

DELEUZE, JUDGMENT AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH

by

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Abstract

The debate concerning the legitimacy of artistic research that has taken place over the last two decades is notable for the way in which it has drawn attention to rival 'representational' and 'performative' conceptions of thought. In the early stages of the debate, critics such as Durling, Friedman, Elkins and Biggs employed broadly representational arguments in a quasi-legal context of judgment to suggest that processes of artistic research were in some sense unrecognisable when attempts were made to see them through the conceptual lens of 'research'. In contrast to this, advocates of artistic research, such as Haseman, Bolt, Sullivan and Slager proposed that research arising out of artistic practice possessed distinctive qualities - conjoining interests in the experimental, the experiential, and the non-representational, with a set of predominantly transformative aims. Haseman et al have likewise suggested that the concerns of the practitioner-researcher, at least in the context of the arts, are mainly ontological as opposed to epistemological in character - seeking to explore, reframe, or contest existing states of affairs in a broadly performative fashion.

Whilst supporters of artistic research often stress the requirement for new ways of thinking to accommodate the specificities of practice-led research, many of the concepts that are employed in an attempt to understand the aims and concerns of artistic research have a long 'process-philosophical' lineage. Process philosophy has been present as a minor current in Western philosophy since as early as 540 BC and through the influence of luminaries such as Dewey and Langer, it has long been associated with education in the arts. Process philosophers typically emphasise both the ontological priority of change and the relational constitution of entities. From the perspective of process philosophy, the world of stable and enduring things arises out of a differential play of interacting forces that admit of multiple and contingent patterns of relation. With this in mind, the contemporary anti-essentialist arguments that are often utilised in the defense of artistic research are positioned in this thesis as examples of process-philosophical thinking, paving the way for an application of the post-structuralist, process-philosophical thought of Gilles Deleuze to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research.

An interesting and long running feature of the legitimacy debate has been the failing of participants on both sides of the discussion to critically engage with their opposition - preferring instead to construct rather idealised, ghostly positions, which ultimately sidestep the specificities of the situation. In an attempt to address the lack of sustained critical confrontation between oppositional voices in the discussion, this thesis attempts a close qualitative engagement with a prominent skeptical position. To this end, the work of Michael Biggs and Daniela Büchler is interrogated from a conceptual, aesthetic and relational perspective, revealing its Wittgensteinian and Kantian roots, and subjecting them to critical scrutiny from the perspective of Deleuzian thought. Biggs and Büchler, have developed a markedly critical voice in the legitimacy debate, importing the early hostility towards practice-led research that arose out of a predominantly North American design community into the context of UK, Dutch and Australian discussion. Biggs and Büchler are much cited within the literature on artistic and practice-led modes of research and they have been influential in the framing of policy. The critique of Biggs and Büchler that is developed in this thesis begins from the observation that their work embodies a broadly conservative emphasis upon representation and recognition, and that it is expressive of what Deleuze describes as the 'dogmatic image of thought'. It is argued here that Biggs and Büchler's resistance to the affective and the performative is pervasive, serving to colour their approach to philosophy, art and aesthetics and to place them at odds with the largely material-experiential, and transdisciplinary interests of many artistic researchers. With this in mind, a series of aesthetico-conceptual strategies are employed in order to problematise Biggs and Büchler's position and to stage an encounter between a process-pragmatism of the left (as typified by the philosophy of Deleuze), and a linguistic-pragmatism of the right (as typified by the philosophy of Wittgenstein).

This thesis makes a number of claims to knowledge. Primarily it aims to demonstrate that the justification of artistic research need not be separatist or isolationist in character, but that in demonstrating the overlap between traditional and non-traditional forms of research we need not dispense with artistry or neglect the artefact's performative work. In this sense it aims to show how characteristics sometimes considered specific to practice-led research have a more generalised, if somewhat understated presence in the context of more traditional modes of enquiry.

In a similar vein, it aims to demonstrate how a broadly traditional, written thesis might be explored in the spirit of practice-led enquiry - drawing attention to a range of textual, imaginative, conceptual and speculative devices that might enable us to explore the intensities of a problem space, and to investigate the ways in which aesthetic devices might also perform active work in the context of an argument. Ultimately this results in a questioning of the separation of artefact and argument that is characteristic of much discussion of practice-led research. Methodologically the thesis is distinctive in its sustained critical engagement with a single oppositional voice, which is also intended, through a process of extrapolation, to problematise a more generalised positivistic current of thought emanating primarily from the discipline of design. Lastly, the philosophical critique of the Wittgensteinian underpinnings of Biggs and Büchler's position also facilitates a contribution to Deleuze studies – addressing the breadth of Deleuze's concept of relation and critically interrogating the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein - the philosopher for whom Deleuze seemed to harbour the strongest antipathy, but of whom he was also the most reticent to speak. Whilst it is clear that there has been much interest in the potential application of Deleuze since the inception of the legitimacy debate, and whilst it is clear that the employment of Deleuze as primary theorist in practice-based-research projects is in the ascent, to date there has been little work that is explicitly focused upon the resonance of Deleuzian thought with respect to the productive context, or the legitimacy of the practice-based PhD.

Keywords: Deleuze, Biggs and Büchler, Wittgenstein, Representation, Performativity, Process Philosophy, Artistic Research.

Dedication

For (and against) Michael Biggs.

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Parts of chapter three of this thesis were presented in a paper entitled 'Deleuze and the Aesthetics of Relation' at the *Deleuze and Transdisciplinarity* conference which took place at Goldsmiths in 2011. Parts of the chapter four and the conclusion were presented in a paper entitled 'Rhythm, Relation Concept and Practice' that was delivered at the *Doctoral Education in Design Conference*, in Hong Kong in 2009, addressing the theme of practice, knowledge and vision. Parts of chapters 1-4 and a section of the conclusion informed a paper entitled 'For (and against) Biggs and Böhler' that was presented at *The International Conference on Deleuze and Artistic Research*, 2015. Parts of chapter 1 and 2 have been reproduced in a paper entitled 'On Scratching Your Own Itch' for a special issue of the journal *Digital Creativity* on the topic of Speculative Hardware (forthcoming, 2016).

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Chapter 1 – Introduction and Literature Review

'The abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity).'

(Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, p. vi)

1.00 Educational Context: Overview of the Characteristics of the Legitimacy Debate

Over the time spent developing this thesis there has been much movement in the debate concerning the foundations and legitimacy of practice-led research.¹ I began researching this area in 2008, and throughout the early stages of my work critical opinion was starkly divided over the value of artistic production when transferred to an academic setting. In some quarters, artistic research was deemed to result in ill defined, highly subjective outcomes, which were poorly suited to the at once objective, rigorous, and communicative demands of academia (Biggs, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008; Biggs & Büchler 2007; Cross, 1995; Durling, 2002; Durling, Friedman & Gutherson, 2002; Elkins, 2009; Frayling 1993; Freeman, 2010; Friedman, 2003, 2008). Critics focused upon the ways in which artistic practice seemed to jar with academic values and to square poorly with what they took to be its rational, investigative ideals (Biggs & Büchler, 2010; Durling, 2002; Elkins, 2009; Frayling, 1993). Thus, the value of artworks and performances in a research context was contested, with particular scrutiny being cast upon the subjective and interpretative context of artistic exhibition (Biggs, 2002, 2008; Durling, 2002). In epistemological terms, it was claimed that there were difficulties in determining the degree to which knowledge might be tacitly encoded in artistic artefacts, and it was suggested that such ambiguity and uncertainty could only create complications with respect to the assessment, communication and dissemination of artistic research outcomes

¹ The phrase practice-led research is intended here to address any research activity in which artistic artefacts and/or artistic processes form a major component of the submission, and in which some form of experiential encounter is regarded as a constitutive element, or as an important outcome of the research process.

(Friedman, 2003, p. 520). In short, skeptics questioned whether artworks could make a legitimate contribution to knowledge, and drew attention to the way in which this would seem to place artistic practice in conflict with the definitions of research that were employed by universities and funding bodies alike (Biggs, 2002, 2004). The idea that artistic practice could figure prominently in a research context was likewise subject to censure on account of the lack of agreed methodological frameworks that might be employed in artistic production (Durling, 2002). Critics drew attention to the idiosyncratic and unsystematic nature of much artistic endeavor - suggesting that this lack of methodological rigor compromised the validity and reliability of artistic research processes and squared poorly the ideal of academic research as a collective and cumulative enterprise (Biggs & Büchler, 2008; Durling, 2000; Elkins, 2009).

Lurking behind much of the discussion was a dispute concerning the respective roles of tacit and propositional knowledge in the context of research (Biggs, 2004; Niederrerr, 2007; Rust, 2004). Critics of practice-led research took issue with what was perceived to be artistic researchers' resistance to verbal or textual modes of argumentation (Durling, Friedman & Gutherson, 2003; Elkins, 2009), and as a consequence, the importance of language in the formulation and structuring of argument was stressed, along with its power to capture, compare, and evaluate information (Biggs, 2002; 2003). In a similar spirit, the idea that artefacts and performances could 'speak for themselves' with anything like the same degree of clarity and precision, was subjected to contestation. Ultimately it was claimed that the epistemological uncertainty generated by artefacts not only problematised artistic research at the level of communication, but also raised issues concerning parity of assessment across disciplines. Thus, those suspicious of practice-led research asked firstly how an exhibition of objects could be considered equivalent to a traditional thesis (Biggs, 2004), and secondly how the production of a portfolio of work could place an artistic practitioner in good stead to pursue a career in research – particularly if they found themselves working in a discipline that was in some sense adjacent to their own (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, 2010; Durling, Friedman & Gutherson, 2003).

In general terms, the critique of practice-led research was generated through comparison with more established modes of research enquiry. Critics seeking similarity and overlap with existing forms of research, subjected artistic practice to

scrutiny, and ultimately found it lacking (see the close reading of Biggs and Büchler in chapter 2 of this thesis). However, others less skeptical of the idea of practice-led research, suggested that such activities might be better considered in both emergent and qualitative terms, as evolving forms of research that were expressive of distinctively artistic ways of knowing, and which, as a consequence, might require equally distinctive methods (Bolt, 2008; Haseman, 2006; Sullivan, 2005). In this sense, those more positively disposed towards artistic research saw such activity as potentially engendering a new research paradigm, inviting comparison with the way in which qualitative modes of research had emerged over the course of the previous century.² Whilst many advocates of artistic research recognised overlaps between its aims and those of qualitative modes of enquiry, they also believed that practice-led research might possess a distinctive identity and be capable of addressing a territory that was peculiarly its own (Haseman, 2006; Bolt, 2008). Whilst there was some consensus with respect to this potential, the exact nature of its specificity and the scope of the territory in question remained somewhat unclear. Early attempts to characterise practice-led research focused firstly, in an epistemological context, upon subjective, phenomenological and intuitive forms of knowing (Bolt, 2007; Gray & Malins, 2004; Leavy 2009; Sullivan, 2005), and secondly, in an ontological context, upon developing a material, practical and pragmatic research context through the exploration of embodiment and performativity (Bolt, 2008; Haseman, 2006).

The broadly qualitative, localised and situated orientation of practice-led research encourages resistance to abstract, conceptual approaches to phenomena, and as a consequence there is a sense in which this complicates issues of research definition. That is to say, given the stress upon the contingent, the particular and the transformative that underpins much artistic practice, it is not hard to see how artistic practitioners may have struggled with, or felt affronted by calls for definition. Recognising that a conflict concerning the value of generalised representation lies at the heart of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research can shed much light upon issues relating to its reception. That is to say, in the early stages of

² In the early 20th century, qualitative researchers influenced by the writings of figures such as Dilthey and Weber, began to resist positivistic notions of value-free objectivity, large scale statistical quantification and the application of labels or generalised definitions. Dilthey and Weber's anti-positivist notion of hermeneutic knowledge or 'verstehen' paved the way for interpretative research practices in the social sciences, as well as introducing the idea that research might be directed towards an understanding of the small, the local and the particular.

the legitimacy debate, those skeptical of artistic forms of research framed a broadly reductive, positivistic critique of practice-led forms of artistic enquiry that focused upon a lack of 'fit' with what was considered to be a legitimate concept of research, whilst those more sympathetic to practice-led enquiry, attempted, in a somewhat looser, pluralistic, fashion, to examine the epistemological, ontological and methodological underpinnings of the multiplicity of practices that might be said to collectively constitute practice-led enquiry.

1.01 The Inception of the Skeptical Position

The debate concerning the legitimacy of artistic research in the United Kingdom arose in a context of institutional changes that took place in the early 1990's (Candlin, 2001). Skeptics drew attention to the way in which new sources of research funding had become available to those involved in art and design education through the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, which in the formation of the new universities, often amalgamated colleges, institutes of higher education and polytechnics (many of which were themselves formerly technical colleges). Critics of practice-led research in the arts suggested that this provided an incentive, if not an imperative for educationalists involved in the visual arts - and indeed for universities themselves - to reframe professional practice as research, in order to secure access to new streams of research funding (Candlin, 2000, 2001; Durling, 2002). In its strongest form, the exponents of such a position suggested that universities and artistic researchers had been complicit and deceitful to this end (Freeman, 2010) - at other times, however, the same position was presented in more modest terms, as a necessary pragmatic response to the changing landscape of education and research funding (Borgdorff, 2012; Elkins, 2009).

In a seminal paper on the characteristics of artistic research – which emerged, significantly, just one year after the reforms had taken place - Christopher Frayling (1993), the then rector of the RCA, attempted to summarise the kinds of research practice that was being conducted in the UK in an art and design context. He famously made a distinction between three types of artistic research:

- i) Research *in* the arts

- ii) Research *through* the arts
- iii) Research *for* the arts

For Frayling, the first of these categories was fairly unproblematic – it was something very close to standard humanities research (as might be conducted in art history, cultural studies, or literature) and, according to Frayling, it was at the time the most prevalent form of artistic research. It is important to note, however, that given its primarily art-historical concerns, it was the one of Frayling’s categories most removed from any researcher-generated, primary artistic practice.

Frayling’s second category (research ‘through’ the arts) introduced an additional level of complexity in so far as it encompassed two rather different kinds of activity that respectively envisaged an active and passive role for artistic practice. That is to say, in its least problematic, passive form, Frayling’s second category addressed a kind of applied research – a mode of experimentation that explored materials, technologies and processes, which might, in some secondary or incidental fashion be employed to produce an artefact. Frayling made it clear that in the case of this broadly technical form of research, the artefact itself was of little importance, serving merely as a vessel to illustrate, showcase or prove a technique (Frayling, 1993, p.5). Things became more complicated, however, with Frayling’s introduction of a subclass that he termed ‘action research’. This form of research was likewise underpinned by some notion of practical experimentation, but it captured a kind of investigation in which the artefact might play a more prominent role. Frayling was less sure footed when attempting to describe the form that this kind of research might take, but he seemed to have in mind a diaristic or journal based documentation of experimental studio practice - a document that was in part an experimental journal, part contextual study and part interpretative exegesis. The model for this kind of artistic research was perhaps derived from Donald Schön’s notion of the Reflective Practitioner (Schön, 1983) – a work that has been frequently cited in the literature surrounding practice-led research.³ Frayling suggests that with respect to his category of action research, the end product should be an artefact that is accompanied by documentation of process

³ Schön’s notion of the reflective practitioner is developed around iterative cycles of experience and reflection upon experience. In this context, artefacts are sometimes positioned as enabling/constituting critical reflection upon experiential problems (Gray & Malins, 2007, p.58).

and influence as well as a reflection on the artistic research process itself. Critics have noted the way in which Frayling struggled to clearly define this category or to operationalise it in a straightforward fashion (Durling, Friedman & Gutherson, 2002) and this is perhaps significant given that it is here that Frayling began to consider the genuine intersection of artistic and research practice.

Consideration of the complications that began to ensue as Frayling turned his attention towards a mode of research that envisaged a more active role for the artefact, leads us towards a final category of research - the one with which Frayling struggled most – namely that of ‘research for art’. Early consideration of practice-led research had generated much debate over the extent to which its outputs should consist of artworks or exhibitions. In extreme cases it had been suggested that doctorates might be awarded entirely upon the basis of portfolio. Whilst today it is extremely unusual for practice-led doctorates to be awarded in the absence of any written materials, in the context of the early intersection of art and academia, this was subject to negotiation, and such awards were indeed made.⁴ Despite the argument that was underway concerning the respective weighting of written and artefactual submission components, Frayling made it clear that he could not see how raw, un-textually mediated artistic production could speak to the category of research, and that as a consequence he was unsure of how the term could be meaningfully employed.

Arguably, Frayling’s empty category of ‘research for art’, along with his uneasy – and slightly idiosyncratic - population of the term ‘action research’⁵ set the tone for the critique of the subjectivity, ineffability and lack of communication that coloured critics accounts of artistic practice, and which dominated much of the early critique of the legitimacy of artistic research. This is captured well in the following quotation from David Durling – one of the more staunch early critics of artistic research:

Research has goals quite different to those of practice. Research asks questions, selects appropriate methods, tests the questions, analyses the results, and disseminates the conclusions unambiguously. In so doing, the best research lays bare the bones of the processes of

⁴ Durling Friedman and Gutherson (2002, p.9) had noted how Wimbledon School of Art had already awarded artistic doctorates based on 100% portfolio submission).

⁵ The term ‘action research’ is more readily associated with a dynamic form of research activity that participates in the formation of change situations, and this will become important to the picture of artistic research that is ultimately developed in these pages.

investigation, and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the results. It lays down reliable knowledge that future researchers may follow, and methods that may be repeated if necessary... Practice does not normally have these goals, and the reasons for practice are quite different. They may involve a personal journey, a burning desire to be the best designer, the development of a new technology, some functional improvement, or simply earning a living. (Durling, 2002, p.7)

1.02 The Construction of the Terms of the Debate

In an early paper, Michael Biggs (2002) arguing from a constructivist perspective highlighted the way in which Frayling, with the introduction of the categories ‘in’, ‘through’ and ‘for’ could have been said to have actively constructed or invented the terms of the debate and to have developed a framework that served to condition many later responses and to set down the parameters for discussion (Biggs, 2002a, p.112). Analysing the category of research that Frayling had most struggled to populate (‘research for art’), Biggs suggested that ‘The reason why Frayling's category of "research-for" is an empty set in art and design is because outcomes in this category are called "works-of" [art]’ (p.117). Biggs’ initial intervention into the debate, like many early responses, was interesting and idiosyncratic, but in Biggs’ case there was an ambiguity of tone that made it hard to discern his intended position. That is to say, in his engagement with Frayling, it was unclear whether he was suggesting that ‘research-for’ art is an empty set because it must be populated, *illegitimately*, by works of *art* (i.e. works more properly of another domain that sit ill with the demands of research), or whether he meant that the category of ‘research-for’ art might, *more legitimately* be populated by *the work* of Art (i.e. that the work performed by an artefact in the context of research might legitimately fill Frayling’s most troublesome of categories). As time went on and the debate unfolded, Biggs clearly leaned more towards the skeptical position - suggesting that works of art might have some place in the context of research, standing as ‘symptoms’ of a complex theoretical territory, but that the substance of the research itself should be exegetical, serving to make this tacit territory more explicit. Thus Biggs ultimately adopted something close to Frayling’s notion of action research, but with a stronger emphasis upon the documentation of context and the production of a textual exegesis as a means of providing an explicit

and in some sense objective context for discussion (Biggs, 2002, p.4).

1.03 Overview of the Supportive Position

Thus far, we have focused primarily upon the detail of the skeptical position – upon those who are in some sense hostile or suspicious of the value of artistic practice in a research context. It is important to recognise, however, that the debate since its inception, been anything but one sided. A number of voices, emanating predominately from practitioners involved in arts education in Holland, Finland and Australia, have been broadly supportive of, and indeed positively receptive to the idea of practice-led research in the context of the arts. Supporters of artistic research have attempted to construct positive justifications, exploring the experiential, material and performative dimensions of artistic practice, as well as actively stressing the centrality of the artwork in the context of artistic research processes. These positions, were to some extent evident at the debate's inception, but have slowly gained strength over the last fifteen years - having been initially overshadowed by the rapid, somewhat reactionary critique emanating from academia itself as well as from artists and designers who had stopped 'practicing' in order to engage more exclusively with more traditional, textual modes of research (e.g. Michael Biggs & James Elkins – both of whom are subject to discussion in this thesis). A significant body of work positively exploring the idea of artistic practice has, however, slowly emerged. In a Dutch context, Henk Slager along with Annette Balkema made an early contribution to the debate through the development of a forum for discussion, organising an exploratory international symposium in Amsterdam in 2003. This symposium brought together theorists, educators, artists, curators and administrators and resulted in the publication of the early journal/series *Artistic Research* (Balkema and Slager, 2004). The symposium also gave rise to the *European Artistic Research Network* (EARN) – which has become important platform for the dissemination and discussion of artistic research. Other notable voices in the Dutch and Nordic research contexts have been Søren Kjølrup (2011), Henk Borgdorff (2012) and Mika Hannula. Collectively they have drawn attention a number of ways of framing practice-led research in an epistemological and ontological fashion, whilst criticising what they took to be the narrow purview of research definitions underpinning the criticism of artistic research practice (Kjølrup, 2011). They likewise sought to foreground the contingent,

performative qualities of research definitions and their dependence upon material circumstance (Borgdorff, 2012).

In parallel to the work undertaken on exploring practice-led research in the Dutch and Nordic contexts, the artistic research communities of Australia and New Zealand gained momentum through Dennis Strand's 1998 report *Research in Creative Arts*. Strand formulated a model of 'research equivalence' that would position the creative work of academics as equal in value to traditional scholarly research (Strand, 1998, pp. 46-49). In stressing the idea of equitability, Strand suggested that the creative work of artistic practitioners involves research – but that it is research *in*, rather than *about* the arts – thus leaning towards the more problematic end of Frayling's spectrum. Importantly, in discussing the nature of practice-led research, Strand suggested of artistic researchers that 'Their research methodologies are in the arts, their investigations are in their practice' (Strand, 1998, p. 16). A similar, enquiry into the performative, material and immanent aspects of practice-led research was explored in Graeme Sullivan's seminal part historical analysis, and part research manual, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (2005). Other Prominent voices in this research context have been Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, Paul Carter, and Brad Haseman (2006) - each of whom has developed some notion of material, or performative enquiry. Haseman's *Manifesto for Performative Research* (2006) was important in so far as it stressed the way in which the performative focus of practice-led research served to distinguish it from related qualitative modes of enquiry. Haseman suggested that there are shared concerns with the local and the situated that align qualitative and performative paradigms, but he noted that practice-led researchers were 'impatient with the methodological restrictions of qualitative research and its emphasis on written outcomes' (Haseman, 2006, p. 3), preferring instead to construct experiential starting points, to 'lead research through practice' (Haseman, 2006, p. 3) and to explore presentational forms that are 'not bound by the linear and sequential constraints of discursive or arithmetic writing' (Haseman, 2006, p. 5). Haseman notes how practice-led research also reconfigures a number of research priorities as well as reordering the conventional stages associated with more traditional modes of research. That is to say, he notes how the artistic researcher may not in the first instance have a clear research question or problem – they may feel enthusiastic or excited by a territory – but may need to commence practicing in order

to see what emerges (Haseman, 2006, p. 3). Thus, Haseman articulated an important tension between practice-led research and the idea of ‘narrow problem setting’ (Haseman, 2006, p. 4) or of rigid methodological requirements being imposed at a project’s outset. Finally he suggested that artworks and artistic practice should be considered along the lines of the philosopher J.L. Austin’s notion of ‘speech acts’ or performative utterances – which ‘accomplish, by their very enunciation, an action that generates effects.’ (Haseman, 2006, pp. 5-9)

1.04 Commonality and Diversity in the Performative Paradigm

Attempts to philosophically contextualise practice-based forms of artistic research have, however, made use of a disparate set of theoretical positions – frequently cited is the work of polymath Michael Polanyi (1966) and the applied writings of Donald Schön (1983) that emphasise the amount of tacit, unspoken knowledge along with the modes of reflexive thought that drive action in a diverse range of practical, professional contexts. Those sympathetic to the idea of practice-led research have likewise made use of the more purely philosophical writings of Gilbert Ryle (1949) and J.L. Austin (1962) in the context of analytic philosophy, as well as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002) and Martin Heidegger (1962) in the context of ‘embodied’ phenomenology. Most interestingly from the perspective of this thesis, however, has been the application of the work of Bruno Latour (Latour & Woolgar, 1986; Latour, 1987, 1999) and Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze, 1990, 2001; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, 1987) in the context of contemporary approaches to process-philosophical materialism. Whilst each of these theorists differ radically in style, tone and emphasis, it is claimed here that it is possible to identify overlapping concerns with relationality, materiality, performativity and the affective power of sensation, which underpin their various writings. Barbara Bolt - an artist, and professor at the University of Melbourne - provides an interesting case in point. Bolt, both alone and in collaboration with Estelle Barrett has attempted to explore the idea of materialist, performative enquiry within the arts (Barrett & Bolt, 2010, 2012, 2015; Bolt, 2006, 2008). Bolt’s work emphasises the contingent and situated position of the artist/researcher and explores variously its affective, embodied and materialistic dimensions. Bolt’s early work arose out of the embodied phenomenology of

Heidegger, stressing the connection between the handle-ability of materials and our knowledge of phenomena, whilst attempting to establish links between the roles of the artist and researcher through the idea of contingent situational negotiation (Bolt, 2004, 2006). Her later work, however, along with her earlier writings on painting, is more strongly influenced by the process-philosophical naturalism of Gilles Deleuze, emphasising an ‘experimental’ affinity between the material negotiation that takes place in the realms of studio and the laboratory, as well as the affective dimension of artistic practice (Bolt, 2004, 2006, 2010) – that is, the way in which artwork and laboratory research alike emerge involve a material-situational confluence, which has the capacity to institute change. With this in mind, Bolt can be seen to emphasise the performative power of research processes, and to stress the collapse of subject, object, method and outcome – ideas that figure as prominent tropes within the writings most supportive of practice-led research. As a consequence, Bolt can be seen to question notions of border, boundary and identity in the context of research activity. However, despite her performative convictions, Bolt has likewise stressed the importance of writing in research – both as a means of ‘linguaging’ the ‘shudder of an idea’ that is bound up in a performative situation, and as a particular means of inducing movement with respect to thought (Bolt, 2004). Bolt’s later work places a stronger emphasis upon the material power of sensation, drawing attention to the co-transformation of subject and object in the context of practice-led enquiry. This position has much resonance with contemporary thinking within the arts in so far as it emphasises the materialist orientation of much practice-led research. Bolt (2012) describes *Carnal Knowledge* – one of her later works, co-edited with Estelle Barrett as sitting between a ‘post humanist neo-materialism and a corporeal materialism ... [and as engaging] with the ‘matter’ of things [whilst acknowledging] the material groundedness of cultural practices’ (Barrett & Bolt, 2012, p.13).

The performative, turn has not been limited to the field of the artistic research. Judith Butler’s anti-essentialist arguments concerning gender performance seem pertinent when transposed to the context of the legitimacy debate and have been influential in the formation of the performative paradigm. It is well known that Butler’s (1991) analysis of ‘drag’ was intended to address the performative nature of gender per sé – that is, the way in which ‘authentic’ gender seemed itself to embody a mode of performance:

Drag enacts the very structure of impersonation by which any gender is assumed. Drag is not the putting on of a gender that belongs properly to another group ... Drag constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalised, worn, and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation. If this is true, there is no originary or primary gender that drag imitates, but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original. (Butler in Fuss, 1991, p. 21).

From the outset, the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research seemed to be constituted by similar problems of authenticity/inauthenticity. Critics such as Durling, Friedman and Biggs, sometimes wrote as if artistic practice when positioned as research, should be considered a form of impersonation or drag, and that the task of their argument was to expose this deception. On the other hand, supporters of the performative paradigm at an institutional level - notably, Borgdorff (2012), have encouraged us to think of traditional research in performative terms – following Butler’s line of enquiry, they have drawn attention to the way in which traditional research procedures themselves embody a learned and imitative structure. Following this trajectory, we can identify a strong affinity between ideas emanating from the performative research community and those suggested by representatives of the ‘new materialism’ such as Jane Bennett, whose *Vibrant Matter* has in recent years been one of the most cited books in the humanities (Bennett, 2010; Gratton, 2014, p. 110). Similar material-affective concerns underpin recent speculative realist thought emerging in the context of philosophy, as well as concerns with material performativity in the context of professional artistic practice. Speculative realist and new materialist ideas were prominent, for instance in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev’s curatorial strategies for dOCUMENTA 13 in 2012, and in the curatorial activity of Massimiliano Gioni and Marta Kuzma in *Manifesta 5* (Gioni & Kuzma, 2004) which was discussed in Balkema and Slager’s early investigations into artistic research (Balkema and Slager, 2004).

The pro-artistic-research position is not limited to voices emanating from Holland and Australia. In the UK there has been a similar interest in embodied knowledge (Niedderer, 2007a, 2007b; Rust, 2004), and issues relating to relationality and affect

(Niedderer, 2007c).⁶ Matters relating to tacit, relational and embodied knowledge have been prominent in the discussion of designed artefacts, but have also been developed in the context of fine art - Macleod and Holeridge's (2006) edited volume *Thinking Through Art* is a case in point. There have likewise been significant overlaps with work arising out of the field of performance studies – notably through the PARIP conferences (Practice as Research in Performance) organized by Baz Kershaw at the University of Bristol. Whilst the agenda of performance might seem distant from the agenda of the visual arts, these initiatives are in some sense united through the focus upon the performative dimension of the artwork. This intersection is particularly noticeable in Robin Nelson's (2013) recent part authored and part edited volume *Practice as Research in the Arts*, which explores a material, performative ontology for the arts, whilst addressing a broadly artistic-research context.

1.05 The Complexity and Specificity of Individual Positions within the Debate

Whilst we can clearly identify a certain polarisation of opinion in the debate – that is to say, whilst we can position particular voices within the legitimacy debate as being broadly 'for' or 'against' emerging forms of artistic, or practice-led research, it is also the case that the way in which positions are held and the specific position that any given theorist ultimately adopts, on closer examination, reveal themselves to be idiosyncratic and complex. This is perhaps due to the fact that the discussion of studio-based research envelops a number of overlapping but nevertheless cross-contextual concerns, which result in competing definitions of research, competing philosophies of enquiry, and competing attitudes towards structures of research and funding administration. The complexity of actual positions or voices in the debate is perhaps best illustrated by reference to example of two of practice-based research's early (and at least partial) detractors – Michael Biggs, who we have already met in the context of the discussion of Frayling's categories of research, and James Elkins, a

⁶ Kristina Niedderer, for instance, disrupts conventional thinking around user centred design, introducing perturbations into affordance-centric approaches to designed objects. To this end Niedderer's *Libation Cups* incorporated holes that must be closed by the user's fingertips in order to enable the containment of water and to facilitate the process of drinking. Niedderer's cups were intended to promote mindfulness through disruption the drinking of water – that is to provoke contemplation of the consumer's relation to water through establishing an intimate at once material, experiential and performative connection in the act of drinking. Thus Niedderer employed tacit knowledge of the affordances of glassware to produce a slow, contemplative but nevertheless activist form of design (Niedderer, 2004, p.106)

professor, art historian and ex-painter, who was likewise a prominent, early, and to some extent skeptical participant in the debate. Elkins has been critical of the role of artistic activity and the artefact in the context of research, in a way that broadly reflects what I have described as the skeptical position. The detail of Elkins' (2009) position on the role artistic activity per sé and its relation to academia proves to be at once complex, interesting and illuminating. That is to say, despite his criticism of studio-based enquiry in the context of research, Elkins nevertheless valorises artistic practice in an *artistic* context, positioning it as highly significant, alchemic and material form of engagement with the world (Elkins, 1999). He goes to great lengths to stress, however, that despite its cultural value, it is a form of worldly engagement that is ultimately not 'rational' in character (Elkins, 1999, p. 49, p. 117, 2001, p.91). For Elkins, this irrationality confers great value and cultural significance upon artistic practice, but it also serves to distance it from the concerns of academia and the university (Elkins, 1999, pp.140-175, 2001, pp.112-165). That is to say, for Elkins it is art's refusal of the rational ordering of the world that is ultimately generative of its cultural significance – but it is this very same resistance to rational thinking that makes artistic practice unsuited to the more sober demands of academic research (Elkins, 1999, p.193). Elkins argument is not limited to the field of artistic research, but is rather directed at the integration of the arts with academia in general. He suggests that art's irrationality, and its intimate connection with tacit forms of knowing, are hard to reconcile with the objective requirements of an academic, university context. Elkins goes so far as to suggest that in an academic pedagogical context, art itself cannot straightforwardly be taught. Thus Elkins is skeptical of the idea of arts education, and suspicious of the notion of 'visual studies', positioning them as attempts to illegitimately combine a set of dubiously compatible artistic and theoretical concerns (Elkins, 2001, 2003). Accordingly, in the context of his professional life, Elkins likes to keep practice and research separate – making a clear distinction between the kinds of understanding and engagement with the world that he believes to be characteristic of his earlier artistic practice as a painter, and the more traditional cultural criticism and art-historical scholarship that underpins his written, research activity. Complicating things further, however, Elkins' skepticism towards the notion that there might be any easy fit between the concerns of artistic practice and research activity is balanced by his observation that the demand to define artistic research (and thus to in some sense 'rationalise' artistic activity) has in part been

driven, or constructed by the administrative procedures of universities and funding bodies - by a socio-economic context that the social anthropologist Maryln Strathern (2000) has termed, 'audit culture'. Elkins use of this argument is interesting as it is more often employed by those more straightforwardly supportive of practice-based research (e.g. Pollock, 2008), and this is perhaps symptomatic of a tension in Elkins' thought between a conservative, academic formalism and a more radical artistic anti-institutionalism, that is itself symptomatic of the complexity of his role in contemporary art education. Elkins is not the only participant in the debate to embody a convoluted, tensile, and sometimes seemingly conflicted position. We have seen how Michael Biggs promotes and defends a particular, reductive, picture of artistic research, suggesting on the one hand that there need be no incompatibility between research in the arts and more traditional forms of research (Biggs, 2007), but on the other that our idea of artistic research must be radically disciplined if it is to function in an academic context (Biggs, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008). Thus Biggs attempts to carve out a space for legitimate modes of artistic research practice, but in his attempt to align them with more traditional notions of research activity, he effectively minimises the role of the artwork and subjective experience. In his recognition that there might be a space for artistic research in an academic context, Biggs initially appears more receptive than Elkins, but in practice, his process of legitimisation comes at a cost, namely through the subtraction of any active or significant role for either the artist or the artefact (Biggs, 2002, 2003, 2004). Thus, in contrast to Elkins who, at times celebrates the veiled epistemic and more explicitly ontological dimensions of artistic practice, Biggs' writing is more consistently positivistic, and his tone for the most part austere. For Biggs, the artwork in a research context becomes something that is largely illustrative in character, or something that stands as a provocation to be unpacked by an extensive exegetical text (intending to make explicit to the audience, the implicit knowledge embodied in the artwork). Much like Elkins, however, Biggs stresses the importance of rationality and communicability in the context of legitimate research practices (Biggs, 2007; Biggs & Büchler, 2009) - emphasising the importance of the scholarly delineation of a research context, the careful selection and rigorous application of methods and the development of explicit argument and interpretation. Unlike Elkins, however, Biggs also sees such demands as being positively reflected in the working definitions and gatekeeping activities of research that are employed by universities and funding bodies alike in their day-to-

day administration (Biggs & Büchler, 2010), and accordingly, he stresses the importance of positive engagement with these processes. In one sense, and for a similar set of reasons, Biggs shares Elkins' skepticism with regard to the value of artefacts and artistic practice in the context of research. In another sense, however, Biggs sees more value in bureaucratic procedure – ultimately suggesting that such structures help to make explicit our everyday understanding of the concept of research.

1.06 The Caricature of Oppositional Voices in the Debate

It should be clear from the sketches of Biggs, Elkins and Bolt that have been encountered thus far, that the individual positions that are developed within the discussion are often complex, nuanced and idiosyncratic in character. That is to say, those broadly 'against' the idea of practice-based research in the arts overlap on many issues, whilst nevertheless developing a distinctive position of their own - and this is likewise the case with the supporters of artistic research. An interesting, and long running feature of the legitimacy debate, however, has been the tendency for its participants to focus upon developing interesting and nuanced positions of their own, whilst failing to critically engage with their opposition – preferring instead to debate rather idealised, ghostly positions – a series of abstractions that positively facilitate the exposition of a position, but which promote a lack of engagement with actual voices within the discourse of the legitimacy debate – and which as such tend to sidestep the realities of the situation (Borgdorff, 2012, p.5). Thus, when Frayling conducted his overview of stake-holding positions at the argument's inception, he began not by examining any actual voice within the debate, but chose instead to interrogate a series of Hollywood stereotypes. This is particularly interesting when we take into account that Frayling's area of expertise (his area of practice, as it were) is film studies. In the context of his discussion, Frayling presents us with a series of stereotypes and caricatures of the impassioned, lunatic artist, the pragmatic designer-boffin, the designer-semiotician (as a surfer of signs and culture) and contrasting clichés of the 'saintly' and 'mad' scientist (Frayling, 1993, pp.3-3). Through the employment of these abstractions (albeit in a slightly knowing and ironic fashion) Frayling's paper did some important foundational work with respect to unpacking the problem and it drew attention to a number of important issues, but there is also a sense in which it could be said, in its instructive use of stereotypes, to have been

symptomatic of a problem that it attempted to diagnose. In short, Frayling's paper contains only five references, and the only position examined in any detail was Picasso's early resistance to the presentation of his work as a form of research. The tendency to deal in abstractions and simplifications has been a long running feature of the debate. The various manuals and edited compilations concerning practice-based research in the context of the visual arts, as well as the early journal papers that questioned the legitimacy of artistic research presented a similarly simplified vision of the problem, tending to foreground an outdated and overly positivistic conception of science as a standard of comparison – sometimes situating this historically, and at others presented it as informing the 'gold standard' of research that had become enshrined in research administration. Thus at a relatively early stage in the debate, Sullivan writes:

Notwithstanding the revisionist tendencies of postpositivism in the latter half of the 20th century, the rationality of logical positivism has been the long term trustee overseeing what is commonly known as the scientific method. (Sullivan, 2005, p.33)

As late as 2013, Nelson tells us that 'in making the case for different modes of knowing' he 'propose[s] to depart from positivism and the 'scientific method' as the only valid research paradigm' (Nelson, 2013, p.51). It would be unfair to suggest that these authors are unaware of way the transformations that science has undergone over the course of the 20th century. Indeed, it is often the case that an overly positivistic image of science is invoked negatively as a set of ideas that underpin the ideals of research administration, and it is likewise the case that the same publications which invoke this positivistic picture are accompanied by descriptions of the way in which the assumptions of positivism were questioned – beginning in the late 19th century and continuing over the course of the 20th (Nelson, 2013, p.26). The issue is rather that the participants in the debate find it easier to frame the position that is being discussed, against the backdrop of a simplified vision of enquiry – but this also means that they fail to address the richness and detail of any contemporary position as it is actually held. This seems rather ironic, however, firstly because the apparent difficulty presented in staging an opposition between artistic research and actual positions in post-positivistic science, implies that there might be a stronger affinity between artistic research and contemporary ideas of research enquiry than initially meets the

eye, and secondly, it is odd that so much time should be spent constructing ghostly, spectral positions, given that the defenders of practice based research are for the most part keen to stress its qualitative dimensions - that is, its sensitive engagement with phenomena, that should score highly in terms of validity. Henk Borgdorff, professor of Art Theory and Research at the Amsterdam School of the Arts has recently noted the lack of critical dialogue between those broadly for and those broadly against artistic research. He explains that 'many of the contending parties tend to opt for the rhetorical force of 'knowing you are right' above the gentle power of convincing arguments' and that 'It is not entirely coincidental that people's personal opinions usually correlate with their own affiliations' (Borgdorff, 2007, p.2, p.32). Ultimately, this results in a strange kind of disengagement that is perhaps further complicated by the brevity of exposition that is necessary within journal papers and the edited compilations that attempt to address the nature of artistic research - a necessary feature of what Carole Gray (1996) has described as paradigm 'articulation' (Gray, 1996, p.8). Thus we are told that the thought of Heidegger, Latour and Deleuze provide important frameworks for understanding the nature of emergent forms of research enquiry, but that the analysis of their significance is cursory, and is typically constrained to a handful of paragraphs. Consequently, one of the aims of this thesis will be to explore the philosophical underpinnings of arguments for and against in more detail, and to stage a more thorough critical dialogue between a smaller number of positions. In the process, we will also draw upon relevant, more specifically philosophical enquiry that is not necessarily located within the debate itself but may instead be situated in philosophical discussion that operates on the periphery (e.g. Lefebvre, 2008; Mullarkey, 2006, 2009; Sabisch, 2011).

1.07 The Tension between Art and Design

The fact that in the early stages of debate concerning the question of its legitimacy, both critics and supporters of practice-led research could be said to have focused upon an overly positivistic, 19th century conception of science, would seem to suggest that this was not a quarrel being conducted between arts and the sciences. Had it been so, it would undoubtedly have made reference to a more contemporary vision of scientific activity. Indeed, Florris Solleveld (2012) has recently noted that:

Few people outside the contemporary art world are aware that there are currently thousands of artists pursuing a PhD; I remember a history and philosophy of science symposium on 'discipline formation' in 2009 where none of the participants was even aware of its existence. (Solleveld, 2012, p.78)

In this sense, the discussion does not have the same gravity or global application as the conflict that took place between the natural and social sciences the late nineteenth eighties and early nineteen nineties that came to be known as the science wars (Ashman & Baringer, 2001; Bricmont, 2011; Gross & Levitt, 1994; Parsons, 2003; Ross, 1996;). Indeed, what is all too often positioned as a dispute between art and science in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice based research, would perhaps be more accurately positioned as a dispute between art and design within the context of the visual arts. That is to say, a long running, but not often noticed feature of the legitimacy debate has been its tendency, from its very inception to group the disciplines of art and design together, as if practice-based, or practice-led research in the visual arts should exhibit a common form that would be applicable to both art and design. This was apparent in the title Frayling's paper (*'Research in Art and Design'*) and was prominent in the writings of those active in the first wave of critique. It is important to note, however, that the idea of visual arts as it occurs in university is itself an at once pragmatic and hybrid construct, which like the new found eligibility of art tutors for research funding, might also be considered a consequence of the restructuring of university departments through the educational reforms of 1992 (Sullivan, 2005, p. 73). That is to say, it is important to recognise that the Further and Higher Education Act not only resulted in new streams of revenue for art and design, but also amalgamated a diverse array of institutions, each of which had their own distinctive histories and agendas (Borgdorff, 2012, p.34; Nelson, 2013, pp. 14-15; Rust, Mottram & Till, 2007, pp. 17-22). Most significantly, it brought together art and design under the rubric of 'visual arts' through the amalgamation of art colleges, polytechnics and technical colleges. Whilst it is true that both art and design can in part be considered visual practices, and whilst it is likewise true that each are in part concerned with the construction of artefacts and the generation of aesthetic experience, it is nevertheless the case that they are driven by significant differences in disciplinary teleology and practitioner values, and as such it does not necessarily follow that they might be served by common pedagogical or research frameworks. Most notably, there

is a difference between what we might frame as the openness of much artistic practice (a concern with the multiplication and complexification of signs and their interpretation) and a more reductive functionalism that underpins much thinking in design (a concern with methods, parsimony, efficiency and user modelling) – which results in a kind of reductive (de)-signing. With this in mind, it seems significant that that the first wave of strong reactive criticism directed at practice-led research in the context of fine art, which began around the year 2000, can be seen to have taken place largely in design-centric research forums such as the Doctoral Education in Design conferences, the PhD Design Listserve and the closely associated journals such as Design Issues and Design Studies. We have already seen how at the time of debate's inception, the model of 'legitimate' research was derived from a particular, idealised picture of research as it was thought to be conducted in the sciences, and how the set of research definitions utilised by universities and funding bodies seemed supportive of this view. With this in mind it is not difficult to see how design could more readily answer to a set of rational and positivistic demands as it had already gone through a process of 'scientisation' in the formation of the postwar Design-Methods movement that originated at the RCA in England in the 1960's (Cross, 2001; Margolin, 2010). Design thinking, in its concern with audience and user modelling, as well as in its concern with efficiency and its embrace of systematic methods can perhaps be more receptive to the notions of definition, functionalism and parsimony that are inherent in research-administrative planning. Thus, consideration of the tension between art and design in the discussion of practice-based research also draws attention to the tendency for critics of artistic research to emanate from the field of design - and this easily slides into discussion of the way in which funding and administrative policies have influenced the debate.

1.08 The Influence of Research Administration

Clearly, in order for university departments and funding bodies to function, a certain degree of administration and form filling is required that assists in both the quantification and arbitration of research activity. Critics of artistic research often draw attention to the need for parity across subjects and institutions, as well as a need for comparable levels of research training across disciplines and institutions. This has most recently been discussed in the context of the Bologna process – the initiative of

the European Union that proposes that there should be parity of standards and quality of higher educational qualifications across all academic institutions in Europe. As we have seen, there is an affinity between the ideas of design efficiency and organisational modelling that underpins both research administration and the more formal, reductive aspects of design thinking that arguably makes systems of research management and the design critique of artistic research appear mutually supportive. These concerns appeared to be amplified in the UK at least in the run up to the REF (Research Excellence Framework) of 2014. According to Robin Nelson, all of the major UK universities submitted substantial portfolios of practice-led research in the 2014 REF, and this seems a significant indication that the tide may have turned with respect to the reception of practice-led research in the context of academia.

Henke Borgdorff has been a prominent voice and a frequent contributor to the debate in a Dutch context. Borgdorff's work is particularly distinctive from the position of research administration. Borgdorff addresses many of the issues relating to the defining character of administrative procedures, but approaches them from a processual and performative perspective that arguably resonates more neutrally with art and design. Thus Borgdorff emphasises the importance of functionality, materiality and contingency in equal measure, and generalises their operation – applying them more broadly to the contexts of traditional and non-traditional research alike. Borgdorff's work was initially located in the thought of late period Wittgenstein (Borgdorff, 2012, p.130), but has latterly moved towards science and technology studies in the form of his employment of Bruno Latour's Actor Network theory (Borgdorff, 2012, p.210, p.216). Borgdorff attempts to draw attention to what he terms the 'post-disciplinary context' for contemporary research (Borgdorff, 2012, pp. 177-178). He notes how Michael Gibbons et al in their *The New Production of Knowledge (1994)* observed that 'Mode 1 science' needed to make room for 'Mode 2 knowledge production'. Thus traditional, discipline-bound research - characterised by organisational homogeneity, uniformity, and stability; primarily focused on the finding of truths or the justification of beliefs, and assessed by discipline-centric, expert peer review, was positioned as needing to make way in the contemporary context of application for the interdisciplinary and the transdisciplinary - that would involve expertise that extended beyond the confines of the academy. Borgdorff, explains that:

Research is not conducted exclusively in homogeneous, uniformly structured universities, but is more localised in heterogeneous, diversified, often transitory configurations, made up of universities, governmental agencies, industrial research centres, non-governmental organisations, and other actors that assemble around a particular set of problems. Specific attention is given to whether the outcomes are socially, economically, or politically relevant, competitive, or feasible. The quality of the research is assessed and controlled by the various parties involved. Both ‘disciplinary peers’ and other stakeholders critically examine research questions and priorities as well as findings. This ‘extended peer review’ is one of the attributes that distinguish Mode 2 knowledge production, in conjunction with the demand for social robustness and reflexivity, the organisational diversity, and the problem-focused teamwork that transcends disciplines. (Borddorff, 2012, pp. 89-90)

Borddorff goes on to provide a framework for considering the integration of emerging forms of artistic research activity into academia, whilst remaining receptive to notions of academic hybridity and transformation. Following Latour, Borddorff first questions the idea that there is of any essentialist notion of research that artistic research could be measured against, and then goes on to present a picture of research activity in a pragmatic, post-disciplinary context, as something which arises out of loose opportunistic academic and professional networks - emphasising the importance of temporary alliances that are driven by bids to secure research funding. Practically, Borddorff’s aim has been to ‘perform’ artistic research into existence. To this end he has established JAR (the Journal of Artistic Research) an international multimodal peer reviewed journal/platform for the dissemination and archiving of practice-based research in the arts. In the context of this thesis, Borddorff provides an administrative voice for artistic research, which has a stronger creative dimension, emerging out of, and being constituted by the activity of artistic researchers. In the context of this thesis, Borddorff provides an important balance to Biggs’ more conservative, administrative position.

1.09 Rival Approaches to Research Definition

Given the tensions between the conceptual, the material and the performative that inform various positions within the legitimacy debate, it is perhaps not hard to see why discussion of practice-led research in the context of the art has been plagued by issues concerning definition. Broadly speaking, the debate takes place in a philosophical context of judgment, and from its inception there was much pressure to populate, or to define the concepts of ‘research’, ‘art’ and ‘practice’ as they occurred in the context of the debate as well as a need to clarify and qualify the various linguistic nuances that were employed in the concatenation of these terms. Thus over the course of the discussion there have been a number of terminological constructions that have attempted to capture the nature of artistic research enquiry. Accordingly, such as practice-based research, practice-led research, practice-as-research, or artistic-research confer different kinds of emphasis and subtly alter the concept under discussion. Over the course of the debate labels have fallen in and out of favour. When I began my enquiry, the term ‘practice-based’ research was dominant and the idea of ‘artistic’ research was subject to much criticism. Latterly the terms ‘practice-led research’ and ‘artistic-research’ have become more strongly favoured, and we will use these terms accordingly. This is firstly in the interest of currency, and secondly to draw attention to the fact that in recent years there has been a turning of the tide in relation to the academic acceptance of artistic research - and the terms that are more in tune with my own study now occur more prominently in the discussion. Regardless of the specific nuances of any prevailing terminology, the construction, fusion or coinage of terms implies a central pragmatic, constructivist insight. Indeed, we will see in chapter two of this thesis how all of the participants in the debate can in some sense be considered pragmatists, but it is important to recognise how pragmatism can be employed for both conservative and radical ends. Thus the conservative wing of pragmatist thought emphasises the role of pragmatic constraints, order and community sanctions, whilst the latter goes to greater lengths to emphasis contingency, social transformation and the materiality of problems. In the context of the legitimacy debate, pragmatists of the right look to research definitions, research regulations and institutionalised patterns of research activity (Biggs & Büchler, 2010) which results in a quasi-essentialist ‘top down’ view (a working definition that is top down both in the sense of being derived from administrative definitions and an

academic 'form of life' and in the sense of having an interesting resonance with bounded, conceptual thought). Pragmatists of the left on the other hand, attempt to construct loose working definitions of practice-led research by conducting surveys of research activities taking place in the context of art and design that describe themselves in these terms (Mottram, 2009; Rust, Mottram & Till, 2007). Thus this latter approach is more directly 'bottom-up' in character, and has a more direct connection to material affairs and the material construction of concepts.

The issue of definition is further complicated by what we might term the anti-representational focus of much art theory and much artistic practice. Following Morris Weitz (1964), advocates of artistic-research have noted the tendency of artworks, and artistic practice themselves to in some sense resist definition. Thus there is a tendency to position art as a perpetually evolving and transformational 'open concept' that is ultimately resistant to capture. This, when considered alongside practitioner concerns with the liminal/interstitial as well as the tendency of artists to embrace bricolage, collaboration and nomadic forms of thinking, could be said to attune artistic forms of practice-based research to Borgdorff's 'post-disciplinary' research concerns. As we have seen, Borgdorff has emphasised the connection between artistic collaboration, and emerging inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research contexts (Borgdorff, 2012, p.68, p.199). Thus the emphasis upon transformative outcomes that characterises much discussion of artistic research can be seen to generate a secondary meta-level problem concerning disciplinarity. That is to say, there is a tendency for artistic-researchers to reject notions of fixed disciplinary boundaries, and to stress the importance of the inter-disciplinary, the trans-disciplinary, the multi-disciplinary, and ultimately the post-disciplinary with respect to enquiry. In one sense this has placed artistic research in a highly strategic position as universities confront the openness, fragmentation and transformative character of postmodern, networked culture, but in another sense it has generated problems at the level of university administration concerning the integration of artistic practice into an academic curriculum.

1.20 Philosophical Context: Overview of the Process Perspective

Whilst supporters of practice-led research often stress that new ways of thinking are required to understand and accommodate practice-led enquiry, many of the theories and concepts that are ultimately employed towards this end have a long process-philosophical lineage.⁷ Process philosophy has been present as a minor current in Western philosophy since as early as 540 BC (Rescher, 1996). Process philosophies tend to emphasise both the ontological priority of change and the relational constitution of entities. From the perspective of process philosophy, the world of stable and enduring things arises out of a differential play of interacting forces that admit of multiple and contingent patterns of relation (Rescher 1996, p. 10). Given its emphasis upon the movement, transformation and development of phenomena, as well as its emphasis upon external or extrinsic relations with respect to the constitution of things, the process perspective is less interested in any stable, essentialist, or object-centric definitions of the substance of entities, but instead focuses upon performative descriptions of their role and constitution (Rescher 2000, p. 15). Thus there is a functionalist orientation to process-relational thinking, but it is a functionalism that is tempered with a creative and vitalist bent. Accordingly, the process perspective is as much interested in the transformation of practices as it is in their functional description, and interestingly for our purposes here, such transformation is itself typically presented as the result of the connection of things through some form of material, processual or situational encounter.

John Mullarkey, Professor of Film and Technology at Kingston University has noted how much contemporary French and German thought resonates with the core tenets of process philosophy - Mullarkey (2006) cites Gilles Deleuze, François Laruelle, Michel Henry, and Alan Badiou as expressing prominent process-philosophical concerns (Mullarkey, 2006, p.8), and it does not require much imagination to see that

⁷ Nicholas Rescher has produced a useful summary of the tendencies of process-oriented thought as it pertains to the Anglo-American process tradition (Rescher, 1996). He suggests that process philosophy can be read of as an attempt to make sense of the world in terms of a logic of change/becoming as opposed to a logic of substance/being. This has important implications with respect to the ways in which we think identity, time, stasis and change, which will impact significantly upon the problem of practice-led research.

the same could be said of Latour's Actor Network Theory, as well as the plethora of new materialist and speculative realist thought that has arisen in recent years in an Anglophone context. Process philosophy has likewise had a long relationship with arts education - serving to orient the thinking of luminaries such as John Dewey and Susanne Langer,⁸ playing a significant role through the influence of Dewey in both the art-educational context of Black Mountain College and the design-educational context of the Bauhaus (the influence of Dewey was felt via Josef Albers who taught at both institutions). Both Dewey and Langer have provided philosophical inspiration for prominent voices within the legitimacy debate. Scott Brook notes that Donald Schön wrote his PhD thesis on Dewey's theory of enquiry (Brook, 2014, p.4), whilst elsewhere, Patricia Leavy and Brad Haseman reference the important contribution of Langer's work on non-textual, symbolic knowledge (Haseman, 2006, p.5; Leavy, 2009, p. 91, p.255).

1.21 The Anti-Essentialist Orientation of Process Philosophy

Given its emphasis upon the transformation and development of phenomena, as well as its emphasis upon external or extrinsic relations with respect to the constitution of things, the process perspective is less interested in any stable, essentialist, or object-centric definitions of what art or research fundamentally *are*, but is instead interested in performative descriptions of how such practices are sustained and what they provisionally and contingently *do* (Rescher, 1996, p.4). Thus the process perspective is as much interested in the transformation of practices as it is in their functional description, and interestingly for our purposes here, such transformation is itself typically presented as the result of the connection of hitherto unconnected contexts or states of affairs. Thus, the process perspective provides us with a set of tools to stage a creative encounter between practices of art and practices of research – stressing the possibility of nuance, inflection, synthesis and transformation, as opposed to any fundamental compatibility or incompatibility.

⁸ Langer was the author of *Feeling and Form* and a student of Alfred North-Whitehead, the philosopher that coined the term 'process-relational philosophy'

1.22 The Modal Neutrality of the Process Perspective

Process ontology tends to be monistic in character, positioning all phenomena as, at root, a manifestation of a more fundamental category of process. In this sense, it has a reductive slant. However, with the adoption of the seemingly neutral category of process as its foundation, there is an important sense in which it prioritises neither the conceptual nor the experiential in its account of phenomena. That is to say, implicated in process-relational philosophy's ontological monism is a phenomenal pluralism that is neither straightforwardly empiricist nor straightforwardly idealist in character (Rescher, 2000, p.9). Thus the process perspective brings with it a multi-modal emphasis that confers a distinctive neutrality upon its analysis of phenomena. It is suggested here that the phenomenally pluralist orientation of process-relational thought provides a suitably neutral starting point when the subject of analysis is the relationship between artistic activity and established forms of research. Thus, from the perspective of process philosophy there are levels and modalities of emergent order, but there is also a sense in which everything is capable of melting or morphing into everything else (Rescher 1996, p.15). As a consequence process philosophy has the power to collapse dualistic vocabularies and deal positively with systemic tensions - ultimately suggesting a picture of the world that emphasises complexity, emergence, and the aspectual qualities of things. With this picture of connective transformation in mind, Rescher has noted that one of the great promises of process-relational thinking is its methodological power to formulate comparisons. (Rescher 1996, p.4)

1.23 Applying Process-Relational Thinking the Debate Concerning the Legitimacy of Practice-Led Research

From the perspective of this study, the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research in the context of the visual arts can be seen to develop out of a core problem concerning the complex relationship between tradition/integration and novelty/innovation, that can be discerned in the context of institutional models of research (AHRC, 2014, pp. 9-10; Roberts, 2011), and which is likewise implicated in discussion of paradigmatic transformation. Accordingly, this thesis begins from the observation that process philosophy's stress upon the importance of both the integrative and the differential in its account of the genesis, maintenance and

transformation of phenomena, gives it explanatory value in both artistic and more traditional research contexts. In the context of the arts, it would seem to connect, firstly with the practitioner's emphasis upon creativity and innovation, secondly with an art historical emphasis upon the engagement with tradition (be it of a reverent or of a more irreverent nature), and thirdly with the way in which new modes of artistic activity and new artistic territories emerge through practitioner engagement with non-artistic contexts. Accordingly, it is suggested here that there is an emphasis upon disciplinary receptivity, mutability and transformation that can be located in the arts, which has a strong resonance with the ontological commitments of process philosophical thought.

