VISUAL ARTS PRACTICE AS A BASIS FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL POETIC PRACTICE

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Alison Gibb, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to explore, critically and through practice, how visual arts methods have influenced contemporary experimental poetic practice and have lead to the emergence of the 'poet-artist' practioner. Through this thesis I aim to articulate my own creative practice and to position my practice within contemporary poetic practice.

The creative component explores this question through a 59-page sequence of text and images. The critical component consists of four chapters exploring different aspects of visual arts practice in relation to contemporary poetry. These four chapters constitute a poetics for my own creative practice.

Chapter one starts with the historical relationship between experimental poets and visual arts practice within the modernist tradition. It begins with Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein at the moment of Picasso's development of collage. The chapter offers a reading of Stein's *Tender Buttons* through a reading practice developed in relation to Picasso's collages.

In Chapter two I will focus on the use of language in the visual artworks of Marcel Duchamp and in the conceptual, experimental writing methods of Gertrude Stein. This chapter will explore how Duchamp and Stein treated language and poetry as conceptual frameworks and as materials to develop their innovative art and writing practices.

These two chapters provide the context for a reading of Allen Fisher's 'Proposals' and for considering the multi-generic projects of Redell Olsen in Chapter three. Both practioners are examples of poetic-practioners who combine visual art practices with poetry writing to produce experimental poetics works.

In Chapter four, I will draw conclusions about my critical research and my practical attempts to develop a multi-generic poetry project. Outcomes of this research will form the basis of a sequence poem that will combine text and image and a CD of video recordings.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis takes, as its starting point, the influence of Cubism on the poetry of Gertrude Stein. In particular, my interest is in how the avant-guerre poets and artists in Paris incorporated verbal and visual strategies of creative practice into their respective works to break with the traditional methods of making visual art and poetry. Since Guillaume Apollinaire, artists and poets have continued to extend and develop textual and verbal practices that have lead to the interdisciplinary poetry practice of today.[1] In addition, I will explore the critical role that experimentation plays within poetic practice, where poets are producing creative outcomes across a variety of multi-generic practices.

As a poet who trained as a visual artist, my practice includes video, recorded and live performance, poetry texts, book-arts, page-based experiments, instruction-scores and sequence poems. Working in the inter-disciplinary space of poetic practice allows me the freedom to produce different iterations of a project and outcomes, to think through concepts and to realize my ideas. This freedom to work across the visual arts and poetry is central to my creative practice and to my mode of thinking about and of making poetic works that co-exist as discrete artworks. For example, the process of writing a poetry text

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[1] Guillaume Apollinaire was part of the pre-WWI community of artist and writers living in Paris in the early 20th century. This included among others, Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp and Gertrude Stein.

may start out with my writing a set of instructions for a video performance; the video footage might go on to be projected as part of a live performance piece or it could stand alone as a video artwork in a gallery setting. There is no hierarchy to the works that I produce. The status of an outcome can change or be left out altogether depending on the situation or environment in which I am showing or performing the work. Within my practice, writing poetry can be my approach to documenting an event or to producing evidence of a larger poetic project. When I am making work, I don't consciously move between art and poetry or think of my practice in these terms. To me, it is all part of the same project. If I were pushed to describe myself in terms of my practice, I would have to concede that I am a "poet-artist," and that my creative practice can be described as a poetic one.

In both my critical research and creative practice, I am interested in exploring how relationships between methods of visual arts practice and writing poetry can prove productive in making poetry and how this can lead to an articulation of my own poetic practice. Throughout my critical research I have developed a series of creative poetry writing experiments to scrutinize and advance my research outcomes. These experiments form the basis for my creative manuscript *from Game (s) of POWER*, which accompanies this thesis. In this thesis I will seek to plot a historical account of the evolution of the "poet-artist" from Apollinaire to today, and to situate my practice within this mode of poetic practice.

Apollinaire: poet & art critic

According to Marjorie Perloff, Guillaume Apollinaire 'gives us—

insights no one else at the time had fully formulated'.[2] A champion of

Picasso and Cubism, Apollinaire also foresaw the potential in the

young painter, Marcel Duchamp, to challenge the traditional aesthetic

values of painting and to change the direction of visual art. In *The*

Cubist Painters, he asserted that:

> It will perhaps fall to an artist as free of aesthetic
> considerations and as concerned with energy as Marcel
> Duchamp to reconcile Art and the People.[3]

The reconciliation between "Art" and the "People" that Apollinaire

suggests needs to take place, is a reaction to the status of art in

bourgeois society at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his

essay 'Autonomy of Art in Bourgeois Society', Peter Bürger explains

this as:

> The European avant-garde movements can be defined as an
> attack on the status of art in bourgeois society. What is
> negated is not an earlier form of art (a style) but art as an
> institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men. [4]

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[2] Marjorie Perloff, 'The Cubist Painters review', in *Modernism: modernity*, 12 (2005), 521-523 <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/186780> [accessed 10 Nov 2016 s] (para. 8 of 9)

[3] Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, trans. by Peter Read (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 75.

[4] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Michael Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University, 1984), p. 49.

According to Bürger, for artists to perform the reconciliation between "Art" and the "People" as Apollinaire had predicted, they must 'attempt to organize a new life praxis from the basis of art'.[5] Bürger believes that artists need to engage with the questioning of art, its modes of production and reception as the site and as the materials of a new content for art. Where 'a new life praxis from the basis of "art" is situated in an intellectual engagement with art that is realized through the experiential processes of making and receiving art through art objects, concepts and discourse.

What is first recognized by Apollinaire in his critique of Duchamp's 1912 painting, *Nude Descending A Staircase* [6] (a shift towards an art practice rooted in the conceptual ideas of art) is further developed in the avant-garde experimental methods of Duchamp's readymade artworks, as Bürger explains:

> When Duchamp signs mass-produced objects (a urinal, a bottle drier) and sends them to art exhibits, he negates the category of individual production. The signature, whose very purpose it is to mark what is individual in the work, that it owes its existence to this particular artist, is inscribed on an arbitrarily chosen mass product, because all claims to individual creativity are to be mocked.[7]

Duchamp's strategy of choosing to include manufactured everyday objects in his artworks, undermines the pre-existing expectations of

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[5] Ibid.

[6] *Nude Descending A Staircase No.2* was painted by Marcel Duchamp in 1912 and was presented in Paris in 1912 at Salon des Indépendants. Famously rejected by the Cubists and the Futurists, the painting, a mechanical drawing in oil on canvas, depicts the movements of a figure having descended a staircase. In 1913, the painting was reproduced and published by Apollinaire in his book of essays on Cubism, *The Cubist Painters: Aesthetic Meditations*.

[7] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 52-53.

the role of the artist and the value placed on individual artistic talent. It also embeds questions of "what is art?" "What can be considered an art object?" And "what role does the concept of an "original" artwork play in an art where multiple artworks rather than one-off-artworks are produced?" According to Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp hints at his tactic to disturb the art-market through the agency of the artist's signature—the symbol of originality and authenticity worthy of monetary value—when he signs his multiple readymade objects:

> The readymades were a way of getting out of the exchangeability, the monetarization of the work of art, which was just beginning about then. In art, and only in art, the original work is sold, and it acquires a sort of aura that way. But with my readymades a replica will do just as well. [8]

Duchamp's move towards an artwork that can be reproduced or can co-exist as a multiple is in opposition to the traditional view of an original artwork. This gesture is also in keeping with Duchamp's desire to get away from artworks that promote individual artistic talent as the superior aesthetic visual reception in experiencing art. As such, Duchamp's concept of producing multiple copies of an artwork via the inclusion of manufactured objects produces the conditions for what Bürger coins an "individual reception".

According to Bürger, this form of reception occurs when a spectator experiences art through accessing an experience of artistic "individual production". In this instance, the role of the artist is made available to the spectator through the reception of the work. For

[8] Calvin Tomkins, 'Marcel Duchamp', in *The bride and the bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde* (Middlesex: Tomkins, 1976), pp. 9-68 (p. 40).

Bürger, it is in the production of the work that an experience of art is accessed rather than via an experience of the aesthetic surface of an artwork.

According to Apollinaire, the "essential unity" of art can be achieved if a painter is able to create paintings that would; 'encompass past, present and future in a single glance'.[9] Thus, the "essential unity" is made available to spectators of Cubist paintings through a visual reception of the process of collage as an experience of art. Apollinaire maintained that bringing these durational experiences together in a painting would create the conditions he referred to as the 'essential unity which alone induces ecstasy'.[10] Once this quality of 'induced ecstasy' is established in a painting—that which is induced lays dormant—it is able to reignite and to pass from the painting to the spectator on viewing the painting. According to Apollinaire, what is "divine"—the creation of the work into art—is available in the space of 'induced ecstasy' that the spectator experiences in viewing the work.

The process of bringing together multiple image fragments to create a unified image is a characteristic of the collage technique developed by the Cubist painters. Apollinaire, a great champion of Cubism and an admirer of Picasso, took up the challenge in his own poetry writing to respond to what he had identified in Cubism as 'not

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[9] Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, p.9.
[10] Ibid.

an art of imitation but an art of ideas, which aspires to creation'.[11]

This is most notable in his 1912 collection of poems *Alcools* [12] which

according to Robert Hampson and Will Montgomery 'marked

Apollinaire's movement away from the French Symbolists towards a

new modernity'.[13]Another characteristic of Cubism was the

introduction of ordinary materials as materials for art. In his 'Picasso'

essay, Apollinaire admits that he had 'no preconceptions concerning

artists' materials. '[14] And went on to asserted that as a painter of the

new school:

> You can paint with whatever you like, with pipes, postage
> stamps, postcards, playing-cards, candelabras, pieces of
> oilcloth, shirt-collars, wallpaper or newspaper.[15]

As eclectic as are the materials and representations of the collage

paintings of the Cubist painters, so too are the poetry writing methods

and materials of Apollinaire's poems. However, unlike the experience

of viewing a cubist painting, where the materials chosen are visible to

the eye, Apollinaire's materials are words and his collage methods are

poetry devices that need to be read or heard to reveal their

complexities. For example, in his poem (*Un Soir*) *One Evening,*

Apollinaire collages together poetic images to create his lines of

poetry. The poem begins:

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[11] Ibid., p. 10.

[12] *Alcools* is the first collection of poems published by Apollinaire in Paris in 1913.

[13] Robert Hampson and Will Montgomery, 'Innovations in poetry', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms,* ed. by Peter Brookner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 63-68 (p. 67).

[14] Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, p. 39.

[15] Ibid.

>   Un aigle descendit de ce ciel blanc d'archanges
>   Et vous soutenez-moi
>   Laisserez-vous trembler longtemps toutes ces lamps
>   Priez priez pour moi
>
>   La ville est métallique et c'est la seule étoile
>   Noyée dans tes yeux bleus
>   Quand les tramways roulaient jaillissasient des feux pales
>   Sur des oiseaux galeux[16]
>
>   An eagle descended from the skies white with archangels
>   Uphold me
>   Will you let all those lamps flicker for long
>   Pray pray for me
>
>   The city is metallic and the sole star
>   Drowned in your blues eyes
>   When trolley cars rumbled pale sparks flew upward
>   Over mangy birds [17]

According to Timothy Mathews, 'Apollinaire sets up two distinct structuring levels of the metaphor — the recognizable and the indefinite'[18] within his lines of poetry. For example in the opening line of the first stanza, the image of 'an eagle' descending is morphed into the "recognizable" 'skies white' with the "indefinite" image of 'white with archangels'. In the next stanza, 'the city is metallic' is indefinite while the 'sparks' from trolley cars is readily recognizable. At the same time, the trolley cars serve to provide a definite referent for 'metallic'. According to Mathews 'Apollinaire seeks to gather as many significances as may be associated with an event, or as are scheduled

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[16] Guillaume Apollinaire, *Alcools,* trans. by Anne Hyde Greet (Los Angeles: University of California Press, Berkeley, 1965), p. 166.
[17] Ibid., p. 167.
[18] Timothy Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire: Theories of poetic language* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) p. 7.

in the memory of an event'.[19] Thus, 'eagles' are joined by 'archangels' before being replaced by 'flickering lamps', 'blue eyes' and 'mangy birds'.

Throughout the poem, Apollinaire creates new verbal pairings between the first and second, and the third and fourth lines of each stanza. Set up like a refrain, the shorter second and fourth lines operate as a self-conscious reflection in time of the experience that is being accounted for in lines one and three. For example, Apollinaire responds to the first line of stanza one in the French, 'Un aigle descendit de ciel blanc d'archanges,' with the call of line two, 'Et vous soutenez-moi'. This call and response refrain builds up images and dissipates points of view throughout the poem creating new dimensions of meaning.

> See the actor stick out his tongue at the women staring
> A ghost has killed himself
> The apostle hangs from the fig tree his saliva spills slowly
> Then why not hazard our love on a dice throw [20]

In stanza four, Apollinaire draws parallels between the concepts of faith and fate, when he pairs the biblical figure of 'the apostle hangs from the fig tree' with chance in the question posed by the fourth line 'Then why not hazard our love on a dice throw'. By drawing together multiple points of view of spirituality and chance, Apollinaire creates an image of love in the face of death.

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[19] Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire,* p. 4.
[20] Apollinaire, *Alcools*, p. 167.

Apollinaire's tactic to gather together images is offset by a second structure. This, Mathews identifies as: 'a mobile space, it exists in relation to a poetic lyricism from which the text ultimately disengages itself'.[21] According to Matthews, these "mobile spaces" within Apollinaire's poems work through a repetition of words and sounds to produce 'patterns of alliteration and echoes to synthesize his stanzas and produce continuity'.[22] In the poem 'The Traveler', Apollinaire introduces and repeats words to emphasise emotions of abandonment and lost love. For example, in the third stanza of this poem, regrets and memories surface to dominate the poem:

> You watched a bank of clouds descend
> With the orphan steamer toward future fevers
> And all those regrets all the repentance
> > Do you remember [23]

This theme of remembering and forgetting recurs in stanzas four, five and six:

> I remember I remember still
>
> One evening I stopped at a dreary inn
> Near the Luxembourg
> In the depth of the room a Christ was soaring
> Some one had a ferret
> Another a hedgehog
> We played cards
> And you had forgotten me
>
> Do you remember the endless orphanage of railways stations
> We crossed cities that all day revolved
> And at night they vomited the sun
> O sailors O dark women and you my companions
> > Remember[24]

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[21] Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire,* p .9.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Apollinaire, *Alcools,* p. 75.
[24] Ibid.

The poem, located in ancient Greece, sets sail through a memory of love to arrive at the remembered time of the last stanza where 'two sailors who had never parted' and where 'orphan steamers' reappears as 'endless orphanages'. Here memories are the context of the poem, which are recalled like the tidal rhythm of the sea. This tidal rhythm of memory provides the structure for the poem that, according to Mathews, is a recurring strategy of Apollinaire's:

> He is presenting us with the materials of an abstract expression that articulates the desire for specificity, location, for punctuality. Simultaneously, in space where perceptive and identification are dissolved, the material created in the reading of these images is an appropriation of perception; is so far as it represents, it represents the erosion in perception of the terms that relate memory to experience and to language.[25]

For example, Apollinaire forms an "abstract expression" of the experience of 'crossed cities', through the "specificity" of the 'railway stations' that he "locates" in 'endless orphanages'. In the next two lines 'We crossed cities that all day revolved' and 'And at the night they vomited the sun', Apollinaire's writing goes on to operate like memory. What is "eroded in perception, experience and language" are 'cities' that 'revolved' and are 'vomited' as if they are living entities, rather than as places filled with the activities of people's lives. Apollinaire also repeats the word 'remember' to weave the concept of memories into the fabric of the poem. For example, the first stanza ends with the line, 'Do you remember' and is followed by the single

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[25] Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire,* p. 12.

line after the second stanza, 'I remember I remember still' before

repeating the phrase 'Do you remember' at the beginning of the third

stanza.

Gertrude Stein responds to Apollinaire's rallying call to create

an "art of ideas" in her 1913 poem 'Apollinaire', which plays with the

concept of what a "new painting" as a portrait in words and poetry

could be:

> Apollinaire
>
> Give know or pin ware.
> Fancy teeth, gas strips.
> Elbow elect, sour stout pore, pore caesar, pour state at.
> Leave eye lessons I. Leave I. Lessons. I. Leave I lessons, I. [26]

In contrast to Apollinaire's attempts to replicate the technique of

collage to create poems full of poetic images, directions and references

vying for attention, Stein's project is to write minimal lines of complex

poetry. For Stein, each word, fragment of text and line of poetry acts

out in experimental ways to create painterly representations in

language. For example, the opening line 'Give know or pin ware,' is

not meant to mean 'Give know or pin ware' but is a reference to

Apollinaire's full name, Guillaume Apollinaire. According to Ulla E.

Dydo, 'Stein heard it in French and wrote down in English'.[27] This was

a spontaneous approach by Stein, which resulted in a phonetic pun on

Apollinaire's name said in French, written without translation into the

English.

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[26] Gertrude Stein, *Portraits and Prayers* (New York: Random House, 1934), p. 26.
[27] Ulla E. Dydo with William Rice, *Gertrude Stein: the language that rises: 1923-1934* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003), p. 298.

Stein's playful homophonic word game at the beginning of the poem demonstrates her intention to use language as a pliable material to create her "word-portrait" of Apollinaire, for example, in the first line 'Fancy teeth, gas strips'. In this case, what is meant by 'fancy' is likely to be a reference to Stein's admiration for Apollinaire whom she describes as 'very wonderful' and 'extraordinary brilliant' [28] rather than a direct compliment on his teeth. The second part of the line 'gas strips' can also be a reference to Stein's own observations of Apollinaire debating with his peers in the gas-lit cafés that he frequented.

In contrast to the fluid syntax of Apollinaire's poetry, Stein disrupts the syntax of her lines of poetry, breaking open words, phrases and their meanings to encourage multiple possible readings of her lines of poetry. In the opening phrase of the next line 'Elbow elect' Stein paints a picture in words of Apollinaire as a self-appointed ruler, sitting with his elbows firmly on the table. The line, which continues 'sour stout pore, pore caesar, pour state at' paints the picture of Apollinaire as a 'stout' man with a sharpness mind, drinking 'sour stout'. The inclusion of the word 'pore' appears to refer to absorption, possibly of ideas and also to the continuous 'pouring of beer' which leads to drunkenness, and to the muddling of ideas, as in 'pour state at'. It is not the only time that Stein suggests that Apollinaire has specific empirical qualities. Recalling the impression

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[28] Gertrude Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 65.

Apollinaire made on her, in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* Stein writes 'Apollinaire was very attractive and very interesting. He had a head like one of the late roman emperors'. [29]

Stein also creates "mobile spaces" in her poems by combining homonym and homograph words to create lively lines of poetry of multiple directions. For example in the s-sounds of 'sour' 'stout' and 'state' and in the words 'pore' and 'pour' of the third line. In the last line Stein continues to play around with repetition and homographs to create the line, 'Leave eye lessons I. Leave I. Lessons. I. Leave I lessons, I.' In this last line Stein appears to acknowledge her debt to Apollinaire's 'eye lessons' as an influence on her method for writing her word-portrait poems.

Apollinaire's ideas for a new approach to "production" and "reception" in poetry and art are also explored by poet and artist Mina Loy in her 1917 poem, '*O Marcel - - - otherwise | I Also Have Been to Louise's'.* The poem first appeared in the second edition of *The Blind Man*; a journal of art and poetry published and organized by Henri-Pierre Roche, Marcel Duchamp and Beatrice Wood in New York in 1917. According to Sandeep Parmar the inclusion of Loy's poem in the journal established her as member of the elite 'New York City's avant-garde' arts scene of the time:

> That number of *The Blind Man* (as well as its inaugural issue) published short polemics on art by Loy, a fact that affirms her centrality to this select, inner crowd and to their revelry.[30]

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[29] Ibid., p. 66.
[30] Sandeep Parmar, *Reading Mina Loy's autobiographies: myth of the modern woman* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.1.

The poem operates as a response to Apollinaire's 1914 poem 'Lundi Rue Christine'.[31] The poem is set in a café in France written by Apollinaire by assembling the overheard conversations of the clientele and passers by. This experimental method of writing poetry by treating overheard conversations as "found" text sources, as opposed to the focusing on traditional poets voice to create poetry, is taken up by Loy, who in turn sets her poem in a New York café, and within the conversations of the clientele who eat there. Both café poems consist of the overheard conversations presented as fragmented lines of poetry. In the case of Apollinaire's poem, the fragments are grouped together to form traditional stanzas and single line stanzas throughout the poem:

> La mere de la concierge et la concierge laisseront
>   tout passer
> Si tu es un homme tu m'accompagneras ce soir
> Il suffirait qu'un type maintĭnt la porte cochère
> Pendant que l'autre monterait
>
> Trois bec de gaz allumés
> La patronne est poitrinaire
> Quand tu auras fini nous jouerons une partie de
>   jacquet
> Un chef d'orchestre qui a mal a la gorge
> Quand tu viendras à Tunis je te ferai fumer du kief
>
> Ça a l'air de rimer
>
> Des piles de soucoupes des fleurs un calendrier
> Pim pam pim
> Je dois fiche prés de 300 franc à ma probloque
> Je préférerais me couper le parfaitement que de les
>   Lui donner.[32]

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[31] Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes*, 12e. éd (Paris : Gallimard, 1945), p. 31-33.
[32] Apollinaire, *Calligrammes,* p. 31-32.

Apollinaire uses shorter indented fragments of conversations to collage together the larger fragments of conversation. For example, the second line 'tout passer' visually and verbally joins together the opening line 'La mere de la concierge et la concierge laisseront' with the third unrelated line 'Si tu es un homme tu m'accompagneras ce soir'. The phrase 'tout passer', in the English 'all pass', introduces the next three lines in the stanza as fragments passing by. Apollinaire's method of including the overheard conversations into his poetry is to leave the fragments of "found" texts enacted and separated for each other. Reading the lines of poetry is similar to moving from listening to one conversation to another. It is an ordinary linear reading experience of different voices assembled into a poem.

What is experimental about Apollinaire's poem is the inclusion of "overheard voices" as "found" textual material for writing poetry. In contrast, Loy experiments with the form of her poem and with the use of "overheard voices" as materials for writing poetry.

O Marcel - - - otherwise
I Also Have Been to Louise's

I don't like a lady in evening dress, salting
From here she has black eyes, no mouth, some - - - - -
Will you bring a perfection, well bring a bottle - - - Two perfections WELL I want to SEE it - - - he will know it afterwards - - - will you bring the bottle. Really, have I? - -. Which way? Oh did I? WHEN? Too much? You are abusing myself. No, you would not - -. Did you ask Demuth about it? Anything you like, would I? Ough Naow? of course not? Yes I do. I used to kill myself with the syphon - - -. You don't remember that ball. Well don't do that because I am perfectly sober now - - - - that's the kid he looks like - . It will probably cost me very much I have not got money. Did I say I wanted the bottle all right - SEE it! Excuse me, explain it. You don't need any. I will give you some paper Mina and keep silent to give you a rest. Oh! I will give you some paper all the same. Very much. He said to me, we will toss whether you resign or I resign - - - a very old French story about 'the English man must shoot first.' She has a pencil in her hair - very impressionistic. You know you should have some salt on your hair it's so nice - because? Nothing - its music. Ah this

is, this is, this is, is IT. Do not worry about such things as lighting a match. I give you my key Clara - HEY - have some yellow paper. If carried away If Clara ever returns it. Well, you did about a week, after. Here's the salting lady - I will show her to you - salting lady. She passed. Do not speak any more - - - you have to squeeze it, maid of the - - - . I used to go every day - - waitress. I feel ashamed in front of this girl - she looks at me from far its wonderful - its wo - onderFUL;
Yes, have a drink lady, teaspoon by teaspoon. No please take this - Do I eat? You know why I have one - I do - I do have it - I want some tongue I will give you some - but don't do too much what? Suck it. Well I don't know how I will get up early to-morrow I have a lesson at two - no not with the "bellemere" You don't know what a wonderful sensation it is - - - - - I have some preference for some company where is our waiter - where is he it sounds it doesn't he?
Mina are you short-hand?, I never knew it. I want tongue sandwich, anyway it keeps me awake. You know, she comes riding school fifty sixth street you know she comes. Lunch 12 o'clock. Well you know it was. How do you light a cigar-

Figure 1. Mina Loy, *The Blind Man*, p.14, *1917*

As this image of the poem shows, Loy's poem is a much denser and messier affair. Her poem does not follow a conventional poetry form and instead her poem appears in two columns, printed over two pages of the journal similar in format to a newspaper article. The title, a complex couplet is made up of three fragments of conversations and appears to address Duchamp directly, 'O Marcel - - - otherwise.' The tone of 'O Marcel' suggests to me an atmosphere of lively debate and

the sharing of ideas. In pairing 'O Marcel- - - otherwise' with the second line of the title ''I Also Have Been to Louise's', Loy's title appears to be referencing Apollinaire's 'Lundi Rue Christine' poem as a framework for her own writing experiment.

Loy's technique, to produce a continuous form of writing from the conversation around her, creates a poem of multi-voices operating as one poetic voice where voices merge and drift in and out of each other. This is both visually and technically in keeping with the collage methods of the Cubist, where multi-perspectives come together to form a representation. Loy achieves this effect in her poetry in a number of ways. One of her methods is to run together the lines of overheard conversation fragments with her own observations and her own speech. For example in these opening lines:

> I don't like a lady in evening
> dress, salting
> From here she has black eyes,
> no mouth, some   -   -   -
> Will you bring a perfection,
> well bring a bottle -   -   - Two [33]

The first three lines, 'I don't like a lady in evening | dress, salting | From here she has black eyes, | No mouth, some   -   -   -', appear to be Loy's observation of a woman 'salting' her food. However, the next two lines, 'Will you bring a perfection, | well bring a bottle -   -   - Two', could either be Loy placing a drinks order or a fragment of overheard conversation within the restaurant. There is no change in the verbal

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[33] Mina Loy, ' O Marcel - - - otherwise I Also Have Been to Louise's', *The Blind Man,* 2 (1917), 14-15 (p. 14).

register of the texts to indicate which voice comes from whom, other

than when Loy lets slip a phrase containing a reference to herself and

to her companions. For example in this next section, Loy mentions

friend and avant-garde artist Charles Demuth:

> It   -   -   - he will know after-
> Wards - - - will you bring the
> Bottle.   Really, have I - - -
> Which way?   Oh did it? WHEN
> Too much? You are abusing
> myself. No, you would not - - -
> Did you ask Demuth about it?
> Anything you, like, would I?
> Oug Naow? of course not? Yes [34]

The shift in voices, and from observation to conversations, builds

layers in Loy's poetry. This creates complex lines of poetry of varying

intensity in urgency, movement and meaning from line to line and

from fragment to fragment. Loy uses visual devices of punctuation to

add more layers of meaning to her poetry. For example, she includes

dashes to visualize breaks in the text and to join fragments of

conversations together. These visual editing techniques

simultaneously help to unify the shape of the poem and to provide

spaces in the text for imagined words to be inserted. Another visual

tactic of Loy's is to include capitalized single words in the text. These

bigger in size words suggest to me raised voices, as well as drawings

attention to specific hotspot areas of the poem. In addition, lower-case

words feature alongside capitalized words to begin lines of poetry,

adding to the visual texture and to the density of the text. Loy's

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[34] Ibid.

individualized visual grammar creates a textured poem of visual and

verbal representations of a noisy café full of people talking all at once

with hotspots one certain conversation. At one point Loy makes an

appearance in the poem. Here she portrays herself frantically trying to

write down what she hears around her while in conversation with her

friends, as if to let her reader know that her process of writing the

poem is integral to their reading experience:

> right - - -see it. Excuse me,
> explain it. You don't need any.
> I will give you some paper
> Mina and keep silent to give
> you a rest. Oh, I will give
> you some paper all the same.
> Very much. He said to me, we[35]

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[35] Ibid.

THE BLIND MAN   15

ette - how do you light a match
Did you, well it is not danger-
ous at all - Did you got it?
Are you an American represen-
tative - I am sorry. You are
Pennsylvania I am Boston. Do
you want some cigarettes - - Did
you put the pronunciation.
Waiter! tongue sandwiches. Do
you want hot milk. Two perfec-
tions she doesn't want anything
- you got it? She can't write
it down anyway - through the
flag oh some cigarettes - waiter
I want some cigarettes for Mina
- this is a wonderful tune Ti
li li laera Mina I give you
two dollars, it means to me two
dollars - Ti li li laera - - it
is twice I need to shave now.
Demuth you must be careful of
your key she keeps it about a
week every key she gets she
keeps. You speak like Carlo,
well when he wants to imitate -
well have a drink! You know
those two girls are crazy about
that man, they mustn't, you must
get him out. I will have a
tongue sandwich - you must suck
it - - - Censorship! Don't let
your flag get wet - - is that
Billy Sunday. One should have
had an additional star Billy
Sunday - There's always a sky
in heaven! - - - that is too
low. My ancestor is tall
people. Don't write, he is going
to leave you for a minute.
Sandwiches - Oh I forgot to
telephone - what shall I say.
Ti li li laere - she said - all
right!

Compiled by Mina Loy

291 Fifth Ave., New York
April 13, 1917.

My dear Blind Man:

You invite comment, suggestions. As I understand the Independent Society its chief function is the desire to smash antiquated academic ideas. This first exhibition is a concrete move in that direction. Wouldn't it be advisable next year during the exhibition, to withhold the names of the makers of all work shown. The names, if on the canvases, or on the pieces of sculpture, etc., exhibited could be readily hidden. The catalogue should contain, in place of the names of artists, simply numbers, with titles if desired. On the last day of the Exhibition the names of the exhibitors could be made public. That is each number would be publicly identified. A list of the identified numbers could also be sent to the purchasers of catalogues. To no one, outside of the committee itself, should any names be divulged during the exhibition. Not even to those wishing to purchase. In thus freeing the exhibition of the traditions and superstitions of names the Society would not be playing into the hands of dealers and critics, nor even into the hands of the artists themselves. For the latter are influenced by names quite as much as public and critics, not to speak of the dealers who are only interested in names. Thus each bit of work would stand on its own merits. As a reality. The public would be purchasing its own reality and not a commercialized and inflated name. Thus the Society would be dealing a blow to the academy of commercializing names. The public might gradually see for itself.

Furthermore I would suggest that in next year's catalogue addresses of dealers should be confined to the advertising pages. The Independent Exhibition should be run for one thing only: The independence of the work itself. The Society has made a definite move in the right direction, so why not follow it up with still more definiteness.

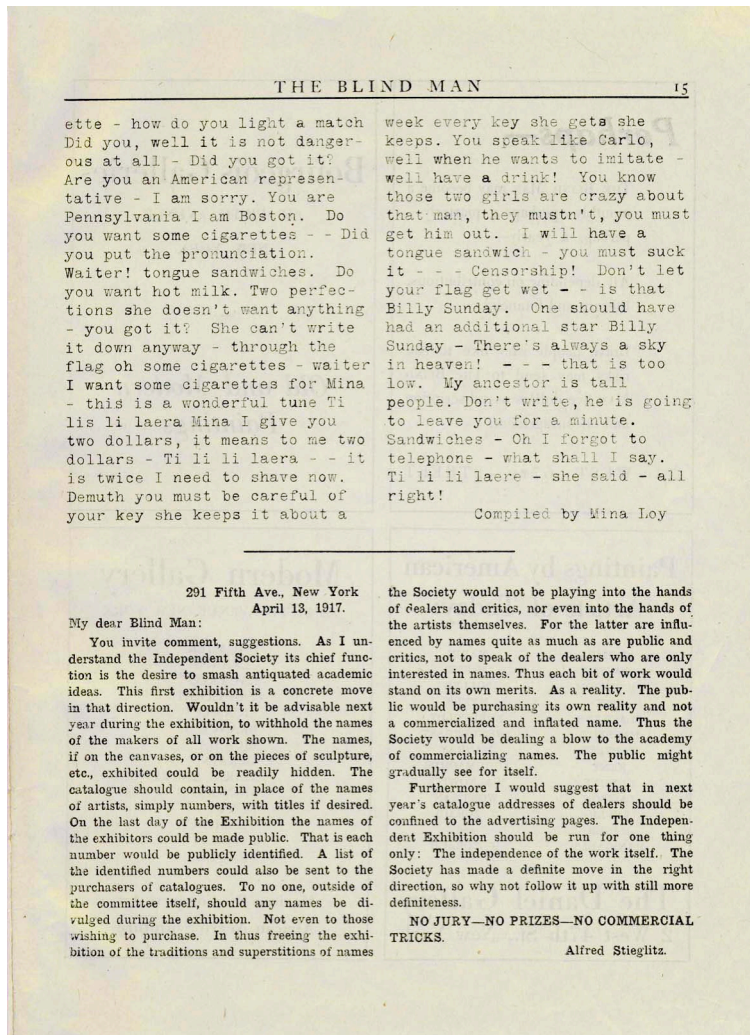NO JURY—NO PRIZES—NO COMMERCIAL TRICKS.

Alfred Stieglitz.

Figure 2. Mina Loy, *The Blind Man,* p.15, 1917

On the second page of the poem, it becomes clear that Loy's companions are also invested in the enterprise of the experimental writing project. This is suggested in the fragmented lines 'Did you got it?', 'Did you put in the punctuation' and 'She can't write it down anyway'. Loy's poem is more of a collaborative exercise, than a traditional solo penned piece of writing. This reflects the radical ideas to eradicate authorship circulating amongst the avant-gardists at the time, as proposed in the letter from Alfred Stiegiltz published below Loy's poem in *The Blind Ma*n:

> Wouldn't it be advisable next year, during the exhibition, to withhold the names of the makers of all work shown. The names, if on canvases, or on pieces of sculpture, etc, exhibited could be readily hidden. The catalogue should contain, in place of the names of artists, simply numbers, with titles if desired.[36]

Stieglitz's reason for wanting to present artworks anonymously was to create the conditions of reception where 'each bit of work would stand on its own merits'. [37] Loy's gesture to sign the poem 'Compiled by Mina Loy,' suggests that she shares these ideas. She deliberately distances herself as the author of the work and instead she positions herself in a more administrative role, where her tasks are to collect and to compile language as a method to demonstrate an experimental writing process.

Poetry and the contemporary poet-artist project

Since the early 20th century break with tradition, first with Cubism and later with Duchamp and his ready-mades, visual arts practice has continued to explore modernist and conceptual art practices, with Picasso and Duchamp becoming the exemplars of Cubists and Conceptual artists to mainstream gallery goers. In contrast, poetry in the UK after modernism has split into two camps. In one camp are the poets wishing to continue to write in traditional styles and observing the constraints of poetry prior to modernism. In the other camp are

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[36] Alfred Stieglitz, 'Letter', *The Blind Man,* 2 (New York: 1917), p. 15.
[37] Ibid.

the poets wishing to pursue projects unresolved by modernism, to work with new technologies and with methods of visual arts practice.

According to Redell Olsen, contemporary poets who continue to follow in the traditions of the early modernist poets can gain much from a practice that situates itself as an 'extended recuperation'[38] of modernist ideas. Olsen explains this extended recuperation writing project as, 'a new space for contextualization of contemporary work which highlights the innovative and the experimental use of form and procedure as central to the history of poetry and poetics in the twentieth and twenty-first century'.[39] By continuing to situate poetry within a tradition of experimentation, poets are able to fully embrace and to enter into the space of poetics. Within this creative space, language, both verbal and visual, is available to the "poet-artist" as materials and methods for poetic practice.

Since the first gatherings at Gertrude Stein's Salon in Paris, artists and poets have collaborated to produce work and theories for making art and poetry. On the one hand, artist groups such as Dada, Pop Art, & Fluxus embraced language and writing as a material and as a site for visual arts practice. On the other hand, poets have embraced visual arts practices, sharing modes of making, critical theories, publications and communities with visual artists. Most notably, within North America, The Black Mountain School of poets and artists from the 1930s to1950s, whose members included; Josef Albers, John Cage,

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[38] Redell Olsen, 'Postmodern poetry in Britain' in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 46.
[39] Ibid., p. 48.

Merce Cunningham, Robert Creeley, Elaine de Kooning , Walter

Gropius, Charles Olson, Robert Raushenberg and William Carlos

Williams were instrumental in developing new approaches to writing

poetry and to collaborative arts practice that still resonates today.

The Concrete poets, followed by the 1960s-70s L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

poets including Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Ron Silliman, Lyn

Hejinian, Bob Perelman, Rae Armantrout and Susan Howe continued

to explore the visual and verbal aspects of language in poetry.

According to Kathleen Fraser, Charles Olson's manifesto

Projective Verse had far-reaching influence on poets entering

literature from the 1960's onward:

> The excitement Olson generated, the vent of the *making*—the
> hand—on construction of a poem being searched out, breathed
> into and lifted through the page, fragment by fragment, from
> the archeological layers of each individual's peculiar life—
> reveled the complex grid of the maker's physical and mental
> activity. Its *it.*[40]

Olson's method of composing a poem to reveal its "activity" involved a

process described by Fraser as:

> Olson's ideas of high energy "projection" engaged an alchemy
> of colliding sounds and visual constructions, valuing
> *ir*regularity, counterpoint, adjacency, ambiguity [. . .] the
> movement of poetic language as investigative tool.[41]

This, according to Fraser, 'helped to provide a major alternative ethics

of writing for women poets who resisted the "confessional" model for

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[40] Kathleen Fraser, 'Translating the unspeakable: Visual poetics, as projected
through Olson's "field" into current female writing practice (1996)', in
T*ranslating the unspeakable: poetry and the innovative necessity: essays*
(Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), p. 179.
[41] Ibid.

their poems'. [42]In addition, Fraser claims there were two significant

visual sources influencing the next generation of female poets. The

first visual source Fraser attributes to the female poets' visual

encounter with the blank page. This she defines as:

> The occasion of the empty page became, for them, an open
> canvas: a "screen of distance" (Guest 1989, 35); a grave of
> memory; the template above the door of hidden resolve:
> another kind of use value; a "forehead" on which to scrawl a
> new language: the recovery of lost grammar of women written
> over; a slate on which to collage and draw and reconfigure the
> lessons of "the master teacher." [43]

What Fraser suggests here is an opportunity for a genuine female

poetics, outside of the constraints of the traditional modes of poetry as

prescribed and enforced by 'the master teacher' where the female

experience of otherness, openness and inner and outer voice could be

established and explored. The second visual influence, Fraser

maintains comes directly from visual art. She clarifies this as:

> In parallel time with the Olson, a handful of women painters
> variously associated with New York abstract and expressionist
> movements were helping to shape and advance the 1950s/
> 1960s graphics imagination.[44]

The typographical concerns of language and poetry are brought into

sharp focus in the interdisciplinary, shared practice of book-arts and

artists' books. According to Johanna Drucker 'The history of the book

as an early 20th-century artform cannot be separated from the

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[42] Ibid., p. 176.
[43] Ibid., p. 177.
[44] Ibid., p. 178.

agendas of the artistic factions that comprised the historical avant-

garde.' [45] Drucker gives the following example:

> Throughout the 19th century in England, France, and other
> parts of Europe, an explosion of periodicals had published
> exchanges between artist, writers, and other creative thinkers.
> But it is in the early 20th century that books become a major
> feature of experimental artistic vision, and a unique vehicle for
> its realization.[46]

This "experimental artistic vision", Drucker suggests, was particularly

relevant to artists with a variety of artistic talents. This she explains

as:

> The first activity in which this occurs with a high degree of
> visibility is in the Russian avant-garde. This was due in part
> to the hybrid nature of the talents possessed by many of the
> individuals involved—poets had frequently trained as
> painters or vice versa and often they became involved with
> experimental theatre, music and dance as well. [47]

This implies that the site for an experimental artistic practice is

realized in the distinctive ways in which the poets and visual artists

approach and treat language, words and images. Drucker claims that

visual artists have historically engaged primarily in the visual form of

language. This she explains as:

> Within artistic practices the engagement with writing as a
> visual form foregrounds these dialogues—between personal
> and social, somatic and symbolic, conceptual and material, and
> the real metaphoric domains—which are all inherent aspects of
> writing as a visual form.48

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[45] Johanna Drucker, 'Artist's Books & the Early 20th-Century Avant-Garde' in
The Century of Artists' Books (New York: New York, 2004), p. 45.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Drucker Johanna, *Figuring the Word* (New York: Granary Books, 1998), p.
58.

An example of this can be found in the artwork of American Pop Artist

Robert Indiana. Famous for his series of "Love" inspired paintings,

prints and sculpture, Indiana says of himself, 'I thought of myself a

painter and a poet and became a sculptor because the raw materials

were lying outside my studio door on the lower Manhattan

waterfront'.[49]

Figure 3. Robert Indiana, *Love Sculpture,* 1996-99

Indiana's *Love Sculpture* in downtown Manhattan, New York is an

example of how, according to Drucker, writing is 'charged with binary

qualities'. [50] This is due to its 'fundamental dualism'[51] of being both a

visual and a verbal experience. That is to say, that the visual and

verbal are working together to create the overall experience of art.

