally conflated – it can be said that methodology is theory-laden lecture, discussion synopsis' (APPENDIX D1)). One central idea of this type of relation of theory and practice is that problems can arise in practice but often cannot be addressed, developed or addressed by producing another art-work.

[42] Another project, partially remembered by Dave Hirons, and which 'posited that "Guernica" was an equivalent map of the western hemisphere in the 1930's - Something along those lines.' (DH: 120)

which involved the measuring and documenting, over three days, a gradually deflating, helium-filled balloon on the end of a streamer.[43]

There is another Technos document which is for a project set in March 1970 (DRA, 1970) and for which 12 students signed up.[44] The students are asked to scrutinise objects with an aim to produce 3D work. The list of objects and methods is as follows:

1. *Dorman Long Handbook*
2. *British Admiralty Chart*
3. *A current copy of the radio times.*
4. *Calendar Steam Tables.*
5. *The current issue of radio valve data.*
6. *Tables of Newall Standards.*
7. *Brinell Hardness Tables.*
8. *The current issue of Wisden*
9. *A Noisy Channel.*
10. *PAN book of Card Games (specifically Cribbage)*
11. *A 1969 Calendar*

Consider one of the following methods as possibly appetent for resolving 'a way to work.'

1. *Direct application of theory (outcome known find theory that works)*

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[43] The project is infused with a dry humour, however much of it, albeit within the framework of drawing and painting, has much that anticipates the aims of the Technos course, for instance the students are given theoretical no-go areas, these are:
A. INVENTIVENESS
B. ORIGINALITY
C. CREATIVITY
It prescribes some possible procedural concepts, namely: 'duplication, copying, repetition, transcription, miniscule and microscopic variation, mindlessness, rechauffe' (M&W, 1973: 224). This focus on adopting these procedural frameworks is perhaps closely related to the shift from Minimalism to Process and Conceptual works and specifically Sol Le Witt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,* which were published a few months before this project was set. Atkinson would have met Le Witt that summer in New York. A relevant excerpt reads: 'To work with a plan that is pre-set is a way of avoiding subjectivity… The plan would design the work…This eliminates the arbitrary, the capricious, and the subjective as much as possible' (see Harrison & Wood, 2003: 846-849).

[44] They were:'B. Hainstock, C. Gray, D. Rushton, S. Payne, C.Willsmore, S.Beebly, K.Lole, Graham Mileson, L. Chamberlain, H. Ironside, R.Leagate, R.T. Woods'

2. *Renovation Method (modify established theory to make room for new process)*

3. *Method of Transfer of Concept*

4. *Method of Analogical transfer*

5. *Morphological method (esoteric method)*

6. *Dichotomy Method (yes or no)*

7. *Seldon's Method (fictions from Azimov Foundation – statistical psychohistory)*

8. *Teratological Method (applied in business situations, irrational, military engineering.)*

9. *Apocalyptic Revelation (divine)*

10. *A Noisy Channel*

11. *Megalomaniac or kudos seeking method.* (DRA, 1970)

The objects are from the world of engineering, both professional and amateur (steel manufacture, pressure charts, gauges, radio kits) all of which point to the 'motor shop' and 'wireless world' interests of Hurrell and Bainbridge discussed earlier. If one were to characterise the material visually, there was an identification with tables, charts and simple diagrammatic uses of drawing to convey particular types of information. A key link between all of them, however, is that the objects require investigation beyond the visual in order to reveal their inherent interest. The methodological filters were proposed as a further obstacle to producing a straightforward product; many of them with humorous or inventive possibilities entailed within them. The majority are sourced from science fiction, theology, biology, mathematics and scientific method. The reading-list for the component is not included in these documents but Philip Pilkington (in Crippa, 2014: 251) and Graham Howard (GH: 126) both remember Norbert Weiner and Colin Cherry as particularly important. Graham Howard in particular remembers *The Human use of Human Beings* (1950) being a useful and accessible introduction, but also *Cybernetics* (1948). Another work mentioned in relation to this aspect of the course is W. Ross Ashby's *Introduction to Cybernetics* (1956).[45] Dave Hirons, who remembers Dave

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[45] This would have been a central interest for Graham Howard, who went on to teach computer art and then start up his own software business. He was also heavily involved in the Indexing project and has written about this partly in his essay *Conceptual Art, Diagrams and Indexes* (in Brown et al. eds., 2009: 323-344). See also (GH:126)

Bainbridge's expansive reading and detailed interest in engineering and cybernetics, would add Abraham Moles[46] to that list (DH: 36). The course also would have benefited from amateur electronics magazines, but was also aware of the work being done at E.A.T (Experiments in Art & Technology) from 1966 onwards in America (Harrison, 2001: 56; AL0265, 1968). Students remember the 'Cybernetic' or engineering parts of the outputs more vividly than the content of the written work, and it seems the exhibitions that did take place contained a number of electronic works alongside the written texts (RP: 292; DH: 36; Atkinson, 2016: pers.comm; GH, 122, 126).

There are several end-products that can be identified as the result of Technos projects, or 'modes of report'. These were published in the students' magazine, *Statements*, produced in November 1970.[47] They include a *Noisy Channel* project by David Rushton which involved a photograph, and subsequently photo-polymer coated canvasses, of a halftone plate depicting a Robert Morris felt sculpture in order to effect different levels of 'noise' between the original and the developed image and to be able to compare them (DR: Pt. 2, 15; Statements, 1970: 18). [48] There is an extended essay on *Seldon's Method*[49] and its

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[46] Moles' *Information Theory and Esthetic Perception* appears on the reading list for the Romanticism section. The book had just been translated in 1966 but was actually written in 1958. Information Aesthetics, of which this is a founding text, would have been a fresh approach to an old discipline at this time. Much of the writings cited relating to cybernetics were at least a decade old and some were two decades old. There was indeed a time lag between the great tomes of cybernetics and artists taking it up, not that Bainbridge and Hurrell would have been eager to join in the enthusiasm for cybernetics in the art world, but there were precedents for this use (see previous chapter, and Skrebowski, 2009: 123-177; Brown et al (eds.), (2009)).

[47] The other contributions and other student publication, *Analytical Art*, are discussed in detail in the next section.

[48] This was then repeated with a physical object, a perhaps Kosuth-like chair, though more decorative. Stripped and bleached in order to have a 'pure signal' at the start, and then overlaid with its own photographic image. The Robert Morris felt sculpture and the works of Joseph Kosuth are two examples of the exemplars that would be used on the course when examining various aspects of then contemporary art but, as Terry Atkinson points out (in Rushton, 1998: xiii) the particularly productive conversation around the Noisy Channel stemmed not only from its use from the mid-60s by Hurrell and Bainbridge in their 'cybernetic' works but also from Jasper Johns flag paintings, among others.

[49] 'Seldon's Method' refers to Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Series* and, specifically, his character Hari Seldon's mathematical reduction of history into probabilistic terms, 'pyscho-history', a Sociological version of Laplacean Determinism. Dave Hirons was introduced to Asimov's Foundation Trilogy by Dave Bainbridge, both of whom shared an interested in science fiction (DH: 36). The ideas of science fictions and counter-factuals and thought experiments can be seen in much of the earlier work of A&L and SF in particular

relations to other philosophical conceptions of history, causality and determinism by Philip Pilkington. In this essay he clearly brings in works from other parts of the course, such as those on historicism, and makes the most of the integrated nature of what they were learning (in Pilkington & Rushton (eds.), 1970: 5). One of the projects set in the initial draft for Technos was, 'Devise an 'event' bizarre enough to guarantee response… from fellow students and possibly from the general public… In a sense the idea would be to view the initial 'event' as a piece of nascent history and to set it up as such.' (Appendix D1) This is very similar to two projects documented in *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973: 265) and *Statements* (Statements, 1970: 11) respectively. The first, by an unknown artist, identified as a first year fine art student of the 1969-70 year group, is an empty exhibition in Kasmin Gallery, New Bond Street. Alongside this the artist proposed to publish the names of contributors to his 'artwork' in *Studio International* for a nominal fee of fifteen pence. The latter piece, by Geoffrey Ritchings, is the selling of an art event in which the art event being bought is one and the same thing as the sale of the art event. Both have a reasonably cynical, prankster-like, approach to the idea of art as a commodity and, though they are not typical of the work produced under the tutelage of A&L, show another possible response to the projects set within the Technos component.

This ostensibly very practical section of the course would still have included much studio discussion. Lynda Morris described the discussion as being centred upon 'the link between materials and the ideas carried in those materials', and 'the development of the arts in relation to the materials available to it… especially the recent… development of new visual media' (Morris, 2014: 50); as the documents tell us, the 'methodology is discussion-synopsis' (Appendix D). It was intended that Technos and Audio-Visual were two components that were reconstituted equivalents to the technical positions of painting and sculpture and, in Dave Hiron's opinion, students tended towards one or the other (DH:128). The different components did not seem to presuppose 2 or 3 dimensions,

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represents an art form that they saw as, at its best, carrying some cognitive ambition. Explicit use of such devices in early or pre-Art & Language can be seen in Bainbridge's *Notes on M1* (A-L 1.1, 1969: 19-23) and Terry Atkinson's *Wildthink Album* (MACBA: AL0229, 1969). Conversely, on reflection Pilkington was luke-warm regarding this aspect (PP: 232), possibly because it never fully extracted itself from the techno-friendly, 'plug-in city' interests of the sixties.

however, and the Technos projects (some of which are detailed above) ranged from text to photography and performance.

Projects and Essays

Within the Art Theory Programme many projects seems to a have been set during the first year. These did not sit within Audio Visual and probably didn't happen within Technos, but were assignments for the students to use the various ideas they were supposedly encountering on all aspects of the course. Structurally, they inherit the timetable lineage of 6 week drawing projects that was already established in the college.[50] They differed quite dramatically from these in content and intent, however, drawing as they did from a highly specific set of concerns and different expectations of vocabulary and outlook. *Art Students Observed* includes a transcript of an assignment set by Michael Baldwin (pseudonym 'Ashley') addressing 'spatio-temporal continuity' and 'identity' as problematic concepts within the history of art (M&W, 1973: 236). The reading list largely consists of analytical philosophy (Geach, Prior, Strawson, Quine) in addition to classical and enlightenment figures (Aristotle, Hume, Spinoza) and literary sources (Mann and Proust). When one compares this assignment with essays included later in the student publication *Statements* (Rushton & Pilkington (eds.), 1970), it can be seen that this assignment was included early on within the Art Theory Programme and it is generally considered as such in other writing (Crippa, 2014: 250). The same analytical concepts can be read throughout both Art & Language work such as *The 368 Year old Spectator* (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1967) and student assignments produced for the Art Theory Programme. It draws on much that was planned to be covered in the Romanticism document. Unlike Technos or Audio-Visual, however, any variation of 'handicraft' was not to be tolerated 'unless it paradigmatically instantiates an examination of the question and related ones', which one would imagine would be very hard to do, accurately, with 'handicraft'. This was explicitly a call for 'papers for discussion'. Several papers in answer to this assignment were later published in Statements (Pilkington & Rushton (eds.), 1970:

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[50] For some of these see *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973: 221-236) in which an early project set by Michael Baldwin is situated in this tradition of both writing and drawing projects.

5-14), by David Rushton, Graham Mileson and Philip Pilkington. These reflect much of the reading that had gone on in the foundation course and first few months of the Dip.A.D. course and dealt largely with the ideas of particulars, 'sortals' (Strawson), and 'time slices' within both J.J.C. Smart, P.F. Strawson, W.V.O. Quine.[51] All essays then attempt to use the theoretical devices provided by these authors upon considering an art work, from a performance of *Hamlet* to Duchamp's *Bottlerack*.[52] David Rushton dated the writing of his essay from October to December 1969, so they appeared very early on in the course.

Other essay questions set on the course can be garnered backwards from material in *Statements*. In the first issues of statements we see responses to several set questions. 'Is the statement "That Noland is thirty feet by six feet" a statement about an art object?' of which the essays explore more the ideas of the temporal nature of an artwork, but also form a critique of metaphysical art criticism and the more respected work of Michael Fried and Richard Wollheim.[53] Another assignment, which only had one response by Susan Beeby, 'Can I reproduce my feelings in respect of Jim Dine's Toaster in John Mitchell?' which touched on issues of philosophy of mind that were within the remit of the epistemology course, also introduces some of the issues addressed in the many essays that were written in the second year on internalism and the private language argument. Many other essays and assignments appear in the second issue of *Statements*, the discussion of which will be later on in this thesis.

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[51] The reading list for the project is much more extensive but it seems that the students focused on these authors for their papers.

[52] Rushton's 'Event' shows the influence of an earlier Art & Language piece *22 Sentences: the French Army* (Atkinson & Baldwin, 1967), using the Battle of Waterloo as his 'Event', drawing in turn from P.F. Strawson. As mentioned before another example of A&L trying out these considerations can be found in *The Notion of the 368 year old Spectator* (AL0368, 1968). Pilkington's use of Duchamp's Bottlerack is more evidence of how the problem of Duchamp's notion of the readymade was initially discussed in class. In fact, Pilkington remembers his first conversation with Baldwin centring around a nominative/institutional definition of an art object (PP: 8).

[53] Here the responses are by Kevin Lole, Philip Pilkington and Chris Willsmore.

Art History

As we have seen in the previous chapter, another proposal at the Quinquennial Review was the integration of the art history and complementary studies provision with that of the studio.[54] This didn't happen in any dramatic sense but, thanks to the proposals and approach of Barbara Reise, the provision had begun to shift away from the very traditional and very broad, shallow approach; an approach that neither Reise nor the NCDAD approved of. That a radical reinvention was not possible is mentioned in a candid account of her career a few years later:

> *'The frustration of my attempts [to reform the Art History Department] from government bureaucratic structures as well as from the mental rigidity of particularly conservative art historians and radical 'conceptual' artists … in their abortive attempts to agree on an 'integrated' program… taught me a great deal about the influence of traditional structures on particular educational policies' (TGA:786/5/6/11)*

The art history staff had not been changed completely, as was the suggestion of the Atkinson/Sandle proposal, and the student forum reported in *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973: 209-210). The conservative interests of the majority of the staff meant that whatever was going to change was going to have to be a compromise (DH: 84-86). Barbara Reise's conclusion here reiterated A&Ls complaint that there were entrenched ideas and values in the art college which were not easily displaced, the difference being that in some ways Reise saw the 'mental rigidity' of A&L as being symptomatic of that problem. However, Reise's efforts were not entirely in vain, and there are some signs of the art history provision becoming markedly more relevant, contemporary and involving the studio teachers. The projects and lectures she devised complemented the Theory of Art components, in that they were firmly set in the art world and would have helped the

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[54] By 1969-70 this was very much in line with the effects of the Hornsey sit-ins and rethinking that was to become recommended in the Coldstream/Summerson report, which, in addition to liberating Design somewhat from a fine art dominion also tried to encourage the integration of studio and art history/Complementary studies concerns (NACAE/NCDAD, 1970: especially para 8; Lynton, 1970).

students gain knowledge about contemporary art that would perhaps have been assumed knowledge in the other parts of the course (GH: 200). [55] Expectations of the students were also higher; over the summer of 1969, a reading list was sent out to all students then entering onto first year. The list reflects a combination of texts A&L used in their teaching and those used in the art history department. Again the rift or compromise between the different approaches is evident, as we have students instructed to read Kenneth Clarke alongside John Passmore and JJC Smart.

Much of the evidence for this change in approach to art history, and Reise's central involvement, can be found in Barbara Reise's own collection of papers, now at the Tate Archive. From 1968/69 onwards the lecture lists change quite dramatically. The second year course in 1968 has an entire term on the 18th to the mid-19th Century with a third year course then picking up the thread and continuing slowly through the late 19th century and early 20th Century until post-World War II work is reached in the last half of term two. The first year programme for 1969-70 couldn't be more different, dealing entirely with post-war and contemporary art, entitled *Critical History of the Contemporary Art Scene* it initially intended to map out the 'critics, dealers, patrons, politics and magazines' biases' of the art scene, alongside the various 'isms' of both European and American factions (TGA: 786/5/6/6).[56] Barbara Reise not only brought the course up-to-date but also seemed to cut through the European/American dichotomy; providing an international frame of reference at a time when the USA still dominated.[57] That it was a

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[55] Barbara Reise also participated in the Theory of Art components, either through being in the audience, 'hanging around' or officially contributing (PP: 118-120). She mentions her participation in a job application a couple of years later for Leicester College of Art (TGA:786/5/6/12). Terry Atkinson did not like her participation particularly, due to her celebratory attitude to much of the art that both he and Baldwin were suspicious of, but she did contribute regularly (Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.) She was unequivocally popular with both Art Theory and non-Art Theory students.

[56] These are divided into 'Light, Air, Movement', 'Environmental Work', 'Serial Structures', Minimalist Sculpture, Shaped Canvas, Post-painterly Abstraction, Post-Cubist Sculpture, Pop and Abstract Expressionism. Interestingly, 'strong' Conceptual Art is not covered as it was possibly considered the mainstay of the nominal studio teaching.

[57] For example including artists such as Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel, Tetsumi Kudo, the Argentine Avant-garde and Nikki de Saint Phalle among other, more expected American and European artists. Dave Rushton mentions that Barbara Reise was important in general for broadening the discussion within the various spheres she operated in (Commercial and Public Galleries, Studio International, Art Education). See also Lynda Morris' assessment of her achievements in (Morris, 2014: 159).

critical history made it not only more amenable to the critical nature of the rest of the new curriculum, but also opened up the seminars to more debate and contestation. The effect was felt keenly by the students, some of whom were interviewed for this thesis. Her fresh approach was made all the more appealing by the fact that she was someone who seemed to 'have a direct connection' to the real art world, but also took the students seriously and seemed to personally care about both their work and education (DH: 46, PP: 120, DR: 62, 64; GH: 198-200).[58]

Reise set up innovative ways of integrating the studio and art history lessons by including art production and performance as valid outputs for the students. They could also work in groups, and there would be critiques by both art history and studio staff. One effect of introducing dramatically different formats was to engage erstwhile 'traditionalist' staff, who begin to participate in these projects. Ros Billingham, while not in favour of the Theory of Art lectures, is remembered as having conducted one of the more adventurous projects devised by Reise (DH: 176; DR: Pt. 2,59). Presented with a list, over one term the students are 'required to present a work in the artistic life-style of one of the artists named.' This is then followed by a three hour critique and discussion with members from both studio and general studies departments. Examples of projects that no doubt derived from this approach are 'The Barnett Newman Project' and 'The Robert Morris Project' (see PP: 396),[59] both by Rushton and Pilkington and 'The Last Home Movie', which used

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[58] See also Keith Wests draft of a memoir, which is held in the Tate Archive, and details Reise's time at Coventry and after, from a student's perspective (TGA 20121/7).

[59] Reference to the 'The Robert Morris Project' can be found in Lynda Morris' Thesis (in Morris, 2014: 49), attributed to an Audio-Visual project. Elena Crippa notes that it was not part of the course of study (according to Rushton), but its similarity to these projects cannot be coincidental. It was a restaging of a Robert Morris felt piece, much as was used in A Noisy Channel (Statements 1, 1970), which was filmed and discussed afterwards (DR: 76). The discussion draws the Morris piece into questions of authorship, fabrication and the history of aesthetic judgement (Rushton, 2013: 23-28). A description of 'The Barnett Newman Project', which also had a critical function, can also be found in Elena Crippa's thesis from her exchange with Philip Pilkington, which is worth quoting in full:

> *'a multimedia presentation that lasted approximately 30 minutes... a projection of slides of as many paintings by Newman as the students could source, as well as... edited recordings of conversations between the students and Barbara Reise about Newman's work; recordings of the students reading Newman's articles; recordings of Olivier Messiaen's organ music; parts of an interview by the critic*

Robert Rauschenberg as subject matter, by Dave Hirons (when a student).[60] They all took the form of extended projects involving sound, projection, filming and, in Hiron's project, performance. Alongside Art & Language's highly discursive seminars, Barbara Reise freed up the lectures and seminars and involved the students much more, as Graham Howard remembers:

> *I mean his notes on sculpture that appeared in Artforum were just the sorts of things that would get talked about in Barabara Reise's seminars… It was much more participatory in that I remember she encouraged people to lead seminars … to actually pick topics and lead seminars etc. …you can start to be a bit more creative, think about this a bit further, which was a bit interesting.* (GH: 200)

Indeed, Ted Harrison, who was a printing tutor at Coventry and involved in printing Art-Language material, wrote of her influence that 'although her sympathies never seemed committed in that direction [i.e. the direction A&L were pursuing], she made possible to some extent the acceptance of art theory as a proper activity of an art student' (TGA 786/5/6/12).

Thanks to their various connections within minimal and conceptual art, forged by either originating from or visiting the USA, Barbara Reise and Art & Language also offered a trans-Atlantic peer group from which to draw visiting lecturers to the college. This was to build on a tradition set up by Harry Weinberger, who had also organised a long-standing

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David Sylvester with Newman…; and further recording of the two students commenting on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's praise for the authentic character of primitive modes of life.' (Crippa, 2014: 264-265)

[60] This seems to have taken place a little earlier, under the supervision of Ros Billingham, however the project seems to have stemmed out of a similar brief, involving as it did an entering into the imagined life-world of the chosen artist. In this case it was Robert Rauschenberg contemplating a portrait of Descartes by Frans Hals (DH: 176). Again, despite the account not quite fitting the similarities between the projects and the brief suggest a common lineage. All three projects mentioned involved multiple processes and seem in some respects to go far beyond the project brief, which is probably also why they seem noteworthy or memorable to the interviewees. Stretching back to 1966 performance seems to have been quite prominent within Fine Art, with theatre being part of Complementary Studies (DH: 8) and Michael Baldwin producing his Robert Morris project (H&O, 1982: 80n.18; Atkinson, 1992: 46).

programme of visiting lectures of varied artistic and literary backgrounds.[61] Visits to art colleges was part and parcel of many artists activity (as it is today), but the period from 1969-1971, however, was a particularly busy one for visiting artists, writers and gallerists to Lanchester Polytechnic. The list is extensive and comprised of Sol Le Witt, Carl Andre, Richard Hoggart, Seth Seiglaub, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Les Levine, Mel Bochner along-side soon to be Art & Language regulars such as Joseph Kosuth, Ian Burn, Mel Ramsden and Charles Harrison (see TGA: 786/5/6/11; RvB/MF/PS: 31; PP: 144; Morris, 2014: 159; Atkinson, 1992: 26; 2011; 2016, pers. comm.). This list also reflects Barbara Reise's involvement with *Studio International* magazine as this list coincides with their roll-call of contributors; through Reise, Charles Harrison was first introduced to the work of Art & Language and subsequently invited to talk by Atkinson.

As has been mentioned briefly before, Barbara Reise had a productive antagonistic stance towards the activities of Art & Language. Her popularity with the students, her involvement in the art world, that she was articulate and incisive, all put her in good stead to be a worthy counter to Art & Language (not to mention the 'traditionalists' she was employed by). All the Art Theory students liked Reise; many reported that Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin did not. Her sardonic annotations to the Romanticism course document (Appendix D3) display a suspicion as to the coercive and illiberal nature of the new course, and a desire to find holes in its construction of topics and presentation of history. Ted Harrison's above statement regarding her contribution to the delivery of the course and the Art Theory students' unanimous recollection of her as a positive factor to the course suggest that she provided a productive, alternative voice.

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[61] These included Jim Dine, Quentin Crisp, George Melly, Iris Murdoch, Richard Demarco and Father Cyril Barrett (PP: 46; DH:8).

Summary

In summary, the art history department[62] did shed much of the old potted art history style, as characterised by the 'From the Renaissance to the Modern Period' approach (including its peculiar focus on the 18th Century and Heraldry). The course as a whole was a combination of the 'Romanticism (Theory of Art)' seminars, which happened on a weekly basis, although the spilled out into all aspects of the course, and were largely taught by Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson; constant less-structured discussion in the studios; 6 week 'Technos' and 'Audio Visual' blocks; weekly epistemology lectures and seminars; and reconstituted and more relevant art history lectures and seminars. In spite of this apparent fullness of programme and the initial success of its implementation, there were a few problems from the start. Firstly, as has been mentioned, the main body of students did not expect such an alien programme when enrolling into the art college and so many did not follow the topics mentioned above for more than a few sessions. This was due to a mixture of incomprehension, disinterest and objection toward the course, its methods and values. Secondly, the programme focused almost entirely on the first year, the second and third year students were not receiving much attention from the studio staff most heavily involved in the new Art Theory Programme.[63] This was both a blind spot of Art & Language and a symptom of the emptiness of the programme that went

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[62] The complementary studies provision did not feature in most accounts, possibly having been absorbed into the new structure. The teaching of Stuart Knight and Don Mears' (who was initially employed as a complementary studies teacher) philosophy lectures, the first focussing on phenomenology (Knight, 1971: 1-5) and *Nouvelle Vague* Cinema (PP: 32), and the second as discussed earlier on in the thesis under 'Epistemology'. This was reframed in terms of the Art Theory Programme, but perhaps occupied a similar space in the timetable.

[63] There are a few caveats to this statement. This was not true of the organisation of the art history element; there are equally integrated art history assignments for the second years, including a seminar on painting taught jointly by Weinberger and Reise. Term one was on Contemporary Art, term two on Surrealism and term three on either A) 'Romantic' Visual Research or B) Abstraction. These were taught jointly by art history and studio teachers (Ros Billingham, George Wall and Brian Love) all of whom were the less inclined towards the Art Theory Programme. This does show that some activity was going on and there was some teaching (both studio and history) for the 2nd Year. (see TGA786/5/6/3). Those students who did show interest in the theoretical topics, such as Alan Villaweaver and Graham Howard, who were then in their third year, were obviously taught by the Art & Language associated teachers (GH:104-106; 152). The project set by Michael Baldwin, is also purportedly for second year students, although the first year students also responded to it.

before. This would be one cause of the antagonism that developed in the second year of the Art Theory Programme's existence.

Auto-Didacticism and Research Programmes

The educational activity of Art &Language can be seen in relationship to the autodidactic aspect of art education. Baldwin approved of the time and space, in one sense, that an art student could 'avail oneself of' within an art college to pursue their own interests (MB/MR: 55). That this resulted largely in a solipsistic attitude and atomised mode of production was the problem, and that was largely due to the lack of coherence, aggressive individualism and intellectual laziness within the teaching staff. Art students therefore inherit a tradition of auto-didacticism, which A&L harnessed to avail themselves of the space and time an art college provides. Auto-didacticism leads quickly to issues of class in that there is a strong tradition of worker auto-didacticism (Williams, 1961: 161-5; Roberts, 2016: 134), and in many ways the self-taught trajectory of the first generation, Atkinson, Bainbridge, Hurrell and Baldwin, is linked to a sense of taking the kind of philosophy that was the domain of Oxbridge in order to bring it down to the art school and be used to different ends.

The idea of an autodidactic cadre within the art school brings up many of the central themes of this thesis and of A&Ls practice. John Roberts sees it as an escape from the inherent provincialism of the education on offer, as they sought to 'intellectualize their practice as the basis for divesting their art from the provincialism of the prevailing culture in Britain, and in the process recover the merits of 'autodidacticism' for artists' (Roberts, 2016: 127). Indeed their autodidact position within the institution implicitly critiques it, as Roberts goes on to write: '…their scholarship is based on the transformation of the autodidactic ideal of non-institutional learning into a non-academic critique of ruling bourgeois (modernist as much as anti-modernist) accounts of authorship.' (Roberts, 2016: 141). Philip Pilkington very much sees their work while at Coventry as an autodidactic process in spite of an institution that wanted to oust them (Pilkington, 1997: 14; PP: 74). Roberts more than any other writer on A&L has addressed A&L as a research-like operation (Roberts, 2007: 129-30) and indeed this is one of the legacies of their origins within the art school. That the Art Theory Programme was within the art school is important, and it is significant that it repurposed the space and time offered by an art school education.

The idea of a Radical Academy or a 'Counter Course' style course criticism were central to many student movements during the late sixties. The actions of the students at Coventry were in no way linked to this, at least not initially, and many would want to keep a distance from some of the ideas within this movement. That stated, there developed (as shall be evidenced later on in this thesis) some desire among some students to develop something along the lines of a counter course critique. That none of the groups described

in this thesis actually managed to create anything sustainable within these frameworks, either as a sustainable Art Theory Programme or a sustained many-authored project of course criticism, is one of the more bathetic aspects of this thesis and testimony to the lack of fit between their ideals and the general ideals of art education.

The 'Anti-University', the penguin *Counter Course* - one of several publications - (Dworkin, 1997: 128-9; Pateman (ed.), 1972: Cockburn & Blackburn, 1969), interlinked with the events of 1968, and socially progressive ideas of education after the paperback publications of Illich and Friere, among others, were popular throughout British higher education. This suggests a receptiveness to certain types of criticality and experimentation within educational institutions, and there were many overlaps with the social concerns of A&Ls support of student agency within the 'classroom' (A&L, 1975: 28; MB/MR: 203-5). It was never central, however, to A&Ls concerns, and despite this possible conducive environment, A&Ls radical ideas were never popular in the way that those of the *Counter Course* etc. were.

However, what the auto-didactic, semi-autonomous cadres of students and teachers eventually moved closer to was more an idea of a research programme. This is typified by the indexing project that existed after 1972 (but was worked upon through 1971) and had roots and similarities with the diploma show at Coventry. Employing the concepts of Imre Lakatos and Paul Feyerabend (Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970; Feyerabend, 1975),[64] alongside more complex multi-modal logics and linguistic theories (Pilkington & Rushton, 1973), A&L shifted from some attempt to engage with definitional and propositional content of art, and its support languages, to producing a much more complex and intersubjective process and mapping of that process.

If we look at the aims of the *Fine Art Policy Statement* (Appendix B3) to produce autonomous cadres of students working on self-directed projects, then the course was successful in that Pilkington, Rushton, Lole and Smith in particular, because of a range of unforeseen circumstances, were working independently to construct their own progressive heuristic programme. Influenced by the shift in methodology to ideas of problem shift, falsification and heuristics, the 'cadre' started to contribute meaningfully to the wider Art & Language project and in no small way to the indexing.[65]

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[64] Here I am referencing the later publication, *Against Method*, which is the culmination of articles written in the preceding years and which Art & Language would have read.

[65] For a look at the indexing as a research programme see (Bailey, 2016: 44-76; Wood, 1992).

1970-71

The curriculum described in the first sections of this chapter is associated with the first year of the course; the structure being seen by some to have quickly become less rigid. Elena Crippa mentions in her dissertation that this is due to both a 'lack of documentation and recollection' and the fact that 'students were increasingly encouraged to develop their thinking in their own reading and writing' (Crippa, 2014: 252), both of which I would agree with. That the structure started to become more freeform seems likely and the relationship between A&L practice and A&L teaching changed during this period to a quasi-research group, in which the more dedicated students were treated more as apprentices or co-workers, and the style of education was even more geared towards a form of 'group learning' (though not in any standard educationalist sense of that term). The reading and learning fed into discussions which in turn fed into the production of texts, which were then edited and discussed. In that A&L never really saw a split between their group practice and their teaching, this was perhaps a foreseen development for the art theory students' second year.

In the second year of the programme there were a number of students who enrolled on the Dip.A.D. and who chose what had now come to be known as the 'Art Theory Course', within the Dip.A.D. Fine Art.[66] Those who enrolled onto this part of the course were Paul Tate, Lynne Lemaster, Stephen Dove, Geoffrey Richings, Ian Johnston and Alan Robinson. Pete Smith enrolled onto the second year after being advised to by Mike Sandle when at Stourbridge and because of a particular interest in the contents of the course (RvB/MF/PS: 5, 337-341). The course it seemed had become known as a 'Conceptual Art' or a theoretically heavy course in some respects and so, with this cohort, there were students who had enrolled on the Dip.A.D. from elsewhere in the country who wished to study the Art Theory Programme specifically. The polytechnic did not dramatically change their literature however; the 1970 prospectus for Fine Art (Painting)

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[66] Terry Atkinson remembers that 'you signed up to do the fine art course and you then took the choice as to whether you came to art theory' (Atkinson, 2011: np) If you didn't enrol on this particular course of learning it did not preclude you from the dipping in and out of the courses seminars ad hoc, as had been the case the previous year.

being almost identical in wording to the 1968 prospectus (MTC, 1968). The General Studies department describes the inclusion of 'current affairs and the aesthetic and philosophical sources which have contributed to the environment today' and 'the development of philosophical thought' (Lanchester Polytechnic, 1970: 19 at TGA: 786/5/6/2). The description offers, as would perhaps be expected in a prospectus, a very general account but it is clear that the influence A&L had had on the curriculum was not considered in the production of the prospectus. It is another indicator, however, of how the Art Theory Programme was still running as an unofficial course within a course, even to the extent that it was broadcasting itself independently of the institution that hosted it through the student publications and lectures in other colleges (see below and DR: 46).

Art Student Intake, Academic Qualifications and Student Relations

At this point it is appropriate to discuss the type of student that seemed to have been attracted both by the Dip.A.D. Fine Art course and the Art Theory Programme. The type of candidate expecting to go to art college was in a state of flux during the 1960s for many of the reasons that are implicit in the accounts I have given within the thesis. The changes, in summary, moved away from an emphasis on manual and technical skills, a kind of rote learning of stylistic conventions, and little in the way of written or formal discursive work, attracting a candidate with practical facility in certain material and processes that wishes to be trained to improve that facility. The candidate's verbal or written facility would not be considered, and neither would their ability in any other area that didn't impinge directly on their ability to produce work deemed of an appropriate quality for examination. This changed through the process of professionalisation and academicisation into a broad liberal education with the history and sensibility of Fine Art and visual acuity at the heart of all disciplines. The type of candidate this would attract was hoped to be of a more well-rounded and liberal nature that would be educated rather than trained in a manner that could be comparable to that of the university arts and humanities subjects.

With this broad background in mind the students that were positively disposed to the Art Theory Programme were all very typical of the aim of the Coldstream Reforms to draw in

students with higher academic ambitions. They all had good 'A' level results, were all also considering university subjects as an option, but chose to go to art college.[67] The prospectus for Lanchester Polytechnic, quoting almost directly from the Coldstream Report, is very keen to impress on prospective students (and one presumes their parents) the degree equivalence and credibility of the Dip.A.D. programme:

> *Courses leading to the Diploma in Art & Design (DipAD) in Fine Art (Painting) are intended to be broadly comparable in standard to first degree courses at British Universities. The DipAD may be awarded with first and second class honours to students who achieve an exceptionally high standard.* (Lanchester Polytechnic, 1970 - TGA:786/5/6/2)

With this appeal to people with a broad, ambitious outlook, by the late-sixties and early seventies we can assume that a shift in the demographic of art colleges had occurred. The ability to attract students from all around the country, while potentially affecting the college's immediate community role detrimentally, meant the cross-section of candidates was broadened and, as the effects of broader educational reforms began to take full effect, the Dip.A.D. not only increased in number of students over the sixties but also in the diversity and breadth of their qualifications (Piper, 1971; 1973). The students that came onto the foundation course, or were attracted to the Art Theory Programme, could be considered as prime examples of this aspiration; grant in aid students from atypical, non-artistic backgrounds and all but one avowedly working class.

Art College in many ways has been heralded as a place of social mobility, before and after the Coldstream reforms, but the upwardly mobile working class artist was in reality notable only as an exception. The 'theory' students at Coventry often expressed

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[67] Accounts to this effect can be found in the interviews (PP: 6; DH: 114; GH: 8; Rushton, 2016), which was unusual to the extent that in reality not that many applicants to art schools had good A'Levels at the time, in fact the requirement focused on 5 O Levels (see Piper, 1971; 1973; NACAE/NCDAD, 1970). This was also the case regarding Paul Tate and Rob Brown (Tate, 2013: pers. comm.; Brown, 2016: pers. comm.). In fact the sense was that for many it would not have been an option to go to art college if the subject had not gained this slight boost in respectability from the Coldstream Reforms. This echoes John Hilliard who, in an interview with Alex Massouras, noted it was his 'parents who were gratified' by the qualification of the Dip.A.D. (Llewellyn (ed.), 2015: 162, n.25).

disappointment at the intellectual calibre and work ethic of their fellow students (GH: 316), and Philip Pilkington explicitly linked this to class, describing the art college environment as 'a socioeconomic monoculture, coming in to meet all the middle classes, who were thick.' (PP: 72) He was attracted to A&L partly because it was avowedly working class in attitude (PP: 6). This sense of entering into a world that was traditionally the preserve of the middle-classes (DR: Pt. 3, 191) was common among the interviews and while technically the art college is not the domain of the middle classes entirely by design - many of the regional colleges were setup partially to train working class people - the sense that Fine Art in particular was the domain of the cultured middle classes did ring true. Class in the art college is a contentious thingand to address it fully is beyond this thesis but, in thinking about the types of students at Coventry, and by extension Hull, Newport and Trent Polytechnic (discussed later in this thesis), and the tensions that occurred it is worth considering class-based attitudes at the time and the educational background of the students.[68]

Art Students Observed (M&W, 1973: 51-61) looks at the background of the students at 15 schools in the West Midlands intending to study both art and non-art subjects in the period 1967-69 in terms of the *Registrar General's Social Class* structure, which takes into account occupation as an indicator. The small sample that was taken from sixth forms in the area was heavily weighted towards the top end of this occupational scale, due to the comparatively small amount of comprehensive and secondary modern schools included in the study.[69] Within the sample of students in *Art Students Observed,* 62% were from private or grammar schools (M&W, 1973: 271). The substance of this part of the study is on pupil opinions and so, because of the small sample and the lack of triangulation with

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[68] The roots of the publicly funded art college and who it was intended for are discussed in Mervyn Romans' essay *Social Class and the Origin of Public Art and Design Education in Britain: In Search of a Target Group* (Romans, ed., 2005: 55-65), which explores how contested both class definitions have been at different periods and the assumed 'target group' for art education was at its inception. An idea of how art schools have been sites of working class culture during the mid-20th Century can be gleaned from many sources, including (Massouras, 2015; Walker, 2003). Anna Coatman addresses this somewhat in a more recent THE article (Coatman, 2016)

[69] The scale was from I to V, I being Professional Occupation and V being unskilled occupation.

any other source, the results are both non-generalisable and dependant on many other variables.

