PICTURING CLOUDS OF UNKNOWING:

Photography, Lostness, and Cognitive Decline

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That thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you is usually what you need to find, and finding it is a matter of getting lost.

Rebecca Solnit

Abstract

The central premise of this doctoral project is that the progressive cognitive ambiguity that is dementia can be creatively apprehended by way of lostness. As defined by Rebecca Solnit, 'lost' holds "...two disparate meanings. Losing things is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing." The initial hypothesis of this research was that in certain neurodegenerative conditions the familiar and unfamiliar can confoundingly combine, and that it's through the lens of this particular combination that some comprehension of dementia as lived experience may be approached. The disorienting misperceptions most commonly encountered in cognitive decline are visual in nature. Given, then, that dementia reveals the importance of vision to perception, how may the photographic, with lostness as optic, be used to illuminate cognitive decline? In what ways can creatively visualising aspects of neurodegeneration in dementia inform understandings of its existential ambiguities?

Although dementia has been broached in the arts, photographically the tendency has largely been to look *at* the condition. In contrast, and through particular focus on symptoms that occur in dementia and the metaphors used to convey them – agnosias or 'unknowings' and, for example, 'clouded thoughts' – this research has aimed to develop fresh lens-based approaches to subjective experience of cognition as it declines. For this, photography has been tested in sculptural installations, as moving image, with creative writing, and in the medium of artists' books. In the course of this hybrid practice-led enquiry, novel approaches to using the photographic as means of manifesting neurocognitive disorders have been opened, supporting the proposition that metaphoric ideations of imperceptible symptoms have direct relevance to photography as visual art, and thereby contributing to the growing field of creative approaches to cognitive decline. In parallel, reappraisal of the photographic from the perspective of dementia invites review of photography as an analogical medium. The conceptual and creative visual approach developed in the project offers distinctive insights into cognitive decline with ramifications beyond enhanced comprehension of it as lived experience.

To my mum, Carol Jackson, for always believing in me.
And my love, Richard Glynn, for finding me.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Richard Talbot for making a PhD seem feasible in the first place; to Chris Jones and Andrew Newman for stepping forward as supervisors, Mike Lewis for later joining them, and all (but especially Chris) for providing stimulating things to work with and against; to AHRC/Northern Bridge, Northern Network for Medical Humanities Research's 'Thinking Through Things', and Newcastle University's Doctoral College Enhancement Fund for providing the means to complete this project; and to Heather Ross for sharing the pain.

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Introduction

Backdrop

While there is no history of dementia in my family there is a familial connection in my mother, who used to be a geriatric nurse. When in my late teens (around four decades ago…), she started taking me with her on night shifts and introduced me to the people in her care. I became fascinated by one woman in particular – always in the same wingback chair, still and silent, there and oddly also not, like a photograph. The only way I could even vaguely understand was to imagine her deeply asleep, if perhaps dreamlessly, with her eyes open, but I wasn't satisfied by this way of thinking. What also made her remarkable was that she was only in her forties (younger than I am now) while all the other residents were on average twice her age. Many years later I realised that she most likely had young-onset Alzheimer's, but I still didn't know what that might mean.

This experience, and the desire to better understand that it stirred in me, must have made a strong impression as I remembered it vividly in the summer of 2015. That July, while travelling through Bosnia, I found time to read Rebecca Solnit's *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (2006), and was particularly struck by her definition of 'lost' as having "...two disparate meanings. Losing things is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing."[1] This is the location, the where and when and how, of my doctoral research journey's origins, as it was there that I began to wonder: what happens if the familiar and unfamiliar combine? If such a combination is possible, who might it be possible for? Could this be what the experience of dementia is like – or, could lostness as a concept help me to understand that experience in some meaningful way? And what might that understanding look or otherwise be like?

As I prepared this creative practice research I learnt that the disorienting misperceptions most commonly encountered in cognitive decline are visual in nature. Given, then, that dementia reveals the importance of vision to perception, how may the photographic, with lostness as optic, be used to illuminate cognitive decline? In what ways can creatively visualising aspects of neurodegeneration in dementia inform understandings of its existential ambiguities? These questions have guided my enquiry – through a series of processes, of thinking through the medium of photography principally but also moving image, installation, creative writing and artists' books, leading me to things very different than I was capable of imagining at the outset. In this sense they have been like an 'X' mentally sketched on an imagined scrap of paper, that I kept in mind while trying to envisage what might have been apparent beyond its edges had it been a fragment of map – what became apparent as I mapped what I discovered, understood and created.