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[49] Robert Indiana, 'LOVE 1996-1999',
<http://robertindiana.com/works/love-2/ > [accessed 6 April 2017] (para. 3 of 4)
[50] Drucker, *Figuring the Word,* p. 57.
[51] Ibid.

Indiana recounts his decision to make sculpture out of language, as an exploration into 'the concept that the **word** [LOVE] is also a fit and viable subject for art'. [52] In the case of the *Love Sculpture*, Indiana has treated the letters and the word LOVE as his "raw materials", which he has selected from ordinary language and has scaled-up to create a primary coloured declaration of Love, out of the word LOVE, as a public artwork. Although visually representing language, Indiana's sculpture operates primarily as visual art. It does not fit Drucker's description of "writing" as a complex yet basic system of social interaction of multi-faceted experience, which she explains as:

> It is both an object and an act, a sign and basis for signification, a thing in itself and something coming into being, a production and a process, an inscription and the activity of inscribing.[53]

The 'coming into being' space between reading and thinking, language and action and the 'activity of inscribing' is occupied as a space for making and for experiencing art in the *Instruction Paintings* of Yoko Ono. A conceptual artist and member of Fluxus, Ono uses language to create a series of "poetic actions" for her conceptual paintings.

Originally exhibited in 1962 in the AG Gallery in New York, Ono's *Painting Instructions* consisted of a series of blank canvases with printed instructions attached to them. In 1997, Ono exhibited the work at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art. At this time, the instructions and blank canvases were displayed side by side. This new

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[52] Robert Indiana, 'LOVE 1996-1999', <http://robertindiana.com/works/love-2/ > [accessed 6 April 2017] (para. 1 of 4)
[53] Drucker, *Figuring the Word,* p. 57.

hanging of the work encourages spectators to imagine what a finished

painting would look like, by carrying out the instructions in their

minds. For instance, in *Painting For Wind*, the spectator is invited to

prepare the canvas for a painting:

> PAINTING FOR WIND
>
> Cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds of any kind
> And place the bag where there is wind [54]

Another of Ono's *Painting Instructions*, *A+B Painting* is a collaborative

effort. For this "poetic action" at least two people are need to perform

the instructions:

> A+B Painting
> Let somebody other than yourself cut out
> a part of canvas A.
> Paste the cut-out piece on the same point of
> canvas B.
> Line up canvas A and canvas B and hang them
> adjacent to each other.
> You may use blank canvases or paintings or
> photographs to do this piece. [55]

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[54] Yoko Ono, *Instruction paintings* (New York: Weatherhill, 1995), p. 15.
[55] Ibid. , p. 51.

Figure 4. *Yoko Ono, A+B Canvas,* 1962

Alternatively, in *Instruction Painting A+B Canvas,* Ono presents the

canvas after the instructions have been performed. Here, the canvas

operates as a visual guide to how the painting could be realized. Ono's

instructions aren't absolute. Instead, spectators are encouraged to

make their own choices as to how they should complete the tasks. For

example, Ono instructs, 'You may use blank canvases or paintings or

Photographs to do this piece.' This foregrounding of choice making

and the role of authorship in Ono's work is reminiscent of Marcel

Duchamp's anti-retinal artworks and his readymades sculptures.

However, in the case of Ono's *Painting Instructions,* it falls to the

spectators to create the artworks via a sharing of creative processes of

making with the artist. According to Astrid Peterle, the use of language

to engage and provoke audiences into performative acts is a recurring

characteristic of the Fluxus project. This she explains as follows:

> Fluxus-scores can be perceived as the instructions to do
> something but also, in its material quality, as the artwork
> itself—some are musical scores, some look like paintings,
> some look like abstract drawings.[56]

According to Brandon LaBelle, the proliferation of language as a

material and as a site for art is essential to the experience of

conceptual artworks being both an intellectual and a visual experience

of art. This he explains as follows:

> This necessitates a critical relationship to language, for we can
> see language as the very machinery of these forces, the gears
> through which such forces operates and perpetuate
> themselves.[57]

LaBelle suggests that this shift away from the material object in art

and toward an experience of art in conceptualism, happens when 'the

artist speaks for him or herself not solely as maker but as thinker'. [58] It

is within the space of the "critical relationship of language" shared by

the artist and passed on to the spectator where Ono situates the

experience of art in her *Instruction Paintings*. According to Peterle, this

method of "outsourcing" artistic performance was a strategy

developed in Fluxus instructions, where the spectator replaced the

artist as the performer in a piece of performance art. This she explains

as:

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[56] Astrid Peterle, 'Fluxus scores and instructions: the transformative years,
"Make a salad"', *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 19
(2009), 439-441 (p. 439).
[57] Brandon LaBelle, 'Reading Between the Lines: Word as Conceptual
Project,' *Performance Research*, 7 (2002), 47-53 (p. 47).
[58]. Ibid.

> Not only do the instructions open the way for new interpretations—as detailed as they may be, they often evoke the possibility of chance –they challenge the classical performance-art idea of the coinciding role of the artist as both the creator of the performance and the performer. [59]

However in the case of reading a text, a reader must take the place of the author to perform the reading of the author's writing. Then what is the expectation of the role of the poet who is also an artist? And how does the "classical performance-art idea" of the artist "as both the creator of the performance and the performer" come to bear on the poet-artist whose practice involves "performance-art" as a site for experimentation and as a method for performing instructions, documentation and as the finished work?

In his lecture, 'Thirteen Ways of Talking about Performance (a lecture)' [60] John Hall asks that we consider this:

> Writing can be all composition—all, is as it were, done beforehand—invisibly decomposed into performance—no thickness left. Or it can retain its thickness, drawing you in to the act, as it were, of language trying to do up a tie, not because it doesn't know how to, but because the thickness of language gives us from time to time a thick sense (a sense with density, like thick paint) of the medium in which—or, perhaps, better, against which—we perform our lives.[61]

For Hall, "performance as composition" is a continuous experience, which he equates to being 'like thick paint'. The performance of writing happens before we write and is 'invisible' with no 'thickness'.

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[59] Peterle, '*Fluxus scores and instructions',* p. 440.
[60] John Hall gave this lecture to first year undergraduates of Dartington College of Art on Tuesday 22nd November 1994.
[61]John Hall, 'Thirteen Ways of Talking about Performance Writing', in *Essays on Performance Writing, Poetics and Poetry* (Bristol: Shearsman Books, 2013), p. 24.

Writing then is a performative act in language. Language is the

performer and is also that which is being performed, in what Hall

refers to as 'the thickness of language'. Hall claims that we 'perform

our lives" in and through language, as artists, as poets and as people,

and that Performance Writing happens in language. This writing is a

continuous performance, where the performer, material and

performance are constantly shifting, reforming, settling and

reemerging, as in Hall's analogy of paint thickening. For Hall, language

provides the conditions for the performer to write. It enables the

performance of writing and it is simultaneously the material and the

location of the performance of writing, formed at the intersection of

four creative practices. These Hall explains as:

> It is useful to think of four points of origin, for departures away
> from the security of a name:
>
> *from* poetry or a poetic text
> *from* theatre and related forms of dramatic narrative
> *from* visual art, including performance art
> *from* sound composition or words that lurk near music[62]

Hall goes on to explain that:

> Performance Writing is founded on the belief that these four
> (which are already in themselves very varied) converge in
> crucial respects and that the place for this convergence is the
> one from which to view the future of writing in its relation to
> performance. [63]

Within my own practice, I would not define myself as a Performance

Writer; however, my practice is situated in a converging space where

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[62] Ibid., p. 35.
[63] Ibid.

poetry, performance art and video installation meet. My creative aim

is to explore and develop poetic practice through the production of

multi-generic experimental poetic works.

Chapters and Methodology

Throughout the thesis, I will focus on how poets and artists have

shared thinking and experimental strategies to expand and develop

their poetic practice. By situating my research in this dialogue, I will

identify certain areas of shared thinking, making and influences as key

strategies for contemporary poetic practice.

In chapter one, I will close read Gertrude Stein's poetry

collection *Tender Buttons* through a critique of Pablo Picasso's collage

painting *Guitar and Sheet Music* to examine links between Stein's

experimental writing project and the experimental methods of

Cubism. I will then turn my attention to Marcel Duchamp and to his

project for anti-retinal art and readymade works. In Chapter two, I

will explore Majorie Perloff's claim that 'Duchamp's critique of the

retinal has its counterpart in Stein's writing'.[64] Through attention to

Duchamp's *A bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even: The Green*

Box, I will draw comparisons with Duchamp's use of language and

objects as materials, systems and poetic devices as strategies akin to

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[64] Marjorie Perloff, 'A Cessation of Resemblances', *Battersea Review*, 1, (2012) <http://batterseareview.com/component/content/article/85-back-issue-content/75-marjorie-perloff >[accessed 1 August 2016] (para. 8 of 49)

Stein's own experimental writings. In my third chapter, I will move to

the present day to consider how Allen Fisher and Redell Olsen have

continued to expand the field of the verbal and visual poetics. In

Chapter Four, through a critique of my manuscript *from Game(s) of*

Power, I will demonstrate how I have developed a series of

experimental strategies and tactics to produce multi-generic poetic

works, based on and in dialogue with my critical project.

CHAPTER ONE: Seeing Reading as Writing

> I was alone at this time in understanding him, perhaps because
> I was expressing the same thing in literature, perhaps because I
> was an American and, as I say, Spaniards and Americans have a
> kind of understanding of things which is the same.[65]

In his essay, 'A Narrative of Undermine: Gertrude Stein's Multiplicity ',
Peter Quartermain states 'Stein's writing perpetually destabilises itself
(no easy accomplishment) by foregrounding linguistic (as opposed to
referential or representational) concerns.' [66] This raises the question:
what method of reading should one take if the text in question actively
seeks to subvert the familiar in language and to displace word
meanings by destabilizing the syntactical structure of the sentence,
which shifts the emphases towards an experience of language through
an encounter with the author's processes of making and of
experimentation?

To approach an answer to this question I will develop a close
reading of Stein's poems that incorporates visual arts methods of
analyzing and reading an artwork to produce an alternative approach
to a reading of *Tender Buttons*. I will begin by offering a critique of
Guitar and Sheet Music, a painting produced by Picasso in 1912.[67]

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[65] *Gertrude Stein On Picasso*, ed. by Edward Burns (New York: New York, 1970), p. 23.

[66] Peter Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics: From Gertrude Stein and Louis Zukofsky to Susan Howe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 21.

[67] Picasso met Gertrude Stein in the early 1900s. Picasso painted her portrait in 1904-05. At the time they struck up a close friendship and shared ideas on their creative working methods and on art and writing. For further insights into their relationship see *Gertrude Stein On Picasso*, Liveright, New York, 1970.

A Critique of Pablo Picasso's *Guitar with Sheet Music*

I chose this painting in view of the parallels between Picasso's inclusion of domestic materials in the painting and Stein's choice of domestic objects, foods and rooms as subjects in her collection of poetry *Tender Buttons.* Both artworks appear to be set in the realm of experience of ordinary domestic lives, and both artists use multiple perspectives of representations to describe and present objects in their compositions. Picasso does this through an experimental process of collage within the form and techniques of painting, whereas Stein's aim is to achieve this through an experimental writing process within the form of prose and poetry.
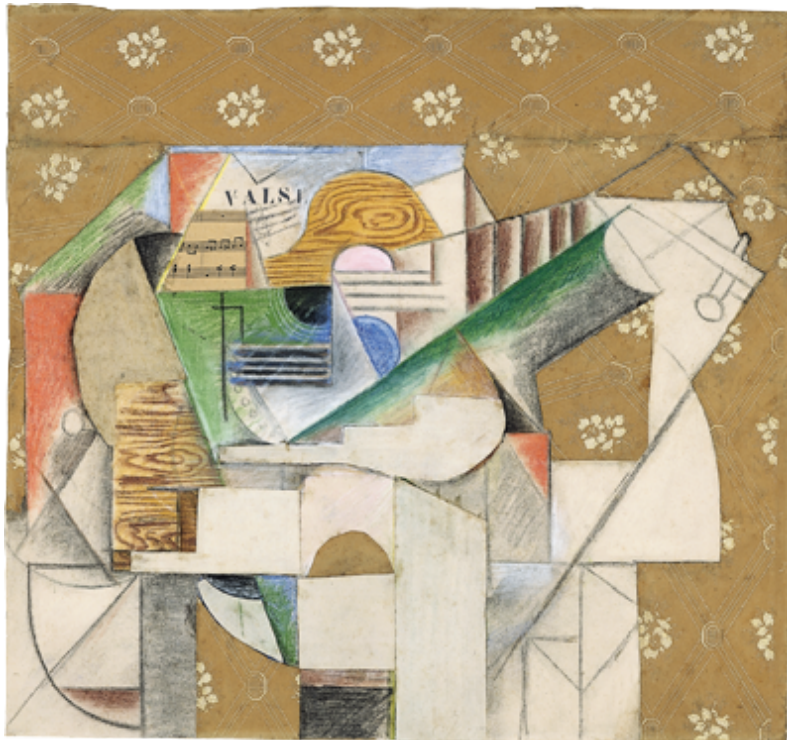
Figure 5. Pablo Picasso, *Guitar and Sheet Music,* 1912

Guitar and Sheet Music [68] is one of a series of collage studies of guitars produced by Picasso in 1912. The painting is an example of Picasso's early Cubist experiments with non-traditional art materials and of his use of collage as a technique by which to juxtapose and bring together multiple perspectives of a given object's form and meaning within a single artwork.

The painting is square in shape and is produced on paperboard rather than on a traditional stretched-canvas surface. Brown, flowery wallpaper frames the main composition of the collage area, which is made up of a mixture of traditional and non-traditional art materials, including woodgrain wallpapers, a piece of sheet music, charcoal marks, shading and areas of colour pastel work.

In partnership with his collage technique, Picasso incorporates non-art materials from 'daily life' [69] to develop complex meaning-making options between the relationship of the material, form and subject within the painting. For example, the contrast in wallpapers — one is a repeat pattern of cream chrysanthemums on a brown background and is decorative and natural, and the other, a woodgrain effect wallpapers imitates the natural in its subject — brings together the concepts of the natural and the man-made within the shared surface of the painting. This inclusion of non-traditional materials is a characteristic of 'Picasso's new language of representation'. [70] At the

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[68] In this chapter I will refer to the artwork 'Guitar and Sheet Music' as a painting and to collage as an artistic technique.

[69] *Gertrude Stein On Picasso*, p. 35.

[70] Susan Greenberg Fisher, *Picasso and the Allure of Language*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p.74.

same time, Picasso's use of the domestic wallpaper takes the still-life painting out of the traditional artist-studio space and into the public cafés of France.

The main collage activity is concentrated around the centre of the painting. A large piece of the wood-grain-effect wallpaper, cut into the distinctive shape of the top-half of the body of a classical guitar is combined with charcoal marks, colour pastel work and a cut piece of sheet music to produce multiple shifting viewpoints of a guitar. The effect is at once captivating and disorientating. By collaging recognizable shapes, materials and colours of guitars with abstract shapes, materials and textures, Picasso engages his spectator to bring their own experience of guitars to a viewing of his painting. There is a playful spontaneity in the gesture of Picasso's use of mass-produced materials such as the woodgrain wallpaper to stand in for "real" wood in his painting. However, Picasso's appropriation of materials goes further than substituting an imitation material for a painted representation of the real thing. In Picasso's paintings the woodgrain-effect wallpaper is wallpaper imitating the appearance of woodgrain and also woodgrain-effect wallpaper standing in for the wood veneer surface of a classical wooden Spanish guitar.

In this painting, Picasso appropriates "found materials" to reflect a basic reality of natural wood and a classical Spanish guitar and to represent every-day life experiences of wood to his viewers, inside and outside of an experience of art. By introducing non-traditional material to painting, Picasso has elevated the status of

everyday domestic materials into the status of art materials and has broken from the traditional practice of representing in paint different materials, textures and attributes.

Picasso's method of collage involves a process of overlaying, repeating and juxtaposing fragments of recognizable guitar forms with abstract and geometric shapes and colours made up from the wallpaper, pencil lines and paint. As a result, the painting has no fixed single point-of-view. This challenges the viewer to engage in a complex viewing experience, where the viewer is constantly required to question what she is looking at. Picasso's method builds up a holistic image that conveys an experience of the object to a viewer. In his early essay on Cubism, Clement Greenberg refers to the paradox faced by the Cubists trying to simulate the "real" through the inclusion of manufactured materials that imitate nature or act as placeholders for recognized signs or objects:

> But the term "reality," always ambiguous when used in connection with art, has never been used more ambiguously than here. A piece of imitation-woodgrain wallpaper is not more "real" under any definition, or closer to nature, than a painted simulation of it; nor is wallpaper, oilcloth, newspaper or wood more "real," or closer to nature, than paint on canvas. And even if these materials were more "real," the question would still be begged, for "reality" would still explain next to nothing about the actual appearance of the Cubist collage.[71]

However, what is "real" about a Cubist collage painting is the inclusion of fragments of recognizable external objects brought together to create a new representation of an object through a process of

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[71] Clement Greenberg, '*Collage*', in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* by Clement Greenberg (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 70-83.

recognition, accumulation and assemblage. In *Guitar and Sheet Music*,

Picasso brings together the three-dimensional form of a guitar and its

implied musicality through the way he assembles and works his

fragments, materials, shapes, colours and textures upon the flat

surface of the paperboard. This serves to create an illusionary

experience on the single surface of the painting that according to

Greenberg is at times problematic to the collage project. This he

explains as follows:

> The main problem at this juncture became to keep the "inside"
> of the picture—its content—from fusing with the "outside"—
> its literal surface. *Depicted* flatness—that is, the facet-planes—
> had to be kept separate enough from *literal* flatness to permit a
> minimal illusion of three-dimensional space to survive
> between the two. [72]

According to Greenberg, the problem of "depicted flatness" can be

solved through a process of composition, method and materials,

where the traditional "physical flatness" of the painting, for example

the canvas, is revealed and brought to the fore. The surface of the

canvas is explicit in the experience of the painting as a surface by

which to compare and contrast other perspectives and surfaces. This

Greenberg explains as follows:

> If the actuality of the surface—its real, physical flatness—could
> be indicated explicitly enough in certain places, it could be
> distinguished and separated from everything else the surface
> contained. Once the literal nature of the *support* was
> advertised, whatever upon it was not intended literally would
> be set off and enhanced in its non-literalness.[73]

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[72] Ibid., p. 71-72.
[73] Ibid.

Within *Guitar and Sheet Music*, Picasso's continuous process of "flattening down" paradoxically builds up the surface of the painting to produce manifold perspectives of a guitar. Art historian and early collector of Picasso's work, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, described this paradox as a method novel to Cubism:

> On one hand, Picasso's new method made it possible to 'represent' the form of objects and their position in space instead of attempting to imitate them through illusionistic means. With the representation of solid objects this could be effected by a process of representation that has a certain resemblance to geometrical drawing. This is a matter of course since the aim of both is to render the three-dimensional object onto a two-dimensional plane.[74]

Indeed, the fragments of materials and drawn shapes within the composition have a geometrical quality to them that mixes with the figurate shapes of the guitar body, sides and necks to create opposing yet harmonious patterns and relationships. Laid out from the left-hand bottom corner towards the right-hand top corner, the cut shapes of papers and areas demarcated by charcoal line and shading are brought together along the centralized structure to produce a representation of the front of a classical guitar from the body up toward the neck. This Cubist characteristic used to represent an image through a process of fragmentation is described by Robert Hampson and Will Montgomery as:

> The Cubist fragmentation of the object, the replacement of the perspectival representation of the object by a reconstruction of the visual image, which shifted the focus from represent-

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[74] Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler 'from The Rise of Cubism' in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers,1992), pp. 203-209 (p. 207).

ation to the articulation of perception through the tension of the painting plane.[75]

For example in *Guitar and Sheet Music*, the background surface of the

white paperboard is brought to the fore by Picasso's technique of

drawing shapes on the board which he includes as materials within

his collage activity. The divisions created by the strong charcoal line

reduce the endless possibilities of collage and provide loose frames

within the painting. At the same time, pieces of the brown-and-cream-

chrysanthemum-patterned wallpaper included in the main collage

compositional areas create tensions on the surface of the painting,

disrupting its surface and simultaneously binding and unifying the

painting as whole. The overall effect is to challenge the viewer to

establish what is the background and what is the foreground of the

painting. Greenberg explains the outcome of these tensions created by

the Cubist collage technique as follows:

> The actual surface becomes both ground and background, and it turns out—suddenly and paradoxically—that the only place left for a three dimensional illusion is in *front of*, *upon*, the surface.[76]

The flat surface of the painting is dynamic and shifting to the eye.

Shapes and lines and areas of shading create different planes of space

within the surface of the painting. Thus, as we have seen, the white

uncluttered clear areas of the paperboard have risen to the fore of the

painting. This effect elevates the status of white throughout the

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[75] Robert Hampson and Will Montgomery, 'Innovations In Poetry', p. 67.
[76] Greenberg, 'Collage', p. 75.

painting causing the white flowers of the wallpaper to appear

connected spatially to the white paperboard, and to create the illusion

that the flowers are layered on top of the wallpaper. Greenberg

describes the illusionary effects of the movement created by collage in

the following terms:

> All this expands the oscillation between surface and depth so as
> to encompass fictive space in front of the surface as well as
> behind it. Flatness may now monopolize everything, but it is a
> flatness become so ambiguous and expanded as to turn into
> illusion itself—at least an optical if not, properly speaking, a
> pictorial illusion.[77]

Simultaneously, relationships are built up between the shapes and

form represented in the materials, colours and textures of the painting

to create resemblances of shapes that operate like echoes across the

painting. This compositional rhythm creates movements across the

surface of painting. Charcoal lines demarcate shapes and spaces

throughout the composition, creating new forms and depths within

the surface of the painting. Guitar shapes emerge, merge and re-

emerge as I work my way through a viewing of the painting. Daniel-

Henri Kahnweiler explains this technique of producing multiple views

of an object to create a new unified representation of an object in

painting, and the effect on the art practice, as follows:

> This new language has given painting an unprecedented
> freedom. It is no longer bound to the more or less verisimilar
> optic image which describes the object from a single point of
> view. It can, in order to give a thorough representation of the
> object's primary characteristics, depict them as stereometric
> drawings on the plan, or, through several representations of

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[77] Ibid., p. 77.

the same object, can provide an analytical study of the object which the spectator then fuses into one again in his mind.[78]

In developing this "new language" of painting, Picasso also introduces actual words and texts into his collages. 'VALSE', French for waltz, is visible in the upper left corner above a piece of sheet music. With this word, Picasso appears to invite spectators of his work to join him in a dance through his musical representation of a guitar, where subjects come into view, begin to form, are recognized and merge into another form, through a continuous impression of motion.

By creating these destabilized surfaces consisting of multiple perspectives of an object, juxtaposing decorative and domestic materials with naturalist materials and found objects, words with music and charcoal marks, Picasso produces a representation of an object that is also a record of multiple representations of the object. At the same time, by the introduction of words alongside sheet music, Picasso also gestures towards the systems of reading language and sheet music as other forms of representation within an artwork. His finished painting facilitates the act of the object's becoming through the viewing of the painting: the object emerges, merges and re-emerges through and across the surface of the painting via an experience of viewing.

Not only does Picasso firmly place his spectators in an active, collaborative role of viewing but he also provokes his spectators to question visual art and their role within it. These provocations range

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[78] Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler,'from The Rise of Cubism', p. 207.

from the obvious "what am I looking at?" to the more complex

questions of "what is representation?" and "what role can materials

play in art making?" to "what is the role of art in 20th century western

culture?" In an interview in 1923 with the American magazine, *The*

Arts, Picasso goes some way to answer these questions: 'We all know

that ART is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least

the truth that is given us to understand'.[79]

A Critique of Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons

In much the same way as Picasso's collage paintings provoke

questionings of painting, seeing and representation in spectators of

his art, Gertrude Stein's poetry provokes questions of reading

representation and of language in the minds of her readers.

On moving to Paris in 1903 with her brother Leo, Stein became

a central figure within the modern art scene in Paris. In 1905 Stein

agreed to sit for her portrait by Picasso. This was a lengthy process

that, according to Stein, involved her sitting for him 'ninety times',

during which time 'a great deal happened'.[80] Indeed, it was a

consequence of these portrait sessions that Stein established her

Salon; a weekly meeting of artist, writer and thinkers who gathered at

Stein's home to dine, discuss art and to view the Steins' private

[79] Pablo Picasso, 'Picasso Speaks' in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 210-213 (p. 211).
[80] Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice. B Toklas,* p. 52.

collection of art. Stein recounts this in The Autobiography of Alice. B

Toklas, as follows:

> Practically every afternoon Gertrude Stein went to
> Montmartre, posed and then later wandered down the hill
> usually walking across Paris to the rue de Fleurus. [. .] And
> Saturdays evening the Picassos walked home and dined and
> then there was Saturday evening.[81]

Artists, writers and thinkers began to gather on Saturdays at Stein's

Salon to dine, to discuss and to view the Steins' art collection, which

included early works by Cézanne, Renoir, Matisse and Picasso. [82]

According to James Mellow:

> It was a brilliant scene—and a historic one. For all intents and
> purposes, Leo and Gertrude Stein had inaugurated, at 27 Rue
> due Fleurus, the first museum of modern art.[83]

It is no surprise to find that the ideas debated at the Salon nights

would influence and inform Stein's own modernist writing

experiments. In the case of Stein, her response to the new ideas for

modernism manifested in relation to the materials of language. Just as

Picasso asks questions of his viewer, which he explores through his

new language of representation within painting, Stein asks her

readers to question reading, language and writing through her poetry.

In parallel to Picasso's ambition to produce a new language of

representation in painting, Stein set out to explore a method for a

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.*,* p. 14.

[83] James R. Mellow, 'The Stein Salon Was The First Museum of Modern Art:
To a name dropper . . .', *New York Times*, 1 Dec 1968, pp. 326-336, p. 326*.*

"description of immediacy" in *The Making of the Americans.* [84] This she

explains as follows:

> And in The Making of Americans, which is a book I'd like to talk
> about, I gradually and slowly found out that there were two
> things I had to think about; the fact that knowledge acquired,
> so to speak, by memory; but that when you know anything,
> memory doesn't come in. At any moment that you are
> conscious of knowing anything, memory plays no part. When
> any of you feels anybody else, memory doesn't come into it.
> You have the sense of the immediate.[85]

Tender Buttons (1914), a collection of poetry and prose, anticipates

Stein's ambition for an "immediacy of description" which she explains

further as 'to give the appearance of one-time knowledge, and not to

make it a narrative story.' [86] Stein moved from prose writing to poetry

in *Tender Buttons*. She uses the devices of framing, fragmentation,

repetition, words as placeholders and the appropriation of objects as

subjects. Stein's poetry-writing process disrupts and radicalizes the

surface of her page through foregrounding the materials of language,

lexis and grammar to produce new experience of reading. In

'Innovations in Poetry', Robert Hampson and Will Montgomery state

that:

> Stein's verbal artefact endows an object status to language,
> replaces product by process, and initiates a close investigation
> of grammar and meaning. [87]

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[84] Gertrude Stein wrote *The Making of the Americans* between 1903-1911.
The book was later published in 1925.
[85] Gertrude Stein, *How Writing Is Written, volume II of the previously
uncollected writing of Gertrude Stein*, ed. by Robert Barlett Hass (Los Angeles:
Black Arrow Press, 1974), p. 155.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Hampson and Montgomery, 'Innovations In Poetry', p. 67.

Disrupted syntax, verbal fragments, words and word meanings and

language are the materials in Stein's artistic practice. Just as Picasso

handles the materials of painting in his collage, language is broken,

arranged and rearranged through Stein's writing experiments to

create her unique radicalized poetic texts.

My experience of reading *Tender Buttons* is similar to my

experience of viewing 'Guitar and Sheet Music'. To begin with, I find

myself looking for recognizable phrases and word meanings on which

to pin my reading experience. Then I find myself rereading lines,

poems and passages throughout the book, drawing comparisons

between the size and shape of the poems, wondering about the

similarities between titles such as, 'DINNER' and 'DINING', 'A RED

STAMP' and 'A RED HAT', or about the significance of a block of text

after a poem of a single line.

Accessing a reading of *Tender Buttons* is similar to my

experience of viewing Picasso's collage painting. I find myself trying to

figure out a way to gain access to *Tender Buttons* through my

experience of seeing and reading the individual texts, and through my

engagement with the sequence of the poems. According to Peter

Quartermain, Stein's experimental poems encapsulate a "playfulness"

that 'undermines our customary notions of how our sense of what we

do when we read, but also our notions of how meaning is

constituted'.[88] As Quartermain implies, this foregrounding of the

reading process forces the reader to let go of their preconceived ideas

[88] Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics*, p. 21.

of their role as a reader, and with that their preconceptions of how

texts produce means:

> The transformational strategies render impossible the reader's
> *possession* of meaning, for in rendering inaccessible to the
> reader the customary contract with the author as authority it
> undermines the reader's sense of his/her own certainty as
> arbiter of the meaning of text.[89]

Instead, reading *Tender Buttons* produces new experiences of reading.

Thus, the reader experiences the questioning of their preconceptions

about reading and their expectation of certain kinds of coherence of

language and poetry in the immediacy of reading *Tender Buttons.*

Divided into three sections titled, 'Objects', 'Food' and 'Rooms',

Tender Buttons consists of fifty-eight 'Objects' poems, fifty-one 'Food'

prose pieces, and 'Rooms' which is a continuous piece of prose divided

into paragraphs. Stein's decision to structure the book in this way

implies the traditional, start, middle and end sequence of a novel or

short-story format. In this case, the section headers and poem titles

within the book all refer to ordinary domestic objects and food found

in the home. In this way, *Tender Buttons* pays homage to Stein's life in

Paris and to her domestic and artistic life with her partner Alice B.

Toklas. According to Stein:

> They were the beginning of, as Gertrude Stein would say, of
> mixing the outside with the inside. Hitherto she had been
> concerned with the seriousness and the inside of things, in
> these studies she began to describe the inside as seen from the
> outside.[90]

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[89] Ibid., p. 23.

[90] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice. B Toklas,* p. 179.

The traditional female space of the home provides the setting for

Stein's radical experimentation in the English language. Whether this

can be seen as an act of "serious play"[91] or not, it is hard to ignore that

by locating her voice in such a comfortable, familiar, female territory,

she is able to cause a lot of mischief, albeit behind closed doors.

The title, *Tender Buttons,* for example is ambiguous and

puzzling, and seems to simultaneously suggest the idea of objects with

human feelings and to evoke female erogenous zones At times there is

a sense of concealment or of a secret female code at play in *Tender*

Buttons. This is pointed out by Margueritte S. Murphy in her article

'Familiar Strangers' when she asks:

> Where have we heard such words before? In the home — in
> the kitchen and in the parlour, where women sew and where
> women dress.[92]

Therefore, *Tender Buttons* is also a record of a place where women

pass the time, work, play, daydream, love, eat, entertain and make art

out of words and objects.

Stein's 'Objects' poems come in different shapes and sizes.

Ranging from perky little one-liners such as 'EYE GLASSES', 'A color in

shaving, a saloon is well placed in the centre of an alley', to the thirty-

nine lines of 'A SUBSTANCE IN A CUSHION'. The influence of *The*

Making of Americans can be considered as fully realized in these

poems. In *Tender Buttons* Stein provides each of her objects with its

own "inside" portrait composed from fragmented lines of description

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[91] Ibid., p .22.

[92] Margueritte S. Murphy, ' "Familiar Strangers": The Household Words of
Gertrude Stein's "Tender Buttons", in *Contemporary Literature*, 32 (1991),
pp. 383-402. (p. 383).

of "the outside" of her objects to create holistic poems. This Stein recalls as:

> I had this conception of the whole paragraph, and in *The Making of Americans* I had this idea of a whole thing.[93]

More importantly for *Tender Buttons,* in writing of *The Making of Americans,* Stein had set out to write an "immediacy of description". Stein aimed to produce an immediate description of a thing by siting her writing experiments "inside" her knowledge of the "outside" experience and the knowledge of things she chose to write about. By a bringing together information on the inside and outside together to write a description of a thing within the single flat plane of a linear sentence, Stein hoped to create poetic experience of her object that only existed in the present. This bringing together of different perspectives as to create a descriptive representation of a thing in single plane has obvious continuities with Picasso's practice of collage.

Indeed, one of the ways that Stein creates feelings of immediacy in the 'Object Poems' of *Tender Buttons* is by using a "collage"-like method to join together fragmented sentence to create lines of poetry. Stein's method is to combine continuing and discontinuing sentences and fragments of meaning to create a shifting of perspectives on the surface of her lines of poetry. Thus, just as Picasso's process of collage challenged the spectator's expectation of visual coherence, Stein's process of fragmented sentences creates poetry of out disrupted expectation of syntax and meaning. Stein's

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[93] Stein, 'How Writing Is Written', p. 153.

radical use of grammar disrupts the syntax of her lines of poetry, as
demonstrated in the first of the 'Objects' poems. 'A CARAFE, THAT IS
A BLIND GLASS':

> A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS.
>
> A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in resembling. The difference is spreading.[94]

To begin with, the first line of this poem, 'A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange' appears to be a series of fragments of sentences collaged together by Stein through juxtaposition of the repetitive use the conjunction 'and' to join each fragment to the next. These fragments of text all appear to be open-ended parts of unfinished sentences and suggest multiple possible meanings. For instance, in the opening line 'A kind in glass', 'a cousin, a spectacle', 'nothing strange a', discrete meanings overlap each other to create complex patterns of meaning that move back and forth along Stein's lines of poetry. According to Lyn Hejinian, 'The pattern of unfolding laid against in folding, or double set in dualities, continues in the poem [s]' [95] of *Tender Buttons* to create meaning so that 'a kind in glass' is also 'a kind of glass' and 'a cousin'—and something familiar is also 'a spectacle'. By contrast in the final line, 'The difference is spreading ' appears to be a closed statement. This line closes the poem, but it also overwhelms and envelops the previous text, in what Hejinian

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[94] Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons,* 2nd ed*.* (New York: Dover Press, 1997), p. 3.

[95] Lyn Hejinian, 'Two Stein Talks', in *The Language of Inquiry* (Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 99.

describes as a sentence 'which might be read as statement of commentary on the rest'. [96]

As this suggests, complete and incomplete sentences combine to create new directions of meanings and an experimental melded reality where 'A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS' can also be a lens that points to and brings into focus "perception" as a system of meaning. Therefore, it is possible to consider that this poem, which opens the collection, is itself a lens created by Stein as an eyeglass through which to view the poetry of *Tender Buttons*.

Transformations in meanings also occur within Stein's poetry through the repetition of words in a poem, through rhythms and rhymes, and also through the crossover from poem to poems. This allows meaning to travel across the texts and to disrupt the surface of language on the page, and to continue through the sequence.

To demonstrate how Stein's texts operate individually and sequentially, I will focus on a group of six poems from 'Objects' that appear side by side on pages 12 and 13 in the collection. The first thing that needs to be said about the poems relates to their layout. All bar the last poem, 'A WAIST', are short in length and appear to operate as types of descriptions for the subjects named in the titles. Take for instance, the poem 'A PAPER':

A PAPER.

A courteous occasion makes a paper show no such occasion and this makes readiness and eyesight and likeness and a stool.[97]

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Stein, *Tender Buttons*, p.12.

The noun 'paper' is central to the first line of the poem: 'A courteous occasion makes a paper show no such occasion and | this makes readiness and eyesight and likeness a stool.' Bracketed by the repetition of the word 'occasion', 'paper' appears to be central to the situation of the opening of the poem. However, the word 'paper' is then undermined and displaced by the word 'show'. The title had led me to assume that 'paper' was a noun. Yet when faced with the word 'show', I was forced to pause and to reconsider whether 'show' is operating as a verb or as a noun. If 'show' is a noun 'paper' then becomes an adjective. Stein destabilizes words by this hesitation between verb and noun. As a result their operation and meaning are rendered ambiguous. Therefore, I find myself asking "what is a paper?" and "what is a paper show?" In her essay 'Poetry and Grammar' Stein explains her position on nouns as:

> A noun is a name of any, why after a thing is named write about it. A name is adequate or it is not. If it is adequate than why go on calling it, if it is not the calling it by its name does no good.[98]

Does one conclude from this statement that the word 'paper' signifies paper and that it is also simultaneously failing to be the noun 'paper'? In this poem, 'paper' appears to be operating as both an adequate and inadequate noun.

The meaning of the poem is further disrupted by Stein's use of the word 'occasion'. What is it that is being described here? Is the subject 'a paper', as indicated by the title, or is it a specific 'occasion'

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[98] Stein, *How Writing Is Written*, p. 123.

as suggested by the opening five words, 'A courteous occasion makes a paper'? By shifting the focus from the noun 'paper' to the noun 'occasion' Stein seems to suggest the idea of 'papery occasions' or of drawings, where a 'readiness' is demanded and 'eyesight and likeness' are the resultant activities.

Unlike the charcoal marks, shifting tones and overlapping edges that join Picasso's found materials to the fragmented shapes and areas of his collage, Stein's words and literary devices are not immediately visible or easy to pin down. Instead, Stein's exploration of language possibilities skips back and forth along the lines of her poetry to create beautiful turbulences in her poems, which transcend the idea of edges and create instead multi-directional movement across the surface of her texts. At the same time, conjunctions and repeated words act as the referential signposts by which to navigate a reading. For Stein, conjunctions are active and these work to keep her lines of poetry moving, controlling the pace and the focus required by the readers of her poems. For example, Stein's repetitive use of 'and' encourages her reader to get on board and to ride on the momentum to the end of her line.

And what should one make of the phrase 'a stool' at the end of the line? Is Stein's use of 'a stool' a reference to a piece of furniture — perhaps a place to sit while making a drawing in a domestic setting? Perhaps, it is the subject of a drawing: the likeness of a stool. Or is it that Stein wishes to also make a reference to faecal matter and to waste in general: that which is unwanted and is of no social or

domestic use? Alternatively, is Stein questioning the concept of familiarity experienced through our relationships with objects and asking, what is familiar to you? For example, "What is ordinary? And is anything ever really experienced in isolation? These questions, along with the response they trigger in me are in effect gateways into Stein's text. The questioning of word meanings is foregrounded by Stein in the next poem, 'A DRAWING':

> A DRAWING
>
> The meaning of this entirely and best to say the mark, best to say it best to show sudden places, best to make bitter, best to make the length tall and nothing broader, anything between the half. [99]

The poem's opening 'The meaning of this entirely', forces one to question what 'meaning' in this context is and what, if anything, can be known 'entirely'. *Tender Buttons* is littered with such remarks. These offer a description of the experience of the titled work and also offer insights into Stein's writing project as a whole. In this poem, is Stein therefore suggesting that meaning is everything or that 'meaning' evades us? Alternatively, do we read this as an incomplete statement? What word then should follow 'entirely?' The poem doesn't resolve these questions but instead transitions into a series of declarations of what is 'best' and what is meant by the word 'best'.

By pitching literal meanings against figurative representations and connotations, Stein turns words inside out and back again to create a three-dimensional experience of the words, as if one were

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[99] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p. 12.

viewing an object. For example, the first use of 'best' appears to be in the literal sense, an adjective, as in 'it is best'. This 'meaning' of 'best' is quickly undermined by the repetition of the phrase 'best to say', which is more colloquial and idiomatic. The 'meaning' of 'best' blurs further as 'best' is repeated as a way to begin and to join fragments of texts together. In her 'Grammar and Poetry' essay, Stein explains her interest in the operation of verbs, nouns and adjectives and how the possibility of mistaking one operation for another gives rise to numerous ambiguities in the intended meanings of a word:

> Besides the nouns and the adjectives there are verbs and adverbs. Verbs and adverbs are more interesting. In the first place they have one very nice quality and that is they can be so mistaken. It is wonderful the number of mistakes a verb can make and that is equally true of its adverb. Nouns and adjectives never can make mistakes can never be mistaken but verbs can be endlessly, both as to what they do and how they agree or disagree with whatever they do. [100]

Stein exploits these so-called mistakes to affect the pace, direction and meanings of her poetry. For example, there is an urgency created by Stein's dropping of 'it is' in this poem that is exploited further when 'best' is used to bookend the fragment 'to say it'. This in turn transforms the adjective 'best' momentarily into an adverb before it is returned to functioning as an adjective: 'best to say it best to show sudden places'. By repeating 'best', Stein also creates the possibility of a rhythmic pattern 'best to say it | best to show sudden places' by using the traditional poetic device of anaphora.

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[100] Ibid., p. 124.