There are a couple of findings within the study focussing on the type of people going to art college and the qualities of student at both Coventry College of Art in general, and these seem relevant when thinking about those subscribing to the Art Theory Programme. Firstly, the students going on to do a Dip.A.D. Fine Art did not necessarily identify art as the subject they excelled most at; only 31% said 'unequivocally yes', art was their best subject. The majority (59-65%) had also considered studying other subjects before art (M&W, 1973: 59).[70] This goes someway to corrode the cliché that people would study art because of an exclusive skill-set that is markedly different from those needed by other subjects, and paints the picture of a large proportion of reasonably widely-educated candidates. Secondly, that art was much more encouraged within the recently integrated 'comprehensive schools, with in many cases new buildings, innovative teachers and, for what it's worth, a less class-bound, more progressive 'mandate' and educational ideology' (M&W, 1973: 56). The ambiguities of this finding (i.e. what approach, tradition or type was encouraged) mean it is hard to draw any conclusion from this, but needless to say that many of the students studying the A&L-influenced programmes I interviewed came from comprehensives and did not necessarily take art as a *faute de mieux* option.

The students included in M&W's study, therefore, were considered to have a broader range of interests (architecture, humanities and science (M&W, 1973: 59)). They were also predominantly from families who had managerial, technical or professional occupations and were educated at grammar or public schools.[71] The class bias of education was a hot

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[70] These two different criteria resulted in 'nearly a third of the Fine Art students both [giving] a subject other than art as having been their best and [having] considered other careers' (M&W, 1973: 60)

[71] Writing from a position several years later than the end of the study proper, M&W impute that the breadth of interest in the students 'may help to explain why so much of their activity was either quasi-literary or quasi-scientific rather than artistic in any traditional sense' (M&W, 1973: 271) By this one would assume the more conceptually inclined students, and in particular the 'theory students' were being referred to. One attitude of these students and their tutors was that art was normative in the same way as any other discipline. M&W conclude their section with the consideration that, 'in pursuit of a valid modern concept of art, the student will reject the idea of the artists outlook being different from that of others, may indeed seek to equate his role with roles more highly regarded in the modern world, that of the scientist for example' (M&W, 1973: 60).

topic at the time, with the proposal of comprehensive schools and polytechnics heralded by some as offering up a more level playing field (Robinson, 1968:60; MacLure, 1973: 301). As part of the polemic in favour of the polytechnics offering a new alternative to an outdated university system, *The New Polytechnics*, by Eric Robinson (Robinson, 1968),[72] also looks at how biased the GCE exams were towards a particularly cloistered and patrician mode of education. This is in line with the kind of argument made during the Hornsey sit-ins (Tickner, 2008: 42-48). The clause in the Coldstream Report that allowed applicants to be admitted without such qualifications providing their portfolio was strong enough was included in order to address these issues, but did not, in the Hornsey students' opinion, go far enough in encouraging a non-traditional student.

This goes someway to revealing both the truth and exaggeration of the claim that it was a 'socio-economic mono-culture' and that the students were largely 'thick'. This reflects the sense of the art theory students demanded a much a higher intellectual standard and a much more critical and confident attitude. The relatively high academic level of the students (for an art college) did not mitigate the fact that most of the students were seen as inadequate with regards their critical faculties. The characterisation of a middle class attitude within the art college followed on from the idea that painters, of whatever ilk, were acquiescing to the patrician cultural gatekeepers operating in the British art college, towards which it was considered necessary by the art theory students that a progressive or antagonistic and critical stance should be taken.

From the perspective of the other students, the art theory students may have seemed aggressive, pompous or aloof. Keith West's memoirs of his time as a student in Coventry (1965-69) recalls, 'The typing pool, their careful selection and dismissive attitude toward our group appeared to indicate they had special status.' (TGA 2000121/7/1: 80). West was associated with another group of students who, now in their third year, were firmly self-identified painters, and his memoirs depict a particularly antagonistic relationship with

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[72] Especially p.70-91. The discussion centres on a justification for dignifying non-academic achievement as having complex intellectual requirements. Pertinent also to this thesis is his distinction between Liberal, Vocational and Academic Education which assume similar ideas to those that divided up courses in Art & Design.

those of the 'typing pool', who would 'isolate individual members of our group and harangue them with '…why are you painting in the second half of the twentieth century? Painting is dead…'' (TGA20121/7/1: 77). This was the situation when the students first moved into the new, purpose built art college in 1969, and pre-dates the Art Theory Programme proper, but gives an indication of the kind of questioning that started among the students. David Rushton articulated the position of the art theory students:

> *You should be here to learn, you should be here to criticise, you should be here to take yourself in different directions, not to sort of arrive from foundation, to cruise for three years, to fulfil your dreams. I mean, that just didn't seem like an education or practice.* (DR: 68)

So the general attitude was to try to provoke some reflection on the part of the painters as to their unquestioning pursuit of painting. As Philip Pilkington points out, 'They probably thought we were stuck up prats, and they may well have been right! (laughter). I don't care!' (PP: 98).[73] There was certainly a very clear assumption that it was hard for painting especially to be considered a critical or cognitively interesting practice. Their antagonism was partly alleviated by the separate working practices, operating in separate 'cubicles' within the building. Indeed, during the course the relationship between the student groups (painters/sculptors and art theorists) was most of the time one of mutual exclusivity.[74]

Another central issue that came between the students not engaged in art theory and those students and tutors who were, was simply that of vocabulary. Elena Crippa mentions a student, Marti Hall, who began at Coventry in 1970 and quotes from her 2011 essay on the 'Art Theory Course' in which she remembers that the course was 'unfathomable for the majority of the students' in large part because of the 'generally impenetrable and obscure language that characterised most of the seminars' (Hall quoted in Crippa, 2014:

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[73] David Rushton also comments on how the tone, especially from them as students, would have come across as incredibly patronising (DR: 46). In essence, that was the intention.

[74] See (PP: 98) and (DR: 48).

256). Keith West, in his memoirs of his time at Coventry, also describes Atkinson's 'opaque vocabulary, psychological jargon and verbal constructions which, rather than illuminate actually locked dialogue, and certainly all opposition. By not clarifying his use of words and terminology, he retained the upper hand.' (TGA20121/7/1: 80).[75] This kind of reaction was also evident at Hull (see later section), and was one of the major factor that caused offense, as it was imputed to be malicious and corrosive to the well-being and peace of mind of the students.

Initial Assessment Problems

Graham Howard, though not initially involved with the 'Art Theory Course' as commonly defined, but who eventually contributed to the discussion with A&L and those students on the programme proper, graduated in the summer of 1970 with the work *Diagrammata.* In many senses it was a precursor as to what could be produced as a workable diploma show, based largely on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and the relationship between ascribing truth values to images and propositions and 'seeing as' or 'noticing an aspect' (see Wittgenstein, 1976: 193-210; GH: 98). The piece consisted of essays elaborating on this idea in terms of art work and using the art work, 'Diagrammata' as a noun, much in the same way as other works by A&L use 'The Art of David Bainbridge' as a propositional unit, explored in terms of authorship and other factors (see A-L 1.3, 1970: 7-8). It was also a test case in the possible controversies that may arise when producing a text based art work:

> *I was the first person as far as I know anywhere to basically exhibit text as work for a fine art degree… it was problematic. And basically Terry literally came to me and said 'Graham, it's a bit of tricky situation', he said, 'basically half of the staff want to fail*

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[75] There is a tendency, possibly for dramatic effect, to characterise and demonise the Art Theory tutors and students which compares unfavourably with accounts that have a less hysterical tone. Dave Hirons, more amusingly, remembers the constant bewilderment of the students: 'There was this, that first year, the first year that they recruited was this one guy… he had this thing about Mike saying, 'I don't understand what you're saying. I don't understand. You keep using these six inch words!' It was all that kind of thing all the time. The students couldn't keep up.' (DH: 86)

you and the rest of us want to give you a first'… They basically said, 'Would you be satisfied if it was a 2.1?'. I said 'I don't care Terry, it's fine' you know, it doesn't make any difference really… it suddenly meant that a door had been set ajar at least which then enabled the possibility of people … to then do things that were of a similar form, if you like. (GH: 102-110)

His precedent didn't actually stop there from being future controversy regarding assessment. Howard's progress through his Dip.A.D. is charted in *Art Students Observed*, although the main body of the study had finished before his final year. It does show that his ideas and approach were challenged regularly both by Mike Sandle and other tutors[76] who were suspicious of written work as studio practice. Howard's separation from the 'Art Theory Course', his status as a singular anomaly in the year with Terry Atkinson's support, and his ability to deflect conflict meant that he managed to get to graduation and produce a diploma show on his own terms, albeit with a compromised grade.

In the second year there was both a growing confidence about the programme but also a growing opposition to it from certain members of staff within the college, and indeed this was to be the final year that the programme was to run recognisably as it was intended in the *Fine Art Policy Statement*.

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[76] Graham Howard's pseudonym is Arthur (although he pointed out to me they accidentally use his real name on a couple of occasions, which makes it easier). Mike Sandle is Gibson and Terry Atkinson Coutts. See especially (M&W, 1973: 156-60).

Continuation of the Programme

The Art Theory Programme for the first year of the second cohort, therefore, was much like that for the first cohort, for those that chose to partake. Romanticism, Theory of Art, Audio Visual and Technos were, nominally, all still running (DH: 109-115). Romanticism's reading list seems to have been modified and streamlined, possibly informed by the areas of progress made by those in the first cohort, editing out the sources and texts that did not lead to anywhere fruitful. The programme would also have been modified in liaison with a more open and up-to-date art history programme and by the changing focus of A&L's concerns.[77]

Included are some near-current writing on contemporary art, such as those by Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, Joseph Kosuth and Michael Fried.[78] This firmly places the art context within a largely US focused, late-modernist discourse that centres around the tensions produced by shifts in emphasis ('significant form' vs. 'theatricality'), expanded conception of what constitutes an art object ('dematerialisation'), and the position of 'strong conceptualism' in Kosuth's 'Art After Philosophy'.[79] There are also texts on art criticism, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Science, Ethics and Metaphysics. The Art Theory component, therefore, had evolved from the first year, but still stuck to the same general tenor and wide range of topics.

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[77] The full reading list, as I don't have a facsimile, is worth quoting here: 'G.H. Von Wright *The Varieties of Goodness* (1-20) and *Time Truth and Contradiction*; E. Toms *Being, Negation and Logic* (ch II IV); K. Popper *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Chapter II; JJC Smart *Philosophy and Scientific Realism* 16-94, 116 - ?; W. Heisenberg *Physics and Philosophy*; E. Panofsky *Studies in Iconology* (esp.intro); Elton (ed.) *Aesthetics and Language*; G.E. Moore *Some Problems in Philosophy*; I Kant *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*; Lazerowitz, M. *The structure of Metaphysics*; The Problems of Criticism nos. 17, 27, 47, 67 all in 67-68 Artforum; M Fried *Art and Objecthood*,; R Morris, *Notes on Sculpture;* W. Rubin *Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition;* L. Lippard and J. Chandler *The Dematerialisation of Art;* J. Chandler *The Last Word in Graphic Art*; J. Kosuth *Art after Philosophy*; Atkinson and co. *Status and Priority*.' (DRA, 1970).

[78] Lippard & Chandler and Kosuth texts can be found in (Alberro & Stimson, 1999: 46-50 & 159-177) and Fried's text is included within (Harrison & Wood, 2003: 835-46) alongside Morris' *Notes on Sculpture* which is also included (see above).

[79] For the account of the implications brought up with the move on from the late-minimal proto-Conceptualism to 'strong' conceptualism of Kosuth see Peter Osborne's essay in (ed. Newman & Bird, 1999: 47-65) and Kosuth's Introduction to (Kosuth, 1970: 1-4).

Although it is easy to overstate this idea of the reputation of the course, and many of my interviewees were careful not to, the course did have several mechanisms by which the students and teachers were able to broadcast beyond the boundaries of Lanchester Polytechnic (DR: 46). The expanding horizons of Art & Language, and the increasing lateral connections between students outwith Coventry, were an important feature of the programme's development. One of the key mechanisms was the publication of magazines containing the work of the students (and occasionally teachers), and which contained set essays from the programme, but in many ways followed the production model of *Art-Language* as a professional-looking 'journal'.

Statements and Analytical Art

The first cohort of students had, even in their first year, started to produce their own magazine, *Statements*, which was published in January 1970. Some of the essays from this have been cited earlier in this thesis as they were direct products of assignments set on the Technos and Romanticism courses of the first year. The magazine was edited by David Rushton and Philip Pilkington and its purpose was set out in the introduction to the first issue:

> *'It was thought necessary by a number of students to establish an outlet for work, primarily taking written form, to an audience not directly concerned with the course, who might find interest in the work produced within such a framework.'* (Statements, 1970a: 1)

This outward looking approach was one contribution to forming a small awareness of the course and a small student network with Newport College of Art, Hull College of Art and, to a lesser extent, Trent Polytechnic (where Victor Burgin was teaching). As their tutor, Michael Baldwin remembers this was actively encouraged:

> *'…there were the horizontal connections between the students themselves, so the students in Newport were in contact with the students from Hull and the students from Coventry and so on so there were these horizontal institutions that were being created by the*

students which again we were very concerned to encourage in as much as they were …
productive of critical activity on the part of the students relative to the institutions.'
(MB/MR: 172)

These 'horizontal institutions' made up of these connections between students, were important as part of fostering a critical discourse that cut through the established institutions of the art school and their established mode of operation. In this way it was also a way of putting across the model of learning, production and, not least because of its similarity to *Art-Language,* distribution that was advocated by the Art Theory Programme. That is to say, the magazine had a proselytizing function and acted as a bid for some other kind of legitimation from the wider world. *Statements* ran for two issues and the introduction to the second, in November 1970, shows something more of this aim:

'The achievements of Statements January 1970 remain fairly limited, apart from internal college feedback and some replied from Canada, there has only been a small response. It is hoped this issue with provoke a more varied reply and strengthen that already established… Participation from outside the faculty in the form of comment, criticism, articles, artwork will be considered for inclusion in the early 1971 issue.'
(Statements, 1970b: 1)

There was then, an anxious search for the void to speak back with this publication, and for a critical discussion of some kind to stem from it. *Art-Language,* which by the time of the second issue of *Statements* had only run to three publications itself,[80] was nevertheless well established as a format, and had begun to include products of the burgeoning trans-Atlantic conversation between future members of Art & Language New York (ALNY). That the work could be situated within a wider context through this channel was important for some of the students:

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[80] The delay between Vol.1 Iss.3 and Iss.4 was contemporaneous with the problems A&L were facing with opposition to the Art Theory Programme.

'between us we were fairly determined to make sure …[of] a context for the work, which Statements represented. We were getting feedback from outside fairly early on… that said in a way you are, you know, a parasite within the institution, but you are a parasite worth having, from an outside perspective.' (DR: 50)

As A&L had acquired a certain kind of cachet over their short existence among the small but reputedly cutting-edge Conceptual Art community, so too could their students and educational activities, in the hope that those who were perhaps not positively inclined to their activities within the college would at least see the value of their fashionability.

The journal also functioned quite simply as an 'end product', as Philip Pilkington explains:

'I think the project of doing the Analytical Art and Statements stuff I suppose was the thing that cemented it and gave us some kind of focus as well, that we could, ironically, have an end product.' (PP: 248)

The practice of editing and relating texts was one of the key activities within the Art Theory Programme, especially in the second year, and producing the magazines was one of the ways to both crystallise a collection of mini-investigations or projects undergone, but also to start to work collaboratively on one shared product (and thence problem or project). The students would go on to produce two further magazines under the title *Analytical Art* in July 1971 and 1972. These include the input of both cohorts of the course,[81] but also include many people who would be part of the expanded A&L community; Atkinson/Baldwin, Burn/Ramsden and Graham Howard, (who had graduated by that point). They were distributed among libraries in British art colleges, finding much more sympathetic reception and support towards their work from the polytechnic and art college librarians. The period that these magazines cover, from November 1970 to July 1972, mark a period where the structure of the Art Theory Programme changed dramatically, partly because of a natural development and expansion (1970-71) and partly through external manoeuvres impacting upon the programme and its curtailment (1971-72). They are the best indication as to how the

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[81] Although actually only Ian Johnstone and Paul Tate feature from cohort 2. There was more inclusion in Statements No. 2 of the second cohort.

content of the course developed and what the students focused on in their work, and when read alongside Art-Language and other unpublished texts by A&L, we can garner a sense of how the problems developed and what the discussions centred around.

Art-Language and Research-Like Practice

Art-Language Vol.1 No.1 was an initial indication of certain transatlantic connections with other artists producing textual work, roughly under the relatively new definition of Conceptual Art. The group's quick move to distance themselves from Conceptual Art from this point forward is widely written about, as is the inclusion of Joseph Kosuth as American Editor for the second and third issue.[82] A&L as a practice had, by late 1970 and early 1971, started to have a meaningful and critical relationship with New York artists, most significantly Joseph Kosuth, Mel Ramsden, Roger Cutforth and Ian Burn who subsequently began to publish in Art-Language. The texts in Art-Language begin to cross-refer and take the form of an on-going discussion, which was then further expanded by contributions from authors not associated with the group and not necessarily artists (Frederick Barthelme, Michael Thompson, Stephen McKenna, B. Bihari), in addition to selected students and teachers from Coventry (Graham Howard, Rob Brown and Dave Hirons, Stuart Knight). The breadth of approach and this increasing cross-reference was largely a result of trying to build a wider community of reader/participants into A&L as an ongoing conversation, centred around critiquing the language and assumptions of the art world and its subsidiaries (i.e. art colleges). The topics were more varied than this suggests, however. Graham Howards contributed several essays to both the June 1970 and November 1971 issues which included essays looking afresh at Thomas Aquinas, the function of logical notation in describing the development of the Mona Lisa, Possible World Theory and Modal Logic through Peter Geach and Saul Kripke. There were more central and A&L-centred concerns addressed by Atkinson and Baldwin; but also critiques of Marshall McLuhan, Hermeneutics and Phenomenology (Knight);[83] a different flavour of investigation into the art object, language and perception introduced by Ian Burn,

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[82] See, for instance, Chris Gilberts essay in (Stimson & Sholette, eds. 2007: 81-82) and (Godfrey, 1998: 170-2) and for a discussion on Art & Language's critical relation to Conceptual Art see (Harrison, 2001: 47- 62).

[83] Knights interest in Phenomenology and Situationism was very important to Pete Smith, as other members of the group were not sympathetic to this tradition (RvB/MF/PS: 469-481). Smith had transferred to Coventry at the suggestion of Mike Sandle, who was also interested in Merleau-Ponty.

Roger Cutforth and Mel Ramsden; and more poetic texts from people more at the periphery of the group in both the USA and the UK. The November 1971 issue is dominated by two large Atkinson/Baldwin texts, *Art Teaching* and *La Pensée Avec Images*, which will be looked at in more detail later on in this chapter.

The essays included in A-L during this period (1969-1972) have been seen as wilfully obscure and, as Peter Osborne puts it, contain 'severity of expression, obsessive formalisation, disjunctiveness and incompleteness' (Newman & Bird (eds.): 1999: 62). More sympathetic, but taking his cue from the hostile writings of Daniel Buren, William Wood describes much of the writing as 'sarcastic', 'baffling' and 'verbose' (Wood, 1992: 47). This is a common criticism of A&L writing as a whole, and echoes those accounts of teachers and students who encountered their lectures and found them incomprehensible or offensive. The relevance to this thesis, however, is in determining how the pedagogy and content of the course interrelates with the texts and work that was being produced, with half an eye to the professional art world, both by the students and in the widening A&L group.

The day to day activities of the students became even more an continual, on-going discussion, taking place in one of the student 'cubicles' allotted in the new building. It was in this period that group-learning, extended discussion, recording and transcription, individual and collective writing, and production were all activities out of which the group fashioned a practice. David Rushton remembered,

> *…we'd have our conversations… that would be the substance of which we might then go away and type up… and that informed… all the various articles… , things like Working Notes 1, Working Notes 2, things like that would just be bits and pieces of transcribed stuff here there and everywhere that we pulled together.* (DR: Pt. 3, 93-99)

It was also at this point when the first moves towards what was to become the indexing project are, in retrospect, noticeable. It is at this point when Art & Language start to function something like John Robert's description of them as a quasi-research group:

> *this model of learning became… a commitment to research-based group practice itself, reviving a model of studio practice that had not been seen since the 1920s… their work has the character of an extended and never-ending conversation, in which discussion*

disputation and shared learning and reading shape the outcome of research interests unfettered by scholastic, aesthetic or academic fealties. Research is the outcome of collaborative learning with all its attendant conflicts, confusions and misrepresentations. (Roberts, 2007: 129)

This account is in some ways guilty of both hyperbole and historicism, but it is an incredibly succinct and, when toned down, accurate summation of both the aspiration and the character of the group during the period 1970-1974. Specifically in the second year of the Art Theory Programme, 1970-71, this collective learning programme continued in the painting studios, operating more and more autonomously within the college, with its own idiolect and concerns.

The clarity and clear educational origin of many of the set texts in *Statements* is in contrast to how the subject matter is treated within the other texts of this, slightly later period. Indeed, although near paraphrases of philosophical works do exist within A&Ls writing, the journals make it quite clear that the use of these philosophical tools was as little to do with producing more philosophical texts as it was to producing more still lives. The writing started to demarcate territory which offered up this model of art practice and art writing that both colonised that of the critic, and, though not enamoured with art in any way, nevertheless was unapologetically the writing of people whose professional identity was firmly that of artists (whilst disavowing any dignity to that role). A-L, in this period, also represented one means of production and distribution which did not rely on the art gallery or curator for its display, and which was expanding its authorship and readership.[84] The journals were relatively affordable and could be made available through various public means, such as libraries. It was an important example not only to those students who then went on to produce *Statements* and An*alytical Art*, but also to those being produced in Newport[85], as a focus for this research-like practice.[86]

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[84] That the publications were often distributed as merchandise adjuncts to exhibitions compromises this, and is a central problem when talking about A&L's product and how it related to the art world.

[85] The publication also carried on through the more agitational groups in the mid-to-late seventies described in the penultimate chapter.

[86] As an aside, but an important one, another way that early A&L practice was embedded in the art school was the availability of reasonably good quality resources for production, namely printing presses. From

Nova Scotia College of Art & Design (NSCAD)

One other example of the reputation of A&L (and the programme) benefitting the art theory students was the offer from Nova Scotia College of Art & Design (NSCAD) in Halifax, Canada to contribute to an exhibition in their Mezzanine Gallery, then managed by Charlotte Townsend. NSCAD thrived on a steady stream of artists running through it and it ran several what would now be termed artists' residencies. Lynda Morris compared the programme there to that of Coventry in her MA Thesis (Morris, 2014: 51-53) as it grew a reputation for supporting minimal, textual and conceptual work; the college was equipped with a publishing house and printing facilities. David Rushton's abiding memory is the broad array of technical equipment and facilities, and the hi-tech, luxurious media with which the students could produce works, when compared with what was available at Lanchester Polytechnic (DR:76). It was a destination for students with a certain kind of attitude, as Lynda Morris points out (Morris, 2014: 51), and in many ways made up for its remote location by bringing the art world to its doors.[87]

The connections A&L held with New York fostered the invitation and, through the *Jane Sutton Memorial Grant* from the College, the funds were acquired by Terry Atkinson to send Pilkington and Rushton to Nova Scotia, New York and Chicago in March of 1971 (PP: 291). The perception of the 'Art Theory Course' at NSCAD was that it was an established and more 'sanctioned' affair than it was, and so, in order to live up to expectations, in a prankster-ish fashion, extra students were invented and work was

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early on the printing department had been the site of production for both Atkinson/Bainbridge/Baldwin/Hurrell, and Pilkington/Ruston, to type-set and print their early limited edition booklets, posters, prints (such as *Map not to Indicate…*(1967)) and copies of *Art-Language*, *Statements* and *Analytical Art*. Ted Harrison, who worked as a printer, was a close friend of Atkinson's and also knowledgeable of much of the philosophical material used by A&L. He and a print technician, Frank McGrath, were responsible for this side of their production. Ted Harrison eventually became dean of the college. For recollections of this see (PP: 382; DR: pt3, 171-3; GH: 132).

[87] The amount of students wanting to go NSCAD was partly catalysed by the Vietnam War, in the sense that many USA citizens were looking for ways to dodge the draft (Morris, 2014: pers. comm.; DR:72). Vietnam hangs eerily in the backdrop of all of these accounts. Terry Atkinson remembers seeing GIs queuing up on his trip to California in 1967 (Morris, 1996; Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.)

fabricated.[88] This is another example in which, alongside the very serious minded, po-faced rhetoric of some of the works, the students were also being encouraged to have both an irreverent and game-playing attitude to both the art college and the outside institutions with which they engaged.

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[88] See (DR:70) and (PP: 293-295). Confirmed by Paul Tate in a conversation (Tate, 2013: pers. comm.). Accordingly joke names were adopted such as Bill Blake and Arturo Escura. As Philip Pilkington puts it, 'Yeah we were twenty and didn't know anything, and we were having fun and playing games.' (PP: 301). Another aspect of this is the general chutzpah bestowed upon, or learned by, these students to deliver these lectures. Reflecting on the lectures David Rushton said 'You know, there was a time, that period where you would wind Philip and I up, or Terry, or Mike more than anybody else, buts it was like wind them up with a clockwork system and they would talk for three hours, you know, and go off.' (DR:80). There was perhaps a misunderstanding and a contradiction within this learning model between the idea of a discursive, dialogic environment and a performative monologue which goes someway to explain the impenetrable nature of their programme by those more timid students, see especially some of the accounts from their teaching in Hull. Giving lectures was to become another mainstay of the students activity and invitations to speak on behalf of Art & Language would continue after graduation (see Fig. 7)

The main task for the visit was to produce work for the Mezzanine Gallery and conduct some seminars, of which most of the work was collaborative work between Pilkington, Rushton, Lole and Smith. Philip Pilkington remembers a number of seminars that they delivered with the students, one of which was his essay in *Statements* on Tautology, which led to a heated discussion. Other lectures were on 'Taxonomy and Ontology... because that was kind of buzz stuff at the time' (PP: 303) and these were delivered in both the New York School of Visual Arts and in the Chicago Institute at the suggestion of artists who were later to join A&L - Mel Ramsden, Ian Burn and Joseph Kosuth (DR: 70; PP: 291, 303) - and with whom the students were staying or being given guided tours.[89]

A report was produced from the visit to North America in which the response of the students at NSCAD was revealed to be less sympathetic than they had hoped. The attitude of the art students, though technically sophisticated, did not have the same kind of scepticism towards contemporary art that was fostered at Coventry. As Rushton explains:

> *So Vito Acconci would not be thought of as a bit of a piss artist [at NSCAD], he would be taken seriously. There was that fringe between performance and conceptualism and the breaking down of the barrier between the hard determined object and into areas of photography, film video, performance and event.* (DR: 82)

The pluralism of approach, which was absolutely reflective of the very latest movements in the New York art-world, could not be critiqued in terms of its retrograde timidity, as much British art-school activity was, but was still anathema to A&L's rigorous orthodoxy and suspicion of novelty. It seems that NSCAD was important in the sense that being introduced to North America offered an entirely different sense of what art education could be. Even though, ostensibly, Nova Scotia was cut-off from the art world, its direct air route from New York, its influx of well-to-do, middle-class American students, and its reputation as a progressive and generous patron for artistic experiment created a very direct link to the most advanced work. From the interviews and the report

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[89] The visits by the students helped cement relationships between the artists, at that time still working in their sub-groupings. It also meant that Pilkington and Rushton became more involved in the work being done outside the art college (see PP: 305).

drafted by Rushton and Pilkington, there is a sense that this caused both excitement that progressive things could happen in an art school and that they could be part of that, but also a certain reaction to the celebratory way in which 'avant-garde' was introduced, the report labelled the prevailing condition at the colleges visited as one of 'neophillia' or 'neolatry' (DRA, 1971). The experience on the whole, however, was a pleasant one for Pilkington and Rushton; NCSAD and the art milieu they were being introduced to still being much more in sympathy with Conceptual Art relative to those encountered in Britain, albeit in its wackier, expanding form.

The trip to North America was also a product of the ongoing development of Art & Language at the time as a transatlantic project, several trips to New York by both students and tutors facilitating that greatly. As already mentioned, Joseph Kosuth became American Editor in 1970 of Art-Language; the Atkinson/Bainbridge works especially, although Hurrell/Bainbridge also, were exhibited in New York Galleries and other North American 'art centers';[90] a more informal exchange through various encounters was also developing between the New York and the English artists extending beyond that which was published in A-L or presented in galleries.[91] Because the Art Theory Programme was considered an integral part of this growing project, the students' trip to North America was both part of their education and partly a mission to consolidate the group, facilitate this development and their participation in it (PP: 305).

Linking the course to places like Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, The New York School of Visual Arts and Chicago Institute, helped this increasing sense of outside

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[90] These exhibitions were, in Museum Group shows: *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* in the New York Cultural Center, April-August 1970; *Information*, MoMA New York, July-September 1970; *The British Avant-Garde*, New York Cultural Center, 1971, . In private Galleries: *Language II*, *Language III & Language IV* in 1968, 1969 and 1970 respectively, Dwan Gallery, New York; Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1969; *Catalogue-Show*, with Seth Seiglaub in March 1969. Also Lucy Lippard-curated shows *557,087*, Seattle, Washington and *955,000*, Vancouver, British Columbia in 1969 (which toured to South America and A&L were exhibited several times in Buenos Aires especially, which was another centre for Conceptual Art). For the Lucy Lippard shows see the documentation and research available from (Buescher, 2012) and in (Alberro & Stimson (eds.), 1999: 178-185) for Lucy Lippard's essay for the show. A look at the exhibitions and detailed information of the exhibitions of conceptual art 1969-1977 is available in Sophie Richard's published thesis (Richard, 2009: 294-313).

[91] Mel Ramsden remembers visits around 1970-71, spending some time at Coventry and going to a seminar (MR: 90)

legitimation, especially in North America, and enabled some broadcasting of this proposal that new types of work could be proper to art colleges or Fine Art Departments.

The broadcasting to other institutions also happened within the UK, as has been mentioned before. The next section investigates what is known about the relationship between the Art Theory Programme and the teaching at Hull Regional College of Art, and the effect Art-Language and the Theory Programme had on students of Keith Arnatt in Newport.

Art Theory at Hull College of Art

The Art Theory Programme at Lanchester Polytechnic was most closely linked to the Fine Art course at Hull Regional College of Art & Design, where Harold Hurrell taught. Much less is known about this course as it did not produce any future members of A&L, did not seem to be such a structured and substantial part of the Dip.A.D. programme and did not involve any of the other staff in the college. Many histories of the 'Art Theory Course' at Coventry do not mention Hull.[92] Hull College had been restructured in 1962 in order to deliver the Dip.A.D. The college's Fine Art department was situated in the Craven Street Annex, an old school which 'was on the edge of battered Hull... was the middle of kids, washing lines, streets that would be demolished within ten years and a transport caff... an island outpost' (KJ: 95). It was far removed from the production studios and workshops of other disciplines within the college. Indeed, like many art colleges, before the building of a purpose built college in Queens Gardens in 1974, the

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[92] In addition to this, I have not been able to get in contact with Harold Hurrell who has had little to do with the art world since the mid-1970s. This means I do not have any first-hand accounts from anyone involved directly and closely with Hurrell's teaching. Other members that did teach there were unsure as to what was happening, and so this causes great problems in terms of any detailed description of how A&Ls programme was delivered and how it migrated to Hull. Indeed, except for Mike Chilton with whom I had an extensive phone conversation, the accounts I do have are from former teachers at Hull who were either in different departments or started after Hurrell had left. There is also information gained from email conversations with students at Hull during the period 1971-1974. Needless to say due to there being nothing written on this part of the course the following is almost entirely based on interviews, web forums, email conversations and archival documents. I have tried and failed to contact several ex-students of Hurrell's, including Stephen Goodfellow, Steve Daley-Yates and John Bradbury (who sadly died during the writing of this thesis). Steve Lawton, who was later instrumental in the A&L related publication *Ratcatcher* also passed away many years ago.

college was spread out among a number of older buildings across the city.[93] Hull was described by many of the interviewees as a remote place, difficult to get to and depressed both in its economic situation and its appearance (SL: 180, 253; KJ: 95; MB/MR: 166) Hull itself, heavily dependent as it was on the fishing industry, was suffering under the ongoing Cod Wars, industrial decline in the wider area, and its marginal location; it was a long way from Chelsea.

The college itself had, like Coventry, a number of strong stylistic influences pressing upon it. The attitudes of the teachers and departmental organisers had very particular views on what and how things should be taught and certain dogmas were at play upon the students' education.[94] It is therefore interesting to consider Hull College of Art and its state after the first few years of running the Dip.A.D.; its dominant influences in terms of art practice and how they approached the introduction of art history and Complementary Studies.

One of the dominant tendencies in fine art at Hull around the early seventies was that of Greenbergian Modernism in the form of the young formalist painter David Sweet. As we have seen this did influence some teachers in Coventry, but it seems it was aggressively adopted at Hull. This was not to say that students all produced abstract paintings, and from an account of the degree shows of this period the output was diverse (KJ: 100-103). Kathy Jenkins roughly divided, as she saw it, the fine art practitioner into either the formalist, medium-specific painter type or a more process-based approach to material and end product (KJ: 107).[95] In addition to David Sweet, the artists teaching at Hull at the

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[93] For a brief history of the College see (Foster, 1997: 32-34, 60-64). This covers its complicated institutional history, outside of the mainstream institutional categories described in this thesis, which saw it become a Regional College of Art after failed attempts at joint bids with other colleges to become a CAT and then a polytechnic (Foster, 1997: 68-70).

[94] This is particularly how it seemed to Kathy Jenkins who, as a recently graduated art historian from a fledgling course on Fine Art and Music at the recently established University of East Anglia, started to teach at Hull in 1969. Much of the teaching perspective in this section is drawn from my interview with her and a painting tutor who was brought in, from Coventry, to set up the Dip.A.D. programme in 1964, Mike Chiltern. For a contemporaneous characterisation of the kinds of conflicts of style available in the art college, see (M&W, 1973: 17-19) in which similar positions are played out. The authors' lack of involvement in the art world means the portrayal does lack some nuance.

[95] This is probably related to the heavy influence of Basic Design (see footnote 98).

time included sculptors Willis Ainley and Martin Wolverson, painter Douglas Muir and Mike Chilton. These artists work do not necessarily fit this binary, Douglas Muir 'who was a Scottish colourist' (SL: 188) but David Sweet definitely pushed the modernist agenda.[96] Kathy Jenkins' account very much emphasises how the different personalities, largely macho, fought for space within the college as the dominant ideology (KJ: 1-7). Indeed, the Coldstream Reform seems to, at Hull, have produced a kind of Hobbesian State of Nature in which each man - and it was, naturally, men - would flex their ability to dominate the other and the students with their ideological position on the production of art.[97] Underpinning the course, however, was a first year that was rooted in the basic design principles of experimenting with media in order to compensate for the poor standard of the pre-diploma and foundation courses from which some of the students had arrived.[98]

Another element of Hull College of Art was the influence of the professional educator. Martin Wolverson, especially, was regarded as an 'educationalist' and one interviewee, Simon Lewis, on his first encounter with Wolverson remembers he 'talked in riddles', meaning that he used an educational jargon (SL: 184; 271). The influence of Wolverson

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[96] See (SL: 188 and KJ: 1-5). David Sweet engaged with Conceptualism from the position of an increasingly unfashionable formalism in line with that of Michael Fried. An early, direct and concise example of this is in his correspondence, *A Case for Conservation* (Sweet, 1969: 205), in which he sees the type of Conceptual Art espoused in Joseph Kosuth's *Art After Philosophy* (to which the piece is a reply or a commentary) as typified by a horizontal expansionist movement to the frontiers of art, whereas painting, and especially formalist, offers a vertical deepening of an ever enriching tradition. Mike Chilton (2016: pers. comm.) though that it was possible that David Sweet was in some way influenced by certain approaches of Art & Language, as unlikely as that seems. It is sufficient to note here though the two mutually exclusive axes on which he saw conceptual and modernist art operating on at this point. This becomes more interesting in terms of later A&L work which engages critically with this supposed enriching of the painting tradition, but through ideas of intension, indexicality, deflationary techniques and what they termed an 'essayistic practice' (see Harrison, 2001a: 7).

[97] Imagining it from the students' perspective Jenkin's chooses another metaphor:

> *'because there was conflict within the field of practice and because there was a range of inputs that were in themselves contradictory then in a sense you have to choose your champions. I've got the roman arena in my head at the moment! …And that final exhibition and the awarding of the diploma… was either a thumbs up or a thumbs down.'* (KJ: 37)

[98] Mike Chilton (2016: pers. comm.) Mike Chilton had studied at Leeds College of Art just in time to witness the effect of Harry Thubron's new approach and was incredibly impressed and so wanted to develop that approach at least in the first year of the Dip.A.D. (see Charnley, 2015: 1-37; Forrest, 1985).

seems to have been an interest in theory around education in general, having completed his Art Teachers Certificate at Goldsmiths in 1960, and would have made him more pre-disposed to an experimental approach to education (SL:269). There was also a less progressive influence of tutors who had been imported from the teacher training college, with which the School of Art had recently merged (Chilton, 2016: pers. comm.; Foster, 1996).

The Head of Fine Art, Dennis Booth, was an RCA educated artist, who had also been in the Royal Air Force (SL: 184). By all accounts he held a fairly traditional but liberal outlook toward the role of the artist, and had a sense of a strict 'hierarchy of command'. His position was made difficult by having to negotiate many enthusiastic new members of staff brought on for the Dip.A.D. and a 'disaster of a principle', Alan Sugden, for whom it was constantly necessary to cover up various acts of negligence (Chilton,2016: pers. comm.) Kathy Jenkins summarises Dennis Booth's position and his predicament insightfully:

> *Having studied himself I suppose in the London schools in the more tradition British context and then found himself in charge of this anarchic process… the bureaucracy of governance and accountability… the academic framework, and this sort of riot of activity, that was both staff and students. All of them pulling in different directions and all really claiming which was legitimate and needed to be seen.* (KJ: 152)[99]

Such were the tensions of managing the art school as it was settling into its freedom within the Dip.A.D. system at a time when art practice was also changing quickly. Art History and Complementary Studies was run by Peter Hammond who again was one of a generation of traditional, academic historians suddenly introduced into the very different atmosphere of the art college to bring in Coldstream's academic equivalence. He had studied at Oxford, after being in the navy, was ordained in the Anglican Church and was an expert in Byzantine and Modernist Architecture, having a strong interest in Eastern Orthodox theology and taught at Hull from 1962 to 1980 (KJ: 31; Murray & De Waall, 1999). Both Wolverson and Hammond shared a taste for music and as a consequence, listening to and talking about jazz became a staple in the complementary studies

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[99] This was in reference both to the early seventies and to the later seventies, which is dealt with later on in this thesis.

programme. (KJ: 33). Other subjects within complementary studies were largely dependent, as with many colleges, on the intellectual resources available, and so included poetry, sociology and French literature (KJ: 55-67). The head of art history did not have any particular interest in the integration of studio courses, a feeling which was reciprocated by the studio teachers.