The process perspective would seem to have similar value when examining more established modes of research. That is to say, in a more traditional research context, the integrative qualities of process ontology connect with the formal expectation, often ingrained in the definitions suggested by research funding bodies, that the researcher should delineate a research context (AHRC, 2014, p. 9), whilst its differential emphasis resonates with research-centric notions of innovation and the idea that the researcher should strive to make a significant contribution to 'creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding' (AHRC, 2014, p. 9).⁹ Whilst there is still some tendency to think of disciplines in a rather specialised, self-contained, and hermetic fashion, the importance of cross-disciplinary contact in more traditional fields of research should not be underestimated. The transversal connection between disciplines is manifest not only at the level of overt, disciplinary contact in the context of collaborative research projects, but also in the more subtle migration of methods and concepts from one discipline to another. We need only think, for instance, of the quantity of original research that has resulted from the employment of the concept of the germ or virus (originally a biological concept) as an explanatory tool in other disciplinary contexts, to appreciate the intimacy of inter-disciplinary connection. In a paper written in 1990, Daniel Dennett famously attempted to apply sociobiological ideas to the transmission of ideas in the context of the arts and humanities – stating

⁹ Over the last ten years, there has been significant debate concerning the AHRC criteria surrounding artistic research. When I began my study the focus of discussion was epistemologically oriented, focusing purely upon 'contribution to knowledge'. The AHRC Practice-Led Research Review (Rust, Mottram & Till, 2007, p.63) drew attention to the limited purview of the early focus upon knowledge and understanding and recommended a broader approach which might address the specificities of the arts.

along the way that, from a mimetic perspective, ‘A scholar is just a library's way of making another library’ (Dennett, 1990). Looking further back we might draw attention to the importance of fluid-dynamics in Freudian thought - Maria Sanchez-Vizcaino (2007) notes the way in which in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ‘Freud elaborates a mental world structured around the surface-depth dichotomy and the fluid movement of elements in the waters of the mind’ – indeed, it has often been noted that Freud was concerned with the ‘plumbing’ of our psychological life. Building upon the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and Isabelle Stengers the semiotician Mieke Bal famously explored the subtle transformation of concepts as they migrate from discipline to discipline (Bal & Marx-MacDonald, 2002). Bal’s examples include the biological concept of hybridity (Bal & Marx-MacDonald, 2002, pp. 24-25), along with the application of literary concepts of text and narrative to visual studies. Significantly, from the perspective of this thesis, she also draws attention to the way in which the theatrical notion of performance has been applied to a diverse array of disciplines (in this sense, she both anticipates and inaugurates the performative turn). Bal likewise discusses the way in which such concepts alter – opening up new analytic potentials as they travel over time from discipline, to discipline. To this end, Bal cites the wide array of conceptual frameworks, theoretical perspectives, and research strategies (e.g. hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction, pragmatism, critical theory, cultural analysis), that are employed across musicology, art history, theatre and dance studies, as well as comparative literature, architectural theory, moving image and new media studies, notwithstanding research in cultural studies or sociology of the arts. Borgdorff himself suggests that there is a ‘self-evident kinship between artistic research and the qualitative focus of the humanities. However, he also notes that those frameworks, perspectives, and strategies generally approach the arts with ‘a certain theoretical distance’. Thus, whilst he applauds Bal’s symbiotic observation that theory may be seen as a discourse that ‘that can be brought to bear on the object at the same time as the object can be brought to bear on it’ (Bal 2002, p. 61, cited in Borgdorff, 2010, p. 150), Borgdorff stresses, however, that practice-led research seeks to ‘reduce the critical distance’ between theory and practice – that is, the way that it is critical of ‘the interpretive, verbally discursive approach’ of the humanities, and the way in which ‘the experimental practice of creating and performing pervades [practice-led research] at every turn’. Significantly, for our purposes here, Borgdorff suggests that the embodied, performative dimension of

practice-led enquiry, aligns it more closely with technical design research or with participatory action research than with research in the humanities' (Borgdorff, 2010, p. 151).

1.24 Affectivity and Relationality in a Research Context.

The final, and perhaps most clear testament to the applicability of the process perspective to the question of the legitimacy of practice-led research becomes evident when we consider our tendency to think of both art and research activities as long-durational, developmental processes. The notion that writing might be considered a form of creative, long durational, intertextual (relational) composition is a persistent trope in philosophical reflection on writing and the arts. It can likewise be found in the writings of a number of prominent figures from the history of process philosophy – e.g. Dewey, Langer, Deleuze, and Foucault, and this idea has likewise been expressed by the semiotician and stalwart of cultural studies, Roland Barthes. Dewey was an early exponent not only of the emergent, developmental, corporeal process of writing, but also of the artificial, cultural isolation of its product. In the opening to his *Art and Experience* he states that 'the book 'somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being ... a wall is built around [it] ... if one sets out to understand the flowering of plants, he is committed to finding out something about the interactions of soil, air, water and sunlight that condition [their] growth' (Dewey, 1934, p.1). Dewey's initial observations concerning the creative, processual character of writing, are extended by Deleuze and by a number of other late twentieth century post-structural theorists, into the realm of intertextuality and material relationality. Thus, for Deleuze a book is 'a collection of bifurcating, divergent and muddled lines' that 'are unattributable to individuals' (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, pp. ix-x) and which has 'has only itself, in connection with other assemblages' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 4); for Foucault 'The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands... Its unity is variable and relative' (Foucault, 1972, p.23). Similarly, for Barthes 'every text holds the intertextual, itself being 'the text-between' of another text, quite different to

its “sources”, but nevertheless, marking the “influences”, falling in with ‘the myth of filiation’, even whilst of and in citations that are ‘anonymous, untraceable and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas’ (Barthes, 1977, p.160).

In the context of practice-based research the tropes of intertextuality and long durational material production are frequently addressed by the Australian journal TEXT, and can be seen to possess a strong affinity with the process-relational tenets out of which the performative paradigm arose.

The inability of the traditional thesis to acknowledge the corporeality of the theorist is simply because the academic is not considered to be a writer, who engages in the practical and creative activity of writing... This essay has taken me many hours to write and I have changed it, shifted the words, crossed out and reinstated many sentences and yet, as reader, of all this you are unaware. You are solely party to the placid linearity of beginning, middle and end, that suggests a completeness to the object, as though it existed previously and I have merely represented it. Yet although I had preparatively sketched out the essay, it was solely in the writing of it that its subject was generated, it is only through its practical construction that its logic and structure now exists. (Webb, 2000)

Accordingly, the work of Dewey et al points to a long intellectual history underpinning the idea that written objects and artefacts embody a convoluted developmental and relational history. It should be clear that there is a sense in which, the conception of a text as a static object or as a stable propositional structure masks a complex productive history in the form of substitutions, redevelopments and the emergence of ideas that take place over the course of its composition – which is to say that a text embodies a developmental complexity of a logical, aesthetic and semantic order. Thus, the comments, of Deleuze, Foucault, Barthes, and Langer suggest that conceiving of a text as a stable, bounded, ‘object’ not only conceals its compositional history, but also serves to occlude an important set of relational qualities. That is to say, when considered as a genre, the traditional textual research document, though in some sense aiming at the production of the new, is nevertheless oriented by strategies of inter-textual reference that are formalised in its citation, quotation and indexing conventions. Similarly, in the context of artistic practice, relational strategies of reference such as symbolic allusion and quotation, though less overt and systematic in character, are no less important with respect to the constitution of a work.

In the context of academic research, formalised referencing conventions map a path or route through a specific knowledge domain – a route that might be precisely followed by another individual with a similar research interest. In contrast to this, the strategies of reference that are employed in art practice are less direct, and less regimental, establishing instead a space of productive tension. With this in mind, it is interesting that the subject of imagistic reference has been neglected in the context of the legitimacy debate. In the context of artistic production, we can see strategies of reference at work when an art object alludes to another work or to some other form of practice (as in the case of religious symbolism). Such strategies are no doubt referential and symbolic, but they are also in some respects diffuse, coded or incomplete. In performative terms, however, this kind of informational privation is productive, serving to elicit new hypotheses and systems of relational connections from the audience of a work.

1.25 Affectivity and Relationality in an Artistic Context.

The concepts of relation and affectivity will become very important to the account of artistic research that is developed within these pages. By way of introduction, we can see the prominence of each of these qualities in Hans Holbein the Younger and Robert Lazzarini's indexically related works – *The Ambassadors* (Holbein the Younger, 1533) and *Skulls* (Lazzarini, 2000). The analysis presented here will focus in part upon the referential relationship between the works themselves and their respective milieus, and in part upon their related, strategies of affective innovation.



Figure 1. *The Ambassadors*, (Hans Holbein, 1533)



Figure 2. Detail (Resolving Anamorphosis)

By incorporating an anamorphic projection of a skull into his portraiture, Holbein utilises an affective, experiential strategy to conceal layer of symbolism within his work. In Holbein's *Ambassadors*, The image of the skull can only be properly resolved if viewed from a particular perspective. This concealed layer serves to augment the more manifest symbolic set of relationships between the figures represented in the image and the paraphernalia that is situated on the shelves of the table behind them. Holbein's incorporation of aspect-laden symbolic meaning into a 16th century portrait can be seen as a strategy of innovation with respect to the art-practice of the time.¹⁰



Figure 3. Robert Lazzarini *Skulls*, 2000

Robert Lazzarini's *Skulls* (2000) is an installation that quotes Holbein's original work but makes use of three dimensional prototyping technologies to cast in bone a series of sculptural, but nevertheless anamorphically projected Skulls. Lazzarini not only attempts to reference the skull from Holbein's work, but also attempts to reference Holbein's strategy of perceptual-innovation by constructing a three dimensional sculpture that has been subjected to a two dimensional pictorial distortion – and which as such can never be fully experientially resolved. Lazzarini can be seen to mirror

¹⁰ Jen E. Boyle in her 2010 study of anamorphosis in early modern literature notes how by the 17th Century anamorphic figures abound, but Holbein's innovation predates the popular interest in the anamorphic by three quarters of a century.

Holbein's mode of perceptual innovation, whilst attuning it to a contemporary milieu that has a stronger materialist and bodily orientation.



Figure 4. *Skulls* (Detail)

The media philosopher Mark Hanson (Hanson, 2004) describes the experience of Lazzarini's work thus:

The effect of protracted – indeed, interminable – anomorphosis results from Lazzarini's peculiar engagement with the three dimensional media of sculpture ... Lazzarini utilizes what are, in effect, two-dimensional distortion techniques in order to model three dimensional objects. The result is sculptural object who's own depth interferes with the illusionary resolution of perspectival distortion ... *Skulls* confronts us, in short, with a spatial problematic that we cannot resolve. (Hanson, 2004, p.202)

It should be clear from these opening comments that from a process-relational perspective, there are resonances between artistic practices and more established modes of research that are in turn reflective of the process perspective's commitment to concepts of relation and transformation, as well as to its ontological commitment to the at once temporal and complex constitution of entities. Accordingly, it is suggested here that the ontological commitments of the process perspective resonate strongly with the values of creative practitioners and that the adoption of this perspective will facilitate an account of artistic research activity that emphasises the connection between practice-based modes of enquiry and traditional forms of research, without in

the process losing sight of its connection with the concerns of professional artistic practice.

1.30 Oppositions and Allegiances

As a case of applied comparative philosophy, this thesis addresses a number of domains. As a consequence the question of general allegiance and opposition breaks down in to a set of more refined educational and philosophical positions.

1.31 Academic Opposition: Biggs and Büchler

Building upon the design led critique of artistic research that began in the early 1990's, Michael Biggs, largely in collaboration with the ex architect and designer Daniela Büchler –until her death in 2013 - took issue with what they presented as the private, subjective and experiential dimensions of certain aspects of practice-led research. They suggested that only a subset of the practices that have thus far been positioned as practice-led research legitimately cohere with what they took to be the concept or model of traditional research enquiry. In the context of their somewhat sustained critique they have been particularly skeptical of the role of the artwork in the practice-based submission - positioning artistic activity and its outcomes as in some sense inessential with respect to the requirements of legitimate research practice (Biggs, 2004; Biggs & Büchler, 2008). They likewise suggested that what they position as the fundamental incommunicability of the experiential dimension of the artwork, clashes with the demands of objectivity and community, which they present as fundamental to the concept of research per sé (Biggs & Büchler, 2010).

Biggs and Büchler, along with David Durling, have been prominent critical voices in the legitimacy debate, importing the early hostility towards practice-led research that arose predominately in a North American context into the UK discussion. Their work is much cited worldwide within the literature on practice-led research and together they have been instrumental not only in assembling international professional networks, but also in developing forums for the discussion and formation of the academic conception of practice-led research (e.g. the University of Hertfordshire's *Research into Practice* conferences). Biggs has had further influence through the

publication of the *Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (2009) and they have collectively served as advisors to funding bodies such as the AHRC. Politically and philosophically, they express a set of broadly conservative, representational concerns – occupying a position of power equivalent to that held by Borgdorff in the context of the performative paradigm. Biggs and Büchler have written widely upon the subject of practice-led research - and this will enable us to address many of the intricacies of debate in general through a close examination of their work. Accordingly, this thesis presents a rich, critical philosophical engagement with their project, whilst positioning them as avatars of a more generalised skeptical position.

The critique of Biggs and Büchler that is developed in this thesis begins from the observation that when seen from the perspective of process-philosophy, they appear to operate in a somewhat restricted, primarily conceptual and recognition-oriented fashion. Methodologically, their work proceeds by firstly constructing or locating meanings, definitions, models or criteria that are purported to be in some sense constitutive of the concept of research *per sé*, and then seeking to apply these definitions or criteria to phenomena – presenting them as potential cases of, or candidates for practice-led research. They ultimately find some practices lacking in the sense that they are deemed to be problematic or unrecognisable, when an attempt is made to see them through the conceptual lens of research. That is to say, from Biggs and Büchler’s perspective, when artistic artefacts dominate a submission, and when written provision of context and argument is slight, a practice is considered to lack a set of necessary, constitutive conditions that stand as a requirement of legitimate forms of research activity.

Drawing upon Gilles Deleuze’s process-philosophical critique of representation, it is argued here that the focus upon conceptual (re)presentation and (re)cognition that characterises Biggs and Büchler’s approach – that is, their emphasis upon the conceptual, to the detriment of the material, or empirical, results in a form of conceptual conservatism that places their analysis at odds with the predominantly material, experiential, and processual interests of many creative practitioners. It is suggested that there is an interesting symmetry between Biggs and Büchler’s recognition-oriented methodology, and their depiction of the character of legitimate research processes as primarily community focused and integrative in character

(Biggs and Büchler, 2010). That is to say, in accordance with their stress upon the integrative as opposed to the innovative qualities of research processes, they favour the explicit, predominantly textual exposition of research context over and above what is taken to be an excessive and romantic concern with creativity, innovation and the instrumental/performative powers of both artist and artefact (Biggs, 2002, 2003, 2004).

1.32 Philosophical Allegiances: Gilles Deleuze's Post-Structuralist Process

Philosophy

In marked contrast to the predominately social and consensualist orientation of Biggs and Büchler's philosophy, Gilles Deleuze's poststructuralist process philosophy has a stronger emphasis upon the singular, and a notably more radical slant - foregrounding as it does notions of transformation, creativity and difference. For Deleuze, it is primarily innovation that should be taken as the mark of thought (Deleuze, 2008, p.15). Deleuze is notorious for presenting his ideas using an ever evolving, neologistic vocabulary that emphasises notions of disjunction (e.g. 'becoming minor', 'line of flight', 'deterritorialisation' and 'the untimely'). Methodologically, Deleuze approach is diverse – ranging from incisive methodological critique, to highly performative texts in which language is used in an affective fashion to engage and stir the reader - enticing and provoking them to feel the force of a problem (Williams, 2008, p. 14). For Deleuze, there is an important sense in which social, communicative and regulatory ideals – which are pervasive in the work of Biggs and Büchler - serve to dilute original thought and as such compromise the potential for the conceptual creation that Deleuze takes to be central to the activity of philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). Deleuze suggests that the ideal of communication is to create consensus and to promote the exchange ideas, and that this resolves into the production of empty and abstract generalities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 28-29). Accordingly, he suggests that philosophies oriented by communication have 'never produced a single concept.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 6)

Building upon a series of contemporary, predominantly Deleuzian, process-philosophical insights, this thesis seeks to identify a number of ways in which Biggs and Büchler's quasi-essentialist approach to conceptual definition underplays the

degree of creativity and innovation that is involved in both artistic and more established modes of research. It focuses upon developing an account of the performative qualities of art and research objects – that is, their ability to influence and affect their audience - that would appear to be subject to de-emphasis in Biggs and Büchler’s account. Both Deleuzian ontology and Deleuzian aesthetics stress the affective dimension of experiential encounter. That is to say, Deleuzian philosophy stresses the transformative nature of our encounters with objects, entities and artefacts – and it is suggested here that this mode of analysis is applicable to the outcomes of established modes of research activity as much as it is to the outcomes of artistic practice, and that this is formalised in the research-centric concepts of ‘significance’ and ‘impact’. Accordingly, Deleuze’s philosophy is positioned as a useful means of exploring both artistic practice and more established modes of research, and as a consequence it is positioned as having particular utility in the context of theorising a hybrid notion of artistic, or practice-led research. In developing the emphasis upon material conditions and their close link with sensation that can be located in Deleuze’s philosophy, it is suggested that Biggs and Büchler recognise, but nevertheless underplay the way in which concepts – including the concept of research – arise out of broadly pragmatic, material contexts. With this in mind, this thesis explores the contingent, impermanent and constructed nature of the conceptual, linking conceptual transformation and development to changes in an at once material, experiential and cultural milieu.

Ultimately, it is suggested that rather than disqualifying practice-based modes of research from legitimate consideration as research, the tension between concepts of artistic practice and concepts of traditional modes of research activity open up a space to identify a set of research concerns that are focused primarily upon innovation through connection, and the production of the new. It is important to note, however that ‘the new’ is a widely ramified concept which might address (either variously or in combination) the production of new knowledge, the production of new meaning, or the production of new material/social circumstance. It is claimed here that in the context of artistic-research, a range of experiential devices are employed alongside argumentation in order to manipulate and transform our perception of states of affairs. Thus it is the recognition of art’s anti, or non-representational tendencies that is positioned as providing the key for the formulation a differently inflected, domain-

specific collection of research concerns. It is suggested that artistic research is predominately ontological, as opposed to epistemological in character, tending to focus upon destabilising existing representational categories through the development of new readings, new forms of artistic practice and new forms of social intervention (Borgdorff, 2012, p.93).

In constructing a case for the validity of a non-representational research agenda, we will attempt firstly to explore the source of dissatisfaction with the conception of representation in the context of artistic research, secondly to identify an alternative set of values and concerns arising from the domain of professional artistic practice that might be utilised to formulate such an agenda, and thirdly to consider the implications of such an agenda for both research training and research adjudication in the arts.

1.33 Philosophical Oppositions: Kant and Wittgenstein

Biggs and Büchler's work is predominately Wittgensteinian in character. That is to say, it is the Wittgensteinian notions of agreement in practice, meaning as use, and Wittgenstein's criticism of the idea of private language that underpins their critique of artistic research. Accordingly, my thesis attempts to oppose Wittgensteinian approaches to the question of the legitimacy of practice-based-research, by constructing a Deleuzian critique of Biggs and Büchler's project.

It is well known that Deleuze had a particular distaste for the school of Wittgensteinian philosophy, describing it variously as a 'philosophical catastrophe', a 'system of terror', and as a form of 'poverty introduced as grandeur' (Stivale, 2015). He likewise accused Wittgenstein's disciples of the 'assassination' of Whitehead – the creator of 'the last great Anglo-American philosophy' (Deleuze, 1993, p.103; Jorris, 2015) - through the spreading of 'their mists'.

There has been some research conducted into the application of Deleuze's thinking in educational contexts, but as yet there has been little that has addressed the application of Deleuzian thought to understanding the character of practice-led research. That is to say, whilst it is clear that there has been much interest in the potential application of Deleuze, since the inception of the legitimacy debate – especially in a European

context - and whilst it is clear that the employment of Deleuze as primary theorist in practice-based-research projects is in the ascent, there has been little work that is explicitly focused upon the resonance of Deleuzian thought to the productive context, or the legitimacy of the practice-based PhD. The source of Deleuze's hostility to Wittgenstein is likewise under-explored, and has no doubt been precipitated by Deleuze's near silence on the matter. Accordingly, this thesis considers Deleuze's more explicit critique of other recognition-oriented philosophers such as Aristotle and Kant, as well as his criticism of pre 19th century scientific thought (Lefebvre, 2008), to develop a clearer understanding of his antipathy towards Wittgensteinian philosophy – developing the idea that Wittgensteinian thought is similarly conditioned by what Deleuze describes as a 'dogmatic image of thought'. It goes on to apply this critique to the application of Wittgenstein's philosophy in the work of Biggs and Büchler, exploring the potentially negative consequences of instituting epistemologically focused research methods, alongside legislative and adjudicative procedures that have been derived from domains other than the arts, and which, as a consequence, do not fully reflect the values of professional artistic practitioners, or the prevailing teleology of professional artistic practice.

1.34 Packaging Deleuze for Traditional Academia

My own thesis, though ultimately a performative defense of the validity of emerging, practice-based modes of research, is intended to engage traditional and non-traditional research communities alike. Given the need to appeal to the latter, the idiosyncrasies of Deleuze's style, his embrace of non-philosophical practices and his wilder, more baroque conceptual creations are not, in the first instance, helpful. Neither is the situation improved by the relative youth of Deleuze studies and the tendency amongst many Deleuze scholars to imitate Deleuze's philosophical style and manner - much as was the case with the early followers of Wittgenstein. In an attempt to expound a more sober and temperate version of Deleuze's philosophy, that is less Dionysian in character, and which is thus more palatable in an institutional context, this thesis also draws upon the account of process philosophy that has been developed Nicholas Rescher, which utilises more traditional philosophical methods and modes of expression.

In the context of this thesis, Rescher's role is two-fold. His ideas serve both to clarify some core Deleuzian concepts, and to show how process-philosophical ideas can connect with more traditional forms of research practice. As process philosophers, Deleuze and Rescher have similar ontological commitments, however, their general political orientation, the research methods that they embrace, their mode of presentation and the conclusions that they reach seem at first glance to place them in stark, incommensurable contrast. Methodologically, Rescher focuses upon logical and dialectical analysis - emphasising the importance of cumulative knowledge, communication, and the importance of scientific enquiry with respect to establishing processual regularities in nature, however ultimately contingent these may be. In this sense, he presents himself (at least in terms of his methodological commitments) as a philosopher 'of the old school'. Though broadly oriented towards process, Rescher tempers radical notions of transformation and flux by suggesting that despite changing historical conditions, patterns or rhythms of stability can be established with respect to our understanding of the real. He suggests that such patterns of processual stability are trans-historical, providing trans-temporal constancies, and that as such they can furnish us with stable, communicative basics that reach across culture and time. Thus, for Rescher, a process is a manifestation of a general pattern and when instituted as an identifiable process of a specific 'type' it is capable of repetition at a certain level of abstraction (Rescher, 2000, p.109).

In juxtaposing Rescher's conservatism with Deleuze's radicalism, we are able to develop an account of a more subtle intra-perspective opposition that is important to the account of practice-based research that is developed here. That is to say, the utility of process-relational thought with respect to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, stems in part from the way in which the process-relational perspective is itself constructed upon a similar integrative/differential fault line. To reiterate a little, it has been suggested that process thought is distinctive in the sense that it stresses the ontological priority of novelty, transformation and differentiation whilst simultaneously asserting the importance of relational structure, and connectivity in the constitution of entities. In light of this, there is systemic tension between concepts of the differential/innovative and concepts of the holistic/integrative to be located in process-oriented approaches, and there is an important sense in which these mirror the tension between the notions of research-context and innovation that

are stressed in various conceptions of research. Indeed it is possible to trace disparities of emphasis across various strains of processual thought, and this leads to hostility and professed incommensurability among many of the perspectives adherents. Thus, there is an interesting schism between broadly integrative and broadly differential process philosophies. The former can be loosely positioned with respect to an Anglo-American philosophical/theological tradition and is associated with theorists such as Rescher, Hartshorne and Griffin, while the latter, being associated with thinkers such as Deleuze, DeLanda and Massumi can be loosely associated with a European or Continental process-philosophical orientation.

This schism between the integrative and the differential is interesting given that these approaches arise out of a common heritage and as such share many ontological concerns. Despite this commonality, philosophers representative of each tradition emphasise points of disagreement - rarely communicating, acknowledging one another's work, attending the same conferences or publishing in the same journals. Despite having published a substantial body of work, Rescher, for instance, has yet to explicitly engage with contemporary European versions of process thought. Weber and Hampe have criticised Rescher's recent historical survey of process philosophy as entirely ignoring the contemporary European process tradition. Rescher's response to this objection is itself indicative of the Anglo American/Continental schism. He simply quotes Matthew's 'sufficient unto the day are the problems thereof.' (Weber, 2004, p. 289)

Katherine Keller in comparing the Anglo American and Continental forms of process thought has suggested that:

Both jubilantly privilege becoming over being, difference over sameness, novelty over conservation, intensity over equilibrium, complexity over simplicity, plurality over unity, relation over substance, flux over stasis. (Keller & Daniell, 2002, p. 6).

She notes, however, that despite these commonalities, there is an important divergence across traditions with respect to the process philosophical characterisation of the notion of relation. She suggests that the American process tradition (of which Rescher can be taken to be representative) is 'integrative and holistic' in character and

that this conception of the relational seems, at first glance, hard to reconcile with the radical alterity of post-structuralist thought (which emphasises difference, otherness, divergence and disjunction). She is quick to qualify, however, that despite this disagreement over the nature, significance and broader implications of relational structure, both philosophical traditions make extensive use of the concept of relationality, and that it is symptomatic of their common anti-essentialism. With respect to the post-structural tradition, Anne Daniell (Keller's co editor) suggests that we can see relationality at work in its characterisation of traces of the 'Other' standing in some sense as 'constitutive of identities, historical contexts and disciplines.' (Keller & Daniell, 2002, Preface, xix)

It is important to recognize, that although notions of difference and incommensurability feature prominently in Deleuze's writing, the kind of intentional conceptual disruption that characterises Deleuze's early philosophy – developing distorted or refracted readings of other philosophers' positions - requires clear conceptual contact with the history of philosophy. Indeed, in his *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze develops a number of more integrative relational themes. He argues, for instance, that the pure movements that characterize the virtual ('sense') and which in some sense express actual states of affairs, are related in an infinite number of ways to produce novel 'worlds' or selections. In this sense, in Deleuzian philosophy, the notions of difference and connection become simultaneously implicated in a play of difference, complexity and abstraction that stresses the importance of connective-transformation.

Accordingly, it is claimed here that Deleuze can be taken to present a philosophy of communicative-mutation where differences are most prominent, but nevertheless connected. Indeed a famous passage in *What is Philosophy* states:

If one can still be a Platonist, Cartesian, or Kantian today, it is because one is justified in thinking that their concepts can be reactivated in our problems and inspire those concepts that need to be created. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 28)

These preliminary sketches of Rescher and Deleuze have been introduced in an attempt to show how process philosophies with seemingly different emphasis, which

are expressive of different aesthetics, nevertheless thrive upon a set of common systemic tensions - playing them in slightly differently ways, inducing new and particular points of view - and that these same tensions are close to the heart of traditional conceptions of research, as well as to aspects of professional artistic practice.

1.40 Research Questions

This thesis addresses a number of related questions that collectively explore the application of the process perspective to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. It is claimed here that there is a neutrality to process philosophy that is achieved partly through its even-handed processual treatment of the conceptual, the aesthetic and the material, and partly through its attempts to collapse dualisms between, the integrative and the transformative, and the singular and plural. It is likewise claimed that the concerns of the process perspective are particularly attuned to the discussion of disciplinary and institutional identities that have arisen in the legitimacy debate, and that given its neutrality it is likewise well placed to address the dispute over the relative importance of epistemological and ontological concerns in the context of research practice. Ultimately it is claimed that the neutrality of the process perspective facilitates the construction of an argument concerning the validity of artistic research that might prove persuasive to supporters and skeptics alike, and that this gives rise to a number of related research questions, which are listed below in order of importance.

- i) Given process philosophy's simultaneous interest in concepts of the connective and the transformative, can process philosophical thinking help to resolve the tension between the integrative and the differential that underpins the debate concerning the legitimacy of artistic research?
- ii) How might the multi-modal emphasis of process philosophical thought enable a genuinely hybrid, aesthetico-conceptual form of argumentation?
- iii) How might a conception of research activity that is ontologically as opposed to epistemologically oriented inflect discussions of the role of research per se?

- iv) Does process philosophy's emphasis upon enduring problems as opposed to resolvable questions indicate an alternative route that might have been taken through AHRC research definitions in the early stages of the legitimacy debate?

1.50 Methodology

1.51 Applied Comparative Philosophy

Methodologically this thesis stands as an example of applied comparative philosophy. It is intended to shed light upon the systemic tensions between concepts of difference and integration as they occur, firstly between perspectives in the thought of Wittgenstein and Deleuze, and, secondly, and perhaps more subtly, within a particular perspective, through a comparison of the process philosophical ideas of Rescher and Deleuze.

Comparative philosophy is a hybrid methodology that can be conceived in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In its doxographic, historical form, focusing in detail upon the thought of particular philosophers, it has a qualitative character. That is to say, at this level of specificity, the concern is to locate the detail and specific nuances of a number of voices, and to present them side-by-side. However, attempts to relate particular voices – to set them facing one another, as it were - results in a form of mediation, where each voice is quantified through the construction of a 'virtual' third position. Accordingly, comparative philosophy, if it is to be distinguished from history of ideas, requires a constructive engagement with both abstraction and relation. As such, it has a strong affinity with process-relational concerns. Accordingly, the comparative approach is as much concerned with difference as it is with commonality and that there are various degrees of emphasis to be located in comparative philosophical thought. Indeed, in his account of the comparative method as it is employed in the pragmatist and process traditions, Robert W. Smid (2009) identifies differences in the methodological approach of a number of comparativists. Thus he presents David Hall and Roger Ames as primarily concerned with elucidating cultural difference, Robert C Neville as tending to over-emphasise

similarities between cultures, and F.S.C. Northrop as attempting to walk a line between each of these positions.

The philosophically comparative dimension of this thesis first explores a philosophical triptych in the form of Deleuze-Wittgenstein-Kant with a view to understanding and contesting the work of Biggs and Büchler. It goes on to suggest that we might extrapolate from this to address a diverse array of positions with the legitimacy debate. The aim is less to capture or represent the philosophies of Deleuze, Kant or Wittgenstein, but rather to identify a set of common tensions operative in their thought. It is intended that the tensions inherent in this philosophical triptych will serve to set their ideas in motion, and which will likewise prove instructive when applied correlatively to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research. The thought of other contemporary process thinkers – notably Nicholas Rescher and John Mullarkey are likewise mobilised as a means of clarifying some of Deleuze’s most esoteric ideas and resituating them in the context of actual experience.

1.52 The Construction of Aesthetico-Conceptual Devices

Despite its predominately textual orientation, my thesis approaches the problem of the legitimacy of practice-led research in the spirit of artistic research enquiry. To this end a series of bespoke methods - or experiential devices - are developed alongside a more traditional propositional argument. Collectively these devices are intended to show how aesthetico-conceptual methods can be brought to bear upon the problematisation of concepts, and this is illustrated through an aesthetico-conceptual critique of Biggs and Büchler’s position.

1.60 Thesis Structure

1.61 Overview of Chapter Two

The study begins with an exploration of the Deleuze’s process-oriented critique of representation. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze takes issue, variously with taxonomic classification (through a critique of Aristotle), overly abstract notion of objects and procedures (through a critique of pre 19th century scientific method that is

focused upon its emphasis upon the production of law-like regularities) and ultimately with the Kantian ‘representational turn’ that, for Deleuze, serves as the most sinister internalisation of a representational framework. The Deleuzian critique is then applied to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice based research, questioning the relevance of the concept of representation in this context, and attempting to identify the various ways in which a representationalist research agenda might prove unsatisfactory when seen from the perspective of the arts. In so doing, it examines the tendency of the process perspective to position language as a tool of representation that is abstractive in character (in the subtractive sense of the term). In one sense, such abstraction clearly enables the possibility of knowledge and communication, but at the same time, through the employment and distribution of general categories, there is a sense in which it necessarily misses the specificity of phenomena. It goes on to suggest that representational ideals are most manifest in the research activities that are generally considered the province of the sciences, and it is noted that it is this model of research activity that is most often cited when the legitimacy of practice-based research is called into question, or when it is suggested that its methods and practices should be circumscribed, moderated, or subjected to limitation. It is argued that when the value of the artwork/artefact is queried, the critique is typically conducted within a representational framework, and as such stands as an expression of representational ideals.

The section goes on to apply the Deleuzian critique of representation to the work of Biggs and Büchler, exploring both its Wittgensteinian foundation, and its ultimately Kantian root. From the perspective of this thesis, Biggs and Büchler’s account inflects traditional Kantianism with a socio-behavioural and socio-linguistic, twist. It is argued that Biggs and Büchler substitute the more orthodox Kantian notion of schematic representational structure with a broadly Wittgensteinian emphasis upon the operation of society and community as a form of quasi-transcendental condition. In the past, Biggs and Büchler have sought such conditions in the purported definitions of research-centric terms, as well as in institutional and administrative criteria. As a consequence it is suggested that Biggs and Büchler ultimately expound a conservative form of social constructivism that is derived from Wittgensteinian thought. Ultimately, it is suggested that in attempting to align practice-based research with more traditional modes of enquiry, Biggs and Büchler subtract that which is

most important to the prevailing teleology of contemporary artistic practice, and that this serves ultimately to disconnect them from the concerns of their discipline.

1.62 Overview of Chapter Three

Biggs and Büchler have suggested that there is a subjective and experiential emphasis that can be located in the arts that conflicts with what they take to be the objective and community focused demands of legitimate research activity. To this end they employ a number of insights derived from Wittgenstein's 'private language argument' and from Kantian aesthetics. It is suggested here, however, that in the context of his process-philosophical aesthetics, Deleuze develops a curiously impersonal and material account of sensation (Deleuze, 1991; Deleuze, 2005) that is neither fully subjective/experiential, nor fully objective in character, and which inflects questions of subjectivity, objectivity and communication in a number of interesting ways. As a consequence, it is suggested that Deleuze's aesthetics complicates the objectivist, communitarian critique of practice-based research that is suggested by Biggs & Büchler, signifying a mode of artistic research that is both ontologically focused and performative in character. Accordingly, the Deleuzian position stands opposed to positivistic accounts of the nature of research activity which tend to emphasise epistemological concerns and the acquisition or capture of knowledge. It is argued here that the ontological emphasis that can be located in Deleuzian aesthetics suggests an alternative picture of the nature and purpose of research enquiry, which might be said to embody an alternative set of research values, and an alternative set of ontological commitments which have particular resonance from the perspective of the arts. Significantly, Deleuze is scathing in his treatment of Wittgenstein, whilst remaining for the most part silent about the nature of his aversion. It is claimed here that in attempting to unpack some of the philosophical overlaps and differences between Deleuze and Wittgenstein, we can learn much about the tension between traditional and performative approaches to research enquiry. Ultimately, it is argued that when seen from a Deleuzian perspective, artistic research becomes primarily productive, or instrumental as opposed to descriptive or representational in character. In accordance with this it is suggested that research in the arts, when seen in accordance with Deleuzian ontology, is best considered in terms of the embrace of situational contingency and the production of the new in the broadest sense of the

term. In this sense it directly incorporates artistic practice and extends creative practices as they occur across the spectrum of more traditional research activities. It is stressed, however, that despite its emphasis upon novelty and differentiation, this notion of production in Deleuzian philosophy nevertheless requires an intimate form of historical contact, and this is nowhere more apparent than in Deleuze's own philosophical practice.

1.63 Overview of Chapter Four

This chapter utilises Deleuze's comments concerning the ontological ubiquity of relations to highlight some important asymmetries between Biggs and Büchler's own account of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' relations as they are developed across a series of arguments, which address firstly the centrality of the concept of cumulativeness with respect to legitimate research enquiry and secondly the illegitimacy of the interpretative context that they claim underpins the reception of the artwork. It is suggested that these two arguments are dubiously consistent and serve ultimately to undermine one another. The chapter goes on to examine Deleuze's various relational ontologies in detail, noting that despite the undoubted utility of Deleuzian philosophy for understanding practice-based modes of research, it must be recognized that the Deleuzian approach is premised upon the existence of a metaphysical, 'virtual' realm, which ultimately stands as an unassailable condition for change. It is argued that despite his distaste for essentialist philosophies, Deleuze develops a philosophy that is foundationalist in character, and which serves to sanctify the concepts of transformation and becoming. With this in mind, and in accordance with Rescher's reading of the Kantian noumenal as an unknowable, yet necessary expression of a set of primarily representation-oriented research values, the concept of the Deleuzian virtual is explored as an anti-representational corollary to the Kantian noumenal. In this sense, it is argued that Deleuze's virtual may be considered an expression of an alternative set of values that in turn serve as the transcendental condition for practice-led research. That is to say, regardless of its modal and existential status, it is argued that the Deleuzian virtual may provide an important means of understanding the values and objectives of many practice-based researchers. The section concludes by examining firstly the degree to which Deleuze's project would be harmed if we were to dispense with the concept of the virtual altogether, and secondly if such a

subtraction would impact negatively upon the case for the legitimacy of practice-led research. It is argued, through an application of John Mullarkey's 'actualist' reading of Deleuzian philosophy (Mullarkey, 2004, 2006), that given a sufficiently rich, processual conception of the actual, this need not be the case; that is to say, one can remain actualist whilst embracing virtualist values of change, development, and diversity of interpretation, and, furthermore that it is always in the context of actual experience that we encounter the autopoietic transformation of the world.

1.70 Thesis Conclusions

The study concludes by focusing upon applications. It is suggested that by applying virtualist concerns (whether we see this as an expression of a set of ontological necessities, or as a more modest expression of a creative system of values) to both practice-led research and to its related research-adjudicative procedures, a number of recommendations can be made. Firstly, it is suggested that the notion that practice-led research needs to construct or formulate its methods is misleading, in that it is clear that a number of broadly artistic methodologies already exist. In particular, semiotic methodologies are identified as being particularly attuned to practices that are at once creative, multi-modal and interpretative in nature. More importantly, however, it is suggested that practice-led research projects are distinctive in the sense they are not straightforwardly epistemologically focused – possessing instead a predominately productive, performative agenda. With this in mind, it is argued that practice-based research projects are predominately focused upon the long-durational construction of singular, project-specific methods for the activation and transformation of a particular problem. Thus they are more accurately depicted as expressing a concern with singular methodological construction as opposed to generic methodological application.

Ultimately, it is suggested that research activities and research methodologies should reflect the interests of their respective disciplinary domains, and that discipline-specific concerns should likewise inflect the processes of research adjudication that take place at the level of research administration. Accordingly, jurisprudential, as opposed to criterion-based approaches to the assessment of practice-led research

proposals are recommended to enable diversity with respect to research procedures, and to reflect the prevailing teleology of professional artistic practice.

1.80 Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding

My thesis makes a number of claims to knowledge. Primarily it aims to demonstrate that the justification of practice-led research need not be separatist or isolationist in character, but that in demonstrating the overlap between traditional and non-traditional forms of research we need not dispense with either artistry or the performative work of the artefact. That is to say, in the defense of practice-led research we need not present artistic research as making entirely special epistemological and ontological claims that are absent from more traditional forms of research. Rather, my thesis aims to demonstrate how characteristics sometimes considered specific to practice-led research have a more generalised, if somewhat understated, presence in the context of more traditional modes of enquiry. In a similar vein, it aims to demonstrate how a broadly traditional, written thesis might be explored in the spirit of practice-led enquiry - drawing attention to a range of textual, imaginative, conceptual and speculative devices that might enable us to explore the intensities of a problem. Importantly, it also attempts to illustrate how aesthetic devices can, and indeed regularly do, perform active work in the context of an argument, and in this sense it questions the separation of artefact and argument that is characteristic of much discussion of practice-led research. The thesis is particularly distinctive in its qualitative engagement with its opposition, attempting to provide a sustained philosophical engagement with a single, prominent, skeptical voice as opposed to performing a more generalised, cursory survey. In its critical assessment of the work of Michael Biggs and his collaboration with Daniella Büchler, the philosophical context of their position is explored in detail. Their position is analysed from the perspective of the concept (chapter 2), sensation (chapter 3), and relation (chapter 4), and is placed into dialogue with Deleuzian thought to establish a rich qualitative sense of the conflict. In performing this manoeuvre it draws attention to the way in which the debate might be seen not as a dispute between art and academia or between art and the sciences - rather, it is suggested that it should be considered a more parochial conflict taking place between emerging artistic researchers and a particularly scientised wing of the design community.

The philosophical contextualisation and critique of Biggs position also facilitates a contribution to Deleuze studies – enabling an exploration of the relationship between a process-pragmatism of the left (as typified by Deleuze) and a linguistic-pragmatism of the right (as typified by Wittgenstein). It likewise addresses the breadth of Deleuze's employment of the concept of relation, exploring the way in which the tensions between integration and differentiation that underpin Deleuze's process-philosophical conception of relation can shed light upon the tensions between tradition and innovation that underpin both emerging and more traditional conceptions of research.

It should be clear that this thesis does not seek to replace any existing concepts of research, but rather to extend an existing conceptual lineage through a process of creative reframing that simultaneously places similarities and differences in touch.

Chapter 2 – Paradoxes of Generality and Specificity

'We miss our finest encounters, we avoid the imperatives that emanate from them: to the exploration of encounters we have preferred the facility of recognitions.'

(Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p. 27)

2.00 Representation and Abstraction in Quantitative and Qualitative Research

It was suggested in the general introduction to this thesis that the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research is typically understood as a cross-disciplinary dispute between the arts and the sciences, but that it might be better understood as an intra-school dispute within the context of the visual arts, arising out of a conflict between departments of art and design. In either case, however, it would seem to involve a disagreement over the purported centrality of the concept of representation to the aims, methods and processes of research (see chapter 1, section 1.01). Accordingly, a reductive, at once positivistic and design centric intellectual current was identified, that is particularly critical of the role of the artwork in the context of practice-based research projects, and this was closely allied with the formulation of institutional and administrative criteria for the purpose of research adjudication (see chapter 1, sections 1.07-1.08). It was claimed that design centric, functional approaches, being preoccupied with the construction of taxonomies and definitions of research per sé, proceed from a quasi-essentialist agenda that is at odds with the broadly performative and non-representational aims of many professional artistic practitioners, and by extension, with the aims of many artistic researchers (see chapter 1, section 1.3).

Whilst taxonomic approaches to questions of the nature of research, such as those suggested by Durling (2002, 2003), Friedman (2002, 2003, 2008) and Biggs & Büchler (2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008) might appear to bestow focus upon what seems to have been an at once bewildering and protracted debate, it is argued here that their clarity is secured at the expense of their validity, with such accounts tending

ultimately to distort and oversimplify the problem in hand. That is to say, it was suggested in the introductory chapter to this thesis that in their quest for generality, critics typically develop sensitive and nuanced accounts of their own position, whilst operating with overly abstract notions of their opposition (see chapter 1, sections 1.05-1.06) – be this in relation to their conception of art or their conception of accepted research practice (Borgdorff, 2012, p.2, p.32). It is claimed here that although highly generalised definitions of art or research no doubt have utility when constructing a position, they are likewise useful from a critical perspective in the sense that they serve to elucidate the values and preconceptions of their authors.

The sometimes overly crude simplification of both artistic and research practice that takes place in discussions of the legitimacy of practice-led research serves to highlight a paradoxical aspect of the concept of representation that has long stood as a point of contention between quantitative and qualitative researchers (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008, p. 93). This issue is most manifest at the level of data collection and analysis, with quantitative researchers preferring to make use of large-scale statistical data sets, and qualitative researchers favouring more intimate modes of enquiry. It is important to note, however, that qualitative research arose out of a strain of anti-positivistic, phenomenological thought in the late 19th and early 20th century (e.g. Henri Bergson, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger) that frequently addressed itself critically to the operation and capabilities of language as a tool of generalised representation. Philosophers of the early 20th century noted that although it is that case that language, when considered as an instrument of representation, enables the possibility of knowledge and communication, it is likewise apparent that in unifying or grouping a series of distinct, identifiable phenomena as members of a particular class, the specificity of such phenomena is in some sense obscured. Accordingly, when approaching experience through the veil of language there is a related tendency to neglect or trivialise any aspect of phenomena that jars with existing categories. Henri-Bergson, writing in 1911 (with the somewhat conservative conceptualism of Immanuel Kant in mind), stated it thus:

Even where it confesses that it does not know the object presented to it, it believes that its ignorance consists only in not knowing which one of its time-honored categories suits the new object. In what drawer, ready to open, shall we put it? In what garment, already cut out, shall

we clothe it? Is it this, or that, or the other thing? And "this," and "that," and "the other thing" are always something already conceived, already known. The idea that for a new object we might have to create a new concept, or perhaps a new method of thinking, is deeply repugnant to us. (Bergson, 1944, p. 55)

There is a sense in which the production and application of taxonomies in the discussion of concepts of research serves well to illustrate this paradox of representation. That is to say, it is clear that when classifying particular research practices as 'scientific', 'sociological', 'philosophical' or 'artistic', for instance, we acquire a convenient shorthand for discursive communication, but it is no less clear that in so doing we occlude not only the specificity of any given project, but also any cross-contextual relationship that it may have to work taking place in other disciplines. In this sense, we can see how the representational qualities of language are both enabling and disabling - what they give to conceptual generality with one hand, they take from phenomenal specificity with the other.

2.01 Introduction to the Deleuzian Critique of Representation

In his *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is primarily critical of what he takes to be the 'transcendent' qualities of analytic thought and its tendency to seek stability and closure through the production of categories and taxonomic systems. To this end he first reiterates and then radicalises many of the anti-positivistic arguments that were developed in the thought of the early pragmatist and process thinkers writing in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is important to remember, however, that whilst Deleuze is critical of early scientific practice, his target is not the naturalism of science, but rather its concern with representation, and the production of laws and taxonomies. Thus, Deleuze is critical of what he takes to be the tendency of analytic thought to suppress difference in the service of identity and generality, and he notes that these tendencies are prominent in the machinations of positivistic science. It is important to recognise, however, that there is also a notable leaning towards chaotic, naturalistic thinking in Deleuze's philosophy and that this results in an affinity with the contemporary sciences of complexity (DeLanda, 2002; Gaffney, 2010).

In the presentation of his argument against generality, Deleuze sometimes proceeds by drawing our attention to empirical differences – that is differences that can be located within actual, phenomenal experience, and it is to the qualitative differences between actual things, that Deleuze addresses his concept of ‘differentiation’. Thus in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze states that ‘There is no individual absolutely identical to another individual; no calf that is not recognizable to its mother; no two shellfish or grains of wheat that are indiscernible’ (Deleuze, 1990, p.266). Likewise, in *Difference and Repetition* he writes ‘no two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive points, no two typewriters have the same strike, no two revolvers score their bullets in the same manner’ (Deleuze, 2001, p. 29).

For the most part, however, Deleuze avoids discussion of molar identities, presenting instead a radicalised version of the same argument which foregrounds the role of material differences that are both sub-representational and pre-empirical in character – the operation of which he terms ‘differentiation’. Deleuze claims that such pre-empirical difference cannot be directly experienced, but that they are nevertheless, in some sense, still more properly felt:

What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. (Deleuze, 2001, p.176)

The connection between Deleuzian ontology, tacit forms of knowledge, aesthetics and affect is examined in more detail in chapter three of this thesis, whilst the ontological relationship between what Deleuze terms the ‘actual’ and ‘virtual’ aspects of reality will be addressed in chapter four. We shall see how commentators disagree not only over the nature and ontological status of the Deleuzian virtual and the actual, but also over questions of their interaction and influence. For the moment, however, it will be sufficient to recognise that intensive, affective qualities of experience such as the ebb and flow of emotions, a rising sense of disquiet, or a felt sense of hunger or thirst would seem to resonate with an intensive, energetic conception of the world, and to recognise that framing the production of the experiential world in energetic, naturalistic terms implies a certain resistance to conceptually mediated cognition. Thus, following James Williams, we might depict Deleuze as ultimately presenting a

form of process philosophy that strives to take sensation and subjectivity seriously, whilst nevertheless presenting them as a part of the natural world.¹¹

Deleuzian naturalism has a metaphysically realist quality - instituting a particularly baroque conception of matter that emphasising its complexity and its transformative power, and connects it to the generation of multiple forms of subjectivity. In accordance with his process-philosophical commitments, Deleuze emphasises what he takes to be the transformational, but nevertheless immanent qualities of the world. That is to say, for Deleuze, thought is positioned as itself a facet of a natural world, and not something that is transcendent to it. Thus, from the perspective of Deleuze's ontology, nature is best conceived as a wildly creative, and transformative material process, that at once encompasses body and mind. Accordingly, for Deleuze, both the life of the mind and its ideational products stand to some extent as an embodied expression of the natural world, and, as such, they are similarly subject to contingency and change.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze's broader concern, and what makes it particularly applicable to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research, is to identify a set of traits that he positions as coming before, and in some sense conditioning standard philosophical notions of conceptual thought. According to Lefebvre (2006), Deleuze presents such traits as possessing a pre-conceptual character – and as constituting a conditioning 'image' that serves to guide or to steer enquiry (Deleuze, 2001, p. 164). Lefebvre notes how for Deleuze, even before we start to think, we have some idea, awareness or preconception of what thinking entails, and it is in this sense that we are guided by what we might describe as pre-conceptual, aesthetic or stylistic concerns. It is in this sense that for Deleuze, we are guided by an *image* of thought. In his characterisation of the kind of thinking that is conditioned by this image, Deleuze connects the concepts of representation and recognition - describing them negatively, as collectively constituting a 'dogmatic image of thought' (Deleuze, 2001, pp.166-167, p.169). Within the context of his critique, Deleuze delineates a set of assumptions or presuppositions that he takes to be implicit in much

¹¹ It is important to recognise here that for Deleuze, there clearly is a way that things are – but this reality is ultimately processual in character, at once encompassing and coordinating matter, sensation, and thought.

of the history of philosophy, and which he believes compromise and inhibit the qualities of creativity and innovation that he takes to be the genuine mark of thinking (Deleuze, 2001, p.172). Deleuze suggests that it is the assumptions or presuppositions that he has aligned with the concept of dogmatism - that serve ultimately to guide representational modes of enquiry. Accordingly, Deleuze believes that it is this dogmatic picture that has served to guide the activity of thinking throughout much of the history of philosophy – and that it is the same picture that serves to structure our notion of what he describes as ‘common’ and ‘good’ sense (Deleuze, 2001, p. 169).¹²

Ultimately, Deleuze positions common sense, taxonomic construction, as well as scientific methods and legal adjudicative procedures as products of this image (Deleuze, 2001, p.164). For Deleuze, when conditioned by the dogmatic image of thought, all forms of thinking are reduced to a kind of re-presentation or re-cognition:

The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognisable and the recognised; form will never inspire anything but conformities. (Deleuze, 2001, p.170)

Deleuze argues that the danger of this procedure is that it effectively stifles and prohibits creativity and transformation – all exposure to the novel or potentially different – every fresh encounter (be it with people, animals, or in the case of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research, with texts, art-objects, or novel modes of research/research proposal) becomes subject to mediation and abstraction through the concepts and categories that are employed in their recognition. For Deleuze, in foregrounding the concept of recognition, thought becomes dogmatic, attempting to apply representational forms, in an apriori fashion, to something that is external – or what might more properly be considered unknown, outside or requiring the creative institution of idiosyncratic concepts and ideas in order to be properly understood. Whilst there is a sense in which this outside to thought has an experiential

¹² As we shall see, for Deleuze it is the operation of ‘common’ and ‘good’ sense that collectively constitute the dogmatic image of thought. That is to say, it is common sense that provides the categorical framework, or the conceptual distribution into which things may (legitimately) fall, whilst good sense refers to the (legitimate) processes of practical reasoning (resemblance, opposition, analogy and identity) which are employed in the judgment or disciplining of phenomena. Ultimately, it is the operation of common and good sense that institutes the separation of subject (the enquirer) and object (the ‘object’ of enquiry) in representational thought.

dimension and might be thought of as an encounter with the strange ‘within’ experience (Deleuze, 2001, p.176), it is important to remember that for Deleuze, such an encounter will ultimately have a broader, processual, and importantly sub-representational constitution.¹³ Accordingly, for Deleuze, the imposition of this apriori representational form serves to occlude and underplay the importance of a series of contingent, productive and ultimately naturalistic elements that are in some sense operative outside of our phenomenological or categorical frame of reference.

This element is intensity, understood as pure difference in itself, as that which is ... imperceptible for empirical sensibility which grasps intensity only already covered or mediated by the quality to which it gives rise. (Deleuze, 2001, p.181)

For Deleuze, dogmatic forms of thought presume that any encountered thing is only another identifiable instance of an existing concept, and in so doing they neutralise the influence of the exterior, and subtract any potential for genuine creative encounter (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 176-177). By extension, exteriority and potential are interiorised into apriori acts of recognition or representation that are in some sense operative prior to phenomenal experience. As a consequence, novelty and experiential particularity are subtracted from experience, whilst thought is divested of any potential for creativity - being presented instead as an organ of identification (Deleuze, 2001, p. 303).

2.02 The Substance and Relevance of the Deleuzian Critique

In his discussion of Deleuze and the operation of law, Lefebvre (2006) notes how in concrete terms, Deleuze’s critique focuses variously upon an examination of Aristotelian categories (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 38-44), a criticism of early scientific procedures (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 3-4), and in developing an attack on the Kantian critical turn in philosophy (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 172). Deleuze’s critique of Kant proves important for our purposes here as there are clear resonances between the Kantian project and the more conservative aspects of Wittgensteinian thought, which go on to

¹³ We will see in chapter three that there is an intimate connection between the workings of nature and the production of experiential ‘signs’ that orients Deleuze’s transformational semiotics that is developed in *Difference and Representation* and extended in his semiotic account of art, cinema and literature.

inform much of Biggs and Büchler's project. In what follows, we will proceed to identify the most salient factors in Deleuze's critique of representation, with a view to applying them to Wittgensteinian philosophy and by extension to the critique of practice-led research that has been expounded by Biggs and Büchler.

2.03 Deleuze's Critique of Aristotelian Taxonomy

Whilst it is true that in the context of natural philosophy, Aristotle's genus-species analysis that depicted categories as representing the essence of particular things was later replaced by the notion of scientific law (Levebvre, 2006, p.65), we still find extensive reliance upon taxonomic production and analysis in relation to the distribution of classes and sets that occur in the context of management and systems thinking. Dorothea Olkowski notes how:

It is clear to Deleuze that in most political, social, artistic, ethnic, economic, scientific, linguistic, and philosophical practices, the Aristotelian model of organic representation—organized around identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance—dominates.

(Olkowski, 1999, p. 20)

As a consequence, numerous quasi-essentialist modes of classification are prevalent in practices of research adjudication and they likewise serve to inform positivistic approaches to the debate concerning practice-led research.¹⁴ From a Deleuzian perspective, the Aristotelian division of being into a series of categories, much like the division of being that constitutes the Porphyrian tree, proceeds from a mode of analysis that encourages the reification of categories through the institution of notions of essence and natural kinds. Thus, the concept of multiplicity is intended as a counter to the Aristotelian categories - denoting complex, cross-categorical, horizontal structures that make no reference to a prior unity. In this sense, a multiplicity can be considered a patchwork that partakes of no particular essence. Daniel H. Borus (2009) notes how notion of multiplicity became a cornerstone of American pragmatism as

¹⁴ We saw in chapter one how James Elkins has noted that such modes of conceptual abstraction operate at the level of research bureaucracy, producing overly generalised and idealised management oriented schemas of what might constitute research per sé – and we noted that this was echoed in the writings of Pollock and Borgdorff which provide a contrast to the institutional conservatism of Biggs and Büchler. It is worth noting here that despite his uncertainties regarding the legitimacy of practice-led research, Elkins ultimately recommends that we engage with such practices in the spirit of play.

well as informing developments in popular culture and the arts.¹⁵ Importantly, multiplicity embodies a different aesthetic to that which is suggested by essences, wholes, and absolutes, and accordingly, in its affinity with the creative practice of bricolage, the concept of multiplicity has an appeal for many researchers working in both artistic and sociological contexts (Milech & Schilo, p.242).

In attempting to understand Deleuze's critique of Aristotle, it is important to remember that Deleuze is primarily a thinker of difference. Thus in terms of Deleuze's ontology, differential forces are primary - they underlie every apparent identity and also function as the engine of change. Accordingly, Deleuze takes issue with the Aristotelian genus-species account of difference, which, given its broadly conceptual character, is taken to foreground identity at the expense of natural or material difference, and consequently to desensitise us to the role of difference in the productive transformation and development of existent things (see, for instance, Deleuze, Olkowski, Lefebvre, Williams and Due). Thus, for Deleuze, Aristotle makes two important errors. Firstly, the Aristotelian categories institute a set of constructed conceptual identities, which are then presented as a description of a natural order. For Deleuze, this stands as a reification of concepts - displacing a chaotic and differential reality, with illusions of stability and order. Thus there is a sense in which Deleuze attempts a dual overturning of Platonism (the ghost of which, from a Deleuzian perspective, still haunts the Aristotelian categories). That is to say, in one sense he attempts an overturning in the sense of an overthrow, whilst in another he attempts to literally 'overturn' Platonism in the sense of an inversion, conferring ontological primacy upon an at once chaotic and productive 'virtual' realm that precedes the illusory identities that characterise 'actual' (phenomenal) experience.

Deleuze's second, and perhaps most serious criticism of Aristotle concerns the division of being, or the cutting of reality at its joints that he takes to be characteristic of Aristotelian categorical analysis. For Deleuze, Aristotle presents a weak and importantly *non-productive* conception of difference that ultimately possesses a secondary or derivative status - being in some sense dependent upon a pre-supposition

¹⁵ The concept of multiplicity, as it occurs across a diverse range of cultural contexts, has been explored by Sanford Kwinter in his *Architectures of Time* (2001), and Daniel H. Borus in his *Twentieth Century Multiplicity* (2009)

of a prior conceptual identity or generality (Deleuze, 2001, p. 30). Thus, from a Deleuzian perspective, Aristotle confers ontological primacy upon the concept of identity, positioning it as a precondition for the expression of difference. Deleuze objects to the way in which, if we adopt an Aristotelian position, our attempts to speak of differences are forced to first posit and prioritise identities. That is to say, in Aristotelian terms, in stating that an x (an individual duck, for instance) differs from a y (an individual goose, let's say) we are first forced to posit each of their identities as members of a generalised class/species (the general class/species of ducks, and the general class/species of geese). For Deleuze, this act of identification asserts a prior identity at the level of species between all individual ducks, and between all individual geese, as well as positing a set of 'higher' successive identities between the classes of ducks and geese that must accompany any expression of their difference (firstly through the genus of 'bird', secondly through the genus of 'animals', and thirdly through the genus of 'living beings'). In this sense, the Aristotelian schema is only able to posit differences relative to a number of prior conceptual identities. In light of this, we lose:

- i) The true specificity (singularity) of x (it's unique, singular, material constitution)
- ii) The differential constitution of an evolving and developing x (the way in which x is constituted by a series of unique and differential forces, operational at different levels of description)
- iii) The continuity of x at an appropriate level of description with all other things. Thus, for Deleuze, there are more fundamental, material forms of connection (and hence relation) that exceed conceptual boundaries and cut *across* the categories of the Aristotelian schema. Thus in relation to the Aristotelian schema, Deleuze is interested in drawing our attention to horizontal and transversal forms of material contact rather than any vertical, 'conceptual' lineage.