[1] Solnit, Rebecca (2006), *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, p.22.

A map can be anything. Etymologically, the word 'map' is a shortening of the Mediaeval Latin mappa mundi, 'map of the world', where mappa means a "napkin, tablecloth or flag", on which maps were then drawn.[2] Our common conception of maps is as clear representations that one can orient oneself by; inversely, maps can also be considered as indications of where or how one is or has been lost. The following exposition is my map: its territory is the creative practice research; the map is not the territory.[3]

Overview

This creative practice research sits in the growing field of contemporary visual and literary approaches to medical concerns. It's centred most specifically in the photographic medium, but includes moving image, installation, artists' books and creative writing. The work is also situated in the context of the increasing prevalence of dementia worldwide, and holds the potential to inform developments in the critical medical humanities.

Dementia is a collective name for progressive degenerative brain syndromes. Conditions grouped under this term variously affect orientation and communication, and the difficulties people experience with their senses and memories can cause them to misinterpret the world around them. Vision is the sense most commonly affected,[4] due to sight impairment in the eyes, an inability of the brain to process visual stimuli, or both. This can lead to misperceptions (mistaking one object or person for another, for example), hallucinations (which can also include other senses such as hearing, taste and smell), and difficulties with temporal and spatial awareness (perception of being in the past, inability to gauge distances and dimensions).[5] The incidence of each of these perceptual symptoms differs from one type of dementia to the next as well as from one person to the next but, broadly speaking, they are experienced to degrees across dementia types, particularly as conditions decline.

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[2] Harper, Douglas (n.d.), s.v. Map, *Etymology Dictionary*. [Online.] Accessed 27/06/2020. Available from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/map

[3] "Two important characteristics of maps should be noticed. A map is *not* the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a *similar structure* to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness." Korzybski, Alfred (1994), *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, Brooklyn NY: The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, p.58. Emphases in the original.

[4] In particular, people with Lewey Bodies Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease are "more likely to have visual misperceptions, and hallucinations that are shapeless, peripheral and with images that moved, in addition to well-formed hallucinations." Naasan, G.et al. (2021), 'Psychosis in neurodegenerative disease: differential patterns of hallucination and delusion symptoms', *Brain*, 44:3, Oxford: Oxford Academic, p.1008. DOI: 10.1093/brain/awaa413 Accessed 04/11/2022.

[5] Alzheimer's Society (2021), 'Changes in perception: Factsheet 527LP', pp.1-27. [Online.] Accessed 15/11/2022. Available from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/sight_perception_and_hallucinations_in_dementia.pdf

When I began my doctoral project in September 2017, the orthodox view of Alzheimer's was that "sticky agglomerations, or plaques, of the peptide beta-amyloid destroy synapses and trigger the formation of neuron-killing 'tau tangles'",[6] and the correlate pathway to finding a solution to this has been a continuation of the "30-year pursuit of amyloid destroyers"[7] that has proven difficult to contest. For instance, in *Brain Fables* (2020), Alberto Espay points to a study showing that "only half of [its subjects] who met autopsy criteria for Alzheimer's disease had dementia prior to death[, which] also means that half of those who had Alzheimer's by autopsy standard had no dementia when alive,"[8] and argues convincingly that paradoxes like these ought to raise questions about approaches to this condition still heavily weighted towards "the causal role of aggregates of… beta-amyloid and tau"[9] in the brain. Similarly, towards the end of 2018 scientists in this field began to openly acknowledge that certain types of Alzheimer's might have connections to strands of the herpes virus, such as HSV-1, HHV-6A and HHV-6B, and as a result began to consider that neuroinflammation treatments might be more effective than amyloid destroyers[10] (not to mention the implication that some forms of Alzheimer's may be transmissible).[11] Further shifts in understanding occurred as my PhD progressed, yet there is still no effective medication available. At the time of writing, the most recent announcement of a drug claimed to slow mental decline in Alzheimer's was lecanemab,[12] which targets amyloid in order to decrease this, and while in trials it's considered to have had this result, its beneficial effects seem so minimal that the measurable difference between it and placebo was reported to be "almost unnoticeable."[13] Alzheimer's is acknowledged as the most common type of dementia (affecting an estimated 60-70% of diagnosed people globally),[14] which is why it has been the