Art History itself was conducted strictly as a positivist activity of gathering evidence and writing from first hand encounters with works of art. Importantly, the proper subjects of study were to be sufficiently in the past as to not be 'overly contaminated by present personal experience' (KJ: 43). Objectivity of study and immediate experience of works of art were therefore the most important components of art history teaching. Contemporary art, as with other art colleges, was the domain and the subjective battle-ground of the studio. The interrogation of the object was important to both Kathy Jenkins and Simon Lewis, who came to Hull later in 1975, and for Kathy, was one of the reasons she stayed at Hull as she saw it as a valid way of getting art students interested in art history (KJ: 53). In 1970 however, the approaches and opinions of the head of art history, who was not interested in current art practice and the various conflicts in the studio for ideological dominance were two distinct and mutually disinterested worlds.[100]

Another element, which was also common to many art colleges of this period, was that many of the tutors, and perhaps more so in non-fine art departments, had come from either teaching or studying within the old NDD system. This meant there were many craft-based tutors, who were good at teaching their craft but not necessarily fitting into the new professionalised system, with its addition of liberal and academic pursuits (SL: 271-273). The students were also particularly hostile to the relatively new importation of art history at Hull. Jenkins remembers violent opposition to much of the quite rigorous work that was asked of them; it being her job to try and negotiate this. The students at Hull were largely from working class backgrounds with little history of higher education and, as Simon Lewis remembers, 'this was probably their fourth or fifth... college they'd applied to. This was the last chance saloon.' (SL: 247) This is a similar view of the

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[100] This was further exacerbated by the head of Art History's apparent disinterest in 20th century visual art and preference for music and architecture. Art History classes looked at Modernism more through Stravinsky than through painting (KJ: 55-67).

situation at Coventry described later by the then dean, Robin Plummer (RP: 81-83). One distinction of Hull College of Art was that it operated a policy called 'Integrated Fine Art' in which the Painting/Sculpture distinction within the Dip.A.D. award was not as rigidly observed (Hurrell, 1971). This was possibly an extension of Mike Chilton's emphasis on an 'all-embracing approach' from the start, which attempted to not pigeon-hole students from an early stage (Chilton, 2016: pers.comm.).

Harold Hurrell was a Lecturer in Fine Art at Hull College of Art from January 1965 until 1975. As discussed in chapter 3, he was involved in producing collaborative pieces with David Bainbridge and shared an interest in Cybernetics, Engineering and Electronics and, in the context of the college, he brought that approach as 'one stream in the larger debate' (KJ: 107). He had studied elements of cybernetics[101] at the Institute of Education (H&O, 1982: 15; Wood, 1992: 32),[102] and so it is possible he would have been slightly more amenable to the educational jargon used by Martin Wolverson. More fundamentally, however, art education was for him, perhaps more than any other of the original Art-Language editors/teachers, seriously problematic.[103]

Harold Hurrell was very concerned with the relationship between education and the socialisation of the artist. The conditions at Hull were that several dominant ideas of the importance of the artist and the role of the artist were at play, often forcefully. This idea of the socialisation into a type is looked at in *Art Students Observed*, with regards to Coventry, and is summarised neatly by the following statement, in the introduction:

> *…the problem of the art student is therefore threefold: he has opted out of the dominant occupational system; he is driven to behave as though he had access to a charisma that may not be his to command; and he has to justify this, to himself and his peers and his teachers, in intellectualized terms and under conditions of almost unbearable ambiguity.* (M&W, 1973: 21)

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[101] The application of cybernetics to do with psychology, feedback, cognition and learning processes and conditions.

[102] As mentioned before, he was also a technician at St Martins.

[103] By all accounts Hurrell thought very seriously about the role of the educator. One of the few references to the Hull branch of A&L's teaching at this time was Terry Atkinson, who suggests Hurrell enjoyed the 'relative anonymity' (and by extension marginality) of Hull so he could get on with teaching properly (Atkinson, 2000: note 13).

Harold Hurrell's main concern as a teacher was that, given that this or something similar is a good assessment of the condition of an art student, it has very little to do with education and is more the inculcation of a type. His opinions about art education could be seen as fairly contiguous with those expressed at Coventry, with a particular emphasis on the problems of art world and educational world relationships. Kathy Jenkins remembers, especially towards the end of his time at Hull, 'his disquiet about the conflict between a legitimate educational programme and the mythology of trying to be an artist' (KJ: 115). The conflicting opinions mentioned by Kathy Jenkins within the studio meant that, just as M&W describe the situation in Coventry in 1967, Hull offered a confusing set of roles and values with certain tacit but uncompromising blind-spots, meaning, much like in *Art Students Observed* certain students found it hard to continue doing certain kinds of work (M&W, 1973: 18,275-6; KJ: 87-89). Hurrell also held a critical position towards much of the activity in the art school, in particular the careerism and negligence of those higher-up the college hierarchy and, as a result of this, was central to facilitating student committee activity (Mike Chilton, 2016: pers. comm.; Ratcatcher, 2). This combination of a suspicion of the business of teaching art and its value, and an equal suspicion of the venal activities of those that ran the institution, echoed the concerns of those members in Coventry and, as is discussed in the next section, the students in Newport.

Hurrell's own interests, those of technology, human interaction, cybernetics, cognition and learning, were a large part of what he taught, but with the formation of the Art Theory Programme at Coventry, Hurrell started to teach related topics to that which was taught in Coventry. As Michael Baldwin put it: 'Harold was instrumental in setting up a …sort of shadow outfit…, the word 'course' would be a rather dignified expression to be used.' (MB/MR: 170) The course at Hull did not have the official legitimation offered by the NCDAD, it did not have the support of the other tutors, nor any real engagement from the Art History department and so it couldn't run with the confidence and the self-sufficiency that sustained the programme at Coventry (KJ: 219). The course never developed in the sense Coventry did into a documented programme, and would essentially be an occasional lecture or seminars that took place, first in Craven Street Annexe, then in Lincoln Street, and finally briefly in the new Queens Gardens Buildings in 1974, with Hurrell teaching on his own in the studio. The students did not take to the material or

the means of delivery at all.[104] In fact, the pre-existing recalcitrance regarding the addition of any academic work meant that the anti-intellectualism, encountered to some extent in most art schools, was particularly strong at Hull. Many members of Art & Language dropped in as visiting lecturers on and off between 1969 and 1975, but as Philip Pilkington remembers, '[Hurrell] was pretty much on his own ... and it was an obscure place.' (PP: 226) The obscurity and lack of easy routes with which to get there were dominant memories for most of the interviewees, most of them based in the West Midlands or Oxfordshire.[105] It was this combination of Hull being slightly too far from the centre of activity, the lack of legitimation and the marginality of the concerns of A&L in the face of the disputes on formalism et cetera that stunted its development.[106]

The fact that Hull at this time is included in this study stems from the idea of a growing network of courses which, by 1970 were starting to inter-relate both in terms of material and students.

> *'I think some things then became a question of recruiting students. What would happen would be that some students would be processed in the foundation course at Coventry were then sent forth like missionaries to these other art schools in which the message would be, the faith would be proselytised to a greater or lesser degree of success.'*
> (MB/MR: 172)

This interrelation could have started to form a coherent element of art education from foundation to diploma in certain institutions. This can be compared to the idea of the specialist institution, discussed later in the thesis but heavily encouraged within the art and design sector,[107] and the possibility of attracting and grouping a certain type of

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[104] Kathy Jenkins recalls 'the ones that I attended there was a sort of gob smacked silence for the most part' (KJ: 113). Michael Baldwin also admits that the discursive element didn't really develop there (MB/MR: 173-4)

[105] Hurrell himself commuted on a weekly basis from Banbury. In this sense it was an imposition of a group from another location and not rooted in the city or the college, as it arguably was in Coventry.

[106] When asked about Hull, Robin Plummer remembers it being 'not as bad' due to the lack of personnel (RP: 286). Clearly ,he would see any substantial influence of A&L at Hull as bad.

[107] Though it would seem at this point in the history of the Dip.A.D., research and specialist institutions were largely encouraged in the design subjects, especially with the hope of encouraging a relationship to industry, (see (Tickner, 2008: 115n25) for an example of such a bid and initiatives).

student, mentioned in the NCDAD Quinquennial Review (Appendix C). It also relates to the growing confidence and number in the Art & Language community, and how their educational role was entirely integrated into the spread of a type of student that could engage with the group. These hopes in Hull, as is evident in the following, would not be realised. Atkinson later does note, however, that Hurrell's 'teaching at Hull was just as central to the project as the Art Theory course at Coventry' (Atkinson, 1995: n13). A number of students were tutored, in particular by Hurrell, on a one-to-one basis and, after 1975, the Art & Language legacy became more pronounced in the form of student-initiated *Ratcatcher*, which was firmly in opposition to the institucion, but was begun after Hurrell's departure.

Michael Baldwin and Terry Atkinson went to Hull regularly in 1970-72 to talk on the course (DR: 46). Other members of Art & Language subsequently taught in Hull as visiting lecturers, including Philip Pilkington and Lynne Lemaster who had been on the Art Theory Programme in Coventry. They were at the invite of Hurrell; every full-time lecturer being able to nominate visiting lecturers they think would be interesting. One view of the lectures/seminars/meetings at Hull was that they functioned more successfully as more internal discussions among A&L, emphasising the quasi-research like activity of the group; bringing up issues and debating fine points. This meant that the sessions at Hull would become almost like public performances in which the students were the audience, silent and bored. Kathy Jenkins remembers it in those terms:

> *'I think it was a chance for the ideas to be shared amongst a very small coterie of staff.*
> *And I think it was a bit like a kind of fraternity consolidating its legitimacy. I think as*
> *far as students were concerned it was really, they were the untouchables, they were*
> *elsewhere.'* (KJ: 113)

A Dip.A.D. student who studied at Hull from 1971 to 1974, Stephen Goodfellow would write 'the instructors Harold Hurrell, and Michael Baldwin… tortured us with their messianic visions of art, in the form of "Art Language"' (Goodfellow, 2006).[108] Another student of the same cohort applied to Hull, hoping to be taught by Art & Language with

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[108] This definitely chimes well with Michael Baldwin's idea of proselytising, sadly the natives of Hull didn't take to the new gospel.

the ambition to continue work in a Conceptual Art vein but finding them wholly dismissive (Osborne, 2016: pers. comm.). The small amount of responses I have received from students of the time was wholly negative with regards to Art & Language's teaching and Kathy Jenkins suggestion that the students were almost incidental witnesses to group discussion is, to certain extent, corroborated by these responses. Another student I contacted regarding the course remembers an intense crit with Harold Hurrell but no projects, structure or reading lists (Osborne, 2016: pers. comm.). Mike Chilton remembers a gradual student disengagement from the irregular talks by visiting A&L members, attendance figures slowly depleting. He also remembers very confrontational moments between some students and visiting tutors, particularly Michael Baldwin. Again the conflicts were largely around a perceived wilful obscurity of vocabulary and an unwillingness to clarify.[109]

The presence of A&L did garner some interest from some Art History and Studio tutors, who, like Kathy Jenkins and Mike Chilton, would try and figure out the essays in *Art-Language*, armed with dictionaries, and decipher what these lectures were about (KJ: 113). Most, like Mike Chilton, considered it 'eighty per-cent bullshit' but all the former Hull tutors I spoke to, to varying degrees, did recognise the value of Art & Language's presence as a provocation to consider fundamental questions regarding entrenched ideas of what art activity was in the art school.[110] The interviewees think that A&L did also

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[109] From an email conversation with one student on the course, 1971-74:

> *I remember visits and lectures from Baldwin and Bainbridge. One in particular - I think it was Baldwin - he went on for about an hour, intentionally using language that no-one could follow (that was their thing as I recall). It pissed everyone off, and at the end when he asked for questions, one of the students said "I didn't understand a word you said" to which Baldwin (or Bainbridge) replied "Really - which word was that?" I suspected he had had that question before. But then Malcolm someone laid in to him … I don't remember the course of his verbal onslaught but I do remember Malcolm becoming a folk hero as a result.* (Osborne, 2016: pers. comm.)

[110] Simon Lewis:
> *'I think of all the Art Schools I've worked in Hull was the most interesting to work in because it was so wild and because of that particular time where you'd gone through this extraordinary cathartic clean out of all the old NDD thinking all that, and Art & Language did do that…'* (SL: 245)

Mike Chilton reflected, 'they certainly turned things up on their head for a while and made people consider afresh' (2016). For Kathy Jenkins it was a more specific value of thinking about the role of education:

> *'I think it's enormously important that we can challenge some of the same things that Art & Language were trying to challenge. By the same token someone like me would say it has made me value some of the*

have some residual effect on the work being produced, but because of the very small influence it is hard to tell how direct this was, and is largely seen as a very bad influence, producing conceptual-like ready-mades with offensive words, for example.[111] Judging by the lack of need for and dislike of Art & Language's approach at Hull, and the apparently egregious working conditions, it is surprising that Harold Hurrell taught there for nearly 10 years. His personal influence at the college was, according to his colleagues Kathy Jenkins and Mike Chilton, one of a serious, committed and informative teacher who wanted to do a good job (Chilton, 2016; KJ: 178).

I will talk about the years after 1974 further on in the thesis, when discussing the closure of the programme in Coventry, Hurrell's departure from Hull, and how A&Ls relationship to art education shifted dramatically in the mid-70s, which is the subject of the next chapter. In the following section I would like to describe and discuss a related programme of study, this time largely initiated by the students, at Newport College of Art, South Wales.

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things that are intrinsic to the modernist position even more. But I would separate them out now … I think Harold's lack of comfort in an educational context for me as a person was quite a valuable moment for looking at what I was doing too. Education is a contract, and it is not one and the same as an ideological position. It is not one and the same as delivering a mythology about the nature of creativity, because basically it's unequal… Education was being dishonest about it's role as arbiter of standards' (KJ: 217)

[111] Needless to say that this has as little to do with A&L practice or pedagogy as it does with Basic Design. For a description of this example, see (SL: 240-43, 247).

Art Theory at Newport College of Art

The Dip.A.D. course at Newport College of Art was taught in the main by Keith Arnatt, a conceptual artist who had exhibited in similar shows to those of Art & Language.[112] The course at Newport, aside from Keith Arnatt, had no Conceptual Art legacy, but developed through the foundation and fine art course several students who became influenced by A&L writing and went on to develop in some sympathy with those students at Lanchester Polytechnic. The main connection between Arnatt and A&L was Charles Harrison, who knew Arnatt personally, having curated his work in several shows and included his work in *Studio International*, and had become involved directly, by 1970-71, with A&L. Arnatt, therefore, had acquired the first two copies of Art-Language for Newport College of Art library. Much like Terry Atkinson and Barbara Reise in Coventry, Keith Arnatt was also able to attract many writers, artists and critics over to South Wales from America, via dealings with *Studio International* in London, as Paul Wood, then a student at Newport, recounts:

> *… during our first and second years there was a fairly steady stream of people would come, because Keith had this entre into Studio International and those London art worlds. Lucy Lippard [came] at the end of the first year, or no later than early 1970 …Charles came, Michael [Baldwin] himself came. I don't think Joseph Kosuth came, but he was certainly in the orbit somehow. There was a sense of this stuff being…very cutting edge and you were that close to it, and it was a very powerful thing.* (PW: 15)

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[112] Art & Language would not necessarily have considered him a kindred spirit, however. His work bore a weaker influence of philosophical ideas and was much more jokey and photographic than that of A&L. He possibly shared some attitudinal affinity with A&L in his deflationary approach to the role of the artist but there was no close connection. Paul Wood comments that he had come, in a similar way to Terry Atkinson, out of the earlier pop enthusiasm in Britain, but he was at the time becoming a successful conceptual artist (PW: 15). He was showing at the Tate Gallery as early as 1970, and his work appeared prominently in the recent survey exhibition 'Conceptual Art in Britain: 1964-79' (Wilson (ed.), 2016).

Arnatt's interest in philosophy was, like many Conceptual artists of the linguistic type, but by no means as involved as the students were. In a written interview with John Roberts he stated, 'A brief flirtation with moral philosophy in the late fifties left me with an interest in the philosophy of language and I later went on to read Austin, Grice and Searle. However, in my work I did not think my use of language had much to do with "analysing the proposition of art"… I do remember feeling that so much writing by artists of analytic persuasion seemed tedious and onerously serious. I think I was attracted to a more ludic oriented activity' (Roberts, 1997: 49).

The course as a whole was a fairly typical liberal Modernist fine art course and Keith Arnatt, though open to and supportive of discussion around Conceptual Art and its concerns, did not set up the course to dissolve his practice into a research-like activity or collaboration with the students; his practice was already established. The real congruence with the work being done under A&L at Coventry was self-initiated by the students (PW: 23). Three students in particular, Paul Wood, Peter Berry and Kevin Wright, after making work individually in the first year, influenced by Robert Morris and Barry Flanagan (PW:81), started to organise themselves and make collaborative work, partly under the influence of the early writing and activities of A&L. The three students were exactly contemporaneous in year group with Pilkington, Lole, Smith and Rushton; starting in 1969 and graduating in 1972. Paul Wood remembers the things that were most influential from Art & Language being the Atkinson/Baldwin 'theoretical entities' discussed in Chapter 3 (PW: 1-2).[113] In addition to this, material that was useful for the Art Theory Programme in Coventry was also read by the students in Newport, in particular they responded enthusiastically to A&Ls use of the philosophy of science (PW: 71-77). The materials that Art & Language were using were taken on board by these students to start to discover their own way to critique their art education. In this sense 'the institution of art education [became] our subject matter because that's all we had' (PW: 81), and the essays and recordings that they produced all focused on looking at the unwritten assumptions of art education. Newport was a much smaller institution; it was not integrated into a polytechnic, and was much more disconnected from any metropolitan centre than Coventry.

By the second year this had found an outlet into a very cheaply produced, small run of publications entitled *Number One.*[114] Through this publication, the Newport Students also

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[113] Discussion of these is to be found in early writings, such as the essay 'Art & Exclusivity' which positions them both within a developed context

[114] These publications were very much the equivalent of Analytical Art and Statements in Coventry. These were much lower production value, however:

> '…*our little pamphlets were produced by a local set up that did the parish magazine. There was this thing called 'teeny type' … it was absolutely minute. I think it must have been a Gestetner-Type process, because they're very shoddy to look at, though they have their patina of age now. I think there were about 5 or 6 of them, something like that, and then we got some printed covers of the ones we'd typed out as sort of Limited Editions.*' (PW: 65)

started to form a relationship with the students in Coventry, who were also publishing, and material and ideas was passed down from Art & Language via this student connection. The networks were considered important by Baldwin, as mentioned before, as fostering a criticality of the institution (MB/MR: 172), Philip Pilkington did not want to overstate the connections:

> *'They were doing stuff that was quite congenial to us, I suppose. They were producing pamphlets … and I thought that in itself was quite interesting and we went to talk to them. I didn't feel particularly close to that except that some of the stuff Paul [Wood] was doing… was quite interesting.'* (PP: 164)

This lukewarm response corroborates the impressions of Paul Wood, who very much felt that the 'centre of gravity' was in Coventry, where Art & Language taught on a day-to-day basis. The students at Coventry, being closer to the source, as it were, had more of the A&L interest in what he termed 'expensive American linguistic theory'(PW: 23). It did provide a much more fruitful lateral connection than those students at the time in Hull, however.

The Newport students, in being slightly on the margins of Art & Language's influence translated that into thinking more in Marxist terms from very early on, taking their own conditions of work as their subject matter (PW: 65; Wood, 2016). These conditions were broadly the Modernist art education that they were receiving at Newport, as Paul Wood describes, 'it was pure and simple Modernism… The bogey-words were 'academic' and 'literary'.[115] It was very much you were told not-to-think-too-much about-it… it was like Nature, that's what art practice *was*. Art & Language gave us ways of having a purchase on that.' (PW: 77). Whereas the students at Hull had found the language and attitude of A&L confusing, forbidding or dismissive, these few students at Newport found the ideas somewhat emancipatory, and were motivated to go both to the source of many of these ideas brought up in A-L and to develop them separately from A&L's focus on language.

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[115] An interesting comparison account of Modernist art college criticism can be found in (SL; 106) where the bogey words are 'sentimental' and 'decorative'.

They were like building bricks in a way that you could formulate a way of going on, and you could see yourself as a way of doing something that made some kind of sense in the face of this institution that pretended not to be an institution but was actually a very coercive institution. (PW: 77)

Turning these ideas to their own ends, which were much more a form of imminent critique from the off, meant the students could, in Paul Wood's words, 'drive a coach and horses through the institution' (PW: 77). In this way the students then had formed another outpost for developing, under the sympathetic but less-involved stewardship of Keith Arnatt, the ideas and intellectual materials that were being encouraged by Art & Language. This was put to the distinct ends from the start, however, of grappling with the institution, as Paul Wood writes, 'We were materialists, almost by default' (Wood, 2016).

One of the noteworthy aspects of the atmosphere at Newport was that it was extremely liberal, with a tendency to let the students work atomistically and with little instruction was in many ways the condition that produced such a radical departure; it was the conditions that the Berry Wright and Wood were working to challenge (PW: 5). The students had to take a defensive stance and, despite Arnatt's support, problems became apparent when they began to work collectively on an ongoing research-like project rather than individually producing discrete objects from the second year onwards. That this project was a critique of the institution of art education meant more difficulties in persuading tutors of the worth or applicability of written texts for assessment. These problems beset the students throughout their course, but clearly culminated when the students were required to produce a diploma show and art history dissertation.

In addition to their influence intellectually on the students at Newport, A&L, Terry Atkinson in particular, helped to navigate the students though the minefield of assessment (PW: 7) and went to Newport on a number of occasions as visiting lecturers. The specifics of the problems of collaborative work and non-visual work will be addressed later on in this chapter, alongside the very similar problems facing the students at Lanchester Polytechnic. By the second year of their course, much like the Lanchester students, the students were producing essays as work, and viewed their work as a similar on-going process, a position that is expressed clearly in a lecture they gave in 1972 at

Leeds College of Art, which dealt with, among other things, concepts of 'thinking as' when addressed to art work and the distinction between 'doing' and 'making', which this excerpt is taken from:

> *…a production based notion of art; which has a very highly developed trichotomy of critic, agent and patient: according to such process what is changed by something other than itself, the important thing being the end product. The difficulty disappears when one holds a notion of the activity as a process which does not require any principle or attainment-state for its development other than the principle which is inherent in the thing which develops.'* (Berry, Wright, Wood, 1972: 6)

The clear definition of a mode of practice is testament to the sense of a practical need for the theoretical working-out, the research if you like, rather than any imposition from above of a way of working. The construction and use of the theoretical and artistic material that the students were introduced to by A&L is, in their hands, more sober and clear than those produced at Coventry. At this point both Coventry and Newport had students who, rather than carry on producing discrete objects for contemplation or judgement, wanted to pursue an ongoing investigation. That it was more or less spontaneous on the part of the students helps to belie any accusations of authoritarianism or 'brainwashing' within A&L's pedagogy (Everitt, 1972: 176). The Newport students' ambition then functioned as an innovative combination of a political art practice and an auto-didactic educational programme. I will discuss the later work of these students later on in this chapter, when looking at the final year at Lanchester.

Terminated Contracts and Tangible Objects

One of the most written about aspects of the 'Art Theory Course' at Lanchester Polytechnic is the way in which it was dismantled[116] in 1971, after barely two years running. Charles Harrison included the course within his histories of A&L largely to decry its end, as did Terry Atkinson (Harrison, 2001; Atkinson, 1992). For this reason there is a wealth of testimony, description and opinion as to how and why that closure came about. The eventual dismantling of the programme involved several actions by different members of staff from different positions within the institution and, as they all feature heavily in the accounts elicited in the interviews I conducted, I would like to spend some of this section defining the positions and reasoning behind the actions of three people who played a part in this dismantling.

Harry Weinberger, husband of the co-author of *Art Students Observed*, Barbara Weinberger, after the sudden and controversial departure of Don Foster, became acting Head of Painting in 1970-71, and was responsible for co-ordinating the teaching of, particularly, the non-theory students at that point, but technically the whole Painting Dip.A.D. He had started teaching at Coventry College of Art from the outset of the Dip.A.D. in January 1964 after teaching at Manchester School of Art (Weinberger, 1995: BL15).[117] He came from a German Expressionist tradition, explicitly drew on literary sources and appropriated certain motifs from Japanese and Eastern European art. Deeply committed to a figurative painting tradition he set about reinstating easel painting as part of the course as it had been structurally removed by Foster in the preceding years, largely by getting rid of the easels (Weinberger, 1995: BL18). Writing about his work at later dates commentators have emphasised that he 'sets his face against fashion' (Weinberger, 1971) and is concerned with his 'vision', 'magic' and the 'inner' and the 'outer' (Weinberger & Watkins, 1983: np). He is even quoted as painting 'out of necessity' (Weinberger, 1971: np), all very Romantic terms. His work, his taste and attitude to art,

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[116] The use of the word 'dismantling' is following on from Terry Atkinson as it describes the process the best. 'Decimated' is a good description, in that it was a dramatic thinning-down of personnel, but has other associations. 'Terminated' does not properly reflect the way it ended.

[117] These quotes are from notes taken from a 1995 interview as part of the British Library Artists' Lives projects. The number refers to which section of the interview the quote is taken from.

therefore, did not overlap with those of Baldwin, Atkinson, Bainbridge or their students. Michael Baldwin had no illusions about Harry Weinberger's attitude to conceptual art: 'He hated it! … but he was a man a. with a sense of humour and b. with a certain amount of respect for intellectual achievement in whatever form, whether it was convenient or inconvenient to him.' (MB/MR: 60) He was considered a man of wide interests and was supportive of the students' development, whatever their style. Initially, he had been supportive of Baldwin (MB/MR: 55); he appeared generally interested in the ideas of Graham Howard, who was working in a similar vein (GH: 116); personally he also liked Terry Atkinson, and admired his 'native wit' (Weinberger, 1995: BL17). His concerns regarding the Art Theory Programme focussed more on the students' attitude, stating that he thought '… [Atkinson's] followers were fanatics… they believed any art that was older than the last five years should be destroyed' (Weinberger, 1995: BL17). There was an impression by Weinberger, then, that the young 'followers' (i.e. Pilkington, Rushton, Smith and Lole) were intent on completely disrupting and closing-off traditional painting in the college. His attitude to their work was also ironic and dismissive, thinking Conceptual Art an art of 'gesture' rather than skill and, recollecting in 1995, he described the Art-Language activities as 'arbitrary nonsense' on a typewriter (Weinberger, 1995: BL18). He represents a position that is subtly different from those that held 'visuality' and medium specificity as being central from a Modernist (abstract, American) perspective. His work was literary (a 'bogey word' at art schools), completely unfashionable and resolutely European in outlook.

The administration had changed considerably during the College of Art's assimilation into Lanchester Polytechnic in 1969. The Dean, Ernest Hoch had left after barely a year[118] and a new dean had been appointed, Robin Plummer, formerly dean at the newly established Wolverhampton Polytechnic.[119] He had taught at Plymouth and Sheffield

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[118] Again people have various speculations as to why, but it was sudden and unexpected. The NCDAD refer to him as a very capable dean in their review (Appendix C) whereas Barbara Reise seems to have little faith in his abilities (in a letter to Hoch she, jokingly, writes 'you would be fired in my firm' (TGA/786/5/6/2)) Rosalind Billingham liked him and thought he was 'hounded' out by other members of staff (Billingham, 2016: pers. comm.). Terry Atkinson thought he was 'pushed out' (Atkinson, 2011: np). James Charnley (2015: 73) cites M&W (1973: 265) to suggest it was due to the difficulty of working with the Polytechnic management. These opinions are included as an illustration that regardless of A&Ls controversial position within the Fine Art course, the institution was politically unstable.

[119] At which time he would have only been 36 or 37 and which made him the youngest principal and then dean as it became Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

after studying at the Royal College of Art and the British School in Rome. He was ambitious within the climate of art college expansion and the mergers into polytechnics and was, unusually for a fine artist, in favour of these mergers and comfortable with the educational establishment (RP: 75). A privately educated, liberal conservative and self-confessed art-lover (RP: 135), he was politically, socially and tastefully misaligned with the agenda of A&L, and therefore a suitable candidate for the job of removing the theory programme from the college. He was also more resolved or hard-nosed than his predecessors, stating as he did in the interview that he arrived at the college after a succession of what he considered weak individuals, with no agenda of their own, that could not or would not stand up to the position that A&L held within the college.[120]

In addition to this, the college was now under the directorship of Alan Richmond, since 1959 the principle of Lanchester College of Technology with which the art college merged. He was characterised as serious-minded and decisive,[121] which heralded in a much tighter administrative structure with the polytechnic when compared to that which had existed within the independent art college. Alan Richmond, it seemed around a year or so into the programme's existence, had been made aware of its unusual nature and, because of the nature of the submission in 1969 (under the noses of the polytechnic) had decreed that the course did not constitute a valid syllabus. In the interview for the post of Dean, Richmond asked Robin Plummer questions about how to make sure both students and teachers would follow the 'syllabus' (RP: 75-77). It was on this premise that Plummer, among other things, was charged with the job of discontinuing the Art Theory Programme and removing Art & Language's perceived influence in the college from the

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[120] 'You get Hoch, Foster, Weinberger and to some extent David Bethel and they weren't strong people or at least they hadn't got ideas about what they wanted to do, they had no… they were sort of floating around in the sea and sort of paddling like mad but not doing anything. ' (RP:12)

[121] Robin Plummer, stated, 'you didn't quarrel with Richmond. Nobody quarrelled with Richmond. You know and it was a matter of good argument or bad, he was [bangs table] that's the way it is, you know.' (RP: 225) Terry Atkinson remembers that he held an deeply-entrenched suspicion towards art and considered the fine art department as an overly rarefied discipline and a pampered department, being a graduate 'of the university of life' he represented uncannily the pragmatic, no-nonsense and eager to rationalise polytechnic director of legend (from Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm).

outset.[122] Robin Plummer immediately sensed hostility from the Art Theory students and tutors (RP: 152, 190, 322).[123] Michael Baldwin remembers that he was vocal about his intention to 'get the word men out' (MB/MR: 182) and so, the Art Theory Programme itself and the people involved were increasingly precarious throughout the second year, despite their success outside the walls of the college.[124]

One of the earliest points on which the Art Theory Programme was challenged was on the soundness of its grasp of philosophy. Staff at the college, such as art history teacher Rosalind Billingham, were strongly suspicious of A&L's use of philosophy and believed that it was not just unintelligible but that they were speaking nonsense which they themselves did not understand (Billingham, 2016: pers. comm.). Both Weinberger and Plummer also referred to the works of A&L and their students as 'arbitrary nonsense' and 'meaningless' respectively (Weinberger, 1995: BL18; RP: 292). To this effect a lecturer in logic and moral philosophy, Don Locke, was invited to visit from Warwick University in order to assess whether the work done by the students was of a sufficient standard *as* philosophy. Terry Atkinson recounts that: 'the regime was slightly perplexed at the philosopher not only not determining whether what was being done on the art theory course at Coventry was philosophy, he also had the temerity to faintly suggest

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[122] He was immediately informed of the situation through the filter of Alan Richmond, who had in turn received it from Harry Weinberger. When asked if they had spoken about A&L at the interview for the job, Robin Plummer replied:

> *Oh yes, yes. He was quite paranoid about things… I mean he was terribly worried because he didn't know what to do… he knew exactly what was going on but … he would go over the top. He said to me 'Terry Atkinson and that lot, … I think they're members of the Spartacus League' … one of those things in Germany where they kill their political opponents… Terry Atkinson's not like that, hehe. But Richmond thought they were, and he thought we'd be getting bombs thrown through the window and all the rest of it* (RP: 101-105). See also (RP: 1).

[123] This was not always the case, however, and Terry Atkinson, who had a much more diplomatic role, and Dave Bainbridge were not remembered as hostile in that sense by Robin Plummer. He remembers 'funnily enough, I'm sure Terry will deny this, but when we spoke we all got on quite well really.' (RP:322) and that 'Bainbridge was an extraordinarily nice bloke.' (RP: 190).

[124] Terry Atkinson conjectures that the threat of the course was the international exposure it was receiving (Atkinson, 2011: np). Philip Pilkington puts the illogical nature of it in retrospect:

> *…I mean I found it extraordinary then of the immense incompetence of the powers… As well as… being cruel and nasty and dim, but the incompetence that he knew that these people, whatever he thought of them - whatever low opinion he might have had of them personally - these were people who were having exhibitions internationally and he got rid of them! It's like having a football team, you're in the third division and you've got Wayne Rooney, 'Oh we'll get rid of him… because he's brilliant* (PP: 80-86)

that for all he knew it might be art' (Atkinson, 1992: 26). This is prescient of several subsequent accusations that A&L work was bad philosophy.

The divergence between the aims of the Art Theory Programme and those of the majority of the art students at Coventry has been addressed earlier in this thesis. There was also a perception that the art theory students were becoming more confrontational and aggressive towards the other students, a view expressed particularly by Harry Weinberger (AD: 6; Weinberger, 1995: BL17). In addition, Robin Plummer and Alan Richmond were given the impression that A&L and their students were trying to take over the college and dominate the approach to art production within the Fine Art department, trying to stop people painting in particular (RP: 87, 89, 160)[125].

The art theory students and tutors worked predominantly in the studios, sharing the same social and communal space with the other students. It would be expected, therefore, that some conflict would occur; especially regarding the student relations that had developed as the course had bifurcated following its initial introduction (RP: 77, 171-173). This was not, however, a simple and absolute antagonism and a student two years above the 1969/70 cohort describes her initial impression:

> *'the first year fine art students then were quite an interesting and likeable group of people and were the first lot to be heavily influenced by conceptual art… with their typewriters and someone sending electrical signals from one end of the studio to another'*
> quoted in (TGA 2000121/7/1: 77)

There was a provisional *modus vivendi* among the two sides of students for substantial periods of time and Terry Atkinson and Dave Bainbridge were on cordial terms with many of the other tutors. [126] This was not universal, however, and the dismantling of the

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[125] The only evidence that this could have been possible is firstly, from the initial proposal and the manner in which it tried to create a specialist course for theoretical inquiry, which had, in any case, since been reduced to the Art Theory Programme sitting within the Dip.A.D. Secondly, the prominent position of a theory student and some staff within staff student meetings.

[126] Much of the 'Art Theory Programme' had tried to make sure people had jobs to do (DH: 80) but the rhetoric of the course and the tutors involved essentially held that most of the tutors were 'bone idle' and that their way of working was redundant. The real target of much of their criticism was not, as has often been assumed, necessarily at the expense of the teaching of craft, but more at the expense of Fine Art tutors in particular producing 'education by osmosis' (Harrison, 1972: 223) in which the student is inculcated into a set of values rather than engaged in any kind of substantive education as A&L saw it. This is the mode of art education that I have described in different ways at many points in the thesis at the risk of being overly

course was agitated by those tutors within the college that were most unhappy. Many tutors found the attack on their profession, both explicit and implicit, an affront and became gradually less motivated to come in to college, as did some students. Some tutors, like the art history tutor Ros Billingham took a sabbatical after being unhappy about the direction the course was going (Billingham, 2016: pers. comm.). Other tutors were part of subsidiary departments to Fine Art, such as Arthur Hillyer and Tash Shenstone in printmaking, which had not yet been able to gain a separate Dip.A.D. qualification, also felt aggrieved at the approach and attitude of the Art Theory Programme and students respectively (RP: 89; 166). By this point several tutors at Coventry had left, most significantly Barbara Reise and Michael Sandle.[127] Barbara Reise had stayed on as a lecturer until April 1970 (TGA/786/5/6/10&11). She stated that her and a few 'moderates' all left at the same time, but it is not clear, apart from the disappearance of Don Foster, who else she means by 'moderates' (it probably wasn't Don Foster). The 'moderates'' departure is characterised as being an exasperated result of trying to mediate between the increasingly entrenched positions of the more traditional staff and the 'Art Theory' staff (TGA/786/1/9).[128] Therefore, with three broadly supportive and influential members of staff gone (Reise, Foster, Sandle), the support structure that meant the Art Theory Programme was tolerated within the wider institution had been removed. The college became divided more clearly into those that were teaching on the Art Theory Programme and those that were not, and an exaggerated representation of the students' attitude and dramatic events seems to have been built-up during this period after Reise and Foster's departure and Plummer's employment in 1970.

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repetitive; this is due to the fact that it is the underlying problem lying at the bottom of most of the interventions and criticisms covered in the thesis.

[127] Michael Sandle, though of a very different character and tradition to the A&L affiliated teachers, had remained largely supportive of the course, though he did not involve himself in that aspect and continued teaching sculpture and drawing. He was also supportive of Dave Hirons and Peter Smith, both of whom became his studio assistants for a period of time as he was making large fibreglass sculptures at the time (DH: 16 , RVB/MF/PS: 337)

[128] Rosalind Billingham, one of the more traditional art historians, and who had taken a sabbatical, remembers her thinking 'everybody was against her' (Billingham, 2016: pers. comm.). From her papers in the Tate Archive it seemed she felt incredibly exasperated at various acts of incompetence on behalf of the then dean Ernest Hoch, Anthony Hobson and the immovability of her own department (TGA/786/5/6/2).

This representation of the 'Art Theory Course' is largely the one used to articulate why the continuation of the course was bad for the college. At the most extreme end of this representation there were suspicions levelled at both students and staff of violent intent and terrorist activity (RP: 105; AD: 6; Weinberger, 1995: BL17).[129] At less extreme levels the characterisation was that they were not just provoking and questioning the other students and staff, but that they would deface canvasses, take paintings down and forbid painting activity to happen. Robin Plummer remembers that, 'because they didn't like 'old art', would take any painting off the wall, it was taken down! …there were no paintings hanging on the walls, not in the whole building' (RP: 87) and Alan Dyer, who arrived after the events, spoke to Harry Weinberger who had claimed that 'the figurative painters were getting their canvases damaged. Daubed by this group of Art & Language students' (AD: 6). When Simon Lewis came to take over organising the Fine Art first year in Hull in 1975, effectively to replace Harold Hurrell, a similar claim was made that A&L had managed to instill a complete cessation of production and the studios were completely bare (SL: 180, 212). All members of A&L that I have interviewed admit that the course and the position they took was either 'threatening' (Atkinson, 2011), or 'confrontational', which the students found 'intimidating' (DR: 46, 56, 70) but they also deny vehemently any accusations of damaging or removing the work of the other students or staff (PP: 94-98, 140; DR: 46). This aspect is seen as the most controversial part of the course but relies on a pretty crude characterisation of both tutors and students as a domineering group of over-zealous iconoclasts. This is complemented by an equally caricatured idea of a majority group of timid, teary-eyed painters who are constantly living in fear of having their paintings stolen or defaced and who have no recourse to retaliation.[130]

A more likely version of this (mis)representation was that the arguments and position taken by the theory students affected the other students' sense of the validity of their art work and thence contributed to a lack of motivation towards production. David Rushton

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[129] It shouldn't be ruled out that these comments were made as a joke. One other student on the theory programme, Paul Tate, however remembers being quite seriously accused of carrying a gun (Tate, 2013: pers. comm.).