It is important to recognise that point (iii) in the list above also asserts a kind of generality, in the form of broader material contact between existent things. That is to say, despite Deleuze's veneration of difference and specificity and his critique of the categorical, it is clear that his philosophy also stresses the continuity of things at a more fundamental ontological level (Williams, 2003, p.133; Williams, 2008, p.204). For Deleuze, more radical forms of difference, as well as broader continuities occur

both within and across categories of species – serving both to integrate the seemingly disparate, and to rumble beneath the seemingly identical (Deleuze, 2001, p. 344).

In the context of Deleuzian philosophy, it is the interplay of a series of intensive and differential naturalistic forces that give rise to actual identities, and it is primarily because of this tension between integration and differentiation that we can position Deleuze as a philosopher of process. In chapter one, we saw how the tension between integration and difference constitutes the central faultline of process philosophy (see chapter 1, sections 1.20 and 1.34). That is to say, in accordance with Deleuze's process-philosophical commitments, identities become contingent, permeable, susceptible to influence, and lacking in strong borders. Thus Deleuze's critique of Aristotle proceeds from the observation that through his division of being, Aristotle subordinates a primary ontological difference (the difference-in-itself that constitutes the 'virtual' realm) to a form of conceptual difference. For Deleuze, however, it is this conceptual difference – the Aristotelian schema itself so to speak - that should be positioned as secondary in character.

2.04 The Deleuzian Critique of Aristotelian Method and its Application to the Legitimacy Debate

Applying Deleuze's insights to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research, we can see how Biggs and Büchler's analysis of practice-led research struggles to accommodate ideas of the interdisciplinary or the transdisciplinary that has been so influential in the construction and justification of the performative paradigm. We shall shortly see how the conceptual closure that is characteristic of their early work, follows through to their most recent, more permissive writings by way of their compartmentalisation of self-sufficient paradigms which nevertheless emphasises a kind of closure or containment, but which is now expressed through an emphasis upon the internal consensus of practitioners. Accordingly, it is claimed here that their work exhibits an Aristotelian or Porphyrian character - which is to say, it is ultimately unable to think differences of nature between things of the same class (e.g. the class of 'research' or the class of 'researcher') - be it the many individual differences between practitioners that ultimately constitute a paradigm, or be it the genuine specificity of any given research project. In this sense, Biggs and Büchler

exhibit a tendency to reinforce disciplinary boundaries, through a set of broadly conceptual strategies, that places them at odds with the interest in materiality, interdisciplinarity, and collaboration that characterises much contemporary theorisation of both professional artistic practice and of practice-led, research (see chapter 1, section 1.09).

The operation of the dogmatic image of thought is not, however, limited to Aristotelian, taxonomical thinking. Extrapolating from Deleuze's comments on moral law, Lefebvre argues that when entities are seen under the aspect of (scientific) law – that is, when they are converted from unique singularities to particular instantiations of scientific law - a particularly neutered notion of change comes into play (Lefebvre 2006, p.67). Thus he emphasises the connection between scientific abstraction and calculability. In this context, the concept of 'change' becomes reduced to a notion of calculable and predictable Laplacian transformation. The calculable rhythm and regular periodicity of this mode of temporality subtracts the openness and contingency of material encounter, and as such it sits strongly at odds with Deleuze's process-ontological commitments that serve to foreground the novelty, transformation and complexification of things.

Thus, Deleuze suggests that with respect to scientific law, it is the (re)presentation of a set of generic processes that conditions the idea of entity formation. Lefebvre notes how, in relation to the snowflake, for instance, we are told that in all cases, snowflakes are formed from sixfold symmetries and water crystallisation at a given temperature, but that for Deleuze, there is an important sense in which the differences between individual snowflakes are occluded in such generic descriptions of process – with each materially singular flake becoming equal – and thus substitutable one for another (Lefebvre, 2006, p. 66). Thus, at this level of theoretical abstraction or conceptual mediation - snowflakes become conceptually indistinguishable from one another. As a consequence, for Deleuze, the rich, processual materiality of an individual snowflake becomes subordinate to a mode of temporal recognition. Manuel DeLanda and Sanford Kwinter have each presented accounts of snowflake growth, which emphasise their material complexity and have linked this to Deleuze's thinking on immanence. On the formation of free crystals, Kwinter writes:

Free crystal growth is a product of both complex nonlinear dynamics and specific constraints: geometric instabilities of water, air, temperature, and saturation gradients. Each design perfectly expresses not only the state of one of the universe's neighborhoods during a specific interval in time but also the snow crystal's own particular historical trajectory within it. Because the snow crystal is literally the product of "time," in it growth and design are one. (Kwinter, 2001, p.27)

Significantly for our purposes here, Kwinter builds on this observation to stress the way in which the concept of "weather" in particular, was introduced into aesthetics by Marcel Duchamp and later systematically elaborated by John Cage (Kwinter, 2001, p.27). The importance of contingency and specificity to the performative paradigm was introduced in chapter one of this thesis and will be explored in more detail in chapter three.

It should be clear that through the processual form of abstraction that is characteristic of early scientific thinking, singular individual entities (which Deleuze sees as emerging out of the interplay of a myriad of forces) are subjected to a process of recognition and presented as particular instantiations of (scientific) law. Thus, when influenced by the dogmatic image of thought, perception, for Deleuze, becomes a veil of abstraction and as a consequence it becomes impossible to encounter singularities (Deleuze's term for unique, singular, materially constituted processes) in their fullness or uniqueness. It is in this sense that, once generalised as *particulars* (as opposed to *individuals*), our encounter with material or processual singularities becomes mediated through a mode of conceptual recognition (Lefebvre, 2008, p.67).

We saw in chapter one how the performative paradigm attempts to foreground material, qualitative forms of engagement and how there is a sense in which the legitimacy debate takes place in a quasi-legal context of judgment. We likewise saw that there has been a tendency for voices in the legitimacy debate to focus upon the employment of research definitions and taxonomies - and it should be clear there is something rather Aristotelian about this approach. Similarly, the practical proposals emanating from critics of practice-led research often suggest formulas for

systematising the structure and production schedule for practice-led research projects and there would seem to be an affinity here with the kind of systematisation that Deleuze locates in the regularity of ‘scientific’ law. Thus, Biggs and Büchler have recommended a seven chapter generic structure to the practice-led PhD (and in the process, they have tightly specified the way in which projects should unfold). In a similar vein, Terrance Love - another prominent early critical voice of the legitimacy of practice-led research – has proposed a three year ‘fast track’ model for the PhD, later streamlined into a second proposal for a *two-year* model that was intended to further accelerate and constrain the process.

2.05 The Role of Representation in the Legitimacy Debate.

Before turning our attention to Deleuze’s most severe criticism of representation, which addresses the critical turn in Kantian philosophy, we will take some time to locate the influence of representational thought in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. We have seen how Deleuze attempts to connect our conceptions of scientific and analytic enquiry with notions of law and judgement, and how he in turn attempts to position these concepts as resulting in a form of dogmatism. Given the intimate connection that he attempts to establish between these concepts, it should be the case that wherever we encounter a notion of ‘law’ or ‘judgment’ it should be possible to locate a recognition-oriented schema. That is to say, given Deleuze’s suggestion that the dogmatic image in some sense preconditions enquiry, we would expect its influence to be pervasive - inflecting not only the arguments, but the language, structure and style of a representationally oriented work. In attempting to test this claim we will return to the work of Biggs and Büchler that was introduced at the beginning of this section, and scrutinise the representational character of their project in more detail.

2.10 Representational Tendencies in the Work of Biggs and Büchler

It was noted in chapter one how the work of Biggs and Büchler, has been prominent in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, and has likewise been influential with respect to the framing of policy. When considered from a Deleuzian perspective, the work of Biggs and Büchler seems broadly oriented by

what we might describe as representationalist or recognition-oriented tendencies, and as such it sits uncomfortably with the immanent and performative ideals of artistic research (Borgdorff, 2012, p.20, p.38). Biggs and Büchler's representational tendencies are manifested firstly in their reliance upon research definitions, and secondly in their integrative stress upon the importance of research communities as validators of work (Biggs & Büchler, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010). Representational tendencies can likewise be discerned in their positing of the cumulative nature of research enquiry (Biggs & Büchler, 2008), and in their resistance to both the performative quality of the artwork and the notion of research innovation. It is argued here that there is a tendency in Biggs and Büchler's work to foreground object-centric, representational forms of analysis, and that this in some sense sits at odds with the idea of connective-transformation as well as with affective approaches to the artwork that will be explored in chapter three of this thesis and which would seem to be prominent concerns of many theorists and practitioners in the context of contemporary art. It is suggested here that in the exposition of Biggs and Büchler's arguments, representational tendencies are pervasive, conditioning method and structure; colouring language and expression; and influencing modes of visualisation.

2.11 Object-Centricity and Spatial Metaphors

We can consider Biggs and Büchler's representational tendencies as operating at the levels of surface and depth. At the level of surface it is easy to identify a number of object-centric spatial metaphors and a resistance to performativity. Thus, 'gap analysis' is stressed as a preliminary for determining a programme of research (Biggs and Büchler, 2008, p.9, 2009, p.11), whilst research activity is positioned in epistemological terms as being primarily concerned with 'finding out what nobody knows', or with slotting together the pieces of a puzzle (Biggs and Büchler, 2010, p.86, 2008, p. 9). Similar object-centric tendencies can be located in their later, slightly more permissive suggestion that research communities should be regarded as groups, or classes, that ostensibly share the same values. That is to say, in Biggs and Büchler's discussion of research paradigms that will be examined later in this section, the object-oriented language of parent, child and class proliferates (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p.98), and such object-centric distinctions are likewise reflected in one of their

most favoured modes of graphical representation – the Venn diagram (Biggs, 2004, p.11 ; Biggs & Büchler, 2008, pp. 11-12).

The object-centric tendencies that underpin the kind of analyticity that is characteristic of much of Biggs and Büchler's writing, when seen from a Deleuzian perspective, appear to be indicative of a certain resistance to notions of movement, transformation, and change that are of central importance to researchers operating in the performative paradigm. The processual critique of analytic thought positions abstract logical modes of analysis as spatial modes of thought that result in the decomposition and petrification of a more fluid processual dynamism. The process philosopher Henri Bergson - one of Deleuze's most significant progenitors - emphasised the way in which analytic thought decomposed what he took to be a processual continuum into a series of atomised objects, events and temporal slices. He likewise stressed their affinity with the Aristotelian subject predicate model of language. Importantly for our purposes here, Bergson suggested that 'our logic is the logic of solids' (Bergson, 1994, preface), emphasising the way in which analysis, though ultimately driven by pragmatic need, results in an objectification of phenomena, subtracting their potentiality, and concealing what he took to be their fundamental temporality. For Bergson, as for Deleuze, any given thing, through its processes of becoming, ultimately differs, not only with other things, but also with itself over time. Thus the Bergsonian conception of duration is taken up by Deleuze and exerts a strong influence upon Deleuze's conception of rhythm as an unpredictable and irrational pattern of movement.

Accordingly, from a Deleuzian perspective, there is an important sense in which at the level of surface Biggs and Büchler's research expresses of an agenda that is both object-centric and representationalist in character - actively occluding or diminishing notions of performativity - and standing as an expression of the dogmatic image of thought. The notion of performativity will become important in the context of this thesis for understanding aspects of research innovation, and the affective dimension of the artwork. It is claimed here that Biggs and Büchler downplay the dynamic, processual and productive character of the research situation, subtracting the spirit of encounter and openness to the future, which is central to much research practice. Performative overlaps between artistic and research processes will be explored in

more detail in chapter three of this thesis. Presently, however, we will concentrate on the extent to which more tacit object-centric, representational strategies can also be seen to be operative in Biggs and Büchler's work.

2.12 The Tendency to Proceed from Definition

Biggs' early, sole authored writings concerning research and practice, which laid the ground for Biggs and Büchler's project, are particularly illustrative of a representationalist tendency to proceed from definitions. Sometimes Biggs scrutinises dictionary definitions of his core concepts (Biggs, 2002, 2003, 2004), whilst at others he attempts to construct definitions of his own (Biggs, 2003). Of these strategies, the former is employed when attempting to ascertain the meaning of the terms such as 'research', 'object', and 'artefact', whilst the latter is employed in an attempt to formulate a definition of 'a work (as in 'a work of art')'. An examination of these broadly representational strategies will prove useful when attempting to unpick a particularly conservative, recognition-oriented thread that runs throughout Biggs and Büchler's thinking, and as a consequence, we will consider Biggs' definitions of work and artefact in some detail

In the first instance it is worth asking why Biggs, in attempting to unpick the concept of practice-led research, should choose to seek out a definitions in the form of institutional regulations, as opposed to considering extant social practices that have been labelled as such. An alternative strategy might have involved engaging in some form of empirical or social survey to ascertain how a given term is employed on the ground so to speak. Such an alternative is reflected, for instance, in Judith Mottram's early attempt to compile a database of completed doctorates in art and design that have thus far been conducted in the UK (Rust, Till & Mottram, 2007; Mottram, 2009) and Biggs and Büchler suggest that it was a similar agenda informed the Matrix conferences that were hosted by the University of the Arts (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.7). Biggs and Mottram's strategies are reflective of respectively top-down and bottom-up approaches to the question of research definition and they are respectively analytic and synthetic in character. That is to say, Biggs approach has an at once linguistic, conceptual and deductive character, whilst Mottram's enquiry has stronger empirical, constructivist sympathies. It is likewise interesting to note Mottram and

Biggs have very much polarised positions in the legitimacy debate, and it will prove fruitful for our purposes here to consider this opposition. There is particular disagreement between Biggs and Mottram over questions of research-context and the performative power of the artwork. That is to say, Biggs prioritises the production of a (textual) context and argument, and questions the value of the artwork in a research context. Mottram, on the other hand, emphasises the degree to which a work should in some sense ‘speak for itself’.

Recasting Biggs’ and Mottram’s dispute in a Deleuzian context, we might consider Mottram as exhibiting a concern with what Deleuze would frame as the nomadic distribution of the concept (the concept in this case being that of practice-led research) – in which empirical instances determine an otherwise open conceptual space (Deleuze, 2001, p.283). Biggs on the other hand favours a distribution, which in being disciplined by strong conceptual outlines, has what Deleuze would describe as ‘sedentary’ qualities. Thus, for Mottram it is the distribution of existents that ultimately constructs the concept, whereas, for Biggs, a pre-existing class sanctions the legitimacy or illegitimacy of any given case. In this sense, Mottram seems attuned to a broadly constructivist notion of multiplicity, which attests to the empirical/material construction of concepts. Biggs, on the other hand would seem to be oriented by a rather more overarching and somewhat apriori conception of meaning, that is expressed in the normative application of rules.

2.13 Personal and Social Definitions

Ultimately, Biggs makes use of the dictionary as a means of ascertaining public and socially legitimate uses of language. For Biggs, building upon received usage, it is possible to work in a broadly analytic, apriori, and predominately conceptual fashion, whilst retaining some concession to empirical concerns. Thus when seen from Biggs’ position, dictionary definitions encode legitimate usage of language, and academic conventions stand as ‘ciphers’ for ‘the network of actions that constitute meaningful research’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p.85). It is important for our purposes here, however, to recognise that the dictionary is both a place of authoritative linguistic order, and the place where changes in meaning are reflected over time. That is to say, nuances change, word definitions alter, terms fall in and out of the lexicon, and as a

consequence the dictionary may equally be employed in a comparative, historical fashion as an index of conceptual and linguistic transformation. Indeed, there is perhaps nowhere that this is more apparent than in the labelling and description of practice-led research itself (see chapter 1, section 1.10). Thus, when seen from a Deleuzian perspective, Biggs' decision to employ definitions in a conservative, prohibitive fashion is indicative of a broadly representationalist orientation, and it is this that is most symptomatic of the workings of the dogmatic image of thought. Accordingly, it is claimed here that there is an interesting conflict between a kind of foundationalism and a kind of constructivism that runs throughout Biggs and Büchler's writings, which itself arises out of a related tension between the concepts of the transcendental and the pragmatic that can also be located in the philosophy of Wittgenstein – a philosopher whose ideas have noticeably influenced Biggs' and Büchler's thinking.¹⁶

2.14 The Conflation of Object and Process

It has been suggested thus far that a Deleuzian critique of the work of Biggs and Büchler can be applied at the levels of both form and content. We have seen how, there are a number of object-centric tendencies at work in their writings, which fit poorly with the temporal conceptions of process that are prioritised by Deleuze. This is particularly apparent in an early sole authored paper, in which Biggs tacitly conflates the concepts of process and object in his examination of the concept of a 'work' (as in work of art/literature) and the concept of an 'artefact'. From the perspective of a processual critique, there is much damage done in Biggs' alignment of the concepts of work, artefact and object, and in the subsequent exclusion of the categories of the process and performance that results. Accordingly, it is suggested here that this reveals an object-centric preference that pervades Biggs and Büchler's writings, which is likewise testament to the conditioning of their thought by a dogmatic, representational image. Accordingly, we will examine this in some detail.

In addressing the conflation of object and process that takes place in Biggs and Büchler's work, it is worth noting that two of Biggs' earliest publications whilst close

¹⁶ This tension in Wittgenstein's thought, and its significance with respect to Biggs and Büchler's project is explored in more detail later in this section (Chapter 2, sections 2.30 – 2.46)

with respect to subject matter, nevertheless struggle over an important point of detail. The papers in question are concerned respectively with the role of the ‘artefact’ (Biggs, 2002b, 2004) and the role of ‘the work’ (Biggs, 2003) in relation to art and design research. For our purposes here, there is an important distinction to be made between the concept of a work and the concept of an artefact that trades upon the fact that the term ‘work’ has a verb form, whilst the term ‘artefact’ does not. That is to say, our common sense, ordinary usage of the term ‘work’ sanctions the possibility that something may be ‘working’, whilst this is not so with respect to the concept of artefact (thus the idea that something might be ‘artefacting’ squares poorly with our ordinary usage). Thus there is potential, through an exploration of the concept of ‘a work of art’, to more easily consider some temporal, performative aspects of the artwork. That is to say, we might choose to consider the activities and processes involved in the construction of an artefact, or we might instead focus upon the power/instrumentality of the work itself - or to state this in Deleuzian terms – we might explore its affective dimension.

It is suggested here that in his discussion of the artefact and in his discussion of the work, Biggs tacitly conflates this verb/noun distinction, and as a consequence, illegitimately collapses the concepts of process and object. It is in the context of his editorial that discusses the role of the ‘artefact’ (the descriptor that has stronger object-centric connotations) that the conflation of terms is most apparent, and as a consequence we will begin by focusing there. In accordance with his representational commitments, Biggs begins by unpacking the concept of an artefact through a consideration of its public definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In so doing, he acknowledges that the definition that can be located in the OED is ‘quite broad’ and that it ‘does not only include objects’ (Biggs, 2004, p.1). He then introduces a distinction between the more straightforward objects that emanate from productive activities of art and design (sculptures, paintings, architecture) and more ‘ephemeral outcomes such as performances, and intangibles such as music.’ (Biggs, 2004, p.1)

We might visualise the resulting taxonomy in this fashion:

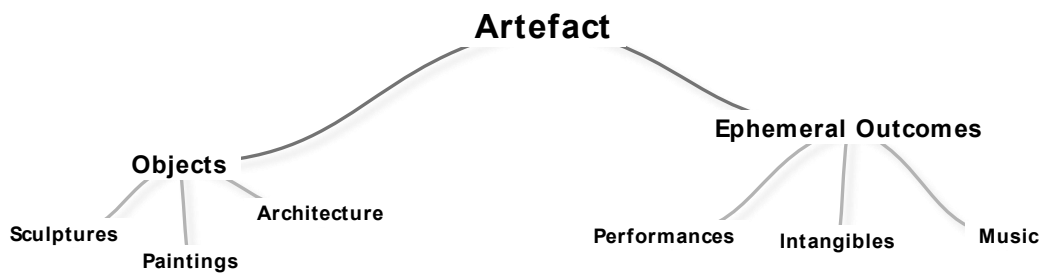


Figure 5. Diagram of Biggs' Distinction between Objects and Ephemeral Outcomes.

Biggs, however, goes on to inadvertently collapse the distinction that he has made between objects and ephemeral outcomes, by suggesting that we need to ask 'how these varied types of *object* contribute to research, and what part they play in the advancement of the discipline' (Biggs, 2004, p.1, my italics). There is an inconsistency here that results in the cross connection of categories that we might visualise in this fashion:

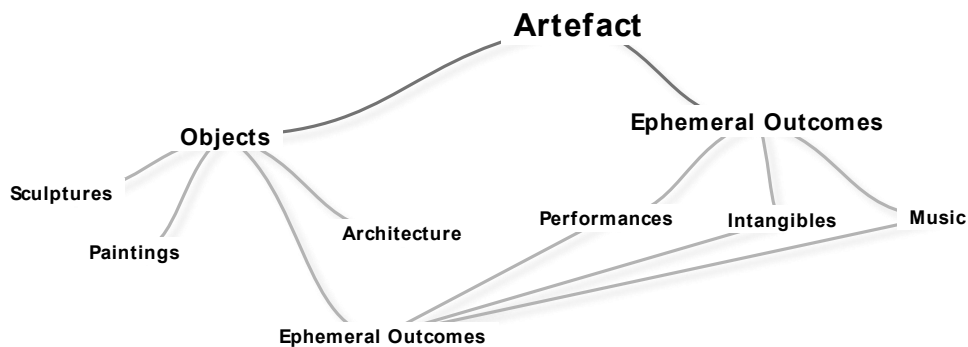


Figure 6. The Collapse of Biggs' Distinction between Object and Ephemeral Outcomes (1).

Alternatively, we might visualise it thus:

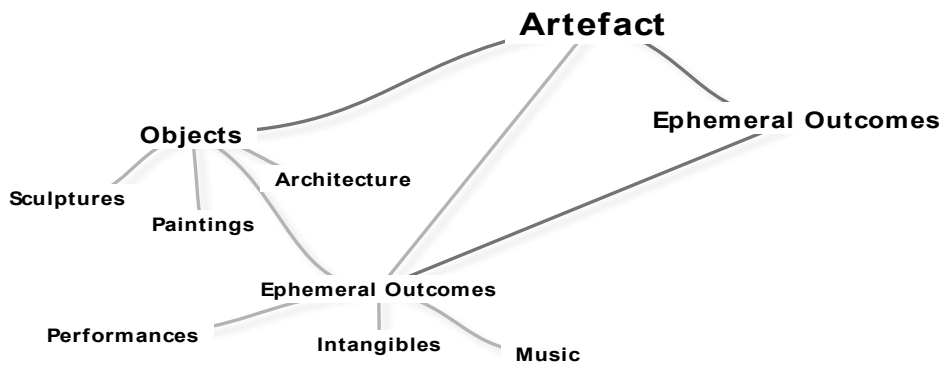


Figure 7. The Collapse of Biggs' Distinction between Object and Ephemeral Outcomes (2).

Something slightly odd has happened here and it seems important to bring out the inconsistency, Biggs first distinguishes objects (sculptures, paintings, architecture) from ephemeral outcomes (performances, and intangibles). That is to say, they are initially positioned as distinct kinds of artefact. However, he then proceeds to merge them into a single class, through their collective description as varied types of object (thus all artefacts ultimately become objects). In this fashion, the ephemeral outcomes of music or performance – arguably the forms of work most manifestly performative in character - are tacitly subsumed under a single class (the class of objects). Whilst at first glance this ambiguity might be taken as a simple slippage or oversight, on closer inspection, we find that at similar ambiguity occurs in Biggs' discussion of the 'work' (Biggs, 2003) and as such it would seem to be symptomatic of a more fundamental tension that goes on to condition Biggs and Büchler's approach.

In his discussion of the role of the 'work' in research practice, Biggs suggests that a work 'refers to an artefact, construed in the broad sense of an object, such as a sculpture or painting, or something intangible such as an image, or something non-persistent such as a performance.' (Biggs, 2003, p.2). With respect to this definition, ambiguity arises with respect to the 'breadth' of the application of the word 'object'. That is to say, it is not clear if Biggs intends the term 'or' in the conjunctive or disjunctive sense. Thus the discussion of the work would seem to follow the logic of the discussion of the artefact and as a consequence it inherits similar complications. In one sense Biggs would appear to be suggesting that we regard three distinct classes of things (the object, the intangible, and the non-persistent) as sub classes of the genus

‘artefact’, whilst in another he would seem to subsuming each of these particulars under the class of ‘object’, placing the emphasis upon the breadth of this category (asking us to consider notions of intangible and non-persistent objects, for instance). It is argued here that the concepts of intangibility and the performative sit ill with the language of object, unless we employ a number of ad-hoc descriptors and/or qualifications, and that this stands as an indicator that there is something about the notions of performativity or intangibility that would seem to jar with Biggs’ conceptual or ontological preferences.¹⁷

2.15 Reductions to Process and Object

Focusing more specifically upon the concept of performance – which is potentially the most troubling of these categories from the perspective of an object-centric ontology, it is worth considering a converse, performative definition of the term ‘object’ that can be derived from the process perspective. For the process philosopher an object - or any other form of constancy - is more accurately described in terms of motion - hence the predilection amongst Deleuzian philosophers for the language of vectors, forces and flows – and accordingly it can at best be construed as a meta-stable process (Rescher, 2000, p.7, p.109). That is to say, when seen from the process perspective, objects are rhythmically constituted – and regulated by a dynamic interplay of forces. According to more rationalistic conceptions of process philosophy – such as that expounded by Nicholas Rescher for instance - it is possible for this interplay of forces to fall into repetitive cycles for extended periods of time (until modified or disrupted by some latent or external force). In this sense, for the process philosopher, objects are subjected to a kind of reduction, entering into rhythmic cycles that admit of a degree of stability – whilst nevertheless remaining open or susceptible to contingency and change (Rescher, 1996, p. 118).

Now there are clearly similarly reductive strategies at work in both Biggs’ definition of performances as non-persistent objects and the process-philosophical definition of objects as persistent processes - albeit the case that they have opposite objectives in

¹⁷ It is perhaps worth noting at this point that prior to embarking upon his research career, Biggs was an artist working in the medium of physical sculpture.

mind. However, it is only with respect to the reduction of process to object that a degree of special pleading would seem to be required. That is to say, in the case of a purely processual monism, every existent thing is positioned as resulting out of the same kinetic order, with sufficiently rapid and regular oscillations instituting a semblance of material form. As such process philosophical thinking has a reductive character, but one that is a subsumptive as opposed to subtractive in kind – and this has a certain intuitive appeal. That is to say, it is clear that an investigation of any object (or metastable process) whether at the level of materiality, taxonomy, or definition will reveal a history of transformation, connectivity and change, which is suggestive of its ultimately contingent nature. The situation is not comparable, however, if we attempt a reduction of the class of processes – which would seem to address a singularly performative dimension - to the class of objects. That is to say, envisaging processes and performances as ‘objects’ requires a metaphysical change of gear – a requirement that we consider processes in transcendent, atemporal terms - under the aspect of eternity as it were. Accordingly, the foregrounding of the temporal constitution of entities would seem to provide the process perspective with a richer set of conceptual resources. That is to say, various distinctions can be made between between types and degrees of vibration/rhythm/complexity and this enables distinctions within the plethora of phenomena that we might ordinarily describe as processes or objects. In contrast, there seems something genuinely subtractive, and consequently less satisfying, about the attempted reduction of process to objects (which entails the levelling of all things in a metaphysical, transcendent and atemporal ‘block’ universe). Furthermore, given the seemingly pervasive and ubiquitous presence of movement that would seem to characterise the material workings of the world when considered at an appropriate level of description, it is worth pausing to consider the validity of the claim that there is *any* class of object, situated in a properly material context, which can be considered absolutely inert.

2.16 Rhetorical Strategies in Biggs and Büchler’s Writing

It was suggested above that the tacit conflation of performance and object that would seem to take place in Biggs and Büchler’s analysis of both the work and the artefact, is indicative of a preference for object-centric modes of analysis. Biggs’ conflation of object, performance and artefact may be considered either in terms of logical

inconsistency/oversight, or in more rhetorical terms as a form of persuasion. In the case of the former, then the rigour of Biggs' analysis is called into question, whilst in the case of the latter our attention is drawn to the affective dimensions of Biggs' mode of exposition – to the way in which Biggs attempts to persuade or instill change in the reader through affective and rhetorical strategies, that are not always straightforwardly logical/evidential in character. With this in mind, it is perhaps worth attempting to identify some other significantly rhetorical moments in Biggs and Böhler's work. In his discussion of the role of the artefact in creative research, Biggs stresses the importance of proceeding from a public, dictionary definition (Biggs, 2004, p.1), and he employs a similar strategy on a number of later occasions (Biggs & Böhler, 2007, 2009). This is in part to retain a social context and to avoid what Biggs and Böhler term the 'isolationist position':

Humpty Dumpty resolved a disagreement with Alice by stating that: 'When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less' (Carroll 2008, Chapter VI). This is an example of the Isolationist Position. (Biggs & Böhler, 2008, p. 6)

Biggs and Böhler appear to be extrapolating here from Wittgenstein's critique of private language (Wittgenstein, 1953, §243, §256). There is, however, an important difference between Wittgenstein's employment of this argument and its employment by Biggs and Böhler in the context of practice based research. Wittgenstein's concern is with the notion that an individual could meaningfully employ a term in an isolationist fashion (Kenny, 1973, pp. 193-194), whilst in the case of the legitimacy debate, we are considering the employment of a term by a specific research community (thus in the context of practice-led research, the social dimension is not lost and this inflects the argument in a way that is not acknowledged by Biggs). Furthermore, there is an interesting moment, at the beginning of his discussion of the role of the work in artistic research, when Biggs employs a somewhat idiosyncratic definition of his own. We have already encountered Biggs' definition of a 'work' in the context of artistic practice. However, it is important to recognise that this should in some sense be considered a personal definition – albeit one which is closely related to a sense of the term that can be derived from the Oxford English Dictionary. It does, however, contain an interesting substitution of the term 'quality' with the term 'merit'

which would seem to have been introduced to support the social foundation of Biggs' argument (Biggs, 2004, p.8)

The definition that can be located in the Oxford English Dictionary is as follows:

14. A product of any of the fine arts (in relation to the artist), as a painting, a statue, etc. In the phr. a work of art including besides these, literary or musical works (13) and connoting high artistic *quality*. Also (without pl.), artistic production in the abstract, or artistic products collectively. (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, my italics)

Biggs, however, appends his object-centric definition of a 'work' that was introduced earlier in this section with the following qualification:

These 'works' are the outcomes of normal practice in the arts. However, 'a work of art', etc. also connotes something that has achieved a certain cultural status. Thus my focus ... is on outcomes of socially accredited value ... the paradigm for arts research is, I claim, a work of artistic *merit* and a bearer of research content. (Biggs, 2004, p.8)

Accordingly, we can see that Biggs strays from the sense of this definition in the OED in a way that would seem to reflect his own agenda. The substitution of the term 'merit' in place of the term 'quality' subtly shifts the focus of discussion, emphasising the importance of a social context and serving to operationalise the term 'quality' as it is employed in the Oxford English Dictionary in terms of the 'socially meritorious', or in terms of 'socially accredited value' – expressions possessing rather different connotations and associations. Thus for Biggs there is an intrinsic connection between the 'quality' of a work and its socially, or professionally determined value, and this institutes an emphasis upon social consensus and disciplinary gatekeeping that is not present in the OED definition.

It is this emphasis upon socially accredited value that likewise frames Biggs' critique of artwork that is produced in a therapeutic context (in the context of art therapy for instance). Biggs positions such artwork as being in some sense insignificant, and relates this insignificance to a certain lack of cultural esteem (Biggs, 2003, p.3).¹⁸

¹⁸ Biggs states this boldly: 'It is the purpose of arts therapies to improve the well-being of the client through an intervention involving the client doing some kind of arts activity such as painting, music or

Thus, from a Deleuzian perspective Biggs focuses upon territorialised and majoritarian artistic commodities. In marked contrast to this, Deleuze, stresses the way in which maladies such as schizophrenia and alcoholism follow an artistic, minoritarian logic. Indeed, there is a sense for Deleuze in which these conditions represent an artistic practice par excellence in which the demolition of the essentialist category of selfhood takes place. For Deleuze, the condition of schizophrenia, for instance, should be considered a site of radical, processual transformation – a becoming other, as it were. Accordingly, the aim of the therapeutic context should be to facilitate this becoming as opposed to a returning to some previous normative more ‘healthy’ state. Indeed Deleuze goes so far as to suggest that:

We cannot give up the hope that the effects of drugs and alcohol (their ‘revelations’) will be able to be relived and recovered for their own sake at the surface of the world, independently of the use of those substances, provided that the techniques of social alienation which determine this use are reversed into revolutionary means of exploration. (Deleuze 1990, pp. 182–183)

2.20 Deleuze’s Critique of Transcendental Representation

In our attempt to discern object-oriented, representational tendencies in the work of Biggs and Büchler, we have thus far considered:

- i) Their tendency to proceed from definitions.
- ii) Their resistance to empirical forms of analysis.
- iii) Their resistance to the notion of performativity in the characterisation of the artwork and the artefact.

We will shortly turn our attention to Biggs and Büchler’s attempt to institute criteria for the framing of legitimate modes of practice-based research. In order to understand the ‘critical’ aspect to Biggs and Büchler’s argument it is necessary to appreciate something of its Wittgensteinian underpinnings, as well as to recognise some important relationships between Wittgensteinian and Kantian thought. Having

drama, etc. Whether the client produces art, in the sense of 'a work of art' mentioned above, is irrelevant to the process ...art as therapy and art as research, are mutually exclusive.’

examined Deleuze's critique of Kant and extrapolated from this to formulate a Deleuzian critique of Wittgensteinian thought, we will be in a better position to engage with Biggs and Büchler's critical, criterion based approach.

2.21 The Deleuzian Critique of Kant

In the translators introduction to *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, Tomlinson and Habberjam note how in a letter to Michel Cressole, Deleuze positions Kant in no uncertain terms as his 'enemy' (Deleuze, 2008). As we have seen, however, stark oppositions and contradictions do not sit well with Deleuze, who's thinking is intensive as opposed to binary and angular in character. As a consequence we would expect the relationship between Deleuze (the radical empiricist) and Kant (the arch rationalist) to be necessarily more complex than Deleuze would lead us to believe. Indeed, as Charles Stivale has noted, the guiding principle behind Deleuze's commentaries on other philosophers could be summed up with one phrase: 'keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer'. (Jones & Roffe, 2008, p.8)

Any straightforward notion of opposition becomes further complicated when we consider that despite the emphasis on law and judgment that can be located in Kantian thought, Kant's philosophy has both radical and conservative aspects. That is to say, whilst Kant expresses an ultimately conservative and regulatory agenda, he also paves the way for many later radical poststructuralist, and constructivist positions (Colebrook, 1995, p.33, pp.226-227). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues that Kant 'seemed armed to overturn... the [dogmatic] image of thought' (Deleuze, 2001, p.172) but instead chose to affirm its presuppositions. Ultimately, it is this disappointment that perhaps best explains Deleuze's hostility to Kant. We will explore the more radical aspects of Kantian philosophy and its relation to the Deleuzian concept of the encounter in chapter three of this thesis. Likewise, in chapter four we will examine the way in which Deleuze appropriates aspects of the Kantian method of transcendental deduction, whilst nevertheless subverting it with the aim of employing it to opposite ends. For our purposes here, however, we will be concerned primarily with the aspects of Kantian philosophy that would seem to prompt its negative assessment by Deleuze.

According to Deleuze, in his attempt to synthesise aspects of rationalism and empiricism, Kant ultimately produces a fundamentally new concept ('synthetic-apriori knowledge'). In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze-Guattari write that the idea that there are structuring 'conditions' for all possible experience should be 'signed' by Immanuel Kant, in the manner that an artwork, or a particular school of art, might bear an artists' signature (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.7). Kant's important philosophical innovation was the suggestion that a series of ordering principles serve to ground and regulate experience, and that these principles should be considered transcendental features of representation itself – that is, structural features of the mind, as opposed to features of reality. In this fashion, Kant attempts to re-institute rationalist certainties in an empiricist context, by arguing that if anything is to have the form of an experience – that is, for anything to stand as an experience - it must fall under the orderly categories of time, space and relation. Thus spatio-temporal categories are positioned as universal characteristics, not of reality itself, but of our representational lens (Lefebvre, 2008, p.69). For Deleuze it is important that we recognise the degree of innovation that is inherent in this idea. However, despite applauding Kant for his philosophical innovation, Deleuze positions this idea as instituting the most, sinister, internalisation of a representational regime. That is to say, for Deleuze, Kant's innovation results in a totalitarian entrenchment of order – an imposition of rational structure upon any possible experience (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.46, 2001, p.139)

It is suggested here that there is a resonance between Deleuze's disappointment in the trajectory taken by the Kantian project, given what he takes to be the richness of its potential and philosophical resources, and his comment that 'the Wittgensteinian school of philosophy imposed a system of terror... under the pretext of doing something new' (Boutang, Parnet & Stivalle, 2011; Stivale, 2015). It was suggested in the introduction to this thesis that Wittgenstein is the figure of whom Deleuze is most reticent to speak, but for whom he would also seem to harbour the strongest antipathy. In his television interview with Claire Parnet (Boutang, Parnet & Stivalle, 2011), Deleuze at first declines to speak about Wittgenstein at all ('I don't want to talk about that'). When pressed, however, he begins with an expression of dejection ('the Wittgenstein matter is quite sad'), which develops into a more extreme form of

disquiet ('there isn't a word to express this kind of danger'). It will be argued here that the extremity of Deleuze's hostility to Wittgenstein arises out of Deleuze's recognition that, much as in the case of Kant, there are significant overlaps, but also stark differences, between their respective philosophical projects. Importantly, in its emphasis upon regularity, rule following, and the foundational basis of tradition, Wittgensteinian philosophy has a socially conservative character, and possesses a paucity of resources for understanding conceptual and linguistic change. Indeed, it is significant that the approach to conceptual extension that is formulated in Biggs and Büchler's most recent writings are ultimately derived from a non-Wittgensteinian source – the writings of the French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (Biggs & Büchler, 2009, p.3).

From Deleuze's perspective, in the case of Kantian philosophy there is still a place for the expression of novelty and innovation, which is explored in *The Critique of Judgment* through the characterisation of the radical and unsettling nature the sublime – and as such some redress is possible. Indeed, following an insight from Deleuze's final lecture on Kant, that we might position Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* read through, or 'effecting a confrontation with' his later *Critique of Judgment* (Hughes, 2009, p.5). In the case of Wittgenstein, however, there is no comparable redress, as, for Deleuze, such resources are somewhat lacking in Wittgensteinian philosophy.

2.22 The Deleuzian Critique of Transcendental Judgment

Deleuze's primary criticism of Kant is that in the process of overturning the pre-critical concept of judgment that served to separate objects from representations, Kant creates a concept of transcendental judgment that serves to ground regularities of experience through a form of conceptual mediation and in so doing he institutes a dogmatic image of thought at the level of experiential structure. That is to say, transcendental judgment is concerned with a necessary imposition of form, and as such, from a Deleuzian perspective it stands as the most sinister and all encompassing form of representational abstraction. For Deleuze, in suggesting that experience is only possible insofar as it fulfils the conditions stipulated by the apriori concepts of the understanding, Kant suppresses the chance for disruptive encounters with an

exteriority, or an outside to thought. This presents a problem for Deleuze since it is ultimately the material encounter that Deleuze wants to position as the genuine transcendental basis for thought, and which serves to ground his own ‘transcendentally empirical’ position.¹⁹ For Deleuze, the Kantian mode of judgment stands as the most dangerous form of representational-abstraction, because it neutralises both the power and specificity of material existents – instituting a universal form of recognition that stands as a necessary condition for the instantiation of any possible experience. Accordingly, Deleuze’s critique tackles the notion that there are common, universal or general conceptual moulds or schemas that in some sense condition phenomena, whilst stressing the degree of violence that is done to the ideas of the particular, the unique and the different through acts of classification and determination.

2.23 The Deleuzian Conception of Thought as Encounter

It makes sense at this point to say something of Deleuze’s conception of thought and its intimate relationship with exteriority that is developed through his concept of the encounter. For Deleuze the encounter is necessarily something that challenges the form of recognition. He stresses that in our everyday experience, we are only prompted to think in situations where we do not recognise, and as a consequence Deleuze seeks to develop a concept of thought that is turned away from ideas of classification and recognition. It is not that Deleuze denies that recognition takes place – indeed he presents it as possessing a somewhat ubiquitous character. He does, however, position it as something of a mindless operation and emphasises that, as a consequence, it should be clearly distinguished from thought. Accordingly, Deleuze goes to great lengths to stress the affinity between genuine thought and a creative disposition - as well as its dependence upon externality of influence, and the operation of an ‘outside’ to representation. That is to say, in Deleuzian terms, genuine acts of thinking are rare, they occur in the context of highly specific conditions, and have a constitutive relationship to an outside of representation. Ultimately, as we shall see,

¹⁹ The intimate relationship between Deleuze’s materialist ontology and his conception of sensation will be explored more fully in chapter three of this thesis - our present concern is with the Deleuzian critique of the idealistic institution of representational form.

the test of artistic research will be the institution of multimodal conditions that actively enable thought. This is to be contrasted with the concept of recognition that is associated in Deleuzian thought with the institution of cliché, habit and dogma.

We search for truth only when we are impelled to do so in terms of a concrete situation, when we undergo a kind of violence that impels us to such a search. (Deleuze, 2008, p.15)

2.30 The Application of the Deleuzian Critique of Kant to Wittgensteinian Philosophy

As we begin to move towards the close of this section, we will attempt to formulate a Deleuzian critique of Wittgensteinian philosophy that emphasises the conflict between the pragmatic and transcendental aspects of Wittgenstein's thought, and we will proceed to apply this critique to further aspects of Biggs and Böhler's project. It is claimed that in being grounded in Wittgensteinian thought, Biggs and Böhler's critique of practice based research inherits its tensions, and that this results in a form of conservatism that squares poorly with the concerns of many artistic practitioners as well as with the prevailing teleology of contemporary artistic practice.

2.31 The Transcendental and Pragmatic Aspects of Wittgensteinian Thought

We will begin by examining the conflict between the transcendental and the pragmatic as it occurs in Wittgenstein's philosophical thinking. In the context of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein tells us that 'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world' (Wittgenstein, 1961, 5.6) – elsewhere he states that he is 'trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism' (Wittgenstein, 1975, 422). The transcendental aspect of Wittgenstein's thought confers a conservative, neo-Kantian character upon his philosophy, whilst nuancing the traditional Kantian position in social, linguistic and behavioural terms. That is to say, with respect to the thought of the later Wittgenstein, order and regularity is provided by enduring linguistic and socio-behavioural conventions, as opposed to being grounded in the structure of our mental faculties as it was for Kant. It is well known, however, that there are strong parallels between Kant's proposition that a mode of apriori representation conditions our phenomenal experience, forming the 'lines and patterns of our thought', and

Wittgenstein's proposition that language or grammar provides the 'possibilities for phenomena' (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.90).²⁰

2.32 The Concept of Transcendental Condition in Wittgensteinian Thought

The transcendental tendency is clearest in Wittgenstein's early work where for instance, he notes that 'it is impossible to see the eye which sees, so it is with the experiencing subject or self' (Wittgenstein, 1961, 5.633; 5.6331), or when he suggests in the preface to the *Tractatus* that his aim is to 'set a limit to thought - or rather to the expression of thoughts' (Wittgenstein, 1961, preface). In his later work, however, this concern with the transcendental becomes less metaphysical in character, and his position undergoes something of a pragmatic shift. Thus in the *Philosophical Investigations*, it is the notion of a form of life and of agreement in practice that becomes the condition for meaningful language use. That is to say, in his later work, it is the practicalities of our language games that provide specific contexts for comprehension – for the later Wittgenstein, understanding a particular word or the significance of a particular phenomenon requires an understanding of its function in a particular pragmatic, social context. In short, what Wittgenstein describes as a 'language game' stands as a condition for the meaningful employment (use) of a term.

Thus there is an affinity with the Kantian notion of transcendental forms of representation that runs throughout Wittgenstein's corpus, but it is tempered to various degrees by a pragmatic tendency that pulls in another direction.

²⁰ The idea that there are Kantian themes running through Wittgenstein's philosophy is not new. Most notably, Erik Stenius (1960) has drawn attention to 'trancendental' parallels between Wittgenstein's thought in his *Tractatus* period and the Kantian project – ultimately suggesting in his critical exposition of the *Tractatus* that it might be considered a 'critique of pure language'. Morris Engel (1971), in a broader survey of the Wittgenstein-Kant connection addresses a range of Wittgenstein scholars, and notes how the Kantian influence has been traced through both the early and late periods of Wittgenstein's writing. To this end, Engel cites Stanley Cavell's (1979) analysis of 'grammar' in relation to the Kantian notion of transcendental condition, whilst positioning A.M. Quinton approaches the *Tractatus* as dealing with a Kantian question of setting a 'limit' to thought. Similar Kantian affinities have also been noted by David Pears (1986), Ernst Specht (1969) and P.M.S Hacker (1997).

2.33 Wittgensteinian Pragmatism

In illustrating Wittgenstein's affinity with pragmatism, it seems fitting to begin in a practical fashion, by considering some aspects of his research and teaching practice. According to accounts given by his students, Wittgenstein's teaching was oriented by an openness and receptivity to problems, which resulted in a form of pedagogical activity that blurred the distinction between teaching and research. It is well known that Wittgenstein had a tendency to grapple with, and to directly confront what he took to be hitherto unexplored territory – as well as to problematise much of the existing terrain. These tendencies were evident not only in his writings, but also in his (highly performative) lectures:

He had no manuscript or notes. He thought before the class. The impression was of tremendous concentration. The exposition usually led to a question, to which the audience were supposed to suggest an answer. The answers in turn became starting points for new thoughts leading to new questions. It depended on the audience, to a great extent, whether the discussion became fruitful and whether the connecting thread was kept in sight from the beginning of one lecture to another.

This emphasis upon the production of questions, along with the confrontation and engagement with problems indicates a strong resonance between Wittgenstein's approach to teaching and the pragmatic, process-relational concerns with experiential encounter that underpin the Deleuzian conception of pedagogical activity. Thus, we find a similar concern with problematic encounter reflected in the teaching style of Deleuze.

It's like a research laboratory: you give courses on what you are investigating, not on what you know.... [W]e rejected the principle of 'building up knowledge' progressively: ... everyone took what they needed or wanted, what they could use. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 139).

The dynamism of the process perspective, along with its experiential context – that is, its emphasis upon process, experience and transformation - resonates with such a conception of teaching/research and likewise indicates some interesting connections with creative practice. In connection with this it is perhaps worth reiterating the intimate connection between the pragmatist and process perspectives, as well as the

affinity of the arts with process relational concerns. Susanne Langer once suggested that Bergson should be considered the ‘artists’ philosopher’ (Langer, 1979, p.114) Langer was an important philosopher of art and mind, the author of *Feeling and Form* and *Philosophy in a New Key*, who was herself supervised by Alfred North Whitehead). We saw in chapter one how it is processual thinking that underpins Dewey’s classic of art education *Art as Experience* as well as his analysis of more traditional education in *Education and Experience* – and a similar processual emphasis can be found in Whitehead’s *The Aims of Education*. These early twentieth century process philosophers were interested in a kind of educational reform, which very much resonates with the ideals and the activities that would seem to be characteristic of both Deleuzian and Wittgensteinian teaching contexts. Dewey and Whitehead likewise presented an approach to education that emphasised the importance of creative learning contexts and tutors ‘learning with’ their students.

We learn nothing from those who say: ‘Do as I do’. Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me’, and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce... When a body combines some of its own distinctive points with those of a wave, it espouses the principle of a repetition which is no longer that of the Same, but involves the Other—involves difference, from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted. To learn is indeed to constitute this space of an encounter with signs, in which the distinctive points renew themselves in each other, and repetition takes shape while disguising itself. (Deleuze, 2001, p. 23; Semetsky, 2006, pp.75-76)

2.34 The Concept of Multiplicity in Deleuze and Wittgenstein

The emphasis upon the generation of questions in Wittgenstein’s lectures, when considered along with the notion that such questions were intended to be generative of new thoughts and to themselves beget further questions draws attention to the rhizomatic quality to the thought of the later Wittgenstein that is evident in both his approach to teaching and in his portrayal of conceptual structure. This is most apparent when we consider Wittgenstein’s famous dictum concerning the definition of games:

Consider ... the proceedings that we call “games”. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? - Don't say: "There must be

something common, or they would not be called 'games'" ... but look and see whether there is anything common to all. - And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail... You will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. (Wittgenstein, 1961, § 66)

From the passage above, we can glean that there is a constructivist strand to Wittgenstein's thought that is pragmatically oriented and which would seem to resonate with empirical concerns. Ultimately, it will be suggested that empirical dimension to Wittgenstein's thinking is somewhat illusory - that it never escapes a form of conceptual mediation and that as such it is focused upon primarily conceptual concerns. For the time being, however, it will be worth juxtaposing Wittgenstein's conception of family resemblance from *Philosophical Investigations* with Deleuze's comments concerning rhizomatic growth in *Dialogues II*:

If one takes the exteriority of relations as a conducting wire or as a line, one sees a very strange world unfold, fragment by fragment: a Harlequin's jacket or patchwork, made up of solid parts and voids, blocs and ruptures, attractions and divisions, nuances and bluntnesses, conjunctions and separations, alternations and interweavings, additions which never reach a total and subtractions whose remainder is never fixed ... This geography of relations is particularly important. (Deleuze 2002, p. 55)

Common to Deleuze and Wittgenstein's respective positions is a notion of non-hierarchical organization. Deleuze, however, presents an account that is also strongly vitalistic in character, stressing the importance of the rhizome's perpetual growth and transformation. For Deleuze, it is the life of the rhizome and its perpetual structural development that is of utmost importance. In contrast, Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance is less vitalistic, resting content with a present tense, structural, or purely architectural description. In this sense, Wittgenstein delineates the complexity of a concept, whilst remaining silent about either its genesis or its productive potential - presenting us with a fossil of a rhizome as opposed to a living, breathing organism.

Despite their subtly different emphasis upon the mutability and transformation of concepts, Deleuzian and Wittgensteinian philosophies would seem to be in accord both with respect to the complexity of conceptual structure, and with the possible

breadth of a given concept's ramifications. This is perhaps why, in a rare moment of positive assessment, Deleuze tells us that 'Wittgenstein and his disciples were right to define meaning by use.' (Deleuze, 1990, p.146)

2.35 The Conflation of the Conceptual and the Empirical in Wittgensteinian Thought.

The apparently empirical, descriptive concern that would seem to underlie Wittgenstein's exhortation that we should 'not say that there *must be*' (my italics) but should and 'look and see' whether something is the case (Wittgenstein, 1961, § 66) ultimately proves to be something of a chimera, narrowing into a form of conceptual prohibition that is peculiarly resistant to linguistic and conceptual change. In reality, Wittgenstein avoids any direct empirical engagement, choosing instead to interrogate his own conception of what constitutes the common-sensical or normative employment of terms, or to speculatively envisage the alternative linguistic practices of primitive tribes or distant cultures. It is in this sense that his later philosophy never really escapes the conceptual foundationalism or the marked solipsism of Wittgenstein's earlier philosophical approach. This prohibitive emphasis upon the legitimate uses of language that can be located in the thought of Wittgenstein himself, and which is accentuated in the thought of many of his disciples (ultimately ossifying into a Wittgensteinian 'methodology'), resonates not so much with a pragmatic conception of meaning -which would retain an important flexibility, and an affinity with process-relational concerns – but rather with Wittgenstein's earlier notion of language as transcendental condition, that is developed in the *Tractatus*.

The conflict between the pragmatic and transcendental character of Wittgenstein's philosophy ultimately resolves in an interesting and somewhat contradictory fashion. That is to say, whilst a pragmatic agenda would seem to condition Wittgenstein's practice (that is, his teaching and his manner of conducting philosophical research), it is a notion of the transcendental that would seem ultimately to dominate his thought, resulting in a philosophical pragmatism of the right, which emphasises the regulation, as opposed to the transformation or development of linguistic communities.

From a Deleuzian perspective, the rift between the practical and theoretical dimensions of Wittgenstein's philosophical activity confers an air of hypocrisy upon Wittgenstein's philosophical activity – and it is this that perhaps best explains Deleuze's rather volatile, negative assessment of Wittgenstein as a philosopher. That is to say, whilst Kant ultimately stands as a disappointment to Deleuze (Kant briefly wakes from a dogmatic slumbers, only to shift in position, and return to sleep once more), from Deleuze's perspective there is something contradictory, and slightly unethical about the disagreement between theory and practice that hangs over Wittgenstein. We shall see in section three of this thesis, how Deleuze's philosophy likewise has its pragmatic and transcendental dimensions. In Deleuze's case, however there is an attempt to transcendently ground the creative, the temporal and differential – concepts that stand in accord with his practical philosophical commitments as well as with the ethico-aesthetic concerns of his collaborative work with Guattari.²¹

2.40 The Application of a Deleuzian Critique of Wittgenstein to Biggs and Büchler's Project

Having examined the tension between the pragmatic and the transcendental that is manifested in the thought of Wittgenstein, we are in a better position to frame a Deleuzian critique of Biggs and Büchler's position with respect to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. The arguments of Biggs and Büchler, when considered from a Deleuzian perspective, are typically recognition oriented, and as such would be positioned by Deleuze as having been intimately conditioned by the dogmatic image of thought. Earlier in this chapter, we saw a number of ways in which this is evident. We focused primarily upon stylistic aspects of argumentation (e.g. rhetorical usage of language and choice of metaphor). Turning now to a more explicit consideration of Biggs and Büchler's arguments, we can see that they have a tendency to express:

²¹ There is, however something likewise paradoxical in his attempt to produce a foundational philosophy that institutes difference as its ground. This will be explored in chapter four of this thesis.

- i) An Aristotelian concern with taxonomies and essential/non-essential characteristics.
- ii) A Kantian concern with criteria and determination.
- iii) A broadly Wittgensteinian concern with agreement and regularity in social forms of practice.

2.41 The Aristotelian Influence

We have already considered the affinity of Aristotelian taxonomical thought with Biggs and Büchler's approach to the organisation of research paradigms, and we have likewise stressed its influence on research administration at a bureaucratic level (chapter 1, section 1.08, chapter 2, section 2.04). However, the Aristotelian influence can likewise be located in Biggs and Büchler's suggestion that in the context of processes of research, images of an artistic order play a non-essential, secondary role. Thus Biggs' suggestion that 'for the appreciation of the work, images are optional' (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 13, 2010, p. 93) places a distinctly Aristotelian emphasis upon secondary or accidental properties. That is to say, in terms of Biggs taxonomy, illustrations, given their 'accidental' status, are simply 'not relevant' to classification. In pursuing a predominately epistemological agenda, Biggs and Büchler simply do not recognise what Deleuze would position as the performative, processual and affective dimensions of the image. Thus Biggs consideration of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland focuses predominately upon the work of the text. He states how:

For example, an illustration may accompany a text such as Alice in Wonderland, but one could read an un-illustrated version and not be worse off. Indeed, some people might prefer to do so, and create their own mental images. Imagery steers one into a particular vocabulary of form and line, and some might prefer a version with more contemporary illustrations than Tenniel's originals, or none at all. For the appreciation of the work, images are optional. (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 13, 2010, p. 93)

Whilst Biggs and Büchler's in some sense acknowledge the affective dimension of the image, it is nevertheless situated linguistically. That is to say, they recognise that the image 'steers us', but they suggest that it steers us 'into a *particular vocabulary*' (my italics). It is clear that in their prioritisation of the text of Carroll's novel, they give little credence to the way in which a particular style of illustration may

significantly transform our experience of reading (the way in which it may urge upon us a particular selection of the novelistic world). This is perhaps most apparent when we consider the mode of representation adopted by filmic adaptations of the text. When considering, for instance the mode of representation adopted by Švankmajer's provocative and surrealistic *Alice* (1988) we are more directly confronted with the affective dimension of the image.



Figure 8. Still from *Alice* (Švankmajer, 1988)



Figure 9. Additional Stills from *Alice* (Švankmajer, 1988)

Whilst Švankmajer's 'illustration' is technically an example of cinema that makes use of deliberately crude and visceral sound as well as the disjointed character of stop motion animation, it nevertheless serves to amplify the more disturbing and uncanny qualities of Carrol's story. Švankmajer's adaptation seems attuned to an uncanny philosophical materialism – and departs radically from Disney's more homely rendering of the text. Whilst each of these films in some sense stands as a mode of representation, they lead the viewer not into a 'vocabulary' of 'form and line', but rather into what Deleuze, following Leibniz (whilst inflecting him with Spinoza) will describe as 'a selection of a world' (Deleuze, 1988). With respect to this process of selection, Deleuze asks:

How can a being take another being into its world... while preserving the others own relation and world... now we are concerned with a symphony of nature, the composition of a world that is increasingly wide and intense. In what order will the powers, speeds and slownesses be composed? (Deleuze, 1988, p.126)

That both Biggs and Deleuze make reference to Carrol's novel is interesting, but it becomes even more so when we consider the way in which they put it to work in the name of opposite agendas (or opposing worlds). Whilst Deleuze revels in the nonsensical aspects of the story (positioning secondary, linguistic order as arising out of the chaotic and nonsensical), Biggs characterises Humpty Dumpty as an incomprehensible 'isolationist' whose language has in some sense been set adrift.

2.42 The Kantian and Wittgensteinian Influence

It was noted in the general introduction to this thesis that Biggs and Büchler have suggested that only a subset of the practices that have thus far been positioned as practice-led research legitimately cohere with what they take to be the concept/model of traditional research practice, which they see as being in some sense ‘encoded’ in academic conventions, which stand as ‘a cipher for the network of actions that constitute meaningful research’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p.85).