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[6] Begley, Sharon (2018), 'How an outsider in Alzheimer's research bucked the prevailing theory — and clawed for validation', *STAT*, Boston MA: Boston Globe Media. Accessed 01/03/2019. Available from: https://www.statnews.com/2018/10/29/alzheimers-research-outsider-bucked-prevailing-theory/

[7] Ibid.

[8] Espay, Alberto; Stecher, Benjamin (2020), *Brain Fables: The Hidden History of Neurodegenerative Diseases and a Blueprint to Conquer Them*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.61.

[9] Ibid. p.x.

[10] Tzeng, Nian-Sheng et al. (2018), 'Anti-herpetic Medications and Reduced Risk of Dementia in Patients with Herpes Simplex Virus Infections: A Nationwide, Population-Based Cohort Study in Taiwan', *Neurotherapeutics*, 15:2, London: Springer Nature, pp. 417-429. DOI: 10.1007/s13311-018-0611-x Accessed 01/03/2019.

[11] Abbott, A. (2015), 'Autopsies reveal signs of Alzheimer's in growth-hormone patients', *Nature*, 525, London: Springer Nature, pp. 165–166. DOI: 10.1038/525165a Accessed 02/03/2019.

[12] Eisai Inc. (2022), 'Lecanemab Confirmatory Phase 3 Clarity AD Study Met Primary Endpoint, Showing Highly Statistically Significant Reduction of Clinical Decline in Large Global Clinical Study of 1,795 Participants with Early Alzheimer's Disease'. [Press release dated 27/09/2022.] Accessed 20/10/2022. Available from: https://eisai.mediaroom.com/2022-09-27-LECANEMAB-CONFIRMATORY-PHASE-3-CLARITY-AD-STUDY-MET-PRIMARY-ENDPOINT,-SHOWING-HIGHLY-STATISTICALLY-SIGNIFICANT-REDUCTION-OF-CLINICAL-DECLINE-IN-LARGE-GLOBAL-CLINICAL-STUDY-OF-1,795-PARTICIPANTS-WITH-EARLY-ALZHEIMERS-DISEASE

[13] Prillaman, McKenzie (2022), 'Alzheimer's Drug Slows Mental Decline In Trial – But Is It A Breakthrough?', *Nature*, 610, London: Springer Nature, p.16. DOI: 10.1038/d41586-022-03081-0 Accessed 29/10/2022.

[14] World Health Organization (2022), 'Dementia'. [Fact sheet.] Accessed 29/10/2022. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia

focus of efforts to find treatments. But according to Alzheimer's Disease International more than a hundred types of dementia have been identified,[15] and as "the boundaries between different forms of dementia are indistinct and mixed forms often co-exist,"[16] and there is no clear consensus as to what dementia overall or its varying subtypes actually are,[17] navigating this nebulous field has been challenging.

In parallel to the sciences, philosophical perspectives likewise evolve. While Tom Kitwood's rejection of the "linear causal relationship between neuropathology and dementia"[18] has greatly influenced the development of person-centred care, reviews of this approach undertaken since find there is still "an absence of clarity with respect to the conceptualisation and actualisation of personhood,"[19] which may not be helped by the fact that the term 'personhood' has now fallen out of favour. Other networked approaches, such as 4E (where the 'E's' are "embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended"), suggest that cognition is "shaped and structured by dynamic interactions between the brain, body, and both the physical and social environments."[20] In specific relation to dementia, proponents of 4E claim that cognition can be seen as having "extraneural and extracorporeal factors"[21] in that the ability to remember can exist beyond the self in the form of notebooks, the information within holding "the role usually played by a biological memory."[22] While this is not without interest (with regard to the tangible outputs of creative practice research, for instance), it doesn't really help towards understanding dementia as lived experience. Catherine Malabou's approach differs in that it derives the interesting concept of destructive plasticity from neurology, but the application of this to an understanding of self and identity as nonetheless narrative leads to a dead end in "the deserts of Alzheimer's patients,"[23] and has been critiqued as an "ontology that is defined only in terms of suffering, deficit, horror,