[130] David Rushton joked that if they had tried to damage or destroy the paintings they 'would have been beaten to death' (DR: pt. 3, 66).

recalls that 'they didn't do anything, they were traumatised... I mean that was one of the problems ... there was nothing going on in the studio' (DR: 51, 58).[131]

It is pertinent to compare the conditions in Coventry College of Art a few years earlier however, as vividly described in *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973), regarding the years 1967-69 immediately preceding the Art Theory Programme. In parts of the study they frequently describe a situation where students did not produce work in college or did not come into college or felt disheartened regarding their work because of harsh criticism from tutors (M&W, 1973: 35-40). Other sections of the study look at the shifts in what actually motivated the students to do work and there was a palpable shift from school pupils saying 'enjoyment' was their main motivation to pre-diploma going on to fine art Dip.A.D. students as an 'achievement or method of inquiry' (M&W, 1973: 62-3). The conclusion drawn from this shift, and particularly from the short responses given by the fine art students is that art college fosters a more 'cognitive' attitude towards art making. This information was recorded in 1968-69, and reveals the dominant influence in the college of both Mike Sandle and Terry Atkinson,[132] and it is their assessment of students which are used verbatim for one chapter of the study (M&W, 1973: 123-187). In their different ways, with different emphases, they both valued certain skills and attitudes, and the criticisms of both work and students' attitudes documented in *Art Students Observed* attributable to Mike Sandle are particularly harsh. In addition to a pre-existing culture of harsh criticism there is also the ascription of anomie within the college, associated with a state of crisis and transition in art production and uncertainty as to what was expected, resultant in a particular dependency on the authority of the tutor's approval (M&W, 1973: 15-17, Harrison, 1972: 222-4; Dennis, 2014). Whilst the derogation of personal and private motivations of 'self-expression' etc. seem to be a major contributor to a crisis in motivation among the younger students, the authors' idea that 'cognitive' work caused a lack of art production via the conflation of a sense of 'achievement' with 'method of

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[131] In contrast Philip Pilkington when asked if the students stopped coming into college he recalled them being full (PP: 98). This could be bad questioning as they could have been full but unproductive. In fact Dave Rushton recalls attendance eventually being enforced to stave off this lack of productivity among the students (DR: 58). The quote above, in context, is ambiguous as to whether there was a perception that there was nothing going on in the studio or whether this was actually the case, but there was unequivocally a drop in motivation and production among certain students it seems.

[132] This status was further confirmed by the then student Dave Hirons: 'Mike and Terry, they were like the two kings of the jungle... by 68...' (DH: 26)

inquiry' as motivational categories within the data seems wilful.[133] Additionally, the students' short responses to the question regarding their motivation, published in this chapter to prove that 'cognitive' motivations were significantly higher in Fine Art students merely show a mix of responses, only some of which (3 out of 11) referencing 'thought' or 'scientific' method (the responses of 'art as a cognitive act' ranged wildly from conceptions of art as 'explorations of the soul', 'punishment' and 'finding out about myself and others'). There is also a conflation of 'self-expression' with 'enjoyment' (M&W, 1973: 65), as if a student would not 'enjoy' working in a 'cognitive', i.e. non-intuitive, non-expressionist manner. This reveals a possible agenda of the study to possibly load all of the blame for the confused and anomic situation among the art students on the supposed injunction to be conceptual from 1968 onwards. It was more likely the plurality of approach in the staff, the lack of any concrete structure and the severity of the often ad hominem criticisms from several tutors that lead to this de-motivation and anomie.

By 1970-71 Harry Weinberger in particular was very concerned as to the effect of the conceptual artists on the direction the school was going in. In an interview he remembered that 'happenings were in' and 'paintings were out' and that his predecessor (Don Foster) had removed the painting easels. He had made many attempts to encourage students to adopt the optional life drawing classes and to do easel-based work (Weinberger, 1995: BL17). Towards the end of the second year relations became more antagonistic. The art theory contingent had a disproportionately high representation, with David Rushton being a member of the staff-student course committee (DR: 50). Harry Weinberger wanted to extend the option of doing painting and life drawing into establishing a permanent space for easel painting in the studios, which was quashed within the committee, due in large part to this representation (Pilkington; Rushton; Lole, 1971: 121). David Rushton remembers Harry Weinberger insisting that he and Philip Pilkington should make visual art work from late in their second year onwards, which they vehemently refused to do (DR: 54). Weinberger perceived the practice of making was being challenged *tout court,* and that the removal of the easels by Don Foster, the opposition to setting up a permanent space for painting, and the students' production of text as artwork were part of the same movement against fine art as he practiced it. As an

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[133] The idea of theoretical analysis precluding practical activity is a forceful and long lasting one within art education and is discussed in the final chapter.

attempt to counter this he sought the opinions of students who did not like the art theory students or the programme to justify a move towards agitating for some kind of punitive action.[134]

Despite both Terry Atkinson 'trying to pull strings within the framework of the institution' (DR: 50), and Pilkington and Rushton being ever more vocal in defending their contractual right to continue the course, Robin Plummer decided, with the approval of Alan Richmond and the support of Harry Weinberger, to take advantage of the fact that in the summer of 1971 the contracts of Dave Hirons, Stuart Knight, Michael Baldwin and David Bainbridge were up for renewal. Those part-time contracts were then terminated, not renewed, along with four others, all of whom had been active in delivering the Art Theory Programme, leaving only Terry Atkinson still in place, who was full-time and therefore had tenure.

As outlined above, the rationale behind it was based on the initial illegitimacy of the course proposal and the presumed subsequent attempts by the art theory tutors and students to dominate the college and preclude traditional art activity. The position was that the 'Art Theory' pedagogy, especially the apparent exclusion of painting and sculpture as the dominant modes of production, was untenable and unfair to the students, and to that effect there were too many tutors who subscribed to this approach. The solution was to create as complete a regime change as possible.[135] This was rationalised by the supposed opposition of the majority of the students and that it was done in their interest, i.e. to create better condition under which they can get on with their work.[136]

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[134] This was simultaneous with the hiring of Robin Plummer, Weinberger becoming Head of Department on the disappearance of Don Foster. The move to limit or stop the theoretical aspect of the course, therefore, came from many locations.

[135] 'I changed the maximum number of staff that I could' (RP: 178)

[136] Robin Plummer himself remembers students feeling upset about a general sense of disapproval towards making objects, probably around early 1971:

> *I mean I can remember going in, there was a little room on the top floor, and there was a young woman and a boy in there, worked in there , and I said you know 'you look a bit upset', and she said, 'well I'm very interested in maps, and I want to do art which is about maps, relief… all of maps', and I said 'well, great!', you know, 'go ahead and do it!'. 'But people tell me not to' she said… you know, it really was terrible.* (RP: 95)

This opposition on behalf of the students was apparently agitated by Harry Weinberger over the year (DH: 94-96; Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.; AD: 6).

To the students most affected by the dismissals (Pilkington, Rushton, Lole and Smith), the discontinuation of the staff seemed both swingeing and incompetent on many levels (PP: 80). It is from this point onwards that it is not possible to conceive of an Art Theory Programme or any kind of radical shift in pedagogy at Coventry art college. The course had been all but completely removed from the institution and therefore the curriculum was largely up to the students from this point forward.

1971-1972

For the students who had enrolled on the Art Theory Programme, the activity within the art college became a series of attempts to keep pursuing the areas that they had explored in the first two years. This took two forms, firstly they had to somehow continue the curriculum and devise new ways to carry on learning without the institutional guidance of several different tutors. This was mitigated to some extent by Terry Atkinson staying, but his presence did not ensure a suitable wealth of topics for the students. Secondly, they had to engage more fully in arguing the case for the work they were producing, in pointing out the folly of dismissing the tutors and defending their place on the Dip.A.D. programme.

Having most of the part-time staff removed from the course meant that immediately after a void of teachers able to continue the core activities of the Art Theory Programme appeared; that was the intention of the dismissals. As the programme had discussion as its kernel, the students had to maintain that discussion within their peer group, which was probably easier for those in their final year than those going into their second year. Conversely, a number of painting and drawing projects were introduced to try and reassert those practices and which the theory students were expected to participate in.[137]

It is peculiar that this person was particularly interested in maps and felt alienated from the rest of the course as Atkinson and Baldwin had produced a whole series of works relating to Maps, writings on Maps and the Technos projects involved Maps (see previous chapter).

[137] One such project was by the newly introduced tutor Judy Bibby in November 1971 in which they should 'consider gesture, colour, mark volume, surface' and instructing the students to 'make a flexible structure in which everything can find its place so that each individual finds his way of enabling himself to become

In the final year it became very hard for those few students to maintain the momentum of the programme that they had subscribed to and were keen to continue.

Terry Atkinson carried on teaching but, according to Rushton and Pilkington, his approach was rather perfunctory compared with the livelier group discussion which had been the core of the earlier programme. David Rushton does not remember Terry teaching inside the art college during this period (DR: 106-7) and Philip Pilkington was very dismissive of it:

> *Terry was doing this stuff, this was after Mike had gone. Oh god this turgid stuff with Karl Popper. … I think he probably thought it was… the right way to go, because he really lost… an arm and a leg when Mike left… what he did was he said 'oh we'll go through this page' like an Oxford kind of seminar.* (PP: 178)[138]

This was largely going through Karl Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies* written during the Second World War and updated in 1962 (Popper, 2011), a sustained critique of historicism and insidious political ideology, but a strange and ideologically controversial choice in itself. This seemed 'pointless' to Pilkington, although they had gone through Popper's *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, this was very different work and they were finding the work of Kuhn, Lakatos and Feyerabend much more useful as tools to be used (PP: 178 and Pilkington, 1997: 14); the topic of this particular work did not seem pertinent to their trajectory (as they were gravitating more toward systems and linguistic theory at the time). Atkinson's position was that he would see the students who had enrolled in 1970 through to the end of their Dip.A.D. in 1973 and then resign, but his idea was largely to protect these students from further punitive action from the authorities; the provision for teaching and discussion on a variety of topics was removed and the students

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aware of the objects and so giving substance to his will to create and change' (DRA, 1971: np). Rushton also remembers a similar exercise to reassert painting in which they were given canvasses as an incentive (DR: pt2, 49).It could not be more different from Atkinson's early drawing projects (M&W, 1973: 223-4) in which he reduces drawing to an act of reporting on a slowly deflating balloon, precluding any gestural mark-making or choice of materials outside a 2B pencil. See also Atkinson's lecture *The Paradox of Drawing as an Ideological Resource* (AL0235, AL0236, 1974) in which the teaching of drawing is rearticulated as a socially manipulative activity.

[138] Peter Smith also remembers a change after Baldwin and Bainbridge left, as the teaching had been largely a group effort and he conjectures that the sense that it was perhaps a lost cause had started to set in with the dismissals (RVB/MF/PS: 431).

were largely left to their own devices . More students were enrolling onto the now one-man 'Art Theory' option within the Dip.A.D (Atkinson, 1992: 27, 56) as part of a number of pathways available. Atkinson described it as a 'dying' course, with no members of staff with any interest in the concerns specific to its proposed aims, and so the curriculum had to come from outside the institution, especially for those students who wanted to get to grips with more specific areas or subjects.[139]

One way in which this dearth of institutional input was alleviated was through the growing and shifting institution of Art & Language itself. The course had always run (as indeed had Atkinson and Baldwin's joint work) as much in social and domestic space as it had in the studios, and in this way the most dedicated students (Pilkington, Lole, Smith and Rushton) entered into Art & Language activity proper. Graham Howard, who had finished his Dip.A.D. the year before and was now contributing to the pages of A-L and the attendant conversation, remembers that around this time quite regular and semi-formal meetings were set up in order for the group to meet and compare recent work and reading (GH: 220-232). The centre of activity then shifted to different members' houses as the *Art-Language Institute*, as it was temporarily named around this time, formalised as its own institution, partly *in lieu* of an art educational context. The contributors to A-L had widened, incorporating the increasing participation of members of the burgeoning ALNY, Charles Harrison, the editor of *Studio International*, alongside those contributors from the 1969 cohort of the Art Theory Programme. The rupture caused by the decimation of the Art Theory Programme and the shift of location and personnel also acted as a catalyst for conflicts between members. The shift from the art college coincided with the departure of David Bainbridge from the group, and an increase in tensions between Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin, among others. The transition from an art college to a homeless, self-sustaining collective also circumstantially contributed to the development of what was to become the conversational context of the indexes. This was

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[139] At the same time Robin Plummer publicly denied that the 'Art Theory Course' has suffered stating that 'it will continue to receive the same (if not more) support as in the past' (Everitt, 1972: 177). There is some account of a psychologist being brought in to do visiting lectures (PP: 323) but most of the former students I interviewed agreed more with Atkinson's frank summary that they 'were left in the shit' (Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.).

not, interpersonally or contextually, a neat or smooth process and came with a series of departures and rifts which were partly related to the 'Art Theory Course's' end.[140]

The students (that is Pilkington, Rushton, Lole, Smith and, more casually, Chris Willsmore) also continued their curriculum by going straight to the source, as it were, and getting in an Austin A40 and making weekly trips to philosophy lectures at Oxford University, often outnumbering the Oxford students in the lecture hall. They saw lectures by A.J. Ayer, P.F. Strawson, Patrick Gardener, Nicholas Rescher, Anthony Kenney, among others (PP: 178-194; DR: 28) and took advantage of a credit account at Blackwell's to furnish themselves with books. In this way they encountered experts and dominant thinkers in the fields of philosophy of most interest to them, which were largely from the analytic tradition, but also covered pragmatism, philosophy of mind and the philosophy of history.[141] In this way they devised their own curriculum out of whatever was programmed in that term's Oxford lecture series brochure.

The students managed to work with their situation in carrying on a semblance of an educational programme through unconventional means and largely indifferent to the polytechnic strictures. However, the students did have to negotiate with the demands of the fine art department in order to qualify for a Dip.A.D. Harry Weinberger regularly intimated to the students that if they continued producing work in the manner that they were then they would not pass the Dip.A.D., and that they should start producing objects. Robin Plummer told the students directly that they had been, 'in following

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[140] There are many speculations as to the cause of the tensions in this period of A&L, up to the mid-late 1970s when the entire project broke apart. Certain perspectives on the situation can be read in detail elsewhere, most significantly from the perspective of the protagonists in the following: (Atkinson, 1992; 1995); (Pilkington, 1997); (Harrison, 2001 & 2011); (Rushton, 1998) and for a slightly later American perspective on the eventual fracturing and reforming of ALNY with some reference to ALUK see (Corris, 1996). The relationship between the importance of learning, the indexing and how the group continued after the dismantling of the course will be dealt with later on in this chapter. It was a contentious matter as to how that learning developed, and it developed quite rapidly.

[141] The interests were developing more and more towards various logics, set theory, machine translation and linguistics and ideas of completeness, decision making, modelling and other problems and expansions of logic as typified by Yehoshua Bar-Hillel, Nicholas Rescher, Richard Montague, Jaakko Hintikka and many others. A developed bibliography as to what was starting to be read by Rushton and Pilkington can be found in Art-Language, 2.3 (Pilkington & Rushton, 1973)

the…course, 'sold a lemon'' (Pilkington, Rushton, Lole, 1971: 220).[142] The bias of the teachers was now firmly in the camp of visual concerns and the practice of drawing, painting and sculpture as self-justifying pursuits; the theory students were therefore under pressure to show evidence of this. Terry Atkinson's 'protection' as a full time lecturer, however, stood for a lot. It seems this period consisted of much biting of the tongue and negotiation through gritted teeth on his part, writing a couple of decades later 'my dealings with Plummer consisted of inane and anodyne blandishments, stalled projects, evasive conversations and outright lies' (Atkinson, 1992: 26). Ever interested in the fate of the Lanchester course, it was included in a report for *Studio International* which also betrays some of this relationship, Atkinson being reserved and reticent in his responses (see Everitt, 1972: 177). During this period, the years 1971-73, the deduction in the *Studio* report was that the Lanchester Polytechnic staff were playing realpolitik, waiting for the A&L influence to be fully expunged; this became confirmed soon afterwards.[143] It was probably Atkinson's presence however that meant there was still any space at all for the theory students to continue as theory students. One of the reasons why this is such a documented moment in the short history of the 'Art Theory Course' however, is that when faced with this threat the small group of students became very vocal about the injustices that they perceived. In many ways this was also a direct outcome of the peculiar nature of the course; in arguing the case of the dismissed part-time tutors and resisting injunctions to make purely 'visual art', much of the critical tools that had been encouraged and developed on the programme were put to use.

Robin Plummer, via Alan Richmond, in addition to terminating the contracts, had also approached the NCDAD asking how legitimate the initial course proposal (the *Fine Art Policy Statement*) was from their perspective, and to question implicitly the idea that written text could be submitted as a Dip.A.D. show.[144] The NCDAD were unusually

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[142] Philip Pilkington, and Paul Tate, remember a variation on this: 'Well the words exactly were: 'you've been sold a pup' and 'he's a charlatan and you should be doing the real course and you've wasted your time'.' (PP: 567) I don't think these are actually the exact words, but the gist of it.

[143] Peter Smith, then a student of Atkinson's, also expressed this sense of waiting for the various influences of A&L to disappear from the college (RVB/MF/PS: 457).

[144] In some ways this was a bizarre request as Graham Howard had been awarded a 2.1 from the NCDAD for a show largely consisting of text in 1970, which had surely set a precedent. It was possible that the amount of diagrammatical spacing and possibly illustrations from the *Philosophical Investigations* made the work sufficiently visual, it is unclear (see GH: 93). The ensuing article in *Studio International* (discussed

responsive to such a request and, as this response is central to this dispute, it is worth quoting it in as full a form as is available:

> *I write in reference to our meeting at this office yesterday when you sought clarification of my Council's views on matters concerned with the Quinquennial Review in May 1969 of the then Coventry College of Art…*
>
> *In accordance with recognised procedure a consultative meeting with representatives of the college and the local authority was held on 25th June 1969, when attention was drawn to the doubts expressed by the Visiting Board, fully shared and endorsed by the Council, concerning the lack of balance in the proposed modifications to the programme of study in the Fine Art area, and a note of caution was added with a view to avoiding what could be a distortion of emphasis in the programme.*
>
> *In other words the council considered that a proper balance should be maintained between studio work and complementary studies and that any integration of the two such as was proposed that there should be no subordination of the former to the latter.*
>
> *There is no doubt whatever that the board and the council used the term "studio work" in its commonly accepted meaning, that is to say the production of tangible visual art objects. This is confirmed by the terms in which reapproval was expressed including it should be noted, specific reference to Painting and Sculpture as chief studies. The Council at no time had in mind any deviation from the basic principle of chief studies in those terms.*
>
> *I hope this information will serve to make my Council's position quite clear.*
>
> E.E. Pullee, Letter to Alan Richmond, 29th July , 1971
>
> quoted in (Pilkington, Rushton, Lole, 1971: 120)

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below) also addresses the condition that something cannot be done purely because it has never been done before (Pilkington/Rushton/Lole, 1971). The most immediate inferred motivation for this request was a genuine anxiety about how to go about it, but it could also be inferred that it was an order to create an issue where there was none.

This was quoted by the students, within their *Studio International* article, as the basis for a public critique of the rationale of Richmond and Plummer, as representatives of the polytechnic, for limiting the programme and undermining their approach to learning. Charles Harrison included within A&L from 1971,[145] then assistant editor at *Studio International*, became an important facilitator for the publishing of the students' articles. The magazine had run several special issues on art education, was the key magazine for publishing contemporary, trans-Atlantic art and in particular late-Minimal, hard edge abstraction, anti-form and Conceptual Art and had printed several texts by Art & Language among others, including Joseph Kosuth's (in)famous *Art After Philosophy* (Kosuth, 1969; Atkinson, 1995).[146] The art theory students' article was to spark an ongoing engagement with art education in *Studio* in subsequent years.

Some Concerns in Fine Art Education (Pilkington, Lole, Rushton, 1971: 120-121) is largely written to address some faults of reason on behalf of the NCDAD and the polytechnic management and to illustrate how recent art offered an understandable context for the course, which escaped the understanding of the council and polytechnic. The central aspect of the dispute was that of the definition of 'studio work', outlined above as the 'production of tangible visual art objects'. As the above excerpt demonstrates, the NCDAD panel had never understood that written work was intended to be treated and assessed as studio work, and did not infer this from the idea that 'Liberal Studies' would be merged with studio work, stated in the proposal. This clearly has implications in terms of art practice's relationship to art education; by 1971 it was a commonplace that textual work could be accepted as art work within the ever-changing larger art world. The artwork and the work of the artist was comfortably going 'beyond the object' and so this was, in this crass formulation, an example of art educational orthodoxy dragging its heels

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[145] Charles Harrison described his position when aligning himself with Art & Language as 'labouring under a sense of ill-explained disillusion and disquiet at the experience of a career as a modern art critic/art historian/exhibition organiser/entrepreneur etc.' and his attraction to A&L due to their 'capacity for irony' which 'immediately distinguished them from the normal population of the English art world' (H&O. 1982: 23).

[146] *Art After Philosophy* was written shortly before Joseph Kosuth became the American editor of Art-Language and then involved with Art & Language and instrumental with shows such as the Documenta Index and the formation of ALNY. *Art After Philosophy* firmly put A&L under Kosuth's idea of analytic conceptual art (see Osborne, 1999; 2002; Atkinson, 1995).

behind art as it is practiced.[147] Why text in particular was an especially unacceptable mode for artistic production, where performance and all kinds of found objects were more accepted, is largely due to its conflation in the minds of the panel with the work of art history or complementary studies. No matter what the content of the writing, entirely written work meant that, when perceived by the NCDAD, what should have been a 'subsidiary' element of the course had inappropriately escaped into the sanctum of the studio, the 'chief discipline', and undesirably disturbed that space. That it was long, complicated and required time and a form of commitment that was different from the attention that a purely 'visual' work received, meant it was much less amenable to assessment as it did not play up to the skills of the assessor.

This part of the debate clearly went quickly back to not only the original Quinquennial Review judgement of 1969 (Appendix C) but also the remit of NCDAD as set out in its initial reports in the early 1960s. The NCDAD and Lanchester Polytechnic management both subscribed to a wilfully 'simple ontology' (Atkinson, 1992: 26) of art works and objects. That largely rested on their 'visual' qualities at the exclusion of any textual content, information on intention or intensional qualities. The article brought the council's own avowed liberalism to bear upon the claim that its judgement would be useable as way of determining what would or would not count as a Diploma show; the NCDAD's remit being one of encouraging approaches to courses of a 'wide and varying nature and character [with the] freedom to pursue their own artistic direction and find their own solution to common problems' (NCDAD quoted in P/L/R, 1971: 221). In eliciting the above letter, i.e. forcing the issue, the students challenge quite successfully disproved this claim.

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[147] This was the term used in Robert Morris' Notes on Sculpture, 4 (Morris, 1969). The other term that is relevant to this argument, the 'dematerialised' art object, coined by Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, in which the art object became displaced: 'a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object, … may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete' (Lippard & Chandler, 1968: 45). (Terry Atkinson took issue with the over-egged disappearance of art objecthood in the examples given (see Lippard, 1997: 34). Both are emblematic of this move from Minimalism to Anti-form to Conceptual Art which was a widely accepted narrative in the art world, works becoming ever more *int*angible. The opposite problem to the resistance to conceptual practices found within the art schools was found in the art world, as Morris ends his essay: 'At the present time the culture is engaged in the hostile and deadly act of immediate acceptance of all new perceptual art moves, absorbing through institutionalized recognition every art act.' (Morris, 1969: 885).

Robin Plummer, EE Pullee and Alan Richmond all agreed to stay publicly silent on the matter (RP: 26) and only communicate with the students through their solicitors. The extremity of the reaction, similarly to the accusations of guns and bombs mentioned earlier, is to be read among the ongoing paranoia stemming from the student protests of 1968, which was seen as looming large over these students and as a possible threat. The acrimony between the students and the management of the polytechnic was high and the students needed to keep defending their entitlement to be on the Dip.A.D. for the whole year.[148] Dave Rushton describes their main fears and aims:

> *…you were trying to stay afloat in a coracle… you needed to get to the end of the process or you'd come out of this without a degree. …if you were successful in staying within the institution, the institution … to some extent… had to have recognised the validity of what you were doing. If you'd left… you would have been expelled and you would have entered into that negative zone … So the point was to stay on the cusp of being accepted in some sense.* (DR: pt3, 4)

This constant lobbying became a central part of the course by the final year, just as central as continuing the curriculum in Oxford University, going to Atkinson's lectures and contributing to the wider Art & Language conversation. As Philip Pilkington recollected some years later,

> *'as final year students… we were campaigning locally and nationally for the reinstatement of all the part time teaching staff who had been dismissed arbitrarily… This included working with the National Council for Civil Liberties…, the National Union of Students and the press in the face of indifference (and Schadenfreude) from our fellow students. We faced the unamusing threat of a libel action against us…*

The students therefore found themselves in an entirely unsympathetic environment and the dismissal of the staff, at least for the last year, increased the tensions rather than put them to bed.

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[148] It is important to point out, as Philip Pilkington was at pains to point it out, that the actions of the students was not in any way to do with 'sit ins' or any kind of student movement, not least because it was not actively supported by many students outside the theory component (PP: 242).

A new Head of Fine Art, Colin Saxton,[149] and several new members of staff were brought in to replace the part time tutors that had been dismissed and, with one exception, fitted comfortably within painting and sculpture as a discipline.[150] With a suddenly unhospitable environment, two students on the second year, Paul Tate and Lynne Lemaster tried to transfer to a more amenable course at Trent Polytechnic. They were refused seemingly because they had been blacklisted among the polytechnic network (MB/MR: 226-8). A letter from the director that was discovered and published by the Student Union explains this. Alan Richmond called the students a 'hardcore' who refused to comply with Council or Polytechnic policy and produce, in his scare-quotes, '"conceptual art" only and hope to get a Dip.A.D. by producing essays only and no works at all.' (TAC, 1971: np) He goes on to say that they 'resort to abuse of the Director, the Head of Department, and anybody else who resists them' (TAC, 1971: np). One of the students, Paul Tate remembers that they were seen as agents of a 'virus' that needed to be contained (2013: pers. comm.) and the idea of Conceptual Art within the small conservative coterie of the polytechnic directors was in this letter characterised as undesirable and "way out" (again the director's own scare quotes). It is maybe important to mention that the head of Fine Art at Trent Polytechnic was happy to take the students, and the letter was sent as both a veto to the impending acceptance of their transfer and a chastisement of the head for allowing this sort of thing to occur, potentially damaging the reputation of the college.[151] Indeed within that network it seemed to the

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[149] Colin Saxton was in Robin Plummer's assessment, 'the ultimate sort of Guardian-reading liberal. Lovely man, very nice. Painted hard and he got a grip on things' (RP: 14). He did spiritual, eastern-inspired painting, he did not enamour himself to Terry Atkinson, who considered him hopeless (2016, pers. comm.) He completely restructured the course and made 'Art Theory' a small optional component of that (GH: 346). He was seen by Rushton and Pilkington as someone to be wary of, as his purpose was to 'get a grip on things' (DR: Pt. 3, 178-9).

[150] These included Judy Bibby, Stephen Cox, Neil Davis, Suzanne Monelle and Terry Powell (Course document. DRA, 1971: np).

[151] This was taken from the Student Union paper 'The Phoenix', 21st October 1971. It also notes that Harry Weinberger had sent across 'nothing but a good academic report' on the students. Robin Plummer remembers Lynne Lemaster demanding to see her report, which was probably linked with the refusal of the transfer (RP: 276). As the article is not widely available it is interesting to include an excerpt regarding the transfer as a comparison with the account by the heads of polytechnics, discussed earlier:

> *…on the first year of the course these two students were involved with that part of the course known as Art Theory (not to be confused with so-called "conceptual art"). With the non-reappointment of the four part-time members of staff who taught art theory, it was obvious that this part of the course could not be continued. Nottingham claimed to offer at least two members of staff capable of directing the students'*

recently dismissed tutors that they were also blacklisted from certain colleges (MB/MR: 226-228).

An article published slightly later, in April 1972 (Lanch. Poly. Students, 1972) and signed off by the majority of Fine Art students, details some of the changes that are only vaguely referred to elsewhere. These were changes being made at the imminent point of assessment for the first cohort and in the article the original structure of 5-terms theory, 4-terms practical, which is detailed in the original *Fine Art Policy Statement,* is reversed to 4-terms theory, 5-terms practical. The students do not take much issue with this in principle, but the idea of a crude split between these two activities yet again seemed to miss the point (a problem partly caused by the language of the original proposal). It also adds to the injunction to create 'tangible visual art objects' the requirement to show evidence for 'manipulating visual images' before being allowed to go on to the third year of the course, which was the situation for the second year students (including Paul Tate and Lynne Lemaster). Again the conflation and misinterpretation of theoretical practice with complementary studies, and the assumptions about what constituted artworks, were taken to task. Indeed, one aspect of lobbying for the course to remain was to try to get other students on-side. One student-produced poster from this period indicates that posters, appealing to fellow students and quite reconciliatory in tone, were used to propagate the idea that writing and theory were an integral part of art work (Fig. 6). In the report for the student paper 'The Phoenix' (DRA, 1971: np), the idea that the rest of the students were in opposition to the remainder of the theory students and the 'Theory Course' as it had run 1969-71, is further challenged by their statement that a 'number of students who are now making art objects benefitted greatly from the Art Theory Course seminars in the earlier stages of their course.' (DRA, 1971: np). This also gives some indication of an aspect of the course that neither those that opposed it nor those members of A&L that taught it articulated: the benefit gained by those fair-weather attendees of the initial year of the programme.

The article in *Studio International* was the first of several that dealt with art education from a critical standpoint. Another set of articles entitled *Some Concerns In Fine Art Education II* (Morris, Harrison, Jacks, 1971) appeared, as did a series of articles under the

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further study of Art Theory which had previously been sanctioned and encouraged at Lanchester. (DRA, 1971: np)

umbrella heading of *Aspects of Art Education (1,2,3)* (1972) which included contributions from both Lanchester and Newport Students[152], among other articles on the state of art education in general; a response by Harold Hurrell, *Trouble at Lanchester* (Hurrell, 1971) and a group piece *Hierarchies in Fine Art Courses* (1972) signed by 43 of the students on the course (discussed above). These ongoing debates on art education often centred around the problems of the artificial division of theory and practice within art education. They are situated within the spatial separation of the studio and the lecture theatre; the temporal separation of thinking about something and doing something; and the cognitive or categorical separation of mute 'privatist' action and discursive communication. All of these polarities are addressed at different times in these articles, and all the student essays in these publications stem from the lived experience of having to negotiate the split of theory and practice, written into the Coldstream Report.

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[152] Berry, Wood and Wright wrote their equivalent of 'Some Concerns in Art Education' in this issue, entitled *Remarks on art Education*. It is largely a sustained attack on the contradictions of 'laissez-faire' as an educational paradigm. Citing the necessity for 'rule following', 'intersubjectivity' and a methodological explicitness eschewed by the 'no rules rule' culture (Berry, Wright, Wood, 1972).

More Problems of Assessment

The assessment of both the Newport students and those at Lanchester Polytechnic was problematic in a similar way.[153] In both instances the injunction to produce 'tangible visual art objects' was one sticking point[154], as it was mainly a problem of formal assessment in which categories of 'Painting' and 'Sculpture' still applied, and the second was the issue of collaborative work.[155]

The theory students at Lanchester Polytechnic worked in pairs (Ruston and Pilkington, Smith and Lole) and exhibited filing cabinets of the texts that they had been working on for *Art-Language, Statements, Analytical Art* and other projects. Much of their writing was absorbed into the *Indexes* from 1972 and the Dip.A.D. show, when asked about the relationship between their show and the *Documenta Index* Philip Pilkington said:

> *Seamless really, seamless. We were doing all sorts of stuff on the indexes, I mean just the mechanical stuff and then the conversations about it before… because I think Documenta was about a week after or two weeks after the degree show. I think we just sort of flew out… almost immediately afterwards and put it together.* (PP: 372)

The work done on the show was not only contiguous but pretty much entirely incorporated into the *Index 001* at Documenta 5.[156] The Dip.A.D. show was simpler in its

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[153] Hull College of Art, as discussed, did not have any students who took the collaborative A&L inspired project on at this point. There is both little information regarding the diploma shows of the early seventies; none of my interviewees can remember any students from this period particularly engaged in A&L collaborative-type work or any particularly A&L-like work (KJ:103-105; Chilton, 2016: pers. comm.).

[154] One possibility/threat entertained during this time is described by Harrison in which the written work the students had done would 'have to be mounted on the wall, assessed for their 'visual qualities', and presumably found wanting' (Harrison, 2001: 70).

[155] Terry Atkinson, looking back at the 'art theory course' writes 'Questions such as how do you mark a text as artwork? And how do you mark an object made by more than one person? Sent [the regime] into ecstasies of self-righteousness' (Atkinson, 1992: 26).

[156] As Dave Rushton points out (DR: 131-133), William Wood includes a comprehensive list of the texts included in the *Index 001*, many of which are the texts mentioned or discussed in this thesis, and one can surmise that the students on the course contributed a good portion to the content (Wood, 1992: 111-120); these would have been the texts submitted for the Dip.A.D. assessment. The students Rushton, Pilkington and Howard also seem to have been involved in much to the technical work and logical ramifications of the Indexes (Atkinson, 1992: 8-9; H&O, 1982: 32; GH: 232; Pilkington & Rushton, 1973: 1-33 ; Pilkington, 1997: 3-11).

structure and technical relationships, but essentially formed a sub-section of the *Index 001* (Wood, 1992: 75n43, 113) and it seemed was also titled Index. The content was partly work extracted from the magazines *Statements* and *Analytical Art* and partly unpublished material (stemming from discussion, transcriptions of conversations etc.) concerned with a wide range of topics, some set essay questions, some self-initiated works. As the content was considered difficult to mark, the Sociologist Zev Barbu was brought in as an extra external assessor (in addition to those from the NCDAD) to assess its quality as written work.[157] In one respect the students had been successful; they had managed to survive the course, have their work considered and get a grade out of it. In another respect the problems of how the work was approached and the ontological and taxonomic problems of identifying 'art work' or 'studio work' had not progressed at all. Those involved in the examination essentially out-sourced the problem to a sociologist, treating it as purely academic written work, a simple category mistake or as a sociological anomaly that needed somehow interpreting. This compromise resulted in an award of a 2.1 for all four students on the advice from Barbu that the work seemed fairly competent (RP: 332).

The Dip.A.D. show presented by the Newport students was much more based on their experience of art education, for reasons discussed earlier in the thesis. They were held to much the same stipulations as those at Lanchester Polytechnic when it came to 'tangible visual art objects', though a different solution was arrived at. As Paul Wood explains:

> *The way that we got round that was to make a film. It was a film about how we'd got to this position, which included film of the works that we'd made… This obviously got round the thing about the 'tangible visual art object'. There was some argy-bargy about whether this would count, because the physical objects weren't there in the room. It was decided they could be counted because they were represented in a film, so everybody sat there and watched the film… We were sitting there like po-faced news readers reading out this script called 'Practical Considerations', which was about paradigm change and stuff like that, and it was instantiated by images of work we'd done earlier, as*

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[157] 'Professor Z. Barbu of Sussex University has been appointed by the Polytechnic to act as advisor to the N.C.D.A.D. External Assessor for the Dip.A.D. Fine Art Chief Study, with particular reference to work of the conceptual artists.' NCDAD Exam Submission by Robin Plummer, dated 4th May 1972 (MRC: MSS.322/AD/28) Zev Barbu was an émigré from Romania (as was Alan Richmond), he set up the incredibly successful Sociology course at Sussex, which attracted some of the leading Marxist sociologists of the 1970s, including William Outhwaite and Tom Bottomore (Martell, 2010).

individuals, which had fed off Robert Morris, Barry Flanagan and that kind of work.
So that's the way that had happened; it was the content of the Dip.A.D. piece. (PW: 81)

Film was their 'supporting' subject, so presenting a film represented both visual art works and the required evidence of their technical facility in film. In some ways this produced a peculiar art form in itself; a performed lecture-film, reminiscent of a T.V. presentation, but firmly rooted in practices of conceptual art and institutional critique. The important constituent, however, was the script; a collaborative essay presenting art-theoretical exploration firmly as an appropriate and valid activity for an art student.

The three students at Newport thus used their final year to test the liberal nature of the institution as to what it did and didn't allow.[158] The script of the video is both reflective of the assessment situation that necessitated its production and, using the earlier work as the products of an 'exemplar-based learning', an argument for a shift in approach to education within art colleges. The concerns of the Newport Students' show were in many ways remarkably similar to those at Lanchester, though put to different ends. The work of Thomas Kuhn was taken to be incredibly important at Newport for understanding the relationship between art practice and art education, arguing that art education was a distinct practice in itself requiring a methodology. This was especially with regards to sorting out how a community within art could function with shared values, terms and 'models of activity' as opposed to an atomised, introspective and *laissez-faire* condition as was forcefully encountered at Newport and seen as representative of all art education. A substantial part of the text for the film focussed on the inadequacy of art history within the art schools, and its role in the inculcation of a student into a certain paradigm of art practice. The current practices involved in art education in which 'morphologically based imitation' of a 'mass of undifferentiated past achievements' counts for an education into a field is considered woefully inadequate. The philosophy of science was therefore mobilised in order to provide an analogous and fitting framework for a progressive model

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[158] Their project, as viewed by Paul Wood was an exposition of the 'ins and outs of the struggle that we'd had with the institution' (PW: 59), not as 'existential dilemmas of being a young expressionist artist' but as 'actually trying to deal with the material conditions affecting your production' (PW: 65). The collaborative aspect also seemed to be a problem for the assessment; the college did not in any way encourage the three students working together (PW: 15-16, 83).

of art education. The text is a very clear and articulate exposition of the fundamental blind spots of the prevalent Modernist art education. 'Digging where they stood', these issues were imminent to their concerns of a praxis, hence the title *Practical Considerations*.