The next two poems 'WATER RAINING' and 'COLD CLIMATE' are considerably shorter than 'A DRAWING' at just ten words each. This move from a thirty-eight word block of poetry to two lines of ten words slows down the pace of the poems and refocuses the reader on the literal meanings of Stein's word choices and grammatical structures:

> WATER RAINING.
>
>   Water astonishing and difficult altogether makes a meadow and a stroke.

> COLD CLIMATE.
>
>   A season in yellow sold extra strings makes lying places.[101]

These capitalized titles exude certainty and refer directly to situations and objects that most readers can readily relate to their own personal experience. Thus, the title reminds us that there is no raining without water, while the poem itself reminds us that there is an experience of water outside of an experience of rain. For example, 'a meadow' and 'a stroke' are both experiences of water presented together as a part of the whole experience of 'WATER RAINING'. We know that water is vital to the production and life of a meadow even when it is not visible to the eye. And we also hear the compound noun 'water-meadow' – a safety device when rivers overflow. As for 'stroke', this could mean stroking the grass of a meadow or a swimmer's stroke, as she passes through the water. Here, the properties of water, whether raining

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[101] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p.12.

down, as a life source or as buoyancy by which to carry us while we travel through it, are all conjured up in this carefully constructed line of just ten words. As with Picasso's work, multiple perspectives are simultaneously present.

Structured like a proverb, the next poem 'COLD CLIMATE' gestures towards meaning based on the certitude of the author's voice and knowledge. This single line poem, 'A season in yellow sold extra strings makes lying places', has no conjunctions or repeated words. Stein's language here appears to be uncomplicated and clear. The fragmented line 'A season in yellow', might be seen as a playful gesture by Stein to reference Rimbaud's poem 'A Season in Hell' [102] and can also be a reference to autumn. 'Extra strings' of 'yellow sold' suggest, a close bond, or a marriage. The invisible rhyming of 'strings' and 'rings', evoke ideas of rings or yellow rings and gold wedding rings. 'Extra strings' also suggest a string instruments and music filling the air to create 'lying places'. These references and patterns trigger recognitions in Stein's reader and function to allow the text to be read in reference to their knowledge of the meaning of words being presented on the page.

In the poem 'MALACHITE', Stein pushes on with her experimental play, this time by focusing on the sounds of words to give a new cadence to her poetry and another directional pull: 'The sudden spoon is the same in no size. The sudden spoon is the | wound

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[102] Arthur Rimbaud, 'A Season in Hell' is a long sequence poem, self-published by Rimbaud in 1873.

in the decision'. Stein continues to evoke the sound of 'spoon' in the final clause of the poem she replaces 'spoon' with 'wound'. Although the words and their meanings are different to each other the sound of 'spoon' remains in the encounter with the word 'wound' with the chiming of 'spoon', 'spoon' and 'wound'. As this suggests, Stein's rhymes set off patterns and open up pathways within memory that engage the reader's participation within the text through their participation. For instance, there is a nursery rhyme quality to some of Stein's rhythms that evoke memories of lullabies and playground songs. Stein's uses these faux naive experiences to play with her reader, and to perhaps draw them into a deeper reading of her poems, like the grammatical possibilities and word meaning ambiguities of other poems. These patterns of connectedness combine to create the immediacy of Stein's poems, by placing her reader in the absolute present of her texts.

The following two poems, 'AN UMBRELLA' and 'A PETTICOAT' again repeat structures and utilize poetic devices set up by Stein in the poems before them. Similar to the ambiguity of meaning of 'best' in 'A DRAWING', Stein creates ambiguity around the meaning of the word 'front' in the poem 'AN UMBRELLA':

AN UMBRELLA

Coloring high means that the strange reason is in front not more in front behind. Not more in front in peace of the dot. [103]

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[103] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p. 12

Thus, what starts out moving in one direction, 'Colouring high means that the strange reason is in front not' is turned back on itself in the next fragment 'not more in front behind', before moving forward again in the second fragment of the line: 'Not more in front in peace of the dot.' This, Quartermain refers to as "double movement". [104] That is, the syntax suggests multiple directions in which these lines of poetry can be read with additional reading combinations being created by reading back and forth along the lines of poetry. In doing so Stein heightens the activity of the lines, through the accumulation of the possible meanings of each word and how they in turn operate with the words beside them. What is first 'in front' is transformed to 'behind' before coming to an abrupt end with the concluding phrase 'in peace to the dot'. Is the 'dot' a direct reference to the 'full-stop'? And, as such, is it a further example of Stein's intention to question grammar and punctuation as a system for creating poetry? To me, it suggests a paradox to reading poetry, where a full stop may visually signal the end of a line of a poem, but doesn't necessarily end a line of poetry. [105]

The next poem 'A PETTICOAT' is a single line poem, which reads, 'A light white, a disgrace, an ink spot, a rosy charm'. The poem starts out as a straightforward description of a white, lightweight petticoat, that becomes stained, which is 'a disgrace'. Or does 'an ink spot' refer to one's character, and this is 'a disgrace' like a stain on a spotless white petticoat? Stein's repeated use of the indefinite articles

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[104] Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics,* p. 22.
[105] See Alison Gibb knives, *a.vase* (Manchester: Knives Forks and Spoons Press, 2017).

'a' and 'an' produce a list poem of fragmented texts that can easily be reordered. For example a reordering of the poem could read, 'an ink spot, a rosy charm, A light white, a disgrace.' The end phrase 'a rosy charm' can also be read as a reference to blushing, with the poem being a description of embarrassment. 'A disgrace' and 'an ink spot' on 'a light white' 'petticoat 'operates as a metonymy for such a humiliation. 'A rosy charm' could also refer to female genitalia, prompting a further possible reading of a stained 'petticoat', where being 'a disgrace' is part of female experience. Lisa Ruddick in her article 'A Rosy Charm: Gertrude Stein and the Repressed Feminine' explains this as:

> "a light white, a disgrace, an ink spot - a rosy charm" - the third term standing between the two menstrual images of "a disgrace" and "a rosy charm" is "an ink spot." [106]

If 'an ink spot' here is operating in place of menstrual blood, than the petticoat and blank pages are surfaces on which Stein can equally leave a mark. In the next poem, 'A WAIST', by changing to a much longer poem, Stein alerts her reader to slow down and take a closer look, to reflect on her project:

> A WAIST.
>
> A star glide, a single frantic sullenness, a single financial grass greediness.
> Object that is in wood. Hold the pine, hold the dark, hold in the rush, make, the bottom.
> A piece of crystal. A change, in change that is remarkable there is no reason to say that there was a time.
> A woolen object gilded. A country club is the best disgrace, a couple of practices any of them in order is so left.[107]

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[106] Lisa Ruddick, 'A Rosy Charm: Gertrude Stein and the Repressed Feminine' in *Critical Essays on Gertrude Stein* ed. by Michael Hoffman (c1986), p. 228.

Made up of twelve lines of four doubled-up, single lines, 'A WAIST' is a considerably larger poem. The first line echoes the list-like quality of 'A Petticoat' with each new phrase or fragment starting with an 'a', with each phrase gaining an extra word as the line unfolds, making it both visually and orally easy for Stein's reader to add a phrase of their own to her list. The poem begins with a combination of nature ('stars', 'grass', 'wood', 'pine' and 'crystal') with the human emotions 'sullenness' and 'greediness'. The phrase, 'A star glide' suggests a shooting star, while the musical effect of the s-sounds of 'star', 'single', 'sullenness', 'single' are balanced with the g-sounds of 'glide', 'grass' and 'greediness', and the repeated f-sounds to create new meanings in the musicality of grouping words.

The next fragment of text 'Object that is in wood' simultaneously refers to the experience of a tree in its natural environment, wooden objects, and wood as a raw material. The word 'Hold' appears to stand in for wood, in the line 'Hold the pine, hold the dark, hold in the | rush, make, the bottom', while the words 'pine', 'rush' and 'bottom', suggest that the 'object that is in wood' could be a pine, rush-bottomed chair. Subsequently, 'wood' is replaced by 'crystal' in the line 'A piece of crystal. A change, in change that is remarkable there | is no reason to say that there was a time.' 'A piece of crystal' is a more complex material than wood, with its enduring qualities that resist time and change. In the last line, 'A woolen object

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[107] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p. 13.

gilded. A country club is the best disgrace, a | couple of practice any of them in order is so left', wood and crystal have become people. 'A | couple of practice' could refer to Stein's and Toklas's relationship, no doubt scorned by the kind of society at 'A county club'. This idea of 'disgrace' is rejected by Stein, who pairs together the words 'best' and 'disgrace' to create a 'best disgrace', which for Stein is something to be proud of.

Stein's experimental processes of writing are foregrounded through the reading of her 'Objects' poem. Her ambition to create immediate, intimate reading experiences challenges her reader to reconsider preconceived ideas of reading, language and the meaning of words. As we have seen, each of Stein's 'Objects' poems offers multiple meanings and directional reading options in tightly packed lines. The influence of collage on Stein and her writing experiments is conceptual rather than an adopted practice. The experimental poems *of Tender Buttons* can be considered as Stein's response to Picasso's visual arts technique of collage as an analogy of collage, where collage techniques are conceptual methods, which are played out by Stein, in the linear visual and verbal fields of language and sentences. For example, Picasso uses collage to produce multiple fragmented perspectives of his objects. He breaks them up, pushing them apart to create a representational image which foregrounds the fractures between his images, materials and assemblage methods. In parallel, Stein uses fragments of texts to bring her objects into sharp immediate focus through her method of assembling multiple

descriptions of her objects, which she forces through the linear space and form of sentences and lines of poetry. Picasso's method of collage and assemblage are visible to the eye, whereas Stein's use of collage and assemblage are invisible and occur instead in the repeated sounds of her words, in her phonetic word plays, multiple word meanings and continuous and discontinuous fragments of texts.

Another tactic of collage shared by both artists is the use of non-traditional materials in their works. Picasso uses non-traditional materials in his paintings to build up representational fragments. For Stein, her material is language, which she uses in non-traditional ways. For example, Stein's approach to language, syntax and grammar as language materials, corresponds with that of Picasso's use of materials in building his surfaces of representations of collage in paintings. The visual art making techniques and a viewing experience of collage in Picasso's paintings are explored conceptually in the verbal form, writing methods and the reading experience of Stein's experimental poems. The experience of reading and the questions of what is reading and what is writing, is what are at stake in the poetry of Stein's *Tender Buttons*.

CHAPTER TWO: Anti-retinal Art as Poetry, Even

> *There again, I had no position. I've been a little like Gertrude Stein. To a certain group, she was considered an interesting writer, with very original things . . .*[108]

In 1914, at the time when Gertrude Stein was publishing *Tender Buttons*, French artist Marcel Duchamp produced the first of his "readymades" artworks, *Bicycle Wheel* and *Bottle Rack*. [109] Duchamp and Stein had met in Paris in 1913 before Duchamp had left to live in America. Duchamp had made quite an impression on Stein, who in her biography writes:

> I was always perfectly able to understand the enthusiasm that Marcel Duchamp aroused in New York when he went there in the early years.[110]

It appears from a letter sent from Duchamp to Stein that on meeting a friendship was established, with the two sharing interests in each other's opinions.

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[108] Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* trans. by Ron Padgett (London Thames and Hudson 1971), p. 17.

[109] *R*eadymade is the term Duchamp gave to his "anti-retinal art" sculptures. These were made from ordinary manufactured objects, which were selected, modified and placed in the gallery by Duchamp to operate as art objects*.*

[110] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 133-134.

Figure 6, A letter from Marcel Duchamp to Gertrude Stein

Indeed, there are a great many similarities between the ideas of Stein

and Duchamp's ambitions for a new radical art form within their

subsequent artistic practices. For example, like Stein's focus on

ordinary objects as subjects for poetry in *Tender Buttons*, Duchamp

appropriated everyday objects as art materials for his readymade

artworks. Duchamp's use of "manufactured objects" as "art objects"

changed the perception of what constituted an art object and

challenged the idea of the artist as a master of individual artistic skills

and aesthetic talent. Above all, Duchamp's inclusion of "found objects"

as art materials foregrounded the operation of "concepts" within

artworks, placing the question of "what is art?" at the centre of the

experience of art.

Another significant element of Duchamp's practice was his use

of written language to create visual art. From notes, diagrams, hand-

scrawled ideas, wordplays and puns, Duchamp used language systems

as a model to develop and to stage the possibilities for "art" through

an experience of words and found objects. For example, in the case of

Duchamp's semi-readymades the function of titles became a space for

experimentation and for creativity. No longer secondary,

complementary and ordinary in their formal use, Duchamp's artwork

titles became "works of art" in their own right. By treating language as

a conceptual art material and a system of logic, Duchamp created

radical, new "anti-retinal" artworks that foregrounded the intellectual

engagement of art above that of an aesthetic experience.

To approach an analysis of how Duchamp's engagement with

language radicalized visual art and operates as poetic devices in his

artworks, I will develop a close reading of: *The Bride Stripped Bare by*

her Bachelors, Even, The Green Box and *The bride stripped bare by her*

bachelors even; a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel

Duchamp's Green box.[111] I will begin, however, by introducing

Duchamp's concepts of "retinal" and "anti-retinal" art.[112] I will then

examine Duchamp's use of poetic devices and language systems as

strategies for producing "readymades", "semi-readymades", "art

events" and "titles" for his artworks, before moving on to critique the

two poetry book-works. Throughout my critiques of Duchamp's art I

will demonstrate how his methods of "anti-retinal" art practice are in

dialogue with the experimental writing methods and ideas of Gertrude

Stein.

Anti-Retinal Art

Central to Duchamp's philosophy of art was his concept of "anti-

retinal" art. This was a new type of artwork that didn't rely solely on

its visual impact to qualify as art. Duchamp distrusted the emphasis on

"the visual" in the Cubist and Impressionist paintings of the day, which

he termed: "retinal" art, and described as 'appeal[ing] to the eye

alone.'[113] Instead, Duchamp was in favour of a more intellectual

approach to making art. This he advised would 'put painting once

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[111] Marcel Duchamp, *The bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even; a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green box*, trans. by George Heard Hamilton (London: Lund, Humphries, 1960).
[112] Duchamp "Anti-retinal" artworks are the predecessor of Conceptual Art with Duchamp widely cited as the father of conceptual art practice.
[113] Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, p. 37.

again at service of the mind.' [114] In 1911, in an attempt to break with the methods of Cubist and Impressionist painting, Duchamp produced 'The Coffee Mill'. This is a paining in oil and graphite on canvas, which depicts the mechanical workings of a coffee grinder through a system of repeated mark-making.

Figure 7. Marcel Duchamp, *Coffee Mill,* 1911

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[114] Ibid.

Duchamp attempts to foreground the concept of a coffee mill's

grinding function through a representation of movement by means of

the repeated marks of the handle turning. Rather than focusing on the

look of the coffee mill, Duchamp choses to develop his painting

technique based on mimicking how a coffee mill works. Duchamp

further distances himself from traditional painting methods by

working in graphite—the traditional choice of draughtsman and

craftsmen. His use of graphite enhances the technical aspects of the

coffee grinder and presents it as a manufactured, functional,

household work of art. As suggested by Calvin Thomas, this painting

although naïve in its application marks the beginning of the shift in

Duchamp's approach to making art towards an anti-retinal ideal:

> This use of machine imagery to illustrate a process was a
> determining factor in his development from then on, although
> at the time he painted the Coffee Mill he had no idea what he
> was doing.[115]

However, it was not until 1913, when Duchamp produced his first

readymade sculptures that his concept of anti-retinal art begins to be

fully explored.[116] With his first two readymades, *Bicycle Wheel* and

Bottle Rack, Duchamp introduced the idea of readymade objects as

formal sculptures. Exposed, defunct and displayed in a gallery as

artworks, the objects, taken out of their context, appear empty of

meaningful use. Take for example the sculpture *Bicycle Wheel*. It is an

upended single wheel attached to a wooden stool by its wheel frame.

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[115] Calvin Tomkins, 'Marcel Duchamp,' p. 28-29.
[116] The term ready-made was not coined until 1915.

There is no saddle or pedals attached to the bicycle parts and as such it fails to function as a conventional bicycle wheel. The fact that it is stationary is emphasized by its attachment to a wooden stool. The stool also fails to function in its ordinary sense, as the space for sitting on is taken up by the bicycle wheel. However, the bicycle wheel is still undeniably a bicycle wheel, and the stool is still a stool. Duchamp transforms these everyday objects configured together into his 'Bicycle Wheel' readymade art object.

Figure 8. Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel,* 1913

Figure 9. Marcel Duchamp, *Bottle Rack,* 1914

The same process of transformation applies to *Bottle Rack*. Devoid of

bottles, the readymade sculpture *Bottle Rack* waits to perform as a

bottle rack; and instead, placed in a gallery, it functions as Bottle-

Rack-Art-Object, signed and dated by Duchamp, as a way of transition

from domestic use to art object. By selecting the objects and

displaying them in galleries, Duchamp challenges what was

considered to be a viable art object or a material for the inclusion in

making art. What is displaced—the representation of meaning of the object as an art material—Duchamp claims as a space to create "new art-events". Duchamp's method of including manufactured objects to create new radical sculptures of non-art materials is reminiscent of Stein's methods of creating radical poems from descriptions of objects which this poem demonstrates:

> A HANDKERCHIEF
> A winning of all blessings, a sample not a sample because
> there is no worry. [117]

In contrast to Duchamp's method of blurring the function of his object by changing its context from ordinary to art material, Stein uses the experience of her object as a method to write experimental descriptions of living with objects, as this poem shows. For example, in this poem Stein combines language from the common greeting, 'bless you' given when someone sneezes, 'A winning of all blessing', with the act of a handkerchief catching a sneeze, 'a sample not a sample' with the association of a sneeze indicating bodily functions to create the short but effective poem, 'A winning of all blessings, a sample not a sample because | there is no worry'. Here, like Duchamp, Stein creates her description of 'A HANDKERCHIEF' as an object that 'wins' the historical and religious context of 'blessings', and operates as a container to capture sneezes as in 'a sample'.

There are also similarities between Stein's choice of titles for her 'Object Poems' and the manufactured objects of Duchamp's readymade artworks. For example, with Stein's poem titles 'A LONG

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[117] Stein, *Tender Buttons*, p. 14.

DRESS'.'A RED HAT' and 'A CHAIR', these titles are regular nouns.

However unlike regular noun titles that introduce a subject, Stein's

titles operate more like containers, framing the loose meanings and

associations presented in the poems below. In contrast, Duchamp's

objects operate like nouns and in relation to the title and the situation

they are presented in. This Marjorie Perloff proposes as an answer to

questions of whether there are parallels between the two

practitioners as:

> Did the Readymades influence Stein's writing? Yes and no. Like Duchamp— [. . .]—her compositions resemble Duchamp's "objects" in their wholesale rejection of the mimetic contract— a rejection that, to my mind goes well beyond Cubist distortion and dislocation of what, after all, are still recognizable objects and bodies. In this sense Duchamp's dismissal of the "retinal" is also hers.[118]

It is interesting to note that Stein, an American in Paris and Duchamp

a Frenchman in New York both choose to disrupt the ordinary

language of objects as vehicles for their experimental art and poetry.

Perhaps this shared methodology stems from the shared experience of

being displaced from their countries of origin and from their mother

tongue languages. However, contrary to Duchamp's anti-retinal art

ambitions, these early ready-mades are often seen as little more than

thought-provoking visual amusements. It was not until Duchamp

produced *Fountain* in 1917 that the impact of his "readymades" is felt

by his contemporaries.

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[118] Perloff, 'A Cessation of Resemblances', (para. 15 of 49).

Figure 10. Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain,* 1917

The most notorious of Duchamp's readymades is *Fountain*. Shocking

in its rude, nude associations with toilets, bodily functions and human

waste, *Fountain*, consists of a standard, manufactured, white,

porcelain men's urinal, upturned, mounted on a plinth and signed and

dated in black paint 'R. Mutt. 1917'. Widely referred to as 'the urinal',

Duchamp's *Fountain* has been synonymous with the question of 'what

is art?' ever since it was first rejected by the "Society of Independent

Artists" in New York in 1917. [119] It has continued to fuel controversy and to provoke strong reactions from new audiences and critics alike. Most notably in recent years questions continue to circulate as to whether Duchamp was the artist behind *Fountain*, due to conflicting suggestion behind the meaning and identity of 'R.Mutt'. Much of the current artist authorship controversy was fuelled by Duchamp himself, who in 1917 wrote a letter to his sister Suzanne— this was first made public in 1982 through the publication of 'Affectueusement, Marcel: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti'— in which he writes:

> The Independents have opened here with immense success. One of my female friends under a masculine pseudonym, Richard Mutt, sent in a porcelain urinal as a sculpture; it was not all indecent — no reason for reusing it. The committee has decided to refuse to show this thing. I have handed in my resignation and it will be a bit of gossip of some value in New York.[120]

At first glance, this letter strongly suggests that Duchamp was not the originator of the first *Fountain*. However, it is possible that Duchamp is making a private joke between siblings, and that the "female friend" operating under the "male pseudonym" is in fact himself; a fact that Duchamp wouldn't need to explain to Suzanne, his sister and close

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[119]The Society of Independent Artists was established in New York in 1917 by Walter Arensberg, John Covert, Marcel Duchamp, Katherine Sophie Dreier, William J. Glackens, Albert Gleizes, John Marin, Walter Pach, Man Ray, Mary Rogers, John Sloan and Joseph Stella. For a $6 membership fee, artists could join to exhibit work outside of the conventions of juries or prizes. Marcel Duchamp resigned as director of society in April 1917, following the decison by the Society to exclude *Fountain* from the inaugural Annual Exhibition.

[120] Marcel Duchamp, '*Affectueusement: Ten Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crott*i' in Archive of American Art Journal, Vol.22, No.4 (1982). p. 8.

confidante.[121] Alternatively, it could be that Duchamp (known for his sense of humour) decided to cause a bit of mischief in writing to his sister and had wanted to create 'a bit of gossip' and mystery surrounding the identity of the artist from the very beginning. Regardless of the mystery surrounding the "female-artist's identity", it is interesting to turn our attention to the relationship between the readymade object and Duchamp's use of language—the signature 'R.Mutt 1917', as the site and operation of authorship in language, as to where the real controversy of the artwork is being created. [122]

It is a widely held view within the contemporary art world that the act of signing the urinal by Duchamp, who had pre-selected it for readymade use, transformed the urinal from an ordinary household object into a piece of art. However, it is not only the urinal that has been has been transformed into an art material. By signing the urinal 'R.Mutt'—neither the name of Duchamp nor a known female artist's name—the creator of *Fountain* has also appropriated the function of a signature as a "material" for art and has occupied this conventional space to perform a "language act". According to art critic William Camfield 'Duchamp stated many years later that the pseudonym

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[121] We might here recall Rrose Sélavy", a female pseudonym Duchamp operated under to produce readymades and printed art-works, emerged in 1921, following a series of photographs by Man Ray of Duchamp dressed as a woman.

[122] In The Arts Newspaper article, *Did Marcel steal Elsa's urinal*? Nov 2014, Julian Spalding and Glyn Thompson, claims that Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874-1927) is the female friend that Duchamp refers to in his letter to his sister Suzanne, and that she is the originator of 'Fountain'.

"Mutt" came the from Mott works', [123] the iron works where the urinal was purchased. Duchamp explains he modified the name to create an amusing pun on a cartoon character's name, popular at the time:

> Mott was too close so I altered it to Mutt, after the daily strip cartoon "Mutt and Jeff" which appeared at the time, and with which everyone was familiar.[124]

If this is to be believed, one must surmise that Duchamp was conscious of his manipulation of the form of the signature. More precisely, this implies that he had intended to use it as a device to provoke questions around authenticity and originality in art and to problematize the function of the artist as creator. With his signature, 'R.Mutt' Duchamp creates a paradox: on one hand, the signature validates the urinal as a piece of art and, on the other, it denies 'Fountain' being a certified piece of art by appearing to be created by a made-up character and not by a known artist.

It is within the ambiguity created through "the signature" that the authorship and authenticity of the artwork is undermined. This act of undermining the traditional authenticity of an artwork enhances the provocation of the artwork and has continued to play a vital role in keeping this artwork present in the art world today. Language mattered to Duchamp and provided him with the tools to create his anti-retinal artworks and to redirect the experience of art away from his spectators' eyes, and to instead occupy their minds.

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[123] William Camfield, 'Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Its History and Aesthetics in the Context of 1917' in *Marcel Duchamp: artist of the century,* ed. by Rudolf E, Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), p. 68.
[124] Ibid.

In his dialogues with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp explains his reason for signing the urinal 'R.Mutt' as 'I had written the name "Mutt" on it to avoid connection with the personal'. [125] Creating a distance or "a delay" between himself and the role of the artist, the creative act and the reception of art objects is a recurring theme in Duchamp's art practice. Indeed, the word "delay" is recurring motif in his later works suggesting that "a delay" or creating a pause or a thinking space for art, is a recurring occupation of Duchamp's artistic project. I will go into this in more detail later in the chapter where I examine Duchamp's notes. For now, I will return to Duchamp's use of "the signature" as an art material and Stein's own occupation of another's voice to stand in for her own as an experimental strategy.

Although written in ordinary linear prose style and not as obviously experimental as Stein's other prose and poetry works, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* is a surprisingly mischievous take on authorship and on autobiographical writing, as is revealed by Stein in the closing lines of the book, which ends:

> About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it.[126]

Stein deliberately blurs the boundaries of authorship and subject in her 1933 *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Here Stein turns out to be the secret author and is also much of the "auto" biographical subject of

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[125] Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* p.55.
[126] Gertrude Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* p. 272.

the biography. According to Carolyn Faunce Copeland, this blurring of authorial truth produces a break between the authenticity of the book and what is being represented by Stein as a truth outside of her own experience, which Copeland explains as:

> That "facts" in the work are not true, and should not be taken as the literal truth of what is on Stein's mind, but rather "What is in somebody else's."[127]

Stein and Duchamp, both manipulate the relationship of author and reader, artist and viewer, via language devices. Stein extends Duchamp's device of the signature, as a method to claim and to foreground authorship as an experimental writing strategy via her own occupation of the autobiographical-first-person-narrator and by a "play-on" being Alice B. Toklas. That is to say that Stein has created a version of herself that pretends to be Alice B. Toklas through the act of writing her fictional autobiography. In doing so, Stein creates a "delay" between her authentic voice and the authentic voice of Alice, by which she can fully occupy of the site of Alice's voice in order to "act" as the Alice B. Toklas writing the book.

By occupying the voice of Alice B. Toklas, Stein transforms the traditionally held autobiographical-first-person-narrator into the basis for a complex fictional retelling of Stein's life based on true and fictional events. This act of disguising oneself as another in order to create a narrative has interesting parallels with Duchamp's guise as 'R Mutt'. The notion of disguise—to become someone else but at the

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[127] Carolyn Faunce Copeland, '*Language & Time & Gertrude Stein*,' (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1975), p.126.

same time remaining oneself—is a recurring method for experimentation and creation for both artists who are both the creators and the subjects in their work. They seek to create shifts in identity and meaning within their work, by choosing to perform as someone else to create their artwork. The artists play with the conventions of language to create new guises or representations of the objects they are representing.

In the case of Stein, in her 'Objects poems' she represents her objects through descriptions of their function rather than through an aesthetic description of form. In the case of Duchamp, is it through his method of appropriating "manufactured objects" to operate as materials for art. For example, the urinal in *Fountain* is no longer a functioning urinal. It has been recast as an art material by Duchamp, and 'R Mutt' is not a artist or its creator, but is Duchamp disguised as a fictional character from a comic strip, questioning the role of the artist in the validation of a piece of art. At the same time, the title *Fountain*, juxtaposed with the up-turned urinal, brings to mind many other water related objects and references. For example, it suggests the fountains of classical Rome and Greece and their place within art history, public-drinking fountains, the arc of male urine and also the notion of a 'source' as in the 'fount' or a fountain of knowledge. By combining an experience of language with an experience of visual art through manufactured objects, Duchamp creates a hybrid system of experience for his spectator. David Antin refers to this as: 'the visual-

haptic system [...] the representational system of human beings and

[...] the conceptual system of language'.[128]

Titles as poetic strategies for creating anti-retinal artworks

This method of creating an "art event" through a system of

visualization and a conceptual system of language (through the

combination of objects and words) is a recurring motif in Duchamp's

readymade and semi-readymade artworks.

Figure 11. Marcel Duchamp, *In Advance of the Broken Arm,*
1915

[128] David Antin, 'Duchamp and Language' *in Marcel Duchamp*, ed. by Anne
d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, (London: Museum of Modern Art,
New York Press, 1974), p. 109.

In the title of his semi-readymade artwork, 'In Advance of the Broken Arm,' Duchamp's use of language becomes more complex and interesting. This short, humorous phrase does two major things. Firstly, it operates like a public information sign, warning spectators of the pending, 'Broken Arm' that could occur. However, situated alongside the hanging generic snow shovel, it also appears to invite spectators to physically shovel-up snow before they slip and break their arm. The title at once operates as the title of the work and as an invitation to spectators to view the artwork in relation to their own personal experience of shoveling snow and slipping on ice. Thus Duchamp places remembered experience alongside the lived experience, in the act of viewing of the snow shovel, to create an experience of art. In his 1957 talk 'The Creative Act', Duchamp explains his ideas on the creative act and the role of the artist and the spectator as fundamental to his theory for an experience of art:

> All in all the creative act is not performed by the artist alone: the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.'[129]

Taken in this context, the experience of 'shoveling snow' operates as a 'found' or 'shared' ordinary American experience; and the 'the arm' of the title is generic and could belong to anyone. According to Marjorie Perloff, Duchamp's *In Advance of the Broken Arm* is in dialogue with

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[129] Marcel Duchamp, 'The Creative Act', in *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp* ed. Michael Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975).

Gertrude Stein's, experimental novel *The Making of the Americans* and with the patriotic American painting, *The Making of an American.* [130] The painting depicts a man with a child at his side and his wife, babe in arms, accepting a shovel from Lady Liberty while standing before the American flag. With this gesture, Duchamp, himself a recent immigrant to the USA, could very well be pinning his allegiance to the flag, if one is to read this work as Duchamp's own poetic self-portrait. As Perloff suggests, 'In this context, Duchamp's *In Advance* can be constructed as his own, "Making of an American"'.[131]

Secondly, Duchamp's choice of the word, 'advance', a word relating to time, creates a more complex experience of his shovel. Through the combination of the meanings of the title, knowledge of shoveling snow, and the presence of the hanging shovel, Duchamp produces an artwork that combines past, present and future experiences of snow shoveling as an experience art.

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[130] The picture shows a man with a child and his wife by his side, the wife is holding a babe in arms. The man is accepting a shovel from lady Liberty, who stands in front of the American flag.

[131] Marjorie Perloff, '"The Madness of the Unexpected": Duchamp's Readymades and the Survival of "High" Art in Regarding The Popular: Modernism', in *The Avant-Garde and High and Low Culture* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), p. 26.

Figure 12, Marcel Duchamp, *Fresh Widow,* 1920

The potentialities of titles as materials for making art are further
exploited in the Duchamp's 1920 "semi-readymade"[132] *Fresh Widow*.
This artwork consists of a miniature French window wooden frame,
which has been painted sky blue and filled with back shiny leather
panes instead of glass. According to Antin, this artwork is a prime
example of how Duchamp employs linguistic systems and poetry to
produce his conceptual artworks. Here Duchamp creates his title for

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[132] Described by the dealer Arturo Schwarz as a 'semi-ready-made' in *The
Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* for Duchamp's use of the concept of a
pre-exist French Window, as the readymade element.

the work by performing a simple language game on the words 'French

Window'. By systematically deleting the letter 'n' from the words

'French Window' Duchamp creates a new word pairing 'Frech Widow'.

This Duchamp corrects to finalize the word pairing in English to 'Fresh

Widow'. Here Duchamp's method is to perform a conceptual language

act as a creative process, to create this semi-readymade. This Antin

explains as:

> [. . .]the relation between <u>fresh widow</u> and <u>french window </u>is
> not a relation of meaning but a relation of phonology or
> spelling and the only other relation that these words
> poems seem to have to each other is that they both belong
> to meaningful entities in the english language.[133]

Antin goes on to suggest that what a spectator experiences when

viewing the work is 'a construction locked between the two linguistic

ones'.[134] In this case the semi-readymade object is locked between the

two, two-word lines, "French Window" and "Fresh Widow". This Antin

describes as operating within the artwork as follows:

> It oscillates between the two divergent semantic poles fresh
> widow/french window/ fresh widow/ french window
> so that the actual physical construction is more of an aide
> memories than a simple physical construction which once
> decoded sets the conceptual pendulum in oscillation between
> the two poles that have just been electrified or actuated
> I would say that what duchamp does as an artist is to create a
> series of kinetic art works in which a language field defines the
> action of something that puts in the middle. [135]

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[133] David Antin, 'Duchamp and Language', p. 104.
[134] Ibid.; p. 105.
[135] Ibid., p. 105.

Figure 13, Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even,* 1915-1923

Duchamp's major work *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*—also known as *The Large Glass*—and its accompanying notes—known as The Green Box—is a further example of Duchamp's use of language systems and of poetic devices as models and as a material within his artworks. [136]

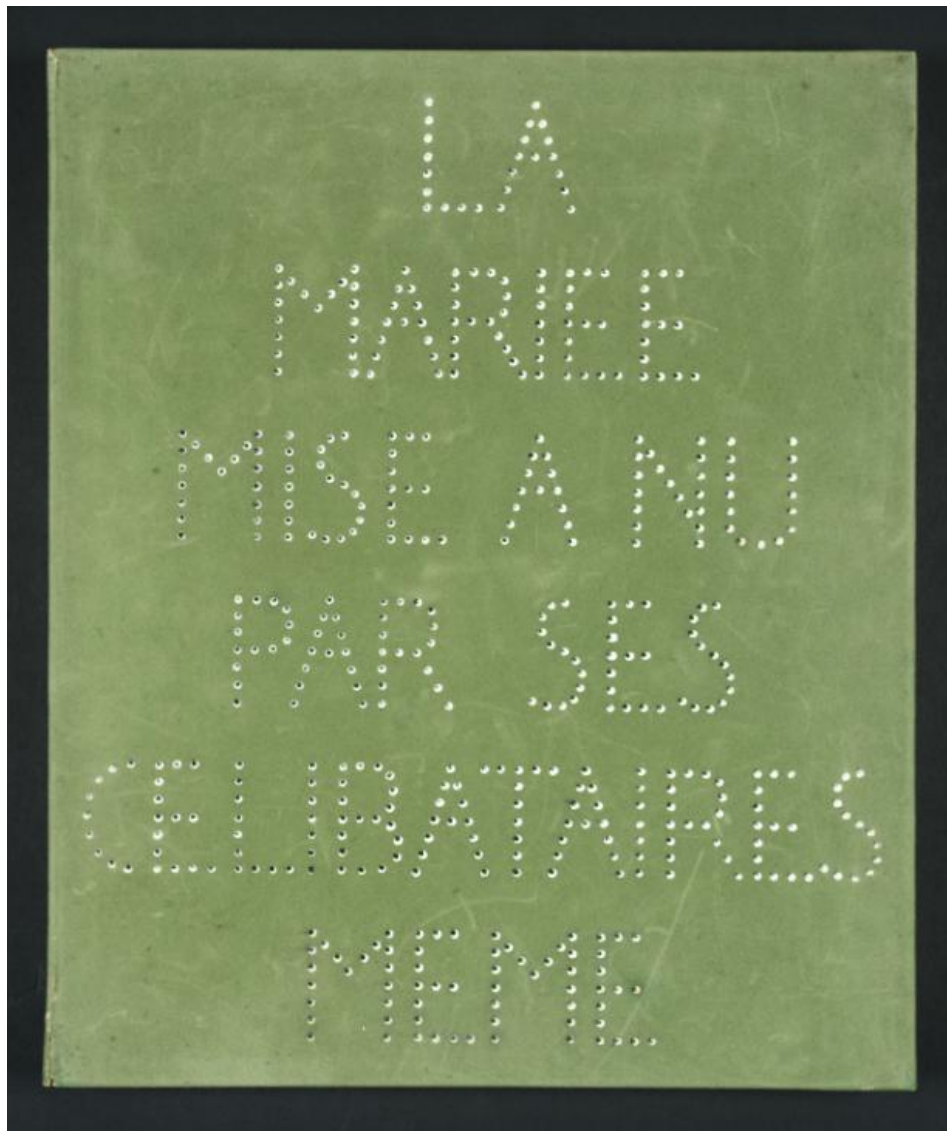[136] The title originally in French reads, 'La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même'.

Figure 14. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, The Green Box,* 1915-1923

Duchamp began working on the notes in 1912 before leaving Paris in 1915 and completed the work in New York in 1923. According to Duchamp, this major project 'integrated the successive sum of his experiments' of this period including his experiments into "readymades" and "semi-readymade" sculptures. [137] According to Duchamp the title, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* is a

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[137] Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, p. 40.

tactical ploy to foreground "adverbness" as a process in order to

create a sentence of 'no meaning', as he explains in interview with

Pierre Cabanne:

> Titles in general interested me a lot. At the time, I was becoming
> literary. Words interested me; and the bringing together of
> words to which I added a comma and "even," an adverb which
> makes no sense, since it relates to nothing in the picture or
> title. Thus it was an adverb in the most beautiful demonstration
> of adverbness. It has no meaning.[138]

In this respect, Duchamp's practice appears to be in dialogue with the

experimental writing tactics of Gertrude Stein. In her 'Poetry and

Grammar lecture'[139] Stein states:

> Beside the nouns and the adjectives there are verbs and
> adverbs. Verbs and adverbs are more interesting. In the first
> place they have one very nice quality and that is that they can
> be so mistaken. It is wonderful the number of mistakes a verb
> can make and that is equally true of its adverb.[140]

This concept of mistaken ambiguities of meanings as a poetic device is

also what interests Duchamp in his effort to expose the "adverbness"

of the adverb 'Even' in his title. He explains that '"This antisense"

interested me a lot on the poetic level, from the point of view of the

sentence'.[141] By adding the word 'even' to the end of his title, Duchamp

modifies the sentence 'The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors'. The

addition of 'Even' acts to regenerate the sentence into a partial

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[138] Ibid.

[139] In 1934 Stein returned to America after thirty-year absence. She gave a six-month lecture tour, visiting twenty-three states and thirty-seven cities.

[140] Gertrude Stein, 'Poetry and Grammar', in *Look At Me Now And Here I AM: Selected works 1911- 1945*, ed. by Patricia Meyerowitz (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1967), p. 125.

[141] Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 40.

sentence of multiple ends and possible continuities. This is similar to Stein's method of combining complete and incomplete sentences to create the multiple surface directions of her *Tender Buttons* poems, as the poem ' A CLOTH' demonstrates:

A CLOTH

Enough cloth is plenty and more, more is almost enough for that and besides if there is no more spreading is there plenty of room for it. Any occasion shows the best way.[142]

Stein's repetition of the words 'plenty' and 'more' works to fill up and empty out words of their meanings. As with the unsatisfactory end to Duchamp's title, Stein's last line, 'Any occasion shows the best way', propose questions around 'the best way' to what? Both of these lines force their readers to closely re-examine them to explore where "beneath the surface" of the text's meanings can be located.

What else interests me with this poem, is Stein's use of a comma in the first line of the text and its possible relationship to Duchamp's comma use in his artwork title. It is interesting to observe that Stein and Duchamp use fragmented sentences as tactics to create poetic reading events. In the case of Stein, her poem is made of fragmented sentences structured as a single sentence and laid out over three lines to create the poem: 'Enough cloth is plenty and more, more is almost enough for that | and besides if there is no more spreading is there plenty of room for | it.' Whereas Duchamp's title,

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[142] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p. 10.

The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even appears to be a fragmented sentence cut prematurely short, as if to pose a question.