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[15] Alzheimer's Disease International (n.d.), 'Types of dementia'. [Fact sheet.] Accessed 29/10/2022. Available from: https://www.alzint.org/about/dementia-facts-figures/types-of-dementia/
[16] World Health Organization (2022), 'Dementia'. [Fact sheet.] Accessed 29/10/2022. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia
[17] "Neurodegenerative diseases do not exist. All are labels neurologists created before we had the insight and tools needed to accurately define them." Espay, Alberto; Stecher, Benjamin (2020), *Brain Fables: The Hidden History of Neurodegenerative Diseases and a Blueprint to Conquer Them*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.x
[18] Kitwood, T. (1990), 'The Dialectics of Dementia: With Particular Reference to Alzheimer's Disease', *Ageing and Society*, 10:2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.177. DOI: 10.1017/S0144686X00008060 Accessed 28/09/2022.
[19] Hennelly, N. et al. (2018), 'The experiences and perceptions of personhood for people living with dementia: A qualitative evidence synthesis protocol', *HRB Open Research*, 1:18, London: The Health Research Board, p.6. DOI: 10.12688/hrbopenres.12845.1 Accessed 04/12/2022.
[20] Newen, Albert; De Bruin, Leon; Gallagher, Shaun eds.(2014), *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Abstract.] Accessed 11/03/2019. Available from: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-4e-cognition-9780198735410?cc
[21] Smart, Paul R., 'Embodiment, Cognition and the World Wide Web', in Shapiro, Lawrence ed. (2014), *The Routledge Handbook of Embodied Cognition*, London: Routledge, p.326.
[22] Clark, Andy; Chalmers, David (1998), 'The Extended Mind', *Analysis*, 58:1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.12. Accessed 16/01/2019. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3328150
[23] Malabou, Catherine; Shred, Carolyn tr. (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.2.

loss, vulnerability… that effaces the contours of the person… [and] construe[s] the lived experience of dementia as opaque and unrepresentable."[24] Daniel Davis leads us to a similar impasse in that, as Martin Heidegger's "explication of existence is… necessarily situated and self-aware,"[25] and Maurice Merleau-Ponty hints that "in illness the body *schema* is disturbed… [such that] a disintegrating cognition erodes our Being-in-the-world,"[26] the suggestion is that, beyond a certain point, dementia "effects the dismantling of the self until there is nothing left"[27] for phenomenology to address. Thinking theories relevant to dementia can seem meagre then, and the one area in which science and philosophy might be said to be in alignment is that neither really knows.

As for contemporary culture, according to the 2021 Dementia Fiction Festival there has been "a 'boom' in fiction about dementia, reflecting the rise in the condition itself and society's need to understand it."[28] This growth in interest is also evident beyond literature – in mainstream media, theatre, cinema, and the visual arts. As examples, in theatre this ranges from contemporary rereadings of Shakespeare's 1608 play *King Lear* in relation to Alzheimer's,[29] to Florian Zeller's theatre production *Le Père* (2012),[30] which was adapted for cinema as *The Father* (2020).[31] Popular novels have likewise been transposed to cinema and television, such as *Still Alice* (2007,[32] 2014[33]) and *Elizabeth is Missing* (2014,[34] 2019[35]) respectively. As to the visual arts, approaches to dementia span diverse media including moving image, installation, photography and more, and pertinent examples will be discussed in the following thesis.