Terry Atkinson was enlisted, along with the Welsh sculptor Jonah Jones, as an external examiner for Newport and so, along with the category shifting to film-with-objects and some arbitrary divvying up of authorship, Atkinson managed to deal with these problems of assessment; legitimising the students work. Significantly, Newport was allowed to suspend the Painting/Sculpture binary, a practice which had precedents at Hull, Goldsmiths and Leeds (Hurrell, 1971; Charnley, 2015: 15 & PW: 83), and awarded Berry, Wright and Wood a Dip.A.D. in Fine Art/Film (MRC: MSS.322/AD/48). Again, this was after much 'horse trading' between sympathetic and non-sympathetic tutors, with a blanket award of 2.1.

These two diploma shows, along with Graham Howard's submission a year before and those of the year afterwards, demonstrate the precarious situation that early 1970s art students were in when submitting 'Art Theory', which was largely seen as synonymous with Conceptual Art, for their Dip.A.D. The injunctions introduced by the NCDAD and Lanchester Polytechnic to show signs of 'tangible visual art objects' and 'evidence of the manipulations of images' show how resistant the colleges were to the submission of entirely text-based work as art work or 'studio work'. This was possibly because the terms of the battle were drawn as avant-gardist, i.e. an easy polarity between painting and sculpture on the one hand, and text based obscurantism on the other. In these terms it is easy to see why, three year later it would not be problematic to submit diagrams and filing cabinets full of texts as assessable art objects (AD: 14). It is a more complex picture when what is taken into account are the different positions towards the location of the cognitive value in art work; the relationship between *type* of theory, discourse and practice and what 'comes up for the count' in those spheres; or the relationships between the educational institution and its custodians to the interests of those embarking on that education. These are some of the things that A&L went on to consider further in the immediate aftermath of their initial foray into art education and more broadly constitute

a large chunk of the central issues skirted around during the following decades of art education.[159]

'Art Theory' from 1972-73 and after

The 'Art Theory' option at Coventry was continued nominally for many years in the official course documents. Terry Atkinson stayed until the 1973 cohort had graduated, as intended. Other former students, then members of Art & Language, taught on temporary or visiting lecturer bases. After graduating, David Rushton visited as a tutor on a number of occasions and worked on texts with students taking the theory course in late 1972 (DR: PT2 101).[160] Graham Howard and Harold Hurrell both taught part time from 1972 (GH: 28) at the behest of Colin Saxton. The teaching in this sense was much more piecemeal, it was a job-share resulting in one 'Art Theory' teacher present in the college for 3 or 4 days a week in addition to Terry's presence until summer 1973, which was by that point also part-time. Paul Tate, who graduated in 1973, remembers the final year being both deflating and frustrating because of issues within A&L and the lack of guidance or purpose on the course. The final show seemed to be formally similar to the previous year, being a series of filing cabinets, in which Paul Tate received a 'pass'. There was not much motivation to carry on for him, and he gave up trying to have any relationship to the art world for many years (Tate, 2013: pers. comm.). Indeed, by this point the interest of Art & Language as a practice began to be entirely focussed on its own concerns (the indexing) or focussed, polemically, on the art world or the simultaneous expansion and fragmentation of the membership.[161] Any minimal art college fealties the group did hold

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[159] These issues are brought up some more in the final chapter.

[160] Pilkington taught for a while at Leamington College during his third year in 1972 and then at Farnham and Portsmouth on an ad hoc basis (PP: 156, 158, 432-436). None of this can properly be seen in terms of any concerted influence of A&L's Theory Programme, Pilkington and Rushton especially saw it merely as a way of earning money in addition to many other jobs they were doing at the time (DR: Pt. 3, 24). In fact these experiences eroded away any last remnants of enthusiasm for teaching in art colleges at all.

[161] Their relationship with the art world was becoming less antagonistic with regards to collectors and curators. As the course was dismantled, coincidentally there was a significant increase in A&L exhibitions, sales and publication. There were many levels of collector and curator who took interest, be it intellectual curiosity or carpet-bagging (usually a mixture), in Conceptual Art at this time (see Richard, 2009). Regarding a particularly significant purchase, Terry Atkinson vividly recalls the moment many years later:

> ...on the Tuesday I was teaching at Coventry, on the Wednesday a Swiss dealer called Bruno
> Bischofberger came to Leamington in ... this big gold Rolls Royce with parking tickets being planted on it

were fully relinquished and their model of learning was transferred into the indexing project and the quasi-research programme associated with that (MB/MR: 239-241).

By 1973 Graham Howard was employed to teach the Theory Component at Coventry for two days a week, effectively replacing Terry Atkinson, alongside Harold Hurrell, who replaced David Bainbridge's role in the sculpture department (GH: 32). Completely unconnected to A&L, Alan Dyer, who was employed in the Art History department soon after completing his M.Phil in the psychology of perception at Reading, also taught some of the students who had enrolled on the course in 1972-3 in the hope of doing art theory (AD: 12). While Harold Hurrell did not stay long in the Department, Graham Howard and Alan Dyer supervised a theory 'route' through the Dip.A.D. and then B.A. in Fine Art until it was taken off the documentation in the mid-1980s (GH: 474, 500, 529-33). The subjects taught in the 'Theory' component of the Fine Art course during this period were contingent upon the Art History department, which was restructured after Tony Hobson's retirement in 1974, by David Phillips (GH: 492; AD: 20). A more varied and relevant programme became installed after a partial reversion to traditional 'potted histories' that had occurred following the departure of Barbara Reise. Alan Dyer and other members of the Art History and Complementary Studies department were therefore able to run courses on their specialisms and students would similarly choose between options. Alan Dyer ran a course in 'Psychology and Art', and also a series of lectures on 'Art and Ideology' (AD: 12) but not in a studio context. Graham Howard, who was preserving some of the lineage of the Art & Language concerns at Coventry did discuss

all day. [He] came into the house …and then bought seventeen thousand pounds worth of Art & Language work like that, produced by all four of us… that was a lot of money in 1972. (Atkinson, 2011: np)

In addition to this financial injection, A&L also produced exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery, London; Daniel Templon, Paris & Milan; Paul Maenz Gallery, Cologne; Dwan Gallery and John Weber Gallery, New York plus others in Belgrade, Rome and Pamplona (Richard, 2009: 291-341). There were several publications as offshoots of these exhibitions, including a relatively plush bilingual selected anthology of A-L writings published by DuMont and Paul Maenz in July, 1972. The wider movement of Conceptual Art, which A&L were now being reluctantly packaged with, was being assimilated gleefully by the art world and sold at blue chip prices. This was a particular bone of contention for David Bainbridge, who left the group in July1971 partly on the grounds that he wanted to work solely in the public sector, and was more comfortable earning his living as a tutor. As with the expulsion from Lanchester Polytechnic these changes in focus or circumstance acted as catalysts for latent tensions within the group to surface. Indeed David Bainbridge's departure immediately followed a 'stormy' discussion about the recently dismantled course (Atkinson, 1992: 55), but his position on some of the more arcane work of the other members was sceptical (Bainbridge, 1972) .

with students the work of Art & Language, especially the indexes, within the studio teaching. He remembers 'the course document that had been implemented' was within 'a classic laissez-faire multi-disciplinary course' in which there was an element of more-or-less theoretical teaching (GH: 252; 531). The subject matter and teaching methods in Coventry, apart from this, bore little causal relation to that which had been attempted by Art & Language. The split between practice and theory was maintained structurally, as it was to varying degrees throughout the country, and the 'Art Theory' name really referred to what was a 'multi-disciplinary' course (GH: 258). Howard himself, though putatively continuing to lend legitimacy to the idea that the course continued at Lanchester Polytechnic when it had in fact been all but completely removed, did not see his own teaching as continuing the Art Theory Programme; he described the original programme as being 'crushed' completely (GH:529).[162]

The trajectory of 'Art Theory' at Coventry was to become more and more marginal to the remit of the Fine Art department until it was a foot note in the course document that was eventually removed (AD: 116-18). This was not necessarily because of an on-going distaste for the origins of the course name, as the actual component was completely rewritten by Colin Saxton around 1971 (GH: 531). It was more that Graham Howard's interest had developed into electronics and computer-based graphics, helping eventually to set up an Electronic Graphics course with a fellow lecturer Clive Richards (GH: 53-57; 527; Howard, 2009). It became increasingly obvious that having a 'Theory Component' would actually increase the idea of a theory/practice divide, which is something Howard was against (GH: 533).[163]

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[162] Several students who opted for this theory component have a longer relationship with the narrative of this thesis, however, as both Howard Porter and Wayne Minter went on to study at the RCA and were part of both the Student Union there and the publication of *Ostrich*.

[163] One effect of the original programme and the issues it raised was that entirely text-based work was never deemed non-assessable again; Alan Dyer recalled several students submitted largely or entirely text based work during his time there. He remembers clearly that, 'It was called 'Art Theory'. It was written into the course documents. Students could do pure theory for the three years and students could submit text based work for their final degree.' (AD: 10) 'Art Theory' , in the sense of 'text based work' had become commonplace, but the antagonism described in the next chapter shows that collective action and certain types of 'art theory' and practice were still problematic.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter is intended to offer as detailed an account as possible of the conditions under which the 'Art Theory Course' was both instigated and dismantled, in addition to the intentions, pedagogy and content of the programme of study. As stated in the introduction, the course has appeared in several historical accounts of British art education but has rarely been interrogated or even described in any detail. Two exceptions to this are Lynda Morris (1973) and Elena Crippa (2014) who both dedicated a chapter of their respective theses to the course, forty years apart. Morris positions the 'Theory Course' within an array of experimental courses consisting of Beuys' Dusseldorf Academy and the projects at NSCAD, drawing mainly from talking to the teachers and students on the course. This context reinforces how atypical the 'Theory Course' was in its espousal of largely analytic theoretical and philosophical concerns and its eschewal of the Romantic figure of the artist and his corollaries of mysticism and inward focus.[164] Elena Crippa locates the course at the apex of a development of discursivity within British art education over a period of 20 or so years stemming from Basic Design and its cognates through to the courses at St Martins (Anthony Caro and then Peter Kardia) and Roy Ascott's *Groundcourse*. This conversely (and convincingly) shows the 'Theory Course' to be an important contributor to a constellation of fugitive points in the history of the British art school in which an experimental pedagogy was introduced into an otherwise reactionary institution.

The pedagogy of Art & Language did clearly value open-ended 'discursivity' as absolutely central and was in some way determined by the wider movement of Conceptual Art, but, *pace* both of the above accounts, what this account emphasises is the importance of the ideological purpose of their discourse, in the sense that the content of the curriculum, no matter how fastidiously or not it was followed, offered what Michael Baldwin called a 'shift of cognitive style' (MB/MR: 110) where the language-use interrupted the Romantic language of the art school, became pertinent to the studio (i.e. directly to production) and demanded problems be articulated as shared and intersubjective. The 'discursivity' had a

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[164] Morris constructed the account, written as Terry Atkinson resigned, from conversations with both tutors and students at the time, visiting the college on at least one occasion (Morris, 2016: pers. comm.). Whilst the study isn't particularly detailed, it does provide a coeval commentary on the course and is the only account of the time to expand on the five distinct components of the course.

'tight tolerance' (Seymour, 1972: 14) and, largely through the imaginative usage of a specific canon of externally-sourced ideas, this forced studio discussion into productive areas. Not just confined to Coventry, the programme made efforts to spread its reputation and shift in thinking to both America and other art colleges within England and Wales, albeit with an uneven and limited success. In Newport the influence was largely the result of spontaneous curiosity on the part of a trio of students. Whilst thinking of their influence as like a 'virus' is perhaps, ironically, a bit generous as to the efficacy of their programme, the project represented for some students and teachers a persuasive programme for the curious and critical art student, of which there were more than had previously been accounted for, and for whom A&Ls practice mitigated the inadequacy of the art educational environment with a toolbox for critical thinking (see PW: 71).

The contents of the Art Theory Programme consisted of a number of different elements that have not always been given due attention when thinking about what the course actually was. Much of the above account had been reconstructed from a mix of archival documents, verbal accounts and reading lists. It seems that the course was indeed 'over ambitious' (NCDAD, Appendix C) in trying to organise a great amount of information. However, it did begin to form a coherent structured way of looking at thinking critically about the 'support language' of art and its social and linguistic determinants. It is usually noted that there was a great deal of analytic philosophy (stemming from Russell, Quine and Wittgenstein) taught on the course providing some of the epistemological problems and thought experiments, but the programme also contained philosophy of science for methodologies (Kuhn, Popper, Feyerabend); moral and political philosophy as could be mapped onto the 'art society', art production and the ideological assumptions of art education (Hobbes, Rawles, Marx and Macpherson); and cybernetics and information theory as alternative models for thinking about aesthetics and the reception of art works (Moles, Weiner, and Cherry). The course, contrary to its reputation, also contained references to literary works (Mann, Proust, Borges, Lewis) and block courses of technical problem-solving and speculative art production that attempted to utilise this intensive reading (Audio Visual and Technos). The course cannibalised these disciplines and sources, and reconstructed them as a heuristic process for developing a critical model of

group production and of a non-solipsistic artistic subjectivity.[165] This became the model for the research-like programme of the indexing (Wood, 1992: 64-5; Bailey, 2016: 44-50).

The dismantling of the Art Theory course has had much more attention than the actual contents of the course and this account of the events and the institutional context of the course aims to offer a richer, more detailed picture of what values and positons were at stake and how the formation of the course and its end can be seen as directly indexed to larger concerns and values within art education and the changing educational infrastructure of Britain in the late 1960s. That is not to say that the problems the course caused for the authorities are not important, they represent the most interesting challenge to post-Coldstream liberalism within the art college and certainly caused the NCDAD a serious headache. Robert Strand included a relatively full account of the initial proposal and the end of the programme (typically missing out any details as to how the programme actually ran). He did this, he writes, because 'it appears to have been the one case in which the Council's otherwise sensible and liberal approach to new developments could be seriously faulted.' (Strand, 1987: 98). It could be said that the 'episode' in question articulated a faulty liberalism that disguised a number of assumptions and entrenched values. The closure of the course does pivot on a number of interconnected conflicts with the putatively liberal NCDAD, those of political agenda, social value, tradition and administrative propriety that supervene over any matter of text vs. pictures. I would like to pick these issues up in the final chapter in which there will be a broader discussion of the problems articulated here.

Historically, this expulsion from the art colleges definitely contributed to, if not caused, a shift in the position A&L had on art education and from this point forwards, rather than proposing a dramatic rethinking within the art institution, it set itself up as a self-instituting learning activity, outside of any external structure. The group's main activity within British art education proper during the 1970s were largely to disrupt and critique the paradoxes, 'foul ups' and insecure professional identities that constituted the day to day activities and attitudes of art students and artist-teachers in art colleges. As stated in

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[165] This can be achieved through other group activities and projects but, after foundation or first year the focus of art education is largely individual production and assessment. An example of group work through making can be read in (SL: 135-141). Another related (and really good) account of an imaginary foundation course , with regards to collective authorship and the craft/intellect dichotomy see (Roberts, 2007: 135n 32)

chapter one, Charles Harrison claimed that 'Material from the 'Art Theory' course has since appeared in travestied form as a means of 'modernising' a number of art colleges and art departments throughout the country' (H&O, 1982: 27). It would be incredibly difficult to know which courses exactly he had in mind although it seems that the continuing use of the name 'Art Theory', alongside A&L's antagonism with Lanchester Polytechnic makes this continuation of the 'Art Theory' component at the polytechnic one likely candidate. Theoretically orientated courses did become much more common in the 1970s however and cultural studies, literary theory and sociology (all of which thrived in the polytechnics more than in the universities) started to supplement, and in some cases replace, art history as the main written component for fine art students in Britain. The intellectual traditions that these courses drew from differed substantially from those that both Conceptual Art and Art & Language used. The next chapter will look at this development as a context in which to situate the polemical activities that the Art & Language diaspora instigated within art schools, polytechnics and universities in mid-to-late 1970s Britain.

CHAPTER 5

Post-Diplomacy:

SUPPORT SCHOOL

Issue, Ostrich, Ratcatcher and The Politics of Art Education

A&L's teaching became more piecemeal after 1971-3 but they developed a presence in art colleges which stemmed from tendencies arising out of the group's response to those events at Coventry which had effectively expelled them from British art schools. The involvement in college politics had been a by-product of the Art Theory Programme, largely due to the need to defend the programme from the strong resistance to it from both the tutors and the management of the polytechnic, and to a lesser degree their unpopularity with the rest of the students. The contents of the initial course proposal, while identifying issues within art education, was largely concerned with asserting a new model in a *laissez faire* vacuum; to make productive use of this vacuum. The role of the later projects, those that were initially and loosely contained under the name *SCHOOL*, but which exceed that project, were primarily to agitate and to critique the institution of art education and its putative representatives directly.

Art & Language, for a variety of reasons, became a much bigger entity, with many different and increasingly heterodox positions being adopted by its developing participants. [1] This was largely and most prominently in New York, and was through various disparate but established practices being incorporated under the title (Harrison, 2001a: 116; Bailey, 2016: 49-50). Less prominently, a second batch of students from UK art colleges showed interest in the writings and conversation within Art-Language in the mid-1970s. Their interest was predominantly due to personal contact with itinerant individuals from the A&L stable in various colleges.

This chapter looks very specifically at the influence of Art & Language in Watford College of Art, Trent Polytechnic, Hull Regional College of Art and the Royal College of Art.[2] The students there were affected by Art & Language writings as a possibly interesting way to approach their education, but in turn subscribed to the wider project of agitation, named SCHOOL. This did not come straight out of the 'Art Theory Course' and had several streams of activity which led to it.

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[1] For speculation as to these reasons, the conversations and arguments that ensued, and the managing of the group there are several accounts, such as (Corris 1997; Gilbert, 2004; Bailey, 2016: 109-181; Harrison, 2001: 114-128; H&O, 1982; Atkinson, 1992). Philip Pilkington was keen to point out the idea of joining or leaving A&L, as a discourse, was a complex one (PP: 505-7).

[2] I also look at Leeds College of Art though the small group of students' relationship to the A&L project is slightly more oblique it seems than the other colleges. I also did not manage to get in contact with any of the students there, which is flagged up later for further research.

After Newport

One strand of work that is perhaps under-represented in histories of the period, [3] and one which has not been brought to bear upon the later student activities of the mid-70s, is that of Wood, Berry and Wright. The students from Newport were those who had been most directly involved in addressing art education and exposing the paradoxes inherent in its putatively liberal nature, and they continued in this vein after getting their diploma. They lectured occasionally at art colleges in Britain, including the Leeds College of Art lectured referred to in the previous chapter. Soon after graduation they exhibited two video works with accompanying publications developed from their diploma show, *Practical Considerations* and *Practical and Historical Relativity* at Gallery House, London in September of 1972. Through the agency of Keith Arnatt, they contributed to an exhibition at *CalArts* in which they produced an Index-like arrangement in order to chronicle and interrelate elements of their struggle through the art educational institution (PW: 57-59, 69) entitled *Art Education Matters*. The piece consisted of a categorical system of 'Epistemic Access Procedures', which were different types of documentation or accounting-for of experiences, conversations and actions which had characterised their struggle through their diploma. These were then searchable within a large bound 'Directory' forming a kind of picture of their battle within the institution that could be interrogated in a number of different ways.

In 1973 they produced a further work for the Welsh Arts Council entitled 'An Epistemic Inheritance' which was another film piece intended to be distributed among the art colleges of Wales. It was exhibited in the arts council galleries in Cardiff, but was never distributed as intended. Again, the argument was that art education was inadequate in that it wasn't rigorous enough, especially in the epistemological grounding of its ideological position. The piece functioned as a demystification of the naturalised Romanticism of the art school and drew much from the same material that the 'Epistemology' part of the Art Theory Programme would have drawn, but applied directly to a Cartesian framework of artist-hood and the object language's lack of descriptive power regarding theory-laden art work (Berry, Wright, Wood, 1973). The

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[3] Such as art educational accounts and historical accounts of Conceptual art (Llewelyn, 2015; Harrison, 2001 and H&O, 1982; Waler

underlying epistemological assumptions denunciated here are essentially those of a Modernist art education. Although the script is clear and straightforward, and contains evidence of the characteristic chutzpah of many of the young graduates covered in this thesis, it is not hard to see why the work was not distributed; it is wholly critical of the status quo of these colleges.

The students in Newport continued working together until 1974, after which they started go their separate ways. Partly as a consequence of this and partly due to geographical coincidences, Paul Wood and David Rushton began to work together on a number of projects. Initially this consisted of a discrete Conceptual Art installation, 'Threshold Agreement' in 1974, but other projects were a continuation of the polemic with art education. [4] The Newport practice of engaging with the institution, alongside the lobbying opposition of those later activities at Coventry, was the basic model for the approach taken by the student groups discussed later in this chapter; each group used their respective magazines to expose long-held liberal canards and to lampoon the institutional incoherence and the professional vanity of the staff.

Paul Wood and David Rushton subsequently worked together on a number of essays on art education, which were published in *The Fox*.[5] To a large extent these were based on the essays Paul Wood wrote for his masters in the General Studies department at the Royal College of Art (and so simultaneous with the publication of issue one of *Ostrich*).

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[4] *Threshold Agreement*, originally entitled *640 Lines*, was initially the product of Paul Wood and Peter Berry but was revised with the added critique and input of Philip Pilkington and David Rushton. Paul Wood emphasised that it was more an 'Art & Language-ified' work through its indexical form, use of charts and lack of concern directly with art education; in that sense he characterises it more as a classic conceptual work. 'It was to do with inflation and when you had the coalition with the trade unions I think the pay was indexed to inflation and I think the union went over a certain threshold. So we did that. You've not got anything about Art Education in there' (PW: 87)

[5] *The Fox* was financed by Kosuth in 1975, publishing work under the quasi-institutional sub-group *Art & Language Foundation Inc*. The first issue declared that :

> *It is the purpose of our journal to try to establish some kind of community practice. Those who are interested, curious, or have something to add (be it pro or con) to the editorial thrust… the revaluation of ideology… of this first issue are encouraged, even urged, to contribute to following issues.*

The journal was in that sense a more ecumenical Church and more earnestly Marxist in its purview than the contemporaneous writing in A-L, which was part of its problematic existence. The inclusiveness of ALUK's dialogic model however, was a central element behind the feud between the two sides of the Atlantic (Bailey, 2016: 109-171). It formed an interesting site for polemical contributions from various positions within the wider A&L archipelago.

They also worked on a report, *Art & Education*, for the Welsh Arts Council, which continued the critical/empirical approach that began at Newport and presented in the *Art: Education Matters* show at California Institute of the Arts, 1973.[6] The report goes into detail about methodological problems regarding the study and includes a clear analysis of the issue of an empirical study on art schools. The perhaps weak conclusions inherent in a positivist approach are mitigated by the study's agenda to insert a critical position within the largely comfortable consensus within studies on art education. The report is relevant to subsequent activity discussed in this chapter in that it sought to create a formal platform for critical activity *between* art institutions, and debate between the different roles within those institutions. This idea was thought technically achievable through a quarterly microform journal, then available to all college libraries, in order to create easier and cheaper access to the 'on-going practical problems of working' within art education as opposed to the 'resolutely finished' product distributed in art magazines (R&W, 1975: 3).[7] The proposals made within the repost to the CNAA and Welsh Arts Council were not to be taken up and the study was compromised for reasons of engagement, cost and a mismatch of aims within the different parties involved (R&W, 1975: 66-72). It was an unusual attempt to propose something within the administrative system that would encourage a shift in the culture of the art college. This study also included several texts that were also published in the *Fox* around the same time, *Education Bankrupts* and *Direct Speech*, the first of which deals with the dominant models applied in art teacher training and the second critiques atomistic relations within art colleges and the relations of theory and practice. One central theme that comes from this report is that much of the problem lies with art teachers, both their self-image and their training. Much of this report is pertinent to the magazines discussed further on in this chapter and offers a clear, perhaps less rhetorical, insight into the aims of the art education projects of the mid-seventies. *Direct Speech* calls for several types of positive action which were followed within Trent, Hull and the RCA by certain students. For

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[6] In a less formal way this was part of the process in the final years at Coventry for Dave Rushton too; gathering evidence and backing up claims on the committees and journalistic pieces.

[7] The study in some ways has some relationship with indexing and, according to the authors, originated as trying to extend A&L work via these means (R&W, 1975: 59).

instance, with regards to localised politics, student involvement and the content of art education:

> *Turning towards student union work often seems to proceed from an assumption that art is non-ideological, such that the domain of a political involvement is seen as the structure of an institution rather than the content of its studies. It is that 'either/or' which is debilitating* (R&W, 1975: 33)

The content of the essays brings up many recurring themes of this thesis: challenging the vacuum of content; the engagement with immediate social and political concerns of the students; the challenge to an atomistic and individualistic practice and a questioning of the authority, interests and necessity of art tutors (and their host institution). The investigative projects of Dave Rushton and Paul Wood, which owed a lot to the trying-out of approaches to art education by Berry, Wright and Wood at Newport and the attempts to continue the course at Lanchester Polytechnic, moved away from Conceptual Art in any mainstream sense and decisively away from art practice in general. Whilst undertaking the research and producing the texts on art education, Rushton and Wood sought to encourage students to exit art practice and to move into political activism, a process which they themselves were also undergoing.

Around 1975 Michael Baldwin, partly as a response to this on-going concern with the conditions of art education, suggested the title SCHOOL as a speculative organisation that would agitate and interrupt the business of the colleges attended by students initially interested in A&L activity.[8] The SCHOOL project is at the centre of the self-organised activities described in this chapter, but it is first important to counterpoise the influence of the work done by the Newport graduates and Rushton and Wood's Art Education projects with the development of other relevant A&L writing and work.

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[8] Though the implication was perhaps not considered at the time, it seems that, in light of the original theory students being labelled troublemakers by a paranoid management, the SCHOOL project really encouraged this next group of students to live up to that reputation. SCHOOL was a nominal organisation in that it was to look more pervasive than it was; something that Art & Language had tried out with various corporate identities over the previous years (Harrison, 2001: 63-64).

The French Disease and Art For Society

In the years from c.1974 to 1979 Art & Language in the UK and USA produced a massive amount of work, it is not the job of this thesis to provide a comprehensive summary of this.[9] Post-Lanchester, Art & Language's writing on art education, which was one small but still notable part of their practice, focussed on attacking overbearing bureaucracy and intellectual (and actual) laziness; and resisting both the old enemy of Modernist anti-intellectualism and the seemingly opportunistic reconfiguration of the academic artist (H&O, 1982: 53-4).[10] The function of the writing in Art-Language diversified and shifted from quasi-analytic essay to a ventriloquized polemic. By this term I mean to cover the many voices and registers that were used to ape, use and repurpose various rhetorical

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[9] Such general accounts can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of *Essays on Art & Language* (Harrison, 2001: 82-149) and (H&O, 1982: 32-89). Retrospective accounts in catalogues can be found in (A&L, 1999; A&L, 2014). Other partial accounts are to be found in (Corris, 2004; Alberro & Stimpson, 1999)

[10] Their ideas of learning proper had, from 1972 onwards, been shifted from the idea of an educational programme toward the idea of a shared, group activity within their conversational practice. This consisted partly in the meetings that took place at various members' houses, and partly in conversations between small sub groups. Much of this conversation was concerned with the structure, boundaries and 'standards of defensibility' within their 'conversational pragmatics' (see 'Pedagogical Sketchbook' in A-L, 3.2, (A&L, 1975: 20-30). It is in this context that a sense of group-learning continued, their model of learning being greatly transformed by the indexing project and the sense of incompleteness that that gave. Whereas the original *Fine Art Policy Statement* (Appendix B3) could be seen as trying to fill up a curriculum, partly for the authorities, as a way of dealing with both anti-intellectualism and a laissez-faire void, the attitude toward learning post-Lanchester was much more embracing of ongoing incompleteness.

flavours and discourses. These were sourced from the denunciations of Saint-Just, different Marxist polemical and critical traditions, repurposed logical notation, colloquial voices and satirical attack (MB/MR: 447-448; PW: 43). The targets centred on Marxist earnestness[11], academic and journalistic semiotics, 'Art for Society'[12] advocates and pretty much any artist or critic who could be accused of involvement with any of the above. Those perceived to be under the banner of *Art for Society*, self-righteous political semio-art practitioners and idle self-satisfied art teachers are all dovetailed into various ad hominem attacks.

Their work in the latter part of this period (post-'75) started to take the form of ostensibly semiotic-friendly (text + picture) pieces of work, which would be rendered unstable by incorporating:

> *seventeenth-century English cartoons and broadsheets, examples of Armenian and Chinese Socialist Realism…, a poster designed by the Nazis to recruit industrial labour in Vichy France… and a people for Rockerfeller campaign symbol* (Harrison, 2001: 139)

Again this ventriloquizing and doctoring, the pseudo-semiotic practice, sought to expose the patronising assumptions of much 'Semio Art' of the time. As Harrison writes several times in different formulations:

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[11] 'some members of the group in England wanted to dissociate themselves from what they saw as an insistent and anti-intellectual form of Marxism" (Harrison, 2001: 120)

[12] For an A&L point of view on this phenomenon:
'the art rip-off has hit its highspot in 'community arts' – you know, earnest arty bores, embarrassing people with their unfunny mime, community theatre and inflatable sculpture' (A&L, *Des Warren is a Political Prisoner* – see below)

'‘Art for Society' had become a rallying point for the self-promotional activities of the *soi-disant* left (typified by the 'socialist artist' Conrad Atkinson's fearless expose of the Queen Mother as an aristocrat).' (H&O, 1982: 61)

See also (A&L: 1980: 1-25) for their essay *Art for Society?*, which takes to task much of the knee jerk reaction to the Richard Cork sponsored idea of arts role in society, one which A&L saw as both privileged and marginal. These essays refer to events from, and were written around, 1978. The other exhibitions and events of this year where the exhibitions, 'Art And Society' at the Whitechapel and 'Art for Whom?' at the Serpentine Gallery (see Walker, 2002; 208-9). There had also been many exhibitions and conferences that had addressed these issues, for instance 'Art into Society – Society into Art' at the ICA (1974) and the formation of the Association of Community Arts (Walker, 2002: 112-113).

Art & Language's displays from the period 1976-8 were forms of Black Propaganda...
they were distanced by virtue of their irony and their technical blandness or vulgarity
from the aesthetic pretensions of Modernist painting, and by virtue of their opacity and
irresponsibility from the deconstructive and demystifying pretensions of Semio Art
(Harrison, 2001: 139)[13]

These works then can be understood as part of an overall resistance to being co-opted by both the liberal left artists' new found conscience and academia's new found systems of managing and controlling the reception and functions of art through an equally carefully managed mixture of irony and invective. In America, the newly formed October magazine became a favourite target, especially the artist critic Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe (for example Fox 2, 1975: 8-17; A&L, 1977: 7-9), whilst in Britain left-wing semioticians Victor Burgin and John Berger were singled out as particularly offensive, alongside the universities', but particularly the polytechnics', gradual embrace of (in Baldwin's opinion badly-translated) French theory. The essay, 'The French Disease' (A&L, 1976: 23-35) launches an assault on the vogue for the theories of 'M. Roland Barthes, M.F de Saussure and Lord (Lucky) Lacan'(p.26):

Watching the rise of semiology amongst the academic and lumpen intelligentsia is too,
too sick-making. The experts (sic) and middle-persons (sic) of the art-bureaucracy,
artists with radical careers etc., are all arming themselves and their 'disciplines' – this
time with a 'science' (A&L, 1976: 23)

'Semio-Art' was seen primarily as the product of, in America, the Universities and, in Britain, art departments and cultural studies departments largely within the polytechnics. [14]

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[13] One of the most cited and most prominent work of this type is the painting *Ils Donnent Leur Sang; Donnez votre Travail* (1977) (Fig. 8) in which a Vichy poster depicting a parade of workers going to the factory, contributing to the war effort. In the foreground of the original was a dead soldier; the removal of the soldier meant that the message of the piece was destabilised. The placement of a poster reproduction in the newly opened Eldon Shopping centre Newcastle Upon Tyne forced a direct comparison with Vic Burgin's previously displayed *What Does Possession Mean to You?* (1976). The co-option of working class imagery within left-ist art of the time and Vichy France was therefore seen as possibly equivalent (H&O, 1982: 59). For a more in depth discussion of the subtleties of their position see (Mullholland, 1998: 110-111).

[14] For an in-depth look at their position on Semio-Art and University art see (Mullholland, 1998: 106-134) and for a coherent critique of their position see the introduction to (Roberts, 1997) and (Roberts, 2016: 133).

Cultural Studies had grown within tertiary education since 1964, when the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was established in Birmingham University (Dworkin, 1997). This institution, almost singularly, started to produce a new influence upon the historical and theoretical content in British art schools in the mid-to-late seventies. During the seventies burgeoning movements from the sixties, such as feminism, gay rights and anti-racism became widespread causes and the early seventies saw a blossoming of a vibrant and relatively intersectional left wing culture. This gradually and unevenly changed the supply and demand of theory in art colleges during the seventies.[15] Cultural Studies, in addition to having home-grown founding fathers, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams in particular, also benefitted from the translation of much Western Marxist, literary and sociological theory from mainland Europe (pioneered by the launch of New Left Books in 1970) (Dworkin, 1997). Writing in 2004, Jon Thompson recognised that during this period the theoretical component shifted from an Art Historical focus to a 'sociological and psychoanalytical' one (2011: 485). Regarding the persistence of the twenty percent theory component in art departments, cultural studies seemed as up to the task, if not more, than art history.[16] Art History as taught by many of the Courtauld-trained lecturers (which characterises many of the teachers featured in this thesis) was being threatened both by that which was inherited by cultural studies (often called Art Theory) and the New Art History, which developed from Social Art History and was cognizant of these new influences (and resolutely Marxist in method)[17]. The old aesthetic *Einfuerhlung* model, the taxonomic Positivist model, the formalist model and the Warburg/Panofsky/Gombrich debates were superseded in many ways by

[15] With regards to the demand side, Alan Dyer remembers the increasing confidence and questioning of the students on feminist and Marxist topics during the 70s (AD: 163).

[16] Another example is St Martins: '…by the late 1970s, the courses taught in the General Studies Department at St Martins School of Art included subjects as diverse as 'Mass Culture', 'Recent Art', 'Media Semiotics' 'Media Comics', 'Women's Magazines' and 'Dreams Myths Mapping'.', from 'The Complementary Studies Department' in St Martins News, Vol.2 number 5 – Frank Martin Archive, quoted in (Crippa, 2014: 44) Although Critical and Cultural Studies aspects of art courses were explicitly called such later on, in the latter half of the 70s many art colleges had a wide range of courses.

I do not want to imply that art history was replaced in this period. Although this is the case today in some art colleges, art history was still a mainstay in most colleges with the addition of cultural studies teaching, especially where there were departments for Cultural Studies within the polytechnic in which the art department was situated. A more detailed look at the problems of the art historian after the 1970s can be found in (Reed-Tsocha, 2013).

[17] A discussion on this change, with specific reference to Michael Baxandall's contribution, can be found in the introductory section on art historical method.

issues which all of these traditions had ignored; those of gender, sexuality, colonialism and race, and, though previously ignored to a lesser extent, historical materialism and class.[18] Many of the lecturers and tutors had personal accounts of these shifts (DB: 215; AD: 163; KJ: 234-241) though at different times through the late seventies and eighties. So, while still often under the guise of Complementary Studies, more and more art schools became influences by this new influx of theory from Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Literary theory and the New Art History.

One could be forgiven for thinking that Art & Language as a whole would be in favour of many of the socially progressive elements that came with the 1970s. They did indeed share many enemies and the application of learnable, theoretical, discussable ideas to art was, after all, one of the main tenets of their early practice and many of the traditions from which they drew, overlapped with that of some of the proponents of the New Art History, such as TJ Clark himself. The seeming pomposity with which writers and academics adopted the stance of de-mystifier of the insidiously deceptive world of images for the general public, however, was attacked as a blatant bid to mystify that same audience with a managerial pseudo-science of direct explanatory power (MB/MR: 438; 468). The popularity of many of these ideas, meant that many expositions of new art histories and semiotic de-codings of the media were prominently distributed.[19] *Art for Society* and *Semio Art*, therefore, were both seen as symptoms of the same pious clerisy. A&L started to engage with Marxist theory in a very different way to that of both the shop floor, card-carrying communism of David Bainbridge and the engaged and serious activities of Rushton and Wood. Again they partook in a kind of supererogation of committed Marxism, above and beyond some of the recent converts to a Marxist analysis of culture, and associated with post-'68 Left. A harder line was taken in order to expose what were seen as 'arriviste' motivations behind such bandwagon-jumping.

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[18] Some approaches that were adapted within the New Art History are discussed within the edited set of essays (Rees & Borzello (eds.), 1986). Within cultural studies, class politics were less conspicuous than the increase of identity politics.

[19] *Ways of Seeing*, a television series and book (Berger, 1972), was one A&L took particularly to task (A&L, 1978), probably due to its particularly wide distribution. It in turn was an attempted Benjaminian riposte to Sir Kenneth Clark's 1969 *Civilisation*. This gives us some idea of the different tiers of these debates. The years between them, I think, matters less; Berger and Clark are still in print.

Charles Harrison, talking of ALUK, suggested years later that, '[t]he tendency in England was to behave as if the artistic engagement with politics were a kind of allegorical game - though nonetheless critically determined or serious in being so' (Harrison, 2001: 121). The point of irony then was quite complicated, the English participants of A&L engaging in the increased politicisation of art and theory as a kind of game, 'dressing up in Marxist clothes' (PW: 45), which jarred with nearly everyone. The tone was a 'third voice', and ' it derived its tone of voice from the ways that the surrealists used denunciations, the way the French Revolution and Robespierre and the Terror used denunciations. And the way Stalinism had used it.' (MB/MR: 447)[20]

This change in tone is important as it forms the background for the new publications that were produced in art schools which had a much more polemical function than *Analytical Art* or *Statements* and are different in this way partly because *Art-Language* (alongside *The Fox*) was also a different publication by the mid-Seventies. As a body of work to draw from for educational purposes, the texts in Art-Language of this time were much more explosive and ideologically unstable than those in 1969-1973. The magazines, *Ostrich, Ratcatcher* and *Issue*, and the student activity that ran alongside them, were produced under a certain set of material and social conditions, however, which did involve the art school directly and confrontationally, and which are outlined below under the rubric of SUPPORT SCHOOL.