In addition, both sentences are conspicuous in their non-conventional use of the comma. Stein moves from creating a pause with a comma to dropping the comma after one use. Duchamp's comma creates a pause that simultaneously leads to nowhere and everywhere in the absence of the suggested missing end. According to Duchamp, his comma doesn't just perform the role of a conventional comma but also performs a language act with the adverb 'Even' that acts to mimic the intention of the 'Bachelors' in *The Large Glass*, that is to strip bare and to reveal the nonsensical meaning of the adverb 'Even'. Duchamp explains this title construction as a happy accident of translation from French to English that added value to a conceptual reading of his title:

> In fact, when I did it, I had no idea of its value, In English, too, "even" is an absolute adverb; it has no sense. All the more possibility of stripping bare. It's a "non-sense."[143]

Given Duchamp's method of performing a conceptual act via a manipulation of grammar to simulate, is it then possible to consider that Stein's comma also is performing a similar language act? In the case of 'A CLOTH' can Stein's comma be read as a conventional comma that is also performing the actions of "reeling" and "unreel" a piece of cloth. Does Stein use the comma and repeated words to serve as a method to create a poetic description of a piece of cloth? For both artists what is visual is transferred into an experience of language and

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[143] Cabanne, *Dialogue,* p. 40.

through a conceptual experimental and tactile process with the

system of language. Duchamp, in his dialogues with Pierre Cabanna,

refers to his method for making the *The Bride Stripped Bare by her*

Bachelors, Even in terms of a writing practice:

> I was mixing story, anecdote (in the good sense of the word),
> with visual representation, while giving less importance to
> visuality, to the visual element, than one generally gives in
> painting. Already I didn't want to be preoccupied with visual
> language. . . .[144]

This deliberate move towards utilizing language as a conceptual

process for an art practice is most evident in the ninety-seven pages of

notes, diagrams and poems of the *The Bride Stripped Bare by her*

Bachelors, Even, The Green Box produced between 1913-14. Duchamp

says of his original *Green Box*:

> I didn't have the idea of a box as much as just notes. I thought I
> could collect, in an album like the Saint-Eitenne catalogue, some
> calculations, some reflexions, without relating them. Sometimes
> they're on torn pieces of paper. . . . I wanted the album to go with
> the "Glass," and to be consulted when seeing the "Glass" because,
> as I see it, it must not be "looked at" in the aesthetic sense of the
> word. One must consult the book, and see the two together.
> The conjunction of the two things entirely removes the retinal
> aspect that I don't like. It was very logical.[145]

By presenting his viewer with both the visual and the written and

drawn mechanics of his artwork, Duchamp hoped to break with a

purely retinal experience of the artwork and to engage his audience

through an experience of the making of the work. The later box,

known simply as *The Green Box* was published in 1934 by Duchamp

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[144] Cabanne, Dialogues, p. 39.
[145] Cabanne, Dialogue, pp. 42-43.

under the name of his alter ego Rrose Sélavy. [146] Like Stein's later

alias, Alice B. Tolkas, Rrose Sélavy was invented according to

Duchamp as a way for himself to distance himself from the constraints

of his given identity, to experiment with persona and to question the

traditional value placed on artistic authorship:

> In effect, I wanted to change my identity, and the first idea
> came to me was to make a Jewish name. I was Catholic, and it
> was a change from one religion to another. I didn't find a
> Jewish name that I especially liked, or that tempted me, and
> suddenly I had an idea: why not change sex? I was much
> simpler. So the name Rrose Sélavy came from that. Nowadays,
> this may be all very well—names change with the times—but
> Rrose was an awful name in 1920.[147]
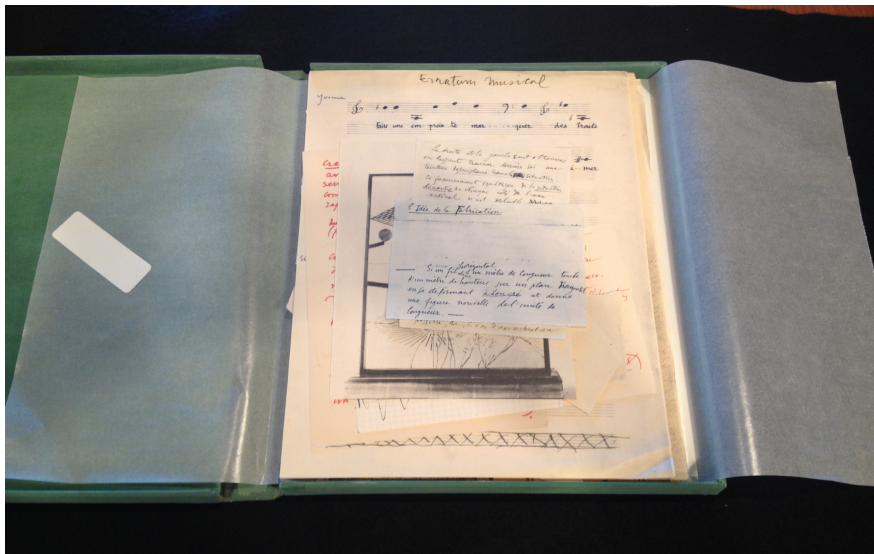
Figure 15. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her
Bachelors Even, The Green Box*, 1915-1923

Duchamp's *Green Box* was originally published as an edition of twenty.

Each box contained ninety-four loose notes relating to the production

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[146] Rrose Sélavy first emerged in 1921 in a series of photographs by Man Ray
showing Duchamp dressed as woman. A pun on the French phrase, Eros,
c'est las vie, translates to 'Eros, such is life", Duchamp went on to create a
number of readymades and publications under the guise of Rrose Sélavy.
[147] Cabanne, Dialogues, p. 64.

of *The Large Glass,* instructions for readymades and other anti-retinal poetic artworks. Duchamp painstakingly reproduced each note. This process, according to art historian, translator and friend of Duchamp, Professor George Heard-Hamilton resulted in:

> The form of this publication was as unexpected as the work to which it referred, for each of the documents whether a careful drawing of mechanical elements on tracing paper or a note suddenly scribbled on a restaurant menu, was reproduced in exact facsimile, even to the torn edges of the odd scraps of paper.[148]

According to Heard-Hamilton, the rationale for Duchamp's painstaking copying process was textbook Duchamp, which he explains as:

> Only in this way, of course, could Duchamp preserve in multiple form the improvisatory character of the ideas as they had occurred to him.[149]

Occupying the private thinking space between the sketchbook and the finished artwork, Duchamp's *Green Box* is a curious artifact that offers its spectators the opportunity to rummage through and to assemble and reassemble its contents into a multitude of sequences. One such viewer to come across the *Green Box* was British artist Richard Hamilton.[150] In an interview with Michael Craig-Martin, Hamilton recalls his first encounter with the *Green Box,* and how this incident

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[148] Marcel Duchamp *from the Green Box*, trans. by George Heard-Hamilton (Yale : The Readymade Press, 1957) no pagination.

[149] Ibid., n.p.

[150] Richard Hamilton is a key figure in 20th century art. An original member of the Independent Group in London in the 1950s, he organized or participated in ground-breaking exhibitions associated with the group. In 1961 Hamilton recreated the Large Glass at the Tate from Duchamp's notes.

led Duchamp and Heard-Hamilton to approach Richard Hamilton as a

future collaborator:

> C-M: Was your first contact with Duchamp through Nigel Henderson—with the *Green Box*?
>
> Hamilton: Yes, that was an important moment. It was later proposed that we should have an evening on Duchamp at the ICA [. . .] So I made a diagram of the textual ideas as I thought they related to *the Large Glass.* I made a slide of my diagram, and this was my contribution to the ICA discussion [...] I sent the diagram to Duchamp [..] Then almost a year later, I got a letter in a familiar handwriting that said [...]"I'm sorry I haven't written to you before. I've had many disappointments about the *Green Box,* but a friend of mine, George Heard Hamilton, professor of art at Yale University, wants to do a complete translation of the Green Box and would like to collaborate with you."[151]

Duchamp's 'many disappointments' with the reception of the *Green*

Box appear to be the only indication he gives to Richard Hamilton as to

whether he had understood Duchamp's intentions for the *Green Box*

and the notes inside. As Hamilton remarks to Craig-Martin when

reflecting on his initial correspondence with Duchamp, 'He didn't say

anything about the diagram or correct me.' [152] However, one must

presume that Duchamp and Prof Heard-Hamilton—who himself had

already translated and published a selected edition of notes at

Yale[153]—felt confident, through Richard Hamilton's gesture to draw

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[151]Michael Craig-Martin 'From October Files', in *Richard Hamilton* ed. Hal Foster with Alex Bacon P.9 From October Files: essays and interviews by Michael Craig-Martin ...[et al] (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2010) p. 9.
[152] Ibid., p. 10.
[153] In 1957 in collaboration with graphic designer Henry Steiner, George-Heard Hamilton translated and published *from the Green Box*, a selection of 25 notes from The Green Box Marcel Duchamp at The Readymade Press at Yale University.

up and to send Duchamp his own diagram for reconstructing *The Large Glass*, that he was their man.

By communicating to Duchamp via the means of a diagram based on one of Duchamp's notes, Richard Hamilton demonstrated that he could get inside and understood Duchamp's methods of "craftsmanship" and "planning". This process Hamilton claims 'is devised to isolate the artist from any emotional relationship with his medium'.[154] Thus, Hamilton proved that via an engagement with the notes of *The Green Box*, it was possible for a spectator to enter the intellectual making process of creating the *Large Glass.* In turn, Hamilton, by moving from written language to visual language, had presented a system of logical thought, via the aid of a diagram, to perform a reading of a process for assembling the *Large Glass.*

Richard Hamilton's 1960 version of the *Green Box* is an A5 pocket-sized hardback book. What is striking when viewing the Hamilton version is the neatness of the layout of the book. Gone are the hand-written notes of Duchamp's original loose-leaf pages and his craftsman-like attention to specialist papers. Instead, in its place are precisely laid out texts, diagrams, photocopied prints, paintings, a musical score, including the iconic Duchamp signature that authenticates the project, to form a book-length sequence of poetry. Gone too is the comma in the title of the book, *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors Even.* This subtle change to the title suggests to me,

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[154] Richard Hamilton, The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, Again: A reconstruction by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Large Glass (Newcastle: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1966), No pagination.

that Duchamp and collaborators are specifying that this book is a new

approach to translating the notes of the box into a fixed form.

With the inclusion of the on-going scholarly support of Heard-

Hamilton, it is clear that Duchamp shared Heard-Hamilton's view that

the notes were, 'an inseparable part of modern poetics'.[155] It is also

reasonable to assume—as Heard-Hamilton had recommended

Richard Hamilton to Duchamp—that this was a joint enterprise

between Duchamp and Heard-Hamilton to see the notes translated

and fully appreciated independently of viewing the *Large Glass*.

By foregrounding typography as a process of collaborative

making, Richard Hamilton and George Heard-Hamilton and Duchamp

suggest that this book is a focused exploration into the intellectual

interests of Duchamp and into his use of language systems and words

as an art material. According to Richard Hamilton, preserving the

integrity of Duchamp's use of language was central to the

collaborative translation process between himself and George Heard-

Hamilton:

> We tried to provide all the words and all the marks which
> convey the ideas and as much as possible of the variations
> of visual quality of the notes which give clues to the way in
> which ideas developed and were modified.[156]

Richard Hamilton developed a series of strategies to translate

Duchamp's notes into his own typographical rendering to 'maintain

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155 Duchamp, *from the Green Box*, n.p.
156 Marcel Duchamp, *The bride stripped bare by bachelors even: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton*, p. 1.

the individuality of the notes'. [157] His starting point, he explains, was to give 'each separate page of the original a separate page in the book'.[158] Richard Hamilton paid special attention to the series of marks, crossings out, squiggles and other visual annotations applied by Duchamp in his original handwritten notes to create a uniform visual system that he applied to the texts, instructions, drawings, diagrams, poems and images throughout the book.
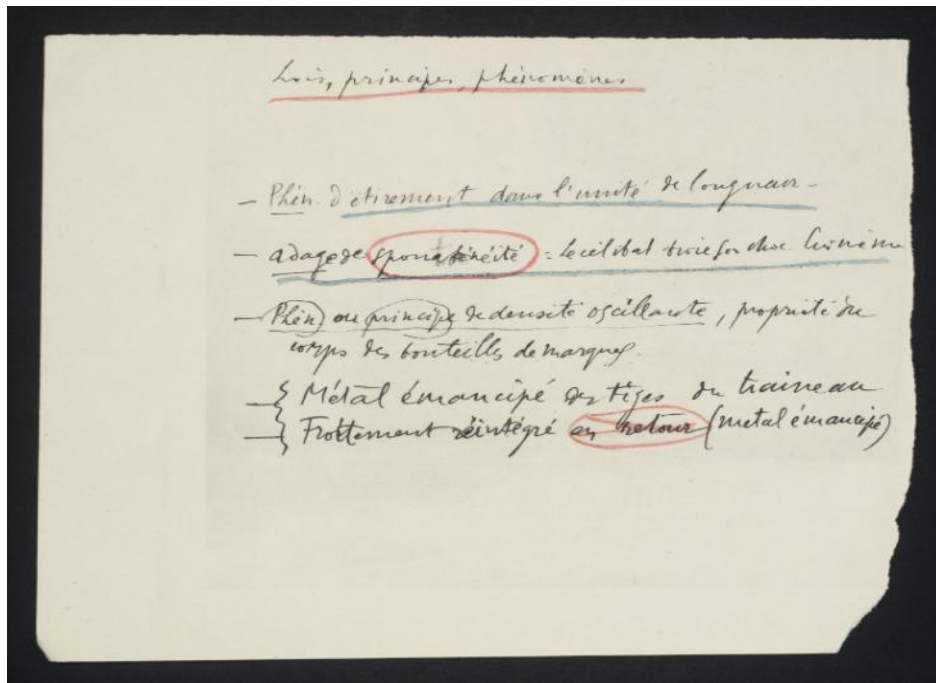

Figure 16. Marcel *Duchamp, Laws, principles, phenomena, The Green Box*, 1915–23

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[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
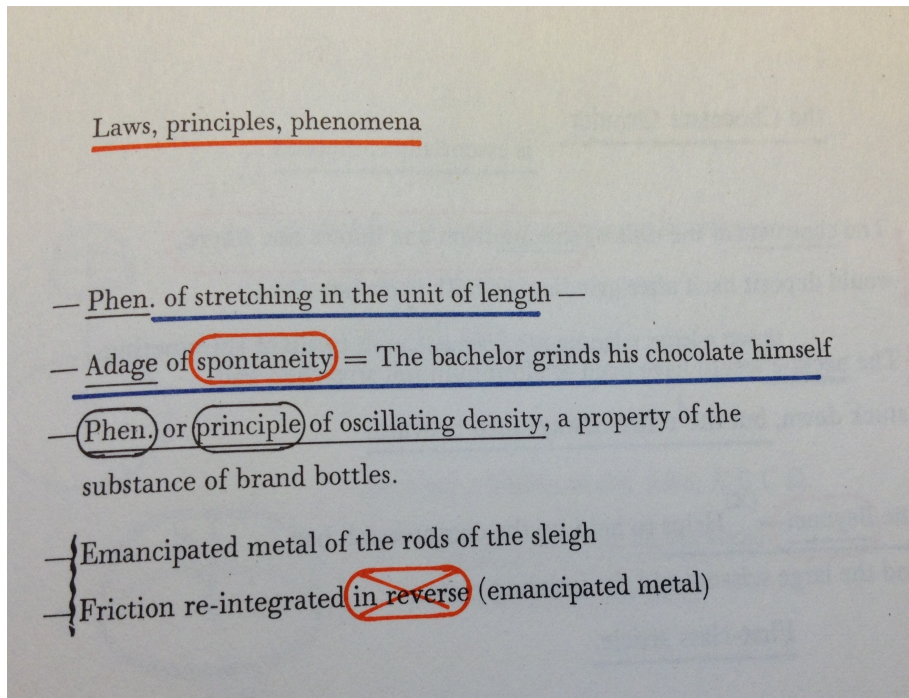
Figure 17. Marcel Duchamp, *Laws, principles, phenomena in The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even, a typographical version by Richard Hamilton,* 1960

As figures 16 and 17 demonstrate, Richard Hamilton's method of tidying up the marks and annotations of Duchamp's notes, gives prominence to their function and encourages a close reading of "marks" as part of the language of the notes. Richard Hamilton's translation invites the reader to read the texts in relation to the marks, colours and annotations applied to them. For example, to read through the method of orange ellipses, one is invited to read the phase "spontaneity in reverse" and ask, what does this mean? And how does this relate to the overall text? Should one omit the crossed out in orange words of "in reverse" from the reading of the text entirely or are these crossed out yet visually accessible words still part of the text, but acting in different way to the ringed oranges words?

By visually highlighting these words, are Duchamp and Richard Hamilton suggesting that over time "spontaneity" goes into "reverse"? Or that "spontaneity" is both a clue to the conceptual meaning of the 'Laws, principles, phenomena' (again underlined in orange) of the 'Large Glass', and a function of the pistons that drive the bachelors in artwork? If so, is the crossing out of the words 'in-reserve' an indication that a disruption to the mechanics of the *Large Glass* has an impact on the conceptual meaning of the work? And what of the other marks and annotations of Duchamp highlighted by Richard Hamilton's typographical translation?

As with the use of repeat words by Stein to build up and to pull apart the conventional meaning of words through the relationship of word meanings to each other, Duchamp and again Richard Hamilton use the visual tools of colour coding, mark-making and annotation as methods to recreate multi-reading of words, texts and poems. These, like the poems of Stein's *Tender Buttons*, use visual and language systems as guides to reading layered poetry and across the page. For example, parallels can be drawn between the annotations of Richard Hamilton's page, 'Laws, principles, phenomena' and Stein's use of word repetitions and visual tactics in her poem 'A LONG DRESS':

A LONG DRESS

What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle, what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist. What is a current.
What is the wind, what is it.
Where is the serene length, it is there and a dark place is not a dark place, only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green are blue, a pink in scarlet, a bow is every color. A line distinguishes

it. A line just distinguishes it. [159]

In this poem, Stein repeats the word "What" to foregrounded questioning as an active part of reading this poem. By creating a form that breaks down long lines into shorter ones, Stein is able to process a series of partial sentences starting with the word 'What', as this line demonstrates, 'what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist'. However, by reading on to the next line, it become apparent that the partial sentence is part of the larger sentence 'What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle, | what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist'.

By repeating the words "What" and visually presenting them above and below each other, Stein frees the urgency of "What" and like electricity it runs along the 'currency' of the lines, presenting a series of possible questions. For examples, "what is currency?" "What is meant by machinery?", "How does currency work?" and "What does this have to do with a long dress?" Here it appears that Stein has sited her writing experiment in the experience of static electricity, caused by a long skirt rubbing against a floor or the legs of the wearer. Her repeated use of the words 'What' and 'currency' move up and down and across lines to form possible reading combinations, such as 'What is a necessary waist | that makes it crackle, 'or 'What is a long line | What is a current'. In the second half of the poem, Stein replaces the word 'What' with 'Where', thus creating the rhyme between 'where' and 'there' in the second phrase of the line: 'Where is the serene

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[159] Stein, *Tender Buttons*, p. 8.

length, it is there and a dark place is not'. This rhyme replaces Stein's

use of repetition to act as the current and moves the line on. Stein's

partial line goes on to create the longer sentences that explore length

as a site for experiment. Later, W-sounds are replaced by d-sounds to

create a homophonic reading experience of a long dress, which is

visually written in long lines. This embodies the experience of wearing

the item through the function of a line of text. As Stein suggests 'A line

distinguishes it'.

Richard Hamilton's treatment of Duchamp's annotations

continues through the book. His decisions to foreground certain

aspects of Duchamp's annotations into concrete shapes and lines

creates new versions of Duchamp's notes that move beyond a

straightforward literary translation of the work. For example Richard

Hamilton's visual translation of Duchamp's note '*Preface'* gives visual

significance to the words highlighted and impaired by the marks and

lines applied to and around them. For example the title 'Preface'

underlined in Duchamp's notes is ringed by an orange ellipse, which

Hamilton also applies to the words 'determine', 'succession', 'various

facts', 'all the', 'innumerable eccentricities', 'determining them' and the

symbol '?' Also printed in orange are shaped lines that go behind and

beneath the word 'also'. An orange line also underlines the phrase 'the

term: extra-rapid', which continues to the outer right-hand edge of the

page. Notably the word "sign" has been perfectly circled in orange, as

if to suggest that what is highlighted in orange are signs, symbols or

clues to be paid attention to as a visual guide by which to access and

re-enact Duchamp's processes of drafting notes and sketches for his artworks and theories.
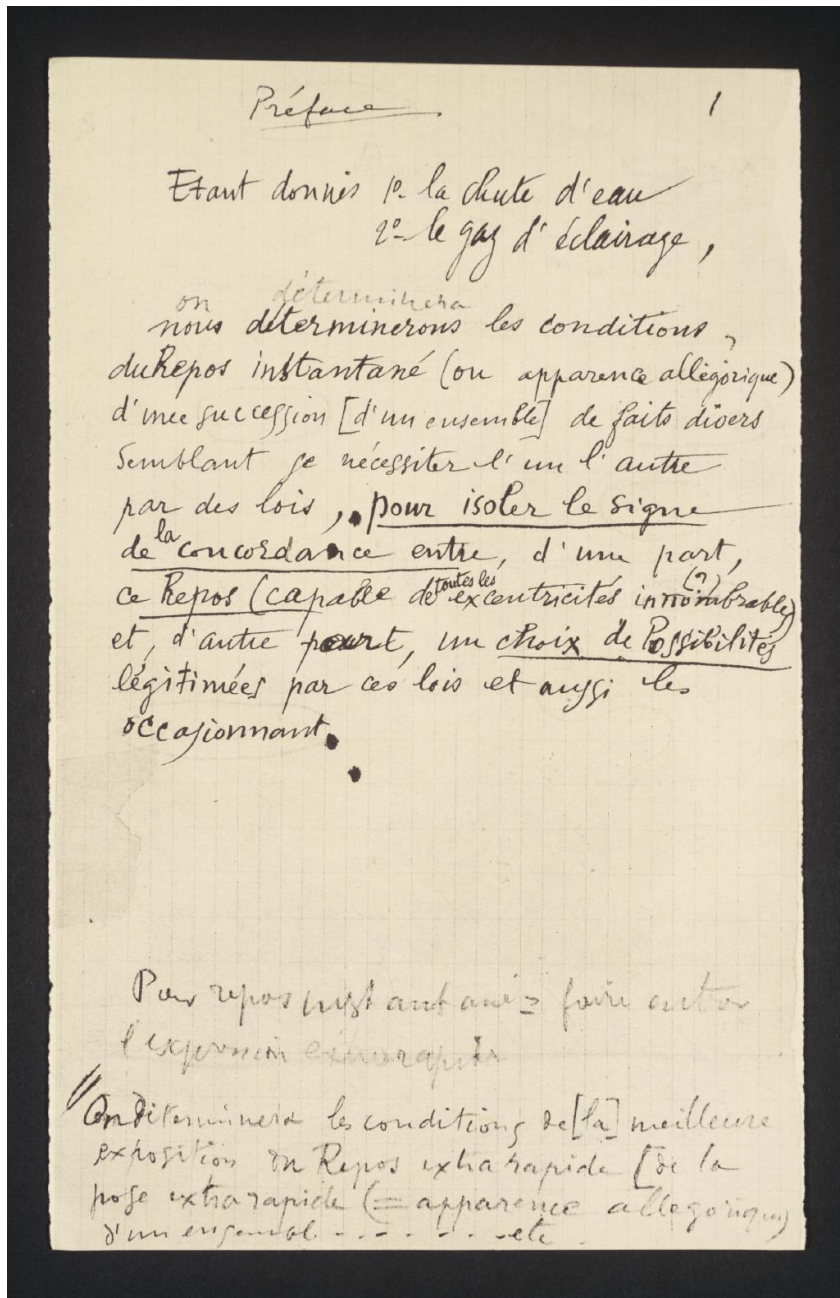

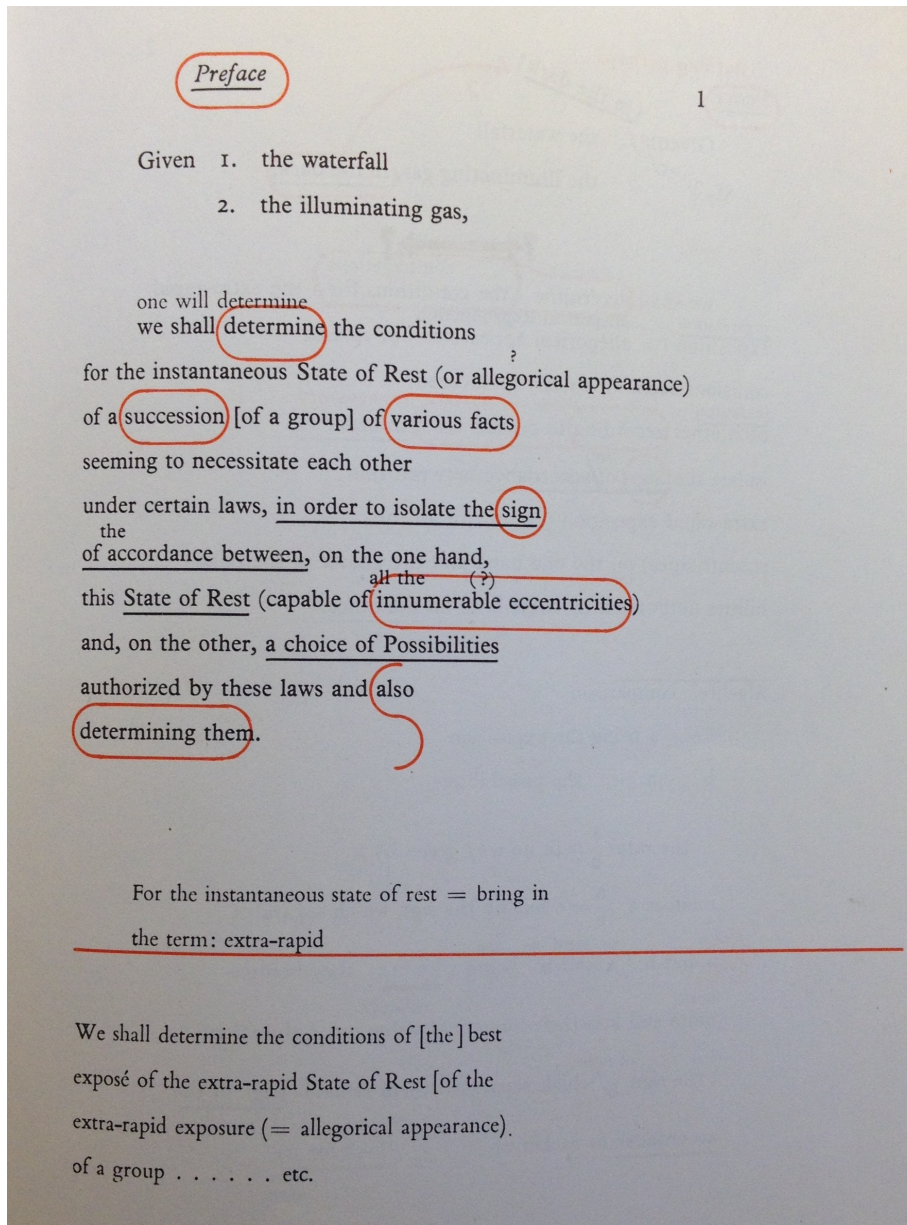Figure 18. Marcel Duchamp, *Preface, The Green Box*, 1915-23

Preface

1

Given   1. the waterfall

2. the illuminating gas,

one will determine

we shall determine the conditions

for the instantaneous State of Rest (or allegorical appearance)

of a succession [of a group] of various facts

seeming to necessitate each other

under certain laws, in order to isolate the sign

the

of accordance between, on the one hand,

all the   (?)

this State of Rest (capable of innumerable eccentricities)

and, on the other, a choice of Possibilities

authorized by these laws and also

determining them.

For the instantaneous state of rest = bring in

the term: extra-rapid

We shall determine the conditions of [the] best

exposé of the extra-rapid State of Rest [of the

extra-rapid exposure (= allegorical appearance).

of a group . . . . . . etc.

Figure 19. Marcel Duchamp *Preface, The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even, a typographical version by Richard Hamilton, 1960*

It is interesting to note the contrast in precision in Hamilton's orange marks and his placing of these annotations around the words on the page. In some instances, as with 'determine', 'determining them' and in the grouping of 'all the -?- innumerable eccentricities', Hamilton's applied marks have cut through and cut off letters and words in the

groupings. The orange ringed marks appear to float on top of the texts

pages, stopping at intervals to highlight areas for closer attention. As

with the "mobile language" of Stein's poetry, that which hovers on the

surface of the language exists through the relationships of complete

and incomplete sentences to form textured surfaces of texts. This

typographical application by Richard Hamilton gestures towards

accessing alternative readings of Duchamp's notes through an

aesthetic of reading layered textual surfaces, where movement is a

visual metaphor for becoming something else. As with the traditional

composition of poetry on the page, Richard Hamilton's visual

translations of Duchamp's notes are achieved through a system of

visual forms applied on to his texts, where line lengths and

annotations and coloured inks create a poetic language that offers

visual and verbal readings of a page.

The relevance of poetry is not fully appreciated in relation to

Richard Hamilton's understanding of Duchamp's notes and its role

within Duchamp's wider artistic project. Hamilton dismisses the

apparent poetic form of the notes as simply a matter of 'the variation

in line lengths' caused by the 'the natural difference of line length

determined by French and English grammar and spelling.' [160]

However, it is impossible to view these pages without reference to

poetry, poetic forms and poetic devices. As the alliteration of the

repeated b's in the words of the title suggests (not to mention the

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[160] Duchamp, *The bride stripped bare by bachelors even: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton*, n.p.

rhythm of their repetition), this is an artwork that is entangled with poetic ideas, devices and strategies. Indeed, Richard-Hamilton demonstrates this well when he falls into the trap of explaining the effects of Duchamp's notes as having a 'poetic appearance to the page'.[161] But what does Hamilton mean by this statement? What does it mean to say something has a poetic appearance? What are the visual rules of poetry, which this observation seems to acknowledge, and how can they be applied within visual art to make anti-retinal artworks that are not poetic?

Unconvinced by the poetry of Duchamp's notes, Richard Hamilton goes on, paradoxically, to suggest that one should treat any "poetic effects" in Duchamp's notes as coincidental. However, as Heard-Hamilton has already suggested, it is precisely a "modern poetics" that Duchamp is developing through his anti-retinal artworks and as such, his notes, instructions for artworks and sketches can be seen as visual verbal poems. Ironically, Richard Hamilton's own typographical treatment does much to reinforce the poetic appearance and even the poetry of the notes. For example, Richard Hamilton's treatment of Duchamp's note 'Rattle' clearly evokes the conventions of writing poetry when his translation of Duchamp's block of handwritten text that spans two pages in the original is reshaped into a linear, comb-shaped visual poem.

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[161] Ibid.

Crécelle.

avec une sorte de peigne, on se
servant de l'espace entre 2 dents
comme élément déterminer des
rapports entre les 2 points extrêmes

du peigne et des points intermédiaires
(par les ~~xxxxx~~ dents cassées).

    Faire agir, comme une
conduite proportionnelle, ce peigne
à dents cassées, sur une autre
matière composée, elle aussi
d'éléments plus petits (plus
petits pour qu'elle puisse
recevoir cette conduite. Par
exemple : des fils de plomb
plus ou moins gros placés
l'un contre l'autre dans
un plan (analogues à des cheveux).

Figure 20. Marcel Duchamp '*Crécelle p.1*', *The Green Box,* 1915-23

Ensuite, développer le
peigne c.à.d. qu'il agisse
autrement que normalement
sur un plan ~~xxx~~ de fils de
plomb [ou bien tournant
sur un point, ou bien un
peigne à courbures c.à.d. pas
plat ou à dents de longueurs
inégales; ou bien l'action de
ces différents modèles de
peigne sur une matière
(fils de plomb) épaisse et
non plus plane seulement].
etc.

Sept. 1915

Figure 21. Marcel Duchamp '*Crécelle p.2', The Green Box,* 1915-23

Rattle.
With a kind of comb, by
using the space between 2 teeth
as a unit, determine the
relations between the 2 ends
of the comb and some intermediary points
(by the broken teeth).
        Use, as a
proportional control, this comb
with broken teeth, on another
object made up, also
of smaller elements
(smaller so that it can
accommodate this control. For
example: lead wires
more or less thick, laid
one against the other in
one plane (like hair).

Then, develop the
comb i.e. so that it
works abnormally
on a plane of lead
wires [or then turning
on a point, or even a
curved comb, i.e. not
flat or with teeth of unequal
lengths; or even the action of
these different models of
comb on a thick
material (lead wires) and
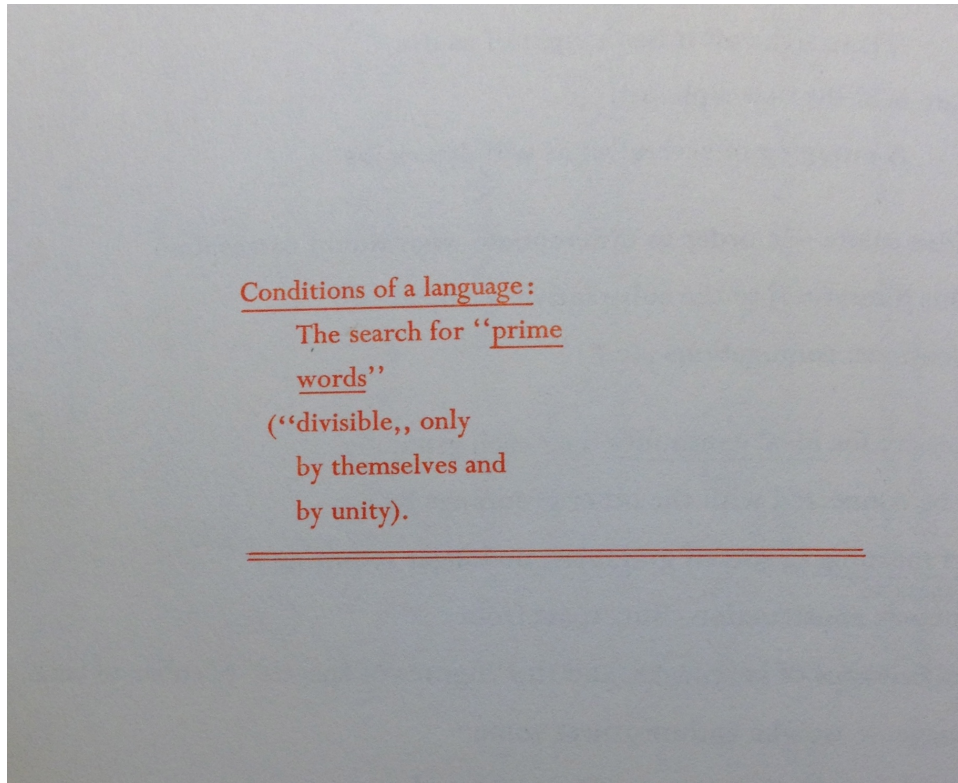no longer just flat].
etc.

Sept. 1915

Figure 22. Marcel Duchamp, '*Rattle', in The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even, a typographical version by Richard Hamilton,* 1960

Translated into English, Hamilton's 'Rattle' looks and reads like a

visual poem. The note, which I will critique as a poem consists of three

stanzas, and is a column shaped poem made up of thirty-two lines. The

title 'Rattle,' originally 'la crécelle' by Duchamp, evokes the sound of a
wooden rattle. In the English it also suggests associations with toy
rattles and with the rattling of loose teeth, and, by extension, with the
missing and broken teeth of the comb in the poem, as in the lines 'of
the comb and some intermediary points' and '(by the broken teeth).'
Sideways on, the poem's lines appear to form the shape of a comb with
differences in line lengths representing broken and unbroken prongs
or tooth lengths. This visual tactic emphasises the verbal play on
multiple word meanings and word sounds, which is in keeping with
Stein's own tactics for writing poetry, as I have detailed in the
previous chapter.

      Other methods of poetry writing, first utilized by Duchamp
and later retained by Richard Hamilton in his translation include
enjambment, spacing as a visual punctuation to create puns and
multiple word meanings in the lines of the poem. For example the first
line can be read as 'With a kind of comb, by ' and 'With a kind of comb,
by [Duchamp]'. The commas before the 'by' in the first line invite the
reader to start here to read the next line as 'by using the space
between 2 teeth' in place of 'by|using the space between 2 teeth.' The
poem continues in this vein until the twenty-seventh line in the third
stanza when this method deteriorates into lines trailing off, opening
up spaces in the poem between the structures of the lines:

     Then, develop the
     comb i.e so that it
     works abnormally
     on a plane of lead
     wires [or turning

on a point, or even a
curved comb, ie. not
flat or with teeth of unequal
lengths: or even the action of
these different models of
comb on a thick
material (lead wires) and
no longer just flat].
etc. [162]

Throughout the poem, Duchamp plays on the word 'comb' with the

abbreviation 'i.e' to create the visual pairing of 'comb' and 'i.e'. This

visual word pairing suggests and performs the function of the word

'combine', as in the lines 'comb i.e. so that it' and 'curved comb i.e.

not.'. Duchamp and Hamilton also place an emphasis on "combining"

by apparently dividing the word into the typographically suggestive

word 'comb i.e'. Another example of Duchamp' treatment of language

as a conceptual verbal art material is his note 'Conditions of a

language.'

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[162] Ibid.

Conditions of a language :
  The search for ''prime
  words''
('' divisible,, only
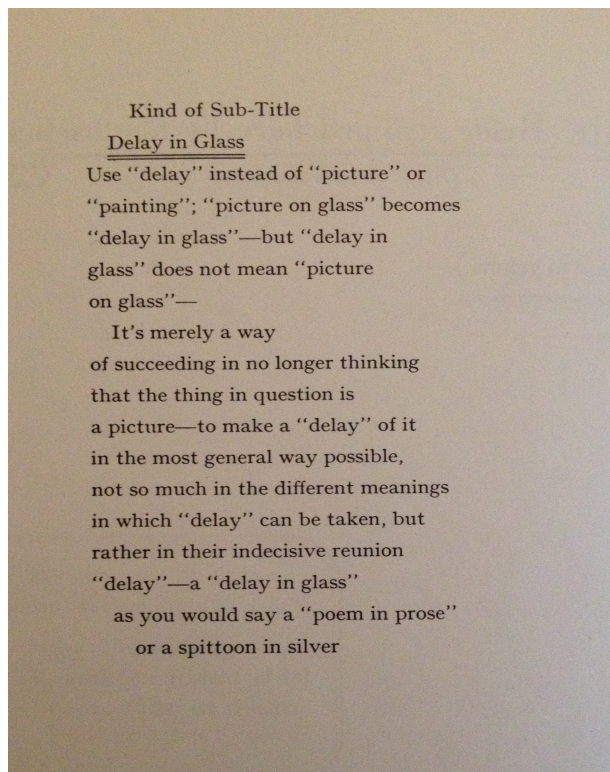 by themselves and
  by unity).

Figure 23. Marcel Duchamp *'Conditions of Language', The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even, a typographical version by Richard Hamilton,* 1960

Occupying a single page, this poem-note appears in a sequence of notes in the book that combine systems of language and mathematical concepts to propose solvable visual and poetic problems through the action of thoughts. According to Marjorie Perloff 'Conditions of a language' is an example of Duchamp's tactic to "remake the verbal world in [his] lexicon". [163] This note, which is both a visual and quasi-mathematical poem, suggests that language is a problem to be solved (in the way in which one might solve a mathematical problem) if one examines language through the details, systems and material of

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[163] Majorie Perloff, The Conceptual Poetics of Marcel Duchamp in '*21st-Century Modernism The "New" Poetics*', (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p. 91.

language itself. That is to say, Duchamp's 'a language' is a language

that is also a process of developing a language: it is a thinking space

that is also a making space for anti-retinal artworks. In this case, 'a

language' includes mathematical terms and definitions, as well as

various punctuation marks and typographical motifs.   However, it is

the first note 'Delay in Glass,' of Richard Hamilton's translation which

best illustrates Duchamp's interest in the materiality of language and

words as a system to construct art events in poetry and to work out

and explain his ideas. Appearing at the beginning of Richard

Hamilton's version, 'Delay in Glass' operates as the 'Kind of Sub-Title,'

suggested in the title of the note on fixed, ordered translation of the

contents of *The Green Box.*

Figure 24. Marcel Duchamp *Delay in Glass in The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even, a typographical version by Richard Hamilton,* 1960

The placement of this note by Richard Hamilton, Duchamp and

Heard-Hamilton at the start of the book operates as a prelude and

as a guide as to how to read the collection of notes, instructions,

diagrams and sketches that follow. It also invites one to consider

the book as a cohesive collection of poetic materials. As I have

already stated the word 'Delay' recurs throughout Duchamp's

practice. The denotation of 'delay' means to "make (someone or

something) late or slow" or to "postpone" or to " defer" provides a

useful conceptual lens through which to consider Duchamp's

practice, as this excerpt illustrates:

> Use delay instead of "picture" or
> "painting"; "picture on glass" becomes
> "delay in glass"—but "delay" in
> glass does not mean "picture
> on glass"— [164]

In the opening phrase, 'use delay instead of "picture"or│"painting;"

Duchamp instructs us not or relying on the visual but to instead

replace '"picture" or│"painting" with 'delay'. But what does it means to

do this? In reading on, it is evident that the poem relates directly to an

instruction on how to view, *The Large Glass*, and more specifically,

how to view the surface of the glass as a material by which to fix

together the element of *The Large Glass* and as a temporal framework

and as a site art outside of traditional painting:

> It's merely a way

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[164] Duchamp, *'The bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton'*, n.p.