Biggs and Büchler have suggested that our experiential encounters with research practices and research proposals alike are necessarily conditioned by a mediating structure that is socio-conceptual or social psychological in nature, and that this is expressed in the regulatory systems of universities, funding bodies and research boards (application forms, regulations, research assessment exercises etc). Despite the shift from an abstract concern with categories and concepts, to a concern with the machinations of institutions, the Kantian influence is nevertheless clear. The influence of Kantian thought is all the more apparent when Biggs and Büchler ask if we can *recognise* particular practices as research, or if the practices in question must instead be positioned as something else/other (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.8). Thus, Kantian notions of necessary conceptual conditioning and representation can be seen to orient Biggs & Büchler’s criterion-based account of research definition. In accordance their broadly Wittgensteinian orientation, however, Biggs and Büchler suggest that the conceptual mediation of research processes has socio-behavioural and socio-linguistic origins – seeking these conditions in definitions of research centric terms, as well as in the content of institutional/administrative criteria. In this sense, Biggs and Büchler’s reliance upon dictionary definitions as well as their resistance to empirical survey can therefore be seen as an analogue of Wittgenstein’s tendency to reflect upon the normative employment of concepts. However, it likewise calls to mind the prohibitive avoidance of *illegitimate* uses, or the misapplication of language that is present in the thought of Wittgenstein, and which is subject to amplification in the work of his followers.

In this sense, Biggs and Büchler can be seen to inherit the peculiar tension between the pragmatic and transcendental that has been described above in relation to the

thought of Wittgenstein himself. In their early work, this manifests itself in a concern with the concept of research per sé, or the ‘meaning’ of the term research (Biggs, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004) and as we shall see, this is ultimately encapsulated through four core, primary, criteria that are presented as constituting legitimate research (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 9). In their later work, however, there is a more pragmatically oriented shift in emphasis – here the founding notion of community consensus institutes a localised, but nevertheless conservative ideal, with legitimate practices of research being positioned as those which reflect the values of communities of research practitioners (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p. 98). The values of practice-led researchers, however, are encapsulated through the introduction of an additional four criteria that are positioned as being in some sense secondary, or of a concessional nature. In this sense, notions of community value and meaning, though positioned in ‘social psychological’ terms can be seen to operate in Biggs and Büchler’s philosophy as a form of transcendental condition (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p. 84).

Rather than being logically determined, conventions are *socially* determined ... We believe that academic conventions provide a kind of shorthand for what activities the academic community needs and wants. (Biggs and Büchler, 2010, p. 85 - my italics)

Thus through the rhetorical fusion of the terms ‘need’ and ‘want’, Biggs and Büchler go beyond any notion of simple expectation that would be implied by the term ‘want’ employed in isolation. That is to say, the notion that academic communities ‘need’ a particular kind of activity implies an exaggerated degree of necessity and finality that must ultimately overreach.

The primacy given to the notion of community value with respect to the definition of meaningful research can be seen as resulting from the overstatement of the integrative aspects of research processes to the detriment of processes of differentiation that occur in particular forms of research innovation or performative, instrumental activities directed at social change. Accordingly, there is an important sense in which Biggs and Büchler’s notion of satisfaction with respect to processes of research would seem to exclude the satisfaction of the individual practitioner. That is to say, they would seem to be less concerned with feelings of satisfaction that might arise in the

performance of individual research activities, than they are with the sense in which processes of research might serve to satisfy particular community values. It is important to acknowledge this distinction, as satisfaction would seem, in the context of Biggs and Büchler's argument, to be operationalised purely in terms of the non-inhibition of statistically regular community activities. In contrast to this, Henk Slager a prominent early Deleuzian voice in the legitimacy debate has produced an account of the research process entitled *The Pleasure of Research*, which positions artistic research as a temporary autonomous activity where intellectual pleasure and an experimental method serves to invigorate processes of research (Slager, 2015). Accordingly, Biggs and Büchler de-emphasise what might be positioned as the more personally satisfying and meaningful moments in a research process. Such moments of individual innovation (the breaking of new ground, the development of a new interpretation, or the introduction of a new metaphor for explaining a process) can be problematic when considered from the level of community – but it is important to note that the dissonance that arises at the level of the social in the face of disorienting innovation is also what makes such moment most meaningful, significant and personally satisfying. Biggs and Büchler tend to position the desire for high research impact as something of a romantic aspiration that has little bearing upon research per sé. It is, however, clear from their description of their own research activity, that they – or at least their intended audience - nevertheless value qualities of research innovation. In the run up to the 2014 REF, for instance, Biggs research profile, stated that he was ‘a leading international figure in the field of arts research’, and went on to reproduce in quotation an extract from a review, stating that ‘the quality and importance of his work is world leading’ and that it ‘is defining the field’ (researchprofiles.herts.ac.uk, 2013).

2.43 The ‘Circularity Problem’ and Empirical Survey

In developing their critical approach to the legitimacy debate, Biggs and Büchler's make a charge of circularity with respect to the role of empirical analysis or modes of social survey in the delineation of the concept of practice-based research. They cite the Matrix conferences that were held at the University of the Arts as being in some sense wrong headed in their attempt to empirically compile ‘the activities that bear the label of research’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.7). They suggest that ‘the cases that are

taken as exemplars beg the question: on what basis are they labeled PbR if that is the very matter under investigation?’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.7)

The Deleuzian conception of nomadic and sedentary distributions has already been introduced in relation to the discussion of the empirical survey of practice-led research that was conducted by Judith Motram (chapter 2, section 2.12). What this discussion highlights is the opposition between a bottom up constructivist account of the conceptual – which has an affinity with Deleuzian thought, and a top down conceptually oriented essentialism, which it is claimed here has an affinity with Aristotelian essentialism, and the transcendently instituted order that is derived from Kantian and Wittgensteinian thought. Accordingly, it is suggested here that what Biggs and Büchler term the ‘circularity problem’ – the way in which in the gathering together of legitimate exemplars must first assume a concept, might be better considered a rejection of nomadic, constructivist positions that does little more than foreground the quasi-essentialist, sedentary character of their own conservative conceptualism. As Deleuze-Guattari write in *What is Philosophy*:

You will know nothing through concepts unless you have first created them – that is constructed them in an intuition specific to them. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.7)

In the context of their discussion of the circularity problem Biggs and Büchler suggest that any approach that empirically surveys practice-based research across a number of institutions is ‘bound to reinforce the status quo’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.7). This is an interesting turn of phrase, which is more typically employed in arguments against conservatism, but which, as Biggs and Büchler’s work makes apparent, can chime with both revolutionary and reactionary ideals. That is to say, in the context of Biggs and Büchler’s argument (which has a more conservative orientation than any of the positions that they criticise) a break with the current state of affairs is sought - but it is a break that is ultimately revisionist in character, and as such, a break which might be better positioned as a return to an idealised, utopian state of research. In aligning the outcome of an empirical survey with the support or entrenchment of the ‘status quo’ Biggs and Büchler deflect attention from the possibility that the empirical – or the experiential – may play a significant role in the construction and development of concepts. Accordingly, when seen from a Deleuzian perspective, Biggs and Büchler

loose sight of the potential transformation or inflection of the concept of research through the acquisition of empirical data, and as such they effectively underplay the potential significance of the non-conceptual (of the experiential, the material, and changing social/cultural conditions). With this in mind we can see how Biggs and Büchler's notion of circularity resists a pragmatic, constructivist conception of concept formation - imposing instead a requirement for essentialist definition in the guise of a call for reform. In this strategy, there are, of course, important echoes of the operation of the pragmatic/transcendental tensions that have been located in Wittgenstein's thought. This helps us to understand Deleuze's comment concerning the disciples of Wittgenstein:

They imposed <ils ont foutu> a system of terror under the pretext of doing something new, it's poverty introduced as grandeur. (Stivale, 2015)²²

Revisiting the 'circularity problem' with Biggs and Büchler's quasi-essentialist position in mind, we can see that in order to properly feel the force of their argument we must first have accepted and epistemologically prioritised not only the socio-conceptual mediation of phenomena, but also the foundational and determining character of the concept. Indeed, the affinity with the Kantian conception of the conditioning character of the conceptual, is accentuated when Biggs and Büchler propose a set of eight criteria as the 'necessary conditions' (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.10) for practice-led research, and suggest that it is only in so far as a given practice fulfills such criteria, that it can be revealed as a legitimate process of research.

In their justification of their 'socio-behavioural' position, Biggs and Büchler are not themselves immune from circularity. That is to say, if we consider their position in more detail, they would seem to suggest that:

- i) Community values are primary, and in this sense they stand as a kind of Wittgensteinian bedrock.
- ii) Meaningful actions reflect, and are thus subordinate to the community values identified in (i).

²² 'Ils ont foutu' translates as 'screwed up' / 'we're all screwed'.

- iii) Academic conventions are a ‘cipher’ for a network of satisfying actions (ii) that themselves are constitutive with respect to the performance of meaningful research (i)

The quasi-transcendental status of the values described in (i) becomes clear when we consider attempts to describe such values in isolation from the actions described in (ii).

... the aspect that we focused on was not whether this element or that element was important, but the observation that these elements described actions: the action of rationally connecting ideas, the action of disseminating outcomes, etc. These actions were undertaken because they reflected what the academic community valued, in this case for example, the values of connecting, building and sharing. (Biggs and Büchler, 2010, p. 85)

We have already encountered the way in which Biggs and Büchler have a tendency to resist notions of privacy and subjectivity - questioning their explanatory power and encouraging us to rethink personal values in a public context. There is an important sense, however, in which their arguments against the value of experiential knowledge, which will be explored in more detail chapter three are also applicable to any similarly private conception of personal value. Biggs and Büchler stay true to this, attempting to recast ‘value’ in public and behavioural terms. However whilst there is a sense that this remains consistent with their own philosophy, it nevertheless introduces a circularity problem all of its own.²³ That is to say, in the context of the statement of their eight criteria, community values are positioned as grounding community actions – but community actions are likewise positioned as grounding community values.

2.44 The Substance of Biggs and Büchler’s Eight Criteria

We have seen how Biggs and Büchler’s eight criteria break down into a group of primary and secondary categories, which contain four criteria apiece. The primary categories are positioned as truly essential in character, and as shared universally across every form of academic research, whilst the latter are positioned as secondary

²³ We have already seen how in their criticism of the Matrix conferences, Biggs & Büchler make much of a problem of circularity – suggesting that citing exemplars begs the question of how they came to be labeled/identified as research in the first place.

‘issues or indicators’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 13) that are discipline-specific, and which play a somewhat concessionary role. Thus, for Biggs and Büchler, academic research per sé is primarily characterised by the requirements of ‘question and answer’, ‘method’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘audience’ whilst practice-led research is characterised by additional concerns with ‘text and image’, ‘relationship of form and content’, ‘the function of experience’, and ‘the function of rhetoric’ - which is defined, somewhat idiosyncratically as ‘constituting things through language’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.15).

Thus far our focus has been directed at the form, as opposed to the content of Biggs and Büchler’s argument. However, it is worth pausing to consider the largely epistemological, positivistic orientation of Biggs and Büchler’s primary categories. We have already seen how the fleshing out of the notion of accumulation in the Biggs and Büchler paper is performed in a data-centric fashion that emphasises a notion of the filling of ‘gaps’ in knowledge, or the location of the missing pieces of a puzzle. (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 9) Accompanying this, there is a notion that extant methods can be identified at the outset of a research process, and that such methods will facilitate the acquisition of data (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, pp.10-11). In marked contrast, the position that is developed in these pages develops the idea that much of a practice-led research project can be seen in terms of the development of a project-specific method for the activation of a problem, as opposed to the application of a method, for the formulation of a solution (this is broadly in accord with the conception of method that is implicit in many writings on practice-led research arising out of the Dutch and Australian context - see chapter one, section 1.03). Accordingly, in the conclusion of this thesis it will be suggested that practice-led research is not epistemologically focused, and that the AHRC (formerly AHRB) criteria that informed Biggs’ initial solo authored papers could be reinterpreted in accordance with non-representational concerns that are more strongly onto-phenomenologically focused.

2.45 Axiomatic Argument and the Petition of Principle

In the course of their argument, Biggs and Büchler explain that their method is axiomatic in character, whilst stressing the economy of their approach. They state that:

In developing these criteria we too are making assumptions about what research is. However, our method is not circular, but axiomatic. Axiomatic argumentation proceeds from a few unverifiable statements that lie outside the system of argumentation, paradigmatically employed by Euclid. (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 8)

They go on to tell us that their position adopts the axiom that research is a 'cumulative process', and they suggest that from this single axiom, the rest of their position can be deduced.

That research is cumulative functions as an axiom in our reasoning process. It is a fundamental assumption that cannot be explained and for which our system cannot give any justification ... Axioms are discretionary and it is important for the transparency of academic argumentation that the ones that are adopted be identified from the start ... they are not explained by the researcher who adopts them and cannot be explained within their system of thought. (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 8)

The discretionary character of axiomatic thought becomes prevalent, however, when the notion that the subjective experience of artists, researcher or audience might play a significant role in the delineation of the character of practice-based research, is rejected, largely on the grounds that given the 'personal' nature of experience it goes against the axiom of (i.e. preference for) accumulation (Biggs & Büchler, 2004, p.16)

Although this is a discussion without a definite solution, it is important to recognize that because experience per sé is something personal, its transferability is problematic and thus goes against the axiom of accumulation and the idea that there is something that can be shared in order to build a body of knowledge and interpretation. (Biggs & Büchler, 2004, p.16)

2.46 Biggs and Büchler's Undeclared Axioms

Whilst this may be the case with respect to the assumptions made within their broadly conceptualist framework, it is important to recognise that any position may involve additional axioms of which an author may not be aware. Indeed, to acknowledge that enquiry is axiomatic is to acknowledge that something very like an image of thought is at work in one's philosophy. In this sense, Reidar Due has noted how the notion of petition of principle, which orients the notion of an axiomatic approach, also features in Deleuzian philosophy. That is to say in Deleuzian philosophy, the set of (often tacit) assumptions that are not justified within the system in question goes under the name of the 'plane' of a given philosophy (Due, 2007, p. 167). For Deleuze, the most important feature of a philosophical plane are the assumptions it contains about reality, and a given plane becomes correlated with a given conception of the role of the philosopher. With this in mind, we can see that whilst Biggs and Büchler focus upon what they take to be the single explicit assumption that orients their approach, the influence of Kant and Wittgenstein confers a more fundamental set of unacknowledged assumptions that likewise serve to condition their enquiry. Thus their prioritisation of the conceptual over and above the experiential stands as an undeclared axiom which can be seen to amount to little more than an insistence upon viewing the world in a certain way. As we shall see in chapter 3 (sections 3.30-3.34) and 4 (section 4.43), Deleuze's position is likewise axiomatic, offering an alternative way of approaching the world, which it will be argued is no less partial, but is more attuned to, and consistent with an artistic disposition.

The tone of much of Biggs and Büchler's writing, then, suggests dissatisfaction with the current state of artistic research, and as a consequence, they exhibit a reformist desire for revisionary change. It is claimed here that a set of broadly conservative values orient Biggs and Büchler's position, and that they serve both to inhibit disciplinary development and to jar with a number of broadly artistic concerns.

2.50 Problematic Consequences.

In unpicking Biggs and Büchler's critique of practice based research we have noted a tendency to stress the integrative character of research processes to the detriment of

innovation, instrumentality and the production of the new. In the closing pages of this section, we will consider some slightly problematic consequences that result from the almost singular stress upon integrative that conditions Biggs and Büchler's account.

2.51 The Legitimacy of Wittgenstein's Research Practice

It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the content of Wittgenstein's writings have played a role in the formulation of Biggs and Büchler's research program and that as a consequence they have in some sense built upon his philosophical research. However, Biggs and Büchler's stress upon the necessarily integrative, public, cumulative and community focused nature of research activity would ultimately seem to problematise the status of Wittgenstein's own research activity. That is to say, with Biggs and Büchler's criteria for academic research in mind, it would be extremely difficult to characterise Wittgenstein himself as engaging in legitimate research. To elaborate a little, we can begin by considering the lack of contextual provision that characterises Wittgenstein's writings. That is to say, there are few direct and unveiled references to other philosophers or even to issues and thematics that can be located in philosophy's history in Wittgenstein's work. Indeed, von Wright has gone so far as to suggest that that on the surface 'The author of the *Philosophical Investigations* has no ancestors in philosophy' and that this work is 'without literary sources or influence' (ibid) and that 'from Spinoza, Hume and Kant he (Wittgenstein) said that he could get only occasional glimpses of understanding.' (von Wright, 1955, p. 539)

In connection with this lack of research/community context, it is worth reiterating the comments made in the introduction concerning the tendency of commentators to present Wittgenstein as operating outside of any given philosophical community. Thus Wittgenstein is often depicted as someone philosophically aloof – as isolated, and distanced from friends and enemies alike. He famously rejected the praise of the Logical Positivists when they adopted the work as something of a manifesto. Likewise, after his doctoral examination, he is said to have clapped his examiners (Moore and Russell) on the shoulder, saying 'Don't worry. I know you'll never understand it' (Monk, 1991, p. 271). It is claimed here that rather than excluding Wittgenstein from consideration as a research practitioner, the qualities of independence and innovation that underpin such behaviour are the very things that

testify to the strength of his philosophical research. Moore's report on Wittgenstein's thesis states it well:

It is my personal opinion that Mr Wittgenstein's thesis is a work of genius; but, be that as it may, it is certainly well up to the standard for the Cambridge degree of Doctor of Philosophy. (Monk, 1991, p.271)

Turning now to the peculiarities of Wittgenstein's methodology, it should be noted that the veiled and aphoristic quality of much of his work (Wittgenstein states that he did not, in his writing wish 'to spare other people the trouble of thinking' (Wittgenstein, 1953, viii) results in a clash with any straightforwardly epistemological notion of cumulativity and this is reflected by the industry of interpretation with respect to his life and his work:

Wittgenstein's lecturing style, and indeed his writing style, was curiously at odds with his subject-matter, as though a poet had somehow strayed into the analysis of the foundations of mathematics and *The Theory of Meaning*. He himself [Wittgenstein] once wrote: 'I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought to be written as a poetic composition. (Monk 1991, pp. 290-29)

With these observations in mind, it should be clear that it would be particularly troublesome, if we were to adhere to Biggs and Büchler's emphasis upon community, integration, epistemology and cumulativity, to sanction the philosophical activity of Wittgenstein – who it must be remembered stands as one of their central research influences - as engaging in legitimate research practice.

2.60 Practitioner Values and Philosophical Systems

In the discussion of the concept of research paradigms developed in their paper *Supervision in an Alternative Research Paradigm* (Biggs & Büchler, 2009) -written at a relatively late stage in the legitimacy debate when the notions of artistic and practice-led research were gaining rather more academic acceptance - Biggs and Büchler adopted a slightly more permissive and pluralistic position, in which different communities of research practitioners were positioned as regulating their own activities, with the concerns of the community functioning as a kind of transcendental

condition for the validation of research activity. In this sense, in their later work, the activities and conventions of a research community take the place of any notion of the overarching ‘meaning’ of research centric terms, but occupy the same functional role and serve the same regulatory/integrative agenda. This paper is interesting in so far as it captures the moment in which Biggs and Büchler begin to embrace the idea of practice-led research as having a certain legitimacy, but being expressive of an alternative set of values and beliefs.²⁴ In this sense it represents an attempt by Biggs and Büchler to think relativistically, but it is equally interesting in so far as it illustrates both the pervasivity and the entrenchment of a conservative image of thought. Here Biggs and Büchler discuss the work of the constructivists Guba and Lincoln who had been influential in the debate concerning the emergence of ‘new paradigms’ of artistic and practice-led research. Carole Gray (1998) and Julian Malins (Gray and Malins, 1995, 2004) had made early reference to Guba and Lincoln’s work on paradigm formation in sociological enquiry, and Lincoln and Denzin were likewise cited in Brad Hasemans (2006) manifesto. Gray, Malins and Haseman applauded what they saw as a ‘performative turn’ emerging in the context of qualitative research through the work of Guba, Lincoln, and Denzin (Haseman, 2006, p. 4; Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). Biggs and Büchler’s account of Guba and Lincoln’s work, however, is distinctive in so far as it expresses a more angular, reductive logic, and departs quite radically, if not from the substance, then certainly from the spirit of Guba and Lincoln’s project. That is to say, in Biggs and Büchler’s exposition of Guba and Lincoln’s ideas, there is a marked difference in tone. Guba and Lincoln ultimately emphasise the complexity, permeability, transformation and mutability of various schools of non-positivistic research (the things that non-traditionalists such as Haseman find particularly attractive), Biggs and Büchler focus instead upon extremities of opposition - primarily in their emphasis upon the very binary distinction that they make between positivistic and constructivist paradigms, and between realist and anti-realist ontologies (Biggs and Büchler, 2009).

The differences between Biggs and Büchler and Guba and Lincoln’s accounts are best framed in terms of emphasis, and their respective preferences for simplicity and clarity (in the case of Biggs and Büchler) and complexity and porosity (in the case of

²⁴ This was perhaps in recognition that the climate was changing surrounding practice-led research – with an increase in institutional acceptance.

Guba and Lincoln). However, these broadly aesthetic differences would seem to reflect deeper discrepancies concerning the function of concepts and the nature of their development, which, it is claimed here, are likewise reflective of divergent epistemologies, ontologies and systems of value. Reflecting upon the style of analytic philosophy (a prominent influence upon Biggs B uchler’s approach), the speculative realist philosopher Graham Harman, interviewed in 2013 notes:

...here’s another problem with mainstream academic philosophy ... they think good writing is only about *clarity*, as if the only problem with bad writing were vagueness and imprecision. But what we need is not clear writing, but *lucid* writing that really brings things to life before us. And since things are never entirely clear, lucid writing means using vagueness, allusion, and insinuation at times, just as the great Renaissance painters had to master the art of shadow to depict things accurately. Academic philosophy today has no sense of *chiaroscuro*, and thus no sense of style. (Kimbell, 2013)

In order to explore the tacit, rhetorical, aesthetic dimension that is operative at the level of image of thought, it is worth noting some disparities between Biggs and B uchler’s exposition of Guba and Lincoln’s ideas. The incommensurability of paradigms that is foregrounded by Biggs and B uchler, and which ultimately conditions much of their early work, draws upon a very early paper of Guba and Lincoln’s, written in 1994. The paper in question was produced in a climate of academic conflict between positivistic and non-positivistic forms of sociological research, and as a consequence, it focused more closely upon oppositions and antagonism between perspectives.²⁵ However Biggs and B uchler’s focus upon paradigmatic extremes serves to obscure the receptivity to overlap, permeability and paradigmatic relation which was also seeded in the 1994 paper and which came to prominence in much of Guba and Lincoln’s later writing. This serves an illustration of the way in which even the most analytical approach to argument can be seen to employ tacit aesthetic/rhetorical strategies. Indeed, as Biggs & B uchler have themselves noted, ‘How something is said, and indeed saying anything at all, begins to direct thoughts in a particular way’ (Biggs and B uchler, 2008, p.15)

²⁵ Interestingly, the so-called ‘science wars’ that took place between the natural and social sciences was symptomatic of a postmodern cultural shift. Indeed running contemporaneously to this discussion was, for instance, a conflict between ‘analytic’ Anglo-American philosophy and ‘synthetic’ European philosophy (Snow, 1964), as well as the so called ‘legibility wars’ that took place in the context of modern and postmodern graphic design (Vander Lans, 2009).

It is clear that Biggs and Büchler's suggestion, as late as 2008, that 'it is very difficult to make connections horizontally across paradigms... it is difficult to map one onto another' (Biggs and Büchler, 2008, p.5) departs from the spirit of Guba and Lincoln's philosophy. Whilst Biggs and Büchler's focus upon contraries and polarities assists to some extent in a speedy exposition of Guba and Lincoln's position, it equally serves to obscure the emphasis upon the importance of structural complexity, structural development and the porosity of categories that orients Guba and Lincoln's explanation of paradigmatic change. Thus, Guba and Lincoln begin their later, 2005 paper, for the sixth edition of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, by distancing themselves from their earlier concern with incommensurability, and choosing instead to focus upon more fluid notions of symbiosis and the elaboration of nuance in the development of successive paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 163). Accordingly, there is a clear sense in which their account leans towards a postmodern conception of paradigmatic multiplicity as opposed to any straightforwardly hierarchical form of conceptual organisation.

When discussing the development of paradigms, it is important to recognise that Guba and Lincoln express their ideas using language that implies, movement, intensity and threshold, and that this implies an affinity with postmodern and poststructuralist positions.²⁶ Conversely, Biggs and Büchler tend to express concepts using the language of borders, inclusion and exclusion, that reflects an at once more classical and conservative philosophical idiom. Ultimately, Guba and Lincoln position the most 'important issues' of enquiry as being those subjects of concern, which illustrate 'the influence of one paradigm upon another'. They go on to suggest that there is '(now) great potential for the interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing or bricolage'— and that taxonomical categories keep 'altering' and 'enlarging', whilst boundaries between paradigms keep 'shifting' (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.167). Thus there is an interesting stylistic discrepancy between the writing of Biggs and Büchler and Guba and Lincoln, that can be best framed in terms of voice. Guba and Lincoln suggests that the qualitative researcher's voice may be that of the 'transformative intellectual' or that of the

²⁶ Steven Crook (1991) notes that there is a tendency towards reductionist, physicalist vitalism in much postmodern thinking, and observes the prevalence of physicalist tropes in Deleuze, Baudrillard and Foucault. Crook cites Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) concept of 'intensity' — noting how it collapses the material and the semiotic, whilst Kwinter (2001) stresses the importance of thresholds of emergence and energetic thermodynamics.

‘passionate participant’ as opposed to the voice of dispassionate neutrality that they align with the positivist ideal - and in accordance with this, they identify a number of performative dimensions of research processes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.15; 2005, pp.182-184). They likewise note that qualitative research projects are sometimes directed towards social action and, that accordingly, they are often intended to bring about socio-cultural change (2005, p.175).

Guba and Lincoln make no secret of their own commitments to a productive constructivism, and over time their style comes increasingly to embody such postures. In marked contrast to this, Biggs and Büchler speak predominately with what Guba and Lincoln describe as a ‘positivist’ voice – the voice of the ‘disinterested scientist’, who Guba and Lincoln likewise position – importantly from the perspective of this thesis - as the ‘informer of decision makers, policy makers and change agents’ (1994, p.115). It is interesting that in their discussion of ‘research posture’, Guba and Lincoln do not make any significant distinction between positivist and post-positivist voices. It is suggested here, however, that there are grounds for such a distinction to be made and that ultimately Biggs and Büchler’s writings should be regarded as predominately post-positivist in orientation, but with social constructivist leanings. To elaborate a little, Biggs and Büchler’s writings are positivistic in so far as they adopt a ‘scientific’ voice, employ a strong analytical logic, tend towards parsimony and economy and frequently address administrative concerns. However, they also lean towards postpositivism and ultimately constructivism by virtue of their tendency to break away from apparently disinterested observation in order to acknowledge their presuppositions, and the value-laden qualities of observation.

Biggs earliest writings in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research were positioned by Biggs as constructivist in nature (see chapter 1, pp. 7-8) and a set of constructivist tendencies, resurfaced in Biggs and Büchlers later work, as it began to acknowledge the influence of situation and community upon methodological frameworks. Throughout the great majority of their writings, however, Biggs and Büchler would seem to have sided with voices such as those of Friedman and Durling – adopting a positivistic position that was broadly sympathetic to administrative concerns. The sense in which constructivist and positivist frameworks would seem to be co-present in Biggs writings problematises, or at least raises

questions concerning the consistency of Biggs' position – ultimately squaring poorly with his suggestion that the horizontal connection between paradigms is problematic.

2.61 Positivism, Anti-Positivism, Multiplicity and Incommensurability

In stressing the incommensurability of paradigms, there is a danger that Biggs and Büchler have lost sight of the mutual, critical influence of oppositional positions. That is to say, positivistic research practices have changed markedly over time and this is due to influences that are both internal and external to the paradigm itself. In one sense, the contemporary dominance of post-positivism in scientific research practice is testament to this, but as we shall see shortly, in recent years, there has been a materialistic turn in both the arts and humanities - that underpins much of the writing most sympathetic to practice-led research - which, in its collapse of matter, culture and sensation contests the inevitability of paradigmatic separation between positivist and non-positivist paradigms. Accordingly, in substantiating the claim that paradigms may differ but nevertheless admit of influence,²⁷ it is worth considering the transformation of positivism into post-positivism as a consequence of both internal and external critique. Likewise, from a more contemporary perspective, it is worth considering the recent move towards naturalistic as opposed to idealist or anti-realistic philosophies in the context of European philosophy– which serves to illustrate the way in which the suggestion that there are fundamental incompatibilities between (supposedly naturalistic and objective) realism and (supposedly idealistic and subjective) anti-realism can be considered something of an overstatement (Mullarkey, 2006, p.1).

2.62 The Relationship of Post-Positivism to Positivism

With regard to the transformation of positivism into the post-positivism, the (internal) influence of Popper saw the institution of theoretical falsifiability as a pre-requisite for the scientific legitimacy of hypotheses, and the related emphasis upon probabilistic conjecture as opposed to truth claims (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.106). In contrast, the more radical (and external), revolutionary claims of Kuhn tended to be

²⁷ Deleuze writes of the importance of 'disjunctive synthesis' as a 'relation of non-relation' that provides a perpetual stimulus for negotiated invention and creation between seemingly incommensurable things.

rejected - questioning as they did, the very logic of scientific activity. However, it is through predominately, external sociological critique, that here has been some acceptance, albeit with a degree of qualification, of the value laden aspects of empirical enquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Thus in its attempt to deal with both internal and external critique, that positivistic research practice has become increasingly subject to nuance, ultimately morphing into various strains of post-positivism, and resulting in a situation where the majority of contemporary scientists can be seen to work within some kind post-positivist context. Accordingly, it is not unusual for researchers in the sciences to view science as a fallibilistic enterprise and to likewise acknowledge the influence of background knowledge and researcher values upon the observation of phenomena – albeit the case that an attempt is usually made to incorporate measures into their research practice that might account for, or serve as a corrective to such factors.

2.63 The Naturalistic Turn in European Philosophy

Turning now to the second point of interest with respect to the questioning of the notion that there are fundamental incompatibilities, or irreconcilable oppositions between positivistic and non-positivistic paradigms – we will consider the recent interest in naturalism arising outside of contemporary philosophy. It has recently been noted (Bryant, Srnicek & Harman, 2011, pp. 3-8; Mullarkey 2006, p.1) that there are a number of contemporary European philosophers (collectively, Mullarkey and Bryant et al cite Badiou, DeLanda, Deleuze, Henry, Laruelle, Latour, Stengers, and Žižek), who in their emphasis upon the materialistic, or naturalistic concept of immanence, have begun to embrace predominantly realistic as opposed to idealistic or anti-realistic ontologies. That is to say, philosophies of immanence develop accounts of the real that foreground its self-sufficiency, its self-determination and its freedom from external dependence upon ‘transcendent’ entities such as god, self, mind, or language. Reidar Due defines the concept well, whilst also drawing attention to a set of epistemological and ontological implications that will prove significant from the perspective of understanding practice-led research:

Deleuze formalizes the term [immanence] so that it comes to mean *any manner of thinking that dispenses with an external or transcendent viewpoint* ... For the *ontology of the mind*, immanence means

that the mind is part of reality and unfolds as an activity within the force field of reality as a whole ... For *epistemology*, or the examination of what it is to think well and of how thought relates to its objects, the concept of immanence entails the view that thought develops as a process alongside the reality that it seeks to grasp: thought is not like a picture of a world of objects, but the unfolding of different kinds of reality within the reality of thought. (Due, 2007, pp. 21-22)

With respect to the concept of immanence, reality is characterised in broadly naturalistic and self-sufficient terms, as being importantly ‘in and of itself’. As Mullarkey has noted, the philosophical dispute between rival philosophies of immanence concerns the nature or character of that which is immanent – thus there are philosophies that emphasise variously the totality and independence of life, affect, process or number (Mullarkey, 2006, p.2). However, common to each is a monistic worldliness, and an inherent materiality that is broadly compatible with naturalism.

Mullarkey opens his discussion by drawing attention to the artificiality of the taxonomic distinction between Continental and Anglo-American philosophy:

Philosophically speaking, of course, there is no such thing as ‘Continental philosophy’ at all – this is both a sham geo-cultural distinction and a category error. There is not one philosophical theme that is exclusive to the European Continent, nor any outside the Continent that is confined to ‘Anglo-American’ philosophy... no methodological barrier exists between the two traditions either. (Mullarkey, 2006, p.1)

Mullarkey goes on to suggest that whilst divisions can be located in a professional context - between departments, publishers, journals, and conferences, the claim that ‘analytic thought is uniquely objectivist, individualist and scientific, or the supposed fact that Continental thought is uniquely subjectivist, collectivist and historicist’, should be resisted. Ultimately he claims that:

Most commentators agree ...that this segregation neither fully succeeds nor fully fails to map clearly onto any geographical, historical, methodological, or philosophical difference.. [and that] ... these factors are, at best, tendencies or tropisms – directions more or less followed by both. (Mullarkey, 2006, p.2)

The philosophy of Deleuze, itself a strong influence upon this thesis, is one such philosophy that stresses the importance of the concept of immanence. Deleuze’s philosophy has an affinity with conceptions of materialism and naturalism and

resonates positively with Borgdorff classification of artistic research as research that expresses the ‘immanent and performative perspective’ (Borgdorff, 2012, p.20, p.38). Thus it is important to recognise from the outset that Deleuze is in no sense an anti-realist (in Biggs’ conception of the term), and that although he is clearly critical of the concept of representation, the critique that is developed in his *Difference and Repetition* is not primarily anti-scientific in character. Indeed, as Mullarkey has suggested, Deleuze’s concept of immanence attempts to engage receptively with the sciences – but in such a way as to be expressive of a radical political agenda (Mullarkey 2006, p.3). Thus Deleuze formulates a wild, difference oriented, processual form of naturalism, which attempts to incorporate radical politics into the very constitution of matter. Accordingly, on the occasions when he is explicitly critical of the sciences, his target is neither its naturalism, nor its realism. Rather, the focus of his critique is the *abstraction* of flows and naturalistic processes that are embodied in the notion of generalised theoretical constructs - be this through essences, definition, or laws - the relationship between which, as we have seen, has been explored in some detail by Alexandre Lefebvre (2008), whose writings I am indebted to here. In this sense, Deleuze is less concerned with undermining notions of matter or notions of reality, than he is with outlining the necessary limitations in its description, capture and specification. Importantly for our purposes here, Deleuze’s real target might be said to be the reification of conceptual categories that takes place in institutional contexts as a form of ‘molar’ organisation (the term institution is intended here in the full sense of the word – referring both to organisational structure, and to embodiment of tradition). As such his critique is more applicable to taxonomic practices, administrative and adjudicative procedures and the veneration of forms of doxa or common sense – and it is interesting for our purposes here to note that each of the targets of the Deleuzian critique are prevalent in the literature surrounding the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research (as outlined in chapter 1).

2.70 Summary and Interim Conclusions

As an outcome of their discussion of research paradigms, Biggs and Büchler have suggested that there is a need to identify the core values of the community of practice-led researchers.

The practitioner-research community needs to take responsibility for identifying its practice-academic values and to be critical of any values and conventions they feel they have inherited from their genealogical roots. Once the fundamental values of the community are visible, then meaningful actions can be identified and the significant activities conventionalized. In this way it will be clear why the practitioner-research community does what it does given what it believes and values. (Biggs & Büchler, p.98)

It is claimed here that in attempting to identify such values, we might look to the primary theorists that are adopted by those embarking upon practice-led research degrees. At this time, the philosophy of Deleuze is in the ascendancy, and as a consequence this would suggest an affinity between the values and commitments of many practice-led research students and those expressed by Deleuze's philosophy. However, as we shall see in chapter four, we need not restrict this investigation to questions of value – that is to say, it is important to recognise that to engage with Deleuze's values is also to engage with his ontology.

There are two strands of Deleuzian thought that condition his critique of representation, and which are likewise relevant to the development of a non-representational research agenda. The first, as has already been suggested, is concerned with what he takes to be the artificial, abstract generality of taxonomical thought, its affinity with essentialist thinking and its consequent resistance to difference, situation, movement and contingency. The second is concerned with the positioning of the enquirer as in some sense distinct from, or transcendent to the subject of enquiry. With respect to the former, such principles of classification stand as an affront to the openness of his particularly vitalistic form of naturalism, whilst the latter is seen as a legacy of Platonic thought that, for Deleuze, serves to divorce the mind and its ideational products from their grounding in the natural world. Accordingly, the notion that Deleuze's philosophy might in some sense embody the practitioner values that Biggs and Büchler seek to identify, may nevertheless prove problematic for Biggs and Büchler, or at least expose a certain irony, given that Deleuze would no doubt reject many of the assumptions that condition Biggs and Büchler's approach.

In the chapter that follows we will examine the connection between sensation and materialism in Deleuzian ontology, exploring the way in which Deleuzian aesthetics

recodes and re-expresses many of Deleuze's ontological commitments. It is suggested that in Deleuzian ontology we can locate a model of innovation oriented, non-representational, performative research and through Deleuze's aesthetics we can illustrate the intimate connection of this framework with artistic production, and the way in which the performative paradigm stresses the instrumentality of the artefact. Thus we can formulate a model for practice-based modes of research that does not lose site of its connection with artistic practice and qualities of sensation, or indeed with its connection to the material world.

Chapter 3: Thought, Sensation and the Neutrality of Process Philosophy

'Style in philosophy strains toward three different poles: concepts, or new ways of thinking; percepts, or new ways of seeing and construing; and affects, or new ways of feeling. They're the philosophical trinity, philosophy as opera: you need all three to get things moving.'

(Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pp.164-165)

3.0 Introduction to Deleuze on Artistic and Philosophical Construction

In the previous section we began an exploration of the Deleuzian critique of the concept of representation, with a view to developing an alternative conception of research activity that is primarily focused upon situated practices of relational construction, and associated activities of innovation and experimentation. It was argued that teleological differences between disciplinary domains should inflect their respective conceptions of research activity, and that given the importance of the concepts of process, sensation and materiality to professional modes of artistic practice, we should formulate a conception of artistic research activity in which such focal disciplinary concerns can play an active role.²⁸

Whilst delineating the Deleuzian critique, it was noted that for Deleuze, there is a close affinity between the concept of representation and the concept of recognition. That is to say, the Deleuzeian concept of recognition aligns conceptual (re)cognition with conceptual (re)presentation, and positions them as collectively instituting a conservative, apriori form of generality that occludes both the specificity and the transformation of entities that, for Deleuze, resonates with energetic transformations occurring at a deeper ontological level. Accordingly, it was suggested that the Deleuzian critique expresses an alternative set of difference-oriented ontological

²⁸ This reference to the prevailing teleology of a domain is not intended to imply any timeless, eternal essence or function – rather, its pragmatic and contingent foundation should be stressed.

commitments, and it was noted that these commitments in some way inform Deleuze's conception of sensation and experience.

The aim of the present section will be to examine Deleuze's conception of sensation and experience, and the related concepts of affect and intensity in more detail, exploring their impact upon the received notions of research activity that are expressed in positivistic criticisms of practice-based research. In the process we will examine the way in which Deleuze reframes art and philosophy as compositional, corporeal, constructive practices. Whilst Deleuze-Guattari claim that philosophy and art are predominately constructive disciplines, they nevertheless suggest that each mode of practice has a distinctive domain and its own respective plane of operation. In this sense, philosophy is presented as the activity of constructing concepts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.8), whilst art is presented as the activity concerned with the construction of aggregates of 'percept' and 'affect' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.24). On the surface, this would seem to suggest that a disciplinary division or separation of the faculties takes place in their collaborative work that is somewhat at odds with Deleuze's emphasis upon the importance of cross disciplinary, transversal connection in his sole authored works. However, as we shall see, beneath this apparent separation there lies a unity of compositional practice and a stress upon the absolute ontological priority of the new, which venerates and generalises a mode of creative production.²⁹ This is ultimately derived from distinctively Deleuzian process-ontological concerns and is reflected in Deleuze's choice of artistic terminology to describe the creation and development of concepts (authoring, signing etc.).

Section one of this thesis was largely critical in character, questioning the value of representation and the relevance of epistemological approaches to artistic research. The argument that is developed in these pages, whilst still critically engaged, seeks to illustrate the positive contribution that can be made by the process perspective to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, with particular reference

23 These broadly ontological concerns begin to take shape in his early materialistic reading of Humean empiricism, and can be seen to follow through the philosophy of language that is expressed in *The Logic of Sense*, his writings on art and aesthetics, which encompass painting (*Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*), literature (*Proust and Signs*) and cinema (*The Time Image, The Movement Image*), and which likewise underpin some of his co-authored works with Guattari (*A Thousand Plateaus, What is Philosophy?*) in which the constructive affinity between art and philosophy is developed in some detail.

to the version of process thought that is expressed in the work of Deleuze. As such, chapter three has both critical and constructive aims.

3.10 The Institutional Critique of Experiential Knowledge

We have seen how the notion that there is something inherently subjective or solipsistic about professional artistic practice and the reception of artwork that drives the conservative, institutionally oriented critique of practice-led modes of research. Central to Biggs and Büchler's conceptual critique of artistic research was the suggestion that there is a subjective and experiential emphasis that can be located in the arts, that conflicts with what they took to be the objective, community oriented demands of legitimate research activity (see chapter 1).

3.11 Biggs' Epistemological Critique of Experiential Knowledge

In an early, sole authored paper, entitled *Learning from Experience: UK approaches to the Experiential Component of Practice Based Research* (Biggs, 2004) Biggs explored and ultimately attempted to problematise the value of experience and the role of experiential knowledge as they occur in the context of artistic research. Later, in a mid period paper, entitled *Modelling Experiential Knowledge, for Research* (Biggs, 2007) he revisited and extended this critique, whilst attempting to explicate the meaning of a core term ('experiential content'). As we shall see, there are a number of interrelated strategies that were employed over the course of his critique, but they were each focused upon questioning the importance or relevance of aesthetic experience and the role of the artefact in the context of academic research.

We saw in previous chapters how Biggs has resisted the notion that there is anything distinctive about the nature of knowledge that arises in the context of practice-led research, suggesting that artistic research processes, like any others, should be epistemologically oriented, and should seek to pose and answer questions in an open, public context. Accordingly, Biggs believed this inability to connect with a set of epistemological and objective concerns ultimately deprived the artwork of any distinctive instrumentality in the research process – Biggs reasoned that if there is no distinctive, epistemological context for practice-based research projects to explore,

then it follows there is no intrinsic, discipline specific work for the artefact to do. As a consequence, he suggested that artefacts should be deemed secondary, non-essential components of the research process, and that as such they might be substituted with purely textual modes of argumentation and exposition (Biggs, 2004, p.20; Biggs, 2007, p.10). At times Biggs suggested, in a Kantian fashion, that the ‘practice component’ might play a minor role in so far as it may provoke an ‘initial aesthetic response’, but ultimately he suggested that such a response should be treated merely as a symptom of an interesting conceptual territory, which could then be unpacked through broadly linguistic means (Biggs, 2007, p.9).

Intertwined with Biggs’ critique of the role of the artwork and experience was an attack upon the notion that non-propositional, or tacit forms of knowledge could provide a workable context for the formulation of an epistemic territory for practice-led enquiry (Biggs, 2004). The notion that there might be tacit, non-propositional forms of knowledge underpinning artistic activity, which might likewise inform artistic research, has proven attractive to practitioners working broadly within the performative paradigm who have attempted to locate a distinctive epistemological terrain for practice-based enquiry. We saw in the general introduction to this thesis how Barbara Bolt (2006, pp. 3-4), following Brad Haseman had suggested that a focus upon tacit, embodied and material-centric forms of knowledge might provide the grounds for the formulation of an alternative, discipline specific paradigm (in Guba and Lincoln’s pluralistic sense of the term) that might be positioned as the focal concern of artistic research, and how similar claims have been made by voices such as Haseman, Hanulah, Sullivan and Slager (chapter 1, section 1.03). Accordingly, for many artistic researchers, Polanyi’s ‘tacit dimension’ of non-linguistic knowledge, and Ryle’s distinction between ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’, have been thought to open up possibilities for the formulation of an idiosyncratic kind of knowledge claim that blurs the distinction between epistemology and ontology, and which is less dependent upon, or in more extreme cases, completely independent of, textual modes of expression.

Thus supporters of practice-led research, broadly influenced by Ryle, sometimes argue that there is a dimension to craft-based activity and to other broadly material forms of practice that depends upon a form of ‘know how’— that is to say, upon an

intimate knowledge of material properties that is expressed in a practical as opposed to linguistic register, and which may be operationalised as a form of artistic ‘skill’. Likewise, they suggest, there would appear to be a similarly tacit dimension to the kind of knowledge involved in the context of the reception of artistic objects – in connoisseurial delectation and appreciation, as it were - where we speak, for instance, of an ‘educated’ pallet.³⁰ Finally, we noted how tacit forms of argument or tacit systems of reference might be enabled through artistic strategies of quotation and allusion (see chapter 1, section 1.25), and suggested that this might provide an alternative *relational* line of enquiry concerning the way in which arguments might be embodied in artefacts, which has been somewhat underexplored in the debate. Thus researchers working within the performative paradigm have suggested that the ‘contribution to knowledge’ of a research project might be better framed in accordance with a discipline specific, or discipline inflected form of knowing that has a practical, material and experiential ground (Borgdorff, 2012, pp. 54-55).

Biggs’ strategy with respect to formulating his critique of such an approach is not to dispute that there is a legitimate distinction to be made between explicit propositional forms of knowledge, and knowledge that might have a non-propositional, tacit basis, but rather to dispute that non-propositional, tacit knowledge can have any relevance to the epistemological context of research per sé, which he positions as requiring the statement and defense of explicit knowledge claims (Biggs, 2007, p. 9). Thus he focuses his critique upon the privacy and ineffability of the tacit and the experiential, employing an argument that is derived predominately from *Philosophical Investigations* era Wittgenstein that questions the coherence of the concept of a private language – this is Wittgenstein’s (in)famous ‘private language argument’ (Wittgenstein, 1953, §243, §256). Following Wittgenstein, Biggs suggests that statements relating to the private aspects of first person experience – that is, statements relating to an inner world of feeling and sensation – do not operate in an epistemic context of doubt and contestation and that as such they cannot be legitimately be construed as claims to knowledge (Biggs, pp.1-2, p.6). Thus for Biggs

³⁰ There is a now burgeoning literature on the primacy of craft as a way of engaging with/knowing the world. Theorists as diverse as Christopher Frayling, Richard Sennett and Glenn Adamson and have stressed the seemingly paradoxical simultaneous ubiquity and invisibility of craft-oriented ways of knowing. We will expand on that nature of this embodied form of knowing shortly, in an analysis of Ryle, DeLanda and Deleuze.

via Wittgenstein, we simply *have* a headache, and given that this is not something open to debate or something that we could sensibly doubt or set out to prove, then the question of knowledge is moot.

Biggs' argument against the relevance of tacit forms of knowledge, and his positioning of subjective experience as possessing, at best, only secondary research import, collectively shade into a third argument that disputes the communicative potential of the artefact. Thus, whilst Biggs acknowledges that profound experiences may arise in our encounter with artistic artefacts (Biggs, 2007, p.2), he emphasises the subjectivity of audience response, positing a second problem of privacy that pertains to the status of any knowledge or argument that might be in any sense 'encoded' in an artwork. That is to say, Biggs argues that the experiences that arise in the encounter with the artwork, though at times thoughtful and distinctive, are essentially subjective, varying from person to person. As a consequence, he suggests that any knowledge that might be encoded in an artefact remains open to interpretation unless accompanied by an additional textual or conceptual delineation of context.³¹ In this sense, for Biggs, the problem of the ineffability of the artwork resonates with the problem of privacy that we encounter in the context of first-person experience, and together they combine to problematise the epistemological import of the artefact, suggesting that each lacks the quality of openness and explicitness that is required for participation in the predominately epistemological and communicative context of research. Thus Biggs develops a positivistically tinged Wittgensteinian critique, which aims to problematise the subjectivity of the practitioner/audience experience whilst promoting a sense of the essential epistemological ineffability of the artefact.

3.12 Kant and Wittgenstein on Ontology and Metaphysics

Arguably, despite the fact that they each engage in a degree of metaphysical speculation themselves, both Kantian and Wittgensteinian philosophies often result in a generalised suspicion of metaphysical enquiry. It is commonly suggested that despite their employment of metaphysical speculation, each of these philosophers sought to end the practice of philosophical metaphysics, associating it closely with the

³¹ In an earlier paper, Biggs sites Peter Vergo's distinction between 'aesthetic' exhibitions, where artefacts are left to speak for themselves and 'contextual' exhibitions where artefacts are accompanied by 'informative, comparative and explicatory' material (Biggs, 2003, 2004)

production of the ineffable, the unsayable, and the nonsensical. Thus, in the context of Kantian philosophy we learn that any metaphysical problem presents irresolvable antinomies,³² and that there is an essential ineffability to the ‘thing in itself’ or to the ‘noumenal’ realm that lies beyond phenomenal representation (Kant & Ellington, 2001, pp. 75-82). Similarly, in the context of Wittgensteinian philosophy we learn, firstly in the context of the *Tractatus*, that the expression of metaphysical statements produces linguistic nonsense – that is, statements which overreach and attempt to step outside the boundaries of representation (the Kantian resonance is significant here), and, later we learn in the context of the *Philosophical Investigations*, that the expression of metaphysical statements produces sentences that have the appearance of language, but which suffer from misapplication, having been disconnected from any pragmatic, functional context.³³ (Wittgenstein, 1953)

Given that, as we have seen, Biggs operates in a theoretical context that embraces both Wittgensteinian and Kantian influence, his engagement with ontological and metaphysical concerns are, as might be expected, rather rare. However, there is an interesting moment where, in a bid to problematise sensation-oriented approaches to artistic research and establish a purely epistemological context for practice-based research, Biggs would seem to (briefly) undertake a form of enquiry that will enable us to consider his ontological commitments (Biggs, 2004, p.7). Biggs explains that he intends to engage in a form of ontological enquiry that will enable him to first suggest and then problematise a position. In this sense, his aims, like those of Wittgenstein and Kant before him, are philosophically therapeutic (Biggs, 2007, p.6).

3.13 Outline of Biggs’ Ontological Conception of Experiential Content

Central to Biggs’ argument for the diminished importance of sensation, is an ontological distinction that he makes between ‘experiential feeling’ and ‘experiential content’ (Biggs, 2004, p.3). Biggs suggests that what we ordinarily think of as

³² Kant believed that metaphysical speculation attempted to address an inaccessible ‘noumenal’ realm through the operation of reason alone, and that this resulted in equally plausible but nevertheless antithetical propositions, which could not be resolved or tested in the context of phenomenal experience. An example of an antinomy would be ‘the world is finite/infinite with respect to time and space’ or ‘the operation of the world is fundamentally deterministic/spontaneous’ (c.f. Kant, 1781)

³³ Wittgenstein explicates this concept through reference to a ‘knob which looks like it might turn on some part of (a) machine’, but which is ‘a mere ornament, not connected with the mechanism at all’ (1953, p. 270)

experiential feeling should be repositioned as a ‘representation’ of a more fundamental ‘experiential content’ which stands as the common source of both language and sensation (Biggs, 2004, p.4). Given the ontological import of this claim, it can properly be placed in dialogue with rival positions – most notably with the ontological account of sensation, which is developed in the work of Deleuze (2005).

There are two phases that can be discerned in Biggs’ argument - the first of which is strongly influenced by Kantian metaphysics and the thought of *Tractatus* Wittgenstein, whilst the second is predominately derived from the later Wittgenstein’s critique of the picture theory of language, and his critique of the concept of linguistic privacy. In marked contrast, Deleuze’s position, although it shares something of a Kantian structure, is strongly influenced by materialist tendencies that he derives primarily from Spinoza, and an emphasis upon the qualitative and intensive that is derived from an idiosyncratic reading of Bergsonian thought. Given the shared Kantian influence, the argument developed here will not always be straightforwardly oppositional – that is to say, there are points of contact between these philosophies – but they will ultimately bifurcate, with Biggs steering towards a on ontological coupling of language and concept, and Deleuze steering towards an ontological coupling of matter and sensation.

When Biggs first introduces the concept of ‘experiential content’ he assumes a general consensus as to what might be meant by the term:

The difference between (experiential) feeling and (experiential) content is, I hope, relatively straightforward ... I hope that we are agreed that we are less interested in experiential feeling ... in focusing our attention on what the feeling is like ... and more interested in the meaning of that experience. (Biggs, 2004, p.3-4).

Critics such as the craft and design researcher Kristina Niedderer have noted the way in which Biggs’ concept of experiential content and its relationship to experiential feeling was at this time ill defined (Niedderer, 2008). Biggs in some sense acknowledges this himself, qualifying in a later paper that it has been ‘passed by without comment’ – a figure of speech that alludes to proposition seven of the Pears and McGuiness translation of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein, 1961).

Whatever the exact nature of experiential content, it becomes clear over the course of Biggs' paper that he is trying to populate this concept in a way that leans towards and ultimately privileges qualities of a linguistic and conceptual order. We learn variously that experiential content is connected with 'the meaning' of an experience, and with 'the way in which it might be related to our shared context' (Biggs, 2004, p.4). In light of the above it seems fair to suggest that Biggs' concept of experiential content is discursively focused, and that it has a predominately conceptual orientation. Conversely, experience is positioned in secondary terms, as a shadowy reflection of its conceptual other. Biggs suggests that the representations that constitute experiential feeling are in some sense partial, confused and in need of clarification. Such remarks are typically accompanied by suggestions that the work of clarification can be undertaken through a form of conceptual and linguistic analysis, and this serves further to privilege a textual mode of exposition (Biggs, 2004, p.20). Thus at this early stage of Biggs' argument, he suggests not only that language and experiential feeling are each forms of representation, but also that their representational efficacy is not equitably distributed. In this sense, Biggs can be seen to institute a clear prioritisation of language (Biggs, 2007, p.10).

Biggs returns to the subject of experiential content in a later paper, with a view to populating the concept more explicitly and giving some sense of its instrumentality. He also attempts to clarify the motives and rationale behind its introduction. In this second paper, Biggs begins by reiterating this idea that the felt qualities of experience that are involved in the aesthetic response to artworks pose a problem that should be considered in representational terms – 'that the experiential feelings we have merely represent something called "experiential content", and it is this content that is relevant to research' (Biggs, 2007, p.1). He goes on to argue in a more instrumentalist fashion, however, that it is in order for the profound experiential feelings that arise in the aesthetic response to art objects (the feelings which he tells us are sometimes accompanied by physical symptoms 'such as having goose bumps or being moved to tears') to gain a communicative foothold, they must be construed as representations of a more fundamental, and more straightforwardly objective experiential content (Biggs, 2007, p.2). Thus for Biggs, the concept of experiential content enables a form of objectivity that allows us to make claims to knowledge that have something more than

an ineffable, subjective, and solipsistic status. It is at this point in his argument, however, that Biggs makes a small but important distinction that is highly significant for our purposes here. He suggests that experiential content may either be in some way ‘analogous’ to experiential feeling, or that, alternatively, it ‘need not be especially like [it]’ (Biggs, 2007, p.7). Biggs makes very little of this distinction in his paper, but is suggested here that there are two subtly different claims bound up in this statement and that they differ significantly in ontological import. The notion that experiential content is analogous to experiential feeling will lead us, via James Williams reading of Deleuze, to the intensive world of material sensation that can be located in Deleuzian philosophy.³⁴ Conversely, the claim that experiential content need not be especially like experiential feeling will lead to the ontological disconnection and the institution of conceptual order that can be located in both Kantian and early Wittgensteinian philosophy.³⁵

3.14 Similitude and Experiential Content

The notion that qualities of experiential feeling are in some way analogous to qualities of a more fundamental, ontological aspect of reality, resonates with a particular theme in Deleuzian philosophy, namely, that changes in the qualities of certain (particularly ‘internal’) aspects of phenomenal experience - the rise and fall of emotional states and the transition from one experiential state to another – reflect the form of intensive transformations occurring at a deeper ontological level. The Deleuzian scholar James Williams offers an easy way into this aspect of Deleuze’s work in as much as Williams stays close to descriptions of phenomenal – or to what Deleuze terms ‘actual’ experience (meaning our day to day experience of objects, events and our internal emotional life). In describing such phenomena, however, Williams seeks evidence of the influence of another ontological order – the reservoir of potentiality that exerts a transformative influence upon actual states of affairs, that in Deleuzian

³⁵ It should be said at the outset, that this opposition is not entirely straightforward. As with all arguments from analogy any position will simultaneously possess elements of similarity and elements of difference. The intended significance of this example is to draw attention to the resonance between the logic of our intensive, introspective psychological life and Deleuze characterisation of the material qualities of the virtual. It should be noted, however, that Deleuze also goes to great lengths to stress that the world of ‘actual’ things does not resemble the conditions that are required to produce it, and that this in itself is a good indication of the overlaps (at a structural level) between Deleuzian and Kantian thought.

philosophy goes by the name of ‘the Virtual’. Thus William stresses that in the context of Deleuzian philosophy, this transformative ontological order is something that must be deduced using the Kantian method of transcendental deduction,³⁶ and accordingly Williams seeks evidence for this deduction in, amongst other things, the intensive kinetic logic of our internal psychological life. Thus, for Williams, it is in the ebb and flow of our aesthetic and emotional life that we can locate our most intimate connection with the operation of the set of pre-individual, intensive, forces that constitute the virtual. As a consequence, for Williams it is in our subjective first person experience of our inner psychological life that we can encounter the most direct, felt sense of ontological process. Accordingly, Williams suggests that the changes in our subjective emotional states have an analogic character in so far as they share a logic with the more ontologically fundamental form of energetic transformation that constitutes the Deleuzian virtual. In attempting to capture these qualities Williams emphasises the way in which our emotions ‘shade into one another’, ‘envelop’ or ‘cover one another over’. As a consequence, Williams’ writings are, in the context of Deleuzian scholarship, distinctive in their receptivity to the significance of subjective qualities of actual experience. That is to say, Williams’ work is to some extent inclusive of the concept of the self and receptive to the notion of subjectivity, whilst nevertheless foregrounding its resonance with an impersonal ontological order. As we shall see, Deleuze, given his post structuralist orientation is ultimately critical of concepts of self/subjectivity, seeking their dissolution through an at once vibrant and vital fusion of matter and sensation.