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[20] It is important to state that the language used here was entirely divorced from any actual sincere aggression on the part of any individuals involved but I think there was pleasure taken in people responding to it as such. Mel Ramsden, from an American perspective, was keen to decouple the change in tone from any sense of it being caused by the publication of October Magazine in 1976. He explains:

> *I think we were working through a period when Conceptual art … or whatever it was turning into, a kind of self-parody… and one was, in a way, unsure of the direction to take. And one of the directions it seemed to take was to crank up the language and see what happened then. That's all. But it's kind of pickled in its time really, that kind of language.* (MB/MR: 456)

Fig. 9 A&L (1975) Des Warren is Political Prisoner. Exhibition Leaflet, MOMA Oxford.

SUPPORT SCHOOL

For a 1975 retrospective in Oxford's Museum of Modern Art, two bits of ephemera that accompanied the exhibition display an ongoing concern with art education; the catalogue essays (A&L, 1975: 25-27) and a leaflet handed out at the exhibition (Fig. 9). The leaflet addresses a school group or a group of art students, supposedly visiting the gallery on an educational trip, in an ironic teacherly voice ('can you think of any other examples?' etc.).[21] It links the imprisonment of Des Warren[22], which points to an idea of a sinister ruling class; the enculturation process of education; and the complicity of the artist in such processes. Again there is irony and militancy in equal measure, but the key aspect of the poster is an avowed use of propaganda as consciousness-raising and is particularly directed at the idea of education as an ideological resource of enculturation and socialisation, imbued with sinister interests. In the accompanying catalogue, which has the appearance of a special edition of *Art-Language*, the short essay *Putative art practice in Britain is focussed on the art schools* (A&L, 1975: 25-6) expands on the application of some of the problems of the leaflet to the art schools. The art school is seen as an extension of the educational instrument, but one which is particularly good at the insidious tasks of depoliticisation and particularly bad at any of the positive ideological possibilities of education (such as critical thinking); 'The social, educational and ideological character in the art schools at all levels is lamentable… as reinforcers of hegemony they are among the

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[21] The tone of the exhibition was one of different points of irony. The works 'Dialectical Materialism' (all produced around 1975) display a combination more or less conventional fragments of text, which offer a partial view into the problems of ideological positions and the limits of a discourse, among other things, and which are then ascribed indexical relations to a matrix, which in turn relates the fragments to a 'picture' composed of the indexical numbers and letters and a multi-typeface arrangements of the word 'Surf' or 'Surf.', which refers to the idea of levels of surface. The arrangements are based on various Constructivist posters, of which a miniature version is displayed in the bottom left-hand corner. In Art & Language's terms they were 'efforts to plant indexical trees, essays on the fractal instability of meaning' (A&L, 2014: 144). The level of irony involved was not necessarily that subtle, with titles such as 'Dialectical Materialism, Ernie Wise 01' (see Harrison, 2002: 108-109). They remain the most quizzical of A&Ls works, and they require the reader to attempt often futile feats of translation (with many obstacles and interruptions), mapping from one type of reading/ association to another in much the same way as the later indexes did, and mark a shift of practice from declarative essays to indexical picturing via polemical sloganeering and fragmentation. They are related to other Dialectical Materialism works which include WWII images and 'ironic texts about the social claims of 'Semio-art'… the use of photo-text is clearly designed to embarrass or 'see-off' what they perceive as the idealism and managerial tendencies of photo-based conceptualism' (Roberts, 1997: 42). These relate to the black propaganda brought up by Harrison above.

[22] Along with Ricky Tomlinson, the most prominent and severely punished of the six people who were arrested on spurious and trumped-up charges after being involved in the flying pickets against the lax safety and poor pay conditions of building trades workers during the early 1970s (Maguire, 2004).

most reactionary and backward of educational establishments.' (A&L, 1975). The essay focusses on and characterises the role of the art student, and her situation within competing forces of enculturation:

> *Art Students in particular have been the victim of social dislocation and depoliticisation. This is a function of bureaucratic reification which transcends the petty officialdom of the Polytechnics; the dominant ideology saturates on a considerable scale. The well-known bourgeoisification tradition of practising to be an artist/businessman/teacher is entrenched formally and informally.* (A&L, 1975: 25)

It also recognises the complicity of the art student and calls for a self-organisation and political activity which presents itself in a form opaque to the institution, centred on the contradictions within the institution.[23] It ends with a concise indictment of art colleges poorly disguised as a call for something more than an indictment of art colleges:

> *We can't just go on in an excoriatory or diagnostic spirit complaining that students are irredeemably quieted and mystified – victims of the low cunning of the morons who pretend to teach them… And the possibility of teaching must not be tainted with the pretentions of art teachers who, universally, pretend to one another that they are teaching when they are just hanging around and fostering the ideology of hanging around.* (A&L, 1975: 27)

The idleness of art teachers, something that was implicit right from the 1969 proposals,[24] was a condition that A&L found morally repugnant, all pervasive and inextricably linked to the increasing presence of bureaucrats within the colleges. By this point most of A&L were either blacklisted or at least made very unwelcome in art colleges, so in return sought to be as antagonistic and disruptive to this regime as possible.

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[23] The politics encouraged were within the institution; wider political issues were seen to have a reflexive relation to these 'local' contradictions. This touches on problems of the art colleges' relation to the society in which they are placed. As A&L put it, an analysis 'can proceed on the obvious assumption (observation) that institutions dedicated to the ideological tuning and perpetuation of hegemony must display (internal) relations which reflect the logic and practice (and theory) of class domination. This is also true of the kinds of relation such institutions bear to the communities they scab off' (A&L, 1975: 26)

[24] The 'ideology of hanging around' is what Mike Chilton related to me as setting in at Hull in the early to mid-seventies in both tutors and students (Chilton, 2016: pers. comm. – see below section on *Ratcatcher*).

The initial and most direct form of agitation and involvement by Art & Language was the writing, production and financing of recruitment posters to be put up around art colleges encouraging students to SUPPORT SCHOOL (Figs. 10, 11, 12), these were also initially produced in 1975. Charles Harrison's account suggests that

> *…for several of those associated with Art & Language as members of second and third generations it was through such activities as these, and not through some quest for the name and profession of an artist, that it seemed most appropriate to continue the commitments and lessons of an 'unaesthetic' practice* (Harrison, 2001: 113-4).

The project was primarily to devolve activity from the central practice of Art & Language, at that point an increasingly inchoate body of conflicting enterprises, and encourage self-organisation within a small sympathetic base of art students. Secondarily, it was to cause problems within the art school from a distance, creating this imaginary organisation as a trans-institutional point of collective action.[25] The straight forward, disruptive ideological message argued for in *Putative art practice…* could be transmitted and built upon in institutions that Art & Language had some connection with, and perhaps even further.

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[25] The antagonism of the SCHOOL project was linked with the idea of exiting art as practice, which was very much the approach of the Newport students and had been part of the effect of the Art Theory Programme:

> *…part of the whole essence of some of our Art & Language teaching programme was associated with the idea of promoting a kind of activism, whether or not that led to one being an artists or even being involved in art at all was a moot point, it was never… the whole point is that it was never an aspiration to train artists … as a result of this course. It was quite the opposite in a way. It was always to inhibit it and to create a sort of via negativa for people who aspired to be artists* (MB/MR: 575)

Fig. 11 SCHOOL Press (1976) SCHOOL Poster (letterpress on newsprint)

The first poster was written by Michael Baldwin and at least one subsequent poster by Philip Pilkington.[26] The responsibility for production and distribution was taken on by David Rushton who set up *School Press* in order to eventually produce three different posters. [27] They were roughly A3 in size and were reminiscent in typography of both army recruitment and Wild West broadsides. The mode of address was initially that of pseudo-Maoist revolutionary denunciation (Fig. 12) characterising the condition of the art student as abject and useless, calling for them to acknowledge their wretchedness and 'become a people in process'. The address was also very general, ahistorical and from an uncertain source, which, given no backstory, would have left an uncanny impression upon their first reception. They share the rhetoric of *Des Warren…* and *Putative art practice…*, which when placed in these posters offers a new language with which to describe the art school, stripped of respect for the tradition of art education and institutional vocabulary, but more eloquent than a yobbish call for rebellion, replacing it with a clear and aggressive language of resistance.

SCHOOL as an organisation was fictional, but several students can be listed as working under the banner. These were: Janie Greville, Rob van Beek, Mike Fyles, Paul Smith and David Batchelor in Nottingham; Steve Lawton and Steve Daley-Yates in Hull; Paul Wood, John Dennis and Wayne Minter at the RCA; and Alan Robinson, Green Strohmeyer-Gartside and Tom Soviet in Leeds. Against a backdrop of increasing cuts in education funding, further amalgamations and restructuring of education, and increasing attacks on the strong left-wing culture that much of the politics of the groups drew from, the cadres under the SCHOOL banner resisted much of the unquestioned business as usual within the art college, which was in turn viewed as complicit with larger problems within late-capitalist Britain. This activity was centred, much as it had been at Newport and Coventry, on the production of magazines. Rather than slick, dry emulations of Conceptual Art journals, however, these were 'deliberately scurrilous and ephemeral

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[26] I am making assumptions here, as interviewees could not remember, but they recognised certain stylistic idiosyncrasies in the writing that pointed to one or the other (PW: 97; Baldwin, 2016: pers. comm.)

[27] The actual place of production was called Snag Mill Press in the Scottish Borders, which was set up by Malcom Robinson who helped produce the posters. It would then go on to produce left wing pamphlets and magazines for other causes.

magazines' (Wood, 2016). In the next sections I would like to briefly look at the magazines and the circumstances in which they came about.

Ratcatcher at Hull College of Art

Harold Hurrell's teaching at Hull continued during the 'troubles at Lanchester' as he called them in a letter to *Studio International* addressing the problems with Dip.A.D. assessment (Hurrell, 1971). He was increasingly uneasy about his role at Hull and held antithetical views to the Head of Fine Art and principle of the college, which was not in itself uncommon among many of the staff. The college was, as a whole, beleaguered with mis-management and conflicting interests (Chilton, 2016; Osborn, 2016: pers. comm.). Mike Chilton remembers an increasing sense of a malaise within the college in which people were not turning up and not working, which irritated him greatly, adhering as he did to a sense of studio work-ethic and demonstrating skill. Again, it seems that Harold Hurrell could not have had much to do with this malaise, even if he had wanted to, as only a small number of students really took to his teaching. A letter from J. Bower, Director of Education, to the Manager of the Department of Employment states that:

> '…there was a difference of opinion between Mr. Hurrell and other teachers at the college about the role of the artist in society and the nature of art education in colleges. I am advised that Mr. Hurrell's expression of his personal views on such matters engendered only limited response with students at the College. It would seem that such differences over a period of time led to a degree of polarisation, with Mr. Hurrell finding himself apart from his colleagues' (Ratcatcher 4, 1976: 8)[28]

Harold Hurrell then resigned from his post in 1975 as Lecturer and subsequently from working in art colleges all together. His resignation was largely under duress, the

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[28] There were conflicting opinions as to whether his departure a wilful resignation or an escape from a hostile environment, the board of education, having seen that the course was ratified by the CNAA presumed it merely a wilful act because of perhaps resolvable differences of opinion. The position of Hurrell was, however, that he was 'prevented from doing his job as a consequence of the incompetence and malice of a by now egregious coterie of administrators and pseudo-teachers'. The department of employment (which determined Hurrell's unemployment benefit rights) seems to have ruled his account the more accurate (Ratcatcher 4, 1976: 7-8). This example is indicative of the concerns of the magazines discussed in this chapter, including that which this report is taken from, often characterising the coteries of staff as incompetent.

management making it as difficult as they could for him to stay (SL: 263; KJ: 179-200); it seemed he was all but pushed out on ideological grounds.[29]

The fine art department relocated in 1974 from its various annexes into a centralised, purpose-built, art college in Queens Gardens (Foster, 1997: 60). On arrival at this site in 1975, the newly-employed tutor Simon Lewis described brand new studios completely devoid of students and work (SL: 180). This he ascribes directly to the dominance of Art & Language; a dominance which in fact was never so. The more likely contributors to this situation were the newness of the building; a lack of vision in the management of the Fine Art department; and the encroaching malaise that had set in around 1972 (Chilton, 2016: pers. comm.). Lewis was charged with rewriting the first year, within which, along with Clyde Hopkins and John Clark, he reinvigorated the school with a heavier timetable of projects and teaching, centred around of a philosophy of learning through making, under a conception that an A&L virus had caused all the students to stop making anything (SL:212; 237). It is, however, incredulous that one lecturer and the odd visiting lecture could effectively prohibit the making of objects wholesale within the three year groups of a Fine Art department.

This is not to say that a demotivating influence from the A&L visitors, up to 1972-3, was not a factor in this malaise. Chilton does suggest that their visits did 'cause a lot of reflection on issues that were being dealt with internationally' and 'turned things on their head for a while and made people consider things afresh' (Chilton, 2016: pers. comm), which can often have the effect of stalling production. Art & Language were, however, perceived as being responsible for all kinds of apathy, no matter what the cause or type, because of this idea, circulated among the art colleges, that their pedagogy was a route to inactivity. Indeed the work produced, by what Simon Lewis identified as A&L influenced students, seems incongruous with the attitude of the group: piles of books on the floor, sheets of paper with two words on the floor or planks of wood with expletives written on them (SL: 223, 225, 241). Despite his dislike of A&Ls 'bullshit', Mike Chilton does not think there was any direct connection between the majority of work produced at the college and A&L, seeing little consequence in their presence, and puts the responsibility for the lack of activity down to other tutors, whom he saw as lazy and ineffectual.

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[29] By this point he had moved to Banbury, and so eventually started working for an Aeronautical parts manufacturer owned by Michael Baldwin's father (Chilton, 2016: pers. comm; H& O, 1982: 51).

It is after 1975, during Simon Lewis' first few years, however, that it is more feasible that any opposition to object production was being adopted, as A&L's attitude to art schools changed and the SCHOOL project influenced a small group of students' work, which resulted in the production of the magazine Ratcatcher. Following Harold Hurrell's resignation a small number of students, the ones he had worked closely with as a personal tutor, as with Coventry in 1971, went on to campaign in order to receive some tuition from A&L-linked people. It seems because of this lobbying, Philip Pilkington taught at Hull on as a visiting lecturer during 1975 (PP: 210; Ratcatcher 3, 1976: 53-4).[30]

The four issues of Ratcatcher were produced between 1975 and 1976. It was largely the work of Steve Lawton, with the help of Steve Daley Yates, but also included contributions from Philip Pilkington, Paul Wood, David Rushton, Harold Hurrell, Mel Ramsden, Michael Baldwin and other, anonymous, Hull students.[31] It followed closely the movements of staff student committees and functioned as a corrective to any perceived attempts at disenfranchising the student body on such meetings. The magazine also expanded on issues of the national surplus and seeming redundancy of art teachers[32]; histories of international student politics; the problems of Graphic Design and industry and the relations of theory and practice. Its main focus, however, was to attack the staff in the college, focussing on those in managerial positions such as the heads of departments - Martin Wolverson, Peter Hammond and Dennis Booth - and couching the relationship between teacher and student as largely that of bureaucrats administering a lumpenproletariat. The individual articles are often accounts of events in college and so have little wider import and were produced at a time when, though not touched by

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[30] I have not been able to find out how many or who the students were exactly, but it seems likely three of them were Steve Lawton, Steve Daley-Yates and John Bradbury, who came from the foundation course at Coventry and was later to become a member of *The Specials*. Philip Pilkington describes his teaching:

> *'I used to catch the train, trains, and write/jot down some themes I wanted to talk to people about. And I was only employed to teach people who had been the tutees of Harold. I can't remember… it would be whatever was in the themes of Art & Language at the time I guess. Because by that time I spent most of the time either with Mike or with Harold, I suppose sofa surfing.' (PP: 224)*

[31] Ratcatcher 4 (1976: 1) indicates 'out of town informers: Nick Grant, Philip Pilkington Michael Baldwin'.

[32] Ratcatcher 4 contains an account of marches and an occupation in Birmingham protesting the cut backs in education that would sweep through the system in the mid-seventies (Ratcatcher 4, 1976: 15-20). As with many attacks on art teachers discussed in this thesis, the actual attacks were aimed at the system of teaching encouraged. An ironic twist is that Mike Fyles (see the following section) and Steve Lawton would later go on to disrupt the classes of their PGCE course in Birmingham (MF/RvB/PS: 269).

polytechnicisation, the college was absorbed into a conglomerate of 6 different colleges (Ratcatcher 4, 1976: 22-3; Foster, 1997: 84-110). This caused much compromise with regards to student union formation and similar issues to those of some polytechnics with regards the place of the art college within the broader structure.

The articles ranged from a similar aphoristic or sloganistic form[33], such as that associated with certain Art & Language works at the time, and a parody of a local news report (sometime incorporating actual local news reports). Much of the vernacular tone was due to Steve Lawton's skills as a satirist and vivid writer of absurdist scenarios and many of the articles are absurd exaggerations of the shenanigans of the department. [34] The production was a Gestetner-type reproduction with newspaper cuttings and cartoons, the DIY approach giving the magazine some visual affinity with the burgeoning punk rock fanzine and satirical comic-strip, but also the parish magazine. The final issue (the fourth) was produced to coincide and to partly constitute the diploma show (for which the editors got a third) and Ratcatcher ceased publication afterwards.

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[33] Here the main example I am thinking of is the piece *Class Teaching*, which reads like an extended SCHOOL poster, drawing heavily from the Maoist denunciation- type slogan and those found in within *Dialectical Materialism*.

[34] Steve Lawton was considered by every interviewee as the best writer of all under the SCHOOL banner (MF/RvB/PS: 262-275; DB: 82).

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Issue at Trent Polytechnic

Trent Polytechnic had been the site of a conceptual-friendly pedagogy under Vic Burgin in the early seventies. As described in Chapter 4, students from Lanchester had tried unsuccessfully to transfer there in 1971, in the hope that they would be able to continue their studies in art theory. The group that went on to produce *Issue* at Nottingham arrived just after Burgin had left in 1974-5 and they were largely influenced to do so by Charles Harrison who taught all but one of them at Watford College of Art.

Charles Harrison was by this point editor of *Art-Language*, had resigned from *Studio International* and was working in various art colleges teaching art history. Watford was not a Dip.A.D. college, it mainly prepared designers in its foundation course, having been a technical college, and was considered by the students I interviewed as a 'backwater college' (DB: 2). Harrison's teaching and his presence at the college was divisive,[35] he had no time for design history but taught art history in a compelling way, focussing on American Modernism and contemporary practices. He was an infectiously enthusiastic teacher of these histories and invested a great deal in students that engaged with his classes, not just teaching his specialisms but introducing the students to a wide cultural spectrum and its social and political contexts (DB: 1-14; RvB/MF/PS: 176-180; van Beek, 2014).[36] Those students were then introduced to the work of Art & Language, and, through Harrison, to various people associated with the name (DB: 52), who were in turn brought to Watford to talk to the students (van Beek, 2014). Harrison encouraged the students to work collectively and self-organise some kind of activity when going on to their BA degrees.[37] Despite some of the negative opinions expressed of their time on an undergraduate course, this was unequivocally held to have been a good idea; group membership meant that some sense of structured intersubjective activity could be

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[35] 'Watford art college was intensely divided and most students shied away from the gifts implicit in Charles' teaching' (Greville, 2015: pers. comm.)

[36] This also memorably introduced the students to Socialist Realism in the form of *The Rent Collection Courtyard* sculpture of the workshop of Ye Yushan, Socialist Realism being a burgeoning interest in A&L at the time (DB: 24).

[37] The Dip.A.D. became a B.A. in 1974 with the merging of the CNAA and the NCDAD.

established. On their own, those that I interviewed thought they would have been infinitely worse off (RVB/MF/PS: 93-4; 143-5).

Spread over two years, four students went from Watford to Trent Polytechnic (Rob van Beek in 1974, then Janie Greville, David Batchelor and Paul Smith in 1975). Mike Fyles came to Trent Polytechnic from a foundation in Cheltenham and eventually became involved with those from Watford, having been disillusioned by his foundation.[38] Rob Van Beek describes the commitments of the group, when assembled:

> *From a very early stage, after staying with Charles and Art & language in Oxford, we became committed to a fairly uncompromising line:*
>
> - *We abandoned making 'art student work'*
> - *We organised out activity around discussions, reading, producing writing and a journal.*
> - *We worked collectively and resisted being assessed individually, if at all.*
> - *We rejected the proposition that tutors or visiting lecturers were 'artists' and identified them as bureaucrats or 'para-bureaucrats'.*
> - *We recycled the conflict we generated with staff and the college authorities as 'art' or 'work' suitable for assessment.* (Van Beek, 2014: np)

These basic tenets of activity resulted in an antagonistic approach and the students consequently lobbied for various Art & Language members to be brought in as visiting lecturers. Pete Smith, who had gone on to do an MA in Art History at the Architectural Association after finishing at Lanchester Polytechnic in 1972, taught initially in 1976 and then Mel Ramsden, who had moved back to England from New York, taught from 1977-8. Thus from 1975-1978 there was a small group of Art & Language affiliates and from 1976-1978 some part-time presence in the staff of A&L. Certain other members of the part-time staff were also sympathetic to the students and so relations were not entirely

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[38] Interestingly, Mike Fyles had very strong leanings to producing traditional, representational work but his conversion at Cheltenham to a Modernist abstract painter had felt hollow and his involvement with SCHOOL was in order to try and sort out the art domain again, with the hope that he would be able to go back to doing art he was satisfied with (see RVB/MF/PS: 161). As much of this interview testifies to, the idea of different stylistic commitments were irrelevant, it was the mystification that attended art education that was challenged; there was no longer a commitment to Conceptual Art per se.

antagonistic.[39] The staff who were particularly lampooned, as with Ratcatcher, were those in positions of managerial responsibility; the head of department Derek Carruthers; the director of the polytechnic, R. Hedley; head of the first year, Gerard Hemsworth and various other members of the polytechnic administrative staff. Much of the students' antagonisms again stemmed from these tutors' laissez-fair attitude and seemingly comfortable positions. David Batchelor remembers from the outset:

> *Gerrard Hemsworth… he was laissez-faire, do what you want. And he said they'll either be in the staff room or they'll be in the pub. That was it… I think if you didn't have … that sense of a group you could be really high and dry.* (DB: 48)

In contrast to the 'seriousness' (van Beek, 2014) of the staff in Watford, the students encountered staff who had, from their perspective, 'effectively given up the idea of being a successful artist and they were concentrating on doing up their house' (RVB/MF/PS: 205; 215-219). The contrast between the idea of being an artist, seriously engaging with the tradition, and the comfortable day job of teaching it at a regional institution, is what fuelled much of the jibing of the Issue group.[40] This is a common theme throughout this study and the students tried to foster an environment where they could be confident about challenging the complacency of their tutors (RVB/MF/PS: 209-211). The students

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[39] 'There were some part timers who we thought were interesting. One was teaching sound… Michael Nyman, and he backed us. And there was another guy called Michael Brout … the film guy, thought what we were doing was interesting.' (DB: 46) See also (RVB/MF/RVB: 116; 186). It is also the case that the antagonism didn't stretch to their fellow students, despite disagreements; they were, in many ways, sticking up for them (RVB/MF/PS: 367).

[40] Rob van Beek emphasises art education's close relationship to the art world at the time, and that the teachers here seemed to be falling behind on that relationship was one of their Achilles heels. He remarks in an essay circulated in 2014: 'I think SCHOOL was meant to undermine the British Contemporary Artist while he/she was doing their day job.' (van Beek, 2014) in which the day job was perceived as predominantly consisting of walking 'round with pieces of paper going from room to room'(RVB/MF/PS: 209) and sitting in the pub (RVB/MF/PS: 215-19).

There was also mention of a contrast between the adolescence of the art school and a 'grown up' relationship to art production, which echoes many of the ideas Harrison was writing about previously in Studio International in which he entertains the idea that 'the art schools act as institutions in which the educationally homeless… are incarcerated for a period of years and occupied 'therapeutically' with the production with essentially functionless commodities' (Harrison, 1972: 222). One of the themes of the essay is the psychological dependency of the student.

felt supported in this rebelliousness by A&L, Harrison and the SCHOOL project, which offered them some legitimation outside of the institution.[41]

The tenets listed above give us more insight into the role of the group within the college and their antagonistic relationship with the tutors, which conflicted greatly with the putative liberalism of the institution. This relates to the laziness of the teaching in that liberalism was perceived as a method for 'devolving all important decisions onto individual students in isolation' whilst retaining 'the right to assess them and make judgements about them' (RvB/MF/PS: 92). The *Issue* contingent was notable in its (semi-ironic) embrace of Maoist tactics and sayings; *Combat Liberalism* (Zedong, 1937) was widely read and used as a toolbox to do 'what it said on the tin', as it were[42]. The 11 types of liberalism one must watch out for, defined in that article offered a good rule-book where the dominant ideology of freedom and liberalism at the art college offered none. The corollary effects of earlier courses at Newport and Lanchester Polytechnic, those of putatively un-assessable works, a perceived lack of art work being produced, and antagonism with the staff – none of which could be seen to be programmed into the earlier manifestation - at Nottingham were promoted as intended virtues.[43]

Charles Harrison and Art & Language also offered unofficial support to the group, particularly Harrison and Ramsden. The reading was not as structured or intensive as that described at the beginning of the programme at Lanchester Polytechnics, but Harrison was keen to introduce the Nottingham students, when on their foundation in Watford, to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, so certain core texts had not shifted.[44] There was a much greater emphasis on Marx

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[41] This support in itself was not without its problems, as A&L, in particular Michael Baldwin, and had lost faith in the ability to do anything positive within the structure of art education (see RVB/MF/PS: 161-165)

[42] Charles Harrison was particularly prone to subscribing to Maoism at this time. Several interviewees mention this (Van Beek, 2014; PW: 43; DB: 24)

[43] The events at Lanchester were referred to in *The Sinking of the Good Ship Liberalism* (SGSL) (1977: 9) as a precursor to the student occupation at Trent (see later in this section).

[44] Janie Greville also describes a core of texts (Russell, Wittgenstein, Kuhn) in addition to E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams (Greville, 2015: pers. comm.) it seemed that it was even more of an autodidactic or 'peer-led' education for those at Trent, however, with little provision or guidance on these matters. The students did, however, try to set up reading groups and forums (RVB/MF/PS: 384-7).

(particularly *The German Ideology*[45]) and Marxist writings such as Lefebvre and Gramsci (van Beek, 2014; DB: 14; RvB/MF/PS: 400), and the students were also cognisant of different traditions that were not included in the earlier, more detailed curriculum at Lanchester, and some of which had only been popularised since the closure of the earlier courses; the educational writings of Friere, Illich and Paul Goodman (Van Beek, 2014). The students were also enthusiastic about the writings of E.P Thompson and Raymond Williams (see note below and DB: 172) and Peter Smith brought in his interest in the Situationist International (RVB/MF/PS: 394-9). The students also, in a similar way to the Coventry Students post-1971, attended meetings on aesthetics at Nottingham University (RVB/MF/PS: 293).

The production of *Issue* was always thought of as a crucial and central activity for the group, but the first *Issue*, in March 1976, seems to have acted as a trial run, bears little relation to the subsequent publications, and was considered by the authors as unsatisfactory (SGSL, 1977: 2; Issue 2, 1978: 3; DB: 70). *Issue 2* describes a more focussed approach following a SCHOOL meeting and associates itself much more explicitly with the SCHOOL project. The magazine, in addition to the work of the five Trent students also benefitted from contributions by Art & Language, Alan Robinson, Steve Lawton, Nick White and Paul Highnam. *Issue 2* came out in early 1977, a pamphlet entitled *The Sinking of the Good Ship Liberalism* (SGSL) in September 1977 and *Issue 3* in January 1979.[46] *Issue 2* contains articles on general ideas critiquing liberalism from a radical perspective and a history of organisation and politics; comments on the development of cultural studies and art education (specifically the compromised role of the art teacher); commentary on the 'Art and Social Purpose' debate; critical accounts of student staff meetings in the college, spoof scenarios and book reviews. It was announced with a very A&L like poster and bookended with boys' cartoon depictions of WWII scenes. The poster called upon the student population to engage in a collective refusal to collaborate, but to fight against, snitch on and resist the administrative bodies of the polytechnic.

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[45] This was also the Marx that was read at Lanchester, particularly the aphoristic *Theses on Feuerbach*, which is contiguous with the German ideology and contains such relevant gems as 'Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and the comprehension of this practice' (in Tucker (ed.), 1978: 143).

[46] Issue was relatively slick, being printed by professional printers in Oxford and funded by the polytechnic Student Union.

The students involved with issue were, self-confessedly, marked in particular by a low level of productivity, and their experience at Trent was recalled in interviews as being one of anxiety, uncertainty and boredom much of the time (RvB/MF/PS: 573). This is hard to extract from their calculated indolent responses to the demands of other teachers, which was in some sense meaningful. The culture of the art college by this point was largely tolerant of the idea of someone doing 'art theory' but it was still, it seems, measured by the square foot and the nature that 'art theory' could not be the kind of localised and critical activity that the group at Trent were engaged in.[47] The division between art history and complementary studies/ cultural studies was also still taken as given, an assumption that their approach implicitly sought to challenge.[48] The art history and complementary studies staff were, however, partly 'sympathetic and amused by our continued existence'. The feeling was 'partly reciprocated' and out of all the set tasks in the college the students did occasionally write art history essays (van Beek, 2014).

An event at Nottingham which drew a broader audience was an occupation in March, 1977 with support from the Student Union and eventually 1800 students attending a general meeting (SGSL, 1977: 7). The student union were entirely concerned with the cuts to university funding, a nationwide problem, and this was integrated into student demands drawn up at the behest of the *Issue* activists.[49] The occupation, though increasing political awareness of the decision making structures of the polytechnic, did not last long and did not achieve its goals; the NUS capitulating after a couple of days.[50]

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[47] For one account of these concerns see (SGSL, 1977: 10-12).

[48] The students did agree to change their ratio of practice: theory to 60:40. This still perpetuates an idea of a split, however (RvB/MF/PS: 188-189).

[49] These were:
  a) *The dissolution of all department boards of study.*
  b) *The dissolution of all Departmental Course committees.*
  c) *The dissolution of all other decision-making and consultative bodies at departmental level.*
  d) *The establishment of Departmental Councils. All students and staff, in all departments, shall be members of their Departmental Council. The Departmental Council shall direct all matters of exclusive concern to the Department.* (SGSL, 1977: 5)

[50] An account of the occupation is offered in (SGSL, 1977: 5-8). It is related to other student occupations, such as that described at the RCA (see next section).

The students graduated over two years, the 1977 BA show being called *BA Means Goodbye*, a phrase picked up from an article on the culture of education in *Radical Philosophy* by Jon Davies, *Not in Front of the Students* (1974).[51] The show contained portraits of Chairman Mao, 'a reading room with posters, charts, slogans and an index file of essays on the social position of art and art education' (Wallet & Smith, 1977: 27 Fig. 14). *Issue* magazine continued with one more edition after this show, as half the students involved were just going into their third year, and *Issue 3* continued in the same vein. It also included A&L's essay, *Art & Society?*, which continues their attack on socially oriented art practice, a Marxist demystification of the idea of creativity and short texts warning against collaboration with the administration. Another distinct section is a critique of the relatively new Creative Photography course; the paradoxes within the

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[51] The article, as the title suggests, is a critique of the value of formal university (and school) education and identifies several tendencies that with which the current system is beset, including a condition of 'perpetual apprenticeship' in which students have no resistance to the domination of their putative teachers; 'inevitable incompetence', in which facts are brokered for power and the erosion of the students self-confidence; and that a condition where 'cynicism is the highest virtue, enthusiasm the greatest vice', which devalues genuine interest and position and promotes the perfunctory assimilation of set values imbued by the tutor. It was very much in line with the radical ideas on education of Chomsky and Illich, and avowedly drawing from the pragmatic tradition of C. Wright Mills. It also illustrates that the concerns of the students were not isolated to the problems of British art education.

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fostering of such courses and the assessment procedure and demands of industry (penned by Paul Highnam and Nick White). This last, *Issue 3*, is particularly well-furnished with satirical cartoons on the contradictions of art education (**Fig. 15**), agit-prop images by Art & Language (Mel Ramsden) (**Fig. 1** – frontispiece). *Issue* ended with this cohort of students.

Ostrich and the R.C.A.

Paul Wood, after finishing working with Berry and Wright at Newport, studied for an MA by thesis at the RCA in the General Studies department from 1974-1976 as a way to continue writing a critique of art education and integrating an 'amalgam of bits of art history in some kind of engagement with early T.J. Clarke and some theoretical stuff about a critical art practice and it was being done simultaneously with the first Ostrich' (PW: 97).

The RCA had begun to develop a course called Environmental Media.[52] The nature of that course was in question almost for its entire existence, and the General Studies

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[52] Peter Kardia had also both helped and contributed to discussion with Hurrell and Bainbridge at St Martins in the mid-1960s. The difference between a liberal outlook fostering artists who, from Terry Atkinson's perspective, were 'flavour of the month' in the mid-60s and the problems of running such a liberal course as Environmental Media are interesting. The article *Kardiac Arrest* (Ostrich 1, 1976: K1-17)

department, which managed the written elements of all the other courses, was met with opposition from a lot of the staff and students (PW: 97). John Dennis and Paul Wood both enrolled on these respective post-graduate courses and, both being at a loss on these courses, began to work together and, importantly, to attend meetings held by the newly formed Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) in London (PW: 27, 97, 101). Paul Wood was therefore involved, from around 1975 both in the writing on art education that appeared in many publications, including the *Fox* and subsequently the RCA magazine, *Ostrich*, which arose from organising the students to, amongst other things, argue out the unexamined relations of theory and practice (exemplified by the position of the General Studies department within the college) and the problems inherent within the specific courses (especially Film, Design and Environmental Media). Both Dennis and Wood became increasingly active within the still-thriving left-wing culture. John Dennis was a committed socialist, familiar with, though not subscribed to, Art & Language writing and an incredibly verbose character. Their working relationship was formalised through editing the first *Ostrich*, which in turn was a reaction to the trouble brought about by organising and assembling student meetings and groups. Again, organisation and collective action tested the tacit assumption of the students' atomised ineffectualness within the art college (PW: 97).

The first issue of *Ostrich* was published in March 1976, its contributors are listed as George Csato, John Dennis, Mike Dunford, Edwin Pouncey,[53] Dave Rushton, Stuart Semark and Paul Wood. As Ostrich was edited and contributed to by post-graduate, slightly older students they were regarded as slightly more autonomous from an institutional

details the problems of 'tangible visual art objects' and assessment again with regards to the unproductivity of some of the students. This reflects the anxieties of the management of the RCA about the remit of the newly formed Environmental Media department. Christopher Frayling mentions the course, briefly, in his account of the RCA, stating that it was an 'avant-garde ghetto', syphoning off experimental students in order for the Fine Art department to function in a traditional manner (Frayling, 1987: 185). More detail from a more positive light can be found in *From Floor to Sky: the experience of the art school studio* (ed. Coyne, 2010), especially Hester Westley's account of Peter Kardia's pedagogy and his own personal account of his time at the RCA. Ostrich was also critical of Environmental Media, not as a reaction to its supposed radicalness, but largely as a critique of the unexamined assumptions of open ended avant-gardism without critical purport (Ostrich 1, 1976: B1-5).

[53] Pouncey produced the cartoons, entitled *Art Studs* (**Fig. 16**), for the first edition. He became an underground comic artist under the name Savage Pencil. His cartoons were pretty adept at lampooning the vanities of the art tutors at the RCA and very much in line with the proto-punk look of these later journals. This became his signature style (see Gravette, 2006)

perspective and were less in need of any A&L support.[54] Its aims were set out clearly in an Editorial, and it is worth quoting at length (though abridged):

> *Ostrich is intended primarily as functional – something other people struggling to sort out a practice in the face of variously intransigent, divisive and self-perpetuating orthodoxies, can use…One of the best things that could happen as a result of it is… that it stimulates local production of a similar kind in other institutions… What stands behind a lot of the substantive critique in Ostrich is the continuing problem of theory and practice… A critical practice will not recognise… the spurious boundaries of the contemporary academy which separate art practice from its history, from its theory, and more generally appropriate social and ideological dimensions into half-lit shadow worlds with names like 'General Studies'… the existing shibboleths and pre-formed hooks which people hang their practices on, can't go unexamined. A critique of film or design will be political; a political critique will involve educational ideologies. The form of practice that emerges will cause problems for the orthodox (not to mention its own practitioners)… To conclude: Ostrich is generated out of course criticism. We hope it generates more, and is a shareable working instrument in the subversion of educational orthodoxies.* (Ostrich 1, 1976: E1-2)

The magazine, therefore, had the distinctive line of making sure the relations between practice in the studio, commitments outside the studio and the structural concerns and life-world relations within the institution were permeable and all open to critique. Its concern to create a toolkit or to be an example and emphasis on shareable information relates directly to the research on art education conducted recently by Wood and Rushton. Ostrich set itself up immediately as an alternative to, and as critical of, the official magazine *Ark* (Ostrich 1, 1976: M1-2) and included predominantly articles that looked critically at all the departments' approaches and integration of theoretical concerns. It also took up issues with regard to the expulsion of students, the democratic

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[54] Ostrich editors often took a critical stance against the work produced under A&L. Rushton & Wood did not agree with their position vis a vis the art world and their often sardonic take on Marxist rhetoric did not sit well with the genuine engagement of much of Rushton & Wood's writing on art education. In a conscientious bid to offend, Dennis & Minter also wrote, of the ineffectualness of 'The desperately synthetic pinko criticism such as infects Cork's Studio editorials… or the pomposities of the Art-Language , Self and Greenwood (inter alia) enterprises…' (in R&W, 1979: 51).

formation of the college and contained separate accounts of all the departments of the Royal College of Art (Ostrich 1, 1976: D1-5; K1-17).

The second issue was edited by John Dennis and Wayne Minter and featured (a rarity in this thesis) a piece on the precariousness of women's labour by Jill Daniels. The second issue, to a certain extend broadened its horizons, dealing with broad issues of education, as the editors explain 'overall there was a shift of emphasis to attacking government policies of cutting back on educational expenditure as part of a general policy for clawing the nation out of the capitalist crisis it was entering' (Noises Within…, 1979: 94). It also offered many satirical accounts which documented and ran counter to the celebration of the college's presumed successes in industry and sponsorship. In a slightly later essay by the editors, *Occupational Therapy*, they explain how the design focus and professionalism which characterised the RCA shifted the predominant character of the individualist art student:

> *It is now more likely to be the hard headed professional… rather than the archetypal privatist whose work effectively precludes involvement in collective discussion, criticism or action, and to whom the slogan most completely applies: 'Doing your own things means doing what you are told'.* (R&W, 1979: 51)

In other words the shift could be roughly described as the shift from whimsical Romantic to self-interested entrepreneur. These two are, of course, inter-related; it is just a case of emphasis. This issue highlights another difference between the Royal College of Art, culturally and geographically at the epicentre, and the regional colleges. Rather than facing the seemingly depressing problems of lazy tutors within a largely ignored institution, the students here, though facing just the same problems, experienced them set against a forceful narrative of unmitigated success. This was what set Ostrich against the mouthpiece of the College's successes, the magazine *Ark*. The agit-prop like poster inserts, much like the *Issue* poster reproduced earlier, emphasised the increasing commercial interests of the art school vis consumer culture and its constantly shifting relations to industry (**Fig. 17**). It is this constant realist emphasis on the base relations determining the art school that characterises all the critique within the journal.