> of succeeding in no longer thinking
> that this thing in question is
> a picture—to make a "delay" of it
> in the most general way possible,
> not so much on the different meanings
> in which "delay" can be taken, but
> rather in their indecisive reunion
> "delay"—a "delay in glass"[165]

However, as the poem progresses, Duchamp adds to the complexity by proposing 'to make a "delay" of it│ in the most general way possible,│not so much on the different meanings│in which "delay" can be taken.' In an interview with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp explains this as:

> I wanted to give 'delay' a poetic sense that I couldn't even explain. It was to avoid saying. ' a glass painting, ' a glass drawing.' 'a thing drawn on glass,' you understand? The word 'delay' pleased me at that point, like a phrase one discovers. It was really poetic, in the most Mallaremèan sense of the word.[166]

It is within language and poetry that Duchamp choses to express and evoke the break that he is trying to make from retinal-art. He does this by introducing the ambivalent and unsettling concept of 'delay', as a break in time, a pause in speech, poetry or thought and as something that could be created 'in glass'. Duchamp also relies on grammar and poetry writing techniques to reinforce a 'poetic' use of 'delay'. For example, in his repeated use of the em dash, Duchamp avoids the conventional use of commas to create complex paradoxical lines of poetry, for example, in the lines, '"delay in glass"—but "delay" in, '"a

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[165] Ibid.

[166] Cabanna, *Dialogues,* p. 40.

picture—to make a "delay" of it'" and "'delay"—a "delay in glass."' It is

interesting to consider Duchamp's concept of a 'delay in glass' by

returning to Stein's 'Object Poem', 'A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND

GLASS':

> A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS
> A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a
> single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All
> this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The differ-
> ence is spreading.[167]

Both prose poems play around with concept of 'delay' as a way to

divert the reader away from a conventional experience of glass as

being transparent. With Stein's 'BLIND GLASS', blindness causes a

delay that stops the glass functioning as a window or as a material to

see through. In contrast, Duchamp turns the transparent see-through

quality of glass into a possible site for an encounter with anti-retinal

art. There are also similarities in the sentiments of Stein's line 'All │

this and not ordinary, not unordered and in not resembling' and

Duchamp's line 'glass does not mean, "picture │ on glass".

As with his earlier tactics used to create pseudonyms and to

appropriate the functional use of his chosen objects in his

readymade artwork, Duchamp occupies the system of language to

create poems that operate inside and outside his exhibited

artworks. The closing lines of 'Delay in Glass' reinforce that it is

through a combination of the visual experience of the artwork and

the verbal intention of the poetry that Duchamp seeks to create

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[167] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p. 3.

anti-retinal art works that operate as poetic experiences through a

conceptual language of objects and words. It is in the

transformational nature and conceptual space of poetry, outside of

the ordinary use of language that Duchamp chooses to form his

ideas, as these closing lines from 'Delay in Glass' demonstrate:

> as you would say a "poem in prose"
> or spittoon in silver.[168]

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[168] Duchamp, *'The bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton'*, n.p.

CHAPTER THREE: Poet as Artist as Poet

The foregrounding of production as a tactic to create alternative receptive experiences in readers and in spectators through the means of visual and verbal poetics is a strategy shared by contemporary poet-artists, Allen Fisher and Redell Olsen. Both practitioners create multi-generic poetic work, which combine visual arts and poetry writing practices to produce outcomes in various media, including live performance, video, installation, lectures, poetry texts and books of poetry.

A critique of *Proposals* by Allen Fisher

Questions of how to read and write poetry are central to my reading experience of Allen Fisher's book *Proposals*. This is similar to reading Stein's *Tender Buttons.* However, in the case of *Proposals*, Fisher incorporates and extends methods and techniques used by Picasso, Stein and Duchamp to produce multi-sensory poetic outcomes, where poetry, prose and imagery co-exist to create page based poetic works. Although not 'collages' in the traditional painterly sense of the word, Fisher's *Proposals* raises interesting questions in relation to the role of the referential and of collage as a method by which to produce poetry.

In his article, '*iDamage:* Introduction to *Assemblage and Empathy*, a book in progress,' Fisher declares his interests in collage as:

> The radical and significant method and form of <u>assemblage</u> in the twentieth century has been <u>collage.</u> <u>Collage</u> demonstrates the use of more than one reality on the same picture plane which thus develops or <u>transforms</u> the understanding of <u>consciousness</u> into a multiple, and yet potentially simultaneous, *spacetime*, or better understood as a mobile <u>pseudo-coherence</u> with peripheral exchange and crowd-out with many spacetimes.[169]

In the case of *Proposals*, Fisher assembles the "multiple" visual and verbal images and text of prose poetry, commentaries and sketch book images together to "transform" the understanding of his lived experienced as "mobile pseudo-coherences" that occur within the "peripheral" exchange between the reading and seeing experiences of his double-page spreads. As the book's subtitle 'poem-image-commentary' suggests, each of Fisher's 'Proposals' is a double-page spread representation made of the three components. What Fisher is proposing here is a complex poetics, experienced through the interactions and the relationships between images and texts. This is a participatory reception experience where verbal and visual information can provide modes of reading and seeing to produce and experience what Fisher terms "new pertinence poetics". This Fisher explains as:

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[169] Allen Fisher, 'iDamage Introduction to Assemblage and Empathy, a book in progress' 4 (2007), 142-163 < http://plantarchy.us/plantarchy-4.pdf> [accessed 7 April 2015] (para. 16 of 53)

> The poetry of new pertinence incites, it provides patterns of correctness through its aesthetic function which initiates the process of production in me.' [170]

Although Fisher explains "new pertinence" as a new tactic for poetry writing, as a poetry that foregrounds process in relation to an "aesthetic in action" to provoke an unique reading experience—as I have already established, this explanation can also lend itself to a reading experience of Gertrude Stein's experimental writings. In this context, it is worth considering Veronica Forrest-Thomson's, *Poetry Artifice*; a pioneering work, which did much to move the reading of poetry towards an aesthetic of artifice and immediacy.

Veronica Forrest -Thomson makes the common observation that 'language is common both to the realm of poetry and to the domain of ordinary experience'. [171] However, she uses this observation to foreground the importance of artifice in poetry:

> For our ordinary non-poetic language gives us the world which we generally regard as non-verbal: a world of emotions, objects, and states of affairs. This is the language that we use every day (. . .) and it is this language upon which Artifice must work to create it alternative imaginary orders.[172]

For Forrest-Thomson, the everyday assumption of the transparency of language is a problem for poetry reading and writing: when poetry uses ordinary language, it is for the creation of 'alternative imaginary orders'. As for other specialist language and information included in poetry, Forrest-Thomson argues that these language sources are

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[170] Allen Fisher, 'Necessary Business' 25 (London: *Spanner,* 1985), p.165.
[171] Veronica Forrest-Thomson, *Poetic Artifice,* ed. by Gareth Farmer (Bristol: Shearsman Books, 2016), p. 60.
[172] Ibid.

characteristically different to 'ordinary language'. As such, they are already at some distance from the 'non-verbal' attributes of 'ordinary language' and can be more readily 'absorbed' into the artifice of poetry making. This she explains as follows:

> Of course, poetry deals with the more specialised languages of, say, science, philosophy, religion, and cookery, but these do not present the same basic problem. For them the non-verbal is already highly mediated, and Artifice has only to work on their alien structures of words, which must be absorbed and transformed into poetry.[173]

According to Forrest-Thomson, language, "ordinary" or otherwise is 'absorbed and transformed into poetry' via poetic operations and processes of synthesis that foregrounds artifice and immediacy.

In keeping with the poetry writing methods of Stein's 'Tender Buttons', Forrest-Thomson asserts that the activity of poetry is happening when, 'language is working to achieve both continuity and discontinuity with a world of ordinary experience.'[174] For Forrest-Thomson, 'continuity which relates the poetic line to other situations in which its various words might be used is dominated by a discontinuity which distances and reorganizes'.[175] Poetic techniques and devices cause a disruption and a constant activity within the surface of the poem's text. In this handling of language and the corresponding experience of reading poetry, pressure is placed on the referential aspects of the traditional sense of form and meaning context:

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[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid., p. 62.
[175] Ibid.

> This assertion of the form of the linguistic material itself exerts pressure on external references, limiting them to what the poetic structure requires [. . .] This is achieved by lifting the meaning away from direct reference to an external state of affairs and preparing it for its part in a thematic synthesis, where the external contexts are evoked only to be made fictional.[176]

Take for example the poem 'RHUBARB' in Stein's *Tender Buttons*:

RHUBARB

Rhubarb is susan not susan not seat in bunch toys not wild and laughable not in little places not in neglect and vegetable not in fold coal age not please.[177]

What is 'asserted' by Stein's 'linguistic material' is that a description of 'Rhubarb' can be many things, and that much can be made of an experience of Rhubarb. The discontinuities of Stein's text force the reader to concentrate on the immediate. For example, Stein states, Rhubarb is 'susan' (a person) and is also 'not susan' (not a person). However, it is also in the repeated 's' sounds of the words 'susan' and 'seat' –what Forrest-Thomson terms "phonetic solidarity"–that Stein creates her poetic images of Rhubarb. Written in "ordinary language", Stein's experimental poetic lines of continuous and discontinuities lines of text have 'lifted the meaning' of what Rhubarb is 'away from the direct reference' of description of Rhubarb as a pink, woody, fruit used to make pies, desserts and sweets. This language is cut free from any reference 'to an external state of affairs', and is a making space where new active, poetic experiences are created, where ordinary

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[176] Ibid.

[177] Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*, 2nd edn (New York: Dover Publications, INC, 1997), p.32

language is transformed into "non-semantic" language. The experience

of poetry has, accordingly, moved away from the traditional values of

content meaning and form, to foregrounding the materiality of

language and the production of poetry as thinking, making and

experiential spaces of knowledge. Forrest-Thomson describes the

reading process as follows:

> Our reading must work through the level of meaning into the
> external world and then, via the non-semantic levels of Artifice,
> back into the poem, enriched by the external context of
> reference in which it found itself momentarily merged.[178]

This process of reading 'through the level of meaning' brings in

referentiality and knowledge – the knowledge of the poet in producing

the work and the knowledge of the reader. Forrest-Thomson explains

this as follows:

> The knowledge of both the poet and the reader of poetry is a
> kind of mastery, an ability to see how a use of language filters
> external contexts into the poem and subjects them to new
> distancing and articulation. [179]

Fisher is also interested in 'how a use of language filters external

contexts within poetry'. However, Fisher's model is not one of mastery

and depths. Fisher's approach focuses on the production of the work's

meaning by the reader. This production of meaning is made possible

by two processes, "in-reading" and "float-perceived" reading. The

former focuses on how external language resources are utilized by

poets and experienced as 'external contexts' within a poem. According

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[178] Veronica Forrest-Thomson, *Poetic Artifice,* p. 62.
[179] Ibid.,p. 63.

to Fisher, an experience of "in-reading" involves research on the

reader's part to locate and to acquaint themselves with the

"resources" included in the poem. "Float perceived" reading, on the

other hand, draws on the reader's own knowledge. Fisher explains his

theory of "float perceived" reading in relation to Jeremy Prynne's

poem 'Down Where changed', as follows:

> Prynne's effort to make successful poetry is isomorphic to the
> effort to render a form independent of its empirical realistions.
> The realisations can only be with the participating reader who
> interferes and brings noise: brings a dictionary, or a biography
> of Wyndham Lewis (65) or notes on crystallography. Yet a
> reader needs none of these to float perceive a significance.[180]

In this float reading, the readers search out their own connections,

patterns, and significations by attending to the surface of the poem.

In her critique of Prynne's poem, 'Of Sanguine Fire' Forrest-

Thomson claims that Prynne's poem is 'tendentiously obscure', and

that his use of literary resources fully synthesize with his use of

'ordinary language' to produce poetic lines that harness 'arcane

knowledge' to enhance an experience of poetry through an active

reading, and where a reader must work through a process of

"absorption" as an experience of reading to find new meanings in

words and phrases but without ever escaping into a 'a non-poetic

realm'. She explains the process in the following terms:

> They resist the reader by making him work; they positively
> repel him by implying that no amount of arcane knowledge will
> help him produce an interpretation, that however had he tries
> he will not get away with (or through) these lines into a non-
> poetic realm. He will have to recognise that he stuck with the

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[180] Fisher, *Necessary Business*, p. 229-230.

lines on the page, that these words have a meaning not an extended reference to the world outside, and that his limitation /expansion will have to take place in the poem internally and artificially'.[181]

Forrest-Thomson's account of the readers 'stuck in the lines on the page' has obvious affinities with Fisher's 'float-perceived' reading. Fisher's own writing methods result in producing active processes of participatory reading as required actions from his reader. According to his theory of "new pertinence" readers must place their own knowledge and experience within the mobile "spacetime" across and between the textural and visual realities of the pages. For Fisher, 'new pertinence is a poetics that undertakes it aesthetic function from the ground – from its activity.'[182]

At an earlier stage in his career, Fisher developed the terms, "process-showing" and "procedural showing" as terms by which to articulate his creative process. He explained these terms in an interview for ALEMBIC in 1976 with Peter Barry and Ken Edwards. Barry asked him the question:

> You then use two phrases of 'process-showing' and 'procedure-showing'. And I take it that the reason why you do these two things is make the work available to use. Can you talk about the difference between these two things, "process-showing" and "procedure-showing"?[183]

Fisher give an example for "process-showing", as an effect generated in a poetry text where a reader is able to read horizontally as well as

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[181] Veronica Forrest-Thomson, *Poetic Artifice*, p. 93.
[182] Fisher, *Necessary Business*, p. 164.
[183] Andrew Duncan,. ed.,*The Marvels of Lambeth* (Bristol: Shearsman Books, 2013), p.35.

vertically across the text. He explains how this formal presentation

dictates a reading that foreground the processes of making the work.

"Procedure-showing", in contrast, derives from a practice, which

conceptually organises the work prior to production and displays that

conceptual procedure. Fisher then observes a significant difference

between the two, which he explains as follows:

> By "procedure" I meant the process of the work was
> conceptually organized before the writing. By "process-
> showing" I meant that conceptual organisation took place *as*
> the writing. [184]

Fisher then turns from the production of the work to the reception

and the creation of the work by the reader. This he explains as:

> My main emphasis is really that what eventually happens is
> that somebody reads the work, and their reading from the
> work will be the brain reading—I'm just trying to emphasize
> that the work will be read as if it had been written by any
> method, and therefore what is said must be what the artist
> intends to be said—that is, if the artist is concerned that what
> he is saying needs to mean the same to him as he hopes it
> means to other people'.[185]

What Fisher here terms 'the brain reading' clearly anticipates what he

later called 'float-perceived' reading.

In a later interview with Scott Thurston in 1999, Fisher reflects

on his use of these terms in relation to his ongoing creative practice

and makes the following distinction between these two modes of

operations within his work:

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[184] Ibid., p36.
[185] Ibid.

> If I think of examples, there's likely to be a crossover between them. A procedural example would be that there is some predetermined structure, which generates the text before the text. For instance, let's go through a range, the note pattern that creates arithmetic from Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*, the order of letters in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude,* and in the way in which a piece of visual collage has been laid out on a page, so the positions are already demarcated. Now, if the text is written against those parameters, against those limitations, then the work is solely procedural, effectively. But what quite often happens is that, out of that work, there's some improvisation or changes of conceptions decision changes, which are in the process of writing the work, so I call it processual in that sense. [186]

As this suggests, Fisher's production of work has been accompanied by a sustained effort and articulate poetics that involves both a writing practice and a reading practice. I will now consider these terms as practice methods for creating poetic outcomes within Fisher's practice alongside Fisher's more recent theory for "new pertinence" poetics. I will use this body of poetics as a guide to what Fisher has declared as poetry that 'comprehends the aesthetic potential after the work of Marcel Duchamp and thus has understood what art can be'. [187]

Within his creative process, Fisher employs various strategies to produce both 'in-reading' and 'float perceived' experience reading in the double-page spread verbal and visual poetic artworks that he presents as his *Proposals*. For example, Fisher asks his reader to consider how non-literary sources can be utilized to activate an experience of poetry. This is evident in his method of writing his commentaries from found information sources, such as tourist information and critical theories. Each double-page 'Proposal' is laid

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[186] *The Marvels of Lambeth*, p. 63.

[187] Fisher, *Necessary Business*, p. 163.

out identically and within a chronological title sequence. On the left-

hand side is a continuous poem which runs from 'Proposal 1' to

'Proposal 35' and on the right-hand side page is an image, made up of

one or two images from a sketchbook, beneath which is a short

commentary text. For my critique, I will focus on each of the three

elements as singular devices on the page, working both discretely and

together to produce what Fisher has coined a "Proposal".

'Proposal 1' presents the reader with the format that changes

little throughout the book. The seventeen lines of poetry are of free

verse and are in the first person. The content appears to be personal

and to relate to a time of change and reflection in Fisher's life while

journeying by train to Crewe, [188] as these opening four lines

demonstrate:

> When I first came to Crewe
> I saw the death of my mind
> and started work again
> to bring it back to life[189]

These shifts in time, and the activity of travel are further alluded to in

the latter half of the poem:

> on the third day after
> the railway declined
> I stood on the grime of
> platform 5 and revived
> my confidence in

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[188] In 2005 Allen Fisher took up a post as head of contemporary arts at Manchester Metropolitan University, which was located in Crewe.
[189] Allen Fisher, *Proposals 1-35:poem-image-commentary* (Hereford: Spanner, 2010) p.4.

> a lack I now recognised
>
> as necessary as demanding[190]

However, this use of first person narrator soon gives way to third-person narrator in 'Proposal 5'. Shifts in points of view continue within the poems to create distinct voices that echo from page to page, producing a cacophony of voices that build throughout a reading of the book. Indeed, on reflection there is no certainty that the 'I's' in 'Proposal 1' are Fisher. As observed by Robert Sheppard the '"I" might not be that of Allen Fisher who I so easily identified with this platform arrivant at Crewe'. [191] Sheppard draws attention to Fisher's use of a 'Resources' [192] list to undermine the authenticity of his use of the first person "I" as a recurring device. However, it is possible that Fisher is also providing a space for multiple voices alongside and within his own voice. 'Proposal 1' certainly plays with the possibility of an autobiographical 'I'. Towards the end of the book in 'Proposal 34' Fisher appears to deliberately displace the first person narrator by omitting the 'I' when he writes 'Took train to London to see poetry read [. . .] stopped off for a map of Ravenna | took an early Tex-Mex supper at Food for Thought'. The first-person narrator in the absence of an 'I' is liberated and opened up to become the 'now' of all the voices within the poems, operating as a single voice or as a possible location of a multiple voices, even as the details of the narrative tempt us to identify them with the poet.

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[190] Ibid.

[191] Robert Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher' (2003)http://www.robertsheppard.blogspot. co.uk [accessed Jan 11th 2015] (para. 10 of 19]

[192] Allen Fisher, *Proposals*, p.75.

Fisher constructs his poems in a variety of ways. One of his methods is to use enjambment to simultaneously move his narratives and meanings forwards and backwards and to introduce new meanings. He gets his end words to operate in the present within a linear reading of the line. This is demonstrated in the opening lines of 'Proposal 3':

> This morning   thought
> out   early at 6.40
> in the snow recurrence.[193]

Here the lines of poetry can be read as a single continuous poem and as a series of overlapping texts. For instance, one could read the text as 'This morning thought | thought out | out   early at 6.40 | early at 6.40 | early 6.40 in the snow | recurrence | in the snow recurrence.' Like Stein, Fisher uses a combination of continuities and discontinuities of fragments of texts to build up the surface of his poems. Another of Fisher's tactics is to use what Sheppard refers to as "collagic splicing".[194] This is when he links his texts in such a meticulous and concentrated way that it not always possible to be absolutely certain of where the links occur, as highlighted by Sheppard:

> The change in lexis suggests the kind of collage I call creative linkage, where the abrupt changes are so melded into the texture of the poem that it is hard to disentangle them so that various kinds of simulated narratives can be conjured into being.
>
> But I am in the best sense a magpie in that regard: I drop round and pick up and then use it in my own nest, not in a plagiarist view, much more like a collagist's perspective really [195]

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[193] Fisher, *Proposal,* p. 8.
[194] Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher', (para. 6 of 19)
[195] Ibid., (para. 7 of 19)

Fisher's attachment to collage as method for his writing is suggested in the following defence of his practice. This 'collagic splicing' thus, creates both a sense of ambiguity and a type of language-matter-cohesion across his texts. In the same way, Fisher's uniform presentation of each 'Proposal' reassures and encourages his reader that there are systematic writing processes at work that can be accessed to open up a deeper reading of the text. For example 'Proposal 3' appears to follow the basic form of a sonnet. It is made up of fourteen lines with a turn at the ninth line, 'energy converts'. Fisher's decision to change from three-word lines to a two-word line, at the ninth line, also alerts his reader to the sonnet form of the poem and invites his reader to redirect attention or to 'convert energy' and to consider the wider 'problems' of language, poetry and of forming representations.

By creating a reading experience that juxtaposes certainty with uncertainty, traditional poetry forms and devices with experimental prose, Fisher degrades the authoritative roles of the author and creates openings within his texts for his reader to engage in an active participatory reading necessary for an engagement with his "new pertinence poetry", As Sheppard explains:

> However, the disjointed form of the poem, or its creative linkage, formally celebrates a lack of cohesion in which one might have some confidence, as ever in the work of Allen Fisher which is so often appropriative and collagist in temper (and often much more wildly so than here).[196]

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[196] Ibid.

This is further demonstrated and is alluded to by Fisher in 'Proposal 3', when he writes:

> one of the problems
> articulate in discretion
> to distil bumps
> from background events [197]

As with the earlier excerpt, the continued use of enjambment offers the reader multiple readings options of line end words, for example, 'one of the problems | problems articulate | problems articulate in discretion'. However, if one were to read the poem as a continuous linear text, other gaps and 'bumps' and possible links rise to the surface of the text. For example 'one of the | problems articulate in discretion | to distil | bumps | from background events'.

In keeping with Stein's 'Objects' poems, there are ambiguities in the operation of Fisher's words that lead to multiple reading of the texts. These add to the problematic nature of the surface of Fisher's texts, while constituting an integral part of his pratice. For example 'articulate' appears to operate both as the adjective meaning to be able to 'express clearly' and as the verb 'joint' in the placement of the word 'articulate' between lines eleven and twelve. 'Bumps' is another words with multiple operations. Here 'bumps' operates potentially both as noun and as a verb, causing a 'bump' action between the two readings. In addition, when Fisher appears to suggest that to 'distil bumps' 'from background events' is a necessary part of the poem, it is not clear

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[197] Fisher, *Proposal,* p.8.

whether the aim is to remove or retain the 'bumps'. In addition, Fisher

creates what he refers to as "rhyming meanings" between the words,

'problems', 'discretion' and 'bumps', which Fisher explains act as a

'generator for the writer to some extent' in creating a pattern within a

"processual" work'.[198] Other devices used by Fisher include repetition,

single word lines and sound textures created by a high level of similar-

sounding words, as demonstrated in this excerpt from 'Proposal 4':

> A scientific system relies on
> researchers to repeat each other's
> results without those without
> interpretation
> or that do not fit currency exclude
> odd results avoid complication
> with corrected report procedures
> to suffer not only from the living but
> from the dead personifications of
> economic categories embodiments of
> particular class relations, class interests,
> stressed
> the degree to which polite ethical thought
> in societies of the West today rests on
> or involves self-
> deception or more active deceit
> depends on the private pretence,
> public affirmation, or purposeful suggestion
> of what is for those concerned
> the knowably false [199]

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[198] *The Marvels of Lambeth*, p.65.
[199] Ibid.p.10.

The poem's contents document the practice of modern scientific research. The opening lines are straightforward and derive from one text source to explain the basic research method, 'A scientific system relies on | researchers to repeat each other's | results'. Fisher uses alliteration to group together and draw attention to certain words. For example 'relies', 'researchers', 'repeats, 'results', 'reports' and 'relations' create an alternative image of a 'scientific system' to the widely held belief of science being innovative and novel. In the third line 'results without those without' the poem starts to transform with the repetition of 'without' and is further disrupted by the isolation of the word 'interpretation'. The next three lines of the poem describe 'interpretation' of methods of research that actively 'exclude' 'odd results'. These Fisher suggests are results that lie 'without' the expected range to 'avoid complication | with correct report procedures'. In this poem, Fisher is proposing that modern scientific research is only interested in advancing the concerns of its private funders — that the 'scientific system' outlined in the opening lines has became corrupted. Here Fisher collages what seem to be texts from a political or sociological source to suggest some of the interests at play in the poem. For example 'to suffer not only from the living but | from the dead personifications of | economic categories embodiments of | particular class relations, class interests'.

The change in pace and direction created by the repeated use of 'without' in line three is structurally repeated in the eleventh line when the word 'class' is repeated to create 'particular class relations,

class interests'. Here the reader is invited to draw comparisons between the words 'without' and 'class' and what role 'class' plays in modern scientific society and to consider who really benefits from the research carried out. In the final section of the poem, Fisher suggests that the reader and wider society participate in a shared 'self-deception' or 'a more active deceit' to produce 'public affirmation, or purposeful suggestion | of what is for those concerned | the knowably false'.

Sounds resonate throughout the poem to create what Sheppard labels 'internal rhymes' as Fisher loosely groups similar sounding words together to create a cohesive feel and momentum to his poems. C-sounds become d-sounds that in turn become p-sounds, before the poem slows, and the repetitive sounds fade out towards the end of the poem. Word sounds and word pairings continue to provide a structure for Fisher's poetry in 'Proposal 5':

Love is a marvelous insanity
That be idle must lead by wilderness,
That thirsts of wilfulness and drinks sorrow
And with constant sores mingle his blithe.
in silence infinite openness
in order to affirm essence as her own
prior to any ek-sistence, founded
by ever open lips, eclipsed
by their openness, forgotten
in that opening, the look
that encloses landscape
a multiplicity of instances of taking-place

exceeds her capacity for recall

instiutable [200]

For this poem Fisher has chosen to present repeated words to begin his lines to produce the poetic metre a, bb, c, dd, e, ff, d, b, c, g, h, d. Throughout the poems Fisher continues to play around with paired-repeated words. This acts to control the ebb-and-flow of the text from page-to-page as well as working to contain the poem on the page as an individual piece of text. According to Sheppard, another tactic of Fisher's is to pair similar sounding words to create what he terms "dynamic coupling"[201] between similar sounding words across his lines of text, for example in the words, 'willfulness', and 'wilderness', 'sore' and 'sorrowful' and 'landscape' and 'taking-place'. These irregular couplings create "internal rhymes" within the text. This adds a bouncy and a shuffling momentum to Fisher's lines of poetry, like a train coming down the tracks.

According to Fisher in his reading of Jeremy Prynne's '*Down where changed*', the inclusion of historical, literary and other factual information in the fabric of his poem creates an expectation in the text for a 'deeper complexity in the work to partly derive from the reader's contribution'. [202] For instance, Fisher's use of the word "ek-sistence" provokes an 'in-reading' of the poem that incorporates and reflects on the ideas of 'ek-sistence' in relation to Heiddegger's theory of "being" and on the role of language within 'ek-sistence'. Fisher also

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[200] Fisher, *Proposals*, p12.
[201] Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher', (para. 7of 19).
[202] Fisher, 'Necessary Business', p. 32.

encourages his reader to consider a relationship between moving landscapes and visual and verbal image making when he writes 'the look | that encloses landscape | A multiplicity of instances of taking-place'.

The first fustian and velvet cutting shop was established in Crewe produced railway uniforms, 650 people, mostly women, with a need to change trains at a Grand Junction and in comfortable imitation of Crewe Hall.

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Figure 24. Allen Fisher, *Proposal 1*, 2010

Fisher also uses processes of 'cut and paste' and collage to create his images. In 'Proposal 1', the image on the right-hand side appears to be a colour copy of a double-page spread from his sketchbook of two images. It is not an obvious illustration of the events being described in Fisher's poem. The first left-hand side image is a copy of a colour photographic image of a fireworks display against a dark night sky, either ripped from a magazine or copied from an original photograph. In contrast, the right-hand side image is a simple black and white, pen and ink drawing of an antler. Both images have been overlaid with murky washes of black and brown ink or paint. Side by side, it is easy to make quick observations and comparisons between the two images and to speculate on their possible meanings: fireworks and antlers, light and bone, life and death. Rather than working like traditional illustrations, Fisher's images present the reader with symbolic totems, such as antlers, fire and wood, that recur throughout the book to encourage his readers to reflect on the wider themes of man's impact on nature through industrialization and social change.

By choosing to convey the private thinking space of his sketchbook, Fisher creates a poetic energy in his *Proposals* from what he describes as 'spur of the moment stuff that I feels somehow is rich because of its spur of the moment'.[203] This remark makes clear to us, that, while, from a reader's perspective, Fisher is creating various complexities in the juxtaposition of verbal and visual texts, from his

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[203] *The Marvels of Lambeth,* p.72.

own perspective, these works are the product of a poetics of

immediacy.

As suggested by Sheppard, Fisher's *Proposals* can be seen to

function as "a modern emblem book".[204] A notable example of this

genre is Francis Quarles's *Emblems*, published in 1635. Like Fisher,

Quarles also fuses appropriated existing textual resources with his

own poetry to create 'Emblems', as highlighted by William Walker

Wilkins in his memoir, signed W.W:

> Both prints and mottoes of the two last books of Quarles's
> "Emblems," are exactly copied from theses of Herman Hugo.
> The subjects being similar, he has, therefore, frequently availed
> himself of the ideas of the "Pia Desideria," as well as sometimes
> appropriated lines and entire passages from it; but he has so
> added to, and improved upon his prototype, that the imitation
> detracts little from his originality.[205]

As with *Proposals*, Quarles's *Emblems* book is divided into sections of

individual 'emblems' and is numbered sequentially. Each emblem

consists of an image, a moral or biblical quotation, which first appears

in Latin, under which is a King James Bible reference. The quotation is

repeated larger in English, as shown in 'Emblem 2':

Si maum cecuit unicum in omne malum

JAMES I. 15

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and
sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.[206]

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[204] Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher', (para. 15 of 19)
[205] Francis Quarles, *Emblems, Divine and Moral; and The school of the heart:
and Hieroglyphics of the life of man'* (London, William Tegg, 1866), p. xxii.
[206] Quarles, *Emblems, Divine and Moral,* p. 7.

The quotation is juxtaposed with a lyric or prose poem that in most cases runs for a couple of pages and is followed by two quotations taken from Christian theologians and the Saints and is accompanied by an epigram. The images, like Fisher's, are complex and depict men, women or angelic beings and devils, struggling with the earthly and moral issues faced by humans full of sin.
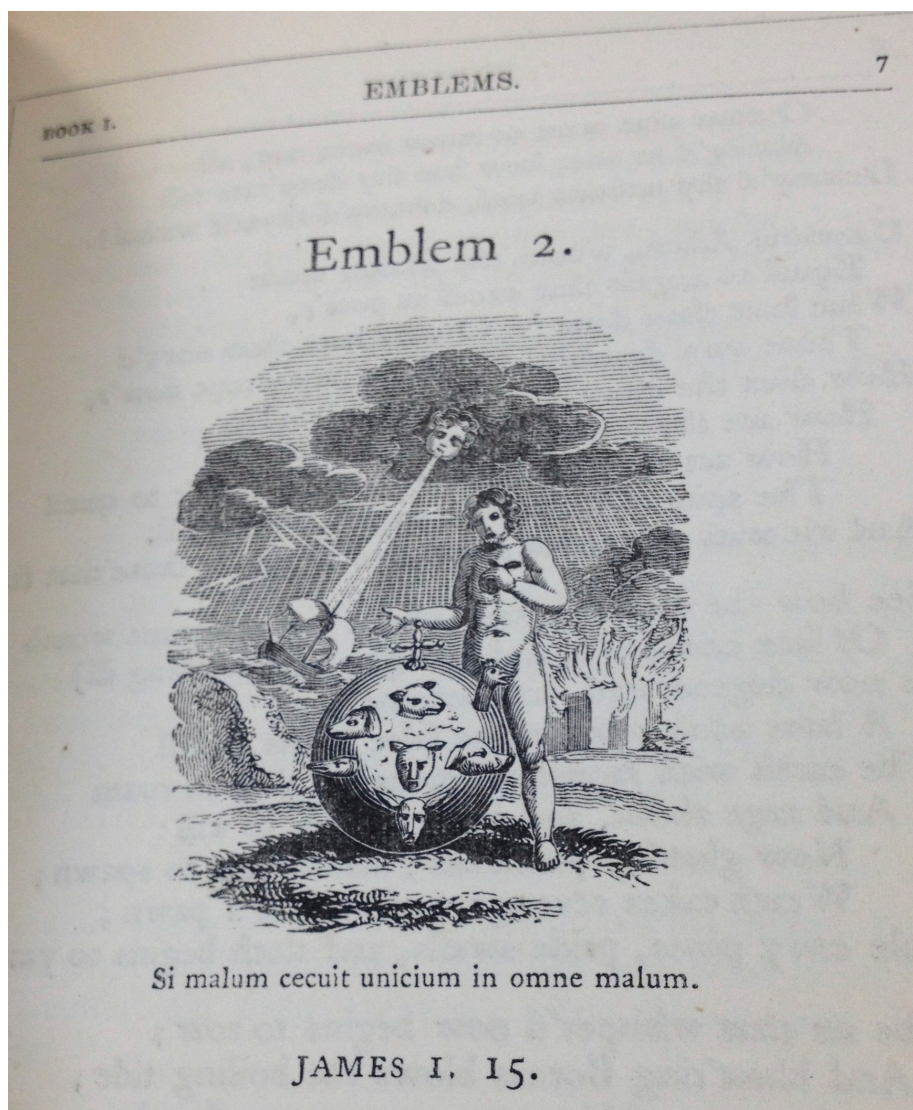
Figure 25. Francis Quarels, *Emblem 2*, 1723

In 'Emblem 2', for example, Adam is depicted holding an unbitten apple and contemplating what action to take next. Behind him fires blaze and the wind threatens to blow a storm and capsize a sailing boat and thunder and lightning prevail, as if prophesying what could happen if Adam chooses to eat the apple. In front of Adam is a strange shield-like object containing six animal heads, rooted in the ground by a sword. The shield appears to represent the animalistic characterization of lust, raging under the control of Adam and his sword. Quarles's images act to illustrate his quotations. According to Sheppard, Quarles's images are developed to trigger a process of self-reflection in a reader, which operates in conjunction with reading the poems and commentary texts:

> Here the images and texts exist in a mutually self-confirming, but not necessarily simple, relationship to goad the reader into a contemplation of these moral forces in his or her life.'[207]

Thus, 'Emblem 2' is followed by the lines:

> Lament, lament; look, look, what thou hast done :
>   Lament the world's, lament thine own estate :
> Look, look, by doing, how thou art undone ;
>   Lament thy fall, lament thy change of state :
> Thy faith is broke, and thy freedom gone,
>   See, see too soon, what thou lament'st too late,
> O thou that wert so many men, ney all[208]

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[207] Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher', (para. 15 of 19).
[208] Quarles, *Emblems, Divine and Moral,* p.7.

In these first seven lines of poetry Quarles urges one to take heed from

Adam and to repetitively 'look' within as well as as to look at the

image to 'see' the error of one's ways to 'lament thine own estate' and

to 'see' that it's never too late to change one's ways, as in the line 'See,

see too soon, what thou lament'st too late'. The accompanying

commentaries 'They are justly punished that abuse lawful things [. .

.]thus Adam lost paradise',[209] and the epigram reinforces the symbolic

and moral messages of Quarles's image, quotations and poems and

reminds us of the consequences we could face if we chose to ignore his

advice:

> See how these fruitful kernels, being cast
> Upon the earth, how thick they spring ! how fast !
> A full ear'd crop and thriving, rank and proud !
> Prepost'rous man first sow'd, and then plough'd .[210]

Fisher, on the other hand, uses his images to represent symbolic

themes in his *Proposals*. For example, fire as a powerful symbol of

destruction, transformation and renewal is represented throughout

the book. From the exploding fireworks in 'Proposal 1' to the red

sparks and poured molten metals of 'Proposal 7' and 'Proposal 21',

Fisher's treatment of this image differs. One of his recurring methods

is to present two images side by side, where the left-hand image is

produced from a 'found image' stuck in his sketchbook, and the right-

hand image is an original drawing, painting or print produced by

Fisher. As is the case in 'Proposal 1', the left-hand side image appears

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[209] Ibid., p.9.
[210] Ibid.

to be an original, additional image that doesn't always directly refer to the image it is placed next to. At other times, however, another of Fisher's methods is to use the right-hand image space to depict or copy a likeness of, or a response to, the left-hand-side image.

The difference principle seems to correspond to a natural meaning of sisterhood or fraternity, the idea of not wanting to have a greater advantage unless this is to the benefit of others who are less well off, but the constitution of the polis is in a sense the life of the polis and the life of the polis cannot be made plain.
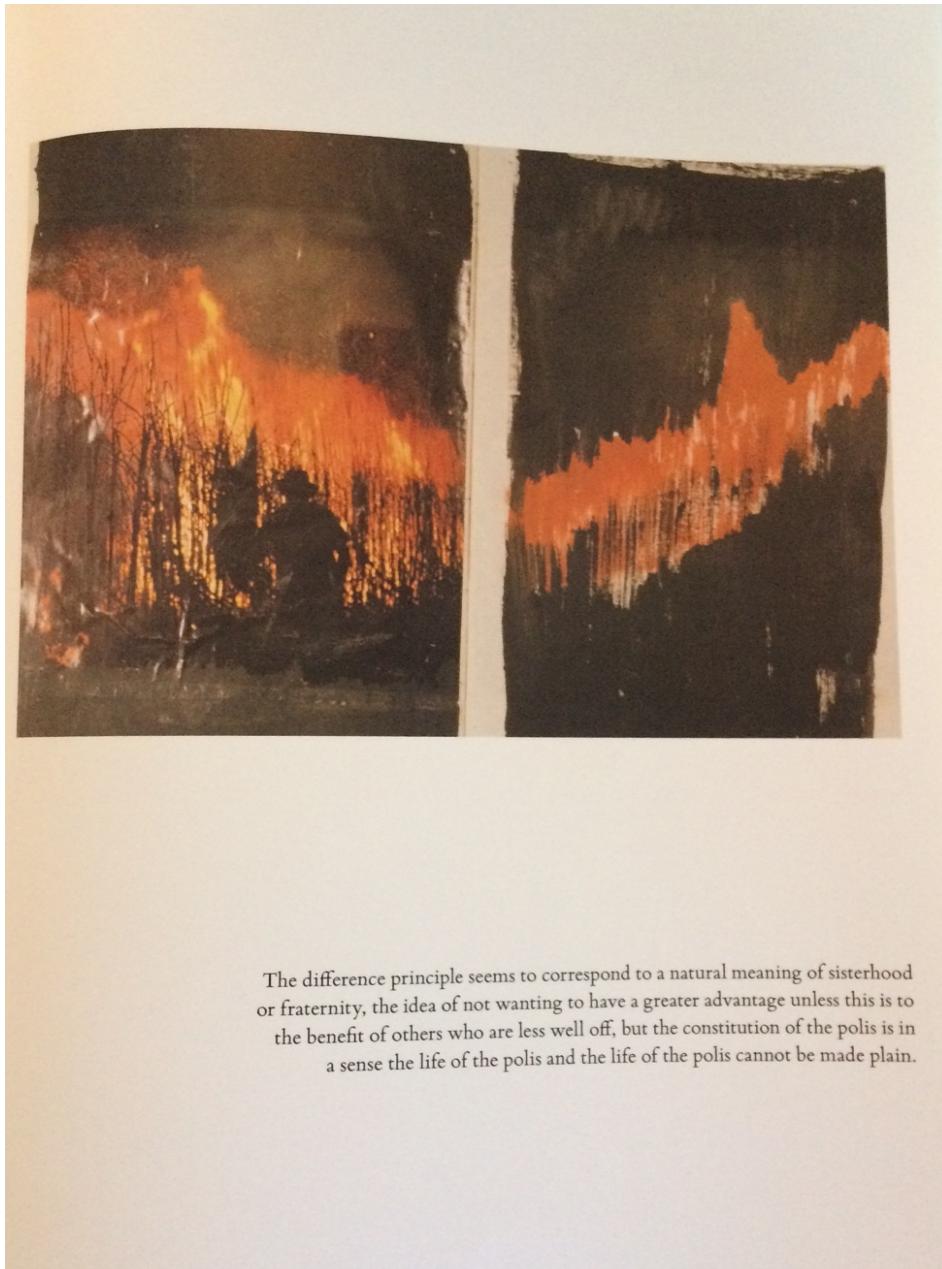
Figure 26. Allen Fisher *Proposal 19,* 2010

For example, the image in 'Proposal 19' is made up of a photograph or a magazine image of a man in front of burning crops or a wild fire. On the right-hand image, Fisher has recreated the shape and colour of the fire in a simple but very effective paint and ink sketch. Fisher continues to create his own mirror images of a "found" source image throughout the book. His inclusion of these pages suggest that all the images come from a sketchbook kept to explore and to visually document the shared themes explored in *Proposals* as a whole. Fisher's method of image reproduction or copying suggests that revisiting a place, or recalling a historical event or an idea can be a useful lens to rethinking the present and the future.