All of these areas of enquiry – medical, philosophical, cultural – approach dementia in diverse but overlapping ways, and at the centre of this circle of concern are people living with conditions. In some sectors, these are increasingly (if slowly) ceasing to be objects of

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[24] Burke, Lucy (2019), 'Dementia and the Paradigm of the Camp: Thinking Beyond Giorgio Agamben's Concept of "Bare Life"', *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 16:2, Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer Science+Business Media, pp.198–199. DOI: 10.1007/s11673-019-09913-5pp.196-197 Accessed 07/11/2022.
[25] Davis, D.H.J. (2004), 'Dementia: sociological and philosophical constructions', *Social Science & Medicine*, 58:2, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, p.375. DOI: 10.1016/S0277-9536(03)00202-8 Accessed 29/10/2022. Emphasis in the original.
[26] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Dementia Fiction (n.d.), 'Dementia in the Minds of Characters & Readers'. [Online.] Accessed 19/05/2022. Available from: https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/dementiafiction/
[29] Zimmermann, Martina (2020), *The Diseased Brain and the Failing Mind: Dementia in Science, Medicine and Literature of the Long Twentieth Century*, London: Bloomsbury, p.7.
[30] Zeller, Florian (2012), *Le Père*, Ladislas Chollat dir., Paris: Théâtre Hébertot, First performance: 20/09/2012.
[31] Zeller, Florian; Hampton, Christopher (2020), *The Father*, Zeller, Florian dir. [Film.] London: Les Films du Cru/Film4.
[32] Genova, Lisa (2007), *Still Alice*, 1st ed., New York NY: Simon & Schuster.
[33] Glatzer, Richard; Westmoreland, Wash (2014), *Still Alice*, Glatzer, Richard; Westmoreland, Wash dir. [Film.] New York NY: Lutzus-Brown/Killer Films.
[34] Healey, Emma (2014), *Elizabeth is Missing*, 1st ed., London: Penguin/Viking.
[35] Healey, Emma; Gibb, Andrea (2019), *Elizabeth is Missing*, Walsh, Aisling dir. [Film.] Paisley: STV Productions/BBC One.

research by becoming participants: they may still contribute as subjects of studies but, when able and enabled, they also help to actively shape enquiries as 'experts by experience'[36] – acting as consultants, taking part in conferences, and so on.[37] All the same, what isn't changing much for them in parallel is life on the 'front line' in the sense that there are still symptoms to contend with. Regardless of whatever scientific, social, political or philosophical – or, indeed, creative – theories and practices may shape the landscapes in which they live, until there are viable treatments the ways in which they can perceive themselves and their circumstances are limited by the effects of dementia as medical condition. However, the scientific, social, political and philosophical – the cultural – forces that shape our understandings and ideas about dementia do have real impact on how they live because they change how we, as people not living with the condition, live with them. For example: "The move from conceptualising dementia as a natural consequence of ageing to its bio-medicalisation is evidence in how this condition can be re-conceptualised."[38] Very briefly, we have advanced from ancient historical positions that considered symptoms as a normal part of the ageing process, through views of these as constituting debilitating senility – as mental afflictions requiring institutionalisation in asylums – to more recent, inclusive approaches to people as 'living with' rather than 'suffering from', and efforts to create dementia-friendly environments and practices. So, though it may take time (and there is still much room for improvement), shifts in thinking do provoke change, and this research proposes that the visual arts – and the hybrid approaches deployed in my research in particular – have the capacity to help affect attitudes towards dementia.

With this in mind, an aim of this creative practice research was to test the potentials of lens-based media in the creation of models of cognition, intended as a means of reaching understandings of processes such as perceptual misinterpretation, spatio-temporal disorientation, and memory loss. The idea central to the work is that the cognitive ambiguity that is dementia can be creatively apprehended and visualised by way of lostness, the concept that links all aspects of the doctoral project. This is not a lostness directly related to dementia – an 'explaining' or theorising of dementia as 'lostness' is not entirely appropriate or indeed adequate to the task of wholly addressing the complexities and existential ambiguities of diverse lived experiences of cognitive decline. No, the lostness I've had in

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[36] "Involving people with lived experience of a condition as co-researchers in meaningful co-creation of data through interpretation of findings by working alongside academics is becoming more accepted and respected." Sprange, K. et al. (2021), 'Journeying through Dementia Randomised Controlled Trial of a Psychosocial Intervention for People Living with Early Dementia: Embedded Qualitative Study with Participants, Carers and Interventionists', *Clinical Interventions in Aging*, 16, Macclesfield: Dove Medical Press, p.232. DOI: 10.2147/CIA.S293921 Accessed 10/12/2022.