In Deleuzian philosophy the virtual is characterised in dynamic, intensive terms as an impersonal chaotic, and kinetic order – a realm of speeds, flows and differential forces - and it is through their intensive, differential, and energetic confluence that the actual (the phenomenal order, which includes our subjective feelings) is said to both emerge and to transform. Thus, in difference and repetition Deleuze writes:

Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity. (Deleuze, 2001, p.280)

³⁶ Williams defines transcendental deductions as ‘Arguments which deduce the form of appearance by asking what the conditions have to be for something to be given or to appear as it is.’ (Williams, 2003, p.17)

When considering the distinction that Deleuze makes between the ‘virtual’ and the ‘actual’, alongside his employment of the method of transcendental deduction, Deleuze would seem to be offering us a philosophy that has distinctively Kantian overtones.³⁷ That is to say, it is tempting to see the Deleuzian distinction between concepts of virtuality and actuality as mirroring the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal (our subject oriented, spatiotemporal, everyday experience of the world) and the noumenal (a realm beyond the actual/phenomenal but which in some sense stands as its condition or ground). Thus there is a sense in which, in Deleuzian philosophy, the actual could be said to take the place of the Kantian phenomenal, whilst the virtual has strong affinities with the noumenal realm – and it is clear that there is much structural felicity between the Kantian and Deleuzian accounts. However, it is important to acknowledge that whilst Deleuze’s philosophy is in many ways evocative of the Kantian system, it must also be considered in evaluative terms, as a critical response. Thus Deleuze reproduces many structural features of the Kantian system but with a view to foregrounding significant points of difference and establishing an alternative set of priorities. Thus, in Deleuzian philosophy there is an ontological priority bestowed upon the virtual, whilst the actual, although possessing a reality of sorts, is relegated as a form of illusion - objects and identities partially dissolve into the operation of more primary material processes, which are given ontologically priority. Whilst it is true that Deleuze confers some causal efficacy upon the actual – that is to say, it can feedback upon and influence the virtual through processes of ‘vice-diction’ and ‘counter actualisation’ - it is a limited, and secondary form of agency – that results in an mere inflection or a playing of events (Williams, 2003, p.157).

For Deleuze, it is in the context of the artistic encounter (which we might frame as Deleuze’s conception of the aesthetic response) that we experience an intimacy or communion with the operation of the virtual in the constitution of actual events. The Deleuzian encounter stresses the kinetic, transformative dimension of the aesthetic response, even when our encounter is with artefacts that are ostensibly inert (material flakes of dried paint, render forces that have transformative effects). Accordingly, it is

³⁷ The resonance between the structure of Kant and Deleuze’s project has not gone without notice. Explorations of the relationship between Kantian and Deleuze thought have been offered by Kerslake (2009), Shaviro (2012), Colebrook (2005) and Raws (2008)

not simply the private and subjective feelings that arise in the artistic encounter that are important for Deleuze, but rather a richer, metamorphic sense of movement or 'becoming'. Thus Deleuze stresses the importance of the affective dimension of artistic experience, which he tells us should be distinguished from the concept of psychological affect. That is to say, Deleuze ultimately wants to disassociate his concept of affect from the trivial colouring of experience that is characteristic of personal feelings or affections. He writes:

Affects aren't feelings. They're becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else). (Deleuze, 1995, p.137)

Thus for Deleuze, affect is a force, or more accurately a confluence of forces, passing through the subject that are responsible for both its identity and transformation. Deleuze will describe affects as autonomous, independent 'haecceities', which together with 'percepts' stand as the components of a 'bloc of sensations' (sic) that constitutes a work of art. Deleuze tells us that the aim of an artwork is to 'wrest affect from affection' – (to wrest the virtual category of affect from the actual category of affection), and, accordingly, to act as a mobilising force (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.167). Revisiting James Williams' account of the felt, qualitative aspects of psychological life with the kinetic dimension of Deleuze's ontology in mind, we can see that his focus is not so much upon the felt qualities of any particular state, but rather upon the life of emotional transition – the life of a felt psychological movement and kinesis.

Accompanying affects in Deleuze's bloc of sensation are what he describes as 'percepts'. Deleuze tells us that just as (virtual) affects differ from (actual) affections, (virtual) percepts differ from (actual) perceptions. Deleuze unpacks his account of the percept in primarily objective terms, explaining that:

Percepts aren't perceptions, they're packets of sensations and relations that live on independently of whoever experiences them. (Deleuze, 1995, p.137)

Thus in Deleuzian philosophy, percept and affect combine to produce an impersonal materialisation of sensation, the parameters of which are explored in a number of

ways throughout Deleuze's corpus. Thus in his earliest work, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* he presents a 'transcendental' or 'superior empiricism' through a reading of Hume which sets out to emphasise the material autonomy of sensation. That is to say, Deleuze's writings on Hume stress the way in which autonomous sensation comes before, and effectively serves to constitute subjective or phenomenal experience. Deleuze likewise stresses that we can think of Hume's constructivist principles of association in purely impersonal, material terms, as principals of human-nature (Baines, 2006, pp. 25-26). Thus in his account of empiricism, Deleuze (1991) renders two pictures of Hume, firstly a phenomenological (actual) Hume – that sits well with traditional interpretations, and secondly a noumenal (virtual) Hume that stresses the immanent materiality of the world conferring autonomy upon its at once impersonal, naturalistic, and productive relations.

It should be clear from what has been said thus far that there is a kinetic and materialistic stress in the writings of Deleuze - a focus upon the genetic material expression of the virtual as opposed to the structural capacities of cognitive representation that dominate Kantian philosophy. The materialistic sense of the transcendental that Deleuze develops throughout his philosophy stresses the way in which the (actual) subject arises out of an autonomous swarm of intensive sensations, which stand as both its transcendental and material ground. Thus, for Deleuze, it is not so much that there are first subjects who 'have' sensations, rather, it is the operation of autonomous, material sensation that, to use Mullarkey's phrase, 'fissures our subjectivity' (Mullarkey, 2006, p.14). In this sense, Deleuze can be seen, from the perspective of the virtual, to take the Humean dissolution of the self extremely seriously. In stressing the concept of immanence – that is, in stressing that the world is entirely in and of itself, Deleuze resists – although perhaps ultimately cannot quite escape – the transcendence of the Kantian position (the separation of the world into different ontological realms). Thus Deleuze tells us that the virtual should be considered 'the noumenon closest to the phenomenon' (Deleuze, 2001, p. 280) and he goes to great lengths to emphasise that the virtual is some sense coiled or enfolded in the actual - but it is clear that there are different causal priorities at work with respect to his characterisation of the virtual and the actual, and that the felt experience of the virtual, which Williams eloquently captures, is nevertheless at best analogous and indirect.

Regardless of the exact ontological status of the virtual and actual, it is clear that whenever Deleuze speaks of the qualities of sensation it is closely allied to a kinetic and energetic conception of the natural world. Thus when describing sensation from the perspective of the actual, he emphasises the resonance between the intensive nature of felt experiential qualities and intensive operations of matter. However, when describing sensation as a virtual, transcendental ground of experience, the relationship between matter and sensation becomes one of equivalence. Thus in Deleuzian philosophy sensation stands both as the transcendental ground of the actual, and as its energetic, material source, and as a consequence, Deleuze would seem to posit the somewhat paradoxical notions of apriori experience and apriori sensation. In positing these seemingly contradictory constructions, however, Deleuze is attempting to emphasise the intimacy of the connection between actual and virtual orders, as well as their at once processual and material constitution. For Deleuze, the impersonal, chaotic, and energetic interaction that constitutes the virtual - when described under another aspect, as it were - is equivalent to the impersonal swarm of abstract sensation that is constitutive of the subject. Thus, accompanying the Kantian structure, there is an aspectual materialism in Deleuzian philosophy that is derived from the philosophy of Spinoza. As we shall see shortly, this intimacy with respect to the relationship between matter and sensation is likewise expressed in Deleuze's aesthetics, where he develops an at once performative and materialist position that is both matter and sensation focused, and which stresses the surplus and excess of the world, along with its perpetual transformation.

3.15 Dissimilitude and Experiential Content

Having considered some of the implications of positioning experiential feeling as analogous to experiential content, we can return to Biggs' distinction and consider its other polarity - namely the idea that experiential content 'need not be particularly like' experiential feeling (Biggs, 2007, p.7). Characterising the relationship between experiential feeling and experiential content in this fashion emphasises a form of epistemological disconnection, as opposed to an affinity between phenomenal representation and that which it ultimately represents. In so doing, it calls to mind both the ineffability associated with the Kantian noumenal, and the metaphysical

‘silence’ of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*. Given what we have learned of Biggs’ philosophical orientation this far, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that it is this line of argument that he goes on to pursue. Biggs ultimately develops a position that mixes ideas derived from Kantian philosophy with Wittgensteinian ideas derived from both *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* periods. Interestingly, for our purposes here, the arguments developed in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* are in many ways opposed – however they exhibit a certain commonality in their respective emphasis upon a kind of ineffability, their critique of distinctive forms of privacy/inaccessibility, and in the way in which they each institute notions of epistemological disconnection or limit (an epistemological disconnection between representation and what is represented in the *Tractatus*, and an epistemological asymmetry between inner and outer experience in the context of the *Investigations*).

3.16 Biggs’ Motivation in Positioning Experiential Feeling as a Representation of Experiential Content

In clarifying how this experiential and epistemological disconnect might integrate with Biggs’ broader project, it is necessary to consider what might potentially motivate the decision to position experiential feeling in representational terms. For Biggs the notion of experiential content provides a bridge for stepping beyond the felt, experiential dimension of an artwork into the ‘knowledge base’ of the subject (Biggs, 2007, p.6). He suggests that there is a ‘resonance’ between the faculties of perception and cognition and that it is this that is responsible for our choosing to confer upon certain artefacts a ‘social and a cultural value’ (Biggs, 2007, p.3, 2007, p.5). Thus, for Biggs it is the vocabulary that is employed in describing the physical make up of the work, alongside its experientially affective, aesthetic dimension that will ultimately provide the repertoire of concepts along with a context of objectivity and precision that can stand in for subjective experience in the context of artistic research. Ultimately, Biggs suggests that the activity proper to artistic research is the discussion of a public, predominately conceptual terrain, which - unlike the solipsistic qualities of experience - lies fully open to view. As such, for Biggs, it is the public epistemological context of conceptual discussion and the historical context of disciplinary heritage that provides a context of objectivity in relation to practices of

artistic research. Accordingly, he emphasises the importance of depersonalisation, or generalisation of experience that takes place when considered in relation to a shared linguistic context (Biggs, 2007, p.8-10).

It should be clear from what has been said thus far that, Biggs confers a less personal character upon individual experience through its simultaneous mediation and constitution through a conceptual/linguistic network that is shared – or that is at least capable of being shared. For Biggs, it is inclusion in this network that enables passage into a broader system of concepts. This helps to understand the stress upon contextual provision in Biggs’ writings, as well as his emphasis upon establishing what has elsewhere been termed the conceptual ‘locatedness’ of practice-based research by the Kantian philosopher Clive Cazeaux (2008).

3.17 Biggs’ Devaluation of the Artwork in the Context of Practice-Based Research

Biggs’ intention is to show that there is no essential or necessary requirement for the inclusion of artworks in artistic modes of research. Ultimately he aims to establish that there is an at once conceptual and epistemological context to the traditional, received notion of research enquiry, and that as a consequence explicit, public, transferrable knowledge claims must likewise be prioritised in a practice-led research context. Accordingly, he goes on to suggest that textual forms of communication are a highly efficient means of communicating propositional knowledge and that this establishes their instrumentality in both traditional and non-traditional research contexts. Thus, for Biggs if there is a place for the artwork in practice-based research enquiry, it stands primarily as a means of eliciting an initial aesthetic response, which can then be conceptually unpacked by an alternative exposition, which is most likely textual in character. In an early paper, Biggs does suggest that he is ‘open to persuasion’ that there may be other, non textual, modes of performing this activity (Biggs, 2002, p.6), but given that through Biggs’ notion of (conceptual) experiential content, the problem has now been re-framed in epistemological terms - focusing upon explicit, propositional knowledge – that is upon the kind of knowledge predominately associated with linguistic expression - then it will be something of a

challenge for those sympathetic to practice-led research to find a vehicle of exposition that will be more suited to its communication.

3.20 The Structure and Conceptual Underpinnings of Biggs' Argument

Biggs' argument in *Modelling Experiential Knowledge* begins with what in the first instance appears to be a defence of the artefact in the context of practice-based research but the argument ultimately resolves in such a way as to diminish the artefact's importance. As we have suggested earlier, Biggs hopes first to 'suggest', and to then 'problematise' a concept (Biggs, 2007, p.6)

The argument that is developed against the significance of qualitative experience in the context of practice-led research is interesting in the sense that it reconfigures arguments derived from Kant and Wittgenstein which were originally aimed at demonstrating epistemological inaccessibility with respect the object of representation, but which were primarily focused upon language and linguistic inaccessibility - in the context of the *Tractatus*, for instance, Wittgenstein famously states 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent' (Wittgenstein, 1961). Biggs employs similar arguments himself but attempts to emphasise their applicability to an experiential context. As we have seen, his ultimate aim is to problematise the value of felt experiential qualities in a research context, whilst in some sense venerating the objectivity of linguistic expression and the discussion of a shared conceptual terrain. For such an argument to be persuasive – indeed for such an argument to be possible at all - experience needs to be configured in such a way as to enable a comparison with language. Accordingly, in the first stage of his argument Biggs attempts to bring language and felt experience closer together, by positioning each as distinctive forms of representation. By framing experiences as representations, of a more ontologically fundamental 'experiential content', Biggs instills them with a quasi-propositional, linguistic quality. Further, in stressing their subjective, partial and confused status, such 'experiential' propositions become ripe for translation and clarification through their re-expression in language (Biggs, 2004; p.5-6; Biggs, 2007, p.2).

3.21 The First Phase of Biggs' Argument

Biggs' argument has two stages. Initially a hypothetical ontological requirement is posited (i.e. the notion that felt experiences are representations of a more fundamental 'experiential content') that might serve as a justification of the experiential component of a practice-based research submission. It has thus far been suggested that in formulating this requirement Biggs shifts Wittgenstein's concern in the *Tractatus*, with the representational form of the proposition – that is with the notion that linguistic propositions should be considered representations of states of affairs - to focus upon an experiential, as opposed to a linguistic context, effectively transposing the representational relationship between propositions and logical states of affairs to the realm of first person experience. In this fashion, experiences become seemingly propositional in character and capable of standing as representations of states of affairs. Thus, first person aesthetic responses are positioned by Biggs as a representations or, as he states (now switching to the vocabulary of the later Wittgenstein) 'symptoms' (Biggs, 2007, p.2) of the presence of a 'more fundamental'...experiential content (p.7) which can then be 'extracted and represented' in language (Biggs, 2007, p.10). This rendering of first person experience as a representation of something other, which itself has an ontological primacy, has the function of conferring an objective, or at least quasi-objective status upon first person experience, whilst also rendering its object (the more primary experiential content) open to translation into an alternative (linguistic) representational mode. Biggs positions this latter mode of representation as both admitting of more precision and as lying fully open to view. Thus in the linguistic expression of the aesthetic dimension of experience, Biggs considers a modal transformation – essentially a form of translation – to be taking place (Biggs, 2004, pp.5-6).

For Biggs, the distinction between experiential feeling (representation) and experiential content (that which is represented) is desirable because he hopes to substitute, or at least supplement what he takes to be an experiential mode of representation with a second mode of representation that is linguistic in character. That is to say, if the qualitative, first person experiences that arise in the encounter with an artwork could be shown to have representational status, it would be less

problematic to entertain the notion that in the context of practice-based research, the aesthetic response might be modally substituted with an alternative form of representation in language. Thus Biggs attempts a close alignment of the linguistic and the experiential. This alignment, as well as having epistemological and ontological dimensions, has important practical consequence with respect to conferring a secondary status upon the role of the artefact in the context of artistic research. Biggs' account of the research situation has a close affinity with the Kantian conception of the enquiring subject, and with what Kant positions as a symbiotic relationship between the faculties of the understanding (the faculty concerned with the generic classification) and intuition (the faculty concerned with phenomenal particularity). That is to say, there is a stress in Kantian thought upon the instrumental codependence of the faculties – in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant states that 'Thoughts without content are empty', whilst 'intuitions without concepts are blind' (Kant, 2007, A51/B75). However, in Kant as in Biggs, there is a top-down, emphasis upon the role of conceptual understanding, which ultimately confers a contemplative character upon subjective experience, prioritising the conceptual and linguistic structuring of phenomenal experience in an apriori fashion. Thus Kant not only emphasises the mediation of phenomenal experience through the application of structuring categories that provide the spatiotemporal form of experience, but also closely aligns conceptual and linguistic orders. In this sense, in the context of Kantian philosophy, concepts form a system and are inter-related by a set of ultimately linguistic categories. Cazeaux states this well whilst also aligning it with the concerns of practice-led research:

To say that an artwork always occurs under interpretation means that it always occurs in relation to certain concepts and themes in the history and theory of art and aesthetics. Even the meanings, associations, and emotions which are stimulated within me while standing in front of a work will be conceptual in as much as they are particular or determinate events in my experience...[concepts] are the constituents of experience which give it shape and intelligibility. For example, I am able to perceive a mug against the background of a table because the concepts 'mug' and 'table' are active within my experience. On this basis, interpretation runs 'all the way down' in the sense that there can never be a moment of experience which does not have some quality or other, where this quality is shaped by a concept...The main difference between [Kant's] thought and empiricism (his philosophy was a reaction against the shortcomings of empiricism, after all) is that it is concepts, and not objects in the world, which structure experience. To look at the white on the wall opposite me.

An empiricist would maintain that I am receiving impressions of whiteness and plaster, and it is the determination or information contained within these impressions that gives me the experience of looking at the wall. In contrast, while Kant acknowledges that we receive the world through the senses, he argues that the senses on their own are mute, and that the intelligibility or determinateness of the experience comes from the concepts of 'white', 'wall', and 'plaster' which are active in our experience. (Cazeaux, 2008).

3.22 Significant Points of Divergence Between Biggs' and Deleuze on Experiential Content

Lest it be thought that there is an easy fit between Biggs' notion of 'experiential content' and Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, it is important to signpost the significant points at which they diverge, which correlate with the parting of the ways of Deleuze and Kant. There is a sense in which, given its resonance with the Kantian noumenal, the Deleuzian virtual may occupy the place of Biggs' ontological notion of 'experiential content'. However, contra Biggs' idealistic emphasis upon the representational affinity between language and experience, Deleuze wishes to establish a set of naturalistic priorities, seeking to replace the notion of (conceptual) representation with a performative, material and genetic notion of 'expression' (Deleuze, 1988, 1990). This difference in emphasis, though seemingly small has marked repercussions – rippling through their respective philosophies and markedly transforming their character.

3.30 Problematising and Transforming Biggs' Position

It was suggested in the previous section of this thesis that there are a number of undeclared axioms at work in Biggs position (see chapter two, section 2.46) and that the substitution of Biggs' axioms with alternative axioms derived from Deleuzian philosophy would suggest a very different picture not only of research enquiry, but also of the relationship of the researcher to the world. We will pursue this line of enquiry further later in this chapter, contrasting the ontological presuppositions that are inherent in Biggs characterisation of experience, with those that can be derived from Deleuzian ontology. Whilst section one focused upon a primarily conceptual

encounter (with the exception of one or two images), in this section we will begin, in the spirit of practice-led research to explore the ways in which Biggs' conception of experiential content might be problematised using broadly experiential means. In order to do this we will focus upon developing a critique of Biggs' use of visual illusions that occurs in the context of his argument for experiential content.

3.31 Questioning Biggs' Selection of Visual Illusions

It was argued in the previous section of this thesis that there is a noticeable de-emphasis with respect to qualities of movement and performativity that takes place in Biggs' recognition oriented account of the nature of research-activity per sé, and it was suggested that this amounted to an avoidance of, or refusal to discuss what is taken here to be his most significant opposition in the context of the legitimacy debate. It is claimed here that we can observe a similar resistance to the performative dimension of the experiential in the context of Biggs' writings on experience.

Over the course of his argument for propositional experiential content, Biggs considers a number of examples of visual illusions (Biggs, 2007, pp. 8-9). When considered from Biggs' perspective, visual illusions become (conceptually) interesting because, like many artworks, they elicit an unusual form of experience that stands as a symptom of an interesting conceptual terrain, or an area for (scientific) investigation (Biggs, 2007, p.9). In expounding his argument Biggs considers, and reproduces, examples of the illusion of simultaneous brightness contrast (taken from Johannes Itten's work on colour theory which was developed at the Bauhaus), and of the form of illusion known as the Münsterberg Figure. Biggs' selections are inflected and problematised in the discussion below. It is important for our purposes here to note firstly that the investigation of visual illusions has resulted in a number of different genres of explanation, and secondly that any given illusion can be rendered in a variety of ways. Whilst this might sound like a reiteration of the paradox of the generality and specificity of representation that was outlined in chapter two, it becomes important in the context of this argument as it enables an exploration of the way in which different inflections in the renderings of an illusion can produce radically different experiential effects (thus the effect of an illusion can become more or less pronounced, or otherwise disturbed by varying its compositional properties).

As a consequence Biggs' selections of visual illusion become interesting. We might ask, for instance, if there are other kinds of visual illusion, or other renderings of Biggs' chosen examples that might serve to problematise the alleged affinity between the qualities of subjective experience and the linguistic proposition – or to further cast doubt upon Biggs' resistance to the performative character of images? To elaborate a little, it is characteristic of many visual illusions, that they have a capacity to work actively upon, or complicate perceptual processes. As a consequence, it is notable that many instances of optical illusion are generative of interesting forms of perceptual instability. Biggs selection of imagery is telling in the sense that it focuses exclusively upon the effects of images that exhibit a certain stability of form. Thus he presents figures that are most receptive to a normative epistemological form of interrogation, and which could straightforwardly be investigated using metrics – by using a ruler or a protractor, or by obscuring elements of the image, using pieces of card, for instance. Thus there is an epistemic confidence in Biggs approach to these questions that can itself be subjected to scrutiny.

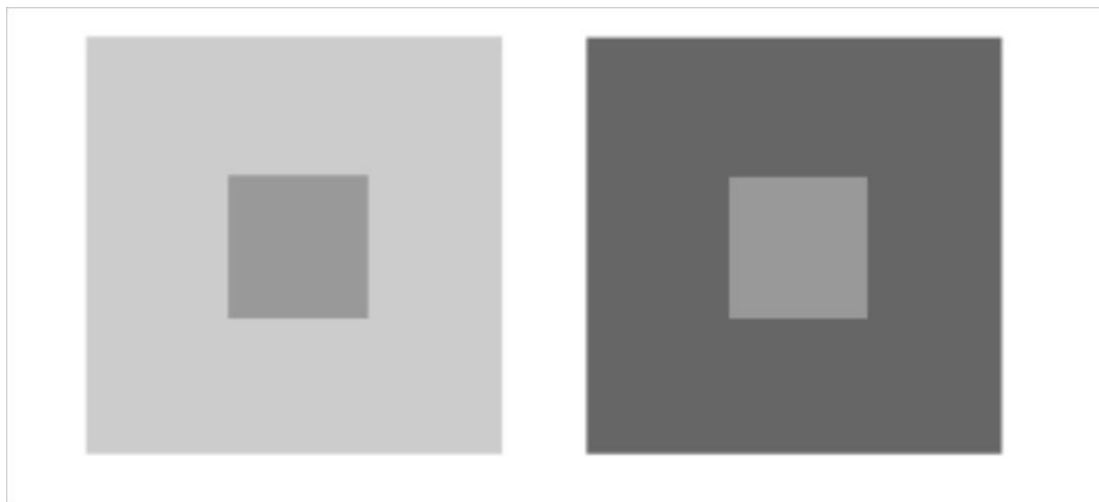


Figure 10. Simultaneous Brightness Contrast (Itten, 1964, p.32)

We will begin by examining Biggs' example of simultaneous brightness contrast (see figure 9). In his account of this phenomenon, Biggs suggests that the experiential component of this illusion - the fact that the right hand center square appears lighter than the one on the left can be 'summarized and communicated linguistically' (Biggs, 2007, p. 9) - stressing that the conditions for this experience are replicable, and

secondly that we might account for such phenomena in terms of the production of a 'rule' or a theory:

The example from colour theory could be specified in terms of the wavelengths of light involved etc. (Biggs, 2007, p.9)

Thus Biggs presents a rather stable, somewhat settled analysis of our encounter with such phenomena, emphasising an optical space, which distances the enquiring subject from the object perceived. It is important to note that Biggs' notion that there is a straightforward theoretical accountability for such phenomena disguises a degree of plurality of perspective within the field of cognitive neuroscience, which itself admits of a tension between materialist and idealist forms of explanation. Thus, in the context of cognitive science, there are multiple theoretical interpretations that attempt to account for the perceived disparity of form in this figure, and different explanations emphasise different 'levels of processing'. Thus, they are positioned at different points on a cognitivist-materialist spectrum. Each explanation, however, emphasises the operation of some form of process – be it cognitive, material, or some hybrid of the two (Adelson, 2000)

It was suggested earlier that different inflections in the renderings of an illusion can produce radically different experiential effects, and to this end it has been noted with respect to the perception of the illustration of simultaneous brightness contrast, that the introduction of an articulated background (the introduction of a more intensive spectrum of difference), whilst still producing a relatively stable form, noticeably amplifies the apparent disparity in terms of the relative brightness of the figures:

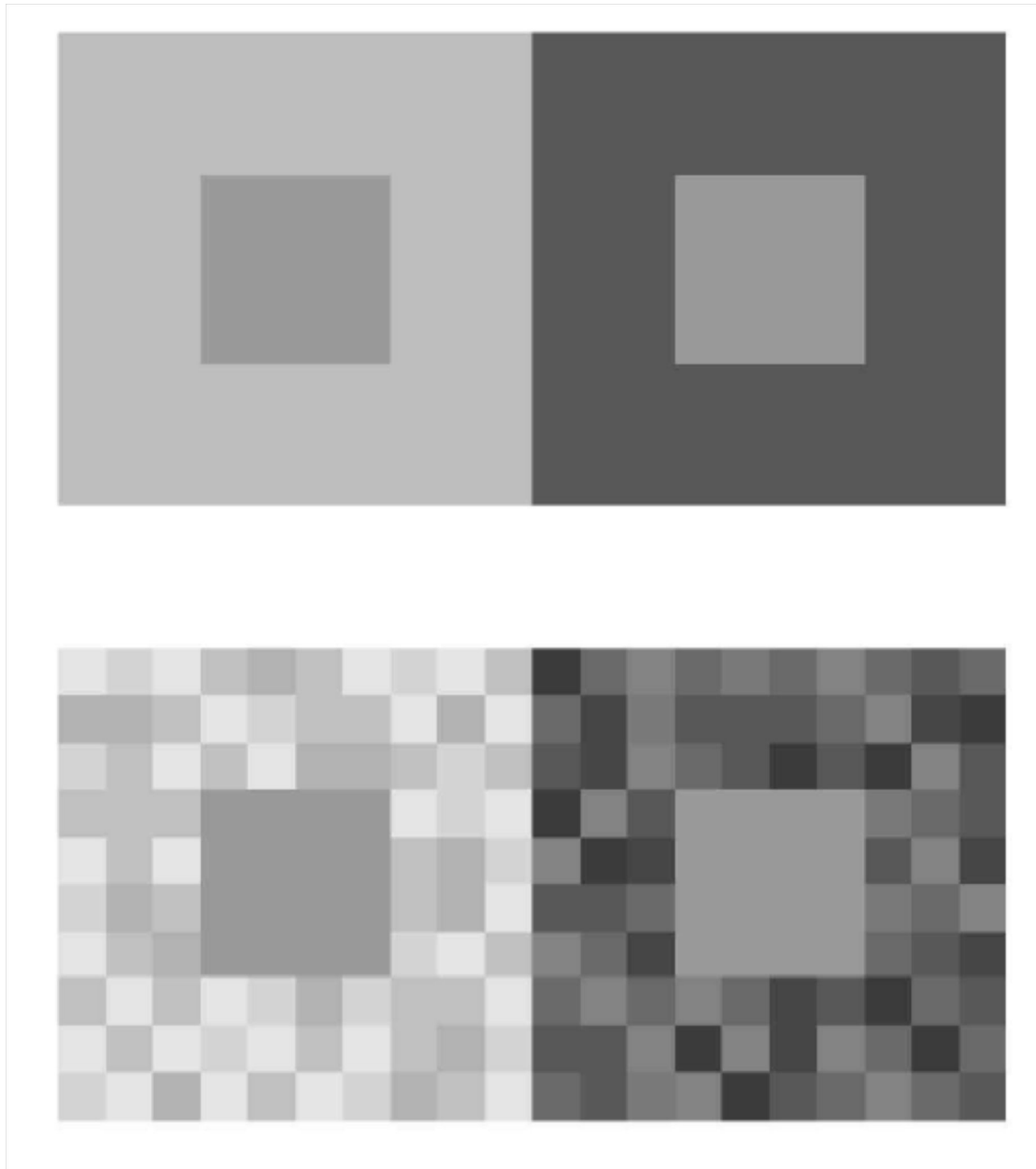


Figure 11. Effect Enhanced with Articulated Surrounds (Adelson, 2000, p.345)

These observations of the differential, active and systemic character of the perceptual become more significant when we consider Biggs analysis of his second choice of visual illusion, the form that is known as the Münsterberg figure.

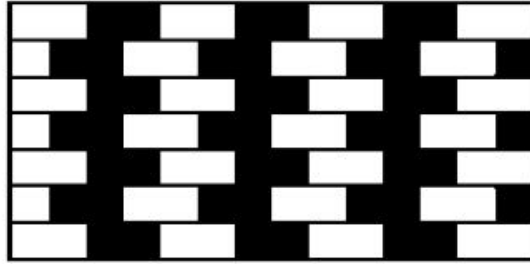


Figure 12. The Münsterberg Figure (Biggs, 2007, p.8)

In relation to the Münsterberg illusion, Biggs, citing Gregory and Heard, tells us that when presented with this image, subjects ‘consistently experience’ (Biggs, 2007, p.8) the horizontal lines in this figure as crooked, and this betrays the fact that an example has again been chosen that emphasises perceptual constancy. Thus, the differential tensions of the image resolve into a distorted figure, that is nevertheless ‘stable’ – or an example of ‘good’ Gestaltist form. In this case, however, Biggs has also opted for a particularly sober rendering of the illusion, which serves to de-emphasise a number of potentially disorienting kinetic effects. He recounts that:

It was my experience during colour theory classes at art school that many students did not seem to be experiencing the phenomena that were being described. I had that experience myself, that I did not always ‘see’ what I was supposed to see. (Biggs, 2007, p.8)

In light of this statement, and given that the effect of the reproduction of the Münsterberg illusion that we encountered in Biggs writing is relatively slight, it would make sense to explore its parameters with a view to amplifying or otherwise complicating the figure.

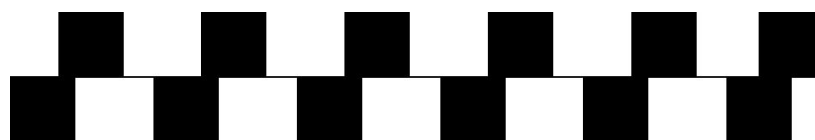


Figure 13. Adapted Münsterberg Figure (1)

Firstly, by considering the image above, which has a more detailed, local context, and which slightly varies the size and spacing of the cells that is employed in the original, it is possible to produce a more pronounced, though similarly ‘stable’ effect. Through

the introduction of a curvature in the differential spacing of the cells, however, a more unsettled, vertiginous image can be produced that exhibits stronger kinetic, performative qualities (of the sort that we might associate with practices of op art). Thus in the example below, we witness a deterritorialisation of Biggs' original image (to use the language of Deleuze-Guattari). That is to say, not only do the lines now seem to exhibit a curvature, the curves themselves seems to admit of a broad spectrum of unpredictable variation. Thus, there is clear sense in which the image will neither fully settle nor fully resolve.

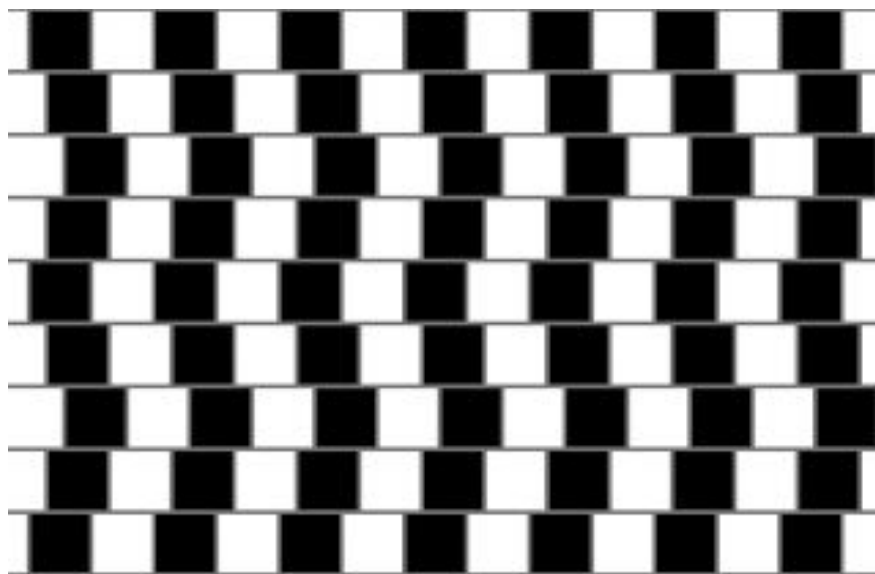


Figure 14. Vertiginous Münsterberg Figure

The continuous movement and perceptual variation of the mobilised version of the Münsterberg illusion presents difficulties for a propositional approach to the image – such as that which is characteristic of Biggs. Whilst we might be able to convey linguistically that it exhibits kinetic qualities, that the curvature of the lines would seem to vary, or even that they are reminiscent of other experiences that we might encounter in the genre of op art – this will not help us if our aim is to capture, represent or to predict the specific movement of any part of the image. This would also be the case if we specified an exact formula for reproducing the image – in this fashion we could reproduce the figure and manifest its effects, but would still struggle if trying to predict its various movements. Thus Biggs' argument that there is an 'experiential content' that has an affinity with the conceptual and which might be equivalently expressed in language seems misapplied when we consider our

relationship to such kinetic imagery that exhibit a resistance to a closure of experiential form. These and related forms of kinetic imagery – which we might go so far as to position as open, subjectivist forms of animation - employ differential material effects such as those described in the example of relative brightness, but by instituting a series of counterposed, differential and intensive relations, that conjure, active, kinetic perceptual spaces, as opposed to any straightforward closure of form.³⁸

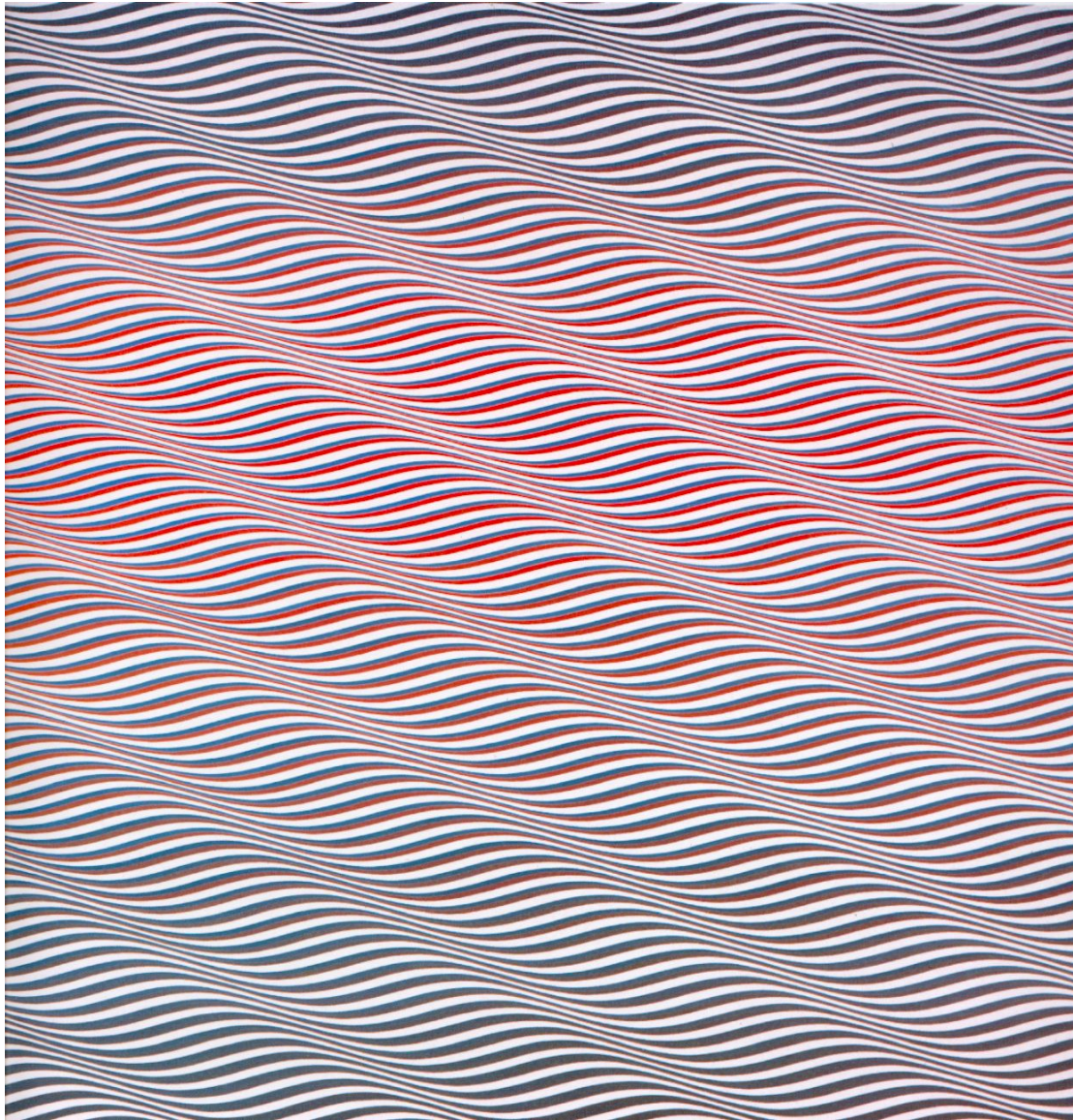


Figure 15. *Cataract 3* (Riley, 1967)

³⁸ In his *Artists with PhD's* James Elkins commends Riley's practice whilst being critical of its standing as research. He states that 'Anyone who has heard Riley talk about her paintings knows the strange feeling her accounts produce: She says things like "What would happen if I painted in four colours using barber-pole patterns, in stripes two centimeters in width, and placed the poles four centimeter's apart?" - and then she answers these apparently scientific questions by simply showing the resulting painting.' (p.213) Elkins goes on to claim that Riley's approach 'will not wash' as research, standing merely as a *practice* that *mimics* research. My aim here is partly to suggest that there is something interesting about Riley's exploration of intensities, but also to show how her painting might figure in an affective, argumentative context.

3.32 References to Op Art in the Work of Deleuze and Guattari

Deleuze-Guattari make scant reference to op art throughout their corpus. This is perhaps because it seemingly lacks any political context – that, to paraphrase Charles Peguy on Kantian morality, it ‘has clean hands’, but only on account of it having ‘no hands’. However, if we consider such imagery in relation to Deleuze’s claim that philosophy needs to become more abstract (in an ontological as opposed to representational context) and to focus its attention upon molecular processual movement – upon ‘movement in itself, or relation *per sé* rather than focussing on the object moved or the things related’ (Cull, 2009, p.71), there is a sense in which, in its purity of movement, op art could be said to become the most political of arts. This resonance is not lost on Deleuze-Guattari – indeed on the brief occasions when op art is addressed, it is evoked as an ethical ideal, in the context of describing ‘actual’ forms of political practice. In their discussion of the political significance of quilt making in *A Thousand Plateaus*, they suggest of the quilt that:

Its basic motif ('bloc') is composed of a single element; the recurrence of this element frees uniquely rhythmic values ... The smooth space of patchwork is adequate to demonstrate that 'smooth' does not mean homogenous, quite the contrary; it is an amorphous, nonformal space prefiguring op art. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 p. 526)

Likewise, in their discussion of the practice of patchworking they suggest, in a formulation that neatly captures the qualities of the adapted, vertiginous Münsterberg illusion:

It is as though a smooth space emanated, sprang from a striated space, but not without a correlation between the two, a recapitulation of one in the other, a furtherance of one through the other. Yet the complex difference persists. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 p. 526)

Similar connections are made in their discussion of the music of Pierre Boulez they stress the ‘melding’ of smooth and striated space that takes place through his mode of composition:

Texture can be crafted in such away as to lose fixed and homogenous values, becoming a support for slips in tempo, displacements of intervals and *son art* transformation comparable to the transformations of *op art* (ATP)

In a short comment in the introduction to the edited volume *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, O'Sullivan and Zepke, make an important connection with the performativity of a text and the applicability of Deleuze-Guattari's claims to the context of textual production and encounter. Of the differently inflected contributions made by various authors to the volume, and the 'criss-crossing of disciplinary boundaries and practices' that takes place, O'Sullivan and Zepke expressing their desire that 'The patchwork texture of the volume would flash and shift in the hands and head of its reader giving it a haptic and hallucinatory affect', (O'Sullivan & Zepke, 2008, p. 6)

The distinction made by Deleuze-Guattari between smooth and striated space always addresses a political context, and we shall see shortly that it has much pertinence in relation to the tensions between epistemological and ontological discourse that arise in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research. For the time being, however, we will focus upon developing an account of the ontological significance of the work of art in the context of Deleuzian philosophy.

3.33 The Importance of Movement in Deleuze's Analysis of the Artefact

The account of artistic practice that is offered by Deleuze, is centered upon the artwork's kinetic and transformative power, and is at once materially and ontologically focused. That is to say, art is positioned by Deleuze predominately as a practice that complicates, transforms and problematises actual phenomena. Deleuze emphasises the corporeal qualities of artistic practice, and how, in its embrace of contingency and resistance to cliché, it in some sense enables a 'wresting' of the virtual from the actual (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.167). To this end Deleuze stresses the corporeality and autopoietic qualities of artists' materials and the inherent unpredictability of the material negotiation that takes place in artistic practice. That is say, for Deleuze the long-durational materiality of painting, for instance, opens up many possibilities for slippage and for material inflection, and in light of this, Deleuze suggests that an originary or representational form can never simply be imposed by an artist. For Deleuze, the paradigmatic example of such negotiation can be discerned in the practice of painting. However, as we shall see, the ontological dimension of his

account of artistic practice confers transferability, resulting in a breadth and diversity of application. Thus Deleuze's writings on artistic production might be applied to the production of texts in the context of traditional research or to the production of installations/assemblages in the context of contemporary art, and with this in mind it seems clear that his writings might equally address the hybrid practice that is artistic research. Importantly, in Deleuze's account of the art of Francis Bacon, we can discern an interest not only in the paintings themselves, but also in Bacon's methods of production. For Deleuze, Bacon's work is interesting primarily because of the way in which it in some sense renders visible the virtual intensities that are enfolded in the actual – producing what Deleuze describes as an autonomous bloc of percepts, affects and relations. However, Deleuze stresses Bacon's methodological embrace of contingency as well as the expressivity of his materials, emphasising their mutual participation in transmutation of figurative form through the expression of intensive forces and affects (see figure 16, over page).

3.34 Deleuze on Francis Bacon's Style

Significantly for our purposes here, Deleuze focuses upon the 'analogical' character of Bacon's work - the way in which Bacon creates a style of painting that is in some sense expressive of the energetic operation of sensation/matter that for Deleuze stand as the conditions of actual experience. In elaborating the analogical characteristics of Bacon's style, Deleuze emphasises the way in which Bacon's work subverts classical perspective, its reliance upon intensive, tonal relations, and its liquification and contortion of figurative representation.

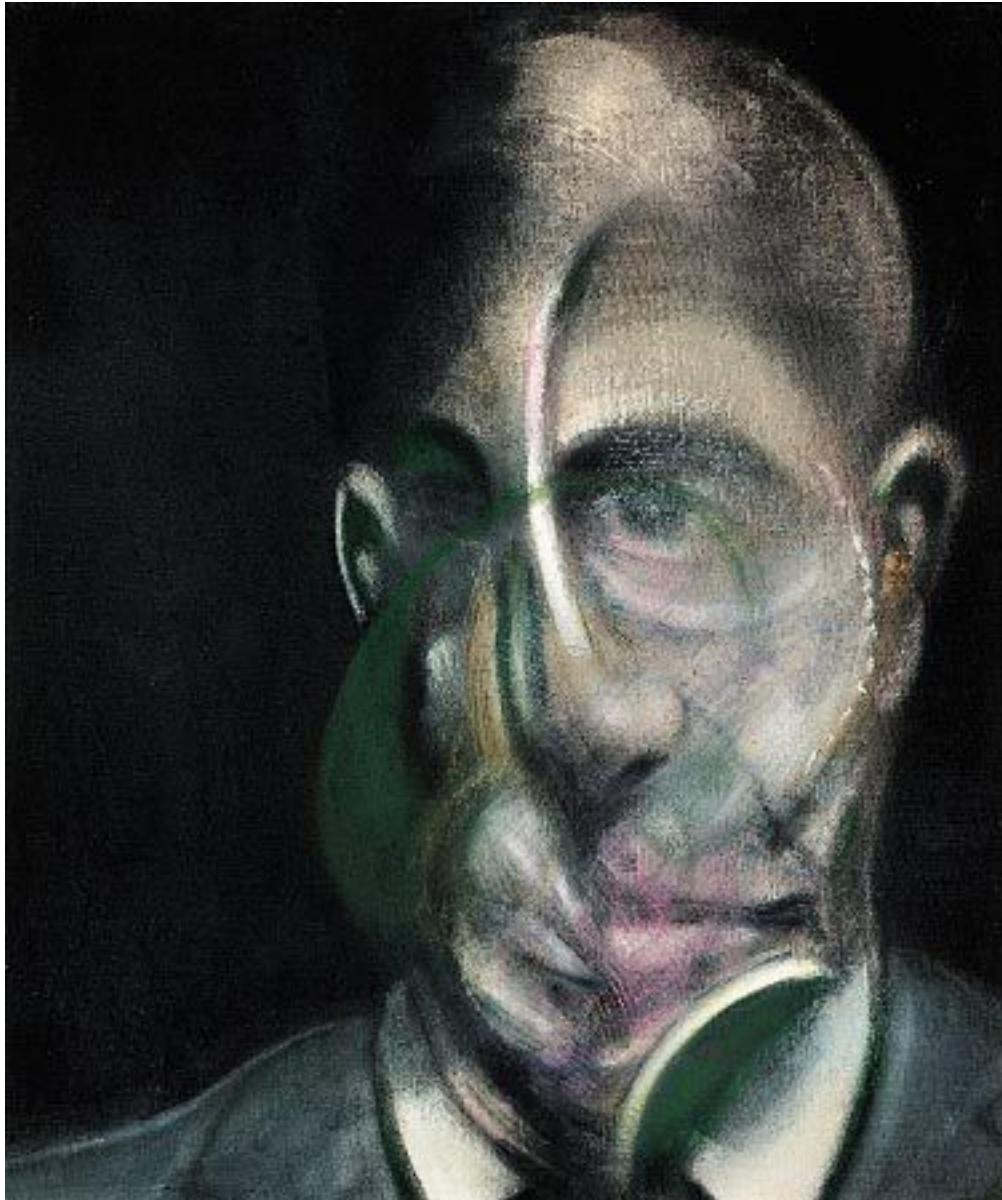


Figure 16. *Portrait of Michel Leiris* (Bacon, 1976)

For Deleuze this arises partially out of the way in which Bacon surrenders to matter by embracing the materiality of paint, and secondly he emphasises the way in which Bacon methodologically institutes a transformative device - which Deleuze terms the 'catastrophe' - into the process of image production.

3.35 Bacon's Method of Diagrammatic Catastrophe

For Deleuze, it is catastrophe that must be embraced in the production of the new. He counsels us, as philosophers, to listen to what artists have to say and to pay close attention to their interaction with materials (Deleuze, 2005, p.99). It is important to

recognise that in his analysis of Bacon, the concept of catastrophe is developed in methodological terms (Ambrose, 2006, p.25). It is suggested here that, hyperbole aside, there is something that can be learned from Deleuze's analysis of this device in the context of practice-based research. With methodological considerations in mind it becomes interesting to consider that despite the at once chaotic and kinetic character of the virtual, Deleuze has a preference for semi-figurative work. Purist modes of abstraction, such as those of Kandinsky and Mondrian are positioned as being too austere and idealistic (Deleuze, 2005, p.105), whilst Deleuze suggests that the frenetic and disorderly qualities of Pollock's abstract expressionism, whilst in some sense poignant, are nevertheless excessive in character and do not admit of restraint (Deleuze, 2005, p.106)

For Deleuze there is a 'diagrammatic' aspect to painting – in the sense that the painting operates as a modulator of forces (Ambrose p.119). That is to say, it is the diagram or catastrophe that stands as a disruptive mechanism that introduces movement and variation into a figure as a whole. *In Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation* Deleuze explores the way in which the diagram could be said to be operative in the work of a number of artists. In his analysis of Cézanne, for instance, he stresses the equivalence of the diagram with the actual landscape that Cézanne is painting (Deleuze, 2005, p.112) – Cézanne paints the same landscape (his motif) numerous times, rendering, or actualising it differently on each occasion. In his analysis of Van Gogh, a minor, but nevertheless important figure in *The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze draws attention to his use of colour and to the use of three-dimensional texture that underpins his technique of 'hatching'. Deleuze emphasises the way in which Van Gogh's 'straight and curved hatch marks ... raise and lower the ground, twist the trees, make the sky palpitate' (Deleuze, 2005, p.102). In this sense, the diagram is omnipresent in the work of Van Gogh – in so far as it is embodied at the level of painting technique. It is Bacon's work, however, that is of most interest to Deleuze, and which, when considered in terms of the employment of the diagram as a methodological device, is most relevant to the context of practice-led research. Bacon's method of composition is to proceed from a form that is figurative (an actual state of affairs), which will introduce a 'diagram' which will serve to reconfigure or scramble the original figuration. For Deleuze, it is the presence of the diagram (that rather like Barthes notion of the punctum, need only occupy a 'small area' of the

canvas) that introduces a ‘germ of rhythm’ that will, through a form of interference or co-responsive variation influence the production of a second figuration that has been expunged or divested of cliché (Deleuze, 2005, p.72) Thus In the case of Bacon, the diagram is produced by making random material marks upon the canvas - by throwing, smearing or scraping paint. These marks serve to compromise the original figure, whilst simultaneously serving to open a potentiality for the emergence of alternative semi-figurative possibilities. Bacon stresses that ‘within the graph/diagram’ we can see ‘the possibility of all types of facts being planted’ (Bogue, 2003, p.123; Deleuze, 2005, p.184)

3.40 The Application of Bacon’s Method to Practice-Led Research

Deleuze’s account of Bacon’s method is interesting from an artistic-research perspective in the sense that it is concerned with the destabilisation of one state of affairs and the emergence of another in a context that embraces both contingency and experimentation. Thus, there is an important process-ontological dimension to Bacon’s method that might be carried over into consideration of artistic modes of research if we position them as activities that likewise begin with an existing state of affairs and attempt to destabilise or transform it through a series of experiments and thoroughly contingent interventions.

There is a clear affinity between Bacon’s approach to the catastrophe in painting and the method that Deleuze employs in his creative readings of other philosophers, which is likewise employed in Deleuze’s reading of Bacon himself. In the period that constitutes his early ‘historical’ work,³⁹ Deleuze employed a diagrammatic strategy himself in the form of his method of ‘enculage’ – a strategy that enabled novel and transformative readings of other philosophers. Of the resulting interpretations of any given philosopher, Deleuze explains:

It was really important for it to be his own child, because *the author had to actually say all I had him saying*. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 6 – my italics)

³⁹ By employing this method – which he equates with the practice of buggery, Deleuze produces novel and transformative readings of Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Bergson and Nietzsche and Leibniz.

Thus Deleuze compares his historical works to philosophical ‘portraits’ of other philosophers. He suggests that ‘As in painting, you have to create a likeness, but in a different material: the likeness is something you have to produce’ (Deleuze, 1995, p.136). It is claimed here that there is an affinity between Deleuze’s transformation of canonical philosophers and the problem of the formulation of an artistic research paradigm. Thus a new paradigm must really be the child of existing research paradigms, but it must also unearth something monstrous - emphasising some subterranean aspect of research processes, and connecting them to a seemingly distant and unrelated activity (such as artistic production).

3.41 Method, Territorialisation and Deterritorialisation

Deleuze-Guattari remind us that any deterritorialisation of an actual state of affairs must be accompanied by process of reterritorialisation – at least if we are to avoid slipping into inaction (through the embrace of chaos). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze-Guattari give a useful summary of their method in the abstract - presenting a useful picture of a generic ‘materialist’ research situation:

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous point on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensity segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.178)

In Deleuze’s various comments that can be brought to bear on methodologies of creative transformation we can discern an at once constructivist and pluralist approach to research methodology, a performative emphasis that is open to both conceptual and experiential strategies, and a necessary intimacy or attention to detail that would seem to have particular relevance in the context of artistic modes of research. We can likewise discern an alternative way of approaching the debate concerning the question of the legitimacy of practice-based research, which engages with familiar aspects of research enquiry, but which temporally reverses the sequence of their operation.

3.42 Reverse Chronology and Research Methods

In the course of his discussion of experiential knowledge, Biggs notes firstly that in the context of the arts it is not usually the case that artefacts are produced as a result of the application of a theoretical or critical model, and secondly that it is the norm for critical writing and commentary to address, and therefore follow in the wake of artworks, which Biggs positions as the legitimate outcomes of practice (Biggs, 2007, p.3). Thus Biggs suggests that artistic practice produces outcomes that are only subsequently theorised, and he contrasts this with what he takes to be the norm in the sciences – as when a theory is employed in the service of the production of artefacts (bridges, computers, rockets etc.). Thus for Biggs, in the context of the sciences, the artefact (a working, stable piece of technology) is positioned in pragmatic terms as a verification of a theory. In the context of this argument Biggs introduces a notion of ‘reverse chronology’ with the aim of reinforcing the separation of theory and practice. There is a sense in which we can take issue with Biggs claim, but in order to do so we must proceed on ontological as opposed to epistemological grounds. That is to say, there is a case to be made for the instrumentality of artworks in problematising, as opposed to representing states of affairs, but it must proceed on predominately ontological grounds. Thus Rescher (1999) has emphasised a more neutral, symbiotic relationship between technological and theoretical innovation. That is to say, he suggests that technological innovation also provides new ways of seeing which themselves facilitate further theorising and subsequent technological development (Rescher, 1999, p.38). Accordingly, he argues that science progresses ‘in terms of pragmatic rather than strictly cognitive standards... affording us increased power of prediction and control’ (Rescher, 1999, p.28). For Rescher, ultimately it is praxis that is the arbiter of theory and his account of the interrelationship between technological artefacts, the acquisition of knowledge, and the development of theory could be said to lend support to a parallel argument that there is research value to the artefacts that are produced in art/design research contexts (The reconfigured Münsterberg illusion employed earlier in these pages stands as a simple example of one such device). There is an affinity between Rescher’s notion of symbiosis between theory and instrumentation and what he terms the erotetic propagation of scientific thought (the notion that scientific enquiry will continue ad-infinitum, as opposed to ever establishing a permanent ground) (Rescher, 1999, pp. 147-156), which can also be

located in Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's notion of 'eternal return' as a form of becoming (i.e. as the repetition of difference as opposed to the repetition of timeless, stable or fixed identities) (Deleuze, 2001, p. 153). In this sense, Deleuze's vision of philosophy as endless conceptual construction/transformation overlaps with Rescher's notion of scientific erotetic propagation in the sense that they can both be seen to emphasise a pragmatic concern with changes to the repertoire of questions that can be posed at any given time, in any given (and changing) milieu.

From the position of this thesis, Biggs' notion of reverse chronology is interesting, but should not be taken to establish any precedential relationship between practice and theory, but rather to enable a more general consideration of research aims and methods. The reverse chronological character of artistic practice that will be developed in the context of this thesis can be seen to arise in part through the artistic goal of problematisation and in part through the highly qualitative orientation of artistic research. It is argued here that artistic modes of research have the broadly performative aim of problematising a highly specific and highly particular set of circumstances with a view to enabling their transformation - and with this in mind, we can identify a number of additional areas where the principle of reverse chronology applies.

3.43 Reverse Chronology and Methodological Construction

There is an important sense in which the qualitative, experiential concerns of practice-based research apply at the level of methodological selection and construction. The notion that we might, at the outset of a study, select a given method or from a series of extant methods, jars somewhat with the specificity of artistic practice and its sensitivity to context. In her *Choreographing Relations* the Deleuzian philosopher-choreographer Petra Sabisch stresses that importance of methodological construction in choreographic practice (Sabisch, 2011), and it is suggested here that we can extend this idea, applying it more generally to the context of practice-led research. According to Sabisch, we might best conceive of method as a 'singular, material experimental practice', opposing it to the idea of purely abstract procedures that are applicable to an object of study (Sabisch, 2011, p. 11, p.21). Sabisch positions methods as themselves arising out of the contingent, material circumstances of a problem. She emphasises

that a performance is both a ‘mode of experimentation, and a mode of production’ (Sabisch, 2011, p. 11, p.21) in a way that resonates with the affective dimension of Deleuzian philosophy. Thus, for Sabisch, where the aim of practice-based research is problematisation through performance, a series of singular, project specific methods or devices are formulated which resonate with the specific parameters or intensities of a problem. Accordingly, from this position, what would seem to be required in the context of practice-led research is an openness and flexibility with respect to methods, and a sensitivity to the way in which they impact upon the object of study. Thus, a problem comes first, and methods arise through the interaction with the problem and a growing sensitivity to its parameters. With this in mind, a practice-led research project might be considered primarily in terms of the production or formulation of a method, or of a series of methodological devices. This has interesting implications with respect both to the management of projects and to the way in which such projects might be assessed. That is to say, the focus upon methodological construction shifts the character of research questions from a descriptive concern with states of affairs (‘How does x do y?’, ‘How did a impact upon b?’) to a speculative concern with their transformation (‘How might x impact upon y?’, ‘How can x be problematised?’, ‘What is the significance of y today?’). This reversal has important implications for the notion of research training. That is to say, whilst there is no reason why an established methodology – or a number of established methodologies - should not be employed in the context of practice-based projects, the contextual specificity of such works suggests that in the context of research training we should focus upon the methodological constitution and methodological construction of existing projects in a case by case fashion – illustrating firstly the way in which methods have arisen out of a problem, secondly how they varied over the course of a project, thirdly how they served to problematise a territory, fourthly what openings they suggested and lastly how they might participate in its inflection or change. Accordingly, there is a case to be made for questioning the value of generic research training in the context of artistic research. Thus it is claimed here that in developing research training we should move away from a focus upon generic research methods and towards case studies of the instrumentalism of a particular combination of methods in the context of particular

research projects.⁴⁰ Practically Sabisch has been instrumental in establishing *The Performing Arts Forum* (P-AF, St Ermw) and has explored the way in which the methods and protocols of the Open Source software movement and Creative Commons licensing might be applied to the sharing of creative methodological devices. In this sense, Sabisch gives some indication of the way in which large volumes of bespoke methodologies might be shared, using a ‘toolbox’ metaphor.