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As with Nottingham, the magazine also coincided and precipitated an occupation, in this case of the art college's Darwin Building in Feb/March 1977. This lasted much longer than that attempted at Trent Polytechnic and involved the distribution of several agendas and publications. The magazine only ran for two, albeit substantial, issues,[55] but there was much material printed during the occupation by *Ostrich* and the Student Union (which also funded *Ostrich*).[56] Again the occupation was co-ordinated with the student union not only to deal with the issues of democracy in the college and theory/practice debates but with the wider and more high profile issues of student cuts and reorganisation in the increasingly hostile political and financial climate, which involved student quotas, effective pay reduction in staff wages and fee increases for overseas students. The occupation precipitated and communicated with other occupations in art colleges in London, especially Central School and Chelsea. It also coincided with the strike of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff at Birmingham University, which was pertinent to, in particular, the technicians at the RCA. Many student union meetings and 'teach-ins' were organised, all with record high attendance.

Christopher Frayling in his entertaining but patronising account of the end of occupation claims: 'the original demands were forgotten and the immediate problem for the occupiers came to be how to extricate themselves without retribution. On 23rd of March, exactly one month after it began, the sit in was over. Ten days later the term was as well, and everyone went home.' (Frayling, 1987: 187) In this account, that things went on as usual, was a triumph of liberalism and reason over unreasonable ultra-leftist demands. In the account of Ostrich and the students it was just another disappointing confirmation of the dull hegemonic position of that sort of opinion. The editors reflect in 1979 that 'the Ostrich and Occupation material has not been superseded by any developments in the college – or for that matter in colleges elsewhere, it is still all too applicable… the salaries are still being drawn, the empires still being built… plus ça change…' (Noises Within…, 1979: 94).

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[55] Ostrich was revived in 2014 as a title by the Student Union as an online journal and discussion forum (http://rcasu.org.uk/wp/the-ostrich/).

[56] The material was collected later in the RCA Occupation Dossier, which is available in Noises Within… (1979: 118-124)

Leeds Polytechnic

Slightly separate from the groups of students firmly under the SCHOOL banner there existed a group of students at Leeds Polytechnic with an interest in A&L, who were acquainted with Rushton and Wood, and who began to harbour the same suspicions regarding the liberal art college model of education.

Leeds Polytechnic, containing Leeds College of Art had developed a reputation for fostering performance art and an anarchic, open-ended atmosphere at the college. This reached its pinnacle in the late-1960s and early seventies and the college produced a reasonably high profile showcase exhibition of the students work at the ICA in 1972. Those practices are detailed in the recent account by James Charnley, *Creative Licence* (2015), which covers Leeds College of Art under Harry Thubron through to the early seventies. The institutional history mirrors that of Lanchester Polytechnic in many ways as it morphed from a relatively small art college to a purpose built polytechnic in 1969 (Charnley, 2015: 69-75). It contrasted quite starkly with aims of the theory course, however, and is an interesting comparison and case study of an extreme, or at least ostentatious, model of the laissez-faire, individual spontaneous creativity model of art education.

Jeff Nuttall was associated for a long time with the Leeds College of Art ethos and remembers the beginning of the Art & Language influence; an influence he was in no way sympathetic to.[57] Nuttall recalls:

All you needed to be, at Leeds, in the seventies, was diverse. All that was forbidden was the dull… All this made Leeds Fine Art well known and promised three years spent in the teeth of advancement… Simon Gartside [breaks] with his hippie mates in Wales and is planning a band with Sebastian Morely which will be called Scritti Politti. Simon will become Green and Sebastian will become Tom Soviet. The extraordinary semantics of this piece of Communist campery owes at least something to the vague Marxism of the Art and Language Fine Art

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[57] Two accounts of talks at Leeds College of Art/ Polytechnic by Wood/Berry/Wright in 1972 and sometime after 1977 by Terry Atkinson and Tim Clarke were met with hostility and an ostentatious walking out by Jeff Nuttall (Wood, 2016: pers. comm.; Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm). Harold Hurrell is also recorded as giving a talk there in 1974 (Charnley, 2015: 267)

course at the nearby University which Simon, in a flounce of annoyance at being ignored by the Polytechnic, has unofficially joined. (Nuttall, quoted in Charnley, 2015: 256).

 The ramping up of Atkinson's presence at Leeds into a course is erroneous, but it gives a sense of how A&L had been transformed in the eyes of their critics from the arch theorists to egregious political artists.[58] These students, Tom Soviet, Green Strohmeyer-Gartside (along with Alan Robinson), published three pieces of writing, *Doing High Culture*, *The Art Condition* and *Show Us Your Uniqueness* (1977) all of which combine a description of their own development and an on the ground interrogation of the lingering attitudes at Leeds Polytechnic. The gradual institutionalisation of this 'spontaneous creativity' meant that, according to these sceptical students, Leeds became a 'desert of laissez-faire and crass 'performance' art which by the mid-70's had made the Department of Creative(!) Arts an intolerable place for anyone with a glimmer of scepticism about their highly touted status as figureheads of creativity.' (Robinson, Soviet and Strohmeyer-Gartside, 1979: 88).

Show us Your Uniqueness, which was published in *The Politics of Art Education* (discussed further below) resembles a punk-parody of *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973) in that it offers interviews with students, tutors and managers in order to get an idea of the motivations and activities of those that inhabit what was once considered 'the most influential [art school] in Europe since the Bauhaus',[59] but which now, the authors contest, contains students 'too apathetic even to show interest in the embarrassingly stupid and bankrupt practices for which Leeds has become known' (Soviet & Strohmeyer-Gartside, 1979: 44). It contains damning transcriptions of cynical teachers, depressed students and an atmosphere of dilettantism and egocentrism in equal measure. In many ways it functions as the coal face report to complement the overall view offered in *Politics*

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[58] Terry Atkinson remembers that he and his colleagues, Fred Orton, Griselda Pollock and TJ Clarke, among others, would attend the Polytechnic to give talks on a regular basis. Dave Seeger, another lecturer at Leeds Polytechnic is also recorded as seeing these lectures as part of some A&L enterprise and blaming it for the demise of the department: '[Geoff Teasdale] was fostering close contact with Leeds University Art faculty people, Terry Atkinson, Griselda Pollock and other "Art-Language" enthusiasts, who were following the tendency to make work with little visual content or material form.' (Seeger, quoted in Charnley, 2015: 254). I am not sure Griselda Pollock would appreciate being lumped-in as an 'Art-Language enthusiast'.

[59] Patrick Heron's *Murder of the Art Schools*, which is pointedly quoted at the beginning of the piece (Soviet and Strohmeyer-Gartside, 1979: 44).

of Art Education. It contrasts only in tone to the information offered up by Charnley's more positive account of those times; Leeds at that time was undergoing a problematic shift from the heydays of the long-sixties to the more critical mood of the seventies. Art & Language's influence on these students, if not at all on the course or the staff, was considerable. As Green Gartside recalls several years later, he instigated an ad hoc presence for A&L at Leeds:

> *Around that time I started reading Art & Language, got in touch with them and invited members to Leeds to give unofficial lectures. They couldn't come to the Polytechnic because I wasn't empowered. I had to hire a room above a pub in Leeds and have these evenings where artists and lecturers that interested me would be invited to come to Leeds. Initially there would be five or six people, but by the end of the time there the head of the Polytechnic was turning up there. They turned into incredible evenings, there was such bitterness afterwards.* (Gartside, 1990: np)

This was something that sat very much on the margins of the art school and was instigated largely by Green Gartside as a kind of personal education. It sits somewhat marginally in relation to the other SCHOOL activities, but offered a very well put together and scathing critique of an institution which typified the problems the students and A&L initially had with the values of the art school.

Noises Within… & The Politics of Art Education

If the *Fine Art Policy Statement* and issue one of *Art-Language* mark the start of historical focus of this thesis then the two publications *The Politics of Art Education* and *The Noises Within Echo From the Gimcrack, Remote and Ideologically Hollow Chamber of the Education Machine: Art School* (both 1979) mark the end point. The latter publication was a *School Press* compilation of the most broadly relevant and typical pieces from the student publications from Trent, Hull, the RCA and Leeds, all discussed above. It was a slicker publication than those magazines from which it was made; re-typeset in a smaller format with short introductions and compiled by Dave Batchelor, Mike Fyles (Issue), Steve Lawton (Ratcatcher), Alan Robinson (Leeds), Paul Wood (Ostrich) and David Rushton. All of its contents were taken from the publications already discussed and none of these publications issued anything more afterwards. In addition the articles that Rushton and Wood had been publishing in *The Fox*, among other places, were also included. The distinctive cover and introduction, written by Steve Lawton, (Fig. 18) offer a straight-forward articulation of its conditions of production:

> *These magazines, by 1979, having run their course without having established, as it were, house roots, provides one reason for retrieving them, minus one or two grinning skeletons from the historical cupboard. Another is that SCARP[60] (?) have put up the money for reprinting.*

> *It may be true that people can only learn from their mistakes - but we were very largely performing in the dark - and though we believe these activities to have been in a limited sense successful, an examination of the succeeding pages will reveal a considerable number of the little victories gained to have been Pyrrhic ones. It has repeatedly been argued that the failure of one generation of students to secure the ear of the next has been*

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[60] Student Community Action Resources Programme, which published a series on education throughout the late seventies.

> *…we realised that all their stuff about revamping education had nothing on art… Art was always seen as separate from these revisions of social science and everything like that. So we got stuck into that and we went to a conference in Bangor that they ran. … told them that they needed something on art education. What we said was there's all this stuff going on Ratcatcher, Ostrich, Issue. They put the money up for what became Noises Within…* (PW: 103)

> *a crippling one for student self-activity. However, this has seldom prevented its happening.* (Lawton in Noises Within, 1979: cover and insert)

The plaintive fatalism of this introduction reflect the bathos with which the project ended. After graduating from these various institutions, these student activists became homeless graduates.[61] Their antagonism was easily forgotten by the institutions it addressed and the prospects of gainful employment were seriously reduced in the late seventies. By 1979 the activities of these graduated students were diverse, both Steve Lawton and Mike Fyles studied for a PGCE (RvB/MF/PS: 269); David Batchelor subsequently studied at the CCCS in Birmingham; Rob Van Beek continued to be an artist after working as a miner for a while (DB: 142); John Dennis and Wayne Minter became more actively involved in Rock Against Racism[62]; Green (Strohmeyer-) Gartside and Tom Soviet (Morley) formed the post-punk band *Scritti Politti*. There was, however, an element of this homelessness causing a lack of purpose in many of those that had been involved. This is not to say that this sense of languishing was in any way enhanced by their activities at art college; the late seventies were characterised by a languishing economy, the attrition of left wing culture and an oversubscribed art education system which inevitably led to many such situations. That there was an attempt to exit art was for some a liberation and for others a red herring (DB: 136).

The Politics of Art Education represents the final product of the ongoing and simultaneous empirical analysis and ideological critique of art education that Paul Wood had started, though with different methods, with Pete Berry and Kevin Wright at Newport; producing the 'Directory' of institutional clashes encountered there and the video for the art schools in Wales. Through the work that he had done with Dave Rushton and at the RCA, Wood went on to write a substantial analysis of the institutional, political and ideological forces at work on British post-war art education.[63] The study was almost

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[61] In the sense of lacking a home for activity. Rob Van Beek reflects 'the problem with institutional type critiques is that they themselves are predicated on the institution they critique' (Van Beek, 2014: np). It

[62] Rushton and Wood were also active within Rock Against Racism, and continued to be heavily involved in Left Wing Politics. After 1979, Paul Wood started teaching at Edinburgh College of Art, David Rushton started Red Star Cinema producing documentary films.

[63] Several parts of Chapter 2 are indebted to this study, as referenced in the chapter. The publication was funded, after some cajoling, by the Scottish architect Michael Spens, the financer of *Studio International* from 1972 onwards (see Melvin, 2013: 19; Mullholland, 1998: 41-2; PW: 101). Rushton & Wood had

entirely written in 1978 but not published until 1979,[64] and edits together contributions not just from Rushton and Wood but also John Dennis, Wayne Minter and the text by the students operating from Leeds Polytechnic, discussed previously.

The approach of the study was a sustained concrete analysis and ideological critique of art education in Britain. This was intended as a counter to the perceived ineffectualness of piecemeal critiques, and, on one hand, the anecdotal or, on the other, overly abstract approaches toward the issue of art education (R&W, 1979: 3). It continues on from the opposition to the possessive individual-artist, documented plenty enough in this thesis, and looks at the so-called cultural debate's constant refusal to deal with 'the permeation of its subject area by capital' (R&W, 1979: 4).

Whereas the remit of the SCHOOL affiliated magazines was very local, and concerned largely with guerrilla tactics adopted within the bounds of the art college, the purview of this report was broad-ranging and a forceful warning against the impending onslaught of 'the growth of the corporate state' upon and through the agency of cultural and intellectual workers; bourgeois liberalism therefore is yoked emphatically to the insidious creep of late-20th century capitalism (R&W, 1979: 4). In many ways the target of the piece is the liberal art education orthodoxy; that art is somehow above or once removed from these determinants and somehow able to shirk political commitment.[65]

In the first section, the study covers post-war policy on education and the industrial, economic and class interests and pressures that underpinned much of the legislation and advisory thinking leading up to the Coldstream Report. Art education, it is repeatedly stated, is not seen as special or separate from the conditions of all further and higher

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published in *Studio International* under Richard Cork in 1977, a fact that had caused some consternation among the Issue and Ratcatcher students, who were against collaborating with *Studio International*, under Richard Cork's editorship see (Melvin: 2013), both as a bid of solidarity with A&L party line on the magazine, and as against mainstream art press in general (Issue 2, 1977: 4; R&W, 1976:132-135).

[64] *The Politics of Art Education* was initially intended as a special edition of *Studio International*, which was the pattern of publication in *Studio* under the Editorship of Richard Cork, and would have been distributed as such; this never transpired, however. The magazine's funding was an ongoing problem, because of the unwillingness of a newly-formed management committee with newly formed interests to publish the work it was never produced as a special edition of the magazine. Therefore, although the print run was still around a thousand, it did not get the distribution intended. (David Rushton, 2013, pers. comm.; PW: 101; R&W, 1979: 2).

[65] This is always with a mind to the thinly veiled, and rampant, self-interest of liberal values, see (R&W, 1979: 37-8).

education. The Coldstream reforms are held up not as a radical and heroic liberation of art education but as a confused, technocratic and groundless reforms, justified by an 'idiotic naturalism' as to the consensus and ideological reinforcements it promulgated. The reforms are part and parcel of a move towards a managerialism: 'The emergence of liberalisation was essential for the transformation of skill-based practices to managerial professions' (R&W, 1979: 13). The report also looks at the consequences of the reforms from the perspective of those institutions left to wither on the vine, allocated custody of the relegated vocational provision. In reinforcing a hierarchy of (at the bottom) vocationally and (higher up) liberal educated individuals, the liberalisation created a gulf between these two strands through enormous discrepancies in the attention and provision for each section (p.16-18).

The second section takes a critical stance on the introduction of polytechnics, again not to plead a special case for the arts, a la Patrick Heron, but to look at what ideologically underpins the restructuring and the technocratic emphasis. The 'technocratic' move in this sense is to move the system of colleges away from local 'wage bargaining' to a higher national system to mitigate any 'local peculiarities'. The study documents evidence of the fact that there was very little consultation at all on the matter with regards the feasibility of the absorptions (p. 23-24). The Polytechnics are seen very much in line with the close influence of industrial concerns into art and design education. Much of the student movement is also criticised as not having a deep enough purchase on the problems, appearing ineffectual against undue influences on curriculum and structure within institutions of art and design education. Hornsey in particular is cited as a confused and cosmetic protest (p. 26-7). Likewise, the NUS is characterised as capitulating at every occupation to the demands of senior management and therefore not fulfilling their purpose (p.36-7; 56). The influence of the author's involvement in student (and non-student) political action is never far from the surface.

The third section focuses on the change in rhetoric from the liberal expansionist hopes of the boom years of the 60s to the, ostensibly more illiberal, reinforcement of economic and wealth-generating imperatives during the mid-70s, following the cuts to education and various industrial and financial crises. This not only charts the narrative of rationalisation and productivity as a force to enable an education system geared towards

industry and profit but also, in summary, belies the idea that the preceding boom period was a period of humanistic and egalitarian reforms, making explicit a common goal for both periods (R&W, 1979: 30-1). This is done largely through an overall analysis of all the gestures towards servicing the need for administrative and management competence in all forms of education under the Wilson, Heath and 2nd Wilson/ Callahan governments.

The study represents one of only a few in-depth analyses of art education after 1970 and makes an interesting comparison with Robert Strands more institutionally-bound history of the NCDAD and CNAA from the same period (Strand, 1987). Since its publication several studies have cited it as significant. Lisa Tickner notes the particularly harsh attitude that the study has regarding the 1968 student occupations for their lack of political coherence and connection to any working class movement. In her history of the Hornsey sit-in, the study functions as an ultra-left critique of some of the contradictions inherent in the sit in (Tickner, 2008: 83-92), taking their attack on the sit-in's political naivety and middle-class isolation as a coherent critique from the left. Indeed, the work has since been mentioned in several histories of the period (Walker, 2001: 232; 2002: 231), including in a reflection on art education by Paul Wood himself (Wood, 2008). He notes that 'the rhetorical voice comes from a different world... Yet ... little has changed. The voice of management, and the equal and opposite chorus of rational planners and the creative free spirits, drone on undiminished... the underlying structure (and of course the wider structure-beyond-the-structure) has remained intact.' (Wood, 2008: 165). In the next chapter, this study will look at the relevance of the central critiques made by A&L and related writers to the current debates and practices within tertiary fine art education and look at how the culture and purpose of that education has changed.

Courses after 1979: Leeds University, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, the Open University

At this point it is appropriate to make reference to teaching that developed after the Art Theory Programme by members of Art & Language, but which developed slowly and less dramatically, and which charted a different lineage than those discussed in the main body of this chapter. Two teaching programmes that are causally linked to the original editors of A-L, and that deserve further research and attention, are the *Fine Art as Social Practice* course at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, set up and taught by David Bainbridge, and the *Tuesday Seminars* at Leeds University, as conducted by Terry Atkinson. For the purposes of this thesis I would like to include them, but they had a much longer half-life than the more dramatic, brightly-burnt student-led lineage I have documented above, and so are really part of a different history that goes beyond the historical scope of the present thesis. What follows is in essence an indicator of an area of further research to be conducted.

In 1977, with encouragement from the art historian T.J. Clark, who had set up a significant Art History department at Leeds University teaching Social Art History (what has become to be known as New Art History) from 1975 (Rees & Borzello, 1986: 3), Terry Atkinson took up a position as both a resident artist (he was given studio space) and a tutor. He would go on to conduct tutorials at Leeds University for 30 years, holding what came to be known as the *Tuesday Seminars*. These were not compulsory to attend and were largely discursive outings into problems concerned with politics, linguistics, moral and ethical philosophy and especially philosophy of mind, and developed considerably up until 2002 when he retired (Atkinson, 2004/2013:np; Atkinson, 2016: pers.com.). This was in addition to the input he had when visiting Leeds Polytechnic, along with his fellow lecturers, as discussed in the section on Leeds Polytechnic.

David Bainbridge eventually went on to direct a course, *Fine Art as Social Practice,* at Stourbridge and then Wolverhampton Polytechnic/University until 2005. After leaving both Lanchester Polytechnic and any formal participation in Art & Language work, Bainbridge eventually began to teach at Stourbridge where, according to Atkinson, he continued much in the same vein as he taught on the Technos component of the Art

Theory course. [66] Other notable teachers on that course were Sue Atkinson, and later Rachel Clarke and Dave Beech; the principle being to challenge ideas of any kind of aesthetic approach and not to train people to be artists, 'but to be good cultural receptors – to have some critique' (Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.).[67]

Another significant influence upon art education by Art & Language affiliated members was their involvement with the Modern Art and Modernism, A315 course at the Open University.[68] This was not in any way an A&L project, but its approach shows much dependency on the same types of resources as the Art Theory Programme. The programme was devised by Charles Harrison and Francis Frascina alongside Gill Perry, Briony Fer, Aaron Scharf, Sara Selwood, Nigel Blake and Belinda Thompson in 1982. Centred around various approaches that would be largely described as sitting within New Art History, the course developed a critical, social and political take on the legacy of Modernism (Frascina & Harrison (ed.), 1982: 1-2). The course probably related strongly to Harrison's approach at Watford and the official anthology of writing contains expected canonical texts by Baudelaire, Clive Bell, Walter Benjamin etc. Another anthology of writing related to the course, however, also betrays a more direct influence of the particular set of concerns with Modernism that have more than a whiff of a distinctly A&L flavour. *Modernism Criticism Realism* (Harrison & Orton (eds.), 1984) acts as a kind of reader for both an account of Modernist myths, theories and problems and a reader for the concerns of A&L as a practice.[69] Edited by Harrison and Fred Orton, it was developed from both the OU A315 course and also with students on the Art History course at Leeds University. It also acknowledges the input of Baldwin and Ramsden as well at the science

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[66] Terry Atkinson remained very close to Bainbridge until his death in 2013 and his wife Sue Atkinson, herself a committed activist and artist, taught with Bainbridge for many years. Atkinson also reflected that his commitment to workplace politics remained and that one of the enduring characteristics of his teaching was his function as a semi-official shop steward for staff and students alike (Atkinson, 2016: pers. comm.).

[67] The character of the early stages of the course remains obscure and requires further research. Many Art and Society-like courses appeared and have since developed, notably those at Dartington and the University of the West of England; East London Polytechnic and Newcastle Polytechnic (see Crickmay, 2003: 121-122).

[68] This involvement is discussed in (MB/MR: 272-332); the effect to which A&L were an influence is contentious.

[69] It also traces an alternative line of thought to that of the more official course material. The publisher was the same as the *Modern Art and Modernism* reader, Harper & Row, and *Modernism, Criticism, Realism* is explicitly seen as Complementary to that previous publication.

historian John Christie (Harrison & Orton (eds.), 1984). It contains many classic texts that date back to the Art Theory Programme in terms of their relevance and interest to art education, such as Kuhn, Hanson, Hintikka and Wittgenstein, in addition to several texts by Nelson Goodman (on Similarity and Expression) and Noam Chomsky. Other works that date back to the Art Theory Programme such as the writing on aesthetics from Beryl Lake, Richard Wollheim, John Passmore and the political and social science of C.B. Macpherson and Alasdair MacIntyre. It also included three texts by Art & Language themselves. Other material for the course was developed by A&L or A&L-affiliated people: David Batchelor wrote some material and delivered the course (DB: 181, 187, 189); Paul Wood eventually became employed on the course; Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin delivered video material for the course on Duchamp and the Beaubourg Development/Pompidou Centre respectively (OU, 1983: A315/30 & 31; DB: 203).

As the OU course was an Art History course and that this reader and the influence of A&L stands slightly to one side of the actual curriculum and delivery (there were a great many non-A&L academics involved in its writing and delivery), the course does not fit properly into this study. Further research would elucidate how the many art historians rose from art college education during this period and how this generation of New Art History benefitted from some of the roads outward forged by the artists and students in this thesis, among many others. The relationship between art history and the art practice of A&L, as mentioned before, is problematic and entangled, the two interpenetrating each other in unpredictable or unaccountable ways. This is both in terms of the histories of the group constructed by Harrison and other former members, and their production of a substantial amount of writing which has affected the history of both Modernism and Conceptual Art.

These three courses deserve much more attention than space and resources allow within this research and form a trajectory of their own. They lasted for many years and are more part of the late-20th Century history of art education, a post-modern and ostensibly more varied array of approaches within the UK art school and which sit outside of the historical end-point of this thesis. Charting their development into the 1980s and 90s would build on this thesis in charting a legacy of the Art Theory programme as a subtle influence or germination of a programme that is still evident in projects like the *Art in*

Theory books compiled by Harrison and Wood (alongside Jason Gaiger) in the 1990s, and courses that seek to develop a type of artistic subject that is sceptical of the mainstream identities and orthodox career prospects of the art world. This causal link could only ever be partial and contingent, and the relative 'qualities' of these legacies are debatable. These courses are part and parcel of British art education as it is experienced today and further research on them would help understand the complexity of that tradition, and its dissenters, as separate from the self-descriptions of unmitigated institutional success.

Summary

The above developments show a shift from the Art Theory Programme and its cognates to a devolved student-led series of protests, cadres and 'scurrilous' publications that persist in the critique of art education that came out of Newport College of Art, and that which was a corollary of the termination of the Art Theory Programme as initially envisaged at Lanchester Polytechnic. When taken together, alongside the writing of A&L post-1973, the writings of Rushton and Wood and the analysis of *The Politics of Art Education* (1979), this period and the activities covered oscillate between very local and immediate political action to broader thinking about the underlying problems of Modernism and 'modernisation', and arts role within both a broader idea of education (in both its radical and conventional forms) and its uncomfortable and often delusory relationship with society in general. It is easy, when taken in isolation, to see the student groups' contrary practice as trivial and merely pranksterish, immature or pretentious. The collective action and interlinked network of resistance to what were seen as the contradictions and idiocies of art school culture, as a symptom of entrenched lazy thinking across the educational and political spectrum, however, is a sharp and useful tool with which to look at the conditions of the time, both for those involved and the present-day reader.

In the late seventies, the beginning of the creation of cultural studies departments and courses, and the increasing acceptance of conceptual and semiological practices, had meant that 'Art Theory' as an activity was beginning to gain currency within the art college. The problem was still, however, how did 'Art Theory' relate to practice, the dividing lines still firmly in place structurally, and what kind of practice that produced.

That it could produce disobedience, refusal to make work, agit-prop and agitation in general yet again caused problems for the liberal self-image of the art college. It is not a simple case of adolescent rebellion, although that was certainly part of it, but perhaps more than any prior art college activity, it was an attempt to get at the central contradictions of how dis-affirmative art activity can subsist antagonistically within the social world and different interest groups of the art school.

CHAPTER 6

Current Problems in Art Education

The previous chapters have set out a history of 'strategic anomalies' (an apt term used by David Batchelor (DB: 14)) within art education, focussing on a ten year period. This chronological structure has enabled social moves, ideas and institutional developments to be integrated into a detailed and focussed history of A&Ls teaching. In this final chapter, which reprises many of the ideas and authors reviewed in the introduction, I would like to consider some of the broad themes addressed by this history, engage with more recent debates within art practice and art education, using relevant examples and studies. Whilst contemporary art pedagogy and academic practice is not the subject of this thesis proper, and therefore the debates will not be explored in detail, the purpose of this conclusion is to offer some possible insight into the relevance of this research to how these debates have been historically determined, and the possible alternative model of learning proposed by A&L. Finally I would like to suggest areas of further research connected to the topics of this thesis, for which it could serve as useful groundwork.

The debates identified as prominent within 21st Century art education are those around discursivity within art education; theory and practice and their relationship; and the role of bureaucracy in academic life. They all interrelate and impinge on each other, centring as they do on issues of types of knowledge, modes of learning, critiques of individualism, the academicisation of fine art and antagonism with the institution. These were also at the forefront of the events described in the previous chapters of this thesis.

'Crits' and Discursivity in the Art Studio: pedagogical innovations?

The first issue of this particular history of British art education I want to address, in part derives from the focus of Elena Crippa's PhD dissertation *When Art Schools Went Conceptual: The Development of discursive Pedagogies and Practices in British Art Higher Education in the 1960s* (2014). Crippa deftly sets up a clear course from the increasing theorisations of Bauhaus and Bauhaus-inspired art education; through the long discussions that were part and parcel of St Martin's sculpture department, both under Anthony Caro and Peter Kardia; the performance of criticism apparent in many of the

performance sculptors of that generation of St Martin's students; the social/cybernetic experiments of Roy Ascot, continuing through to the Art Theory Programme as the end-point of this teleological drive towards discussion-centred art activity/pedagogy. Crippa's thesis is referred to in more detail earlier on in this thesis (See Chapter 3), but here I would like to extend the argument to look at how discursivity is approached in contemporary art education and whether the Art Theory Programme has anything to offer with regards to discursivity's place in the art school. What rests at the heart of this is the question as to whether there was any useful pedagogical innovation or reform occurring on the Art Theory Programme. Firstly, as Crippa does in her thesis (2014: 124-170), I want to look at the development of the form of the 'crit' and look at studies on how the format functions in today's art schools.

The studio 'crit' is a now standard repertoire of art and design pedagogy. It is used across the disciplines of art and design, and takes on a variety of forms; the main variation being the number of participants (two or more), but also the role of assessment and the make-up of the group (ratio of staff to tutors). It conventionally facilitates a discussion centred on the students' artwork and can last anything from tens of minutes to a full day. They can be led by the student or by the tutor(s) involved and can be more or less formal. The crit is usually more formal, however, than just a casual conversation in the studio and is usually the product of some organisation. Following Crippa (2014), I would argue that the various forms of discursivity within A&Ls teaching, in addition to being rooted in rethinking art practice, are genealogically related to the idea of the crit and its development through the studio teaching of the sixties.

The crit has since been the subject of a number of empirical studies, focussing on its effectiveness, the traditions that have developed and the learning structure that it sets up. The most prominent of the British studies, of which there are only a few, is the research project by Bernadette Blair, Susan Orr and Margo Blytheman, *Critiquing the Crit* (Blair, 2006; Blair et al., 2007). This study identified various types of crit, of which the most relevant are group crits, formative and summative crits, peer crits, online crits and desk crits (Blair et al., 2007: 7). The research looked at the advantages of the crit as a discursive space in which the students can get feedback, encouragement and learn from each other. The studies confirm many intuitively assumed notions such as the problem of

large crits, the problem of tying summative assessment to the crit, and the problems of dismissive or aggressive tutors flexing their intellectual muscle or dominating discussion. [1]

Terry Barrett, who taught an education course on the studio critique, conducted a large project, from a USA/Australian perspective, consisting of 84 art tutors and over 1000 students. The study looked at basic accounts of good and bad crit experiences from both tutors and students (Barrett, 2000). The main themes that came up were the positive attributes of a friendly honesty among participants in which the teacher did not dominate, show off or humiliate the students, but facilitated discussion. The bad critique description involved much berating, destruction or alteration of work, and personal humiliation of students (Barrett, 2000: 28-31). This central aspect of the antagonism and dominance of the tutor and the increasing timidity or rebelliousness with which the student responds reflects some of the encounters and descriptions from the 1960s in *Art Students Observed* (M&W, 1973: 29-41, 82-88). Both these studies identify many of these aspects of the crit that reproduce bad power dynamics and habits within art school culture.[2]

In the first instance (Blair et al, 2006) the crit was seen as a species of assessment of the art product offered up by the student, and at best, a kind of formative assessment to help the student make their work better for the summative assessment. This whole thread of study is largely under the aegis of measuring assessment and feedback (Oak, 2000; Blair, 2006; Pollock et al. 2015). In the second (Barrett, 1988; 2000) it is tied to an idea of art criticism and a training of the art student in the interpretation of visual art objects. He develops his study, which takes on board power dynamics between student and tutor, in order to develop a very atomistic, 1-1 model of mentoring art students which eliminates

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[1] The project was brought about by the increasing obsession with assessment in art and design education, and the problems of feedback in an increasingly massified and measured education system; it was essentially to see if the crit was instrumentally effective. The study report comes with role-play exercises, teaching games, a glossary of artistic terms to use in crits and exercises towards managing the crit as a stable teaching tool (Blair et al., 2007: 10-22). While this is laudable in some respects, as there is much that is dangerous and insidious within the dynamics the crit can set up, in thinking so much about assessment and managing the interactions of students and tutors the study completely misses the point. The study contrasts with the ideas discussed later in Elkins' discussion on destabilising the crit (Elkins, 2001: 110-187), its key quality as an unpredictable/open discussion as opposed to a managed assessment. The Crit, in Elkins, should be preserved as a chaotic space, where failure is important.

[2] As a non-research illustration of the experience of a painting crit, one could do worse than read Richard Roth's short dramatic sketch 'The Crit', which represents a typography of attitudes one could find in a typical art school crit and the power dynamics involved (Roth, 1999: 32-35)

many of the negative effects of the group crit format, and the antagonisms between students and between tutor and students.

Within both studies, but in Barrett's especially, there is a sense that the enculturation of the students into the language of art is important, but very little thought as to what that language is and how ideologically loaded it is. I think A&L, when seen as pedagogical innovators of this form, 'The Studio Crit', offered up several challenges that are valuable in that they come up with different ideas than these empirical studies. Firstly, when talking of the Art Theory Programme, making the object or the art work peripheral rather than central to discussion was a significant move away from the 'show and tell' of individual object production into the idea of shared problems. The empirical research discussed above limits crits to object-centred discussions, tied to assessment and dealing largely with the subjective or wilful problems of the student. A&L developed studio discussion both around project briefs, as in Technos (see briefs in Appendix D1) and as the discussion of objective, substantive problems. Both Atkinson and Baldwin also devised problems and thought puzzles[3] in addition to the discussion of philosophical topics and these in many ways were like proto-research topics:

> *that seemed strangely appropriate. There were moments where one had prepared … a well-rehearsed spiel to try out on the students … there were things of interest, to use a perhaps egregious modern expression: there were research interests, that one had as an artist …that one felt one could pass on … share with, discuss with the students that one was sat in front of.* (MB/MR: 49)

The seminar and the crit are perhaps blended into one here, but the critical thing about A&L's 'pedagogy', if you like, is that it was firmly planted in the studio and was work; it was not on the periphery and it was taken seriously. This countered the 20% written work sensibility of the institution; one could engage with research interests or artistic/social/philosophical problems in an art studio, as work, and there is no need to portion-off different types of activity. This takes the crit away from personal criticism, i.e. identifying subjectively with the art product, in thinking that introspection and the

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[3] The Atkinson/Baldwin works of the late sixties are examples of such problems and their exegeses (see also Bainbridge, 1970).

autonomy of the work were necessary, and engenders a curiosity toward other things. The studio crit format under A&L also became a production centre; when only several of the students remained they started to produce, edit and rewrite texts. Production therefore became a collaborative affair within the studio sessions, often with the tutors and students collaborating on texts. As Michael Baldwin remembers, the studio discussions were the focal centre of a whole range of activities happening both within and without the college:

> *I would often drive the car for what was for the time break neck speed and try and cudgel my mind to a topic for today's seminar. .. there was art being produced and there was various articles being produced so one could so to speak share ones reflections as an artist or as a theorist or whatever, the best one could and often one felt that one was participating in thinking and the students were contributing quite meaningfully and quite decisively at a time.* (MB/MR: 192)

This could perhaps be reframed as functioning something like an atelier model, in which there were 'masters' characterising their students' contribution to their art production as education. There was certainly an element of the older directing the younger members towards certain areas, and those who were not students had more previous work from which to develop. The speculative nature of all of the Art Theory Programme however, meant that the studio production was something more like a joint discovery.[4] By replacing the 'tangible visual' centre of the Crit, the students artwork, there were problems that had to be dealt with and addressed by all involved, more or less on an equal footing of speculation and discovery.

One confusion that comes with this move, and is related to the complex value of the extended group discussion, is the frequent occurrence of accusations of 'hanging around' and doing very little teaching or worse (Chilton, 2016; MB/MR: 77, RvB, 205-219) which relates to Charles Harrison's idea of 'education by osmosis' (Harrison, 1972: 223). The sociality of the art school means it is particularly amenable to insidious relations of domination of intellectual and social space.

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[4] See (MB/MR: 189-206) in which there is a discussion about the issues of this approach.

Of the various entrenched habits of art-teaching, and one particularly pertinent to studio interaction, the chauvinistic culture was not one that A&L were able to successfully counter. This was not due to any explicit chauvinism on their part, they were largely horrified by it (MB/MR: 66; PP: 6), but precisely because it was entrenched in the culture,[5] and that they were disproportionately male. Moreover, the reliance on such an aggressive characteristic for a successful student, perhaps unwittingly, reproduced the machoism that the Modernist art school inherited. This is brought up by both Crippa (2014: 265; 2016: 115) and Tickner (2008, see note below) as a particular problem of the male dominated Art Theory Programme. Indeed, of the women involved in the Art Theory Course, only Lynne Lemaster continued to work with A&L. The other female students who may have shown interest at the beginning did not pursue it. The intentions of the course were, however, to counter these relationships of domination within the 'hairy chested' modernist art school (Harrison, 1972: 224). As other commentators have

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[5] Tickner (2008) and Wood (2008: 178) represent this via the sexism evident in Reg Butler's *Five Lectures To Art Students* (Butler, 1962) and they are indeed emblematic of the patrician Modernist mind-set; patronising, biologically deterministic and patriarchal.

> *'I am quite sure the vitality of a great many female students derives from frustrated maternity, and most of these, on finding the opportunity to settle down and produce children, will no longer experience a degree of passionate discontent sufficient to drive them constantly towards the labours of creation in other ways'* (Butler, 1962:11).

Paul Wood's commentary on this quote foregrounds the ease with which this pronouncement is issued. This was symptomatic of the time (1961) and by the late 1960s it was not quite so naturalistic a standpoint. In terms of the shifting discourse of the period on which this thesis focuses on, one may compare it with *Art, Art School, Culture* (Pollock, 1986) in which the issue has certainly not left the art school; both the wrestle with Modernism and the corollary of masculine privilege: 'Art Schools are a particularly contradictory site... What makes the current crisis so acute and significant is that art schools have become particular terrain of feminist struggle and masculinist resistance at a period of intense social conflict.' (50-51) Griselda Pollock gives a pithy and direct statement, furnished with both historical and anecdotal evidence, of the affront Feminist practice delivers to the 'Fathers and Sons of Culture', linked absolutely to the myths of Modernism (Pollock, 1986: 60).

Howard Singerman (1999: 41-66) gives a more historical look at the complexities of masculine identity, sexuality and the role of women in art schools in the USA, looking at the post-War GI influx on the gender make-up of art schools. Indeed the combination of masculinity, abstract expressionism and professionalism was a particularly potent one both sides of the Atlantic in the 1950s and 1960s. The 'masculinization' of the artistic subject is addressed as is the position, historically of women in the art school, with particular attention to the post-war period (1999: 128-129).