[37] Alzheimer's Society (2022), 'Alzheimer's Society's view on dementia research'. [Online.] Accessed 04/12/2022. Available from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/what-we-think/dementia-research

[38] Knifton, Christopher (2019), *A Socio-History and Genealogy of Dementia Thought and Conceptualisation in Western Society*, Ph.D. thesis, Leicester: De Montfort University, p.11.

mind is based on that derived from Solnit, of familiarity and unfamiliarity combined, despite their seeming incompatibility. This way of understanding lostness has served as a lens through which to consider dementia, however – as a way to 'see' in facets of dementia things in which I may find empathic connection through partial familiarity, even while knowing the full implications of any experience of it may never be directly known to me. Regardless of whether or not one has dementia, encounters with the familiar and unfamiliar combined are rooted in *feeling* – for example, the pleasure or discomfort we may sense when chancing upon things normally well known to us in unexpected ways. In a creative practice research project aimed towards apprehending aspects of the lived experiences of others, this understanding of lostness as embodied sensation and perception means that it is not just a conceptual conceit.

Despite the importance of lostness to this research, it was not my intention to use it as a method; there was no plan to develop any kind of creative process involving randomness as a means of generating material for use in practical work outcomes. However, from the start and increasingly as my work progressed I became aware that innovative creative research in and of itself is not a linear process: that it can be, as Charlotte Wegener proposes, the aggregation of 'knot-working' – defined as "the combination of different kinds of knowledge to achieve new insights"[39] – and 'not-knowing' or "getting lost as a strategy of finding one's way through… analysis and representation".[40] The latter draws directly on a 'lostness as methodology' theorised by Patti Lather as an "embracing of constitutive unknowingness, generative undecidability, and what it means to document becoming"; a "learning otherwise in response to the wholly other, the elusive object, the multiple world."[41] In the present research, the 'wholly other' and 'elusive object' principally under investigation is the lived experience of dementia. Defined by Wegener as "a state of involuntary not-knowing",[42] it can also be described as an 'unknowing' – with which parallels can be drawn to questioning about the nature of art-as-research framed, for instance, by Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge in the query: "Could it be that in the process of more clearly addressing the making of art, we might enter into an intimate space of unknowing?"[43]

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[39] Wegener, Charlotte (2014), '"I don't know why I'm here": from knot working to not-knowing', *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3:2, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, p.249. DOI: 10.1108/JOE-07-2013-0016 Accessed 08/01/2019.
[40] Ibid p.248.
[41] Lather, Patti (2009), '2007 Kneller Lecture 'AESA Getting Lost: Social Science and/as Philosophy'', *Educational Studies*, 45:4, Palo Alto CA: American Educational Studies Association, p.354. DOI: 10.1080/00131940903066248 Accessed 08/01/2019.
[42] Wegener, Charlotte (2014), '"I don't know why I'm here": from knot working to not-knowing', *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3:2, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, p.252. DOI: 10.1108/JOE-07-2013-0016 Accessed 08/01/2019.
[43] Macleod, Katy; Holdridge, Lin eds. (2006), *Thinking through art: Reflections on Art as Research*, Oxford: Routledge, p.12.

If it were easy to imagine what it might be like to progressively become, as in Simone Weil's 1930 thought experiment, "an emptied hypothetical subject, a human tabula rasa, who knows nothing about herself or the world"[44] – a person freed of presupposition, existing increasingly in sensation – this project would not be necessary. As a brief survey of philosophical approaches to dementia has indicated, any notion of what it's like to experience "a pure immediacy of being"[45] is one our imaginations can only move towards hypothetically and fractionally. Attempts to consciously apprehend and define such experiences in all areas of study – clinical, conceptual etc – can only partially succeed, precisely because this kind of understanding requires cognition. The implications of dementia as a way of being can neither be fully grasped from the outside of it as lived experience nor from within, as dementia increasingly affects people's abilities to orient themselves in relation to who they were before the condition's advent (even as they may sense changes in themselves), to navigate an increasingly bewildering and inexpressible present, and thus to comprehensively transmit back to us what such experience is like.