From the perspective of the performative paradigm, Sabisch’s work is valuable in so far it addresses the question of discipline-specific methods in a highly qualitative context. Thus, rather than seeking the formulation of an alternative methodology or a set of alternative artistic methodologies that can be instituted at a disciplinary level in the context of practice-based research, Sabisch, focuses upon the creative construction (and negotiation) of methodologies in the face of the qualitative specificity of a problem. As a consequence the assessment of a practice-based research project becomes methodologically focused – but the concern is with the application, permutation and construction of methods and devices (and the sharing/modification of methodological devices where appropriate), as opposed to the ‘selection’ of a generic methods deemed appropriate to the ‘question’.

3.44 Reverse Chronology and Semiotics

Sabisch’s constructivist, methodological pluralism is in part concerned with an openness to phenomena that can be located in the context of the arts, and there is an affinity between this conception of artistic-practice and the post-Peircean strain of semiotic enquiry, that is developed in the philosophy of Deleuze-Guattari. Broadly, semiotics is distinctive in its concern with the study of ‘signs’ and their associative/relational networks. There are two aspects of semiotic approaches to phenomena that are of importance with respect to formulating an at once ontological and non-representational approach to artistic research. Firstly, a sign is characterised by semioticians in multi-modal, experiential terms – thus signs are as likely to take

⁴⁰ It is perhaps thinking such as this that is behind the recent drive for a qualitative focus upon particular case studies of practice-led projects. Borgdoff, Elkins, and Barrett and Bolt have all recently announced books that undertake this kind of study.

the form of words as they are to take the form of images, sounds, gestures or objects. Secondly, the externality of sign relations enables the possibility of innovation or transformation of meaning over time. That is to say, for the semiotician, words, or other assemblages of signs are fundamentally relational in nature. This applies both to their (synchronic) relational constitution and to their (diachronic) relational development. That is to say, whilst Saussurean semiotics emphasised almost exclusively the internal relations within the system of language in approaching the system synchronically (focusing upon function of an existing system as opposed to its diachronic evolution or development), Peircean semiotics focuses upon the movement, development and transformation of systems through a process of what Peirce terms *semiosis* (Peirce, 1966, vol 1, p.339). Thus, in its concern with transformation, there is an emphasis upon the operation of external relations in Peirce's thought (this will be explored in more detail in chapter four of this thesis).

For Peirce, a sign is by definition a kind of intermediary. That is to say, fundamental to the 'signing' of a phenomenon is the notion that it stands 'to' an individual 'for' something else. Thus the phenomena of meaning creation and meaning extension are fundamental to Peirce's semiotics. That is to say, there is a triadic and recursive quality to Peircean semiotics that stresses the multiplication of signs. Central to Peirce's theory of meaning is the notion that an initial sign (a *representamen*) addresses an individual and in so doing it creates an equivalent or more developed sign in the mind of the individual in question. In this way, the initial sign *affects* an individual and in so doing produces something meaningful, which goes beyond that which is experientially given purely by the sign itself (I experience traces of blood on my shirt and am compelled to speculate about its origin). For Peirce, the second sign (the idea that arises in the encounter with the sign) is classed as the 'interpretant' of the first and is itself capable of acting as another sign and combining with others. That is to say, the secondary experience of an idea can go on to stand as a *representamen* itself, producing other ideas in multiple chains of association and inference. As such there are complex chains of inference and mediated forms of reference at work in Peirce's theory of the actions of signs.

Peirce's analysis is conducted at the phenomenological level (the world of appearances that he terms 'the *phaneron*'), and as such his conception of the sign becomes

important both with respect to artistic and scientific activity, but importantly for our purposes here, it serves to foreground another aspect of their reverse chronological relationship. Peirce famously extended the concept of inductive inference to include a category of ‘abductive inference’, which he saw as central to scientific hypothesis formulation. For Peirce, abduction is positioned as the starting point of scientific method - as a kind of non-necessary educated guess. The key point here is that hypothesis formulation, according to Peirce, is ultimately a creative response to an encounter with an unusual, or out of the ordinary, aspect of experience – it is a creative sense-making procedure that is intended to render an experiential anomaly less strange. We might argue then that whilst much traditional research may begin with a moment of abductive inference in the face of anomaly, much artistic practice with its focus upon experiential problematisation, aims at the *production of* such anomalies in an attempt to establish the conditions for abductive inference to take place. Thus whilst much scientific research proceeds from an abductive encounter, artistic research seeks to generate moments of abduction in the service of alternative hypothesis formation. Peirce believed that once a hypothesis has been reached through a process of abductive inference, a series of consequential phenomena could be deduced that should result if the hypothesis is in fact true, and it is the presence of these phenomena that ultimately satisfy an inductive test. Peirce suggests that if these deduced consequences do not obtain, we return to an abductive state, seeking a new hypothesis that can account both for the initial phenomena and for the anomalies that emerged during the process of experimental testing. Thus in the context of artistic research we might suggest that the instrumental function of the work is to generate such anomalies, steering the audience towards the construction of alternative scenarios.

Both pragmatist and process thought developed in a context that was broadly empiricist. That is to say, each begins with experience, and they are likewise concerned with logics of experimentation, sensation and connection. For Deleuze, an ontological conception of process and relation combine to constitute the network of material-relational flows that at once condition experience and allow for its transformation. We have seen how when Deleuze stresses the importance of the ‘encounter’ with something ‘outside of thought’ with respect to the transformation of a situation, he is referring both to the encounter with the *unusual* in actual experience

and an encounter with a broader imperceptible network of relations subtending this. For Deleuze, 'virtual' relations are mediated through the production of experiential signs. Thus the virtual represents the 'outside of thought' that 'signs' to us through experience, motivating, or as Deleuze says 'forcing', us to think through a thoroughly semiotic, experiential encounter (Drohan, 2009).

Given Deleuze's naturalistic leanings and his hostility to representation, it is easy to understand why he might be critical of the more semantic, or meaning geared aspects of traditional semiotics, as well as to their textual associations (semioticians may analyse images, sounds and performances, but they typically approach them as texts). Accordingly, through exploring the at once psychologically affective and ontologically performative qualities of semiotic thought, Deleuze develops an 'a-signifying' naturalistic conception of semiotics. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze-Guattari supplement Peircian semiotics, famously drawing upon the biosemiotic thought of Jakob von Uexküll and his notion of Umwelt, or species-specific lifeworld. Their practical discussion of the Tick as minimal organism - with an extremely limited environmental sensitivity - is useful in so far as it illustrates the importance of the concepts of sensation, abstraction and connectivity in Deleuzian philosophy, illustrating how these concepts can serve as a gateway to a fully ontological conception of relation. Thus we are presented with a picture of a creature, the Tick, which has a limited experiential and behavioural repertoire:

The Tick, attracted by the light, hoists itself up to the tip of a branch; it is sensitive to the smell of mammals, and lets itself fall when one passes beneath the branch; it digs into its skin, at the least hairy place it can find. Just three affects; the rest of the time the tick sleeps, sometimes for years on end, indifferent to all that goes on in its immense forest. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p.283)

It is clear from the passage above that the Tick is sensitive to light, the odour of mammals, the sensation of hair and the temperature of blood. These sensitivities are relational and affective in the semiotic sense, and they trigger respective behaviours (climbing, falling, sucking blood). This example is useful also in the sense that it further brings out the ambiguity in Deleuze usage of the term affect – in one sense it refers to an experiential order (the sensation of light, the smell of a mammal, the

texture of hair, the temperature of blood), but in another it refers to a the capabilities of a body – or as Deleuze, following Spinoza will suggest, it refers to ‘what a body can do’ (Deleuze, 1988, p.36).

Although heavily indebted to the process-pragmatist semiotics/semiotic of Peirce, Deleuze radicalises a particular aspect of the Peircian approach. That is to say, he stresses the function of signs as experiential provocateurs, whilst still in some sense critiquing the Peircean notion of representation. Ultimately, the anti-representational, or ‘a-signifying’ semiotics that is developed in Deleuze-Guattari, focuses upon an extremely diverse collection of transitional agencies, or relations, that combine in the construction of signs. These agencies, in order of complexity, strata, or level of emergence, include molecular and material flows, sensations, informational data, as well as political and social forces. In the context of Deleuze-Guattari’s a-signifying semiotics, the notion of a relation as an intermediary is retained as well as its connection with creativity and the production of the new. The tendency of more traditional accounts of semiotics to focus upon ‘meaning’, however - be it purely textual in nature, or engaged with a wider set of modalities - is subject to de-emphasis in the Deleuzo-Gattarian account. Unpacking this at once vitalist and semiotic conception of relations will shed further light upon Deleuze’s version of empiricism, as well as upon the way in which the semiotic nature of the construction of new knowledge involves a triadic, quasi-Peircean interplay between our faculties (Semetsky, 2009, pp. 448-449). It is significant with respect to practice-led research that Deleuze stresses the importance of sensation, connectivity, and tacit unconscious processes in enquiry – these being traits more traditionally aligned with artistic activity - and attempts to apply them to domains more typically associated with rational modes of thought. We have seen how Deleuze suggests that concepts should be positioned as authored, invented, pragmatic constructions that are prompted by something outside of, or foreign to experience (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.7). In accordance with this, Deleuze emphasises that a triadic interplay of affect-percept-concept is required in order to produce experiences that instantiate the conditions for movement or transformation. (Deleuze, 1995, p.165).

3.50 Formulating a Process-Philosophical Approach to the Legitimacy Debate

It is claimed here that it is the reverse chronological relationship that enables a kind of paradigmatic transformation – drawing attention to specificity of the practice-led research terrain in a way that is attuned to artistic ideals. That is to say, in seeking to establish the conditions for a new research paradigm, we must identify inter-connections between artistic practice and received modes of research enquiry – but we have suggested here that in so doing we might draw attention to some subterranean aspect or quality of received research practices – something that they do, of which they may be only dimly aware. It is important to recognise that this is not the same as calling for a radical overhauling of notions of research per sé. Rather it is a concern with discerning latent connections between disciplines that might, when subjected to emphasis, serve to both distinguish and differentiate the alternative conditions of artistic modes of research.

3.51 The Modal Neutrality and Transformative Quality of Process

Central to the development of the argument of this chapter is the notion that the ubiquity of process confers a distinctive and important neutrality upon the process perspective. That is to say, process philosophies tend to expound a monistic form of metaphysical realism, envisioning the world as something that is naturalistic and processually constituted. As a consequence of its ontological monism, however, process philosophy remains receptive to rich diversity of phenomena. That is to say, despite its ultimately reductive character, the process perspective develops a pluralistic as opposed to eliminative account of phenomenal experience. For the process philosopher, process exhibits an aspectual character - expressing both the external world of objects and the internal life of sensation. From the perspective of process philosophy, our encounters with process are always partial, and this is due in part to its aspectual characterisation of experience, in part because of its emphasis upon epistemic finitude (in knowing, we priorities certain relations, to the detriment of others), and in part to the perspective's emphasis upon contingent relational constitution (confluences of relation are not entirely fixed and are always open to transformation). Thus any given subject position stands as a partial selection of a set

of relations that constitutes a perspective upon the world, whilst the contingency of relation expresses the openness of the world itself. There is a sense, then in which the process perspective can be said to collapse – or perhaps more accurately, to absorb both the subject-object distinction and the purported gulf between personal and impersonal modes of description, that dominate descriptions of representational modes of research in the context of the legitimacy debate.⁴¹

The relational characterisation of identity constitutes the qualitative dimension of Deleuzian thought, which as we have seen is ontological at root but nevertheless has important phenomenological correlates. Thus for Deleuze, relational confluences are qualitative, processual structures that do not admit of division without change. Thus changes in relational constitution or changes in relational intensity impact upon actual identities, resulting in a plasticity of form and an openness to the future that Deleuze associates with the the Riemannian geometry of topological space. Thus, for Deleuze, actual things can be considered in quasi Riemannian terms as n dimensional confluences of relations. Indeed, the concept of ‘relation’ is prominent in Deleuzian philosophy, and consequently has a lot of work to do. In chapter four we will explore the many senses of the term that can be located in Deleuze’s work.

Examples of emergent qualitative change abound in the secondary literature on Deleuze. Exponents of the new materialism DeLanda and Protevi focus upon tangible transformations such as different orders of temperature. Protevi suggests that to present 100 degrees as the sum of 83 and 17 degrees is to overlook a wealth of material, qualitative transformation. Similarly, DeLanda emphasises the emergent ‘phase transition’ that occurs as water begins to boil (DeLanda, 2002, p.11, pp.118-121). As we have seen, Williams, in an argument recalling Bergson’s early psychological work emphasises the covering of emotions and the way in which they shade into one another. Lastly, Massumi foregrounds Deleuze’s example of a change in gait – that is the way in which a rapid walk qualitatively transforms as it transitions into a run. (Massumi, 2002)

We have seen how the idea that differences in relational intensity and differences in

⁴¹ See the tendency to collapse of subject, object and method that frequently occurs in the context of the performative paradigm, which was addressed in chapter one (section 1.03-1.04).

relational constitution might be positioned as producing qualitative difference and we have considered the significance of this with respect to Deleuze's at once onto-phenomenal and onto-genetic account of experience. This process-philosophical conception of qualitative difference can also be utilised to understand both the differential and integrative relationships between artistic practice and received notions of research. By identifying the connections between artistic-practice and received notions of research and bringing them to the fore, we will be in a better position to see that there need be no fundamental incompatibility between artistic research practice and more traditional notions of research. However, we shall also see that in its sensitivity to a particular dimension of the research process in its amplification of a particular set of relations, practice-led research establishes its own, qualitatively distinct territory. It is argued here that qualities of received notions of research that are amplified in the context of practice-based research, are concerns with innovation, the production of the new, and an engagement with the intensive qualities of a situation.

3.52 The Intensive Nature of the Research Situation

There is an important sense in which Deleuze's process-ontological concerns serve to unite his accounts of sensation and matter, resulting in a picture of the research situation as something that is conducted in an intensive, as opposed to predominately linguistic or representational register. With this in mind, we can consider the way in which Deleuze's philosophy questions the second of Biggs' assumptions – namely that in the context of artistic research we should be primarily concerned with the 'meaning' of experience. Whilst Deleuze believes that there is something extremely *significant* about the intensive dimension of experience, he nevertheless believes that the concept of significance must be distinguished from any equivalence with linguistic conceptions of meaning. That is to say, even if we agree that we are in some sense interested in the meaning of experience, we must be take into account that, as Manuel DeLanda (2011) has recently noted, that there is an important distinction to be made in the discourse surrounding meaning between the concept of (linguistic) signification and the concept of (environmental) significance. DeLanda allies the former (linguistic signification) with propositional knowledge that conveys explicit semantic content, and he suggests that in being concerned with explicit propositional

knowledge, it maps onto Ryle's concept of 'knowing that'. DeLanda goes on to explore an alternative sense of meaning that is conveyed by the concept of environmental significance, and which is allied both with Deleuzian ontology, and with Ryle's notion of 'knowing how'. This conception of the significance of phenomena is concerned with concepts of relevance, importance, and the notion of non-conceptual, or 'animalistic' forms of perception (in Kantian philosophy there is a bifurcation of human and animal perception that is instituted by the classificatory capacities of language). Thus the concept of significance is closely connected with the negotiation of intensities that takes place within a given embodied, material situation. Through DeLanda's reading of Ryle, we can connect the research situation to the active, processual, intensive world that figures prominently in Deleuzian ontology. Importantly for our purposes here, DeLanda makes it plain that such knowledge requires a connection with a corporeal situation. Thus for Deleuze, the cyclist forms a material assemblage with the bicycle (as well as with the terrain), just as the carpenter must come to know the grain of the wood and the swimmer must apprentice to the wave. Accordingly, there is a stress in Deleuzian thought upon material apprenticeship – that is to say, there is a stress upon the learning and negotiation of the intensities and thresholds of a situation (Semetsky, 2006). Importantly, this kind of learning requires an intimate connection between the external and proprioceptive aspects of perception – a blurring of inner and outer as it were. That is to say, in order to ride a bicycle (or even to successfully operate a Yoyo), it is necessary to coordinate a number of bodily experiences, and this may or may not take place in an overt and conscious fashion. Thus there are important pre or non-linguistic aspects to 'knowing how' as well as an intimate connection with both movement, and the material dynamics of a situation. Both the intensive aspect of this form of knowledge and its preconscious dimension are of great importance to Deleuze. Indeed, in drawing out the consequences of Deleuze's position, there is a certain radicalisation of 'knowing how' that takes place, and we have seen how the concept of 'know how' is similarly prominent in the theorisation of performative accounts of practice-led research. For Deleuze, such knowledge is not limited in its application to what might routinely describe as the learning of practical skills – it has ontological significance, and underpins every aspect of knowing. Ultimately, for Deleuze, we must not only apprentice to this or that craft, trade or discipline, but must also apprentice to the world - in all of its intensities.

Thus there is an important overlap of epistemological and ontological concerns that takes place in DeLanda's account of intensity, and a stress upon the concept of significance that resonates with the approach to sensation that which we located earlier in the work of James Williams. This is particularly interesting given Williams' and DeLanda's in many ways oppositional readings of Deleuze's work. Thus DeLanda is one of the most materialistic readers of Deleuze, linking the ontogenetic aspects of Deleuze's project to contemporary intensive conceptions of science, whilst Williams in his guide to the Logic of Sense explores a more idealistic version of Deleuze which emphasises the play of inverted Platonic form-like infinitives (which we might position as constituting a Deleuzian theory of 'trans-forms'). Ultimately, however, their readings converge in a shared stress upon the concept of significance and the importance of intensive relation, be it idealistic or materialistic in character.

DeLanda makes an important observation towards the end of his discussion that is particularly important with respect to the re-orientation of the legitimacy debate. He first draws attention to the ubiquity of know-how. That is to say, for DeLanda know how is 'everywhere' – whilst we are used to descriptions of know how underpinning practices such as swimming, cycling, painting, and carpentry, DeLanda notes that it is also the basis of learning to read, learning to write, and learning to argue persuasively. DeLanda emphasises how each of these skills is intimately connected with a mode of apprenticeship and of learning by doing. He goes on to claim that 'know how' also stands as the basis for more or less refined modes of perception in any given context. He suggests that our capacity for perceptual discernment is variable and can in some sense be aligned with artistic skill.

3.60 Problematising The Second Phase of Biggs' Argument

Having considered the way in which Biggs' concept of experiential content might be populated in either a linguistic or intensive fashion – and having shown how each presents markedly different implications for the role of the artefact in the context of artistic research, we can now turn to the second phase of Biggs' argument. In the second stage of his argument Biggs applies insights from the later Wittgenstein's comments in the *Philosophical Investigations* (itself effectively a critique of

Wittgenstein's earlier representational 'picture theory' of language that was presented in the *Tractatus*) concerning the incoherence of private, solipsistic knowledge claims. Biggs believes that what he takes to be the intrinsic incommunicability of private experience weakens any epistemological import that Ryle's conception of 'knowing how' might have in the context of the legitimacy debate. Wittgenstein's thought experiment in his *Philosophical Investigations*, concerning the possibility of a private language, trades on a similar idea of epistemic disconnection to that which is evinced in the *Tractatus*. In the context of the *Philosophical Investigations*, however, it is not the ineffability of an outside to representation that poses a problem, but rather the epistemic asymmetry between inner and outer forms of experience that is at issue. The argument of the *Investigations* explores the epistemic status of our privileged access to inner experience, in relation to the context of uncertainty, doubt and potential error that stands as the condition for a statement to stand as a claim to knowledge. This is most apparent when considering Wittgenstein's example of the 'beetle in the box' that is intended to show the redundancy of private-first person experience in a properly epistemological context:

Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. -- Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something; for the box might even be empty... it cancels out, whatever it is. (Wittgenstein, 1953, §293)

In the example above, the 'beetle' operates as a stand-in for private, subjective qualities of experience, and Wittgenstein asks us to consider the epistemological consequences of such privacy (Wittgenstein is not denying that we have experiences, he is denying that they have relevance in a public epistemological context). We have already suggested that Biggs' claims concerning the fundamentally representational character of language and his claims concerning the ineffability of private of experience arise out of different periods of Wittgensteinian thought, and we have noted that they are each concerned in their own way with a kind of epistemological limit or disconnection. In the *Tractatus* the concern is with the nature of linguistic representation, culminating in a limited notion of what can be said with any sense through the representational medium of language – as such it can be considered a

depth oriented, structural analysis, arising out of no small degree of ontological consideration. Indeed it is because of its at once metaphysical and ontological context that Wittgenstein positions the *Tractatus*, metaphorically, as a ladder (because the *Tractatus* itself, considered in relation to its own theory of meaning, stands as an attempt to address its own pictorial form, and thus stands, on its own terms, as an attempt to say that which cannot be said). Conversely, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, the concern switches to language use – that is with delineating the way in which a term such as ‘knowledge’ is employed in a socio-behavioural context - as a means of explicating what can legitimately stand as a knowledge claim. It is interesting to note that as with the *Tractatus*, the *Investigations* once again expresses a kind of structural concern, but second time around, Wittgenstein’s preoccupation is with the function of words embedded in social contexts. Accordingly, in envisaging a particular pattern of social behaviour, it interrogates a network of language use, or of a collection of practices that lie epistemologically open to view. In this sense, Wittgenstein’s later philosophy has a predominately socio-epistemological, as opposed to onto-epistemological focus. Which is to say there is a shift between the early and later Wittgenstein between ontological and social-epistemological concerns. However, there is a preoccupation in both periods of Wittgenstein’s work, with notions of ineffability and epistemological disconnection - and each of these positions exerts an influence upon the development of Biggs’ argument.

As we have seen, the first phase of Biggs’ argument is more strongly influenced by the thinking of the early Wittgenstein. That is to say, Wittgenstein effectively transposes the early ‘picture theory of meaning’ from a linguistic to an experiential context (in stressing the representational qualities of personal feeling, experiences become propositional in character). Consequently, the second phase of Biggs’ argument is coloured by the later Wittgenstein’s critique of his former philosophical epistemological position. Thus, Biggs suggests, following Wittgenstein, that it makes no sense to position our privileged access to experience as a form of knowledge, as with no publicly observable criteria, there can be no standard of correctness. Accordingly, from a (later) Wittgensteinian perspective, statements concerning first person experience can be neither correct, nor incorrect, as they do not operate in a context that properly admits of a question.

In the context of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, this becomes important when we consider the epistemological emphasis that can be discerned, for instance, in the demands that a researcher frame a research question, and make a contribution to knowledge. That is to say, if there is no room for doubt with respect to first person experience, and if first person experience is not something that can map onto concepts of correctness, then we might ask how anything concerned with private, first person experience could be framed as a question at all, let alone communicated as an outcome. Accordingly, for Biggs, we cannot be mistaken or in error with respect to personal experience - because, as Wittgenstein suggests, there is an absurdity involved not only in trying to try to doubt that one has a headache, but also in trying to envisage a context in which the sentence 'I know that I have a headache' would have an application.

For both Wittgenstein and Biggs, this effectively voids the possibility that a statement of personal experience can stand as a knowledge claim. As a consequence, for both Wittgenstein and Biggs, an aspect of personal experience is simply not something that could contribute to knowledge – be it a claim made in the context of research, or a claim made in any other social context. Thus in his early critique of the experiential dimension of practice-based research, Biggs effectively takes Wittgenstein's arguments concerning the social context of epistemological enquiry, and makes explicit their connection to the formal, institutional requirements of received practices of research, suggesting that the experiential dimension of the practice-based component – the aesthetic response that arises in an encounter with an artwork - becomes at best a 'symptom' that there is a territory to be investigated and unpacked (Biggs, 2007, p.9).

3.61 The Misapplication of the Wittgensteinian Critique

Biggs' employment of Wittgenstein's private language argument targets firstly the ineffability of any knowledge that might be said to be 'encoded' in an artwork, secondly the qualities of first-person experience that are bound up in both the subjective, aesthetic responses to artefacts, and thirdly the notion that there might be pre-linguistic, or tacit forms of knowledge that coordinate artistic modes of practice.

Thus Biggs tells us in connection with Ryle:

When Ryle said ‘efficient practice precedes the theory of it’ he was not making a claim about the status of practice as pre-linguistic research. (Biggs, 2007, p.3)

Later, in connection with the artefact, we are told:

The reason why the outcome of the research cannot be constituted by an artefact that evokes particular experiences is because all experiences are subjective and non-transferable, and therefore can only be indicators of the presence of something needing to be unpacked. (Biggs, 2007, p.9)

It is claimed here, however, that Biggs’ critique of experiential knowledge is epistemologically focused, and as a consequence, when considered in relation to an ontological, performative conception of practice-based research activity, it cannot gain proper purchase. That is to say, in ignoring the performative and instrumental dimension of practice-led research, Biggs’ critique is focused upon the ‘knowing’ as opposed to the ‘doings’ of the artefact. In the context of practice-based research, Ryle’s category of ‘knowing how’, is most relevant, not at the level of outcome, but rather at the level of method. It draws attention to the place of the researcher within a given milieu, and their experimentation as regards the intensities and affordances of a situation, with a view to formulating strategies for its problematisation or transformation. At this instrumental level of enquiry, there is no requirement for an explicit knowledge claim to be made – Deleuze’s point is merely that through an intimate engagement with a problem, the researcher familiarises themselves with its sensitive points. The identification of these points – or what Deleuze would position as a problem’s singularities – both involves and facilitates pluralistic strategies for their manipulation. That is to say, the manipulation of the singularities of a problem might involve the production of arguments as well as the production of problematic, abductive forms of experience (see chapter 3, section 3.45). Thus, both the conceptual and the experiential can be employed in the formulation of the project specific methods/devices such as those that are suggested by Sabisch. Indeed, as we have seen the various modifications of the Münsterberg figure that have been utilised in this section of this thesis can be considered as one such example of experiential argumentation or problematisation.

The ontological dimension of practice-based forms of enquiry facilitates a number of important shifts with respect to Biggs' conception of research enquiry. Firstly, with respect to communication, Deleuze's ontological realism facilitates a kind of communication, but it is a mutative form of communication premised upon notions of resonance or interference. Deleuze will stress that the criteria for evaluating thoughtful activity is that it be 'interesting' (inter-esting), in the sense that it stands as a productive confluence of relations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.84). In his paper concerning experiential knowledge, Biggs claims that practice-based research needs a concept akin to 'experiential content' in order to enable communicative contact. It is claimed here, Deleuzian philosophy in its emphasis upon productive, differential ontological relations, offers just that – but in a way that jars with Biggs' research ideals, and ontological commitments, leaving Biggs in some sense aspect blind to the performative dimension of artistic research activity.

3.62 The Tension Between Epistemological and Ontological Concerns in the Legitimacy Debate

The argument developed in this section of the thesis claims that there is an important ontological dimension that characterises much practice-led research, which sits ill with the predominately epistemological context of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. It is important to remember that the legitimacy debate arose out of a context that included both art and design. We saw in the introduction to this thesis how the early *Doctoral Education in Design* conferences were particularly critical of artistic modes of research, and this critique tended to be at once positivistically oriented and epistemologically focused, contesting practice-based researchers claims to knowledge, as well as the lack of 'rigour' in practice-based enquiry. Biggs delivered a paper at the notorious La Clusaz event and it is clear that the conference's climate of design-led critique, as well as its concern with the (de)signing of artistic practice, chimes strongly with his position.⁴²

⁴² Chris Rust has noted the judgmental tone of the Doctoral Education in Design Conferences, stating 'I presented at the 2000 La Clusaz Conference on Doctoral Education in Design. I went to La Clusaz full of enthusiasm for my ideas but the very intense and quite scary environment of that conference brought me down to earth with a bump.' (Rust, 2004, abstract)

Whilst delivering a paper myself at the 2011 conference in Hong Kong, it was apparent that there was a palpable divide between speakers that could be drawn broadly along epistemological and ontological lines. The assumption that practice-led modes of research have epistemological aims results in a peculiar situation in which ‘legitimate researchers’ contested the claims made by emerging ‘new paradigm’ researchers, suggesting that they did not engage in authentic (epistemological) research. As a consequence, in a situation not without irony, new paradigm researchers whose work typically embraces notions of performativity, desire and affect, presented rather humble papers, pleading for plurality - which were cautiously delivered with restraint, balance and measure. Following their presentation, delegates’ papers were subjected to intense and vehement criticism – usually on broadly epistemological or methodological grounds. The general tone of the conference was one of judgement, the arguments confrontational, and the critical performance was at once elaborate and emotive in character.



Figure 17. Donald Norman, Questioning Speakers at the Doctoral Education in Design Conference, Hong Kong, 2011

Towards the conclusion of the 2011 conference a telling exchange took place between Donald Norman and Welby Ings. Both the outcome of this conversation and the mode in which it was conducted are interesting with respect to the aims of this thesis. With respect to the outcome of their conversation, it was interesting to note that despite the extremity of their opposition, Ings and Norman seemed to establish a consensus that much of the tension in the legitimacy debate was generated through attempts to apply the methods and criteria for evaluating scientific research, to research in art and design. Of more interest, however, was the manner in which this exchange was conducted. Ings enquired if Norman could 'bring himself to accept a number of points'. The question was posed in terms of an affective and intensive register (Would entertaining these points cause dissonance? Were they in some sense unpalatable?) Norman, however, interpreted this exchange in logico-syllogistic terms, stating that he felt he was being led into a 'rhetorical trap' that might in some sense 'force a conclusion upon him'.

3.63 The Presence of Deleuzian Thought in the Legitimacy Debate

Many of the Deleuzian theorists who are interested in the ontological aspects of artistic practice – such as Simon O'Sullivan, and Stephen Zepke, or the Deleuzian choreographer Petra Sabisch, do not engage with the meta-commentary concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, choosing instead to simply operate as researchers within their given fields. O'Sullivan, Zepke, and Sabisch's work is nevertheless highly pertinent to the question of the importance of performative materiality in the context of practice-based research. Similarly, the field of Deleuze studies has long operated in an interdisciplinary context and has embraced both conceptual and experiential dimensions of practice. Accordingly there is hybridity to journals such as the *A/V Journal of Practical and Creative Philosophy* that is hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University – ostensibly a journal of philosophy, but one which routinely accept artworks as submissions alongside more traditional text-only papers, as well as encouraging the use of video and documenting the 'performance' of papers and lectures.

Within the debate itself there was early evidence of the presence of Deleuze in the Dutch and Australian contexts - although the significance of Deleuze's thought was not at that time explored in any detail. We have already seen the significance of Deleuze in the writings of Barbara Bolt, and there was evidence of Deleuzian current in a number of early investigative anthologies (Balkema & Slager, 2011; Elkins 2009; Macleod & Holdridge, 2006). We can perhaps better understand the significance of the tension that arises between epistemological and ontological concerns, and observe its operation by considering some fragments from the writings of Barbara Bolt, James Elkins and Griselda Pollock, which have attempted to simultaneously address (albeit rather awkwardly) each of these concerns. Bolt, Elkins and Pollock are interesting from the perspective of this thesis in so far as they would each seem to identify an at once ontological, and material dimension to practice-led research, as well as noting significant tensions between ontological and epistemological concerns. They are also interesting for our purposes here in that they have each made positive reference to the potential application of Deleuzian thought to the legitimacy debate. Similarly, they have each recognised, and have been to some extent frustrated by, the emphasis upon epistemological and administrative criteria in the evaluation of practice-led research, whilst at the same time suggesting that there is a the need for parity in the assessment of the quality of research projects.

We saw in the introduction to this thesis how the work of Barbara Bolt has in recent years become increasingly Deleuzian in focus. Her chapter in Zepke and O'Sullivan's *Deleuze and Contemporary Art* provides a diaristic account of the production of a painting, and there is a sense in which this complements her considerations of the ways in which the artistic conception of the 'new' might be employed in research-oriented artistic practice within the context of the university without compromising its ontological orientation. We will turn to this shortly, but for the time being, we will examine the awkward confluence of epistemological criteria and ontological focus that can be located in her 2006 and 2008 papers at the *Research into Practice* conferences that were organised by Biggs and Büchler at Hertfordshire.

We have already seen how there is a prominent ontological current in all of Bolt's writings. In her 2009 paper, *A Performative Paradigm for Art and Design* we encounter the following:

Deleuze espouses the forceful, transformative and creative potential of the performative ... The performative act doesn't describe something but rather it does something in the world. This 'something' has the power to transform the world. (Bolt, 2009, p.4)

This passage can be seen as an extension of the ontological themes developed in her paper *Materializing Pedagogies*, that was presented two years earlier, at the previous research into practice conference:

Material thinking offers us a way of considering the relations that take place within the very process or tissue of making... the materials and processes of production have their own intelligence that come into play in interaction with the artist's creative intelligence ... thinking involves a particular responsiveness to or conjunction with the intelligence of materials and processes in practice.... how do we begin the task of developing creative arts research pedagogies from the bottom up, rather than from the top down? ... education has become so driven by conceptual and thematic concerns that materials and processes are conceived instrumentally to be used in the service of an idea, rather than as productive in their own right. (Bolt, 2006)

Running alongside these statements, however, we can locate a secondary current that emerges in 2009 and which pushes in an at once epistemological and evaluative direction:

Against what criteria do we assess the success or failure of a performance/production? ... (Can) a performative model make valid 'truth' claims that will be recognized by the broader research community? ... It is clear that if a performative paradigm is viable it has to be able to do the work expected of a research paradigm, it has to be able to define its terms, refine its protocols and procedures and be able to withstand scrutiny ... how does this model of research fit with the standards of proof in the qualitative and quantitative domains? ... Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies rely on *constative* statements or utterance to establish truth claims. Here truth is seen as correspondence... How then, do we assess the success or failure of the performance? ... How then do we assess the effect? (Bolt, 2009)

In the case of Elkins, who was likewise introduced in chapter one, we encounter a similar pattern, and a similar set of tensions, but they are less consistently expressed. Elkins, like Bolt was a painter, with strongly material and performative concerns. The

Deleuzian scholar Darren Ambrose (Ambrose, 2006, p.22) has noted the affinity between Elkins account of the act of painting and the account of painting that is suggested by Deleuze:

A painting is made of paint ... and paint has its own logic and meanings ... to an artist a picture is both a sum of ideas and a blurry memory of 'pushing paint', breathing fumes, dripping oils and wiping brushes, smearing and diluting and mixing. (Elkins, 1999, p.2)

Indeed, Elkins has noted that there are possibilities for making sense of practice-based research inherent in the Deleuzian thought - suggesting that it '*could* make the kind of sense that would allow the PhD in studio art to be accepted throughout the university' (Elkins, 2009 , p. xix) but he bemoans the tendency of theorists influenced by Deleuze to 'abandon research'to 'an uncertain celebration of complexity' (Elkins, 2009 , p. xix). Elkins oscillates with respect to his position on epistemological concerns. At times he expresses a wariness with respect to the epistemological context of research in the arts, and he has been particularly critical of the concept of 'new knowledge'. We saw in the introduction to this thesis how Elkins has suggested that the emphasis on the creation of 'new knowledge' in research is something that is 'generated by the administrative language of UK universities' (Macleod & Holdridge, 2006, p.241) and that the 'initial impetus behind the terms research and 'new knowledge' is purely economic in character (Macleod & Holdridge, 2006, p.241). Thus he voices suspicion of both the positivistic associations and the epistemological connotations of the phrase 'new knowledge', believing that thinking in terms of new knowledge will lead us to 'mistakenly start thinking about art as if it were a science'. (Macleod & Holdridge, 2006, p.241).

Elkins' account is interesting in that it brings out a particular tension between an ontological sense of 'the new' and the epistemological sense of the term 'knowledge'. He also draws attentions to the quantification and itemisation of research through research-administrative and auditing procedures, which, as we shall see, is likewise expressed in the work of Griselda Pollock (2008). However, it is also interesting to see how Elkins' comments concerning the bureaucratic qualities of research administration transform and shift focus over time, and how his broadly ontological emphasis with respect to the practice of painting, is accompanied, in an academic

context, by an emphasis upon the importance of epistemology and the need for traditional scholarly work. Elkins wrote an afterword for Macleod and Holdrige's edited volume *Thinking Through Art: Critical Reflections on Emerging Research* that was deemed too critical of the contributing authors to be publishable without substantial edits. The original paper was later published in full in an edition of *Printed Project* (Elkins, 2005). Here he draws attention firstly to examples of scattered, thin, ideosyncratic and cursory referencing, secondly to the creation of artificial definitions in the place of normative ones, and finally stresses the importance of disciplinary protocols and communication (Elkins, 2005, pp. 39-41) - emphasizing that every theory must connect to existing theories in other fields. Elkin's has pursued this line of enquiry further, suggesting that 'as the PhD in studio practice continues to spread it will become increasingly important for people in art departments to talk about 'knowledge' and 'research' with people in other departments' and that 'stretching the words, or experimenting with their meanings, will (no longer) be sufficient' (Elkins, 2010, p.28). Interestingly, a Stone Institute seminar organised by Elkins attempted to confront Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions of knowledge with material and tacit forms of understanding. Elkins notes in relation to this issue that there is a 'disjunction' between approaches concerned with aesthetic cognition, and more material, practitioner approaches to the question, that 'needs to be resolved' (Elkins, 2010, p.28).

Griselda Pollock's contribution to the debate is perhaps the most interesting for our purposes here. In Pollock's account, we encounter the citation of both Bergson and Deleuze, alongside the familiar recognition of the material emphasis with respect to artistic practice, and an acknowledgment that the interpretative activities of the art historian has a creative dimension:

This understanding of creativity at the intersection of thought and matter has been re-articulated by philosopher Gilles Deleuze... Thus virtuality in/as art becomes a force for the truly creative, which has no predictable mode of actualisation: that is always discovery by experiment. (Pollock, 2008, p.5)

Importantly she notes, speaking in an at once ontological and methodological register that a particular material practice may 'set in motion the processes by which,

eventually, the necessary terms of critical interpretation may emerge' (Pollock, 2008, p.12) and that as a consequence, it may only be 'in retrospect' that the critical vocabulary for describing such an event may emerge. When Pollock switches to an epistemological register, however, a familiar, communicative, tension arises:

But if creativity may be considered thought it is not necessarily, critical, reflective and other-oriented thought. So how can we think about art as thought, as capable of producing knowledge rather than its own vital, creative and significant event? (Pollock, 2008, p.10)

Pollock's epistemological concerns are tempered with recognition that the epistemological criteria used in the evaluation of research are premised upon what she takes to be 'the hegemony of the science model' (Pollock, 2008, p.16), she likewise notes how emphasis upon the epistemological concerns that she associates with an 'audit culture,' that seeks to quantify the processes and outcomes of research (Pollock, 2008, p.17). Following Strathern (2000), Pollock, describes the emergence of audit culture is an effect of risk management in the face of a cultural context of contingency. Thus areas of culture which have escaped the logic of management are positioned as having been subjected to the 'most alien and alienating schemes of measurement' with the aim of reducing risk (Pollock, 2008, p.18). Pollock's invocation of audit culture in relation to the legitimacy debate echo a concern that is prominent in Deleuze-Guattari's writings on what they describe as the (political) striation of smooth spaces, that we have already encountered in our discussion of Riley's op art, and we have likewise seen through DeLanda's account of Ryle's philosophy that the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of 'smooth space' is intimately connected with the Rylean conception of 'knowing how'. Stating Deleuze-Guattari's distinction between types of space in the simplest terms, a striated space is a space which has been in some sense quantified or subjected to measure, and which as such has been subjected to metrics such as point, line, plane and number. In marked contrast to this, smooth spaces are conceived as spaces of open movement and are aligned with the concepts of vector and potential. The navigation – or more accurately the negotiation - of smooth spaces is presented as arising less from a plan and more in response to encounters with localised and contingent potentials. Deleuze stresses that travel in this context is less about movement through a spatial medium, and is better presented as the construction of space through an assemblage of changes in direction (in response,

for instance, to contingencies such as the presence of scarce, ephemeral and unpredictable resources such as edible plant life or impending rainfall). This contrasts with travel through the city, which Deleuze suggests is typically subject to a plan, and dependent upon the transportation networks of road/rail, and in which the need for food is managed by an economic segmentation of time (breakfast, lunch, evening meal) and resources (the storage and commodification of edible goods). Thus smooth space is associated, by Deleuze-Guattari with nomadic wanderings (nomads, move and settle largely in relation to localised, environmental forces), whilst striated space is associated with directed and purposive travel. Deleuze-Guattari tell us that it is characterised by ‘*haptic* rather than optical perception’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.479). This emphasis upon the tactile is more than a rejection of an optical order, it implies an intensive connection with our environment - an intimate processual connection between subject and object. Thus smooth space in being ‘filled by events or haecceities, far more than formed and perceived things’ is constituted by ‘movements and transformations’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.479) That is to say, it is ‘a space of affects more than one of properties’. Bringing this into alignment with Pollock’s comments on audit culture, Deleuze-Guattari stress that striation is motivated by administrative anxiety when confronted by passage, flow and variety and that it operates by erecting eternal and constant orders such as essences, definitions and things-in-themselves.

Building upon Pollock and Deleuze, we might suggest that there is an epistemic striation of a set of ontological concerns that takes place in the legitimacy debate. Pollock identifies how epistemological, quantitative concerns impact upon the language of the call for paper for the 2008 *Research into Practice*, conference, organised by Biggs and Büchler and which, she suggests, in its attempt to establish a ‘meta level’ discourse on the legitimacy debate, can be positioned as ‘an effect’ of the audit culture –or what Deleuze-Guattari might express in their own idiom as the attempted striation of ontological research. Pollock draws our attention to the way in which Biggs and Büchler’s call for papers steers respondents into a discourse concerned with unambiguous language, clarity, originality, authorship, explicitness, and knowledge (Pollock, 2008, pp. 19-20). This in turn draws attention to the sense in which Biggs’ as the organiser of a regularly recurring international conference, and

as co-editor of the *Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* has occupied an extremely prominent and influential political position.

With this in mind we are now in a position to reconsider the parallel streams of thought that we can locate in Barbara Bolt's paper, and to question the degree to which her wrestling with the tension between ontological epistemological concerns (that is absent in 2006 but emerges in 2008) might have been a result of an attempt to respond explicitly to the framework and agenda that was imposed by the call for papers.

3.64 The Corporeality of Textual Production

In 2004, Barbara Bolt published a short article entitled *The Exegesis and the Shock of the New* in the journal TEXT (Bolt, 2004). In this article, Bolt noted the affinity between the research-centric requirement of contribution to knowledge and the avante-garde emphasis upon shock value or what Robert Hughes famously termed 'the shock of the new' (Hughes, 1981). Bolt suggested that the desire for radical forms of innovation that find their expression in the Kantian concept of the sublime, (which 'overwhelms the senses and brings reason to its knees'), presented an unrealistic expectation in an everyday academic context and had the effect of placing students and artistic-researchers in permanent crisis, seeking out new and ever escalating techniques that incorporated some kind of novelty or 'shock value'. Bolt argued that a more modest and realistic place to look for the impact of 'the new' is not in the radical transgressive aspects of practice, but rather in the openness and receptivity of its methods. Citing Deleuze's remarks on the catastrophe in Bacon's practice of painting, Bolt argued that the new emerges through practices that are open to contingency, and thus to the influence of Deleuzian virtuality, and she applied this to the context of the textual thesis. It is important to recognise, however, that Bolt's account of the 'linguaging' of the event (Bolt, 2004), nevertheless instituted a separation between practice and its documentation. In closing this chapter, and building upon DeLandas observation that reading, writing and persuasive modes of expression can be considered examples of Rylean know how, we will explore the idea of academic textual production as an at once corporeal and intensive process.

We will begin with a small experimental transposition of context. Let us suppose that Barbara Bolt's 2010 paper that was included in the edited volume *Deleuze and Contemporary Art* in which she presented a diaristic account of the corporeal process of composition as it is manifested in the practice of painting, had instead been included in the 2013 volume in the same series that was entitled *Deleuze and Research Methodologies*. It is claimed here that Bolt's account of the corporeality of the painting process might equally have addressed the corporeality of the process of writing – or the production of a textual exegesis. Addressing the process of painting, Bolt writes:

I feel the quality of the canvas, turn over the tubes of paint ... engage in long discussions about the prices and qualities, paints, stretchers and canvas. There are those inevitable periods of apparent procrastination ... essential to marking and preparing for the performance ... what saves the artist from doing what s/he wants to do is ... not knowing how to get there... The performance commences. It is a complex assemblage made from the body's gestures, rhythms and speeds in collaboration with those others to whom this performance is indebted ... The first stain is fairly straightforward ... I lay in paint, watch and wait. Allow the paint to move – wet into wet, wet over dry... the paint moves restlessly in response to the pull of gravity. It sweats and weeps. Here, in the catastrophe that is the very condition of painting, the plane of material invades the plane of composition. (Bolt 2010, p. 276)

Whilst we are accustomed to thinking of artistic composition in such material and corporeal terms we are less attuned to thinking of textual composition in this fashion. It is easy to forget the processual nature of textual assemblage and composition, which is occluded by our tendency to think of a text as a pure, self contained, authorial expression or propositional structure. When writing a text, as when producing a painting, we must become attuned to its movements, thresholds and intensities. The order of exposition alters the force of an argument – and over time, passages are, foregrounded, footnoted, blended or expunged. We addressed the intertextual relation of texts in chapter one of this thesis and noted their significance in a process-relational context. Webb notes how the relational contingency of a text steps well beyond the confines of its binding, drawing attention to the relational dynamics of the research situation, and positioning them as operative even before a single word has been written.

From lucky meetings at conferences, on the train, at dinner where an author or text is mentioned? What of those chance findings of books serendipitously mis-shelved, or left by the photocopier? The book that means nothings and then later means everything, the text that was so hard to find, and yet only clings on to a sentimental place at the bottom of a footnote? And more importantly, what of all the non-textual, non subject-specific experiences that have taken place during the writing process? Those odd conversations over lunch or late at night, the films, novels, weekend thoughts, dreams, illnesses and love affairs? In short, all those events that ultimately shape ones life and character, and more specifically ones time and approach to research? (Webb, 2000)

Lastly, we must not forget that we might also extend Webb's description to also included emotional undercurrents – the Humean passions - the interests and rivalries that often spur the author on, the satisfaction and elation that accompanies a break through, the frustration of discarding material that cannot be made to fit.

3.65 Positioning the Written Thesis as Practice-Led Research

Despite its predominately textual orientation, if we are sensitive to its intensive, compositional character, we can view the production of a thesis, under a different aspect as it were, as an example of artistic research. In the case of this thesis, there are subtle stylistic shifts that have taken place between chapters two and three in terms of strategies that are brought to bear upon the research problem. The mobilisation of the Münsterberg illusion can be considered a practice-led intervention – as can the sudden affective introduction (following page after page of textual discussion) of Švankmajer's white rabbit in section one. However, we might take a similar approach to the invitation to envisage the contextual transformation (or reframing) of Bolt's diaristic account of painting when transposed to the setting of research. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, however, there is also a sense in which this thesis has its motif.

In his discussion of Cézanne Deleuze tells us that the motif, or productive catastrophe in Cézanne's work might be considered the actual landscape that Cézanne is painting. (He is known to have painted the Sainte-Victoire mountain over sixty times). Very early in the research process I planned an artwork that I intended to include as a part of my final submission. Every day I would archive my writing as a date stamped

electronic document. My intention was to subsequently build a writing machine – a graphical ‘plotter’, which would drift through this archive and explore its history of composition. I planned to employ a variant of corpus analysis to track the development of passages over time and to exhibit the emergence, development and migration of text. The plotter would overwrite for long periods of time on a single piece of paper, dwelling upon a given fragment of text - exploring its history of development, connectivity and difference by moving forward and back through its history of production in a somewhat haphazard, non-linear fashion. Sadly, the leaders of my research group were not well disposed towards practice, and were keen that my research should conform to a traditional model. Whilst the writing machine was effectively removed from the submission, it has nevertheless remained operative in the form of a motif. Accordingly there is a sense in which it has been productive, and in which its influence has been felt many times over. There is another sense, however, in which the reduction to the level of ‘idea’ has neutered any directly performative and diagrammatic potential that the work itself might have contributed – along with any possibilities that it may have presented for empirical study. As a practitioner I was as much interested in what this work might have revealed about textual composition, as I was interested in the ideas that might have arisen through directly experiencing the chance collisions and layering of its texts, that would emerge through its long durational process of production. As I near the end of a lengthy, predominately textual defense of the practice-based submission I am keenly aware of the irony. It seems clear that a meta-commentary on modes of research practice that entirely excludes the kind of practice associated with one of its polarities would rather stack the deck. That is to say, having been corralled into asking a purely conceptual question, I have had to be most resourceful in order to return anything other than a purely conceptual answer (c.f. Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.10). In the spirit of practice-led research, I attempted to move with this restriction and negotiate its politics - reframing it as an opportunity to develop a set of genuinely aesthetico-conceptual methodological devices.

3.70 Summary and Interim Conclusion

This section has sought to revisit Ryle’s distinction between ‘knowing how’ and to align it with the intensive and performative aspects of Deleuzian ontology. It has been

suggested that Biggs' criticism of the experiential dimension of practice-based research depends upon a conceptual population of 'experiential content' and that this concept could be otherwise populated. It has likewise been suggested that Biggs' criticism of the value of Ryle's notion of 'knowing how' in the context of practice-led research is misapplied in the sense that it approaches the distinction in epistemological as opposed to ontological terms, remaining blind to the value of the performative dimension of the artwork and the role that it may play in an intensive as opposed to propositional approach to critique. In short it is suggested that Biggs operates with a purely experiential notion of affect (which is itself first disciplined by the concept) and which can be contrasted with the broadly performative and productive sense of affect that is favoured by Deleuze. In the process of building a constructive sense of what practice-based research might be, we have questioned the secondary status of 'knowing how', indicating the dependence of 'knowing that' on skill based activities such as reading, writing, and persuasive argumentation, and we have emphasised the applicability of intensive forms of understanding in the production, interpretation and reception of a text. Lastly it has been suggested that the epistemic emphasis in the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research arises out of a bureaucratic context of research administration, which although well intentioned, serves ultimately to compromise the potential of artistic research and to distort the problem in hand.

Whilst Deleuzian philosophy offers great potential for understanding points of connection and points of difference between practice-led research and more traditional modes of enquiry, it is nevertheless premised upon an ontological conception of productive and differential relation that arguably distances it from worldly (actual) concerns. Accordingly, the aim of chapter four will be to explore the Deleuzian conception of relation and to query its role, status and function with respect to actual processes of research.

Chapter 4: Interiority, Exteriority and the Aesthetics of Relation

'Relations are external to their terms.'

(Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, p.55)

4.00 Introduction to the Concept of Relation

It was suggested in the general introduction to this thesis that Deleuze's philosophy embodies a set of tensions that arise out of a process-philosophical concern with the concept of relation that is at once integrative and differential in character (see chapter 1, sections 1.20-1.34). It was claimed that such tensions become most manifest when we juxtapose Deleuzian philosophy's ontological stress upon the primacy of difference and becoming with its more integrative but similarly ontological concern with the connective – both of which are characterised and developed in relational terms. That is to say, with his concept of the virtual Deleuze offers a picture of an endlessly creative but nevertheless hyper-connected realm, which is concerned as much with notions of influence as it is with the production of the new. In Deleuzian philosophy, it is the operation of difference – or at least of differential relation – that conditions both the identity and the transformation of actual things. However the concept of relation plays something of a paradoxical role in Deleuze's thought – standing as the ontological condition for both the emergence and the development of the actual. Complicating things further, it is the existence of a pre-conscious and pre-individual relational field or network that serves at once to implicate and complicate actual things. It is perhaps for this reason that Patrick Hayden has suggested that much like Leibniz, all Deleuze does is contemplate relations (Hayden, 1995, p.283), and this is not surprising given the amount of work they have to do in his philosophy, fulfilling a simultaneously constitutive, connective and transformational function.

With respect to the broader aims of this thesis, focusing closely upon the treatment of relation in Deleuze's philosophy will assist in illustrating the pertinence of this concept to contemporary discussions of meaning/identity and transformation/change that take place in the context of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led

research. That is to say, a set of distinctively relational concerns would seem to underpin:

- i) The discussion of the legitimacy or role of the artwork in the practice-based submission.
- ii) The discussion of the nature and legitimacy of paradigmatic growth and transformation.
- iii) Calls for multiple, pluralistic, or transdisciplinary conceptions of research activity.

When, for example, Biggs queries the role of the artwork in the practice-based submission, he attempts to establish whether is it intrinsically or extrinsically related to what he takes to be the legitimate requirements of a research process (Biggs, 2004, p.1, p.4, p.5). Discussions of the way in which emerging forms of research relate to or break with more traditional forms of research activity likewise have a relational character, and this can be discerned in Biggs and Büchler's more recent work, with its emphasis upon the naturalistic development of parent and child communities in the context of paradigmatic development and growth. Biggs and Büchler depict this as a process which they contrast with the 'unnatural' academicisation of the arts that they suggest took place when artistic and traditional research communities were artificially 'thrown together', and which they argue ultimately produced 'dissatisfaction' across all of the communities involved (Biggs & Büchler, 2010, p.83). Serious contemplation of paradigmatic development emerged at a relatively late stage in Biggs and Büchler's work and it will be argued here that their new found receptivity to ideas of paradigmatic growth is symptomatic firstly of an acceptance of practice-led research that is taking place at an institutional level, and secondly of an important transformation that would appear to be taking place with respect to Biggs and Büchler's image of thought, which as we saw in chapters two and three, has tended to be strongly representationalist in character.

4.01 Relational Interiority and Exteriority

It was argued in chapter two of this thesis that Biggs has tended to think in quasi-essentialist terms, dwelling upon the intrinsic properties required for a given activity to stand as a legitimate form of research. In chapter three of this thesis we attempted to show how early in his theorisation of practice-led research Biggs had become influenced by the North American approach to design-research, as typified, for instance, by the work of Ken Friedman, and as a consequence had attempted a somewhat reductive and functional ‘de-signing’ of emerging forms of artistic research. We noted in chapter one that the term ‘de-sign’ is used in the context of this thesis to demark a particularly reductive, functional and cognitivist approach to phenomena that can be located in broadly rational approaches to design thinking, which emphasise the formulation of design ‘solutions’ through the reduction of a ‘problem space’ - typically seeking to model an audience or a class of ‘target users’ for any given solution (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, 2010). Such an approach can be contrasted with more open and contingent approaches to artistic research emerging from the performative paradigm and from the context of design activism, each of which which tend to emphasis plurality, difference and the production of the new (DiSalvo, 2012; Dunne and Raby, 2014). It is claimed here that it is the tension between the productive semiotics of artistic research (that is primarily concerned with anomalous sign production) and the reductive functionalism of cognitivist design thinking which regularly charged the atmosphere of the Doctoral Education in Design conferences. We saw in the introduction to this thesis that these two approaches embody antithetical responses to semiotics and to activities of sign production. That is to say, the more rationalist, neo-Kantian contingent of the design community would seem to be concerned with the importance of ‘de-signing’ or the filtering of extraneous associations. The artistic community, on the other hand, would appear to be more positively disposed to the production of signs, often embracing more radical aspects of semiotics (semiosis) and employing them methodologically as a form of critique. We saw in chapter three, for instance, how a diverse array of conceptual and aesthetic strategies can be deployed instrumentally to unsettle, problematise or destabilise a concept. With this in mind, the core tension underpinning the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research can be seen to revolve around polarities of practice concerned with ‘signing’ and ‘de-signing’.

We have already had recourse to consider the way in which the Doctoral Education in Design conferences were typified by heated exchanges which take place in the context of judgment - with a functionalist North American de-sign community, taking exception to the broadly postmodern interest in difference, affect, and transformation that characterises much artistic research. The opposition can be grasped by comparing Donald Norman's functional, integrative conception of the 'affordance' of objects (their resonance or degree fit with an anthropocentric experiential and social life), to more strongly postmodern conceptions of semiotic sign proliferation emanating from activist approaches to design activity which tend to address a pluralistic political context and to utilise design as a means of revealing significant points of tension in an agonistic culture (Disalvo, 2012; Dunne and Raby, 2014; Twemlow; 2006).

It is interesting from the perspective of this thesis that in starting to entertain notions of paradigmatic development Biggs and Büchler begin to make use of a vocabulary that has both logical and naturalistic connotations (the language of 'parent' and 'child') and that it is accompanied by a slide between the predominately integrative, atomistic, essentialist notion of 'properties' and a more neutral conception of 'relations' that is receptive both to discussion of the identity of things and to their transformation. It is important to note that this relational shift is subtle, and takes place only in the later writings of Biggs and Büchler. Consequently, one of the aims of this chapter is to shed further light upon this transformation or development. We will see how, when addressing the issue of conceptual legitimacy Biggs and Büchler retain an integrative focus, tending to use the terms 'property' and 'relation' interchangeably, or choosing to avoid such distinctions entirely - speaking more diplomatically of the importance of 'intrinsic factors'. It is claimed here that when employed by Biggs and Büchler, internal properties and internal relations are often conflated, but that ultimately it is only through some conception of external relation that Biggs and Büchler are, in their more recent work, able to address the possibility of legitimate paradigmatic transformation.

4.02 Relational Interiority in the Work of Biggs and Büchler

Despite their recently emerging interest in the transformation or extension of paradigms, Biggs and Büchler have been broadly consistent in their emphasis upon interiority. That is to say, for Biggs and Büchler, a legitimate conception of artistic research must be intrinsically connected to what they take to be the concept of research per sé - and it is through a discussion of integrative forms of relation that they attempt to establish an objective context to speak of the meaning of artefacts (e.g. the way in which they integrate with art/design-historical contexts). As we saw in chapter three, according to Biggs and Büchler, artefacts generate experiences that, through the notion of experiential content, must then be made to connect with (and thus relate to) the at once public and objective historical knowledge base of the field. Given this broadly historical and disciplinary emphasis, the concept of exteriority – that is, the concepts of extrinsic property and extrinsic relation are viewed negatively, and are closely associated by Biggs with the subjective reception of the artwork and with what they take to be an illegitimate intrusion of projected audience interpretation, which operates as a form of ‘extrinsic meaning’ or ‘impurity’ and which does not correspond to anything that could be said to have been intended or ‘placed there’ by the author of a work (Biggs, 2003). As a consequence, for Biggs and Büchler, this ‘extrinsic’ dimension of meaning cannot be said to be in any sense ‘encoded or embodied’ in the work itself. As a consequence, Biggs and Büchler position such extrinsic factors as possessing a secondary status, or as being in some sense surplus to requirements from the standpoint of research.