As with Duchamp's publication of his notes in *The Green Box*, Fisher's inclusion of his sketchbook images situates his ideas as equal to his poetry and to his research in an experience of his poetic practice. In addition, like Picasso's use of charcoal in his collages (a traditional sketching material), Fisher elevates the provisional form of sketching and keeping a sketchbook in his finished glossy book. The inclusion of imagery also suggests a less conventional approach to reading the accompanying texts in *Proposals*. For example, one is free to move between processes of reading and seeing as a way to construct a variety of possible readings. An image can be viewed in isolation or can be considered in relation to the poem beside it and commentary text below it. A poem can be looked at and read through the visual patterns of its words and layout.

Unlike Quarles's commentaries, that act as a warning of the possible

consequences of not adhering to the message of his poems and

images, Fisher's commentaries seem to relate to the poems and to

offer access points into the possible meanings of his poetry. These

commentaries all appear to be fragments made up from a variety of

external sources including historical, philosophical, economic and

literary texts, as listed in the 'Resources' index at the back of the

book.[211] Although this Resources list could be taken as an exhaustive

list of further recommended reading by Fisher. It is more likely that it

is included as a guide to the research materials that Fisher has

sourced and to the areas of knowledge he was occupied with when

making the work. When responding to a question regarding the

importance of declaring resource materials in his works, Fisher

explains the following:

> There are two reasons for saying I have done so. One would be to
> do with acknowledgement, but the other is to do with ambience
> and context. [212]

The commentary in 'Proposal 1' for example, comes from Diane K.

Drummond's *Crewe: Railway Town, Company and People. 1840-1914.*

[213] In this commentary, Fisher creates an account of an "ambience" of

predominately female factory workforce within the "context" of them

travelling through Crewe to their prospective jobs in the surrounding

textile industries:

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[211] Allen Fisher, *Proposals,* p. 75.
[212] *The Marvels of Lambeth*, P. 74.
[213] Ibid.

> The first fustian and velvet cutting shop was established in
> Crewe produced |railway uniforms, 650 people, mostly women,
> with a need to change trains | at a Grand junction and in
> comfortable imitation of Crewe Hall. [214]

Fisher's use of external source materials in his commentary texts invites an "in-reading" consultation with the 'Resources' list included at the back of the book. This process of cross-referencing causes his reader to slow down and to closely examine the texts to determine their origins and to register possible references, meanings and implications. This Fisher explains as part of the aesthetic function at play in the poetry of cris cheek, Eric Mottram and J.H. Prynne:

> The way in which "Resources", or implications of sources, are
> used by these poets takes part in the reader's consideration of
> the works' processes and what the poets intend with regard to
> the referential language in their works, as well as the intention
> discerned, or inferred, by the reader. [215]

All of Fisher's commentaries start with a capital letter and end on a full-stop, and visually appear as one text. It is evident that the commentaries are either made up of collaged-together fragments of "Resources" texts, or as in the case of 'Proposal 1', that a collage process has been applied to a single text to create a new fragmentary version of it. For example, text appears to have been cut out between the phrase 'The first fustian and velvet cutting shop was established in Crewe' and 'produced railway uniforms' which join back together to create lines such as, 'The first fustian and velvet cutting shop was established in Crewe produced.' Fisher's collaged lines of commentary

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[214] Ibid.

[215] Fisher, 'Necessary Business', p.32.

texts are free from the set boundaries of punctuation or fixed

meaning. In 'Proposal 9' fragments of 'resource' texts are assembled

together from what appears to be a number of different text sources:

> What is new in the show are works from a modern age before
> that became | the contemporary loss of cognition and loss of
> idea except as idea or as |the multiple gravitas in a web of
> unkindness or self-importance .[216]

The first line of the commentary text 'What is new in the show are

works from a modern age before that became'can read as a caption to

the image above it: A forest fire and a drawing of an industrial wood-

chipping machine. The next line 'the contemporary loss of cognition

and loss of idea except as idea or as' appears to reinforce and

comment on the opening lines of the accompanying poem 'He was hit

on the head early in life by a large pine cone which had red beans | on

its surface smell of wet earth.' Fisher revisits themes of the "memory"

and "perception" in the next commentary where, 'A comprehender

seizes as opportunity, questions the obvious, converses | with writes,

known or unknown, all the while interacting with the other | people

and, in the first instance, with poet'.

As a reading experience, I am liberated to approach my "float

reading" of each 'Proposal' in a variety of ways. For example, when

reading 'Proposal 30', I can start by lingering over the images and

drawing conclusions about their meanings, which I can then use as a

guide to read the poem on the left-hand side page.

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[216] Allen Fisher, *Proposals,* p. 21.

Figure 27. Allen Fisher *Proposal 30,* 2010

Here, Fisher has produced a right-hand image by creating a crude printed impression of the shape of the fire, smoke and flame, from the image on the left-hand side. It's unclear whether this purple-watery print is deliberate or a happy accident that occurred when Fisher closed his wet sketchbook. However, the visible quotation by Michelangelo 'paints with his brains and not with his hands' adds an "in-reading dynamic" to viewing the image that suggests that for Fisher, his "processes" of thinking, making and of representing within his *Proposals* are more important than the finished "product" of his artwork. As suggested by the commentary I refer to while I view the image:

> It is considerable and more than play without loss of playful,
> he connected directly to truth in matters of cognition, even of
> perception, and issue with warranty of standards and justice. [217]

In conjunction with the image and the Michaelangelo quotation the commentary text draws attention to relationships between perception and serious play: 'more than play without loss of playful' is offered as a way to access knowledge as processes of thinking 'truth in matters of cognition'. For example, with fire on my mind, and alerted to pay closer attention to the processes of Fisher's project, I now read the poem:

> It is 7:15 on a Wednesday
> he leaves by his back gate
> wheeling a grey dustbin
> painted on one of its tall
> sides in white with a red
> cross of St. George which
> vibrates in the light of his
> search lamp ignited by
> his movement but flickering
> from a damaged socket
> adaptor which corrects to a
> firm beam on his return
> after he had kicked it
> with his heavy black boot [218]

This is a prose poem about a man putting his bin out on his way out of the house and kicking a faulty adaptor with his boot to correct a flickering outdoor searchlight. There appears to be an interesting

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[217] Allen Fisher, *Proposals,* p. 63.
[218] Ibid.

parallel between the words in the poem and the images in 'Proposal 30' For example, 'ignites' directly describes what is happening in the spreading forest-fire image and 'flickering' describes the effect produced in the image captured by Fisher's purple water-mark print. As this suggests, there is no fixed order or hierarchy of text or image by which to read one of Fisher's *Proposals*.

Thus, I could begin my reading with the poem then move to the commentary and then to go on to pay close attention to the images. Or I could start with the commentary, read it in part, look at the images and then read the poem. Either way, each reading leads to the possibility of a further reading. In addition, as with reading Stein's 'Object' poems, Fisher's *Proposals* can be read as stand-alone individual poetic pieces or as part of longer sequence. The shifting dynamics, contrasts and juxtapositions created by the three elements across the double-page spread engage the reader in the space of the page as a space of contemplation. Fisher's *Proposals*, suggest that the site of the double-page spread is the site for an experience of poetry, where visual arts methods of collage, sketchbook keeping and spending time viewing art are guides by which to create poetic texts and new reading experiences. As suggested by Sheppard:

> In order to read the text (and images) at all, we need to use the very capabilities that are undermined in, and by, the text itself, in disharmonious imperfect collusion with the images.[219]

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[219] Sheppard, ''Proposals' by Allen Fisher', (para.19 of 19).

The lack of cohesion of Fisher's individual 'Proposal' elements work together to create an experience of poetry and art that actively seek to engage its reader in a participatory role of poetics.

Redell Olsen: a multi generic poetics

Redell Olsen is a contemporary poet, artist and academic who creates multi-generic poetic works across the interdisciplinary critical and creative spaces of visual arts, performance art and poetry. Her poetic works co-exist in a variety of forms including poetry texts, live performances, films, sound recordings, books and essays. In an interview with Will Rowe, Olsen sheds light on how audiences experience her work, which is pertinent to her thinking on poetics and on what is at play in her work when she suggests that:

> Loss and the inability to "get" everything seem important to consider in relation [to] questions of space and audience.' [220]

An example of the inability of her audience to "get" everything is a consequence of her multi-sensory performance work 'eraofheros', performed by Olsen in at the Bookartbookshop in Old Street in 2003. 'Eraofheroes' involved Olsen walking back and forth outside the bookshop, wearing Mickey Mouse ears, while reading out a compiled list of superhero names into a microphone headset that was

[220] Will Rowe, 'Redell Olsen Interview with Will Rowe at Birkbeck', *PORES Avant Gardist Journal of Poetics*, 4 (2004) <http:// www. Pores.bbk.ac.uk/4/dell.html> [accessed 2 Feb 2017] (para. 2 of 52)

transmitted back into a speaker in the shop. Inside the shop window,

facing out into the street, a neon-sign flashed between the

handwritten phrases, 'eraofheroes | heroesoferror'. On the wall

outside the shop is a poster of an abstract face wearing headphones

with the banner "ERA OF HEROES | HEROES OF ERRORS written

underneath it. A footnote accompanies the banner that reads

'labyrinthitis', an ear condition that manifests as sufferers receiving

misleading information, accompanies the work'.
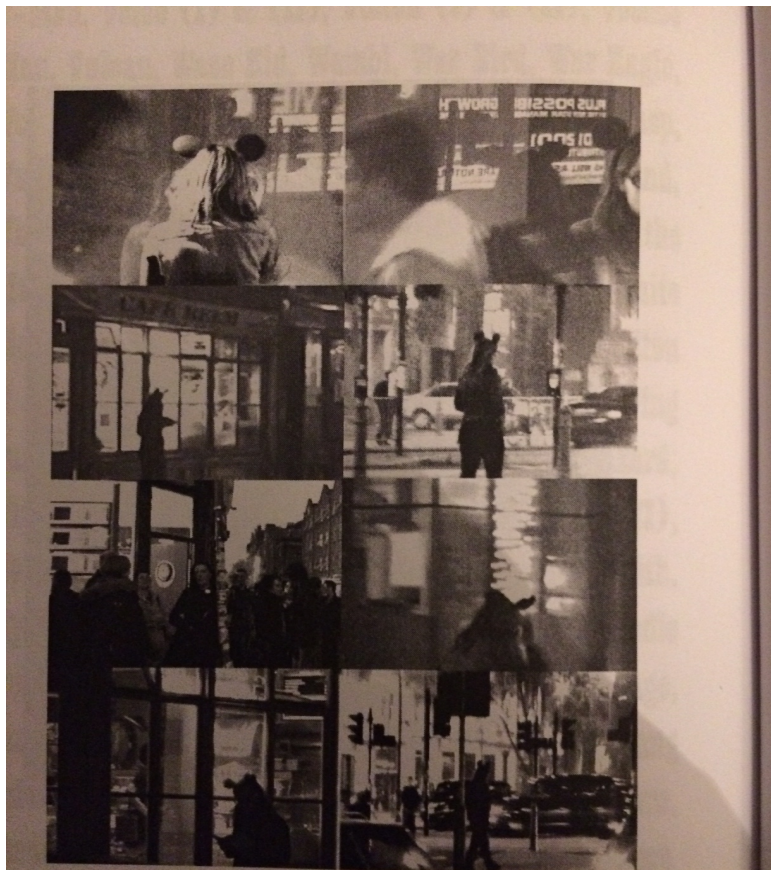
Figure 28. Redell Olsen, *eraofheroesoferror*, photo montage, 2003

By combining live performance with live audio streaming, a neon sign and a poster across multiple sites, Olsen plots a territory of poetic encounters across public spaces. Unlike the experiencing of reading a page of poetry or viewing a piece of art, Olsen's audiences must decide for themselves how to encounter her work. For example, an audience member encountering Olsen performing in the street may be satisfied to listen to and watch her live performance. Another audience street member may notice the neon sculpture and begin to make connections between the superhero names being repeated by Olsen and the paradox being played out between the flashings statements of 'eraofheroes | heroesoferror'. A customer in the bookshop may have missed seeing Olsen performing on the street (the doorway to the shop is set to the side of the shop on the corner) and might encounter the work firstly via the audio live stream in the shop and will decided whether to pursue an experience of the work further. As Olsen explains:

> The audience had to choose to listen to the text from within the shop or to follow me outside on the street.'[221]

By choosing to follow Olsen in her performance, the audience crosses the conventional line between audience and performer, artist and viewer and enters into the time and space of the work. The audience-cum-follower becomes part of the work to be experienced by other static members of the audience watching and being watched by Olsen as part of her experience of performing the work.

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[221] 'Redell Olsen Interview with Will Rowe at Birkbeck', (para. 2 of 52)

Reception choices for audiences are a recurring tactic in

Olsen's work, and are not limited to her live performance work. For

example, shifts in time and space are foregrounded through the

performativity and the materiality of language in Olsen's page based

poems to produce multiple layers of reading options, across poetry

texts for Olsen's reader. According to Allen Fisher in his 2004 review

of 'The Minimaus Poems', one of four sequence poems featured in

*Secure Portable Space*s, reception remains central to an experience to

Olsen's poetic practice:

> The shift in the work of Redell Olsen from modernist critique
> and the conventions of coherences prepares readers for
> contemporary reading and   attention, the poetics and thus the
> politics, of reception.[222]

By situating her 'Minimaus Poems' in Charles Olson's *Maximus*

poems[223] Olsen creates a dialogue with the poet and with the

"modernist critique" of poetry. What starts out as a set of playful

parallels between Olsen and Olson, Minimaus and Maximus merges

into a poetry of the 'conventions of coherence''.[224] This Fisher suggests

'prepares readers for contemporary reading and attention, the poetics

and thus the politics of reception'.[225] The merging of the two poems is

a journey of simulation from the existing surface of Olson's poem into

the unknown directions taken by Olsen's Minimaus (Mini Mouse)

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[222] Allen Fisher, 'Minimaus: in response to cultural malaise: Redell Olsen, *Secure Portable Space*, Reality Street, 2004 Review' *PORES Avant Gardist Journal of Poetics*, 4 (2004) <http:// www. Pores.bbk.ac.uk/4/fisher.html [accessed 2 Feb 2017] (para. 3 of 15)
[223] Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems*, (New York: Corinth Press, 1970). p.1.
[224] Fisher, 'Minimaus' (para.3 of 15)
[225] Ibid.

alter-ego writer of poetry. For example, Olsen's title, 'I Minimaus of Gloucester' is a direct adaptation and a reference to Charles Olson's poem and title 'I Maximus of Gloucester, to You'.

It is also interesting to note the similarities in the gesture between Olsen's occupation of Olson's poem and Mina Loy's earlier tactic of writing a version of Apollinaire's café poem, with both poets choosing to locate their poetry experiments in established male poets' work. In addition, Olsen uses a combination of experimental writing methods to take ground, and to regenerate and to transform the Olson poem into her own poetry. One of Olsen's tactics is to replace Olson's words with her own word choices. For example, in the opening line of her poem, Olsen has replaced the words "Off-shore" and " islands" of Olson's poem with the words, "Inland" and "Iceland". This transforms Olsen's opening line 'Off-shore, by islands hidden in the blood' into 'Inland, by Iceland hidden by the blood of'. She thus modernizes the setting of Olson's poem for a contemporary British audience. This Olsen does through a process of reading, unpinning and opening up Olson's lines of poetry into a dialogue between herself and Olson through word choices in opposition to those of Olson.

Olsen continues to disrupt and to situate herself in Olson's poetry. For example, in the third line of the first stanza, the surgical image of Olson's 'a metal hot from boiling water, tell you' is transformed into a modern image of provincial girlhood in Olsen's line 'sitting on hot metal, boiling in a vest' outside an '*Iceland*'

supermarket. This is a recurring tactic of Olsen's writing method, in

which according to Fisher:

> Redell Olsen's work shifts more expansively in and out of
> Charles Olsen's work, leaving it alighting on it elsewhere,
> returning to it.'[226]

For example, in part 2, Olsen's poetry alights from Olson's poem,

taking as her departure point Olson's lines:

> 2
> love is form, and cannot be without
> important substance (the weight
> say, 58 carats each one of us, perforce
> our goldsmith's scale [227]

In this case, Olsen elaborates on Olson's poetic vision by replying to

his work via a contemporary social, cultural and political commentary

in her own poetry, as her opening stanza of part 2 shows:

> as ads suggest Love is formal:
>
> the scale is calculated in golden stones
> and kilograms (a nest of breast is found
> on an upper shelf
>
> perforce our good is in sum
> makes love value added [228]

'Love' according to Olson is 'form' and is something he suggests

'cannot be without important substance.' However, according to Olsen

'Love' since the time of Olson's poem has become commoditized. Like

'gold' it has become a symbol of power to measure wealth and its

value is tided up with sex and the objectification of women by

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[226] Fisher, 'Minimaus', (para. 10 of 15)
[227] Charles Olsen, *The Maximus poems, p. 1*
[228] Redell Olsen, *secure portable space* (East Sussex: Reality Street Editions,
2004), p.78.

pornography, as in 'a nest of breast is found on an upper shelf.' Olsen's

image of contemporary "Love" is for sale, to be bought and sold, and is

no longer valued as a essential egalitarian experience, as suggested by

Olson's line, '(the weight say, 58 carats each one of us, perforce our

goldsmith's scale.' The experience of weaving in and out and across

the two poems as a side-by-side reading is a stimulating one and one

that Marcella Durand suggests is essential for a superior experience, of

reading the poems when she advised that it is 'good to have Maximus

propped nearby for reference.' [229] Fisher, is also is keen to commend

the academic rigor and artistry of Olsen's poem when he suggest that:

> It is work that demonstrates a critical edge, informed by a
> broad range of artistic activities and attentions necessary to
> contemporary poetics and politics. [230]

Although I agree with Fisher's statement and with Marcella Durand's

critique of Olsen's work, they paint a somewhat self-conscious portrait

of Olsen as a poet. My experience of Olsen's work is that of a highly

intelligent and informed "poet-artist" making work that foregrounds

experience of "poetics" through a very humane rendering of her

knowledge, skills and concerns, rather than poetry that foregrounds

academic knowledge as a superior quality of poetics. The academic

references are not in themselves a measure of the experience or of the

quality of poetry or the location of the art happening in a piece of

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[229] 'Marcella Durand reviews *secure portable space* by Redell Olsen', *Jacket Magazine,* 32 (2007*)* < http://jacketmagazine.com/32/durand-olsen.shtml> [accessed 2 Feb 2017] (para. 4 of 8)
[230] Ibid. , (para 6 of 8)

work. They are part of the materiality of the work being presented as poetry happening.
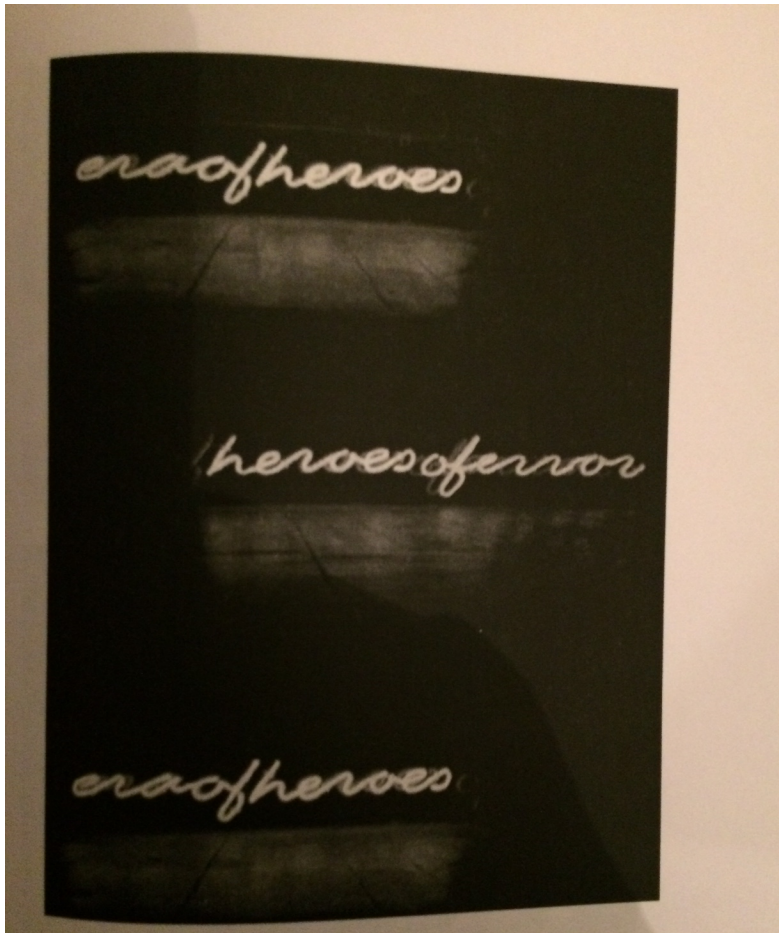
Figure 29. Redell Olsen, *eraofheroesoferror*, neon sculpture, 2003

Olsen's neon sculpture, *eraofheroesoferror*, photographs of which feature in her book *secure portable space* [231] operates as an artwork and as a visual guide to Olsen's tactic of creating visual and verbal poetic works which site their poetic activity in the experiential spaces between reading, seeing, writing and performance. The neon

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[231] Olsen, *secure portable space*, p.71.

sculpture which alternates between the phrases "eraofheroes" and "heroesoferror". The first slogan is a reference to comic book heroes and the second, a poignant statement aimed at the NATO forces involvement in the Iraqi War. Together these form the question, "which are they, heroes or misguided heroes?" Once the initial cleverness of the mechanics of the sign passes, one finds oneself asking, "where is the poetics of in this work located?" What is happening in and to language through the constant refiguring and repurposing of it? And, what is revealed by the similar ambiguities of these supposedly conflicting slogans? Or does this sculpture alert us to the instability of language, its need to be always becoming something else and always coming out of something else: fluid, whole, fragmented, infinite and timeless.

Ideas of exploring audience reception through a poetic practice situated across experiential spaces is further explored in Olsen's project 'S P R I G S & Spots.' Consisting of a live performance, a film, live music and a co-existing poetry text, 'S P R I G S & Spots' was first performed at the POLYply series in 2011.[232] The live performance takes the form of Olsen reading her poetry texts while a film made by Olsen, from documentary film footage of the UK lace making industry in the 1930s, is being projected. In addition, Olsen plays percussion and is accompanied by Drew Milne on an electric guitar, fed back through a synthesizer and speaker system. During the performance

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[232] S P R I G & spots was performed at POLYply 12 at the Centre for Creative Collaboration on 8 September 2011.

Olsen stands to the side of the audience, facing the projected film footage. The film is silent. Olsen performs the poem alongside the screening of the poem, which is shown in slow motion. Sampled noise of the Jacquard looms accompanies the reading, with Olsen playing individual notes on a toy piano during the inter-titles of the edited film. The performance lasts thirty minutes during which time the footage speeds up and begins to generate to reconfigure itself into a series of patterns, as if the film itself has become the thread that is being put through the lace-making machinery by Olsen's alchemy.

The effect on me of viewing this work was one of making a selection of reception experiences. By choosing which elements of Olsen's performance to receive, whether it is the film, the sounds, the reading or the percussion or various combinations of these elements, I was able to form an individual audience experience. My reception experience was in part made possible by Olsen's decision to stand beside her work rather than to read directly at the audience. Performance, for Olsen, follows in the tradition of performance art within visual arts practice.

By positioning herself outside of the traditional stage space of a performance, Olsen creates a break between herself and audience members. Olsen's poetic performances are not about her skill as a performer. Her role as a performer in the work is to perform a gesture, a reading or a function necessary to the overall production of the performance. It is a means by which to do or to demonstrate an action, or to perform a gesture necessary to the making of art and

poetry. By using performance art as a method to create an experience

of poetics in a live work, Olsen vacates the experiential space

produced by the work, and instead she prepares for her audiences to

receive through her approach to language as a material. In her critique

of Susan Howe's poetry book *The Midnight,* Olsen suggests:

> Language is itself used as a raw material that, like the stones
> and earth of Smithson's work, is already in the world; it is raw
> matter to be transported and re-sited. [. . .] Like Smithson,
> Howe attempts to renegotiate the boundaries between outside
> and inside, between the space of art and the world beyond.[233]

This concept of treating language 'as a raw material' to be 'transport

and re-sited' to 'renegotiate the boundaries between the space of art

and world beyond' is also true of Olsen's work. As in the case of

Fisher's method to mobilise "spacetime" via the crossing between

"float" and "in-reading" opportunities of his poems, commentaries and

images, Olsen's work offers readings and listening choices to her

audiences between and across her multi-generic live performances

and poetic outcomes, where knowledge is experienced, learnt,

remembered and transformed into an experience of art and poetry.

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[233] Redell Olsen, 'Book-Parks and Non-sites', *Jacket Magazine,* 40
<http://jacketmag
azine.com /40/howe-s-olsen.shtml> [accessed 2 Feb2017] (para. 35 of 55)

CONCLUSION: Research as Practice as Research

In this thesis I have attempted to plot a historical account of the emergence of the poetic practitioner through the evolution of shared practice, dialogues and ideas between visual artists and poets from the early twentieth century to today. Through critiquing the work of Gertrude Stein alongside that of Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, I have argued that Stein's 'Object poems' in *Tender Buttons*, combine the visual arts methods of "Cubism" with Duchamp's poetic use of language as materials and concepts for "anti-retinal art" to write experimental poetry. In addition, I have also argued that the experimental method of foregrounding creative processes is a mode of reception in the work of Picasso, Duchamp and Stein and has continued to be explored as a fundamental site of artistic investigation in the poetic works of Allen Fisher and Redell Olsen, and in my own poetic practice.

In conjunction with my critical research, I have developed a series of experimental poetic practice strategies and methodologies to explore practically my thesis topic, 'visual arts practice as the basis for an experimental poetic practice,' and to try out new ways to write poetry. These are discrete projects that operate under the umbrella project, entitled *of* POWER, and they aim to address and to explore themes of hierarchy and power in the workplace. Each project investigates the positioning of a female voice in a predominately male business environment through a focus on the language of business,

business attire, hierarchical business structures and the performing of work.

As a starting point for my practice, I was interested in trying to create a dialogue between the established male etiquette of clothing in the business and home dressmaking via paper patterns, which saw a rise in popularity among working women in the 1960s.[234] According to Joy Emery, '[the] figure for all pattern sales were estimated to $50 Million in 1961.' [235] I also wanted to draw parallels between the paper sewing patterns of home dressmaking and Duchamp's own diagrammatical drawings and notes for *The Large Glass*. As T'ai Smith reminds us in his article, 'Ready-made shirts ready-made reading','Duchamp took the word, "readymade," from the label inside a department-store shirt,' while living in New York.[236] The paper sewing-patterns are made up of a series of diagrams and instructions to be followed by any individual to produce a piece of clothing. As established by Richard Hamilton in his reproduction of the *Large Glass* for the Tate, the notes in Duchamp's Green Box can operate as instructions for making the sculpture. [237] Duchamp's attraction to the

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[234] In 1956 a changeover from cut and punch pattern to printed patterns took place across within the magazine published world responsible for producing clothing patterns. In 1961 an estimated figure of $51 Million was recorded for global pattern sales across.

[235] Joy Spanabel Emery, *A History of the Paper Pattern Industry; the home dressmaking fashion revolution* (Bloomsbury: London 2014), p. 178.

[236] http://jacket2.org/article/ready-made-shirts-ready-made-readings

[237] In 1961 Richard Hamilton reconstructed Duchamp's Large Glass in Newcastle, before transporting it to the Tate for a retrospective of Marcel Duchamp's works. Shortly before, Ulf Linde's produced the first replica of The Large Glass for the exhibition *Rörelse i Konsten* (Art in Motion) of 1961 at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. However, Richard Hamilton felt this version had been made too quickly. He was concerned that Linde hadn't

term "ready-made" as a reference to manufacturing and to clothing patterns appeals to me greatly as a metaphorical lens through which to consider a poetic practice.

Duchamp's appropriation of the term "ready-made" can also be seen as a metaphor for his wider ideas of re-thinking the role of the artist within contemporary society. This involved creating a new type of the anti-retinal art, where the democracy of ideas prevailed over the privileged aesthetic choices, techniques and skills of an artist. For example, anyone following the instructions of the dressmaking paper pattern has the option to experience the making of the garment, as part of the experience of the garment. In the same way, as anyone viewing Duchamp's semi-readymade and ready-made artworks has the option of experiencing them as art through the intellectual experience of Duchamp's found object framed by the instruction of his title and the setting of the gallery.

Research through practice

Inspired by Gertrude Stein, I set myself a series of writing projects to see if I could develop a poetic practice outcome generated from critical research. Accordingly, I decided to make a page-based collection of

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consulted the notes of The Green Box to create the work. Only by following the instruction of the Duchamp's Green Box did Hamilton feel that one could create an authentic reproduction of the work. Duchamp signed the work as a authentic copy of the Large Glass at the Tate.

verbal and visual pieces. With *Tender Buttons* Stein brings together 'Objects', 'Food' and 'Room' of poetry and prose divided into sections, yet in dialogue with each other. I wanted to explore the concept of the book as a continuous form where verbal and visual poems could co-exist in the same spaces, and where the reading of texts and images could leak into one another to create a fluid reading experience of poetic activity.

By combining my research into Gertrude Stein and Marcel Duchamp, I have developed a poetic practice that situates itself in the experimental poetry writing tradition established by Stein and prompted by the anti-retinal artworks of Duchamp. In developing this poetic practice I have also been conscious of the work of contemporary practioners—particularly Allen Fisher and Redell Olsen. As in the case of these contemporary "poet-artists", my poetic practice moves between poetry, image making and performance. For my own practice, performance, be it visually on the page, video footage or as a live physical act, is my catalyst for developing concepts for poetic works, and is an artistic process for foregrounding experimental methods of making as an essential quality in experiencing poetics and art.

Not all of my poetic experiments for this period of research are included in my creative submission. As an artist and poet, I felt compelled to test my research through my practice at various stages of my PhD project, regardless of whether I needed to produce another piece of creative work for my submission. However, results from these

experiments have made their way into methods, tropes and stylistic devices within my creative submission. To take one example: the inclusion of orange to highlight words and as a thread of colour is a remnant of my conceptual book project, *Conceptual Writing As Reading, a* project that was devised to test out my research into Duchamp's concepts of anti-retinal art and his use of language as a material in art.

Conceptual Writing as Reading: What Duchamp Said, Even

Conceptual Writing as Reading is a series of video performances, sound recordings, mark-ups, readings, instructions and book combinations that I developed around the title 'What Duchamp Said, Even.' My initial aim for this experiment was to *get inside* the processes of Duchamp's practice by developing a conceptual poem out of Duchamp's own words. I began by sourcing Duchamp quotations from *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp by Pierre Cabannes.*[238] I chose this book as my source material as I wanted to avoid using other critics' interpretations of Duchamp's ideas, and instead to source Duchamp's opinions directly. Through a process of selecting Duchamp's quotations as readymade-found-language objects, I hoped to produce a conceptual art book project that explored and

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[238] Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp.*

foregrounded Duchamp's ideas in his own words. I selected fragments

of speech that I felt gave ambiguous insights into Duchamp the man

and into his way of theorizing and making art. For example, as in these

lines of selected texts, 'I wouldn't sign a request to belong to an

Institute,' 'I made some puns. For Picasso' and 'Oh yes, poetic words.'

This resulted in fifteen A4 landscape pages of sentences made up from

fragmented Duchamp quotations. On reading the text, I became

interested in the chance running order of the lines and in the location

that each individual line occupied on the page, in relation to each

other and in relation to the space of the page as a whole. I quickly

resolved, that I would need to develop my own method of

appropriation to transform Duchamp's words into my own project.

Influenced by the notes of the *Green Box* and the due diligence

Duchamp paid in replicating all of the annotations and jottings to

foreground his thinking process in making art, I developed a system of

annotations of my own that I could apply to the quotations as a

process of marking up my pages to highlight and to distort the

language of the page.

In this work I was interested in developing a method of artistic

production that would combine by-hand and mechanical processes of

making. In keeping with my wider *of* POWER project, I knew I wanted

to experiment with the traditional women's work of sewing and to

explore the prospect of "sewing seams" as locations and as methods

for writing poetry. Therefore, I decided to experiment with machine

sewing as part of my creative project. Conscious that all Duchamp's

works involved a performative act, I then decided to perform and to video my experiments in order to review the results. During the performance I developed a series of actions that I used to develop instructions for marking up, reading and sewing my pages.[239] Influenced by "Fluxus instruction scores for performances", I developed the instructions to produce a variety of different ways to perform annotations. This resulted in multiple page combinations for performing readings.

To begin, I set myself the basic guidelines of applying a process of annotation—to strike through or not to, with a straight line or a wavy line in pencil, by hand—each line of text on a page of my Duchamp quotation texts. I went on to utilize a sewing machine and to experiment with creating seams as a way to join language together and to subvert the texts. This led me to develop my next set of instructions, 'What Duchamp Said, Even – Instruction for annotations.'

Start at the top line

By hand, draw an ellipse around this line to isolate it from the others [what duchamp said,]

Move to next line. If this line contains an 'I' draw a wavy mark through the entire length of the line by hand in pencil / leaving the words readable.

If it doesn't contain an 'I' [even] put a line straight line through the middle of the line / use a pencil and a metal ruler [everything else]

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[239] See appendix 1. Videos 1. *What Duchamp Said, Even Annotations* and *2. What Duchamp Said Even, Sewing Seams.*

After restricting myself to such a limited creative process, I felt

compelled to find ways to vary my method of annotating each line, and

I changed to a random approach to selecting lines to annotate.

Through my experience of doing this, I recognized that in applying the

annotations to a text, I could create a strategy for reading and for

performing the text through the process of marking-up the pages. This

led me to develop this next instruction, 'What Duchamp Said, Even –

Instruction for Marking up Annotations to Create a Reading:'

>   Start at the top line on the page

>   By hand, draw an ellipse around this line to isolate it from the
>   others [what duchamp said,]

>   Choose your next line. If this line contains an 'I', draw a wavy
>   mark through the entire length of the line by hand in pencil /
>   leaving the words readable.

>   If it doesn't contain an 'I' [even] put a line straight line through
>   the middle of the line / use a pencil and a metal ruler
>   [everything else]

>   As you are annotating the line, read the line out loud. Try to
>   coordinate your mouth with your hand and perform the line in
>   sync with the movements of your hand. i.e. – if you are drawing
>   a ruled line through the a line of text, perform your spoken text,
>   short and crisp. If the line is wavy and long, perform your text
>   as a long drawn out breath.

With reading across texts in mind, I developed my next instruction,

'What Duchamp Said, Even – Seams as reading spaces':

>   Sew together left-hand page with the single line *What Duchamp*
>   *Said, Even* to a single annotated page.

>   Use an orange thread

>   Once the pages are sewn together / fold back the seam and
>   read where the lines have joined

Repeat until all pages are sewn

By following through all of the set instructions I produced a book of one hundred and fifty three pages, which in total produces approximately eight million different readings of the texts. I concluded that this project, however, lacked the poetic quality I was looking for in a finished work. It felt more in keeping with post-modern ideas of conceptual art practice than the modernist writing experiments of Gertrude Stein. It lacked the conceptual framework of language as a system for artwork as executed by Duchamp in his use of puns and titles in his "semi-readymade" artworks. I also felt, that like a lot of recent conceptual writing, it did little to advance the contemporary conceptual writing I was trying to develop with my own poetic practice.

Game(s) *of* POWER : a. manuscript

My creative manuscript, Game(s) *of* POWER brings together five page-based outcomes from my subsequent research as practice experiments. The manuscript combines elements of visual poetry, verbal poetry, video performance and photography to form four sequence poems; 'a. *Gender* Bias Binding', 'a.turnout', 'I am knot . . . , '*Lint*', and the single poem 'Postface' sewn together in 'Game(s) of POWER', a sequence-length book of poetry.

a. *Gender* **Bias Binding: found text as readymade language objects**

'a. *Gender* Bias Binding' comprises of a set of fifty-seven couplets.
Written out of the found text sources book 'POWER!: How to get it.
How to use it'[240]—a 1980s guide to workplace power structures and
business know-now by Michael Korda—and 'The Vogue Sewing
Book,'[241] which is an encyclopedia on domestic sewing, fabrics,
fashion and patterning making by Vogue Patterns. For this writing
experiment, I was interested in the idea of treating partial sentences,
phrases and words as readymade language objects within the space of
poetry. Working with these two key texts, I aimed to produce a
sequence of poems where my "found text" sources could come up
against each other, speak to each other, stand-alone and merge
together to create a unique poetic language of their own.

     In the spirit of Gertrude Stein, I began by selecting fragments and
partial sentences from the 'POWER!' book to write continuous and
discontinuous lines of poetry. I decided to treat single words from the
Vogue source material as conjunctions to join together the fragmented
Power texts I had accumulated. As with Stein's strategy of using
words to stand in for other words, as a method to convey an
immediate experience of her objects with her 'Object Poems,' I chose
my Vogue Pattern words to convey immediate experiences of a female
voice trying to establish ground among the male voices of business

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[240] Michael Korda, *POWER!* (Sevenoaks: Coronet, 1978).
[241] The Vogue Sewing Book (Dorset: Blandford Press, 1978).

and the office environment. As this poem from *Tender Buttons*
demonstrates:

> PEELED PENCIL, CHOKE
> Rub her coke.[242]

Here, Stein's use of the word 'coke' is simultaneously a play on lead
and coke as forms of carbon and a play on the words 'coke' and cock.
The status of the poem as a single line shorter than the title suggests
that the poem should be read from the title to the end, as two
fragmented lines of poetry of similar status. This suggests to me
Stein's own experience of being a gay woman without a 'pencil' or
penis, who no matter how much she peels off her traditional feminine
identify is always left 'choked', stuck on the outside of the male
experience. The female 'coke' is a piece of coal made from the same
'carbon' as a lead 'pencil,' but destined to operate outside of a
perceived patriarchal vantage point. For my own project, I felt that
my "Vogue words" would operate to foreground the patriarchal
systems of business language, as a method of provoking my reader
into the consideration of a language where the process and experience
of domestic sewing, tailoring and repair is integral to an inclusive
language of art and poetry.

I then decided to employ a conceptual framework to write and
edit my lines of text into poetry. In keeping with Duchamp's use of his
titles as language operation systems to devise and frame his
readymade and semi-readymade artworks, I chose to site my work in

---

[242] Stein, *Tender Buttons,* p.17.

the conceptual framing of Bias Binding, a cotton or silk ribbon and tool used to bring together and to conceal seams in dressmaking. I employed the poetic form of the couplet to edit my sourced Power words into 'a. *Gender* Bias Binding'—a poetic space of female identities operating in the seams of Power. I introduced the em dash as a reference to Duchamp's 'Delay in Glass' note and to visually represent the loose woven surface of the bias binding and to allow the words and phrases to perform as themselves apart and simultaneously together as part of the poem. Another device I added was to introduce a series of spaces into the couplets. These are demarcated by square brackets. My intention here was to offer to my reader the opportunity to complete, fill or refill as they read or re-read the poetry.

a. turnout: altering a suit as a metaphor for experimental poetry

For the next poem in my collection 'a. turnout', I decided I would explore the processes of high-street tailoring and in particular the notion of "doing alterations'' as a framework and guide to develop an experimental poem. Taking as my staring point the navy blue business suit—a recognized symbol of power in the business workplace—I set out to write my poem through a metaphor and a conceptual framework of alteration that would explore and document the journey of altering suit into writing a poem. I felt that as with Stein's

ventriloquism of Alice. B Toklas's voice and of Duchamp's invention of his alter ego, Rrose Sélavy, that I too would occupy the space of another via putting on the suit, as a site for creative experimentation.