Description of dementia as 'progressive' gives the impression that conditions advance in slow and steady fashion, when in fact people living with it report that they have 'ups and downs' – periods of irregular and largely unpredictable cognitive impairment events unevenly punctuate lengths of time during which life is comparatively normal. Even in the final stage of a dementia there can be sudden, if short-lived – and neurologically inexplicable – lucidity.[46] The uneven, erratic pace of development and severity, differing from one person to the next, made it difficult to pinpoint with absolute accuracy a specific phase to address in this research. Instead, I chose to focus on people in the stages of their conditions during which they are still able to 'report back', orally or in writing, to however limited degree. What people are able to tell us is immensely interesting and of great worth. As examples, some quotes by anonymised persons with dementia: "I get a funny feeling I forget things,"[47] and "Cannot pull myself back to what I have been."[48] This sense of simultaneous familiarity and unfamiliarity, of knowing or sensing that things are unknown or becoming unknown to them in stages, strongly supports the conceptual underpinnings of this research. Although the pandemic prevented me from working with people in person, accounts of lived dementia experiences drawn from secondhand sources (readily available in print and online, ranging from documentaries and autobiographies to blogs, vlogs and poetry) have provided significant insights and greatly helped to shape the development of this research.

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[44] McCullough, Lissa (2012), 'Simone Weil's Phenomenology of the Body', *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 4:2, Milton Park (Oxon): Taylor & Francis, p.198, DOI: 10.1179/ccp.4.2.y052837782363051 Accessed 17/11/2021.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Mashour, G.A. et al. (2019), 'Paradoxical lucidity: A potential paradigm shift for the neurobiology and treatment of severe dementias', *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 15:8, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, pp.1107-1114. DOI: 10.1016/j.jalz.2019.04.002 Accessed online 29/10/2022.
[47] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.40.
[48] Ibid. p.41.

Dementia has been termed an invisible[49] or non-visible[50] disability. Despite this, existing lens-based approaches to it, for instance in contemporary photography and public awareness campaigns alike, largely tend to portray individuals who look no different to people *not* living with the condition. While there is great value in individual stories, as a strategy for interrogating dementia this approach has limitations. According to Alzheimer's Society, the number of people living with dementia in the UK is estimated at 900,000 (with a projected rise to around 1.6 million by 2040),[51] and there's a limit to how many individual stories we can take on board.[52] Also, as dementia *is* an invisible disability, does this kind of imagery tell us anything about the condition, and what it's like to live with it? It is in part for this reason that my own research investigates alternative approaches, by thinking of it as lived experience and so attempting to look into rather than at it, as means of reaching degrees of understanding.

Given the central importance of photography to my research, a chapter of this thesis has been dedicated to theories most appropriate to the ways in which I have used the medium, to how people living with dementia also use it, and to how it relates to vision, perception and memory. Over the decades since I started considering myself a photographer (beginning in 1985 during my Graphic Design BA), the field of photographic theory has greatly expanded and diversified, and access to even the most arcane of writings has become increasingly easier thanks to the internet. Not all of the available texts about the medium are appropriate in every circumstance, however. In the case of my own research, for which I have not photographed people living with dementia, or made use of appropriated imagery of or by them, critiques of the medium in terms of its exploitative aspects are not applicable – it's hard to see, for example, how Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's acclaimed scholarship on photography in relation to imperialism[53] can meaningfully relate to images of cauliflowers and false teeth in works about clouded thought and misperceptions, or to the photographs people living with dementia make of the contents of their kitchen cupboards. As such, certain oft cited critics of photography, that tend to be considered 'usual suspects' in discussions of the medium,[54] have been omitted in favour of references I have deemed to be more pertinent, given the nature of the work I am defending here.

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[49] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, Bloomsbury, London, p.117.
[50] Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (2020), 'What is a non-visible disability?' [Online.] Accessed 29/10/2022. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dptac-position-on-non-visible-disabilities/dptac-position-statement-on-non-visible-disabilities#what-is-a-non-visible-disability
[51] Alzheimer's Society (2021), 'How many people have dementia in the UK?'. [Online.] Accessed 20/10/2022. Available from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/how-many-people-have-dementia-uk
[52] There are certain advantages to documentary approaches, in that such imagery does provide visibility to the people depicted, and it could be argued that concern about the ethics of whether or not they are able to give informed consent risks imposing invisibility on them counterproductively.
[53] See, for example: Azoulay, Ariella Aïsha (2019), *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, Brooklyn NY: Verso.
[54] Such as Susan Sontag.