4.03 Relational Exteriority in Deleuze

In marked contrast to this, we find in Deleuzian philosophy an anti-essentialist emphasis upon ‘exteriority’ and a valorisation of extrinsic relation, which can be seen to underpin the concern with creativity and development that is characteristic of the Deleuzian ethics of transformation. Thus for Deleuze, concepts and entities are composed of, or in some sense arise out of a play of relations that is itself ungrounded, and as a consequence, the concepts and entities of the world are permanently open and receptive to contingent transformation. Deleuze’s notion of transversal connection (the cross connection of relations – or relation fields) is intimately

connected with both his ontology and with his ethics of transformation. For Deleuze, the mutability of phenomena is constituted by cross-contextual influence or connection. Thus Deleuzian ethics recommends an experimental approach to living that, importantly, is premised upon the perpetual overcoming of identity through the operation of processual becomings. Thus we are counselled by Deleuze to experiment with the intensities of a situation, to engage in ‘lines of flight’ and practices of deterritorialisation, embracing unsettling yet relationally productive experiential encounters. Accordingly, it seems fair to suggest that it is notions of relational influence, change and production that sit at the heart of Deleuzian philosophy.

Whilst it is clear that Deleuze in some sense venerates the production of the new and that this can be aligned with his emphasis upon external relation, it would be a mistake, to position Deleuze as lacking any conception of identity or integrity. We have seen how the concept of relation in process-relational thought has both an integrative and differential dimension, and how this is emphasised in James Williams’ process-relational reading of Deleuze. It is important to recognise, however, that for the process philosopher relations establish a creative tension – they both transform and connect (see chapter 1, section 1.21). Accordingly, despite Deleuze’s hostility to notions of interiority, there is nevertheless a concept of ‘territory’ in Deleuzian thought that stresses the importance of what Deleuze refers to as processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. As we shall see, for Deleuze, it is through the practices of territorialisation that we establish a kind of interior – but it is a rhythmic form of processual interiority which requires active maintenance, and which is itself ultimately transitional in character (see chapter 3, section 3.42). Accordingly, we have seen how, for Deleuze, implicated in every re-territorialisation is a parallel de-territorialisation of another position. In this sense we can discern an important difference between the broadly static, and representational conceptions of intrinsic and extrinsic relation that dominates the work of Biggs and Büchler, and a more mobile, pluralistic and kinetic concern with what we might term centrifugal and the centripetal relational activity that can be located in the thought of Deleuze – that, despite Deleuze’s aesthetic affinity with modernism, has a stronger kinship with postmodern and post-structuralist concerns.

4.04 The Ontological Status of Relation in Deleuzian Philosophy

Given the importance of relations to Deleuzian philosophy, as well as to contemporary discussion of artistic practice and to expanded or pluralistic conceptions of research activity, it is worth considering their ontological status. To this end Deleuze's philosophy proves useful, as despite its professed emphasis upon an external conception of relation there are a number of diverse conceptions of relation operative within Deleuze's thought, and this confers a certain breadth of application. Indeed, whilst Deleuze's practical concerns are clear and consistent throughout his corpus – that is to say, he consistently presents an anti-essentialist philosophy of becoming that embraces sensation and experience, and recommends an experimental and open approach to living - his ontology, or rather what we might frame as his various ontologies, are on the other hand, rather more opaque. Notably, there is a rift in Deleuzian philosophy between genetic conceptions of relational change (central to which is the role of the creative tension that arises through the confrontational interplay of differential flows, or fields of force) and syncretist or holistic accounts of relation (in which the structural complexity and the ontological interconnection of entities results in a form of quasi-intrinsic connection).

However we ultimately populate the concept of relation, it is clear that for Deleuze, the virtual is in some sense a relational realm. Indeed, John Mullarkey, following theorists such as Alain Badiou (2000), Peter Hallward (2006) and Todd May (1997) has suggested that the version of immanence suggested by Deleuze's philosophy never completely escapes the concept of transcendence and that Deleuze ultimately postulates an inverted transcendence, or an underside of experience - an 'ontological hinterworld' of which we at best have limited contact (Mullarkey, 2004, p.471).

It is not the gods which we encounter; even hidden, the gods are only the forms of recognition. What we encounter are the demons, the powers which only cover difference with more difference. ... The dark precursor is sufficient to enable communication between difference as such, and to make the different communicate with difference: the dark precursor is not a friend. (Deleuze, 2001, p.145 DR)

4.05 Multiple Senses of Relation in Deleuzian Philosophy

Genetic and syncretist themes are expressed throughout Deleuze's corpus, with one or the other tending to dominate particular works. Thus a syncretist and eternalist conception of relation would seem to be foregrounded in *The Logic of Sense* - this tends to be prevalent in James Williams' reading of Deleuze (Williams, 2008) - whilst the genetic, differential and productive sense of relation is more prominent in *Difference and Repetition* - serving as the basis of DeLanda's morphogenetic, intensive reading of Deleuze's philosophy (DeLanda, 2002). Complicating things further there is a more pragmatic, overtly political sense of relation or 'relationship' that is developed in Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari. This is typically taken up in artistic appropriations of Deleuze work - such as the relational aesthetics of Nicolas Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2002), and the non-relational aesthetics of Michael Corris (Gere & Corris, 2008). In his critique of Bourriaud, Corris effectively takes the ontological debate between relational integration and difference and recasts it in socio-political terms, emphasising the importance of concepts of alterity and hospitality, as opposed to the emphasis upon social inclusion through the formation of micro communities that is characteristic of Bourriaud's aesthetics (Bourriaud, 2002). Despite the obvious tensions between genetic and syncretist accounts of relation, they would each seem to be in some sense capable of delivering coherent accounts of actual, phenomenal experience. Accordingly, this chapter is concerned in the first instance with unpacking a number of seemingly incompatible senses of relation that are at play in Deleuze's philosophy in order that we might explore their ontological status, as well as the ways in which they could be said to be instrumentally united. However, it is likewise concerned with investigating the way in which they each generate divergent, but necessarily reductive, readings of Deleuze's work in the context of the secondary literature.

It is important to note that the tensions surrounding internalist and externalist conceptions of relation are not limited to the way in which the concept is operative in the work of Deleuze or Deleuze-Guattari - such tensions arise in any context in which concepts of tradition, or identity confront concepts of change. As a consequence the tension between the concepts of the differential and the integrative is prominent in discussions of both artistic and research practice - and this becomes further

pronounced in discussion of their coupling as artistic-research. With this in mind, we will begin by exploring a particular tension in Biggs' account of the role of the artefact that arises when the ideal of conceptual, representational capture (which is oriented by an analytic sense of internal or intrinsic relation) is confronted with the more productive, and hence extrinsic conception of relation that underpins Biggs' ideas concerning the interpretation of the artwork. In examining this tension, we will focus upon an important asymmetry or inconsistency between the writings of Biggs on the role of the artefact in the context of practice-based research, and his writings with Daniela Büchler on the nature of paradigmatic transformation.

4.10 Biggs' Critique of Extrinsic Relation in the Context of Practice-Led Research

In his paper addressing the role of the artefact in the context of practice-based research, Biggs proceeds from the AHRB requirement that research should embody 'knowledge, understanding and insight' (Biggs, 2002, p.1) – and suggests that we should be wary of the multiplication of extrinsic relations that arise in the context of interpretation. He claims that we should be skeptical of the notion that knowledge can be embodied within artefacts on the grounds that opinion is so easily divided over what any given artifact might represent. By way of example, he makes use of relativistic, historicist arguments, drawing attention to insights arising from museological studies, which are intended to illustrate the way in which the significance of a given artefact would seem to vary in accordance with its context of representation. To this end he highlights the cases of the Lascaux cave paintings and the Elgin marbles (Biggs, 2002, p.3). With respect to the former, Biggs explains that the images do not intrinsically embody information about how they should be used, and that this gives rise to alternative interpretations that have an extrinsic character:

Opinion is divided about whether the paintings show a hunting expedition or represent a ritual activity in which image-animals are slaughtered symbolically as an auspicious prelude to the actual hunt. (Biggs, 2002, p. 3)

Similarly, considering the Panathenaic frieze he notes firstly that the significance that the frieze possessed in the fifth century BC cannot be known, and secondly that the

meaning of a fragment of the frieze that was removed by Lord Elgin has changed at various points in history in relation to the various contexts in which it was exhibited. Thus he explains that in the beginning of the nineteenth century it was displayed as a ‘souvenir of the Grand Tour’, but that in the twentieth century it took on new significance – now seeming to embody issues of colonialism, having been contextualised in terms of post-colonial arguments relating to the ownership of works (Biggs, 2002, p.3-4).

Biggs ultimately suggests that the interpretation of a work is in some sense independent of any factors that could be said to be intrinsic to it, and that for artistic practice to fit into a legitimate research context these ‘extrinsic factors’ should be ‘controlled’ through the provision of an explicit, textual, context. It is clear to see how these considerations underpin Biggs’ recommendation that the practice component of artistic doctorates should be contextualised by the textual component of the submission, which ultimately has an exegetical function (Biggs, 2002, p.6).

4.11 Definitional and Relational Inconsistencies in Biggs’ Work

We have already had recourse to discuss aspects of Biggs’ work concerning the role of the artefact in chapter two of this thesis. There we focused upon Biggs’ reliance upon dictionary definitions and institutional criteria, noting the subtraction of the performative that takes place in Biggs’ definitions of ‘artefact’ and ‘work’. In this context we stressed the affinity between Biggs’ definitional approach and broadly essentialist modes of thinking, which tend to stress the importance of intrinsic properties and intrinsic relations with respect to conceptual understanding. It is claimed here, however, that there are some telling inconsistencies between Biggs’ quasi-essentialist approach to definitions of for instance, research, work and artifact, and a more relativistic line of thought that is developed in his argument against the submission of uncontextualised artworks. That is to say, Biggs’ argument concerning the contingency of interpretation, though intended as a form of critical commentary, references a body of anti-essentialist, relativistic thought that serves to push against the essentialist trajectory of his arguments concerning research definitions. To elaborate a little, in attempting to illustrate the impurity of artworks by illustrating the susceptibility of the significance of an artwork to extrinsic contextual influence, Biggs

develops ideas derived from Foucault and Kuhn, which in their emphasis upon external relation, resonate with a number of aspects of Deleuzian thought. That is to say, Biggs' citation of Foucault and Kuhn – the former for his rejection of natural kinds, and the latter for his suggestion that the introduction of a new scientific paradigm places an existing data set in the context of a new system of relations, is well placed and undoubtedly interesting with respect to the argument that Biggs develops for the extrinsic character of interpretative activity in the context of the arts. However, given that Kuhn and Foucault's target is not artistic activity, but the activity of the natural sciences, their observations sit ill with the positivistic and broadly essentialist character of the definitional aspects of Biggs' broader project.

Foucault, in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, sustained a critique against our assumption that there are natural or obvious categories of objects in the world. The whole notion of Foucault's 'epistemes', or indeed Kuhn's 'paradigm shifts', involves a change not in the nature of the external world, but in the perceived relationship of its parts, or the changing belief that some elements are more significant than others. (Biggs, 2002, p. 4)

Thus, in citing Foucault, Biggs stresses the importance of relational changes that underpin the transformation of the 'common-sense' of any given historical period, and the way in which context inflects the significance of any given mode of classification. Pursuing his critique of extrinsic factors further he notes that 'objects can be included in an infinite number of different taxonomies' and that this demonstrates that 'their rationale for inclusion or exclusion is not embodied in the objects themselves.' (Biggs, 2002, p.4)

In attempting to further support his case for variability of interpretation Biggs turns his attention to a linguistic context, noting how the status of Joyce's *Ulysses* was susceptible to change over time - from its initial demonisation by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, to its being hailed by Harry Levin as 'a novel to end all novels' (Biggs, 2004, p.5). In the process of establishing this literary context, Biggs considers language in more abstract, relational terms:

This situation is comparable to the meaning of individual words... Words have meanings in the context of sentences, alongside other words, and in social contexts in which utterances are

accompanied by actions... we are aware that the interpretation of words and of works of literature, changes over time owing to changes in the intertextual context.

Whilst chapters two and three of this thesis took issue with Biggs' quasi-essentialist approach to research definition and his subtraction of performativity, we are concerned here with a lack of consistency with respect to Biggs' thinking in relation to linguistic/institutional definitions and the contextual variability of the meaning of the artefact. From a process-philosophical perspective, Biggs' arguments for the transformation of meaning across time, and its emphasis upon a certain kind of relational change are laudable, but this is primarily because of the way in which they chime with process philosophy's anti-essentialist tendencies. In this sense, the arguments of Foucault and Kuhn that are employed by Biggs to establish the role of context in the reception of artworks, serve also to problematise Biggs' own use of definitions in other contexts, as well as drawing attention to the way in which he rather underplays the role of context in the development of institutional criteria. Thus there is a tension between an essentialist *definitional* trajectory and an anti-essentialist *relational* trajectory that can be located in Biggs' writings upon the role of the work and the role of the artifact, that serves ultimately to weaken the import of his position as a whole. That is to say, it is not so much the reception of artefacts that is problematised by Foucault and Kuhn's arguments, but rather essentialist systems of classification per sé – and this must include those which have been proposed by Biggs himself. Ultimately, Biggs may be able to establish that university legislation embody norms and conventions, and that certain aspects of artistic practice jar with such norms, but as we shall see shortly, there is nothing in the institutional conventionalist position per sé that excludes the extension/transformation of concepts or the growth and development of institutions. With this in mind, it is easy to see how Biggs institutional conservatism might be transformed into a more radical, performative trans-institutional position – such as that which has recently been proposed by Borgdorff (2012).

4.12 Context, Instrumentality and Materiality

There is a sense, then, in which Biggs flags extrinsic interpretation as a kind of pollutant that serves to sully any knowledge that might be intrinsically embodied in

the artefact. In chapter three of this thesis, it was argued that it might be more productive to consider practice-led modes of research in ontological, as opposed to epistemological terms, and in this context of instrumentality it was stressed that the function of a work was more closely linked to the production of experiences which serve to unsettle or problematise a position. This materialist emphasis upon transformation as opposed to representation can be seen to be applicable not only to the processual development of knowledge, but also at the level of institutional formation. This is important because Biggs would seem to contrast the impurity of artistic research with the assumed purity of some other (timeless) research activity that is in part justified by what are taken to be institutional ideals. It is important to remember, however, that from a materialistic perspective, the activity of the amateur, or the unsalaried ‘lover’ of a particular practice, stands as a pre-requisite for institutional formation. Indeed, in his *1000 Years of Non-Linear History* Manuel DeLanda writes, building on the on the insights of Peter F Drucker:

Few of the major figures in 19th century technology received much formal education. The typical inventor was a mechanic who began his apprenticeship at age fourteen or earlier. The few who had gone to college [Eli Whitney, Samuel Morse] had not, as a rule, been trained in technology or science, but were liberal arts students... Technological invention and the development of industries based on new knowledge were in the hands of craftsmen and artisans with little scientific education but a great deal of mechanical genius. (DeLanda, 1997, p. 94)

DeLanda goes on to suggest that a condition for the implementation of the industrial laboratory of the twentieth century was the material context of the ‘self-taught inventor’ of the nineteenth century but following the institution of the industrial laboratory, there came a ‘reversal in the balance of power between formal and informal knowledge’.⁴³ DeLanda’s point is that the emergence of universities and formalised knowledge economies – indeed, he goes on to extend this to ‘all structures that surround us and form our reality (mountains, animals and plants, human languages, social institutions)’ - arise out of contingent material and historical processes. One consequence of DeLanda’s broadly Deleuzian position, is a foregrounding of extrinsic and contingent forms of relation. That is to say, for

⁴³ A similar pragmatic and materialist approach to institutional history can be located in David Bodanis’ *Electric Universe* (Bodanis, 2005).

DeLanda it is out of material forms of practice that both institutions and institutional norms ultimately arise, and that there is nothing natural, eternal or necessary about the institutional arrangements of the knowledge economy. In short, he emphasises the way in which material practice precedes theory in the formation of socio-cultural circumstance. Accordingly, such constructivist practices are fixated upon notions of material change and transformation, and as a consequence, contemporary materialisms often have a revolutionary bent.

We will return to Biggs and Büchler later in this section, to focus in more detail on their recent account of paradigmatic development, examining its concession to an extrinsic conception of relation, and querying the consequences of this shift with respect to the role of the artwork in practice-based research. Firstly, however, we will look in more detail at the conception of external and extrinsic relation that is operative in Deleuzian philosophy.

4.20 Deleuze and the Prioritisation of External Relations

It has been suggested thus far that in the context of Deleuzian thought, relations are ubiquitous. It is this ubiquity, and the consequent neutrality of the concept of relation that confers upon Deleuze's philosophy an at once inter- and trans-disciplinary character, and which makes a discussion of Deleuze's concept of relation particularly pertinent to the discussion of the identity and transformation of concepts of research. Rodolph Gasché has recently suggested that we might consider all of the questions of philosophy as being in some sense indebted to the concept of relation (Gasché, 1999, p. 6), and similarly, Paul Baines has described relation as a kind of skeleton key for unlocking the philosophies of a diverse range of thinkers (Baines, 2006, p. 3). Classically, the concept of relation has tended to be associated with purely logical modes of expression. However, Gasché, develops a richer, less formalistic account of relation, presenting a picture of relational thresholds or points of entry that facilitate communication between seemingly distinct domains. Accordingly, he suggests that there is something subtending the traditional, formal, philosophical conception of relation, which stands as the condition both for its possibility and for its meaning. Whilst Gasché does not specifically engage with the thinking of Deleuze, there is a strong resonance between their respective positions. In Deleuzian philosophy, this

tension between difference and connection is perhaps most clearly illustrated through the emphasis upon the concept of the transversal. The notion of transversal connection is intimately connected with both Deleuzian ontology and with Deleuze's ethics of transformation. For Deleuze, in a purely practical sense, transformations arise through cross-contextual influence or connection. Thus Deleuzian ethics recommends an experimental approach to living that is premised upon the perpetual overcoming of identity, or the operation of contingent, processual 'becomings'.

Seeking to clarify the broad spectrum of relational analysis and speculation that are in play in Deleuze's thinking, it becomes necessary to return to his distinction between the virtual and actual that was introduced in chapter three (section 3.14). That is to say, there are times when Deleuze seems to be discussing actual relations – such as socio-political relationships, and the logical relations of more traditional subject-predicate philosophical thinking – whilst on other occasions, much like Gasché, he clearly has a somewhat richer sense of virtual relation in mind. When considering Deleuze's account, actual relations are somewhat easier to comprehend - standing in some sense closer to practical experience - but for this very reason, as John Mullarkey has noted, they will be positioned as weaker, and more limited, than their virtual, energetic, subrepresentational counterparts (Mullarkey, 2004). That is to say, there is a clear sense that in the context of Deleuzian philosophy, actual relations take second place to a more valorised set of virtual relations, which are both existentially primary, and necessarily more obscure.

4.21 The Deleuzian Critique of Logical Relation

In attempting to unpick Deleuze's position, and the various kinds of relation it embodies, it is perhaps helpful to progress from Deleuze's clearest statements to those that are more allusive and uncertain. In accordance with this we will begin by considering his explicit comments concerning relations in his *Dialogues* co authored with Claire Parnet. Here Deleuze aligns himself with a form of empiricism whilst framing the discussion in terms that stay fairly close to traditional predicate logic. It is also here where he voices his claim that 'relations are external to their terms' (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 41) which goes on to feature prominently in much of the secondary literature on Deleuze and the concept of relation.

In his dialogues with Parnet, Deleuze's offers two very simple examples – each of which emphasise his empiricist approach to the concept of relation:

'Peter is smaller than Paul', 'The glass is on the table': relation is neither internal to one of the terms which would consequently be subject, nor to the two together. (Deleuze & Parnet 2002, p.41)

Perhaps because it is the least complicated of the two examples, in so far as it embodies no mathematical relations of proportion, there is a tendency for the secondary literature to focus upon the latter example of the glass/table (Bains, 2006, p. 27-29; Baugh, 1992, p. 146; Hayden, 1995, p. 285; Sabisch, 2011, p.74). Deleuze's point here seems rather simple. He is suggesting that the removal of the glass from the table changes the relation (or relationship) of the glass to the table, but that the identity/idea of the term 'glass' or 'table' is not fundamentally troubled by this change (Hayden, 1995, p.285, p.287; Bains, 2006, pp. 28-29). Accordingly, it would seem that that the two identities or terms stand in a purely contingent relationship and that both glass and table are situationally flexible. That is to say, at one moment the glass may be related to a table, the next it might be related to other assemblages such as spider-paper-hand or hand-ear-wall.

The example of Peter and Paul, or more explicitly, the proposition 'Peter is smaller than Paul' - may seem more problematic in that it does involve a relation of proportion, and accordingly takes us into a seemingly more deductive, logical, mathematical or ideal realm. Thus if we know that Peter is five feet tall, whilst Paul is six feet tall, Peter's smallness and Paul's tallness would – given this level of descriptive detail – seem to be logically intrinsic to the terms of the proposition – and indeed this would seem to be the case. Deleuze's point, however, is concerned with processual transformation and contingency and with their connection to empiricist thinking. Here we need to focus upon the *terms* of the proposition and notice that there is no sense in which Paul is *intrinsically* five feet tall, or that Peter is *intrinsically* six feet tall. That is to say, the height of both Peter and Paul has changed over time, and will no doubt continue to do so. Thus we might say that statements concerning the height of Peter and Paul are intrinsic to a *situation*, but that the situation itself is open to change.

Deleuze's examples in his discussion with Parnet, then, can be considered simply as bold statements of anti-essentialism and an affirmation of the processual kind of change, through which Deleuze develops his 'transcendentally empiricist' orientation. Deleuze's point here is fairly straightforward - all he wishes to establish is that relations must be between things (or more accurately, between the meta-stable processes that for Deleuze ultimately constitute things), and that relations can change with time and circumstance. It is important to stress that with his critique of intrinsic relation, Deleuze is not attacking the idea that there is structure to a particular set of circumstances – indeed, in the broadest sense, this would seem to be a requirement of even the most rhizomatic philosophy, however loose or vegetal. Rather, Deleuze wants to call into question the idea that such a structure is in any sense simple, or has any kind of permanence, solidity, ground or completeness.

By way of speculative illustration, and staying with logical propositions as a means of elaborating upon this conception of situational relations, we might consider the marriage relation and the terms 'husband' and 'wife'. Deleuze would no doubt accept that there is some kind of an internal, linguistic or semantic relational structure holding between the statement 'x is married to y' and the notions that 'x is the husband of y' and 'y is the wife of x'. However, he would want to qualify this by emphasising the historical development of each of these terms, and the way in which such development cannot be considered in isolation from a cultural and material milieu. Thus there are internal semantic relations between the terms – that is, they are implicated by one another at a particular place and time - but they are, nevertheless, ultimately dependent upon practical, societal arrangements that could have been different, and which are in no sense unsusceptible to change. Thus, in an idealised – and no doubt factually tenuous conception of a 1950's household, the conceptual relations between, 'marriage', 'husband' and 'wife' might seem relatively stable and unproblematic. However, focusing upon the relational complexes that are addressed by each of these terms, Deleuze would want to shift the focus of discussion away from any necessary connection and towards that of the territorialisation and deterritorialisation of institutions as they encounter different practices and desires. Thus Deleuze would no doubt emphasise the development of transversal conceptual constructions such as common law marriage, as well as the influence of same sex or

polygamous relations (along with the legalistic category of bigamy, as a mode of institutional re-capture). In this sense, the syllogistic implication of the terms in question gives way to an extrinsic sense of relation with respect to the transformation of existing terms and the introduction of parasitic others in a changing social milieu.

The emphasis upon extrinsic relation in Deleuze's thinking has a more emotive manifestation in his professed 'hatred of interiority' (Deleuze 1995, p. 6). That is to say, in a philosophy of open becoming, identities must not be logically or quasi-logically fixed. However, there is also a way in which identities for Deleuze are in some sense relationally constituted – that is, given the sense in Deleuzian philosophy that something *is* what it *connects to* at any given moment in time, there remains a powerful structuralist undercurrent in Deleuzian thought that has both holistic and intrinsic relational overtones – and which would seem to point to a strangely internalist conception of relation, with relations forming a kind of negative space that is ultimately constitutive of terms.

We would do well, at this point, to remember that Deleuze's position on extrinsic relation was a response to his having felt 'bludgeoned to death with the history of (rationalist) philosophy (in France)' (Deleuze, 1995, p.5) and that the development of his own empirically tinged philosophy can be considered in terms of a line of flight towards empiricism and Anglo-American literature. It should be clear, however, that despite Deleuze's leanings towards empiricism, there is no sense in which external relation is the *only* form of relation at work in Deleuze's thinking – indeed it is precisely the tension between the external and the internal that makes his philosophical thought so interesting and fertile.

4.22 Deleuze on Art and Relation

Deleuze's practice has a peculiarly hybrid form – not only with respect to its occupation of a space between Anglo American and European thought – but also in the sense of its occupation of a space somewhere between art and philosophy. If we are to conceive of Deleuze's work as a kind of artistry, it makes sense to consider another aspect of his depiction of artistic activity, for it is here that we encounter a

form of relational duality. There is a passage in *A Thousand Plateaus* in the chapter concerning the refrain, where Deleuze-Guattari tell us that:

... art is fundamentally poster, placard... No sooner do I like a color that I make it my standard or placard. One puts ones signature upon it just as one plants one's flag on a piece of land.
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.348-349)

Applying this conception of artistic activity to Deleuze's own philosophical practice, we might reconsider his declaration that 'relations are external to their terms' as a philosophical slogan or motif. That is to say, according to Deleuze-Guattari, there is a kind of internalist conception of relation at work in the construction of a philosophical territory. Indeed, Deleuze-Guattari go so far as to explicitly associate artistic activity, with property and territorial modes of expression:

Expressive qualities entertain internal relations with one another that constitute internal motifs.
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.350)

Admittedly there is a difference in degree between concepts of internal and intrinsic relation. That is to say, unlike intrinsic conceptions of relation, the notion of internal relation suggests a certain fragility and a requirement for maintenance, and as such it is still at home with the conception of contingent and open multiplicity. Thus, the Deleuzo-Guattarian conception of artistry implicates the artist in the development or expression of a territory, whilst the Deleuzian conception of the *art object* emphasises both its productivity with respect to relations, and its (tacit) connection to a subterranean virtual realm. Thus Paul Bains (2006), Christopher Drohan (2009) and Petra Sabisch (2011) have each produced work that emphasises the material semiotics of Deleuzian thought, and there is a clear sense in which this position flows out of Deleuze's earliest writings on empiricism and what Deleuze positioned as the naturalistic associationism of Hume (Deleuze, 1991, p. 28).

4.23 Deleuze's Material Semiotics

According to Deleuze's ontology, the AND relation should be considered a material principle of life that serves as a foundation for, or subtends every other form of relation. He suggests that, it is the AND relation that makes other kinds of relations 'shoot outside of their terms ... [the AND relation can be considered] extra-being, inter-being' (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 42). In this sense, Deleuzian ontology shades into an ethics – Deleuze wants us to think *with* AND (with life) as opposed to *for* IS (which he considers an artificial, intellectual, and ultimately imperialistic mode of capture). For Deleuze this vitalistic principle is both the 'secret of empiricism' and 'a certainty of life which, if one really adheres to it, changes one's way [of living]' (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 41). In accordance with this, the Deleuzian semiotician and educationalist Inna Semetsky positions Deleuze's philosophy as embodying a 'logic of the included middle.' (Semetsky, 2009, p. 451)

Deleuze's a-signifying semiotics stresses the disorderly rhizomatic mode of growth of ontological relations and their manifestation in experience in the form of *signs* (Drohan, 2009). In the sense that they are productive, the associationist and semiotic thematics of Deleuze's work resonate strongly with genetic, differential elements of his relational analysis in *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze's semiotic, as opposed to logical conception of relation stresses both the open-ended and uncertain nature of relational production (relations beget further relations as it were), as well as drawing attention to our experience of the mobility of relations - through a multiplicity of associations, we are carried through experiential transitions from one sign to the next.

4.24 Subtractively Reading Deleuze

It should by now be clear that the tensions between relational production and relational constitution are manifested in different ways throughout Deleuze's philosophy. In many ways, the Deleuzian corpus itself could be said to have much in common with Deleuze's conception of the virtual. That is to say, Deleuze's tendency to coin neologisms, hyphenate terms, fuse concepts, shift idiom, and engage with non-philosophical territory, presents us with a body of work which seems chaotic and overflowing with potential (c.f. Mullarkey, 2006). As a consequence, when engaging

with Deleuzian thought it becomes necessary to in some sense abstract, determine or 'actualise' his philosophy. This gives rise to a range of partial readings – or creative closures - of his work. Thus Manuel DeLanda states that '...social constructivists, idealists, post-modern semioticians and so on... probably have no real understanding of Deleuze' (DeLanda, Protevi & Thanem, 2004), whilst Zizek tells us that the Deleuzo-Guattarian *Anti-Oedipus* is 'arguably Deleuze's worst book' (Zizek, 2004, p.21). Interestingly, such closures are typically performed by emphasising connections with other sites of thought – complexity theory and thermodynamics in the case of DeLanda and Hegelian and Lacanian thought in the case of Zizek. We can perhaps see this most clearly by examining the elisions that take place in DeLanda's materialist rendering of Deleuze. In his *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* DeLanda quotes selectively from the opening of the first paragraph of Chapter 5 of *Difference and Repetition* thus:

Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given ... Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon ... Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity. (DeLanda, 2002, P. 70)

Turning to the original passage, with elisions reinstated, however, a rather more complicated picture begins to emerge:

Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse. Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon. It is therefore true that God makes the world by calculating, but his calculations never work out exactly, and this inexactitude or injustice in the result, this irreducible inequality, forms the condition of the world. The world 'happens' while God calculates; if the calculation were exact, there would be no world. The world can be regarded as a 'remainder', as the real in the world understood in terms of fractional or even incommensurable numbers. Every phenomenon refers to an inequality by which it is conditioned. Every diversity and every change refers to a difference which is its sufficient reason. Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, differences of intensity. (Deleuze, 2001, p.280)

It is clear that DeLanda's source material from Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* has materialistic, idealistic and even pantheistic qualities, and this leaves it open to a range of interpretations. With this in mind, it is interesting that Deleuze ultimately chooses a mathematical example derived from Leibniz's differential calculus to formulate his philosophy of difference and to emphasise the productive power of relations. Differential equations provide an interesting context for Deleuze's argument, however, in so far as such formulas are typically employed in the calculation of rates of energetic change. Thus Deleuze will stress that the differential is a 'pure power' - a 'pure element of potentiality' (Deleuze, 2001, p.175), as well as a force of algebraic determination, and in this sense, Deleuze adopts a register of explanation that is at home with mathematical as well as energetic interpretations of phenomena.

4.25 Deleuze's Conception of Differential Relation

Deleuze is aware that with respect to contemporary mathematics, differential calculus is regarded as a somewhat arcane technique, however, he stresses that there is a 'treasure buried within the old so-called barbaric or pre-scientific interpretations of differential calculus' (Deleuze, 2001, p. 217) and accordingly, he seeks to reactivate this concept. The treasure in question, though never explicitly stated by Deleuze, relates to the expression, or articulation of intensities that takes place in the operation of the differential calculus. Thus, through his consideration of differential calculus, Deleuze wants to illustrate three points. Firstly, that relations are external to their terms; secondly that there is a genetic, productive sense of relation that is in some sense generative of, or constitutive of terms; and lastly, that infinitely small, imperceptible energetic differences, through their coming into relation, can be generative of both the stability and transformation of the actual. For Deleuze it is this that underpins the transformation of entities, the creation of phenomena and the production of divergent subjectivities or worlds.

We have already seen in chapter two of this thesis how, for Deleuze, representation, in being limited to the statement of categorical differences, is unable to think difference-in-itself (the becoming of the world). Deleuze is interested in the transformative differences that subtend any form of actual identity or system of classification. Thus Deleuze wants to frame a concept of difference that can stand as the 'noumenon

closest to the phenomenon' (Deleuze, 2001, p.222) – a difference that is literally 'nothing with respect to representation', but which nevertheless has productive effects. It is this conception of difference that Deleuze believes can be located in Leibniz's differential calculus.

In expounding this at once idealistic and energetic conception of difference, Deleuze discusses the following mathematical ratio or function:

$$dx/dy$$

This can more pertinently be stated thus:

$$dx/dy=z$$

It makes sense in the first instance to unpack the terms of this equation in terms of Deleuze's distinction between the virtual and the actual. For Deleuze, some aspects of actual phenomena (an actual x and an actual y) are each indiscernibly affected by imperceptible differences that are virtual, intensive, and energetic in character (these are the d of dx and the d of dy). When they are brought into relation (the division, or ratio), however, this results in some significant phenomenal transformation (z) of actual states of affairs.

Ultimately, Deleuze is interested in the differential calculus because it allows us to think the concepts of intensity alongside consideration of rates of change and helps us to appreciate the way in which imperceptible forces, when coming into relation, can transform or influence actual states of affairs. The differential calculus is concerned with the question of change, but not with change over a given period of time, as when we speak of miles per hour or feet per second. Rather Deleuze is interested in the question of movement at a given instant – when a measurement of instantaneous change or 'instantaneous velocity' is required (Hallward, 2006, pp.171-172). To this end, Leibniz formulated a notion of virtual, imperceptible movements that operate below the threshold of measurement or perception but which nevertheless have energetic value. These infinitesimal, or 'immeasurably small differences' are intended to convey the virtual movement of things - their potentiality even in a frozen instant in

time, as it were - whilst not themselves being actually observable or in any sense subject to measure. With this in mind, Deleuze tells us that dx (the virtual differing of x) is 'nothing' with respect to an (actual) x – it is *insignificant* and in this sense it can never be phenomenally presented or in any sense given to experience. Importantly, however, it is the reciprocal interaction of differences that for Deleuze, ultimately generate determinate representations, and which are ultimately productive of novelty in the world. It is to these virtual difference that Deleuze alludes in the quotation above (the quotation elided by DeLanda) when he writes of irreducible inequality, the inexactitude of God's calculations, and the way in which they variously form the 'condition' and the 'happening' of the world.

Leibniz likewise invokes the notion of infinitesimal difference in his psychology of consciousness, stressing the importance of unperceived micro perceptions in the composition of molar 'apperceptions'. Thus, implicated in the sound of the sea or the murmur of a crowd are the sounds of the singular waves or voices of which the aggregate is composed through their coming in to (differential) relation. By way of another example, we can think of the colours yellow and blue coming into (differential) relation in the formation of the colour green. That is to say, the differences recede as the conscious perception is formed, and in this sense it is more than an aggregate of simple components – the elements of yellow and blue must, for Deleuze, be considered energetically as the genetic elements of perception (Smith, 2005, p.141).

4.26 The Virtuality of Differential Relations

Just as the d of dx and the d of dy can be considered immeasurable and thus virtual forms of difference, Deleuze wants to show that the division sign, or the ratio expressed in (dx/dy) likewise persists virtually, and that it is the systemic confluence of virtual relations that are responsible for the production and transformation of the actual (Smith, 2005, p.140). Accordingly, Deleuze tries to establish that the virtual ratio or relationship (dx/dy) is independent of any actual value that might be assigned to it – that it persists, and is virtually productive even when the value of its terms have been reduced to zero (Hallward, 2006, p.52). Deleuze tries to show that productive differential relations are thus external to their terms and that in their productivity –

that is by virtue of their determining a value (z) there is also a sense in which they are involved in the determination of the actual – which is to say, there is a sense in which they are involved in the determination of ‘terms’ (in the determination of the furniture of the actual world).

Thus Deleuze can be seen to take Leibniz’s psychology of consciousness and ontologise it in a manner suggestive of Solomon Maimon’s notion of the noumenal as ‘differentials of consciousness’. That is to say, for Deleuze, the process of actualisation depends upon systems of virtual intensive difference that stand in differential relation to one-another. This is the sense in which differential relation has an onto-genetic as well as onto-phenomenal role, and accordingly can be thought in either idealistic or materialistic terms. Accordingly, there are times when Deleuze would seem to have in mind a kind of idealistic, geometric productivity (hence the prevalence of mathematical examples) – whilst at others he writes using a more materialistic, energetic register.

Energetics defined a particular energy by the combination of two factors, one intensive and one extensive (for example, force and distance for linear energy, surface tension and surface area for surface energy, pressure and volume for volume energy, height and weight for gravitational energy, temperature and entropy for thermal energy). (Deleuze, 2001, p. 223)

Despite the tensions between intrinsic and extrinsic conceptions of relation that run throughout Deleuze’s work, there are nevertheless recurring motifs. For instance, in *The Logic of Sense* we are presented with a picture of ontological relation in which multiple relations of variable intensity simultaneously connect all of the components of sense.⁴⁴ For Deleuze, the components in question, have an affinity with verbs in their infinitive form (to green, to ride, to swim, to carve, to write). Infinitive verbs are particularly interesting to Deleuze, partly because they express movement in a peculiarly tenseless, virtual fashion. That is to say, the infinitive ‘to ride’ expresses a purity of ‘riding’ that is oddly a-temporal, being outside of the tenses of present, past or future. That is to say, ‘to ride’ is other than ‘to be riding’, to have ‘ridden/rode’, or to be riding in the future. Likewise attractive to Deleuze is the way in which, infinitives are subjectless and devoid of ownership. That is to say the infinitive form

⁴⁴ As Williams has noted, the concept of sense, is the corollary to the concept of the virtual in Deleuze’s philosophy of language (Williams, 2008)

‘to ride’ expresses a processual ‘riding’ without reference to subject or object – it is not me, or you who rides – there is merely riding taking place. Interestingly, in his discussion of embodied knowledge, DeLanda notes how Ryle’s examples of ‘knowing how’ are typically followed by verbs in the infinitive form (to ride, to carve, to swim, to read, to write) and this provides further testament to the overlap between the concept of the virtual and the concept of tacit knowledge, or to what Polanyi has referred to as the ‘tacit dimension’.⁴⁵

For Deleuze, then, actual changes, actual transformations and actual identities are positioned as arising out of an intensive blending of pure movements, and as such any actual entity at any given moment in time expresses the purely transitional and kinetic interrelation of infinitives. Despite the strange kinetic Platonism, there is clearly an affinity here with the genetic view of becoming presented in *Difference and Repetition* that is governed by difference-driven processes, with differential relations functioning as elements of potentiality that work topologically upon the actual. There is, nevertheless, a Leibnizian subtractive or abstractive quality to the ontology presented in *The Logic of Sense*. That is to say, it is a diverse selection from a hyper-connected background that instantiates an actual subject position, or world, and it is in this sense, that we can locate a strongly syncretist tendency within the resulting ontology.

4.30 Rescher’s Critique of Syncretist Philosophies

Nicholas Rescher, has criticized, what he terms ‘syncretist’ philosophies on the grounds that they ‘attempt to take all sides in a quarrel at once’ (Rescher, 1995, p. 90). Rescher notes that:

In recent years, relativistically inclined philosophers have been drawn increasingly to the syncretist view of reality as a complex manifold of diverse thought structures all of which are perfectly ‘true’ in their own way, though each gets at only one aspect of a complex reality. (Rescher 1995:91)

⁴⁵ For an overview of DeLanda and Ryle on knowing how, see chapter three (section 3.52).

When Rescher suggests that a syncretist position entails not a ‘pluralism of alternative positions at all, but one single, all inclusive conjunction of positions, a grand superposition that embraces them all’ (Rescher, 1995, p. 91) it is possible to see not only the relevance of this comment with respect to the ontology expounded in *Logic of Sense*, but also the way in which the kind of relation being stressed is clearly internalist in nature. Somewhat ironically, given Deleuze’s naturalism/materialism, Rescher goes on to suggest that the syncretist position is:

...guided by the model of the book and the library ... [and that] ... just as just as the library as a whole contains many diverse and discordant books, so reality is a complex of many different and discordant worlds ... reality being a complex and diversified whole that encompasses them all (Rescher, 1995, p. 92).

Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, Rescher stresses that the syncretist philosopher ‘refuses to take contradiction seriously’ (Rescher, 1995, p. 92).

Though Rescher’s comments concerning the syncretist’s failure to embrace contradiction are clearly intended as a reprimand, drawing our attention to what he takes to be a literal *con-fusion* in syncretist thought, it is important to recognise the way in which given the radical differences between the operation of ‘rational’ and ‘intensive’ logics, it is hard for such criticism to hit its mark. Indeed it is the Rescherian and Deleuzian approach to the concept of contradiction that in many ways serve to most helpfully clarify their differences. To elaborate a little it is worth considering Deleuze and Rescher’s divergent approaches to notions of formal rationality. We saw in the introduction to this thesis how despite his interest in process, Rescher as a philosopher is something of a traditionalist who is more positively disposed towards the concept of rationality and classical modes of argumentation. In contrast, Deleuze values thinking that proceeds in terms of intensities and, despite the many dualisms that structure his own philosophy, he is ultimately resistant to binary truth claims, and his antipathy towards the concept of contradiction is well known. Indeed, it is Deleuze’s concern to establish an intensive, transitional logic that draws him to ponder questions of relation and the operation of the differential calculus in the first instance. As such, Rescher’s criticism, when seen through a Deleuzian lens appears representationalist and actualist in orientation – and given the

incommensurability of their methodological commitments, it seems unable to hit its mark. It does however provide an impetus and an opportunity to more closely examine the unusual relationship between the aesthetic and alethic in Deleuzian philosophical practice. That is to say, Deleuze operates in a philosophical context – and in some sense clearly does philosophy – there is however also a strong aesthetic dimension that accompanies Deleuze’s emphasis upon the importance of a logic of intensities. It is in this sense that his practice is hybrid, synthesising elements of both art and philosophy, and this is perhaps why his philosophy has proved so attractive to many practice-led researchers.

4.31 The Aesthetic and the Alethic in Deleuzian Philosophy

When speaking as a materialist, Deleuze presents a form of neo-realism - expounding an intricate, folded and processual view of matter, that is intended to be generative of a plurality of subjectivities or ways of being. Given his attachment to realism, there is a sense in which he can be taken to be making alethic claims – that is, claims that are concerned with truth and falsity. As we noted in chapter two (section 2.62-2.64), for Deleuze, there *is* a way that things are, although our engagement with the real is necessarily limited by our finitude. It is in this alethic sense that Deleuze work intersects with traditional philosophical practice. However, despite this realist orientation, Deleuze’s characterisation of matter as having a complex, baroque, transformative constitution, and his emphasis upon the fecundity of the real, confers upon his thought an important aesthetic dimension. That is to say, for Deleuze, being *is* creativity (Hallward, 2006, p. 1), and this remains the case, regardless of whether the creation in question is the creation of altogether new relations, or the infinite intensive relational reconfiguration of repertoire of infinitives.

We have already seen how, when Deleuze stresses the importance of the encounter with something outside of thought, he is in some sense referring to the encounter with the unusual in actual experience but how, more importantly, he is also referring to an encounter with a broader imperceptible network of subtending relations. For Deleuze, ‘virtual’ relations are not directly experienced, but are mediated through the production of experiential signs. Thus the virtual represents the ‘outside of thought’ that ‘signs’ to us through experience, ‘forcing’, us to think through a thoroughly

semiotic, experiential encounter. Accordingly, Deleuze's particular form of realism fuses the aesthetic and the alethic. That is to say, for Deleuze it is the signs of art that are in some sense closest to the workings of material creation (Deleuze, 2008b, p.41; Drohan, 2009), and he attempts to reflect this in his methodological approach. Thus Deleuze's philosophical methodology incorporates aesthetic, alethic and performative ingredients because it is attuned to what he takes to be the proper subject of enquiry (i.e. the creativity of the real, and its manifestation across multiple phenomenal registers)

Regardless of the idiosyncracies of its characterisation at any given time, the concept of relation in Deleuze's thinking is always simultaneously concerned with connection, influence and transformation. In each case there is a concern with relational change and the transformation of identities, and in this sense, Deleuze's various relational ontologies are instrumentally united. That Deleuze's ontological characterisations of the virtual are in some sense at variance should perhaps not be assessed in terms of consistency and inconsistency, or regarded as a flaw. Rather they should be taken as attempts to dramatise a problem for a range of philosophical audiences. Particular dramatisations are subsequently taken up and developed further – usually to the exclusion of the others - by individual commentators.

Transcendental deductions – the kind of deductions that are so central to Deleuze's methodology - proceed by observing particular aspects of experience and then attempting to deduce the necessary conditions for such an experience to prevail. This methodology in part keeps a philosophy in contact with experience, but at the same time is generative of difficulties. That is to say, the characterisation of the conditions that 'must hold' for certain experiential conditions to occur, would seem to be dependent on specific aesthetic preferences of the philosopher performing the deduction. Thus in the original Kantian deduction, Kant attempts to deduce the necessary form of phenomenal experience and arrives at a particularly Euclidean picture. However, the necessity of this particular form of experience was later called into question by the advent of non-Euclidean geometries. Accordingly, it may be that transcendental deductions tell us more about the commitments and presuppositions of the philosopher employing them, than they can of the subject matter that they are attempting to address (Williams, 2008, p. 103).

4.40 Practical/Pragmatic Approaches to the Concept of the Virtual

Nicholas Rescher's analysis of the Kantian noumenal sidesteps metaphysical or ontological engagement with Kantian thought, taking instead a pragmatic line – envisaging the concept of the noumenal as a 'tool for thought.' (Rescher, 2000, p.13). That's is to say, Rescher argues that Kantian the thing-in-itself is better considered:

A creature of the mind – a self-imposed demand of the human understanding that is needed to implement its commitment to the objectivity and externality of those things with which it has to deal. (Rescher, 2000 p.15)

Thus Rescher argues that the thing-in-itself need not be thought as a part of the furniture of the world – but rather as an instrumentality of our thought about the world. In this sense, the thing-in-itself becomes the postulation – or insistence upon – a certain way of thinking about things.

It may be that there is a similar, pragmatic, functional approach that can be taken towards the Deleuzian virtual. In this sense, the virtual might be positioned, not as a 'realm' but as it as an embodiment of an alternative set of commitments – or the embodiment of a different image of thought. In foregrounding the ethical function of Deleuze's philosophy, Todd May draws attention to the way in which Deleuze's philosophy is structured much like the essentialist, foundationalist, philosophies that it typically opposes. May suggests that rather than attempting to found seemingly ephemeral aspects of experience upon principles of identity, Deleuze's philosophy takes a converse approach, attempting to found seemingly stable aspects of experience upon a principle of difference (May, 1997, p.166). May suggests, however, that we should not read Deleuze as advancing strong ontological claims, but rather that we should read him in accordance with his own pragmatically tinged, inventive conception of philosophy as the 'construction of concepts' that was developed in collaboration with Guattari.

When it seems in his text that Deleuze is making a claim about the way things are, most often he is not – and he does not take himself to be - telling us about the way things are. Instead he is offering us a way of looking at things ... Foucault's suggestive remark that *Anti-Oedipus* is

'a book of ethics' is in fact a fitting epigraph for the entirety of Deleuze's corpus. (May, 1997, p.167)

4.41 Mullarkey's Actualist Critique of Transcendent and Foundational Elements in Deleuze's Thinking

In accordance with May's broadly pragmatic emphasis, Mullarkey is likewise critical of the seemingly foundational and totalising role of the virtual in Deleuzian philosophy. That is to say, Deleuze's positioning of the virtual as a transcendental 'conditioning' force sounds suspicious to the postmodern ear, seeming to supply a form of meta-narration, that despite its differential aims, entails an all encompassing, essentialist approach to both actual identity and actual change - stressing the importance of necessary and sufficient conditions. Thus, from a postmodern or poststructuralist perspective, there is a sense in which Deleuze's approach seems ethically and politically suspect - suppressing or devaluing the (actual) difference, (actual) otherness and (actual) plurality that are the stalwarts of postmodern politics. For Mullarkey, in positioning the virtual as a transcendent 'halo of potential' surrounding the actual (Mullarkey, 2004, pp. 474-475), Deleuze oppresses the actual forms of alterity and difference that are of importance to a postmodern political context, with its stress upon the plurality and diversity of actual subject positions. By way of illustration, Mullarkey notes how Irigaray's feminist critique of Deleuze can be framed in actualist terms, as a complaint concerning a perceived disregard in Deleuzian philosophy for molar forms of female political agency (Mullarkey, 2006, p.21). Accordingly, with his actualist reading of Deleuze, Mullarkey attempts to shift the locus of difference way from a transcendent 'conditioning', and to develop a more consistently immanent conception of the real - with the caveat that our conception of reality must be sufficiently broad to embrace all actual perspectives (be they human or non-human in character). In so doing Mullarkey subtly transforms the character of difference, developing it in a perspectival and less foundational fashion. Thus Mullarkey moves away from what he takes to be Deleuze's conception of difference as a hylomorphic, external 'differencing' of the actual - and chooses instead to stress the fecundity and plurality of actuality itself - positing the simultaneous reality of

multiple differential perspectives (multiple actualities), that are correlated with pluralistic and diverse ways of being (Mullarkey, 2006, p.28).

In the context of Mullarkey's actualism the concept of the virtual becomes subject to an important ontological shift. When approaching the virtual, Mullarkey proceeds in a fashion that is somewhat resonant of Rescher's pragmatic approach to the Kantian noumenal. That is to say, Mullarkey suggests that we should consider the virtual in actualist terms - as an (actual) idea - a psychological projection, which is dependent upon the actual in so far as it stands as a function of other (actual) processes (Mullarkey, 2006, p.26). However, despite its derivative status, Mullarkey stresses that the *idea* of the virtual is nevertheless productive – which is to say that it has actual effects. Mullarkey's philosophy confers a distinctive emphasis - departing from what has become a 'virtualist' Deleuzian orthodoxy in its attempt to retain a stronger sense of actual phenomenal subjectivity, and to slightly moderate Deleuze's criticism of representation. That is to say, Mullarkey, like Deleuze is critical of the concept of representation in so far as it is tied to the concept of judgment, but in his defense of a form of phenomenal subjectivity, Mullarkey claims that Deleuze's writings on the virtual misread, or miss altogether the abundance of optical metaphors in Bergson's treatment of the concept of the virtual (Mullarkey, 2004, p.482). Thus he suggests that the concept of the virtual in its original Bergsonian form is itself a representational concept, and in light of this, he proceeds to apply the concepts of plurality, multiplicity and temporality to what he takes to be the phenomenal and affective dimensions of *actual* experience.

Mullarkey, like May, takes issue with Deleuze, essentially over the foundationalist and judgmental aspects of his philosophy. As we shall see shortly, Mullarkey's actualist philosophy is itself radically descriptivist, exploring the multitudes of ways in which reality might be abstracted or described. For Mullarkey, Deleuze goes beyond the description of nature and formulates an ethics that recommends a particular way of living, and which is itself derived from a transcendent and therefore in some sense judgmental ontology. That is to say, in the context of Deleuzian ontology, it is only virtual forms of becoming that are positioned as possessing proper authenticity or legitimacy. Accordingly, in the context of Deleuzian ethics, we are counseled to forget our actuality – to forget our molar identity, and to tend toward the

imperceptible (to allow the virtual to work through us). With this in mind, Mullarkey notes how despite Deleuze's professed desire, following Artaud, to 'have done with judgment', there is clearly a negative 'judging of judgment' that takes place in Deleuze's own philosophy (Mullarkey, 2006, p.36). Accordingly, despite Deleuze's concern to formulate an open creative ethics – to live and let live, as it were, there would seem to be an inescapable moralism that is conferred upon Deleuze's position, that arises out of the foundational structure of his philosophy (Mullarkey 2006, p.33, pp. 36-37). In light of this, Mullarkey suggests that there is a sense in which, in the context of his ethics, Deleuze is guilty of the naturalistic fallacy – of attempting to derive values from facts, or of attempting to derive an 'ought' from an 'is' (Mullarkey 2006, p.40).⁴⁶ Thus, the values that condition Deleuze's virtualist version of judgment would seem to be derived from a quasi-teleological conception of the operation of an imperceptible, differential realm, that is aligned with the authentic (i.e. differential) operation of nature. With this in mind, it is hard to see how Deleuze's suggestion that 'open' and 'creative' strategies of living are in some sense true to, or operate in accordance with the (somewhat veiled) machinations of a (higher) nature could persuade any but the most ardent supporter. With this in mind, Deleuze would seem to insist that we should embrace difference and seek to problematise identity on the grounds that it is in some sense 'unnatural' to behave in any other way, and as a consequence, the virtual not only operates ontologically as a principle of nature, but also stands a disguised deontological morality, or as a secular-theological principle.

4.42 Deleuze and Satire

If Deleuze could be positioned as a satirist, or as operating in the tradition of postmodern irony – if we could place the term 'foundation' in quotation marks, as it were – then we might have an interesting way of making sense of the both the foundationalist ontological dimension of his thought and the deontological, deification of change that takes place in Deleuzian ethics and morality. Rather than rejecting foundationalism and essentialist, naturalised accounts of phenomena, as is more typical of postmodern philosophical positions, Deleuze might instead be

⁴⁶ Todd May makes a similar observation, asking 'Is Deleuze claiming that we ought to affirm difference because that is what difference is – it is affirmation? Assuming we could make sense of this claim it would seem to run perilously close to some sort of naturalistic fallacy.' (May, 1997, p.175)

positioned as ironically embracing foundational strategies whilst playfully subverting the character of nature and the idea of foundation in such a way as to confer primacy upon concepts of difference and alterity. From such a perspective, polygamous, or polyvalent sexuality, for instance would be seen to operate in accord with the natural and by extension normal processes of nature, whilst monogamous, hetero-sexuality would become an ‘unnatural’ deviation from the naturalistic norm. Thus, seen from this position, Deleuze would be presenting a parody of foundationalist philosophy - producing a form of propaganda that operates in the service of differential - but which nevertheless has actualist, political ends. That is to say, if Deleuze could be positioned in this way as a satirist we could see his philosophy as providing the ground, justification or foundation for differential ways of being, as well as an ironic, somewhat tongue in cheek critique of essentialist thought. However, whilst there is some evidence for playfulness and for the employment of affective, propagandist strategies in Deleuze’s work,⁴⁷ his tone is for the most part earnest – and his embrace of a metaphysical realism should be considered an eminently serious enterprise.

It would seem that our experience of the Deleuzian virtual is at best indirect and limited in nature. And as such it can be considered Deleuze’s darkest and yet most luminous of concepts. There is a sense in which any attempt to successfully characterise the virtual must fail given its place in Deleuzian philosophy as an expressive (anti-representational) corollary of the Kantian noumenal. Accordingly, Deleuze’s many attempts to characterise the virtual must remain metaphorical and allusive, and this explains why there can be a certain tension between the roughly contemporaneous ontologies of *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. Deleuze’s various parables of relation do, however, draw our attention to very specific qualities of the *actual* that can serve as the basis for creative modes of living. That is to say, through reading Deleuze, we become sensitive to a felt sense of significance, intensive qualities of sensation, as well as Proustean reveries and the experiential push and pull of signs. We also develop a heightened awareness of the movement, change

⁴⁷ We have seen how Hughes (2009) has noted how *Difference and Repetition* can be read as the *Critique of Pure Reason* read from the perspective of the *Critique of Judgement*. Likewise, in the context of his dramatic method, Deleuze has a tendency not only to fuse terms that are traditionally seen as oppositional, but also to hijack and subvert the meaning of existing concepts. Thus in Deleuze’s hands, ‘repetition’ becomes the repetition of *difference* as opposed to the repetition of identity, (material) experience becomes something that is both sub-representational and *a priori* in character, and essence becomes the engine of change.

and transformation of phenomena. However, It is important to remember, that such phenomena, by virtue of *being* phenomena, are necessarily actual in character. The idea of the virtual only invests these qualities with a deeper – but ultimately contentious - ontological ground or significance.

4.43 The Deleuzian Virtual and Problems of Application

Whilst there is a clear sense in which my own thesis, with its stress upon the importance of novelty, transformation and differentiation in the context of research activity, could be said to express virtualist concerns, it is also clear that, in its emphasis upon application, it must also exhibit a strong concern with actual phenomena. In its consideration of textual production, for instance, it seeks to exhibit the actual compositional transformation that takes place over the course of a text's development, as well as the emergence of ideas through actual, relational connections – be they instantiated explicitly through a text's indexing and citation strategies – or by more poetic and allusive forms of reference. Whilst Deleuzian ontology provides a valuable metaphor for considering these at once connective, creative and differential aspects of the production of a written thesis, there is an important sense in which, if taken literally, the Deleuzian virtual serves to de-emphasise the role of actual, molar structures in the production of new thoughts and new ideas. Likewise, it is clear that many of the arguments of this thesis, whilst resonating with virtualist concerns, are nevertheless directed at actual phenomena and actual states of affairs. As a consequence, what Mullarkey has termed the 'denigration of the actual' that takes place in Deleuzian thought, and the at times abstruse, esoteric, and mystical quality of Deleuze's writings – particularly with respect to the concept of the virtual- are not particularly helpful when confronting actual processes of research or when seeking to convince a skeptical audience of the value of Deleuze's philosophy. That is to say, regardless of whether the Deleuzian virtual is positioned as transcendent or transcendental in character, its status as an at once foundational and imperceptible outside or underside of phenomenal experience can be seen to entrench something of an air of dogmatism with respect to the Deleuzian project. This, when coupled with the stress in Deleuzian ontology upon ontological conflict and when combined with the emancipatory aim of Deleuzian ethics, can result in a style of exposition that owes as much to the manifesto or sermon as it does to philosophical

debate. Indeed in the context of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-based research, we have seen how James Elkin's qualifies his recognition of the potential of the promise of the Deleuzian perspective with a concern that the various attempts to employ Deleuzian thought in this context often results in fuzzy and obfuscated 'celebrations of complexity':

I just don't think it makes enough sense to say that art research is 'mobile,' 'dialogic,' 'contextual,' 'topical,' 'unquantitative,' 'between zones,' 'nomadic,' or 'implicated in poststructural paradigms'— to quote a few authors who have written on the subject. This kind of theorizing, I think, either tortures the concepts of research and new knowledge to make them answer to fine art practice, or abandons them for an uncertain celebration of complexity. Dialogic, Deleuzian, postcolonial, and other poststructural approaches could make the kind of sense that would allow the PhD in studio art to be accepted throughout the university, but at the moment they don't, and I don't think it helps the visual arts to be packaging their initiative in this way. (Elkins, 2009 , xix)

Likewise, *Frieze* magazine's somewhat critical review of the *New Moderns* conference that took place at The Showroom gallery in 2005 characterises Simon O'Sullivan's performance thus:

The Deleuzian inspiration for the conference really came to the fore when Simon O'Sullivan hit the stage. O'Sullivan, a lecturer in art history at Goldsmiths, appeared at times like a Bible Belt preacher, delivering the Deleuzian good news at a hectic pace. But it all happened too fast. As time ran out, he resorted to simply shouting out the names of Deleuze's concepts, managing in the process completely to destroy the sense of anything he was saying. (Kapfere, 2005)

These qualities of manifesto or sermon arise largely out of the difficulties inherent in applying the virtualist ontology of Deleuze in a *concrete* fashion to any actual phenomena or state of affairs. That is to say, in light of the fundamental inaccessibility and imperceptibility of the virtual, there are difficulties in convincingly characterising either its ontological status or the ways in which it could be said to act upon, or interact with, worldly things. That is not to imply that there is a complete disregard for actuality in Deleuzian thought - a number of commentators – such as Williams and Massumi - have stressed that Deleuze clearly postulates some kind of interplay

between the virtual and actual components of the real.⁴⁸ Indeed, it is apparent that both virtual and actual ontological orders are characterised by Deleuze in process-relational terms, and it is likewise clear that in the context of their more practical ‘sociological’ work Deleuze-Guattari position themselves as processual functionalists – albeit the case that they espouse a form of functionalism that emphasises social conflict as opposed to social harmony and which, as a consequence, is radical and leftist as opposed to conservative in orientation. As Rescher, has noted, however, the concept of process per sé is somewhat perplexing - and can be difficult to portray even at the more concrete and familiar level of actuality, and Deleuze complicates things further by distinguishing between the ‘true’ or genuine processual becoming of the virtual and the ‘false’ or illusory processual becoming of the actual (Mullarkey, 2004, p.470).