The poem is made up of twenty-two poems over twenty-two pages. Each poem in the sequence falls under one of the heading titles of 'Acquire', 'Try on', 'Pin', 'Cut', 'Sew', 'Alter' and 'Wear'. This is a sequence of single word actions, I wrote to represent the transformative process from purchasing the suit, altering it to fit my body, through putting it on and wearing it. The poems have three text components, a title, a list of alternative thesaurus sourced words for the title, and the main body text of the poem, as this poem demonstrates:

5.Sew

Stitch, tack, baste, seam, hem, embroider, darn, mend, repair, patch

In golden thread. SEW. Today is pink
REPAIR today is bright & there is hope
REPAIR to become navy blue in silk
& *Listen to Gossip.* BASTE
& with stealth begin again to assemble
tipis & palm trees to practice a. transfer
of parental property at a marriage
of a. girl a. public arena of exchange

I wrote these poems over a period of three years, initially out of a curiosity to develop larger poems out of purely found text sources. I

soon developed a method of including my own observations,

overheard conversations, songs, fashion shoot information,

newspaper articles, excerpts of my critical research and any language

sources pertaining to ideas of hierarchy, power and clothing that

interested me. My intention was to create textured poems of "found"

and original language that offer the potential for "in readings" and

"float perceived readings" as defined by Allen Fisher. For example, in

the main body of poem '2.1 Try on' I combine texts sourced from my

research into sumptuary law [243] and scientific research methods and

sewing with my own words to create the poem:

> Stitch. a complete SAMPLE is set to SHAKE
> DOWN. a. parent population that includes
> ALL Such objects that satisfy well-defined
> Selection criteria enforces a form *of* sumptuary
> Law upon cowboys. outlaws, & refuges fashion

Once I had formed and shaped the texts into stanzas, I began a process

of applying alternative title words for each summary header into the

main body of the poem. My aim in doing this was to have the words

perform a process of editing to the text and to stand in for traditional

punctuation and to create new directions of meaning for my lines of

poetry. The repetition of these words built up patterns of alliteration

within the poems. In addition, by highlighting the alternative words in

the list above in orange, that also featured below in the main body of

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[243] Jennifer C. Ingrey, 'Troubling gender binaries in schools: from sumptuary law to sartorial agency' in Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education 34:3 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 424-438.

the poem, I aimed to encourage a non-hierarchical readings of the poems across and through the areas of the main content, the list of alternative words and the title. By capitalizing the alternative words in the main body of the poems, I also hoped to draw attention to the words as objects, as well as words within the poems. Contrary to Fisher's "commentary texts", which were made up of his resources that operated as "in reading" within the surface of his text, my intention was to propose alternative meanings through thesaurus word definitions that operated like the titles of Stein's 'Object poems'. That is to say, as poetry containers, made of and in language, temporal and shifting.

I am knot . . . a. performance as instructions for poetic practice

I continued to explore the role of clothing in relation to power and turned my attention to neckties and to the etiquette and aesthetics of tying knots. At this time, I was carrying out research into Duchamp's *Green Box* and I was thinking through parallels between his use of language and his theories of anti-retinal art and Stein's experimental methods for writing poetry. Having begun to explore their shared method of occupying alternative voices as a strategy for experimentation, I decided now to focus on foregrounding the process of work as a site for developing a poetic practice.

As a visual artist who has worked primarily in performance art, I decided to initiate this writing experiment through an analysis of the process of performing tie knots. I felt that I needed to shift my investigation away from poetry writing on the page and to focus on the physical space of "doing" as a basis for poetic practice. Armed with the book *85 ways to tie a tie: the science and aesthetics of tie knots* [244] and dressed in the androgynous uniform of a white collar shirt, I set out to perform a series of tie knots while facing a mirror—and to video my performance. In keeping with this androgynous character, I set up a workplace environment of desk, chair and a dressing-table mirror. I intentionally included the reflection of the video camera set up in the mirror as a way of highlighting the importance of documentation in my process of making the work. I systemically performed a series of tie knot instructions that I had pre-selected and photocopied on to A4 sheets of paper to create the video performance piece, 'I am knot . . . a .video performance'[245], as this sequence of still images taken from the video footage illustrates:

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[244] Brian Hayes and others, *85 Ways to Tie a Tie: The Science and Aesthetics of Tie Knots* (Cambridge: Sigma XI-The Scientific Research Society).
[245] See appendix 1. Videos *3. I am knot. . a vide*o and 4. *I am knot . . a. subtitle poem.*
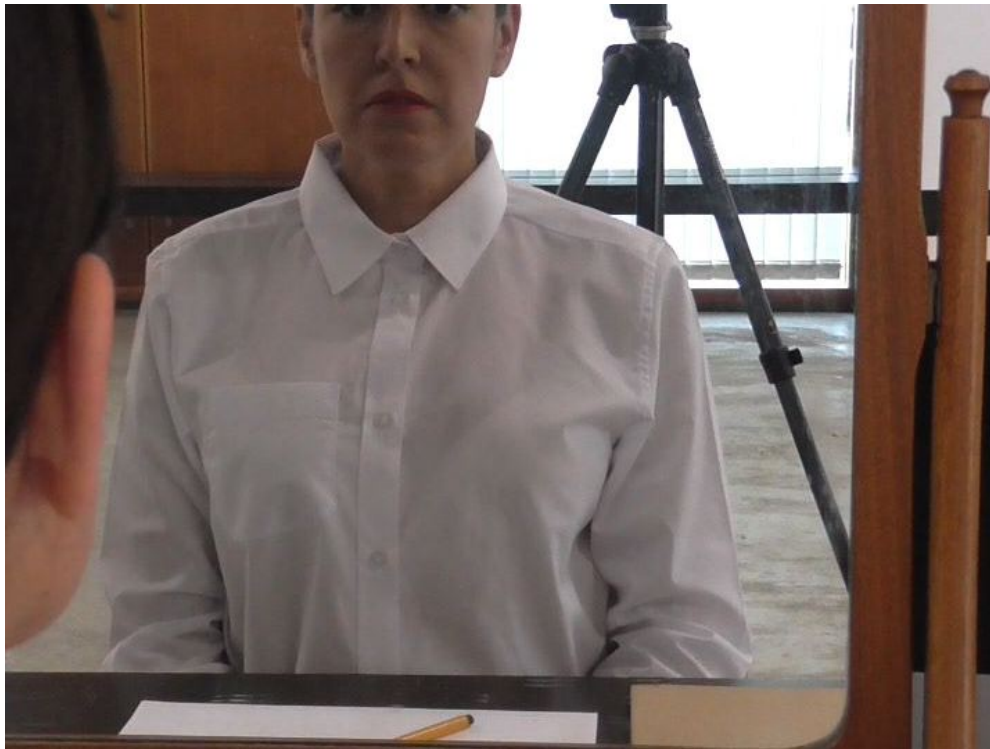
Figure 30. Alison Gibb 'Image 1' from *I am knot . . . a video performance*, 2016

Figure 31. Alison Gibb 'Image 4' from *I am knot . . . a video performance*, 2016

Figure 32, 'Image14,' from I am knot . . . a video performance, 2016

Figure 33. Alison Gibb 'Image 21,' *from I am knot . . . a video performance*, 2016

As I performed the tie knot gestures, I devised a set of instructions on how I could transform the language of the tie knots— Lo Ri Lo Ci Ro Li Co T—into a methodology for writing poetry, and also as a set of instructions for an experimental writing process.

In line with my interest in the multi-generic poetic works of Redell Olsen, such as her project *eraofheroes*, which comprise of the co-existing poetic outcomes of a neon sculpture, live performance and poetry texts, I produced a variety of different outcomes: a video projection, a sequence-length poem, a video with the poem subtitled over the film, a series of slides to be projected and to perform alongside the poem for a live reading, a sequenced poem with photographic images included in the collection, and the artist book *I am knot. . . a. poster in pieces of POWER.* [246] In addition there are parallels between my I am knot . . . projects and Olsen's *a newe booke of copies* film poem project. Consisting of the three elements of video performance, poetry reading and soundscore, Olsen's work describes the experience of the performance on her website as:

> In performance the poem is delivered live in relation to the projected film of a woman making quills. The soundtrack of the film (the sound of quills being cut with knife) is set at a level to produce a level of noise that interferes with the delivery of the text by the performer.[247]

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[246] Alison Gibb, *I am knot...a. poster in pieces of POWER* is a limited edition artists' book made up of seven A4 sized POWER slogans housed in a box, published by Ambergris Editions in 2016.
[246] See appendix 1, Video 5. I am knot... a POSTER.
[247] Redell Oslen, 'a newe booke of copies' < http://redellolsen.co.uk/newe-booke-of-copies/> [accessed on 4 June 2017]

Olsen performs the making of quills in her film. This form of reenactment enables Olsen to locate her poetic work in the operation of making quills for scribes. The sound—an echo from history— disrupts the sound of her voice in live performance, where both sounds mingle together to produce a historical poetry soundscore. In contrast, my performance of tying knots operates as a template for me to create instructions for writing poems and for developing a bookwork. When projected as video or as a slide show to accompany a reading, my *I am knot. . . .a. video* also operates as a visual guide to experience the poetry it relates to.

The sequence poem, *I am knot . . .* included in the manuscript consists of twenty-one stanzas of poetry and seventeen still images from the video performance piece. Each stanza is dedicated to a tie knot selected my me, based on the historical description of the knot, its tying sequence instruction and the example in the book of a person whose status is associated with each knot. For example Marlene Dietrich is given as the example given of a wearer of tie knot 24. I developed a form for these poems, where each stanza opened with the playful pun, 'I am knot', and ended with an open ended partial lines, suggesting what I might be instead. As these opening two stanzas demonstrate:

> I am knot l o n g-established
> L C L R C T
> a.1950's publication
> or J a m e s B o n d
> I am knot
>   a non-release *derivative*

> I am knot Joseph Conrad
> One centered
> a. *variation* known as Prince A l b e r t
> or a Clifford
> I am knot
>   a partly *visible* first *turning*

Although the poem can stand alone as a text, I felt that by including

still images from my video footage, I was able to better convey the

relationship between my repetitive performance of tying the necktie

knots and the poetic form I developed for the stanza sequences. My

aim was to transform my repetitive gesture of tying the knots in

performance into writing the poetry and produce a form that evoked

the strange coded language of necktie knots. As with the performance

of tying knots each stanza follows a shared process, yet the content of

each stanza, like each finished tie knot, is discrete.

Lint: sewing seams as spaces for experimental reading experiences

As the PhD progressed, I become increasingly aware that I was

producing multiple drafts and versions of poems, instructions and

images. I felt I wanted to repurpose these as a way of including the

drafting processes as integral to a finished work. I had been collecting

the *FT HOW TO SPEND IT* magazine for some years. [248] I had already

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[248] *HOW TO SPEND IT* is a monthly glossy newspaper magazine that accompanies the weekend edition of the financial times newspaper, which

included information from the fashion shoots and advertisements in the text for 'a.turnout.' I was now also interested in finding a way to incorporate the high-gloss couture fashion images into my poetry collection. I decided to experiment with the concept of creating an experimental collage technique that would combine the traditional collage methods of Picasso to include everyday materials with my own draft materials to create visual poems.

For this project, I set myself the conceptual framework of using machine sewing as a method of joining my materials together, where I would explore stitching and seams as spaces for creating new visual and verbal poems and new reading experiences. Through a rethinking of collage as a vital experimental device used to produce multiple perspectives of verbal and visual representation as poems, I have aimed to produce new reading experiences within the conceptual framework of seams as a location for poetry. These poems are three-dimensional objects that can be held and rotated to produce a variety of "mobile spaces" of "seam reading" combinations.[249] For the collection, I selected a variety of "seam readings" as scans to produce my *Lint* poems. Here is an example of one of my *Lint* poems:

feature articles, fashion, interviews and advertisement and designer goods aimed at a super rich clientele.

[249] See appendix 2. *from Lint,* seams as mobile spaces artwork*.
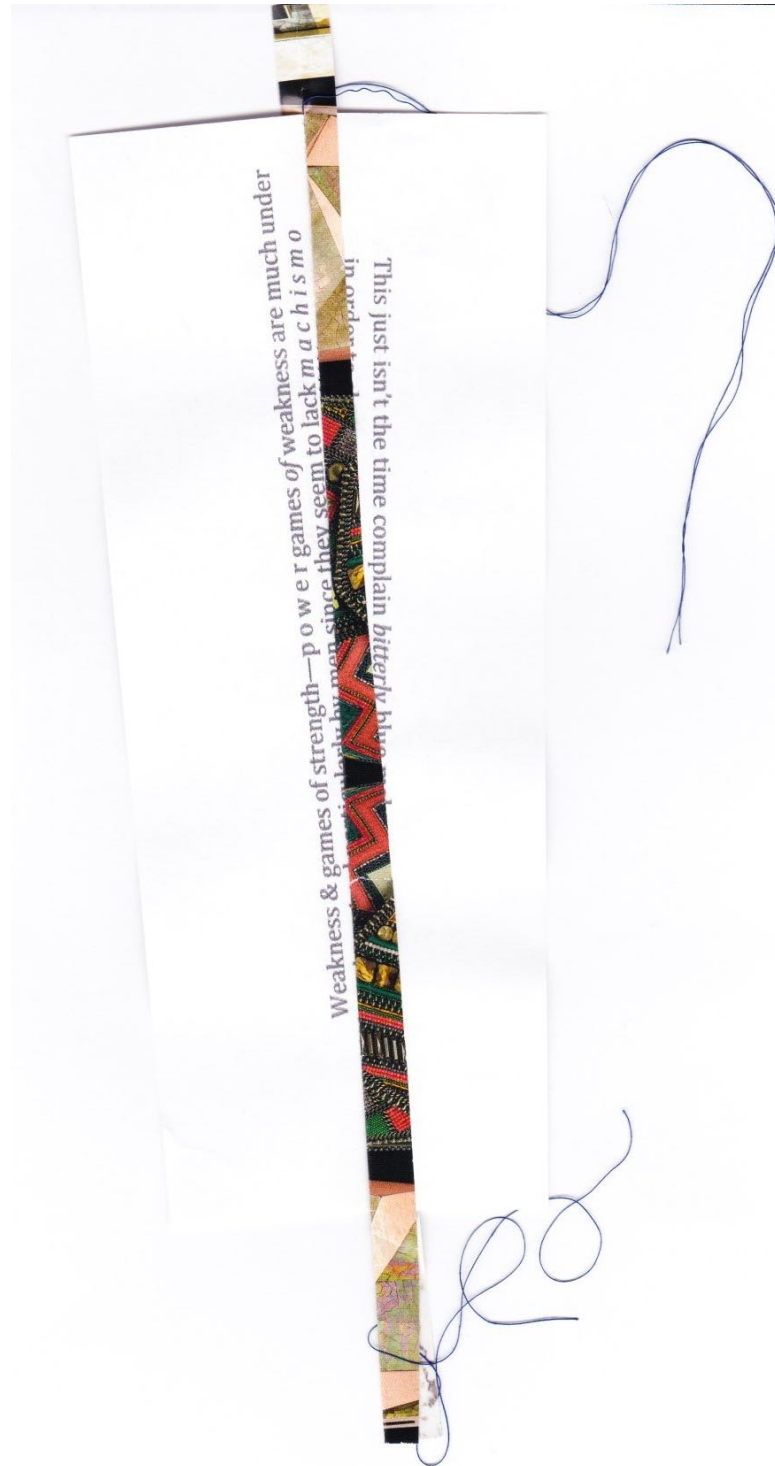
Figure 34. Alison Gibb 'Scan 1' from *Lint,* 2017

Postface

'Postface', the final page and poem of the manuscript brings together all the elements at play in the form of a poem. It is also my invitation to my reader to join me (in the spirit of James Brown[250]) to Get Up! And to dance in protest *from* the *Get Go*!

A note on punctuation as a visual grammar

The verbal editing of my poems and the invention of a visual grammar are integral parts of my poetry writing practice. Across the poems, texts, instructions and titles in the collection, I have developed my own form of punctuation as a visual grammatical system by which to read words, phrases and mark the direction of lines of poetry. For example, in the title 'a. turnout', by placing a full stop after the letter 'a' I hope to create a visual signal that 'a. turnout' was a unique happening or performance of a 'turnout' as opposed to any ordinary idea of what a turnout could be. I continued to use this distancing device throughout my poems to demarcate the event of a word happening, and as a title, to my reader. The repetition of this device also served to mark the kinship between the different parts of the project.

[250] James Brown, singer, soul-man and activist. For further reading on the 'hardest working man in the music industry', see refer to James Brown, *Autobiography James Brown: the godfather of sou*l, (London: Fontana, 1988).

Another visual device I employ is to space out the letters of the words

of interest to me. It is not that I find these words in themselves are

necessarily more interesting to me than the other words in a poem,

but that, due to their visual place in the composition of the poem or

their agency in suggesting other words when spaced into letters, they

offer the possibility of creating openings in the poems for alternative

readings to pass through. My other intention when spacing words

into letters is to control the pace of reading my poem. Simply put,

spaced out words operate to slow down and open up the poems by

causing "delays" in the space between letters, where wordings and

meanings could pass through, morph or disintegrate. Italicized words,

on the other hand, operate to speed up and to heighten the reading of

a word, propelling the poem on and lifting poetry off the page. By

foregrounding my performance and writing process through the

materiality of language, my hope is to produce modes of reception

which provide active reading and spectator experiences of poetics as

choices to my reader, and as making a thinking space for the

possibilities for poetics.

A poetic Delay

The effect of creating "mobile" poetry texts, collaged poems, video

performance and photographic images as a mode of creating multiple

sensory poetic outcomes produces the experience of "delays" as

proposed by Duchamp in his intention of making his spectator move between the notes of The Green Box and The Large Glass. In *from Game (s) of POWER*, I approached exploring the operation of Duchamp's "delay" in three ways. Firstly, I hoped to propose my own 'Delay in Glass'—that is a designated, non-physical presentation space for the experience of art—through multiple readings and viewings which are presented on and off the page. Secondly, by creating visual and verbal poems from multi-generic modes of visual art and poetry practice, I wanted to foreground language as material and as a structural system for the production of anti-retinal artworks and language acts. Lastly, I wanted, as Duchamp did, for my own "delay" to operate poetically as a conceptual word container—That is to say that when I use the word 'delay' in relation to the aims of my own poetic practice, I mean all of the above, under the guise of the conventional meaning of 'delay', as: delay—a. pause *for* thought a d v a n c i n g.

MANUSCRIPT

Game(s) *of* POWER

a. *Gender* Bias Binding
a. turnout
I am knot . . .
Lint
Postface

Recognize & live with a sense of power—your P O W E R —is at the
core *of* a total loss—open your eyes—is a *delusion* —& [a. turnout]

1. Acquire

 Obtain, come by, get, receive, gain , earn, win, come into, be given, buy,
purchase, procure, secure, pick up, land, bag, score

To begin. Make a selection in cloth. Today

is sunny & bright & the air is chilled. All

is better & obtainable. All is navy blue

& all is p o w e r f u l *all in all is all*—& SCORE

Understand where POWER lies—*action* makes more fortunes than caution
is a. p i e c e of advice worth remembering—in loose u n d e r t a k i n g s

1. Try on

Check out, demonstrate, practice, scrutinize, experiment, probe, prove,
    test, inspect, audition, fit, sample, appraise, speculate, assay,
    examine, explore, venture, verify, shake down, research, mess around,
    play around, diagnose, futz around, study, match up, validate, inquire,
    substantiate, confirm

A. STUDY demonstrates a. line & a. size in navy

blue silk a. fabrication to demonstrate a. tuck

under & gather up in language "Mmmm" & *Listen*

to Gossip to make a STUDY *of* being inside *of* an inquiry

"Mmmm" & *Listen to Gossip* to gain [olefin]

Listen to Gossip to venture a. fitting in navy blue

a. STUDY in repetitive acts—a progression in p o w

e r I put my arms through it & MESSED it AROUND

Dress is a game of POWER & it is a natural ally against mathematical formulae
to increase your POWER one must decrease in order to—play up to [*score*]

3. Pin

Tack, nail, staple, bolt, peg, dowel, pin down, trap, hem in, corner,
close in, hedge in, entangle, express, name, specify, pinpoint,
place

Of place. a site *of* fabrication. A site in navy blue

silk & *all in all* to *Gossip.* Listen to PLACES

along the line is a. temporary closing. Gossip to

CORNER . Listening to Gossip is a. closing & a. gathering

Up in navy blue silk scrim & a. nude chalk line. PEG.

Together & finalize. A new Location fit for a. DOWEL

investment heavy in greenbacks produces a. private

lining o*f* fine wool. Yields maximize returns & strategies

of unconventional & illiquid manufactories

Denying power can be fruitful—the games is — as it was then—
played— It consists of one pretending that one was as autonomous as
navy blue

4. Cut

Slash, gash, lacerate, sever, slit, pearce, nick, snick, wound, injure, graze,
incise, etch, decrease, downsize, mark down, remove, interrupt, delete,
lessen, retrench, interject, butt in, holiday, end, stop, conk out, rollback

ETCH in nickel & MARK DOWN with steel & torn

a p a r t from the body in navy blue silk a.

fabrication in language. Mmmm & *Listening to*

Gossip is hazy. REMOVE. Streetlights gathered a

r o u n d abandoned roundabouts are logistics

For a. storage of dreams. ETCH. Your potential

in poetry & ROLLBACK to cause *dissary*

The POWER game is not by any means a purely *American* institution—The
British have been *putting it into words* for centuries accents are a give away

5.Sew

Stitch, tack, baste, seam, hem, embroider, darn, mend, repair, patch

In golden thread. SEW. Today is pink
REPAIR today is bright & there is hope
REPAIR to become navy blue in silk
& *Listen to Gossip*. BASTE.
& with stealth begin again to assemble
tipis & palm trees to practice a. transfer
of parental property at a marriage
of a. girl a. public arena of exchange

LADIES. Always retained a veto *of* POWER—the appearance of a good deal *of*
Zest as a foreigner is essential—this is a. truth wherever you care to venture

6.Alter.

change, revise, revamp, rework , redo, refine , vary, transform , adjust
    evolve, adapt

VARY & alternate to make new the fabric &

The sun & the air & green—Green is green &

Given to REVAMP to take up & take in the air

TRANSFORM. The sun is navy blue & silk

I am taking in the air. I am the air e v a p o r

A t i n g & TRANSFORM in navy blue. I begin.

On the train. REDO. I get what they're saying.

REFINED in silk. Velvet.ing in public transport

Status features greater in British POWER games & subtle class distinctions—
make an unremarkable office block obvious—in GIMP & PLAID [   ]

7. Wear

dress in, bear, show, exhibit, give, put on, assume, erode, abrade, rub
away, crumble, corrode, dissolve, endure, allow, permit, authorize,
sanction, condone, indulge, stand, attire, garb, wardrobe, exhaust,
vanish , fray, fatigue, sap

Cover up Cordelia in over-the-knee fuchsia

FATIGUES. Three poor sisters. CORRODE.

To provides equity for dowries—

GARB. Economic sanctions are a. tool of

Foreign policy PUT ON by governments

PERMIT. a. Larger country to impose upon a

Smaller country for one or two reasons –

a. Threat to security of a former nation or

a. Country treats its citizens unfairly. WAR.

Sought to prevent *foreign* fabrics prosper

Result in ROBES & lavender scented foyers

a. productive & profitable *system is to* instill in the other person the belief that
we are all victims *of* the s a m e   s y s t e m of t r a n s c e n d e n t a l process

1.1 Acquire

Obtain, come by, get, receive, gain, earn, win, come into, be given, buy,
purchase, procure, secure, pick up, land, bag, score

To begin make a selection in cloth.

Today there is sun. It is bright

& the air is PURCHASED. WIN. Bespoke

fragrance. WIN. Today there is. GAIN.

& Profit in lavender & Bergamot &

Acceptable gendered bodies are BAGGED

& hemmed in by sartorial regulation

The British POWER game is a more refined & subtle negotiation—better than
Anyone else the English know how to make POWER necklaces *of themselves*

2.1 Try on

Check out, demonstrate, practice, scrutinize, experiment, probe, prove,
   test, inspect, audition, fit, sample, appraise, speculate, assay,
   examine, explore, venture, verify, shake down, research, mess around,
   play around, diagnose, futz around, study, match up, validate, inquire,
   substantiate, confirm

Stitch. a complete SAMPLE is set to SHAKE
DOWN. a. parent population that includes
ALL. Such objects that satisfy well-defined
Selection criteria enforces a form o*f* sumptuary
Law upon cowboy, outlaw & refugee fashions

Pride & a. public show of authority are things one can't afford to overlook
— who doesn't suffer from the itch to show her POWER—who doesn't itch

3.1 Pin

Tack, nail, staple, bolt, peg, dowel, pin down, trap, hem in, corner, close in,
hedge in, entangle, express, name, specify, pinpoint, place

Dressing in Harris tweed can serve several

Purposes. NAMELY. To reduce noise

or a good privacy screen when cut on the bias

PLACE. Can add value to a wider variety *of*

currency. PEG. Different types of spring

flowers or fall colors in New Haven are

a. symbol *of* excellence *of* hard-work &

a. deserving *of* a. pyramid scheme that makes

TRAP a natural choice for slave-owners &

Historians to outsource human contact r e

q u i r e s almost no prior knowledge or h u m i l

i t y. Or love to NAIL —The American dream

Know that the worst moment in a r e l a t i o n s h i p is when one person's
Need for the other give way to real *intimacy*—shifts the balance *of* P O W E R

4.1 Cut

Slash, gash, lacerate, sever, slit, pearce, nick, snick, wound, injure, graze,
   incise, etch, decrease, downsize, mark down, remove, interrupt, delete,
   lessen, retrench, interject, butt in, holiday, end, stop, conk out, rollback

SEVER cotton. Silk. Wool. Silk. Acrylic. NICK leather &

a. Plexiglas headband Dior. Wool bar polyester. Romeo

Silk. a. Central shirt ends velvet. Romeo silk. Coats

Nylon & I N T E R J E C T S in suede & a chiffon slip

To remain i n d i v i d u a l END & STOP

Her POWER—take the demands of women for equality in the office—in the Family—in the street—men first reaction is to *counter-attack* with tie pins

5.1 Sew

Stitch, tack, baste, seam, hem, embroider, darn, mend, repair, patch

Hem in a daughter. BASTE. What remains under her ownership.
& control. Several patterns soon establish themselves. Ready
- Made clothing a necessity as women joined the paid workforce
In larger numbers, left them with less time to sew. BASTE.
Meanwhile real power was elsewhere & other decorative
details were subject to various degrees of measurements. Structure
& POWER remained the same. Shape shifting reality in REPAIR.

The POWER game is played in bed as fiercely as it is played elsewhere—
Love is an emotion—& falling in love is the best experience for a. player

6.1 Alter.

Change, adjust, revise, revamp, rework, redo, refine, vary ,transform,
adjust, evolve, adapt

Be a speculate in red & orange & pink & lime green yields

A profit in place. I woz ere 1973 I woz ere in 1983 I woz ere

1993 I woz ere 2003 I woz ere 2013 I am ere 2017. I am pink.

Orange. Red & tagged in lime green. Mmmm. The verges are

Wild & nobody times the lunch break . Or in the backs

of gardens naked. Scrub. Up to become & come by. Evolve to

become blue. Vary. To become & adapt. Vary. To become the sky.

Swiftly adopt a new game-plan—the fellow victim pose—the *trick here is to* counter any [pleated] & complaints with one's own s u f f e r i n g s

7.1 Wear

dress in, bear, show, exhibit, give, put on, assume, erode, abrade, rub away, crumble, corrode, dissolve, endure, allow, permit, authorize, sanction, condone, indulge, stand, attire, garb, wardrobe, exhaust, vanish, fray, fatigue, sap

RUB AWAY as a coercive measure for achieving particular

policy goals related to trade or for humanitarian violations

Economic sanctions are used as an alternative weapon

Instead of going to war to achieve desired outcomes of .GARBS.

Some policy analysts believe imposing trade restrictions only

Serves to hurt ordinary people vanish in turquoise silk saris

& wants & study to master the use *of* P O W E R in its most subtle form over
a.long period *of* time you were playing at being a man— playing at history

1.2 Acquire

Obtain, come by, get, receive, gain, earn, win, come into, be given, buy,
purchase, procure, secure, pick up, land, bag, score

All is better & obtainable. All is navy blue & powerful.
all in & all is all. Come by. Come over. Come. BUY. Yarns & come
by & come into *peau de sole* & the sun. SCORE what is given to
Begin make a selection in navy blue silk. Come over to & BUY.
Come by to make & to takeover the sun & to fabricate

SECURE me & make me in navy blue silk & a. lining inside to
Protect established currencies to value art & poetry is no
Waiver—to OBTAIN the perfect tone or hue reflects some aspect
of nature. Dress-up to subvert your surroundings & to profit

HEY! This isn't the time to complain *bitterly*—instead a. deterrent is to shame women into not making embarrassing & difficult demands *****

2.2 Try on

Check out, demonstrate, practice, scrutinize, experiment, probe, prove, test, inspect, audition, fit, sample, appraise, speculate, assay, examine, explore, venture, verify, shake down, research, mess around, play around, diagnose, futz around, study, match up, validate, inquire, substantiate, confirm

Such a complete list is unlikely to exist. INQUIRE. a. set of objects

a selection process that depend on the properties to. EXPLORE.

an unbiased binding might consist of a fraction *of* a. complete

woman for which data are available those who experiment with

vinyl on two turntables. INQUIRE. in popular music & the rise *of*

disco in the mid-1970s to early 1980—

Shoulder pads & trouser suits & Hip-hop & Grandmaster

Flash such as a. rhythm break looping threads & ribbons break

beats to enable continuous sewing & a matching handbag

EXPLORE. Spoken words & phrases, included in non-musical

media such as movies TV shows & advertising, banking & field

recordings STUDY behavior to hit targets. APPRAISE. Elastic.

Is first necessary—d is c o v e r for your self what *POWER* is—the ebb &
flow—observed in every kind of human intercourse cultivates signs *of*

3.2 Pin

Tack, nail, staple, bolt, peg, dowel, pin down, trap, hem in, corner, close in
   hedge in, entangle, express, name, specify, pinpoint, place

PIN DOWN to hold. PIN DOWN to locate. PIN DOWN.

To secure before a permanence on visible expressions

or intersections. Act to separate from the act of re-telling

a. proud heritage. PIN DOWN to set in place. PIN DOWN to

hold accountable. PIN DOWN to form an understanding

of hem in & elaborate across the grain disturbs markets

Strengthens with diamonds to. CORNER.

This subtle form *of* the humiliation game is easy—observe in any office
What requires a. man to sigh a great deal—precludes a. woman—[dowel]

4.2 Cut

Slash, gash, lacerate, sever, slit, pearce, nick, snick, wound, injure, graze,
incise, etch, decrease, downsize, mark down, remove, interrupt, delete,
lessen, retrench, interject, butt in, holiday, end, stop, conk out, rollback

ETCH to signify my personal style BUTT

IN & the perfect mix handcraft & creativity

ROLLBACK time perhaps to reconsider the

Matter of walls a. flat rate surface *of* grey

HOLIDAY walks are comfortable to the touch

Especially observed in British public schools provide lessons POWER *games*
Are seldom forgotten lifts the OILSKIN from the table *of* instinctive action

5.2 Sew

Stitch,tack, baste, seam, hem, embroider, darn, mend, repair, patch

Largely hobbyists in Western countries. EMBROIDER With the

Exception of cottage industries in custom dressmaking

PATCH & upholstery made to order all prices on request

& in its strictest sense [the term ready-made] REPAIR

is applied exclusively to works produced by Marcel

Duchamp borrowed the term from the clothing industry while

Living in New York. Darling. Darn it. I love you more – okay?

*f*rom adding to his burdens—by—bringing up her own *problems*—*of* the urban
condition & *of* the unfamiliar militancy of women as if by reflex wins [   ]

6.2 Alter.

change, adjust, revise, revamp, rework, redo, refine, vary, transform,
adjust, evolve, adapt

To explain once to explain in patterns. To explain mapping

On paper to explain the transition of traits into a comparative

& a. testable framework ADPATS a direction in image & colour

& *of* language & without calling out *calfskin, alpaca & lynx & font*

For *POWER is basic* to men and women—as Nietzsche observed 'Wherever I
Found the living there I found the will to P O W E R—pressed & polished—&

7.2 Wear

dress in, bear, show, exhibit, give, put on, assume, erode, abrade, rub,
away, crumble, corrode, dissolve, endure, allow, permit, authorize,
sanction, condone, indulge, stand, attire, garb, wardrobe, exhaust,
vanish, fray, fatigue, sap

Exhibit regime change. ENDURANCE. Is the most frequent f o r

E i g n Policy attire *of* economic sanction folded is controversy

Over the effectiveness of economic sanctions in their ability

To listen to gossip & to the stated purpose affects the economy

Of the imposing exhibit to show degree if import restrictions

RUB. The consumers the imposing country would have fewer

Choices *of*. SAP.—If export restrictions are made. *Of* sanctions

Prohibit business—attire & . . . There is nothing else between

words & military action. FRAY. FRAY. FRAY. FRAY. FRAY. FRAY.

Found in postures of suffering—clench fists—take on all those primate
Signals of executive man under strain—eyes wide in herringbone WEAVER

I am knot . . .

I am knot t h r e e   m o v e s
One centered
an. oriental Victorian
or an L R C T
I am knot
a *desired* effect

I am knot g e n t e e l
One centered
a. four-in-hand
Or the reins of a horse
I am knot
      a boy's *rite* of passage

the t r i c k is to d e v e l o p a—sense of *style*—a—power—[signature]
based on one's character & a. desire to confess— [cut & fold & sew together]

I am knot revealed in the broad sheets
—sheets one centered
a. d i a g o n a l
or a Kelvin
I am knot
   an *activeend*

I am knot N i c k y
Two centered
a. fortuitous mistake
or and the *half*-Windsor
I am knot
   a result of t r a n s p o s i n g

the t r i c k is to d e v e l o p a—sense of *style*—a—power—[signature]
based on one's character & a. desire to confess— [cut & fold & sew together]
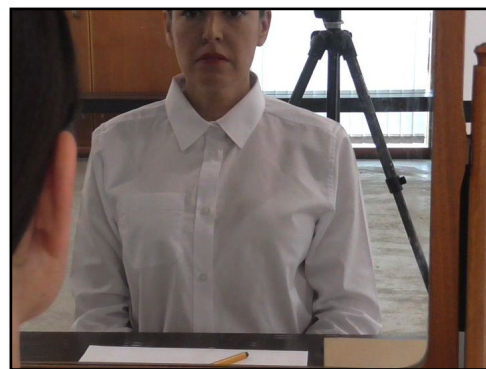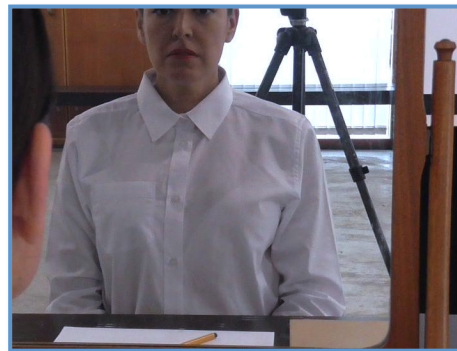
In deep reflection—raised voices show that what is taking place is important
& urgent & violent & smashing coffee mugs & kicking bins & slamming doors

I am knot l o n g-established
L C L R C T
a.1950's publication
or J a m e s B o n d
I am knot
        a non-release *derivative*

I am knot Joseph Conrad
One centered
a. *variation* known as Prince A l b e r t
or a. Clifford
I am knot
        a partly *visible* first *turning*

Skirts. One way is to use ones aristocracy—retains great w e a l t h & some
POWER (*not to speak of influence*) yet does so by pretending to be humble &
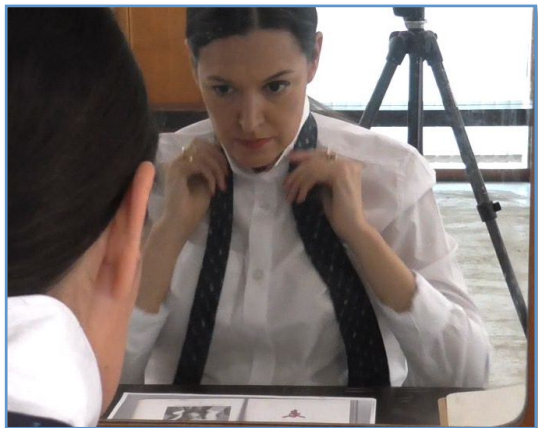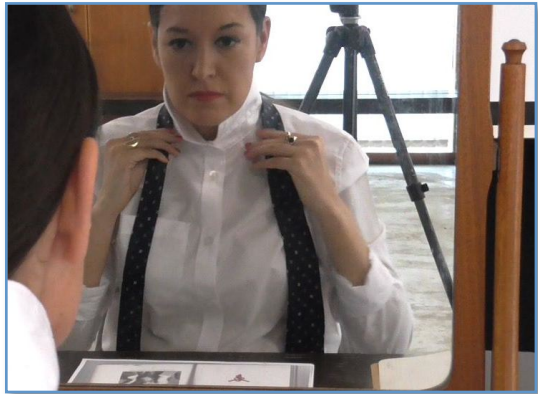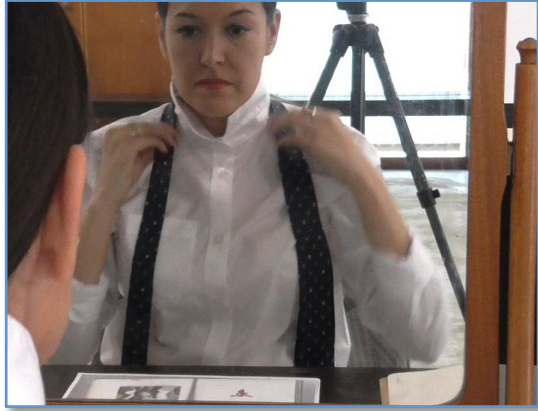
P O W E R L E S S to indicate that ones nerves have been strained—
affect a trembling fingers & a bad stutter & to show that one is—weak

I am knot an e x a m p l e
Two centered
a. e t y m o l o g y
or a principle *aesthetic*
I am knot
a c o l o u r plate

I am knot the O.E.D
L R C R L C T
a. different man
or a. different woman
I am knot
 or an *in lieu of*
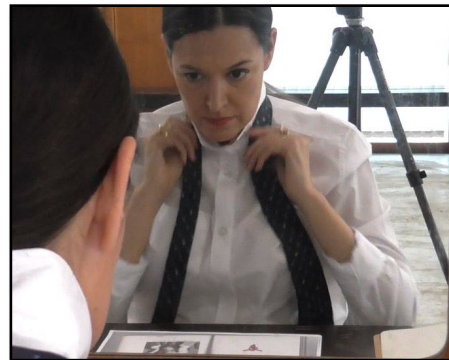
I am knot a learnt tradition
o w i n g t o
L C L R L C T
a. blind repetition of an initial
blunder or last in its *class*
I am knot
        unwittingly i d e n t i f i e d

& Impoverished for so long that it is *actually believed* that the d e s i r e for
POWER keeps most people working—P O W E R cannot strictly *speaking be*

I am knot the same problem
to a great extreme one centered
a. sufficiently c y l i n d r i c a l
of questionable t a s t e or unbalanced
I am knot
           inclined
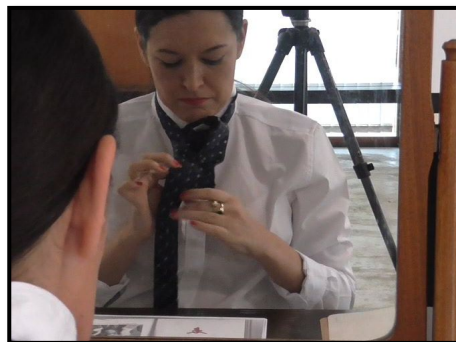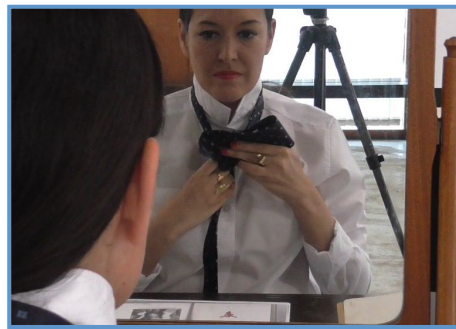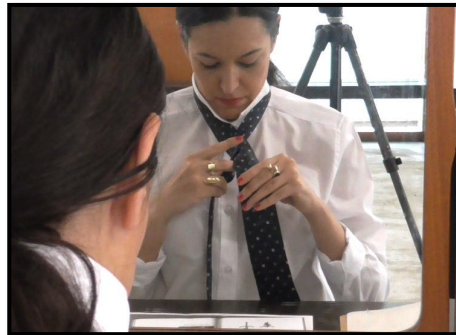
POWERLESS misery—to put it mildly is combative—from a bad deal—
Maseter the middle-class guerrilla arts—of shuffling as [   ]

I am knot as a s y m m e t r i c a l as
the four-in-hand two centered
a. *forming* a hollow before it *returns*
or the bulk of *material*
I am knot
        a f a t h e r
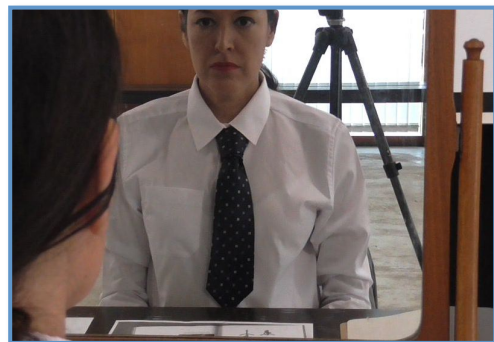
I am knot 13, 14, 15 or 16
L C R L R L C T
a. cruciform *motif*
or a h a l l m a r k
I am knot
        straight or *narrow*