Elizabeth Chapman (2007) comments on the gender stereotypes and dynamics in M&W (1973), mentioning that it is not taken very far in the study. The dynamics of gender relations are said to 'be traced in the student work. Whereas Dave's 'original' constructions found favour in a world of patriarchal aesthetics, Clive's sexist work depicts some of what that world took for granted. The women students had to learn to take on those values in their work or be branded as... failed artists.' (Chapman, 2007: 178).

also pointed out (Tickner, 2008; Chaplin, 2007; Salaman, 2008) however, in the hands of feminist artists, also emerging within educational programmes in the early seventies, the position of women in an art school was used to better effect in countering the insidious influence of the male Modernist self-image.

James Elkins dedicates two chapters of his manual/treatise *Why Art Cannot Be Taught* (2001: 110-187) to the studio critique (which is how it is commonly known in North America). It is a different approach from the more formal empirical approach discussed above and comes from his experience of teaching in an art college and the opacity and unpredictability of how the practice and complex set of understandings gets transmitted and transformed within an art school. His suggestions for reconfiguring the critique are in many ways trying to break apart the endemic traditions targeted in part by A&L. Critiques in Elkins are seen through a number of lenses, which includes Critiques as 'Bad Translations',[6] in which the problem of making ethical and theoretical assumptions explicit is foregrounded, and their tendency to drift from topic to topic (Elkins, 2001: 123-4; 140-2) in which the idea of how language forms ideas and develops them in the course of a critique. Elkins' approach to the critique, though still always presuming both an artefact and some kind of assessment role, seems to articulate much more how the studio teaching of A&L could be seen as having value in art education in general.[7] As part of a central thesis that art is too irrational a process to be able to teach in *essence*, it highlights the value A&L studio discussions would have had in the way that the conception of the crit in the more formal studies precludes; they are valued for their length; their topical digression; their examination of intention and intension; their need to determine what 'comes up for the count' and especially in their role as joint speculative inquiry.

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[6] In this section he also draws from Nelson Goodman's *The Languages of Art* (1976). Although this particular publication was only just published (1968) before the Theory Programme, Nelson Goodman appears several times in the literature of A&L (see Goodman in Harrison & Orton (eds.), 1986: 85-92; 173-80).

[7] It also highlights the problems of antagonism within Crits. This is something brought up in relation to A&L's teaching in Crippa's thesis, via Claire Bishops exploration of *Antagonism in Relational Aesthetics* (Bishop, 2004), in which Crippa surmises that 'such different ways of interaction reflected the contradictions that truly define a democratic group, where differences are not extinguished by autocratic impositions from above' (2014:265).

In her thesis on studio practice and its relationship to the University, Jenny Waller looks at both Madge & Weinberger (1973) and Elkins (2001) as failed attempts at defining studio practice in the art school. Indeed, her thesis attempts at forming an understanding of fine art studio practice from within, rather than from a 'University Paradigm'[8], and offers another way to think through some of the complexities of learning, discussion and speculative activity within an art school and how it has (or has not) developed. The bulk of the research measures the exchange and interaction between students and teachers in the studio sessions. The study mixes some qualitative information with quantitative methods in order to give a clear picture of the dynamics of studio discussion. Part of the aim of the study is yet again to manage the studio discussion. The topics chosen in the analysis[9] emphasise the students' concerns with the course, technical elements and professional practice. The only topic that could cover concerns of conceptual or social problems goes under the vague term 'research'. There is a reciprocal relationship here between the conditions of art school production and how the topics were chosen (they were brought forth from coding the text) but it seems to preclude the idea that 'studio chatter' could be nothing to do with the instrumental goals of the student or the management of the 'studio culture' (Waller, 2014: 171-3). I think a closer investigation of the Art Theory Programme shows a precursor for an art course in which the analysis of art works is not the central concern of the studio conversations. One where crits are open to a broader range of subject matter, which could be shared problems between the students, and one where it is common not to exclusively, or even that frequently, have 'student-centred' tutorials in which the personal development of each student is dealt with.[10] There is a sense that this is essentially what happens in the de facto operations of

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[8] Her inclusion of Paradoxes, Anomalies and Paradigms, following directly on from Kuhn (1962/1996), is interesting in relation to A&L - the Art Theory Programme is briefly (and confusingly) included as a minor case study. The Paradoxes she identifies for contemporary Fine Art Education are useful framing for the problems that both A&L deal with and those that persist: the Paradox between the assumptions that art both must progress and cannot in any science-like sense; that the highest achievers are very often not those that go on to be 'great artists'; that the most successful institutions do not necessarily produce the most artistically interesting results; and that artists are both dependant upon and in opposition to the institution (Waller, 2014: 32-39).

[9] Tutor's role and responsibilities, Students' role and responsibilities, Studio culture, Studio discourse, Operational concerns, Tools and techniques, Project brief, Professional practice, Research, Intentions, Form, Documentation (Waller, 2014: 171)

[10] The concern with the relationship between things such as the Core of the Subject, the boundaries of the subject and how that shifts is a very contested one within art education; see (Corner, 2005), for instance.

many art schools, which suggests the studies above are out of kilter with common practice.

However, to conclude this section it is my contention that the Art Theory Programme reminds us that art exists as a complex mongrel activity and an outward curiosity should be encouraged within art schools through semi-structured group studio discussions. The range of discussion within a seminar or crit like scenario was greatly expanded. A piece of writing from 1972 'A Dithering Device' (AL0544), though written from the New York A&L artists Mel Ramsden and Ian Burn and not published, best explains the rational and possibilities of this change, stating that the tutor operates as a 'dithering device' in order to create a 'dialectical heuristic' within which the path of learning on the part of the students could be constantly unsettled and unstuck. Showing some influence of writers such as Ivan Illich (Illich, 1976) and some similarities with Feyerabend's anarchistic methodology (Feyerabend, 1975) it's clearly of its time. The idea of this device, as a disturber, borrowed from electronics, can be seen as the conception of the teacher within discussion in A&L writing. While their sessions were known for their long monologues, the ideas brought into these seminars, and the encouragement of problems to be teased from conflicting theories etc., should be seen in the spirit of flailing around in order to construct and discover 'opportunistic' and 'alternative standpoints' to the practice of art, theoretically and in terms of learning (AL544: 14-21). This is still an interesting approach to studio teaching and is an early example of a challenging approach to the persistent theory/practice problem within art education.

Theory and Practice; the Language of the Art School

The location of the group discussion in the studio, recast above as stemming from the Crit tradition, was a significant move on the part of A&L in light of the 80/20 division of an assumed written/practical (lecture theatre/studio) workload and an under-theorised approach to art history and complementary studies. The location of theory within art and art education, both literally and figuratively, is a debate that has persisted post-Coldstream and in post-Modern/Conceptual Art thinking. A&L's programme aimed at the encouragement of an outward-looking, intellectually brave (even reckless) and curious student within art schools (to counter the myth of the inarticulate artist) through the

drawing in and investigation of other traditions of research and thinking. Therefore, did A&L have any influence on the type of theory that could be considered to be central to tertiary art education today?

Art & Language could be considered to have some relationship to a 'Linguistic Turn' in philosophy, drawing as they do from Logical Positivism and Linguistic Philosophy. This type of approach did not permeate art colleges very much after the initial period of Conceptual Art's influence (post-c.1974). Wittgenstein and Nelson Goodman did survive because of their interest in the relationship between looking and knowledge; their aesthetic interests (Harrison & Orton (eds.), 1986). Art has since had a very close relationship to theoretical and philosophical discourses and, as I have already claimed, semiotics was much more willingly suited to art discourse along with literary theory, cultural Marxism (Althussser, Marcuse, Adorno etc.) and the philosophical exponents of Postmodernism, such as Jean Baudrillard. All of these had a central interest in the cultural artefact or text, and did not require much translation (cajoling) into artistic use. Presently, 2016, art education has, among many other things, a tailor-made philosophy in the form of Speculative Realism, Object Oriented Ontology and Accelerationism,[11] all having a direct line stemming from the art college vogue for Deleuze and Gutarri.

What relationship does the Art Theory Programme have to this tradition? In the first instance Art & Language opposed, as is described in Chapter 5, the early vogue for semiotics in art colleges and Althusserian, cultural Marxism within the discourse of the Polytechnics and the enthusiasm for psychoanalysis (Freud and Lacan in particular). They were also suspicious, though to a lesser degree, of the cultural studies emanating from Birmingham University and drawing from Western Marxist writers such as Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci and Herbert Marcuse, among others, who certain members of A&L also cited (see (A&L, 1982) for instance). The continued A&L view of the later, more poetic, post-modern tendencies of this theoretical tradition is dim, as can be discerned

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[11] See (ed. Moreno, 2013) for a series of essays on Accelerationist Aesthetics, Graham Harman is the main proponent of Object Oriented Philosophy, for a short introduction to the ideas behind this see (Harman, 2011: 171-179). Speculative Realism was launched at Goldsmith's University, and has had significant interest from, and outings to, major art galleries. For an account from the perspective of its initial proponents see (Brassier et al, 2007). The relationship between this movement and Art &Language is an interesting one. Whilst the philosophical sources are eclectic within speculative realism and its cognates, often touching on similar ideas to A&L writing, the overblown, celebratory literariness of it seems antithetical to their sober deflation of art's 'power'.

from their reviews in *Radical Philosophy* of the writings of Deleuze and Lyotard (A&L, 2004; 2012). Their approach to the use of philosophy and art theory in the art school has been that it has tended to reproduce much of the celebratory or myopic tendencies of those Modernist mystifications that they encountered in 1969.

Naomi Salaman has written about the relationship between the theory course and contemporary art theory as taught in British universities in her article *Art Theory: the Handmaiden of Neo-Liberalism?* (2015: 162-173).[12] The article acknowledges that the introduction of a theoretical element is commonplace in current art education, and as obvious as it seems, it should be stated that the Art Theory Programme does in some way stand as an originator of the foregrounding of 'theory' as opposed to 'art history' or the slightly euphemistic 'complementary studies' as an important component in art education.[13]

Nevertheless, the main gist of Salaman's article is that art theory's role in the art school has transformed from a means of resistance - presumably against the managerial, patrician and mystificatory aspects of British art education - to the cultural commodity and tag-on spiel many perceive it to be today. Much of the problem of this kind of reification, as partly discussed in Chapter 5, was considered by A&L to be with the gleeful adoption of semiotics as a catch-all way of managing the interpretation of art production.[14] Present day theory has much more to do with this management of meaning,

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[12] This follows on from her half-chapter on the Theory Course in her PhD dissertation on the space of theory in the academy and its relationship to the life room and which is discussed earlier in this thesis (Salaman, 2008).

[13] Salaman proposes a close resemblance between the Art Theory Programme with the idea of 'Critical Studies' and the authors own course Fine Art and Critical Practice at Brighton is seen as a possible descendant of the Art Theory Programme, developed as it was out of the *Alternative Practice* course at Brighton Polytechnic in 1971. This was developed under Robin Plummer in the 1970s by Roy Grayson (RP: 14) and was seen as part and parcel of the same type of course, and Plummer sees it very much in the same vein. This would not be from an A&L point of view and it is also possibly one of Charles Harrison's 'travestied forms'. Salaman herself thinks the Alternative Practice course was less 'strident' and 'political' (2015: 167); it may have been that the personalities involved were just less strident or political.

[14] Salaman takes issue with A&L's (actually Atkinson's, but the argument is the same) distaste for the dominance of 'French Theory'. Her contention is, following Judith Butler, is that the idea of 'French Theory' is not a coherent idea; it is an American construction. To dismiss the very many approaches under this title *tout court* is not only crude but, considering the many advances in Feminist Theory, that have a relation to so-called French Theory, 'misogynist' (2016: 169). I would like to contain the topic to the British reception of such theory, however, which is I think what A&L have in mind when attacking various forms of it; they are often much more sympathetic to the original French authors and do not dismiss 'French

and the professionalised idea of the art theoretician than it does with the central concerns of the Art Theory Programme. In this sense the Art Theory Programme has little significance within the history of mainstream art education in Britain and exists only as an anomaly.

When looking at one of the key sources of Salaman's essay, Rule & Levine's (2012) research into the development of what they term *International Art English* via the e-flux press releases, one can see that the attacks A&L made towards certain tendencies in the 1970s regarding the language adopted by October magazine, becomes incredibly prescient. The study echoes the observation of Michael Baldwin concerning the problem of bad translations leaking into the Anglophone proselytisers of half-digested French theory (Salaman, 2015: 171; MB/MR: 438).[15] Baldwin reflects on A&Ls attempts to resist and attack this predominance of a certain theoretical orthodoxy, for the reason that 'the initiative and the critique that we have worked really hard to produce and to discuss was very quickly falling into the hands of management anyway so the institutional critique was becoming an institutional embellishment very fast' (MB/MR: 484). Rule & Levine state that, 'The shift in criticism represented by *October* had an enormous impact on the interpretation and evaluation of art and also changed the way writing about art sounded.' (Rule & Levine, 2012). If one were to think about this history as a battle between two paradigms of discourse, then *October* won and A&L lost outright; the language of *October* has seeped uncritically into degree show statements, press releases, magazine and journal articles et cetera. That this is the case perhaps also means that the opposition A&L represented is still both relevant and exemplary.[16]

In addition to the more recent varieties of so-called 'Continental' philosophy mentioned above, university research has also developed its own strand(s) of theory within art departments, as artists within academia make an identity transition into researchers. As

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Theory' tout court (MB/MR: 488). John Roberts also takes issue with their attack on French theory as a 'return of the repressed' (Roberts, 2016: 133)

[15] There is also a similar effect observed from German theory (e.g. Frankfurt School) in Rule & Levine's study.

[16] A (slightly – 20 years old) more recent activity, not dissimilar from A&L's is cited in Rule & Levine (2012), which is the BANK Faxback and their satirical writing. BANK have worked with A&L (BANK, A&L, 1998) and have a genealogical relationship to their practice.

Nigel Llewelyn notes with regards to recent shifts in university art education, 'academic art practitioners are becoming ever more adept at presenting themselves as researchers' (Llewellyn, 2015: 17) and this requirement to tap new funding streams and present ones practice as such, has resulted in a shift in the relations between theory and practice within the institution. Much of this new research is concerned with teasing out ever more subtle definition of the production of knowledge, redefining epistemological categories and, self-reflexively, the theory/practice balance within art education and art research. [17] The Practice-led or Practice-Based PhD in Art and Design represents a key phenomenon when thinking about these relations. [18]

Malcom Quinn and Fiona Candlin, argue that the Coldstream Reforms, with their university-equivalence aspirations, represent the start of a development toward both PhDs in art and the academic acceptance of art practice as a form of research (Candlin, 2001; Quinn, 2007). Writing at points earlier in the development of practice based research both authors recognise a particular opportunity with regards to the practice/theory debate. Quinn sees practice-led research as challenging the entrenched distinction that Coldstream set up between 'the technicians and the analysts of desire' and 'treating theory and practice as a single set of knowledge relations and a single stream of identifications' (Quinn, 2007: 2). Holding up several examples from outside the art school, Quinn proposes a scenario in which, in troubling both theory and practice, it somehow foregrounds the processes of recognition and identification within certain commitments. Candlin holds out an equally hopeful assessment of the possibilities for the practice-based PhD, as something that 'becomes an active agent in changing the literal and conceptual construction of academic work… as the heir of these feminist, conceptual and poststructuralist debates on theory and practice, the practice-based PhD starts to

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[17] There are many different approaches within art research and it would be an impossible task to exhaustively catalogue them in this thesis. However, to get some indication of the plurality of the different orthodoxies there are several readers on the subject, for instance (Ed. Smith & Dean, 2009; ed. Biggs & Karlsson, 2011) and the Journal of Artistic Research, which has a remit to embrace the eclectic approaches, foci and subjects of art research (see the editorial, JAR, 2016) Both examples are international in scope. A large proportion of art research has explored areas that one could imagine are wholly antithetical to A&Ls approach however, resulting in a more sophisticated, philosophically corroborated justification of sensuousness in the form of haptic, somatic, tacit, experiential or affective knowledge. These obviously in turn come from older traditions in phenomenology, pragmatism and psychology, among other things.

[18] Again, as an aside, A&L's (Ramsden & Baldwin's) position on practice-based research seems to be that it is largely built on the 'nonsense' of much art school cultural studies of the past 40 years (A&L, 2012: 34).

refigure the boundaries of what knowledge is considered to be in the university… from within the institution and not from an adversarial, apparently non co-opted position' (Candlin 2001: 8).

These potentially progressive aspects of the practice based PhD are however compromised in both articles by the unconducive conditions within the 'specialisation of academic production within the marketplace of ideas' (Quinn, 2006: 9). Fiona Candlin admits that the central impetus of practice-based research is essentially financial; produced under the Conservative marketization of higher education, continued by Labour into the twenty-first century, and concerned more with academic status within the institution than with any critical function or genuine need (Candlin, 2001: 11).[19] If the practice- led PhD is one of the outcomes of the trajectory on which the Coldstream Report set art education, then what value does the position of A&L and its response to art education have in relation to this new 'research' culture, bearing in mind that 'research-like practice' was one way of describing their early operations?

One of Art & Language's main virtues regarding the function of theory within art education is that it produces a critical, or sceptical, stance on the fundamental values of the institution and the dominant social mores that it represents. As A&L claim in the essay *Pedagogical Sketchbook,* they wanted to 'produce well-educated and imaginative sceptics rather than well trained and cynical positivists' (A&L, 1975: 25). Fiona Candlin acknowledges the appropriateness of Art & Language's critique when considering the trajectory of the events documented in her thesis, and concludes that their project sits in a position of resistance at significant points. The non-simplistic approach to theory and practice and the joint speculative operation would have marked out the art school as developing a different kind of activity which, given more space, would, as even the NCDAD admitted, attract a specific kind of student and pushed the art college into developing this problematic relationship between making, talking, writing and learning; a problematic that no other type of course was addressing.

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[19] Candlin recognises the prescience of A&L, especially their critique of the Coldstream Reforms and Polytechnicisation in their article *Art-Teaching* (A&L, 1971)

The original Art Theory Programme looked at the generation of knowledge as a joint project long before the research agenda became a priority within art schools. The developing body of theoretical topics that A&L studied, from philosophy of science problems and cybernetics through to critical thinking and political history, meant that common problems could be discussed, and projects could develop around these problems in small groups. This in turn offers an interesting alternative function of the art college to producing novel 'objects of attention'.[20] Much research within the modern university makes grandiose appeals to the importance of artistic contributions to knowledge. The 'theory' of the Art Theory Programme had none of the institutional trappings of a research culture and its purpose was not to validate art but to be critical, negative and deflationary at many points. In addition to this, while this has interesting educational ramifications in and of itself, the course offered up a confidence and a purposefulness that challenged the ad hoc back-footedness of art education at the time, beset as it seemed to be by many other reorganizational agendas from other parts of tertiary education and government agendas. How the political, organisational and antagonistic aspects of A&Ls educational activities challenge certain agendas is what the last section of this chapter will address.

Academicisation, Entrepreneurialism and Administration

A common theme of accounts from fine art teachers within universities, is the increase of management and foregrounding of administrative concerns in academic life. The move into mainstream academia started with the Coldstream reforms, continued with Polytechnic absorption, mergers into the CNAA, and finally the shift to University accreditation in 1992. These seismic changes coincided with a move from a liberal boom in education in the sixties, towards educational cuts in the seventies, followed by rationalisations and then massification in the 1990s (Strand, 1987; CNAA, 1993). Several studies have looked at the detrimental effects of increased metrics and formalised assessment, couched as 'audit culture', on the quality of art school education.

Jon Thompson's account of his return to art education after teaching in the Netherlands for two decades is typical. He found...

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[20] This is a phrase used by Judith Mottram when looking at the development of the function of the art school in relation to research (Mottram, 2009: 232).

…the commercial, market-led model of higher education, as dreamed up by the second
Thatcher government, had become even more entrenched under New Labour. Students
were now quite openly referred to by the new administrative class as 'clients' and
'consumers' and teachers were 'service providers' working in 'educational services'
(Thompson, 2005: 215)

While this is an anecdotal account of one college of art, it is entirely coherent with respect to writing about the development of Higher Education in general after the 1980s.[21] Thompson's position is very typical of many art teachers, he holds that reframing art practice as research is a misnomer and 'devalues' art to 'mere scholarship' and, unlike Quinn and Candlin, does not see much continuity between the Coldstream reforms and the position of art within the modern university; Coldstream was a 'libertarian socialist' with a 'strong anarchist streak'(2005:219) who aimed to put art education in the hands of artists first and foremost and the modern university is the invention of philistine technocrats (2005: 222). While the characterisation of *Sir* William Coldstream was ramped up, the demonization of the idea of research *per se* as a technocratic tool of the new administrative class, is an incorrect assessment.

Thompson does not believe in 'problems' in art; 'Making works of art is not a quasiscientific process of problem-solving. As Duchamp remarked, 'in art there is no solution because there is no problem'.' (2005: 223) A&L would argue that there are objective problems in art but they are not necessarily of a quasiscientific order, and that they are possibly not the simple problems of 'problem-solving' suggested by Thompson; that it is more like a problem-posing process. Despite their adoption of some of the problems of the philosophy of science, A&L were never scientistic in their approach; their method owed more to philosophy, political history and sociology and never held up these academic sources as an ideal of scholarship to the extent that they were used and abused irreverently, hence their (later) use of the ideas of people like Paul Feyerabend.

Thompson's issue with research is perhaps to do with the purpose of the research. Howard Singerman, in his account of Fine Arts in the American university, looks at the history of co-opting the language of research within the arts, which by his account is a longer

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[21] And indeed the original publication of the talk quoted above was situated within a journal-wide discussion on these issues; see *Critical Quarterly, 47, Issue 1 and 2*, especially (Apple, 2005).

history within the USA than in Britain due to fine art's more established link to the liberal arts university. He states that 'the administrative forms of the sciences have left their mark on the university …studio artists imagine what they do now as productive research when they fill out research reports.' (Singerman, 1999: 209). This is another common elision; an almost Adornian sense of anything relating to a scientific world view with reductionism and administration. With the research epithet, it seems to come with administrative hoops and perfunctory form-filling. It is no coincidence that the wealth of readers and collections on research in the arts followed the art colleges' inclusion into the university reward scheme,[22] up until that point polytechnics were not research-heavy institutions and not rewarded on such basis, and so art college production was not framed by or interested in research. Fiona Candlin's research on the relations of theory and practice elaborates on this:

The very possibility of conducting research using practical art is, in part, a product of conservative educational policy and market-oriented educational reform… academic management forms a leading role in constituting what art is understood to be in educational terms. (Candlin, 2001: 308)

The distaste that comes with the perceived coeval rise of a market-led and measured bureaucracy and research (requiring often spurious rationales), has perpetuated the retreat of many art teachers into defending art as a transcendental or technical activity free from the determinants of the institution and concerned only with itself.[23] The

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[22] Research in Art & Design was half-heartedly entertained throughout much of its post-war history, including within the 1974 CNAA reports (CNAA, 1993: 23). Charles Harrison did not have much hope for art and design research, stating in 1972 that: 'There is a danger that the polytechnics will be practically and ideologically unequipped to sustain a concept of art education which includes research as a vital function, and will tend instead… to enforce a hairy-chested teleology: 'practical' teaching for 'practical' results (Harrison, 1972: 224). In 1983 the prospect of a fine art research culture was seen unlikely due to the 'feeble academic base' of the subject in Britain. Even so the CNAA were hopeful about tackling the problems of research in this period but with only an embryonic sense of the epistemological hall of mirrors that this would entail, citing the 'difficulty of "measuring the research quotient in creativity"' (Cornock et al, 1983). There was an institutional impetus to bolster research prior to the Research Excellence Framework (2007), but art and design seemed to benefit greatly from the restructuring that went on with the formation of that framework and this point is when the practice-as-research boom really seems to take hold.

[23] This is, I think, the underlying position of Jon Thompson's complaint declaring as he does that 'Creative work in the visual arts starts with material and is consecrated in a pre-linguistic moment. Its processes begin before the word and before the image… As process, it requires no explanation or justification outside of the topology of the network of thoughts and actions that are embodied through the act of making.' (Thompson, 2005: 224-5). As Rushton & Wood put it 'the water of bureaucracy glides off the back of the

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founding members of A&L were all very careful not to overvalue art, and not to argue from the 'special case for art' point of view, which was predominant within commentators such as Patrick Heron against the Polytechnics; representative as it was of the privileged attitude of British modernism. A&L offer a model of research which was not involved in a myopic 'problem solving'; it engaged with both the broader problems of art but also the immediate issues of the art institution. Most importantly it was not shy of grappling critically with the perceived bureaucracy on its own terms; it was politically and institutionally aware and engaged.[24] In so doing, they cut through the dichotomy of philistine bureaucrats on one side, and artists who just want to get on with their painting, sculpture etc. on the other, by denouncing both. This is a position which is still valid.

In a comprehensive article stemming from wider research, Kate Oakley traces the link between a surviving idea of the Romantic myths of the importance of the artist, the individualism promoted by art education and the graduates' willingness to undergo precarious labour. This links the inward-looking liberalism of the art school doctrine, which it notes as surviving in many institutions, to complicity with the neoliberal agenda,[25] and what has more recently been termed the 'gig economy' (coincidentally using a performing arts word). Indeed, the fine art graduate, especially in the atomised

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duck of art which continues to bob along with relative unconcern. Very cosy, but, most of arts complicity is ideological.' (R&W, 1979: 57)

[24] In this sense it was cognisant and not unrelated to the practices of institutional critique.

[25] Primarily a Political Economic ideology, Neoliberalism is widely and variously used within many spheres of life, in journalism and academia, and mostly as a pejorative. Therefore, some statement of how it fits into the studies I am discussing, and into the narrative of this thesis is required. Neoliberal is meant here simply as an encouragement of markets in all areas of society, regardless of the function or value of those areas. Education is an area that it is held by these studies to be particularly inappropriate to be left to market forces. It also holds that markets are a neutral force, whereas critics would say that there are many aspects of coercion and sinister interest within a neoliberal economic condition. A major and problematic companion to this belief is the understanding of individuals as self-interested and instrumentally rational. As an ideology Neoliberalism denigrates collective action, bargaining and altruistic acts in favour of choice, freedom and informed decision making. As one of its fiercest critics David Harvey states, it negatively effects 'divisions of labour, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life and thought, reproductive activities, attachments to the land and habits of the heart.' In which the state's role is merely to 'secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets' (Harvey, 2005: 2-3). In this way it could be considered the absolute apogee of the subject described in the *Theory of Possessive Individualism: From Hobbes to Locke* (MacPherson, 1964). See (Apple, 2005) for a pro-Neoliberal argument in relation to Education and (Harvey, 2007) for history of the idea.

individualist model so heavily critiqued and ridiculed by A&L (& co.) makes the ideal manipulable neo-liberal subject.[26]

As Angela McRobbie argues in her recent book, *Be Creative (2016)*, the once-burgeoning-now-rampant culture industries rely on an atomised work-force and seek to fragment both social organisations and self-organisation:

> *…people are increasingly disembedded from ties of kinship, community and social class… what individualization means sociologically is that people increasingly have to become their own micro-structures, they have to do the work of the structures by themselves which in turn requires intensive practices of self-monitoring or, 'reflexivity'… where individuals are burdened by what were once social responsibilities* (McRobbie, 2016:31)

Indeed the cultural industries and the art and design education sector have been at the forefront of the unpaid intern culture and could be considered at the avant-garde of the most recent forms of unpaid and precarious labour. One of the corollaries, or even central effects, of the Art Theory Programme was to instantiate more solid social formations through group work, centred on shared artistic and conceptual concerns. Under the SCHOOL project, the students were all encouraged to work in groups and self-activity, union and committee involvement was all central to the project and they produced many graduated students who were active in the union and social justice movements prevalent at the time. This is in contrast to the entrepreneurial emphasis of much art education orthodoxy today in which 'creative entrepreneurship' and 'self-learning' are buzz terms for the ideal graduate of a modern university.[27] Neil Mulholland sees these tendencies as directly indexed to a neoliberal world-view:

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[26] As Atkinson and Baldwin presciently wrote, alongside MacPherson (1964*)*:

'the liberal concept of 'freedom' follows 'necessarily' from the postulate that society consists of property market relations. A point here is that broadly 'liberal' freedom …reflects and follows the transaction which forms the basis of market relations. The art student product is just an extreme example of this reflection. If the perpetuation of this freedom is dependant on the market staying alive, then the liberal contrivance cannot permit 'the individual' alienation of his person; he may alienate his capacities… The art school 'version' of romanticism can stay comfortably treating 'liberalism' as 'non-paradoxical' (Atkinson & Baldwin, 197: 281)

[27] Several references to the centrality of entrepreneurialism are made in the Art & Design Benchmarking statements of 2008 (QAA, 2008), in fact earlier references to 'different forms of entrepreneurial activity', were taken out due to their 'now widely accepted' orthodoxy. To take a specific example of Coventry

Neoliberalism exasperates the idea that art education can generate the precise conditions required to release 'creative potential'. This has led to a fixation with self-reflexivity. Personal development, self-awareness, auto-critique, self-confidence... are all manifestations of neoliberal agency. They imagine the artist as an actor who seeks primarily to know (and manage) thy self. This is a form of professional solipsism, discouraging artists from conducting research on the world around them, or on any fields that lie beyond what they already know. Instead, art students develop a private index of values, endlessly looping back, mobius-like, to a self-citing logic. So, the self-aggrandisement and narcissism of the alma mater is forever carried forth by its alumni (Mullholland, 2013)[28]

Mulholland specifically recasts those values that were the domain of the typical art student in the 1960s and 70s. These are the same values encouraged in order for the artist to develop their own unique product, or research interest, which they can then contribute to the market. Several examples of this tendency within art education serve to reinforce this idea of other forces seeping into art school production unheralded and problematically. Ute Meta Bauer (Bauer, 2009: 219-226) describes the immediate co-option of theoretical discourse and practical experimentation to market applicability from a U.S. perspective.[29] Pascal Geilen, with reference to art education in the Netherlands, talks about the detrimental effect of marketization on the spaces of discussion, group experimentation and reflection (Geilen, 2013: 68-69). These marginal spaces were the

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University, my institution and the equivalent institution to the Lanchester Polytechnic of the seventies, the Art & Design Teaching and Learning Strategy, on which the 'core principles' of teaching and learning are based, prioritises both the entrepreneurial and the mystical in equal measure. References are made to the 'personal power of creativity', the 'celebration of personal identity', 'Self-efficacy, ability to stand on own feet (sic); self-starting; enterprising approach to personal, social and industrial challenges'. The links to industry are the main subject for any group activity under the heading 'Stakeholder-connection and self-efficacy' (Evans, 2015: 1-2). Obviously communication and peer-to-peer learning are mentioned but it is often situated within an instrumental 'networking, self-presentation and communication' (3).

[28] The article this is taken from, SHIFT HAPPENS, described the Shift/Work project in which several radical courses were examined, including the Art Theory Programme, as models to rethink the Professional Practice aspect of the MFA course at Edinburgh, among other things, and offer alternatives to the business as usual of art school education.

[29]   *It seems, on the one hand, that art students are allowed to do whatever they have in mind. Yet what they have in mind is increasingly shaped, if not dictated, by the allure of success in the market, which is to say that the wild growth of experiment is more and more subject to the biotope of uniformity that the market enforces.*
      Bauer, *Under Pressure* (in ed. Madoff, 2009: 222).

spaces in which Art & Language did much of their work (Atkinson, 2011; 2016, pers. comm.) and much of the building of the course as a project relied on the flexibility of time and space.

The continuing validity of the attitude of the A&L interventions catalogued in this thesis, rests on its ability to offer an outward looking alternative that seeks to engage and form meaningful relationships within educational and social contexts that resist these prevalent models within HE from inside.[30] A&L therefore, in trying out the model of the Art Theory Programme and SCHOOL, in influencing students to work together and engage with their immediate political conditions, started to rethink the art school as a space for wide ranging, non-instrumentalised research with a beady eye on the more pernicious aspects of higher education. This enabled many students to exit art, think about working in some other way, and engage in their political surroundings. It seems art teaching in the neoliberal environment requires that alternative standpoint from which to teach, that doesn't presuppose the individual career artist.

The problem with all of these projects was that they were unpopular, demanding and adversarial (though not all three all at the same time). They produced sceptical and thoughtful students, in no small part because the students involved were largely self-selecting. But they left many students behind who did not benefit from the intellectual training offered to them, and many of the people involved in art schools met their mode of address and terminology with incomprehension. The references to the course in literature, as previously stated, are either dismissive or mythologised and this thesis has tried to represent the events in as complex and thorough a way possible, maintaining all contradictions.

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[30] Again Mulholland sees the importance of the programmes operating within the institution:
'To opt out of the art school system entirely in response to its neoliberalisation is to aid the case for its privatisation and further the demise of art education. People concerned with learning should collaborate rather than compete.' (Mullholland, 2013: end)

SUMMARY

In summary the contribution of A&L's pedagogy could be seen as not simply forcing students to do philosophy in place of doing paintings. It consisted in the introduction of a wide range of topics that were considered useful as tools to understand art *production* as well as reception, that are not tied into connoisseurship, visual literacy or any other self-justifying or mystified domain of Modernist art discourse. Their approach to joint inquiry addressed the contingencies of social communication; a working practice that could be read rather than just looked at, paying close attention to intention and the *intensional* aspects of their work; and a developing and far-reaching sense of methodological anarchy. Their conception, as a group of many positions, of a research-like practice was anti-market ***and*** anti-academic; ignoring or challenging the then extant and entrenched disciplinary boundaries and sense of administrative propriety, and speculating on reconfiguring the means of distribution and reception of art works.

This is not to invoke too many of the avant-garde credentials that are common currency when describing this type of activity. The group and the students did much to promote the course as more successful, more systematic and more widely subscribed to at the time, and in many ways the course was compromised in practice. The later interventions described in this thesis were beset with as much incoherence and inactivity as the system they were intended to challenge. However, it is possible to situate the Art Theory Course, from the viewpoint of the history of education, as offering an art education that has a realist understanding of the breadth needed without resorting to an empty laissez-faire model and without promulgating an atomised and individualistic experience, both of which are still far too common in an increasingly 'entrepreneurial' environment. It is also possible to set the encouragement of self-activity, of (local) political engagement and of the attempt to grasp the conditions under which you are working as an art student, as a valid alternative to an overly specialised and individualistic education trapped in a technical training or innate genius mentality of education.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This thesis has contributed new knowledge to the history of the 'Art Theory Course' mapping out the contents, teaching and structure of the programme and providing a detailed and granular account. It has added nuance and detail to the social and institutional background of the programme's instantiation, and in rooting Art &Language as a practice in art education, has created new knowledge regarding the development of their research-like practice in the years 1968-c1974. Previous accounts, of which (Harrison, 2001; Walker, 2002; Salaman, 2008; 2015 Crippa, 2014; 2016; Atkinson, 1992) all take a partial account of the role of A&L in art education, either tied to their involvement, set briefly within a larger history or yoked to a wider argument, often relegating it to a footnote. The research here examines the Art Theory Programme very much in terms of its own aims and in terms of A&L's wider project, offering a more detailed picture. In rooting A&L practice in art education it also offers a fresh perspective on the early practice of A&L in the UK.

It also offers a reassessment of the Art Theory Programme as part of a constellation of activities and examines many of the more marginalised or less well documented practices associated with A&L in Newport and Hull from 1969-72, which form a wider sphere of influence upon tutors and students. It has also continued that account, particularly the practice of art education critique from Newport, into the student groups of the mid-1970s. The account of later student antagonism for the first time contributes to the history of 1970s radicalism and protest within the British art college. It explores the role and value of criticality and genuine, or 'participatory', antagonism within fine art education. This offers a detailed background to the publication The Politics of Art Education (1979), which is a significant critique of art education from the end of a period of dramatic change. This lineage has not been researched or described in any detail prior to this study.

This account offers a corrective to the often London-centric history of art education in Britain and emphasises the contribution of individuals within regional art colleges.

In situating Art & Language as developing initially within an educational context this contributes to the broader understanding of early Conceptual Art and its various origins, of which one significant one was the British art school. This in turn articulates the

problems when very challenging developments in art practice migrated to the educational context. This has particular import when considering 'academic' art production in the new research culture.

The research has used methods of episodic interview, oral history, constant comparison of transcripts, archival documents and published texts to weave a grounded historical narrative that creates a grounded history and complex narrative. The study contributes knowledge of the history of Coventry College of Art within the growing interest in institutional histories (Tickner, 2008; Charnley, 2015) and the history of art education. It also contributes to the interest in the history of radical courses and experimental pedagogy, so often lost with the practitioners that conduct them (Llewellyn, 2015). The appendix is held up as a resource to consult regarding the testimonies of individuals involved in the art colleges it examines and the wider issues that are touched upon, hoping that its value as a resource exceeds that of the contents of the thesis. The thesis also explores the value of criticality and agitation within the art school and relates the significance of the Art Theory Programme to contemporary concerns in art education.

The thesis also contributes to wider histories of British art education, situated as it is within the tumultuous period after the Coldstream reforms. The articulation of problems endemic in art education by Art & Languages interventions, and this examination of this tension adds to the variety of positions taken by radical art programmes in post-war art education.

AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

I have already outlined part of the further research that this thesis opens up, with regard to later courses at Leeds University, the Open University and Wolverhampton Polytechnic, at the end of the historical part of this thesis (Chapter 5). I also outlined in the introduction the need for research on issues of gender within Fine Art education of this period and within Conceptual Art and Art & Language, which this thesis highlights by its notable absence and was too large an issue to offer merely as a subsection of this thesis.

Research on radical courses, radical pedagogies and the inclusion of various philosophical traditions within the art school should be extended into the 1980s, when the art school saw the real explosion of cultural studies and 'theory' as discussed in this last chapter. This would help understand the further development of the intellectual art theorist/ historian as developed in the art school in this period (Roberts, 1994: 2). As mentioned in the introduction, much more work can be done on researching the role of gender within art education of this period and of the art world in general.

In addition to this I would suggest that much can be built on with regards to the closer investigation of the relationship between the variety of philosophical texts studied and the practice of Art & Language, in particular in order to do further research on the indexing project as a learning project. The groundwork done in this thesis could also add to study, using close reading, of Art-Language texts in relation to these early courses and problems.

These further studies could also be seen in relationship to the pedagogical turn and an examination of contemporary ideas of education in the art gallery and A&L model of learning and their repudiation of traditional ideas of what an art student should know. It is hoped however that this thesis does indeed act as a catalyst for the further study of the effects of the Coldstream reforms and the development of art education in general.

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