4.44 Mullarkey’s Postmodern, Pluralist Conception of Actuality

In an attempt at philosophical redress, Mullarkey develops an ‘actualist’ philosophy that is at least in part a reading of Deleuze, but which could also be said to develop a Deleuzo-Bergsonian inflected form of process thought which, although sharing many Deleuzian concerns, has a stronger perspectivist, and phenomenal dimension. Mullarkey’s philosophy is likewise concerned with the differential, the transformative and the temporal, but it nevertheless retains some notion of the subject as a molar processual category – albeit the case that Mullarkey develops a particularly postmodern conception of subjectivity, which is strongly perspectivist in character, emphasising the multiplicity and plurality of subject positions.

Writing in his paper *Forget the Virtual*, Mullarkey tells us that for actualist philosophers there are:

No (hidden) forces, no potencies, potentials, ground or substrate to the real, no possibles awaiting actualisation, no ontological hinterworld, no absolute unconscious, no realm of anomalous identity, no pure ‘Being’ ... (and) no virtual. (Mullarkey, 2004, p.471)

⁴⁸ Deleuze, following Proust defines the virtual as that which is ‘*real* without being actual’ and that which is ‘ideal without being abstract’

Mullarkey suggests that ‘the actual is always already actualised to some perspective or another’ and in so doing, he would seem to embrace not only the postmodern valorisation of surface over depth, but also its multiple and the prismatic conception of reality. It follows that for Mullarkey there is an important, descriptive sense in which reality should be considered ‘public’, but he stresses that we should not lose sight of the fact that there are ‘many different kinds’ of public and many different ways of being present in the world. Thus he concurs with the kind of Wittgensteinian descriptivism that underpins Todd May’s account (we should simply describe the actual, and seek less to explain), but in his emphasis upon relativistic pluralism, he is less well disposed to the Wittgensteinian stress upon socio-conceptual or socio-behavioural norms. In this sense Mullarkey emphasises the breadth or ‘thickness’ of actuality, at times seeming to postulate a multiplicity of perspectives and at others seeming to postulate a multiplicity of ‘actuals’. Thus, the concepts of subjective perspective and actuality are intimately connected in Mullarkey’s thought.

Despite his critique of transcendence, and his seeming pragmatic focus, it would be a mistake, however, to position Mullarkey’s critique of the virtual as itself an in any sense anti-metaphysical thesis. Indeed, Mullarkey’s own actualist position is itself deeply metaphysical, and to some extent speculative in character, and it quickly becomes apparent that a critique of metaphysics is most certainly not Mullarkey’s aim.⁴⁹ Process philosophy, although it may have epistemological concerns, is at root a metaphysical position, and Mullarkey’s pluralistic conception of actuality brings its own metaphysical complications, transposing Deleuzian problems of the depth of the virtual into similarly complex issues of the breadth of the actual as a confluence of multiple, changing and differential perspectives.

In order to more fully understand Mullarkey’s account of what we might term ‘rich actuality’ and to do justice to his notion of what constitutes a perspective it helps to position his philosophy in relation to a number of process-philosophical themes or tropes which have already encountered in the context of the work of Nicholas Rescher. In the first instance, Mullarkey would seem to employ the concept of process as a neutral means of reconciling various modes of actual experience, as well as their

⁴⁹ Mullarkey’s essay on the ‘rehabilitation’ of metaphysics through refractive Bergsonian thought ends with the statement ‘Metaphysics is dead – long live metaphysics’

continuous transformation and development. Thus, he would seem to suggest, in accordance with Rescher, that the complexion of the processual-real is irreducibly complex - and that a process is a 'coordinated group of changes in the complexion of reality' (Rescher, 1996, p.38). Thus much as Rescher suggests that a fully processual reality admits, for instance, of both 'mental and physical' processes – Mullarkey, slicing the problem a little more finely, argues for the processual reality of ideation, materiality, sensation and affect. Thus for Mullarkey, actuality is fundamentally processual in character, but it is also radically plural in its perspectival and aspectual characteristics. Thus, he argues in a Leibnizian fashion that from any given subject position only a portion of the real is visible and that accordingly the actual per sé might equally be considered in terms of a plurality, or play of actualities. However, there is a clear sense in which this would seem to bring him very close to the syncretist account of the Deleuzian virtual that can be derived from his writings on Leibniz which was examined earlier in this section. Indeed, Mullarkey notes that his argument for the primacy of the actual at times sounds like an 'inverted spectrum argument' where the terms virtual and actual have merely been swapped around (Mullarkey, 2004, p.472, 2006, p.26). He goes on to argue, however, that such a direct exchange is not as straightforwardly as it might initially seem given that the terms 'actual' and 'virtual' have very different linguistic associations and operate in very different semantic contexts. As a consequence, for Mullarkey, this exchange results in a markedly different set of practical consequences – hence the importance for Mullarkey, contra Deleuze, of the agency of molar categories.

4.45 Mullarkey's Actualism and Practical Concerns

Mullarkey's concern with process-relational molarity (the processual agency of actual things) is thus manifest not only in the context of his metaphysics, but also in his analysis of practical concerns with respect to philosophy of cinema – and this assists in the application of his position both to artistic practice and to the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. He notes, for instance in his analysis of cinema, the important hybridity of the cinematic, and stresses the way in which cinema might be considered a rich, but nevertheless solely actual assemblage. Thus he suggests, contra the Deleuzian ontological, sensation-oriented materialist account of

cinema which stresses the operation of ‘raw sensation’ upon the nervous system (to the exclusion of everything else), that:

Many of the properties of film that Deleuze rejects – story, representation, action, movement, actuality – can be shown to be more complex and multiple than he gives them credit to be, on account of their relationality with audience, culture and technology. (Mullarkey, 2009, p.103)

In this sense Mullarkey recommends that film should be seen as ‘an immanent set of (actual relational) processes’ that are comprised variously of such processual realities as ‘the artist’s and audience’s psychologies, the cinematic ‘raw data’, the physical media of the film, the varied form of its exhibition, *as well as all the theories relating themselves to these dimensions.*’ (original italics) Thus Mullarkey does not entirely resist cultural or textual approaches to philosophical problems. He believes that such activities have their place – rather, he resists the reduction to a purely cultural response – recognising the partiality, and refractive abstraction of any totalising theory.

From the perspective of Mullarkey’s actualism, the power of cinema ultimately lies in its means of constructing a ‘frame of reference’ or a mode of ‘seeing as’ that is that in turn refracted in an at once cultural, psychological and material encounter with a (radically multiple) audience (Mullarkey, 2009, p.188-190, p.209-213), and we can surely extend the application of this analysis, enabling it to address other artforms. The optical orientation of the concept of refraction becomes very important to Mullarkey, introducing a form of distorting mediation into any subject position – and it is this distortion that ultimately facilitates change, providing a corollary to the biological metaphor of mutation or of conjunctive-disjunction that is operative in the philosophy of Deleuze. Resisting the transcendental aspects of Deleuzian thought, Mullarkey emphasises not only the way in which systems of refraction distort, but also the way in which they are properly immanent in character. That is to say, the process of refraction consists of a bending of the path of light waves and a change in both their speed and wavelength, but Mullarkey stresses that there is no sense in which talk of the refractive need leave or in any way transcend the actual (Mullarkey, 2009, p.66). He notes that refraction is not concerned with a mirroring or a reflection of reality – but rather with its inflection and transformation. In accordance with this, the metaphor of refraction, when standing as a substitute for more positivistic notions

of mirroring or reflection provides interesting possibilities for the understanding of the production of novelty in creative research, but also for the understanding of observer effects and subjectivity with respect to more traditional modes of enquiry. Indeed the concept of refraction has come to have much currency in the context of sociological and philosophical qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.208).

In his discussion of film-philosophy, Mullarkey comes very close to explicitly touching on a notion of practice-led research. For Mullarkey, film-philosophy and truly philosophical film arises out of *the refractive processes of viewing and making films as well as reading film theory*. Mullarkey is critical of films that merely attempt to represent or illustrate philosophical subject matter, and instead seeks out films which, in some sense, could be said to think philosophically, to do philosophy or to extend philosophy in a non-philosophical fashion. He tells us that film is ‘part theatrical, part literary, part photographic, part musical, a group-manufactured commercial art-product’ and suggests that the ‘messiness’ of film ‘merges with the messiness of reality’ (Mullarkey, 2009, p.215). Indeed, with this in mind, the history of film might be considered a history of interfering aesthetic, technical and cultural processes – that is to say it might be considered in terms of a history of refractive innovation. For Mullarkey, it is through its hybridity, relationality and multimodality, that film can provide a forceful illustration of the processual complexity that is likewise operative in the context of art. Mullarkey draws strong parallels between film and philosophy, suggesting that philosophy is the most relational of disciplines, a ‘parasite or symbiant’ discipline which more than any other it needs non-philosophical subjects to serve as its content. Furthermore, he suggests that this coming into (actual) relation subtly transforms both philosophy and its other(s), giving rise not only new thoughts, but also to new forms of thinking:

No less than a film coevolves with its spectator (a single viewer or large audience) in each viewing event, so philosophy coevolves with its object (or subject matter) in an event of novelty where both refract each other. (Mullarkey, 2009, p.210)

4.46 Connecting Mullarkey's Account of Cinema to Practice-Led Research

Hopefully it should be clear that there is no great leap required to connect Mullarkey's comments on cinema, refraction and philosophical actualism, to the theorisation of practice-led research. In the context of this thesis, given that we are not here concerned with the analysis of any particular art form, or with any particular research practice, but rather with the growth of a multiplicity of artistic and research activities, our subject matter encompasses philosophy and film, but ultimately has a broader remit – being applicable to the breadth of ever-growing practices that could be said to constitute art and research.

Firstly, exploring this connection in general terms, the processual proliferation of modes of research was explored in the work on Guba and Lincoln in chapter two of this thesis, and the suggestion that contemporary forms of artistic practice are likewise fluid with respect to form is far from a controversial thesis. Furthermore, it seems clear that film and philosophy are not the only disciplines with symbiotic or parasitic qualities, in so far as art and research might likewise be considered in the abstract as subjects of pure relation - as processes forever in search of subject matter (Mullarkey, 2009, p.209). Extrapolating from Mullarkey's position on cinema we can likewise address the anti-essentialism that pervades the performative paradigm – that is, its performative concern with novelty and innovation and its attempt to collapse the space between the subject (the researcher) and the object of study. Mullarkey echoes a number of both Rescherian and Deleuzian processual sentiments when he suggests that both film and film-maker are not *essentially* 'any sort of thing at all' and should instead be seen as 'mutating' processual 'connection(s)' with significant (actual) productive powers (Mullarkey, 2009, p.76). In this sense, Mullarkey suggests that cinema, whilst possessing an optical context and instantiating a phenomenal subject position or 'point of view' is likewise perpetually generative of (actual) novelty. That is to say, for Mullarkey, a film and its audience (both as a mass and conglomeration of individuals) instantiate a refractive/mutative, actual, relational confluence that is itself at all times (actually) productive. Thus film in its broadly affective capacity is capable of generating and influencing feelings, ideas and actions – and as a consequence is implicated in the development and inflection of other forms of actuality, whether this

be through a call to bodily action, or through a call to see/read the world in a different way – and it is in this sense, as Mullarkey suggests that ‘there is never one film-text, but many’ (Mullarkey, 2009, p.76).

In bringing a number of subterranean Deleuzian concerns to the surface, as it were, Mullarkey’s actualism also enables a kind of experimental philosophy. In the course of his investigation, Mullarkey has employed cinema as an affective experimental device that is capable of confronting us with persuasive forms of experience. To this end, Mullarkey once framed a cinematic philosophical experiment that explored the variability of durational/temporal experience. For Mullarkey there is much durational variability in the subjective perception of time and there is a sense in which cinema provides a means of both exploring and manipulating temporal subjectivity. That is to say, for Mullarkey, films are capable of instantiating a ‘deep reconfiguration of our viewing thresholds’, and highlighting the ‘artificial poles between nature and culture’. To this end, Mullarkey once screened a two-hour film composed of fifteen minute inter-cut segments from Paul Greengrass’ hyperkinetic *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007) and Bela Tarr’s ultra-slow *Satantango* (1994). Importantly, for Mullarkey, film provides a means for exploring not only our own temporal subjectivity but also the potential for interference, or the potential for a kind of communicative transition between closely neighbouring actual perspectives (albeit somewhat distorted in character). Accordingly, Mullarkey’s is interested in the way in which film can engage with what Laura Cull has termed ‘differential presence’ through an exploration of the plasticity of any given subject position/perspective. In this sense, Mullarkey and Cull’s notion of ‘differential presence’ seems to map well onto the singular, radical, but nevertheless communicative and qualitative agenda that seems to orient much discussion of practice-led research.

Witnessing a screening of Mullarkey’s Bourne-Satantango composite enables us to experience the affect of the cinema screen in a highly visceral fashion (that would no doubt chime with Deleuze’s materialist approach to cinema), but it is also the case that given his rich philosophical actualism, Mullarkey is also able to engage with the problem of duration conceptually, without encountering embarrassment or potential contradiction. In Mullarkey’s case, conceptual engagement with duration is achieved in one sense through philosophical reflection (e.g. his sustained engagement with

Bergson), but it is also achieved through the analysis of films that have explored the idea of subjective duration or the idea of individuals who in some sense live at ‘different rates’ (e.g. the film *Awakenings*, adapted from Oliver Sacks’ book of the same name, or creatures from speculative horror and science fiction). In this sense, Mullarkey’s philosophy also enables a methodological pluralism that would likewise seem to chime with the concerns of practice-led researchers as well as those working in cultural studies and contemporary philosophy.

There are a number of aspects of Mullarkey’s actualism that are important from the perspective of this thesis. Mullarkey recognises both the diversity and continuity of actual experience, whilst stressing the experiential and affective dimension of actual relational contexts. That is to say, in Mullarkey’s philosophy there are a recurring set of simultaneously affective and relational concerns that ultimately underpin the intensive, transitional logic that he develops in his own conception of ‘diagrammatic thinking’. Ultimately, the diagrammatic logic of experience that is developed by Mullarkey is intensive, transitional and temporal in character, and there is an important sense in which this transitional logic is reflected in the instrumentality of artworks and artistic research practices. On Mullarkey’s terms, artworks can in some sense be construed as ‘arguments’, which work on an audience by leading them through a set of experiential transformations. In this sense they possess experiential, processual and rhetorical characteristics, constructing persuasive modes of experience without necessarily conforming to syllogistic, logico-deductive conventions.

It will perhaps be helpful to illustrate the operation such a transitional logic in another context, and to further draw attention to its non-syllogistic character. On arriving at the 2011 Doctoral Education in Design conference, delegates were asked by the conference organisers to summarise their paper in five minutes as a kind of ‘elevator pitch’ as opposed to delivering it in full. The organisers of the conference justified this compressed form of exposition by stressing its expedience, and suggesting that it would allow more time and space for discussion of the conference themes (nominally concerning ‘practice, knowledge and vision’). The organisers’ decision was reflective of a broader tendency towards the compression of arguments that underpins, for instance, the production of an abstract, the formulation of precise research question and the construction of analytical tables of contents, which are characteristic

requirements of the traditional doctoral thesis. The unintended consequence of this request, however, was to place any papers that employed performative, transformational, durational or experiential methods/devices at something of a disadvantage. This is because experiential arguments, as we have seen, depend upon a transformational logic, and work upon an audience in an at once performative and affective fashion – provoking a series of experiential states which in some sense confront a problem. One characteristic of this mode of argumentation is its long-durational quality - that is to say, such experiential transformation takes time to establish and often require careful choreography (when speaking of Bela Tarr's *Satanango*, for instance, Mullarkey notes how we are very slowly drawn into *Satanango's* time frame, but how this ultimately results in a significant experiential, temporal 'shock' when we leave the cinema). Welby Ings presentation at the 2011 conference provides a useful illustration of this point. Ings intended the reading of his paper to culminate in a highly performative intervention which would involve cutting into the flesh of an apple with a knife, and revealing it to be rotten on the inside. Ings' paper had presumably been carefully choreographed around this performative intervention, and as a consequence it was somewhat compromised by the organisers revised instructions for presentation. I felt that my own paper, whilst less directly theatrical or polemic, was nevertheless performative, and as a consequence it suffered in a similar fashion. I had intended to demonstrate an aesthetic logic by taking the audience through a series of slow aspectual transformations – firstly at the level of image and secondly at the level of concept. Ultimately, Ings chose to ignore the organisers' request and delivered the paper as intended over a period of twenty-five minutes, but whilst in one sense this strategy clearly enabled him to complete his performance, it also in the process, served to stigmatise him - positioning him negatively as a dissenter with respect to the (revised) conference program. Indeed, there is an important sense in which this last minute change to presentational form can be said to have compromised any papers that had an explicitly performative, affective or durational dimension, and to have unfairly advantaged more traditional, propositionally structured work.

4.50 Summary and Interim Conclusions

In summary, Mullarkey's picture of actual, affective relation, as an at once connective, transformative and experiential phenomena, has both integrative and differential applications. In one sense, much like the philosophy of Deleuze, it provides an ethics of alterity – but in the case of Mullarkey, as we have seen, it is an ethics that is grounded in actual, immanent subject positions as opposed to the operation of an order that should be taken to be any sense transcendent in character. In another sense, however, there is an integrative dimension to Mullarkey's thought, which is likewise present in the philosophy of Deleuze – but which in the context of Deleuzian philosophy is less explicitly articulated. That is to say, despite, his emphasis upon the singular and the pluralistic, Mullarkey notes a certain continuity between subject positions (or at least between their closest neighbours), and this facilitates a rich, descriptivist mode of understanding, which enables us to expand the potential and reach of approaches to practice-led research that are informed by the philosophy of Deleuze. With respect to the integrative-alterity of Mullarkey's actualism, Laura Cull has recently suggested:

The Actualist project is underpinned by an ethical demand to acknowledge the reality of multiple actualities (not only a single 'actual') ... we need to acknowledge the presence of multiple actualities, even when those actualities are invisible or imperceptible to 'us'. That is, regardless of the limits of our specific perspective, these multiple actualities 'are always actual in and for themselves. (Cull 2012, p.191)

In the extract above, Cull emphasises, the differential characteristics of the actual. However, in stressing that actualism is not an anthropocentric thesis, but that in its concern for the reality of 'a multiplicity of inhuman as well as human ways of being in time' it should be considered in radical phenomenal terms, Cull develops a Deleuzo-Bergsonian position that extends the processual dimension of Deleuzian thought, exploring its connective as well as differential aspects. The account of artistic research that has been presented thus far has emphasised its concern with the transformation or problematisation of phenomena through a form of multimodal, experimental, qualitative engagement. Whilst stressing the differential characteristics of the actual, Mullarkey and Cull nevertheless begin to explore the integrative

dimension of process philosophy, positing a form of sympathy and openness to different actualities or subject positions. In an important sense this begins to broaden the agenda of artistic research that has been proposed thus far, connecting it to processes of ‘looking’, ‘ways of seeing’ and the construction of ‘frames of reference’.

Thus whilst it remains the case that there is a clear concern in Mullarkey’s philosophy with radical notions of encounter, confrontation, development and transformation that echoes the concerns of Deleuzian philosophy, Mullarkey and Cull could also be said to posit a form of (durational) Weberian *Verstehen* – postulating a temporally oriented form of phenomenological understanding that encourages an ethic of sympathy and respect in the face of alternate modes of presence. That is to say, Mullarkey explores this affinity between process philosophy and phenomenological, qualitative modes of understanding/communication - positioning cinematic production as being in some sense akin to processes of drawing in so far as it is concerned with the construction and refractive-communication of a perspective. In this sense, for Mullarkey, film stands as a simultaneous ‘drawing out’ and ‘refraction’ of specific aspects of experience. The fissure of monism and pluralism that is operative in Mullarkey’s perspectivism, which is suggested by the emphasis in Mullarkey’s philosophy upon the importance of the concept of multiplicity, is important for our purposes here as it serves to develop the affinity between artistic modes of research, the transformative ideals that are associated with sociological conflict perspectives, and the phenomenal relativism that is typified by more qualitative and ethnographic research practices. Whilst it is easy to see how the former, in its emphasis upon ideas of conflict, emancipation, and transformation fits more readily with the development in this thesis of a Deleuzian approach to research practice (see section three), the latter, in its emphasis upon an integrative notion of phenomenal overlap, is harder to accommodate in the context of Deleuzian thought, given Deleuze’s hostility to the concepts of communication and phenomenal subjectivity. It is not so much that there are no resources present in Deleuze’s work with respect to the development of qualitative sociological understanding, it is rather that they are sometimes overshadowed by a concern with difference and the production of the new that appeals to many artistic practitioners. It is interesting to note, however, that it is in the arena of qualitative sociological study that much of the exploration and application of Deleuze’s thought in a research context has taken place to date (Coleman & Ringrose,

2013; Mazzei & McCoy, 2010), and we have seen how Deleuze's mutative philosophical readings of other philosophers are premised upon a particularly intimate form of contact, albeit intended ultimately as a means of interpretative differentiation (chapter 1, section 1.34). We have likewise seen how it is all too easy for the veneration of difference that takes place in Deleuzian philosophy to obscure the deep philosophical debts that Deleuze owes to many of his professed adversaries (e.g. Kant, Hegel) – and how, in this sense, it is easy to miss the integrative aspects of many of Deleuze's more differentially focused concepts. Indeed the integrative dimension of Deleuze's thinking becomes more apparent in some of the secondary literature, such as in the exploration of notions of receptivity and co-variance that can be found in the writings of Mullarkey, Cull and Sabisch. That is to say, both Mullarkey and Sabisch develop broadly Deleuzian positions, but they each in their own fashion stress the idea that transformational couplings express a kind of affinity. Sabisch defines contamination positively as 'the power to assemble and to create new relations, curious alliances' and notes the necessary receptivity between an organism and any infection that it hosts (Sabisch, 2011, p.20)

Mullarkey's position, then, is particularly valuable from the perspective of this thesis in so far as it provides a less partisan form of analysis, coupling a form of 'understanding' with the notion of differentiation through refraction. We have seen how for Mullarkey, the construction of a frame of reference has a representational dimension – but should be considered refractive as opposed to reflective in nature - providing a form of understanding which is in some sense representational, but also differential in character. Whilst Mullarkey and Deleuze's choices of metaphor (respectively those of refraction/mutation) inflects each of their approaches to phenomenal subjectivity differently, it is nevertheless clear that their respective concepts of mutation and refraction share a concern with processes of distortion, anomaly, and transition. Thus, both Mullarkey and Deleuze emphasise the kinetic and transformational qualities of the natural world – stressing its processual, transformative and radically pluralistic characteristics –but it is likewise the case that in each of their philosophies, the idea of the connective is implicated in their conception of change. Mullarkey's actualist emphasis, however, enables him to be less guarded in his engagement with concepts such as the (processual) subject, the (refractive) representational and the agency of macro-processual constructs, and it is

clear that this results in a position that is in many ways less absolutist and prohibitive than that of Deleuze. It is nevertheless clear, however, that in their common exploration of the concept of nature as multiplicity (the fusion of monism and pluralism), they each wrestle with what was presented in the introduction to this thesis as the core process-philosophical tension between the integrative and differential.

One feature of Mullarkey's prismatic, optical explanatory framework is that it is more easily applicable to discussion of a number of concepts that can be seen to recur in the discussion of research activity (e.g. concepts of the researcher, world, culture, individual, community). That is to say, in the context of Mullarkey's philosophy there is scope to speak of such terms albeit it with some processual nuance or qualification. Mullarkey's concept of refraction, for instance, coupled with his macro-processual conception of the subject provides an interesting context for the discussion of, for example, researcher bias and the influence of the observer upon phenomena (observer effects). Indeed, we have seen how Mullarkey ultimately positions all forms of enquiry – indeed all forms of observation - as embodying some form of selectivity and distortion. In the context of Mullarkey's philosophy, however, such distortions are not so much non-veridical artefacts that need to be compensated for or eradicated, rather they are artefacts that are implicated in the processual development and transformation of the (radically multiple) world.

Mullarkey's at times ocular-centric vocabulary has interesting phenomenological connotations that sit a little more awkwardly with narrowly materialist readings of Deleuzian thought. However, in defense of the optical context of Mullarkey's actualism it is clear that despite Deleuze's choice of biological metaphors, the development of Deleuze's own philosophy might be better described in prismatic rather than mutative terms. That is to say, as Sabisch has noted, concepts of mutation operate in the context of intimacy and this metaphor might seem appealing when considering Deleuze's mutative reading of particular philosophers. However, it strains when we consider the sheer number of philosophical voices that would seem to be involved in the production of Deleuze's philosophical position. Accordingly, a prismatic notion of refraction not only provides a more fitting metaphor to describe the genesis of Deleuze's philosophical position, but also provides us with the ability

to more straightforwardly address the many actual, practical concerns that arise in the context of debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research.

Applications and Conclusions

'Had I not done philosophy, I would have done law, but indeed, jurisprudence, not human rights... life goes case by case.'

(Gilles Deleuze, *L'Abécédaire*, G as in 'Gauche')

5.00 Jurisprudence as an Immanent Approach to the Formulation of Law.

In his recent Deleuzo-Bergsonian book, *The Image of Law*, Alexander Lefebvre (2008) examines the notion of conceptual innovation with respect to legal and judicial frameworks, and emphasises the extent to which innovation takes place in the process of law application or 'judgment' (Lefebvre, 2008, pp. 55-59). Lefebvre's argument turns upon recognition of the tendency for legal concepts to become extended through jurisprudential activities of adjudication. He suggests that judges not only apply, but also create law when the specificities of a particular state of affairs generate conceptual tension. He emphasises the way in which the 'case' connects the law to its milieu, and suggests that legal judgments operate in a space of encounter, which requires necessary conceptual innovation in the face of the novel and unexpected singularities of a situation. This is due in part to the weighing of possibilities that takes place when a particular situation falls under multiple, but incompatible schemes of legal classification, and in part to the inventiveness that is required when the law is confronted with an aspect of a situation that seems 'new' or to be in some sense without precedent.

Lefebvre's notion of 'singularity' is derived from Deleuzian philosophy (Lefebvre, 2008, pp. 204-206), and is as much concerned with the specificity of particulars as it is with their transformation. That is to say, in one sense a singularity refers to the unique qualities of a particular situation (what makes one state of affairs or one event uniquely different from any other) and in another it refers to all of the conceptual pivot points that come into play with respect to the interpretation or determination of an event through a process of judgment. In this latter sense, an event is positioned as a complex field-like structure consisting of many mobile singularities that cross connect

it (connect it transversally) with other contexts (Deleuze, 1990, pp.64-68; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 326-328).

With this transformative potential of singularities in mind, we are in a better position to appreciate the way in which concepts of research might be considered provisional, pragmatic frameworks that address the requirements of a particular moment in time, but which are nevertheless capable of change and development. In attempting to understand the transformation of research paradigms, this thesis, following Mullarkey's actualist reading of Deleuze, has attempted to address practical tensions that have arisen with respect to the contemporary milieu – the tensions, for instance, between textual, visual and material cultures; the tensions between theoretical, pragmatic and performative activity; and the tensions between descriptive and expressive modes of communication. Positioned in this way, the debate concerning the legitimacy of non-traditional modes of research shifts in orientation. It no longer becomes a question of judgment. That is to say, it no longer becomes a question of documenting conceptual fit/conceptual disparity between a set of research definitions, it rather becomes a question of charting the tangible circumstances that give rise to conceptual shift and documenting their relationship to contemporary cultural conditions.

Thus from this immanent, actualist perspective, we can reframe the resolvable 'question' of the legitimacy of practice-based research, transforming it into the enduring creative 'problem' of paradigmatic change. That is to say, rather than seeking definitional criteria to ground a particular phenomenon, the process-relational perspective considers the changing variables, intensities, values and complex relationships that inhere within its terms (Williams, 2008, pp. 12-13, p.183). It is perhaps no coincidence that the scientised and solutions-oriented design methods movement encountered this issue long ago, with Rittel's postulation of 'wicked problems' – problems that admitted on no straightforward solution and which seemed only to generate further complexity (Buchanan, 1992, p.15). To this end, James Williams has noted how process-relational 'solutions' address a particular time and a particular set of circumstances, and do not anticipate the timeless resolution or settlement of any issue (Williams, 2008, pp. 6-7).

5.01 The Future Anterior and Practice-Led Research

During a discussion of the anticipatory sense of the future that is known as the ‘future anterior’ – the tense which concerns ‘what will have been’, Mullarkey notes how Bergson, when asked to contemplate the great dramatic work of tomorrow, suggested that such a work ‘is not yet possible’, but that it ‘will have been possible’ in the future anterior (Mullarkey, 2000, pp.251-254, 2009, pp.214-215). Bergson and Mullarkey’s point is that there is a sense in which the most innovative ideas of any given period must at first appear unimaginable – they are ahead of their time, so to speak and are often met with a mixture of incomprehension and ridicule. However, in hindsight – that is in the wake of a set of appropriate, smaller scale events (smaller, piecemeal occurrences that lay the ground for the idea, and culturally distribute its elements) – such ideas will seem eminently plausible – their appearance perfectly natural, and their possibility clear.

Applying this idea to the gradual acceptance of artistic research that occurred over the last 15 years, we can ask how, after many years of institutional resistance, practice-led research was able to embed itself institutionally and create its own possibility. From the perspective of artistic research, initial practice-led investigations and initial enquires into their nature can be seen to have been performed ‘in the name of’ artistic research – much as a politically motivated individual might be said to act in the name of a cause (Williams, 2003, pp.102-105). However, it is not, as Biggs has claimed, that ‘these pioneering steps were conducted in an academic vacuum that lacked clear criteria’ or that such early examples ‘may not survive’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p.8). Rather, when considered as symptoms of the autopoietic operation of actuality, such actions can be seen as having brought about or as having constituted artistic research *along* with the sense of its possibility. Landmark moments in construction of the performative paradigm, have concerned:

- i) The convergence upon, and prioritisation of material forms of knowing such as tacit knowledge, know-how, and an emphasis upon ontological concerns (e.g. Schön, Polanyi, Sullivan, Bolt, Borgdorf, Haseman, Hanulah, Slager, Rust, Niedderer)

- ii) The recognition that even established modes of research can have an instrumental/transformational agenda as opposed to being fixated upon activities of description and representation (e.g. Butler, Guba and Lincoln, Hasman, Bolt)
- iii) The practical ‘performing’ of practice-led research into existence through the establishment of academic networks, as platforms for exposure and peer review (e.g. Borgdorf).
- iv) A heightened interest in extreme, non-anthropocentric forms of qualitative experience and situational contingency that has arisen out of a variety of new materialist forms of enquiry (e.g. Bennett, Barrett and Bolt, Mullarkey).

Possibilities are, however, at once contingent and fragile – lacking sustenance they may wither, and they are likewise open to attack. With this in mind, and in accordance with its qualitative focus, this study has attempted to engage sensitively with a key singular critical position (the work of Biggs and Büchler), producing a set of unsettling experiences which, through a process of extrapolation serve also to problematise a more generalised positivistic current of thought that still occurs with the context of the legitimacy debate.

5.10 The Hybrid, and Mutually Supportive Character of Aesthetico-Conceptual Enquiry

The aesthetico-conceptual approach that has been developed in these pages can be considered a corporeal form of practice that embraces both conceptual and aesthetic construction. It also emphasises the way in which the coming together of art and research facilitates a kind of connective-transformation. In the context of this thesis we have attempted to illustrate the receptivity of art and research to one another, not through any easy sense of conceptual fit, but through an exploration of the way in which they each share a productive, tensile relationship with notions of conservation/integration and innovation/differentiation. That is to say, what critics of practice-led research have perceived as an inter-conceptual tension between notions of

art and research might instead be viewed as a common intra-conceptual tension appertaining respectively to tendencies operative in traditional research enquiry and tendencies operative in artistic practice - and as such, there is an internal systemic tension between notions of tradition and innovation that can be positioned as *common* to each mode of practice. Accordingly, the existence of a systemic tension between, on the one hand, concepts of tradition, communication, and on the other concepts of innovation and differentiation can be regarded as a point of *similarity* between artistic practices and more traditional modes of research.

If, as is being suggested here, processes of art and research have shared, but differently accented concerns with practices of relation, integration, difference and innovation, then traditional and non-traditional research activities might be seen as compositional processes that operate in accordance with asymmetric and discipline specific weightings of these common, tensile concerns. This would place traditional and non-traditional forms of research in a kind of aspectual conflict as opposed to producing more serious forms of incommensurability or impasse. In this sense, Mullarkey's optical context more readily allows us to think of this relationship in diagrammatic terms, and to be aware of specific nuances that might arise in the context of any given disciplinary frame of reference. That is to say, with Mullarkey's optical vocabulary in mind, we might visualise the debate in terms that are at once, intensive, kinetic and Gestaltist in character, and which are likewise suggestive of the strangely hybrid relationship of the conceptual and the pictorial that constitutes the diagram. Thus, in keeping with the fusion of the integrative and differential that takes place in the process-philosophical emphasis upon multiplicity, Rescher (2009) notes of unstable images that embody multiple aspects can be perceptually abstracted in a variety of ways (e.g. as a 'duck' or as a 'rabbit') and that at a particular level of conceptual complexity the figures are incommensurable. He goes on to argue, however, that there is a more rudimentary level of description at which the two aspects overlap, or can be described as being in coordination – i.e. regardless of aspect, we can speak of 'a linear configuration that looks like that [pointing].' (Rescher, 2009, p. 135). In relation to the optical context of Mullarkey's philosophy, such an explanation seems pertinent. That is to say, in transposing Rescher's line of argument to the context of the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research, we can see how the presence of common systemic tensions between, for

instance, the integrative and the differential explain a specific kind of aspectual shift. That is to say, it is a shift in emphasis regarding the relative importance of novelty and tradition (or of the transformative and the representational) with respect to a given practice that enables an aspectual shift between the concepts of creative practice and traditional research. In justifying and facilitating this aspectual shift, we need to form a picture of the kinds of tendencies that are foregrounded with respect to a particular kind of practice. This necessarily requires a degree of abstraction/simplification and should be taken with the qualification that any specific practice embodies a tension between the duality in question. With this in mind, however, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, as Borgdorff has noted, it is characteristic of creative practitioners to disturb the presiding aesthetic/political status quo or to foreground radical change, conceptual transformation and productive relation (the creation of new, experientially transformative, connections),⁵⁰ whilst it is characteristic of more traditional researchers – as they have been depicted within the confines of the debate at least, to engage with innovation in a more cautious, integrative and conservative fashion. It should be clear, however, that even when presented in terms of a simplistic evolutionary/revolutionary contrast, both artistic and traditional research practices have a more complex relationship with both the canonical and the new. That is to say, regardless of its emphasis upon the cultivation of novelty, creative practice nevertheless engages with tradition through referential strategies (allusion, quotation, etc.), and despite its emphasis on tradition and integration, traditional research practice is likewise productive of the new (hence the stress upon the importance ‘impact’ and of ‘original contribution to knowledge’). Thus, it is by focusing upon tacit background activities as opposed to the tendencies that become foregrounded in each mode of practice - by close reading/viewing as it were - that it becomes possible to switch conceptual aspect – to see creative practice as a form of research, or research as a form of creative practice.

With respect to addressing this study’s primary research question, we have seen that it is not so much that process philosophy *resolves* the tensions between the integrative and differential that underpin the debate concerning the legitimacy of practice-led research. It is rather the case that process philosophical thinking generalises and

⁵⁰ As Borgdorff states it, ‘Art often takes an antithetical stance towards the existing world, and it delivers the unsolicited and the unexpected. That is its very strength.’ (Borgdorff, p.93)

naturalises these tensions - positioning them being in some sense in tune with the workings of the world. In this sense conflicting leanings towards integrative and transformative practices are first located and shown to be operative within our traditional, received understanding of art and research, and this observation goes on to pave the way for an embrace of the kind of conductive-differentiation that results in the transformed and hybrid notion of artistic research. Accordingly, this shades into the second of our research questions, which was concerned with the development of a genuinely hybrid aesthetico-conceptual form of argumentation. This thesis has attempted to answer the second question performatively. That is to say, an aesthetico-conceptual method has been actively employed throughout and this has resulted in some of its most persuasive arguments (e.g. the production of the Vertiginous Münsterberg Figure in chapter 3, section 3.31).

5.11 The Integrative, Differential and Mobile Characteristics of Diagrammatic Thought

The great strength of Mullarkey's notion of 'diagrammatic thinking' is that it is at once integrative, differential and mobile – enabling communication, differentiation, complexity and perpetual development (Mullarkey, 2006). In Mullarkey's conception of the diagram, concepts of the integrative and the differential are fairly evenly distributed. Accordingly, Mullarkey stresses the way in which a Deleuzian 'line of flight' might equally be considered a kind of transition or passing through. From a diagrammatic perspective, movement can take place between a variety of actual frames of reference (the Latin prefix 'dia' translates as 'through', whilst 'gramma' translates as something drawn or written'). Mullarkey applies these thoughts in his *Post Continental Philosophy*. Introducing the idea in a philosophical context, he attempts to map the philosophical transitions that take place in the refractive lineage between Deleuze's frame of reference and those of his successors Badiou, Henry and Laruelle. Of Badiou and Henry he explains:

A diagram does not say that Henry=Badiou. Henry is Henry and Badiou is Badiou. But Henry and Badiou can be transformed into one another, for the very trans-forming is its own actuality too, not related to the theories in their own singularity, but acting on them, seeing them in a certain way. (Mullarkey, 2006, p. 190)

Transposing this line of argument to the context of this thesis, we might state, paraphrasing Mullarkey that: A diagram does not say that artistic practice=research. Practice is practice and research is research. But practice and research can be transformed into one another, for the very trans-forming is its own actuality too, not related to the theories in their own singularity, but acting on them, seeing them in a certain way (c.f. Mullarkey, 2006, p. 190)

In the context of this thesis we have attempted to variously ‘move through’ Kant, Wittgenstein, Biggs, Deleuze, Rescher, Borgdorff and Mullarkey through the application of a set of aesthetic-conceptual diagrammatic strategies that enable us to refractively experience their particularity as well as the productive context of their opposition.

5.20 Revisiting Wittgenstein in the Context of Immanence

In the analysis of Biggs and Büchler’s position that was undertaken in chapters two, three and four of this thesis, it was noted that there are both transcendental and pragmatic versions of Wittgenstein. It was argued that in their application of Wittgensteinian thought, Biggs and Büchler rely almost exclusively upon a version of Wittgensteinian ‘institutionalism’ that emphasises likeness of community and agreement in practice - positioning these qualities as being both encoded and enshrined in bureaucratic practices. It was claimed that this particular reading of Wittgenstein lacks a properly temporal dimension, and it was suggested that it was through the conservative aspects of Wittgensteinian thought that we can begin to understand Deleuze’s hostility to Wittgensteinian philosophy. With this in mind, it becomes interesting to see the way in which versions of broadly Wittgensteinian thought have been operative in the context of debate within the arts at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, and to explore the relationship between notions of ‘artistic community’ and the avant-garde. Most notably, the emergence of Wittgensteinian (or at least neo-Witggensteinian) thought in the 1950’s, as represented by Morris Weitz in his questioning of essentialist definitions of art, and in his positioning of it as a fundamentally an ‘open concept’ (a mosaic of overlapping similarities, as suggested by Wittgenstein’s open and widely ramified definition of the

term ‘game’). Weitz’s notion of art as open concept, like Deleuzean aesthetics, was particularly allied to notions of artistic experimentation and to the operation of the avant-garde. Thus there is a certain affinity between processual thinking upon artistic practice and open-pragmatic interpretations of Wittgenstein in the sense that they each embraced notions of artistic innovation, and stressed the essential *inessentiality* of artistic practice. As a consequence, for both process philosophical and neo-Wittgensteinian conceptions of artistic practice, there is a logical inconsistency inherent in any attempt to pin down or to define the nature of art in any restrictive fashion.

The intersection between ‘open concept’ neo-Wittgensteinian and process philosophical positions is important to this thesis in so far as it marks a line of flight, or a line of retreat that is available to Biggs and Büchler that might help us to understand some recent shifts in their position. These shifts are especially important, given Biggs and Büchler’s role in this thesis as avatars of institutionalised conceptions of research. That is to say, Biggs and Büchler have been closely aligned with the some of the most most conservative, institutionalised thinking concerning practice-led research and it does not seem unreasonable to consider transformations in their own image of thought as being symptomatic of a broader institutional acceptance of practice-led research. Indeed, it has become increasingly clear over the last decade that there is an escalating institutional acceptance of practice-led modes of research. Accordingly, there has been a subtle shift in the academic climate surrounding the debate, with criticism of the legitimacy of practice-based research seeming less tenable after the scale of the 2014 REF submission (in the UK context). As a consequence, academia would now seem to be more accommodating of notions of artistic or practice-led research, and we find some of its most staunch detractors are now seeking ways in which it might be accommodated. It will be argued shortly that in the case of Biggs and Büchler this reconfiguration, or line of flight leads them from a transcendent, institutional version of Wittgensteinian philosophy, through a pragmatic, ‘contingently holistic’ version of Wittgensteinian thought – ultimately leading them to adopt a Leibnizian intensive, aspectual and syncretic view of the legitimacy debate that stands not so much as a nuance of intellectual position, but rather as an attempt to adopt an altogether different image of thought. It will be argued here that if their dalliance with this new image of thought proves to be

authentic, then a number of the core components of Biggs and B uchler’s thinking would have to be radically transformed. Accordingly, it will be suggested that in the trajectory of Biggs and B uchler’s thinking on artistic-research there is an interesting reversal of the historical trajectory taken by Wittgensteinian approaches to the question of artistic definition. Thus, whilst Wittgensteinian approaches to artistic definition could be said to have begun in the 1950’s with Weiz’s notion of art as a ‘open concept’ and an emphasis upon paradigmatic ‘family resemblance’ that was progressively closed by institutional theories of art such as those proposed by Dickie and Goodman.⁵¹ Biggs and B uchler’s, on the other hand, begins with the idea of the institution as transcendental condition and then move towards notions of contingently holistic communities, and open concepts - ultimately resolving into a new image of thought which stresses an at once syncretic and intensive approach to concepts.

5.21 Biggs and B uchler’s Transformational Postscript

In 2011 the Australian Journal *TEXT* issued a call for papers for a special edition issue of the journal entitled *Beyond Practice-led Research*. The editors cited Biggs and B uchler’s claim in the *Routledge Companion to Artistic Research* that practice-based research results in actions that ‘conform to the conventions of academic research, (but which) do not result in a significant research activity.’ (Biggs & B uchler, 2012) Biggs and B uchler expressed some surprise at the pessimistic implications of this quotation, and they contributed a postscript to this special edition, which attempted to respond to the papers published therein.

We were slightly shocked by how negative that sounded, read cold like that, and realized that it may be interpreted as disdaining the artistic research that is produced worldwide. That is absolutely not our feeling! (Biggs & B uchler, 2012, p. 2)

Indeed, in their more recent writings there has been something of a softening or even an about turn in Biggs and B uchler’s position. To some extent they have acknowledged this themselves, stating:

⁵¹ In the context of Dickie and Goodman’s theories, dependence of artistic practices and artefacts upon the social context of an institutional ‘artworld’ becomes foregrounded – and this is mirrored to some extent in Biggs and B uchler’s approach to research activity

In the process of preparing for the book, we revisited our own work that we had produced over the last 10 years and reflected on what appeared to be some, shall we call them, shifts in philosophy (discrepancies? inconsistencies? contradictions?) along the way. Although we could politely describe these as ‘changes of heart’, ‘corrections’, ‘disclaimers’, ‘bouts of schizophrenia’, we recognized that each piece actually presented an inner consistency which suggested that while different to one another, each work was making a coherent case but for radically different claims. (Biggs & Büchler, 2012, p. 2)

Similarly, in their article in the *Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* Biggs and Büchler inform us that:

Given the long running debate, we concluded that perhaps there is not a single research model that would satisfy both (practitioners and researchers), and instead we should ask what is the source of dissatisfaction with the existing models of research that are available to practitioners, in order that new approaches to the problem might emerge.

Changing the question means that we have shifted from focusing upon what model would satisfy the communities, to focusing on what it is about the existing models that dissatisfies these communities. Our hunch was that this long-running disagreement was grounded in different notions of what was required in research, owing to different values. (Biggs & Büchler, 2008, p. 83)

In the postscript to the 2012 edition of *Text*, Biggs and Büchler go on to suggest that their various papers might better be regarded as embodying ‘different positions’ that responded to different ‘systems’ and ‘concerns’ and which ultimately make ‘a coherent case’ for ‘radically different claims’. Their (representational) response was to formulate a new taxonomy – this time concerned with identifying stakeholding ‘positions’ within the debate. Thus they suggest that there are ‘politico-economic’, ‘logico-deductive’, ‘socio-cultural’, and ‘empirico-pragmatic’ positions - and that each of these positions can be located in their own writings.

Whilst, this pluralistic taxonomy is useful in loosely unpicking the conflict, the suggestion that they have flitted between these positions in the past, masks the degree of actual consistency in the general thrust of their writings. It is claimed here that for the most part, Biggs and Büchler’s writings have been concerned with what they describe as the ‘politico-economic’ and ‘logico-deductive’ positions. That is to say,

the vast majority of their work has been concerned, to use their own terminology with:

i) Exploring the ‘regulations, rules, norms, requirements, performance, assessment, accreditation, awarding bodies, management’ – and pursuing the idea that ‘research is produced ultimately in response to educational policy, regardless of subject/disciplinary differences.’ (Biggs & Büchler, 2012, p.4)

ii) Exploring the ‘fundamental, essential, hegemonic, necessary, sufficient, constituting, criteria – *Wissenschaften* – for research, and pursuing ‘an ontological stance that attempts to identify the defining characteristics of academic research in any discipline, including both science and art equally - and which understanding that the same rules apply for all university subjects and research in the arts does not present a special case.’ (Biggs & Büchler 2012, p.4)

The politico-economic and logico-deductive positions have, until very recently, dominated Biggs and Büchler’s work, and it was the mutual influence of these broadly compatible positions that was subject to critique in section one of this thesis. It is perhaps because of the alignment of content and tone in Biggs and Büchler’s writing that the editors of *TEXT* identified them as exemplars of a pessimistic position with respect to the evaluation of practice-led research. Biggs and Büchler’s response is particularly interesting, and clearly retains traces of their former position in so far as they suggest that the (legitimate examples) of artistic research that ‘are produced each year, worldwide’ are ‘not impactful for artists’. That is to say, despite Biggs and Büchler’s more recent pluralistic leanings, their comments retain a tone of critique. Whilst they acknowledge that there is a wealth of legitimate research that is produced by the practice community, they suggest that in conforming to received notions of research, it does not have impact in an artistic context. For Biggs and Büchler, the operations of *legitimate* forms of artistic research are largely divorced from practitioner values. However, their writings in the Routledge Guide and in the *TEXT* postscript posit the formation of a new ‘practitioner-researcher’ paradigm which should grow ‘naturally’ out of the parent communities (the artistic and research communities) and which will have its own specific and emergent ‘practice-academic’ values. This thesis has been deeply critical of the resistance to concepts and transformation that characterise Biggs and Büchler’s work, and as a consequence, the

emergence of receptivity to the notion of paradigmatic transformation seems an important, recent development.

Thus, it is only in their more recent work that Biggs and Büchler have begun to cultivate a ‘socio-cultural’ position – that is a position which they describe as being focused upon ‘the *individuals* and the communities that *they* form around common values and beliefs’ and in which a ‘research model/paradigm is not to be created for the arts but emerges authentically from the artist-researcher community, as a consequence of the entry of the arts into the university context’. Thus, there is an interesting shift in emphasis taking place in their writings that runs counter to the transcendental, or constitutive notion of community that is developed in their earlier work. That is to say, in the comments quoted above, it would seem to be suggested that individuals form communities, as opposed to the idea, more characteristic of their earlier work, that places the emphasis upon the formation of the individual through the community (as transcendental condition). Thus the ontological status of ‘common values’ is not clear at this point, and Biggs and Büchler would appear to be hedging their bets:

Values and beliefs belong to an individual’s psychology and are not easily changed; however, they also inform a sociological system in which groups of individuals act in relation to one another within a community. (Biggs & Büchler, 2012, p.3)

This loosening of the transcendental status of socio-individual relationships results because Biggs and Büchler appear to be moving away from a singular notion of ‘research per sé’ and the criteria which stand as its transcendental condition, to a pluralistic notion of related research communities. Thus Biggs and Büchler would seem to be distancing themselves from an absolutist position, and moving towards a form of contingent holism. As a consequence, there are number of significant shifts that would seem to be taking place at the very foundation of their thought. If, for instance, we briefly return to the material addressed in section one of this thesis. Biggs and Büchler would now seem to be focusing less upon notions of incommensurability in their account of research paradigms, and suggesting something that is more in tune with the emphasis that can be located in the (later) work of Guba and Lincoln which stresses the importance of developmental paradigmatic confluence.

Similarly, the image of Wittgenstein that might support this new position is rather different to that which would seem to condition their early work. The conservative, transcendental elements of Wittgensteinian thought that, were outlined in chapter two of this thesis, appear to have been usurped by a pragmatic, constructivist Wittgenstein that has more affinity with process-philosophical concerns, and is more sensitive to fragmented conceptual complexity.

More importantly, in the *TEXT* postscript Biggs and Büchler appear to embrace an intensive, syncretist, and pluralistic approach to the notion of conceptual boundaries and transformation that is far removed from the quasi-essentialism that characterised their earlier thinking. Biggs has always emphasised the clarity, parsimony and propositional qualities of his position – and it was suggested in section one of this thesis that he has for the most part embraced, positivistic or at best post-positivistic ideals. Thus, in 2004, Biggs stressed the conditional aspects of formal argumentation, and argued that conditionals are poorly expressed when non-linguistic means of argumentation are employed:

Argumentation proceeds in an if-then mode of valid inferences. This is conditional: if the initial conditions are not accepted then the conclusion is not accepted. Conditional propositions are characteristic of linguistic communication and it is difficult to conceive how these might be established non-linguistically. (Biggs, 2004)

In the *TEXT* article of 2012, Biggs and Büchler logico-propositional orientation seems to have diminished, and they now adopt an approach to research definition that appears to be more strongly expressive of what we might describe as a logic of intensities.

In our approach, one position is not superior to another nor do they necessarily emerge sequentially with one replacing another. In the contemporary debate one can identify responses coming from all four of these positions, which are significant to different groups within the field of contemporary art research... Although all the concepts in all the positions are visible and have meaning, within one position certain meaningful concepts stand out as significant whereas others, because they are not foregrounded as mentioned above, lack significance. (Biggs & Büchler, 2012, p.3)

We have already noted the shift that takes place in these writings from an essentialist concern with necessary and sufficient conditions, to a concern with syncretic contingent holism. It should, however, also be clear from the passage above that accompanying this shift is an emerging interest in an intensive conception of significance as opposed to a logico-propositional concern with meaning which we examined in chapter three of this thesis. Thus there is a strong resonance between Biggs and Büchler's characterisation of a pluralism of concerns in the field and my own aspectual approach to the problem of practice-based research, which was presented at the *Doctoral Education in Design Conference* in 2011. Accordingly, It is suggested here that the socio-cultural position marks a dramatic transformation, not only in Biggs and Büchler's position on the legitimacy debate, but also in their philosophical style and in the philosophical underpinnings of their position.

Lastly, it is suggested that there has been very little evidence of any influence upon their work of what they term 'the empirico-pragmatic position', which they describe as:

...an epistemological stance in order to identify the fundamental core of arts research, by observing the practical results of artists producing research outputs in an academic context. A defining characteristic of this position is the understanding that there is a need for subject-specific conditions for the production of arts research.

Given that the empirico-pragmatic position has stood, in methodological terms as Biggs and Büchler's primary opposition (in effect generating the 'circularity problem'), it is perhaps most telling that having established that the 'practitioner-research community' needs to identify its 'practice-academic' values, Biggs and Büchler appear to be now preparing themselves for a related kind of empirico-pragmatic work.

This closing sketch is intended to give some indication of the extremity of reversal that would seem to be taking place with respect to Biggs and Büchler's position. It is claimed here that although Biggs and Büchler suggest that there is something 'penitential' about their postscript to the special edition of *TEXT*, the idea that there work has been in any way neutral, perspectival, or 'positional' ultimately fails to

convince.

In the introduction to Barrett and Bolt's (2015) latest anthology, Barbara Bolt - apparently attracted by Biggs and Büchler's recent pluralistic turn - positively references their work. Bolt suggests that in the context of the Australian research audit conducted through the ARC (Australian Research Council) and ERA (Excellence Research Australia) Biggs and Büchler's project provides a means of foregrounding traditional research-centric concepts such as question, answer, knowledge and method, whilst also stressing the role of the audience in establishing research significance (through systems of peer review). Bolt suggests that this enables the possibility of inflected research communities and methodological frameworks that embody discipline specific research agendas. Bolt also notes that in Biggs and Büchler's more recent writings there has been an acceptance of the role of the artwork in the context of artistic research. We saw earlier how Biggs and Büchler have recently gone to great lengths to emphasise that it is 'absolutely not the case' that they 'disdain' the 'artistic research that is produced worldwide', and in her introductory chapter, Bolt cites an additional comment made in Biggs and Büchler's paper *Supervision in an Alternative Paradigm* (which was explored in detail in chapter 2 section 2.60 of this thesis) to the effect that without the presence of artworks, creative research would be 'incomprehensible as research' (Biggs and Büchler, 2009; Barrett and Bolt, 2015, p.26). However, it seems significant that Bolt is left to populate the way in which artworks might integral to artistic research processes herself, as Biggs and Büchler neglect to address such questions in any detail. Thus, in accordance with her stress upon ontology, Bolt emphasises the performative qualities of the work - what a work *does* over and above what it is - drawing attention to the way in which the artwork in the context of practice-led research can be generative of new knowledge, concepts, methods and experiences. What Bolt fails to note, however, is the way in which Biggs and Büchler's pluralism is framed by a set of concerns that jar significantly with her own Deleuzian position. Thus Biggs and Büchler's pluralism retains a notion of judgment (judgment through peer review) and is oriented by a set of socio-linguistic functional concerns that seem far removed from Barrett and Bolt's interest in materiality. Likewise the notions of question, answer, knowledge and method appear strained when applied to artistic practice, and Bolt's analysis is forced to dwell upon the secondary concessional categories that Biggs and Büchler suggest

artistic researchers ‘seem to want’ (Biggs and Büchler, 2009).

From the perspective of this thesis, and in answer to the third of our research questions, the retreat into socio-pragmatic pluralism, though emblematic of the difficulty of applying Biggs and Büchler’s primary categories to artistic research, ultimately weakens the import of their argument for the legitimacy of artistic research (placing them in something of what they had previously described as an isolationist position). It is claimed here that it is not so much that Biggs and Büchler’s meta-strategy for uniting traditional and non-traditional research was wrong footed per se, it is rather that they approached the issue from the wrong side (e.g. epistemologically), foregrounding Ryle’s categories of ‘knowing that’ (propositional knowledge) as opposed to the more seemingly ubiquitous material-experiential category of ‘know how’ (which, as we have seen, also resonates positively with Deleuze’s notion of ‘exploring the intensities of a situation’). Approaching the problem through material ways of knowing would facilitate more intimate comparison between disciplines, but would also require a rather different, ontological (or at least onto-epistemological) framework.

5.30 The Repetition of (Actual) Difference

The aim of the closing comments of this section is to highlight an observation from one of Biggs’ earliest papers, which was clearly pregnant with potential, but which was all too quickly abandoned. In this sense, we will end by returning briefly to the beginning of the debate.

In chapter two of this thesis, we drew attention to the way in which Biggs’ earliest papers on the role of that artefact addressed the AHRC (then AHRB) research definitions. Biggs’ analysis of institutional definitions focused upon issues of question, context, knowledge and method as the definitive concerns/characteristics of legitimate research processes. However, it is interesting to note that the language of ‘problem’ ran alongside the language of ‘question’ in these early research-body definitions, and that this was something ripe for exploration. To elaborate a little, Biggs noted how the AHRB required that a research project ‘Must define a series of research questions that

will be addressed or *problems that will be explored* in the course of the research.’ (my italics), and secondly that a research project must ‘specify a research context for the questions to be addressed or *problems to be explored*.’ (my italics). At this time, Biggs noted that the characteristics of ‘question and answer’ sat poorly with art and design, and suggested that the notion of ‘question’ might be rephrased and brought into line with studio practice as: ‘how can X be problematised?’ and ‘how can Y be raised as an issue?’ It should be clear that from the perspective of this thesis there was much potential in the AHRB conception of research ‘problems’. At the time, Biggs was clearly very sensitive to the possibilities of utilising these definitions in such a way as to open up research in a way that might be meaningful to artistic practitioners, and we can likewise see from his early paper on Frayling, that he was sensitive to the ‘constructed’ nature of the debate. In this sense, we can see that Biggs himself can be seen, in his earliest papers, to have seeded the answer to the last of our research questions concerning the possibility of an alternative route through AHRC definitions. It is unfortunate, however, that seemingly after exposure to the critical environment of the Doctoral Education in Design conferences, Biggs’ allegiances seemed to shift. That is to say, it was directly after his early (2002) paper, that Biggs began working with a set of somewhat partial and redacted, question-centric, institutional definitions – effectively prioritising question, context, knowledge and method, whilst expunged any reference to ‘experience’ – or to what might constitute a ‘problem’ in the context of artistic research.

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