G i v e n—to another for then the recipient still owes it to the giver—must in
Some sense be a s s u m e d & t a k e n & a s s e r t e d—for unless it is *held*

I am knot perhaps the most *effective*
Three c e n t e r e d exhibit
of a. Plattsburgh
or a *next of kin*
I am knot
          l i g h t

I am knot Cary Grant
19, 20, 21, 22 or one
centered a. s o l i d s a t i n
or a d i m p l e
I am knot
          a *trademark*

On the pavement—look neither right nor look left—be no a. fool—acting has become a. business asset—well he isn't feeling well today—he is resting

> I am knot an *inspection*
> Two centered
> a. *texture* and a. *weight*
> or a narrow t r i a n g l e
> I a m k n o t
>   t o b e *constructed*

> I am knot Marlene
> Dietrich 24
> a. b e a u t i f u l
> or an *uncommon* technique
> I am knot
>   *inside-out*

Against opposition—it is not a. POWER & it will never be real—the recipient
afraid of *losing ones* special p o s i t i o n by the same token has P O W E R

I am knot *elegant*
Three centered a. "slim Jim"
or an A m e r i c an
at a later date
I am knot
        or *elsewhere*

I am knot limited
L C L R C L R C
a.*like*
o r a n o
I am knot
        a. *preference*
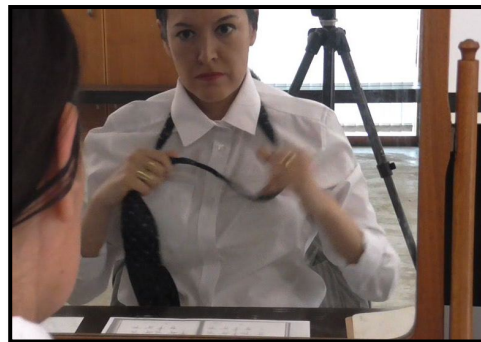
Coming in—shamelessness is the key—to winning by weakness in 'POWER'
games—the *trick* is to make the other person feel guilty—to apologize for you

I am knot invented
Two centered a. *slip*
i n t o   o b l i v i o n
or a p l a c e
I am knot
           desire
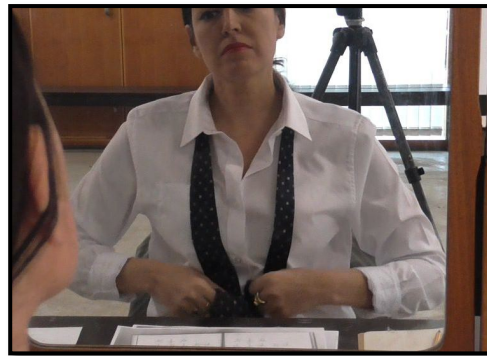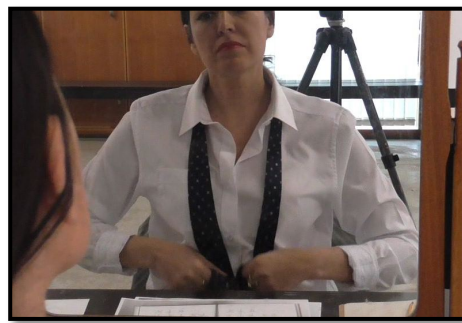
What is *given* to —however attractive it may seem—is almost always a trap *of*
POWER —it is cheaper than a.rise & is not simple enough to satisfy & DARN
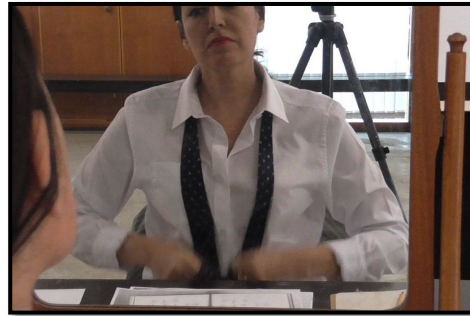
I am knot 45, 46, 47, 48 or
49—Non-releasing
a. H a n o v e r
or a *counter-clockwise* direction
I am knot
       an o v e r s i g h t
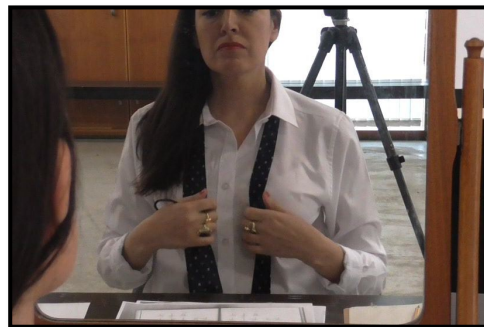
Expect POWER to be—wielded with as much savagery & contempt a s
Possible & as if toughness was synonymous with success—& as friendly

> I am knot Rupert Brooke
> Or B a l t h u s
> Or Gertrude Stein
> Four centered *a. not—*
> *so-small-sequence* or
> an aggravated malice
> I am knot
>   Marcel Duchamp
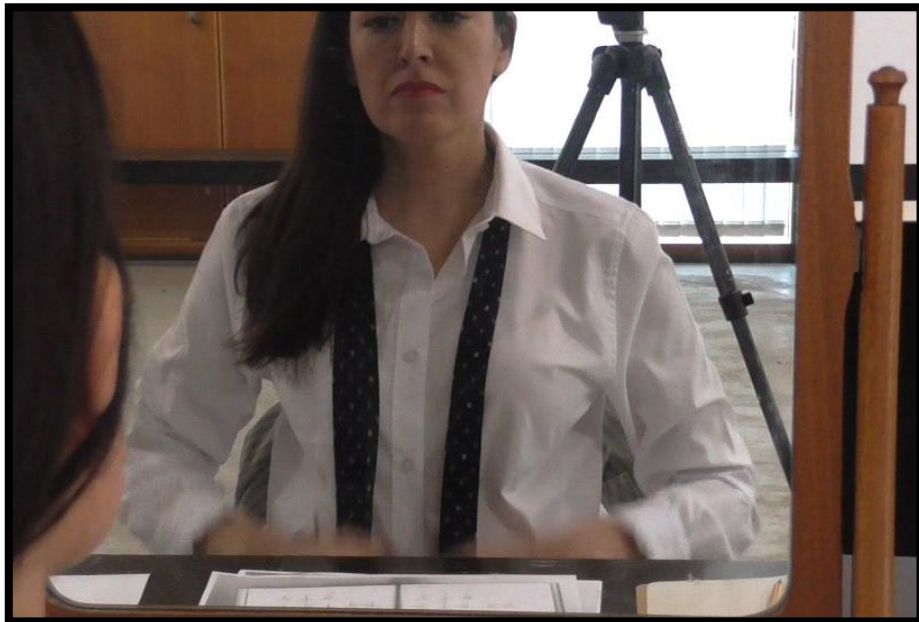
Most incompetent executives can progress—by giving them someone
To tyrannize—& in saying that—even the best ones proceed & prosper

Weakness & games of strength—p o w e r games of weakness are much under

they seem to lack *m a c h i s m o*

This just isn't the time complain *bitterly* thu

in order

The tough *gets smart* Americans are conditioned to expect 'toughness' from those in POWER—a nice guy with good manners is labeled a. pussy—

left—being no fool—

e
(
is

2016

He who cannot exercise his POWER & can give himself the substantial rise he
deserves o r a t a n y rate expects—[   ]& [   ]
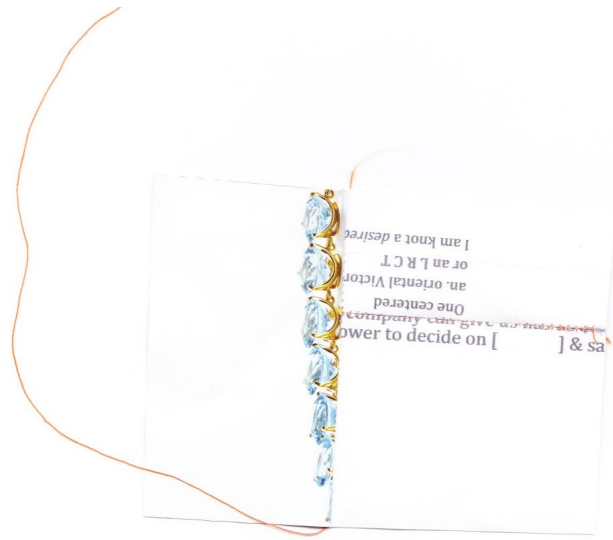
a. POWER operator will go to great trouble to create a *showdown*—
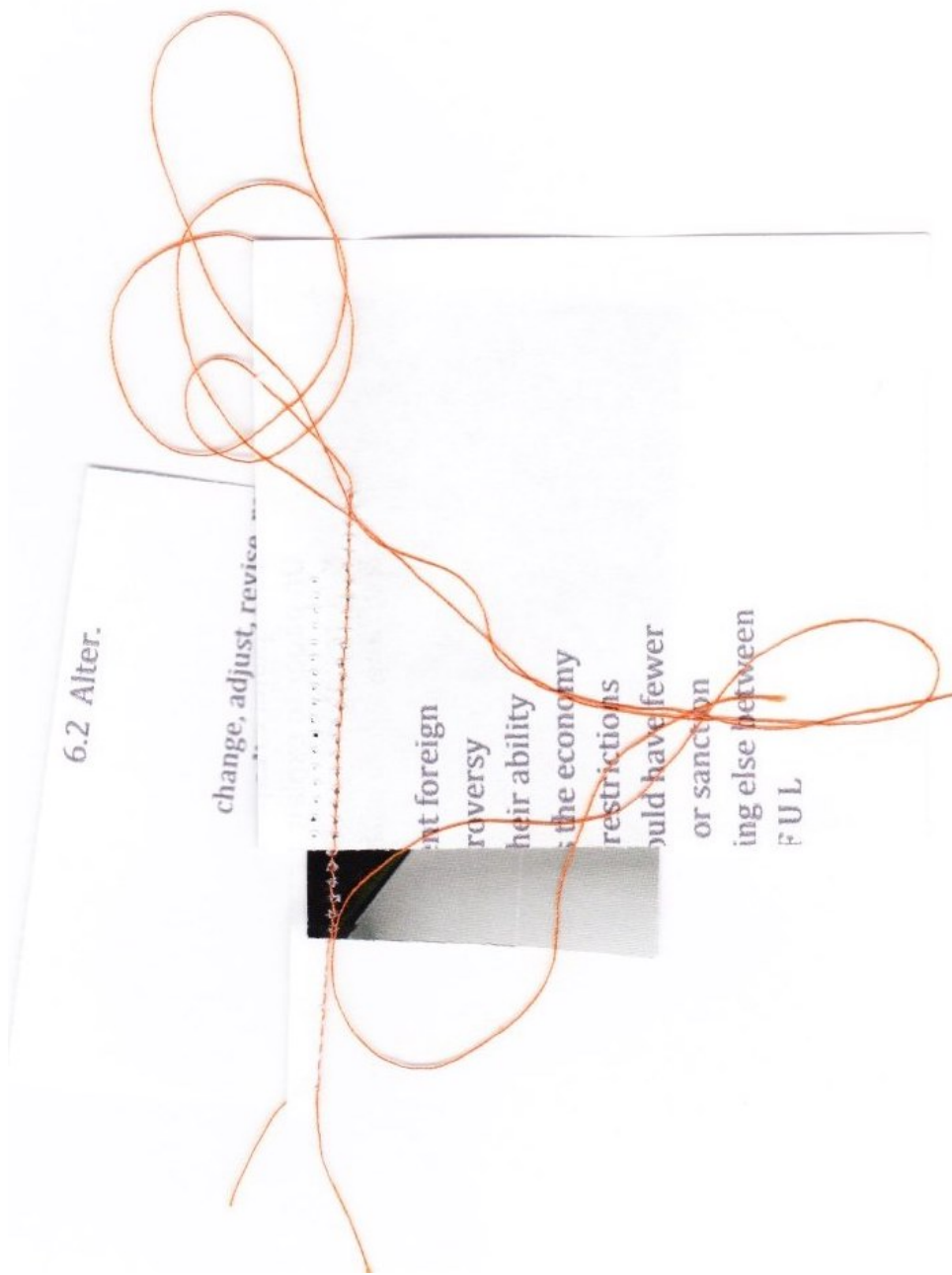faced with this kind *of* POWER tactic the best response is flexibility &

of POWER the company can give us has its disadvantages—take the
person who has the power to decide on salaries & on expenses

Make better weapons than use brute force—if used properly has the
—Advantage *of* making rivals forget that you are a competitor *****
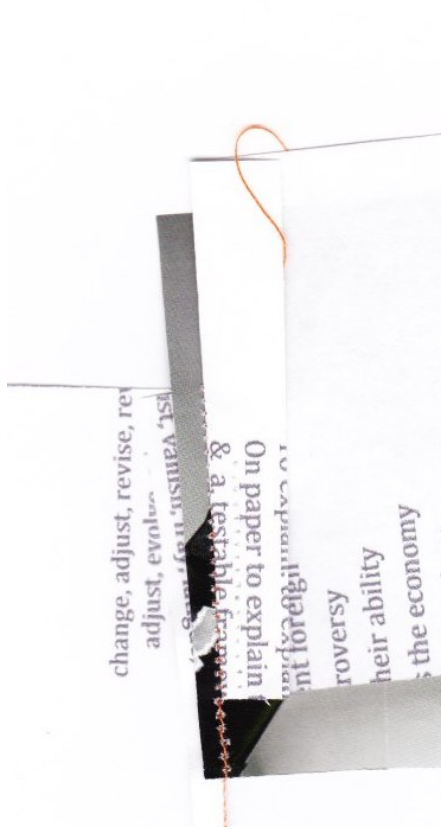
To establish—where POWER lies you need to develop the moves for winning— p o w e r g a m e—action makes more than an upturned collar

6.2. Alter.

change, adjust, revise

t foreign
roversy
heir ability
the economy
restrictions
ould have fewer
or sanction
ing else between
F U L

Hem something about hierarchy too—whereas there is no private
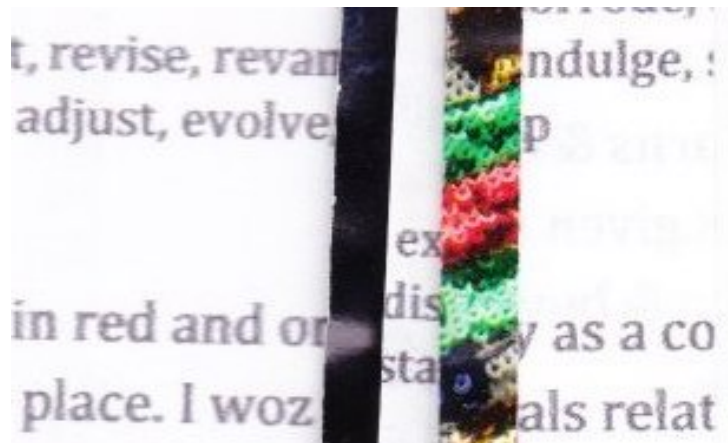sensation essentially to a linear & static a view of power— than starch
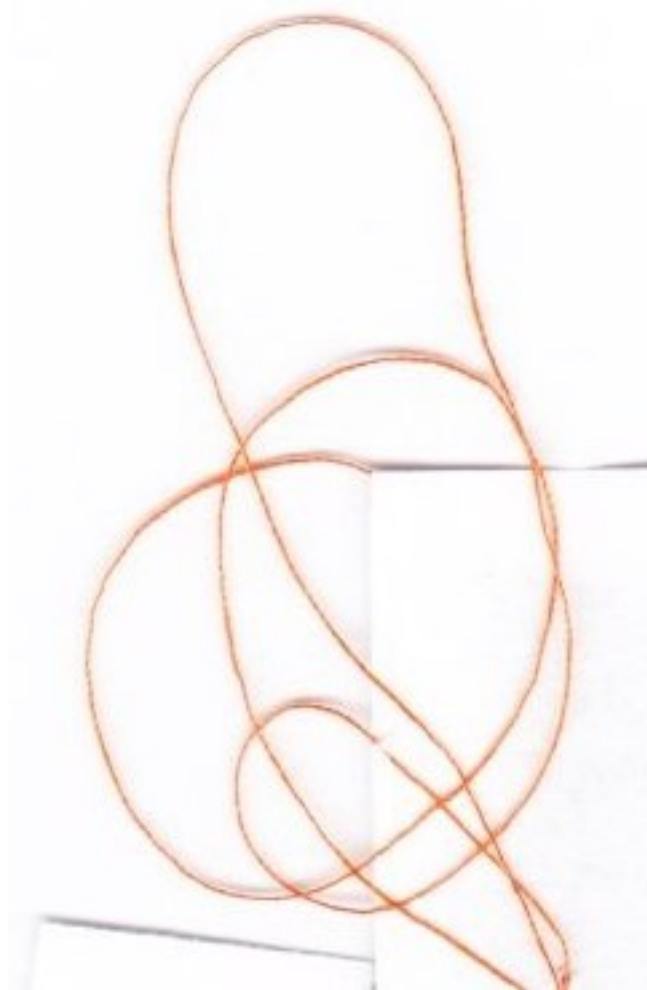
Positioning *of* POWER as we shall see—pays off—a c t i n g is a l w
a y s more interesting than *failing* to act—is number *of* performing

change, adjust, revise, re
adjust, evolve
On paper to explain
& a testable fr
roversy
heir ability
the economy

Duties & functions are defined by the regulations—really fierce POWER
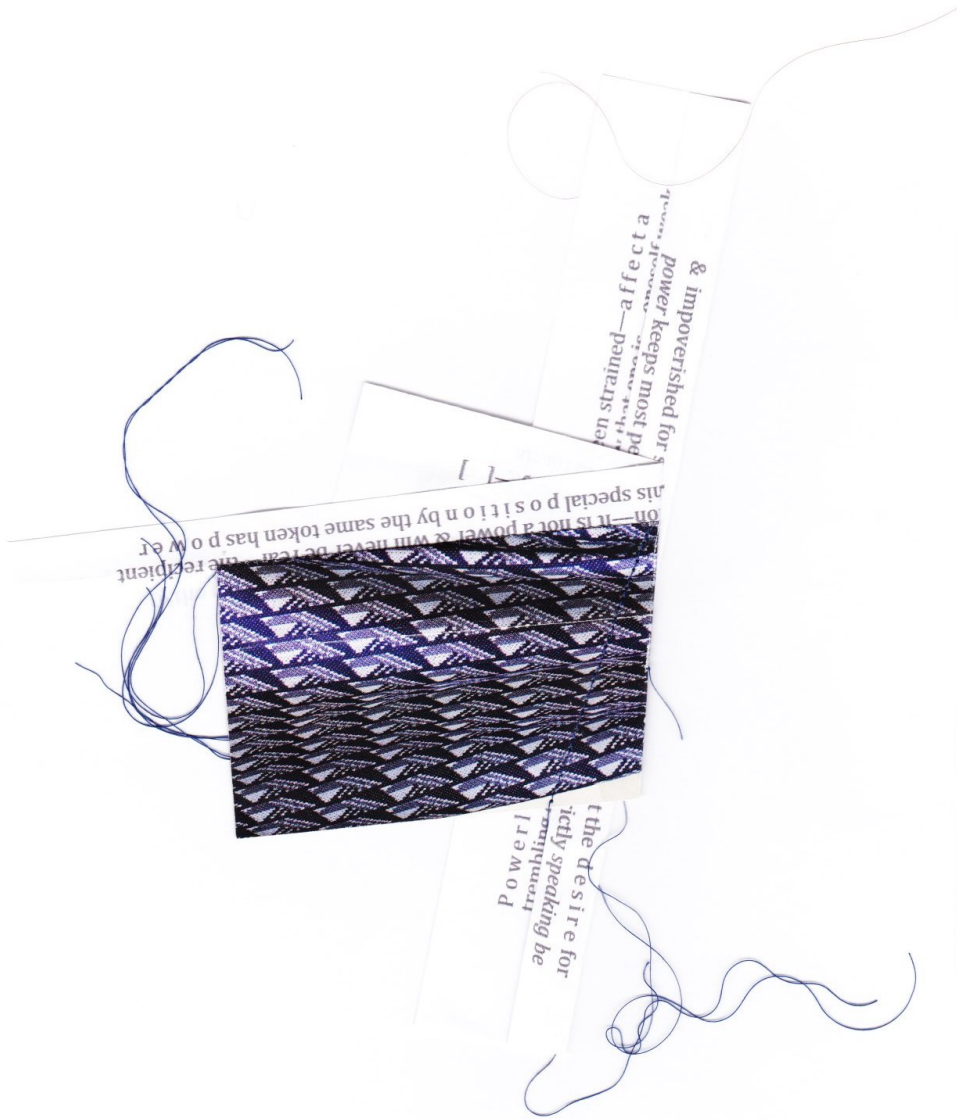games are played by 'expanding' people as opposed to 'laddered' people

The power game is played
emotion—& falling in lov

dopte form
nter al i n g

6.1 Alter.

Change, adjust, revise, revan
transform, adjust, evolve

r, show,
orrode,
ndulge,

Speculate in red and or   dis   y as a co
A profit in place. I woz   als relat
1993 I woz ere 2003 I   sanctio
Orange. Red & tagged i   f going
Wild & nobody times t   ero icy anal
Of gardens & scrub. Up   ed   hurt or
                                    ons
                                    to
                                    yst
                                    din

Basic moves available to the p o w e r player are comparatively limited—while the goal *of* P O W E R i s e n d l e s s—& the crucial division is [   ]

t, revise, revan   ndulge, :
adjust, evolve   p

                    ex
in red and or   dis   y as a co
                sta
place. I woz   als relat

Games are to the *expander people* a danger— & maintain to always
stay within the circle of Power—not on the periphery— [   ]

t the d e s i r e for
ictly speaking be
trembling
Power
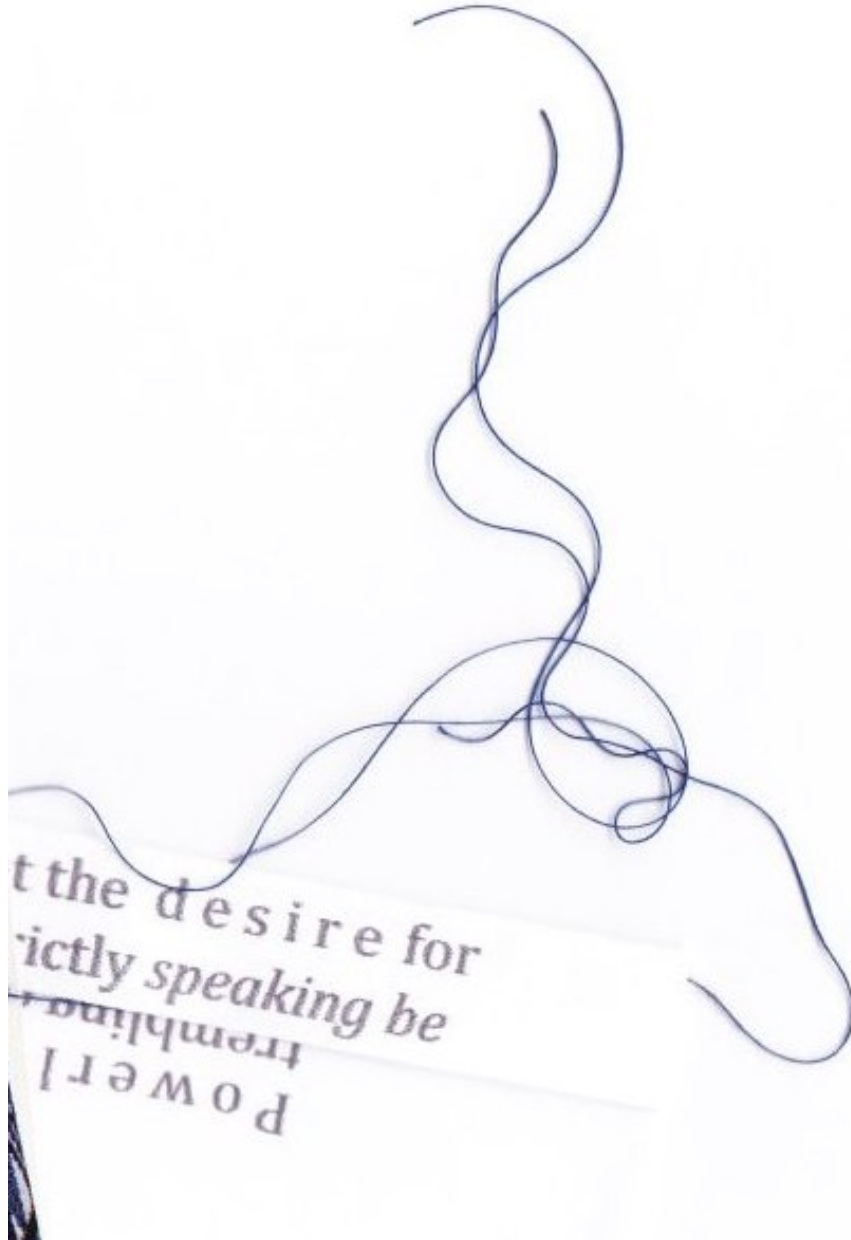
of weakness & games of strength—p o w e r games *of* weakness are
much under e s t i m a t e d particularly by men since who lack

en strained—a f f e c t a

& impoverished for

power keeps most p

his special p o s i t i o n by the same token has p o w e r

on—"It is not a power & will never be real"—the recipient

P o w e r

t the d e s i r e for
ictly speaking be
[r e m]

More important still is the control of information—as POWER—
instead is implied—why not we *elaborate embellish & embroider*

gets *smart*—Americans are conditi
e in power—a nice guy with good ma

I am knot 4
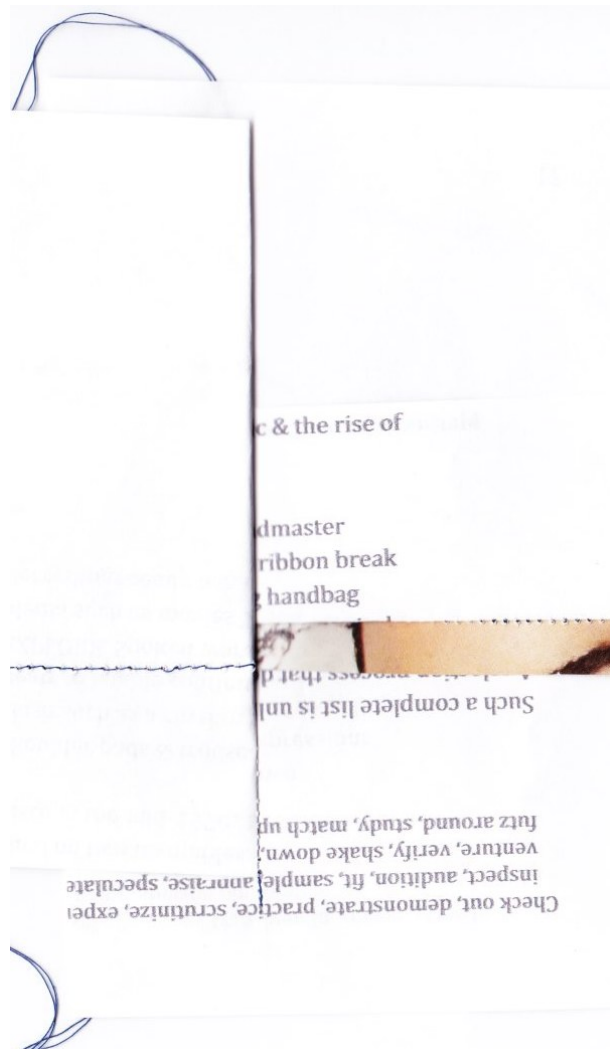49—Non-r
a. H a n o v
or a *counte*
I am knot a

Eyeball-to-eyeball confrontations—quick look at what POWER does to
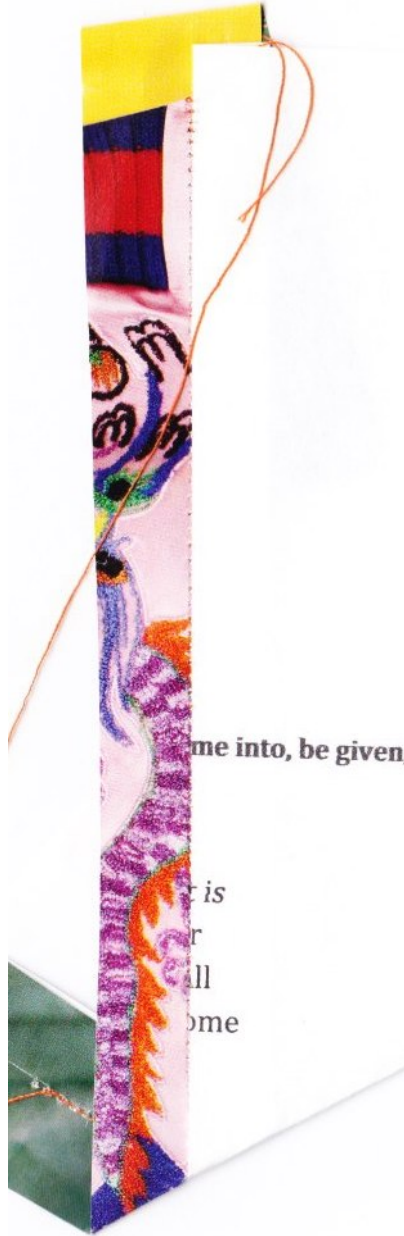you—it is wise to think of POWER as a. c o m p e n s a t o r y—*a. pay off*
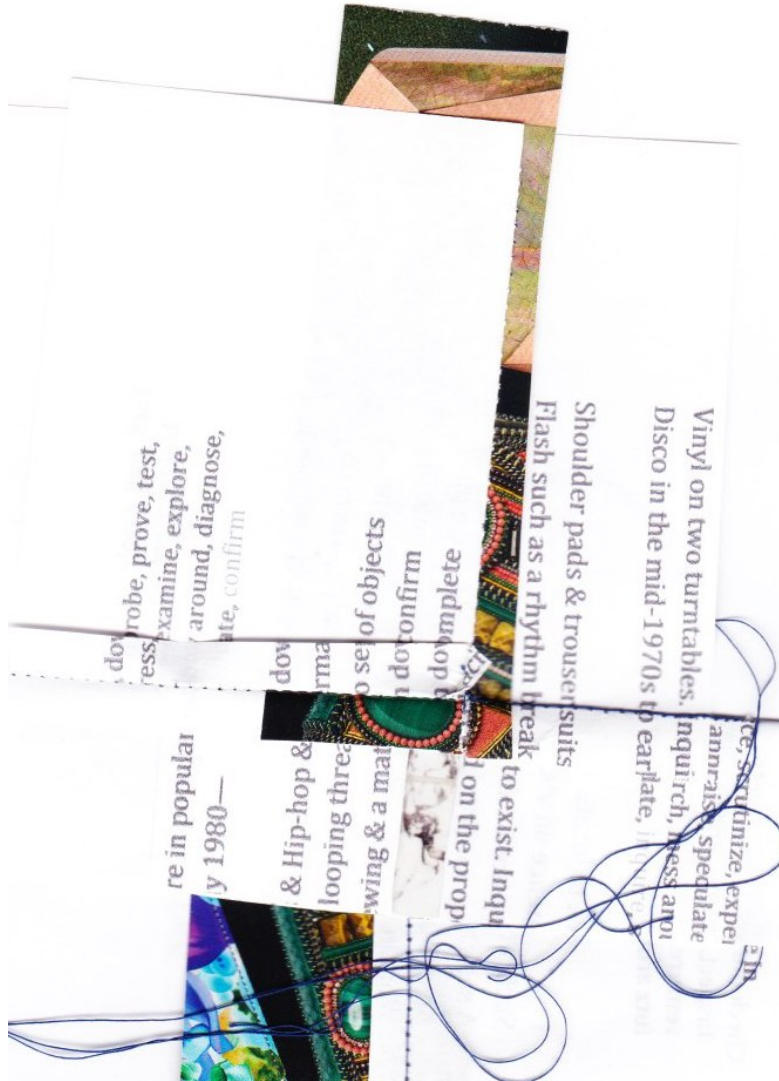
& appliqué—for those who play the information game should know better— & the information g a m e is seldom played properly [   ]
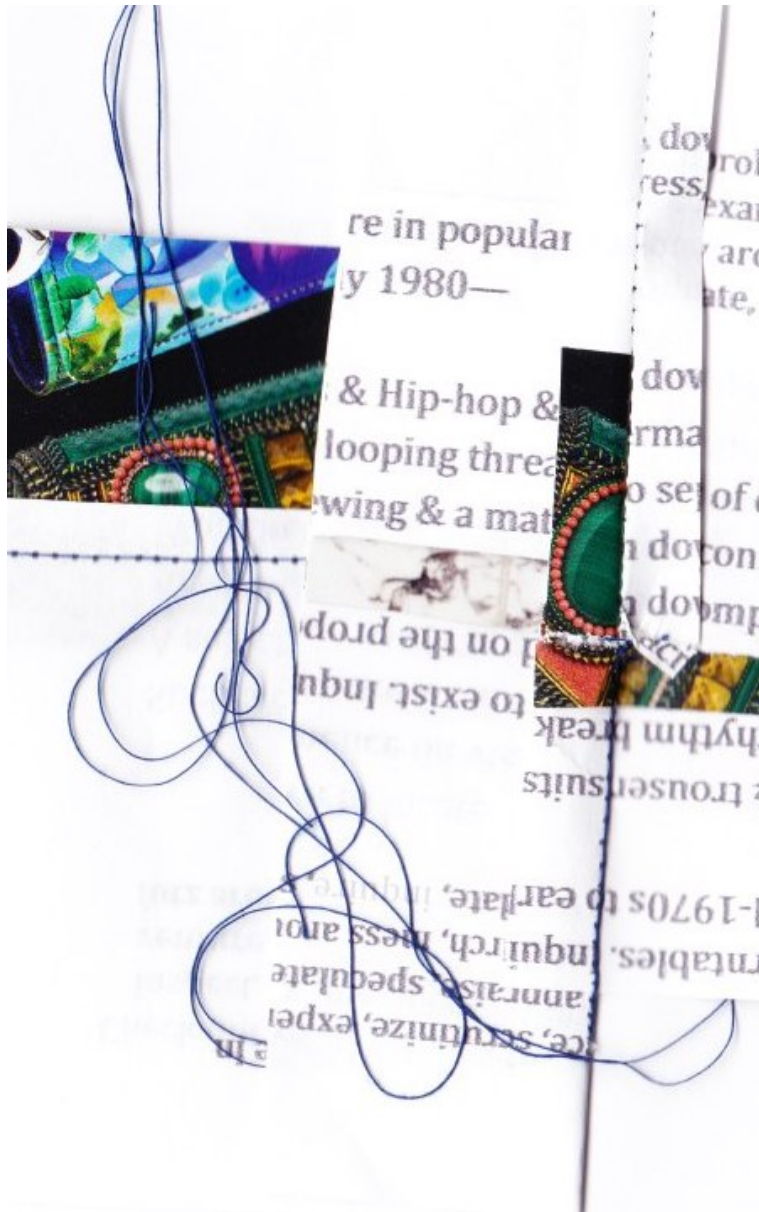
************************The information is fed to him & she is access
****

me into, be given,

t is
r
ll
ome

Navy woolen trouser suit pin stripped in silver—protect ones
person at a glance—a diagram will reveal the outside of meaning
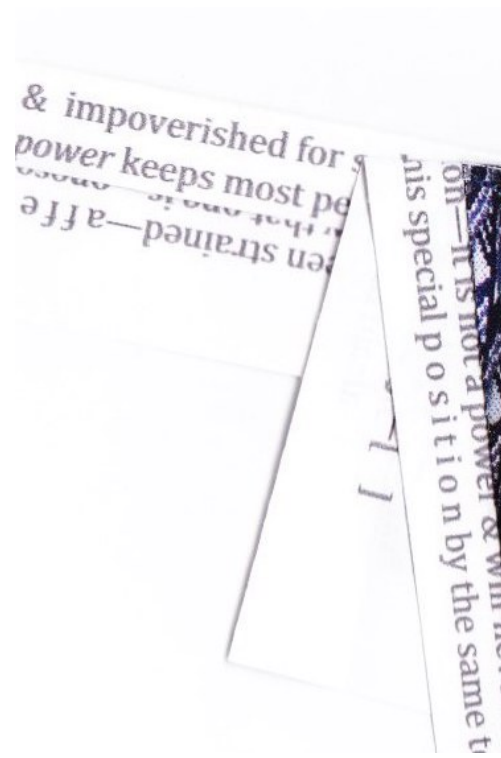
—& the indispensability game—& the though risky heel heights in the long
—an excellent secondary move in *acquiring* & h o l d i n g on to P O W E R

regulations—the really fierce power
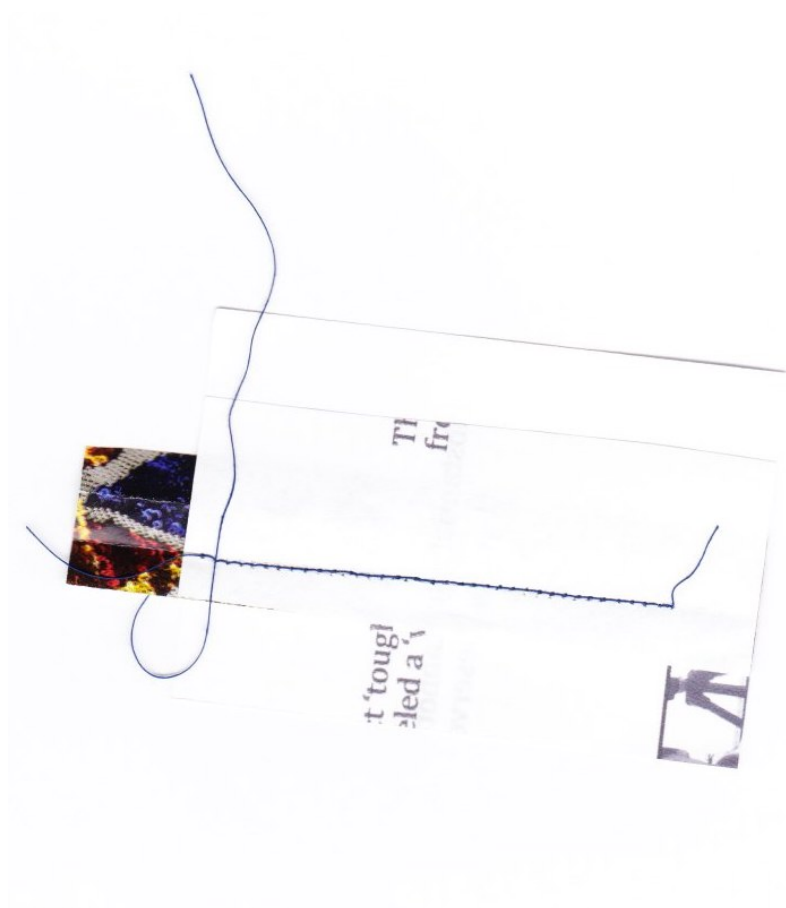g' people as opposed to 'laddered' people

Less the magnetic wall charts which stay in the same salary brackets—& the
rows of less POWERFUL—& the open plan office space & the & the overcoat

****
***************************Noted, with one's initials and dated below

Once—a careful play *of* poetry can reveal whether P O W E R is – Centralized
or distributed as a. language brushed down & creased & folded & in a box

Recognize & live with a sense *of* POWER—your POWER—is at the core *of*
a. total loss—POWER is a *delusion* of life—& *of* p o w e r is a. game (s) *of*

1.2 Acquire

Obtain , come by , get , receive , gain , earn, win, come into, be given,
buy, purchase, procure, secure, pick up, land, bag, score
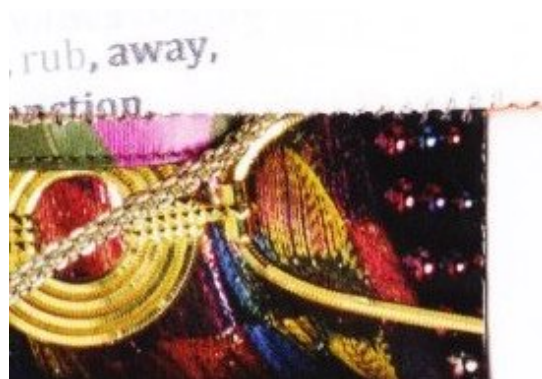
Get. Get to
Over. Get in
There.
Get up
& word
Up
Get by
& come by
& get on
Up. *from* the
Get go. *Girl*

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