In the course of my research I considered several practical approaches and conducted material experiments, not all of which were pursued (at least, not as part of this doctoral project). What has emerged from this central creative practice enquiry are a series of three large sub-projects that differ but can be considered overall as interrelated and, therefore, as a coherent body of work. These sub-projects are numbered and titled: *Picturing Clouds of Unknowing One*, *Two* and *Three* respectively, abbreviated to *PCU1, PCU2* and *PCU3* hereon in. The obvious visual element strongly connecting them all is the photographic medium. This has been used in a variety of ways, from sculptural objects and moving image in installations, to 2D and 3D (stereoscopic) forms of photography combined with creative writing in the medium of artists' books. In addition, other aspects of the works consistently echo across the three sub-projects; for instance, in some of the materials used (perspex, acetate, fishing line), and in plays of reveal/conceal stemming from consideration of the 'falling away' and 'appearing' of the familiar and unfamiliar drawn from Solnit's definitions of 'lost'.

In *PCU1*, thinking about lostness in relation to forgetting or 'unknowing' objects and their names led to the unexpected realisation that lethologica – a phenomenon otherwise commonly known as tip-of-the-tongue – is an experience in which the familiar and unfamiliar do combine, in that we feel we know something even as we're aware it remains unknown to us. As lethologica becomes generally more prevalent with age, but even more so in Alzheimer's, especially when attempting to recall words of "low frequency and imageability,"[55] this discovery was particularly pertinent. In *PCU2*, lostness met loss as I tried to visually assimilate scientific explanations of how memory retrieval is progressively impaired in the brain, and how this might relate to the 'clouding' of thought described by people living with dementia. And for the final project, *PCU3*, I pulled together much of my prior research into a series of artists' books. These are linked by metaphors used by people living with dementia, e.g. 'clouded thoughts', and by different 'unknowings' variously experienced by them, such as agnosia, prosopagnosia, aphasia, and so on. They contrast aspects of domestic life with diverse scientific discourses (e.g. neurology, meteorology) to touch on experiences of different kinds of disorientation (lostnesses or 'unknowings' that are perceptual, spatial, temporal). They also hint at some of the many questions raised by dementia and the different ways it, the body and cognition have been considered historically, that emerged in the course of the doctoral project as a whole.

Fresh approaches to using photography in work about cognitive decline were developed and, when examined from the perspective of dementia, avenues for review of the medium as analogical were also opened. Contextual study engaged with works and artists not considered together before and indicates scope for further enquiry in several areas related

[55] Garrard, Peter; Maloney, Lisa M.; Hodges, John R.; Patterson, Karalyn (2005), 'The effects of very early Alzheimer's disease on the characteristics of writing by a renowned author', *Brain*, 128:2, Oxford: Oxford Academic, p.251. DOI: 10.1093/brain/awh341 Accessed 20/06/2022.

to these. And this research confirms the benefits of attending to the implications of cognitive decline, as people living with dementia can provide "remarkable insights into the capacity to navigate fragmented identities,"[56] and more besides.

Wayfinding

This formal written element of my enquiry has been organised into four sections:

- CLOUDS, in which I trace the origin of this doctoral project's title, discuss the relevance of metaphor to dementia, and provide examples of its related usage in literature;
- UNKNOWING, in which I refine the definition of lostness, expand it to include theological and medical definitions of agnosias as 'unknowings', and consider differing approaches to narrative identity in relation to cognitive decline;
- PICTURING, in which I review photographic approaches to dementia, discuss the dimensionality of photography (in the sculptural practices of two artists not previously considered together) and, by reconsidering it from the perspective of cognitive decline, reveal the importance of interpretation to our understanding of the medium;
- PHOTOGRAPHY, LOSTNESS, AND COGNITIVE DECLINE, in which I further contextualise my creative practice research as I relate its outcomes.

In this thesis I situate my project not only in relation to dementia and lostness as concept, but also relative to selected approaches to dementia in the broader arts, as portrayed in photography, moving image, theatre and literature. It's beyond the scope of this research to comprehensively review all of these, but in what follows relevant examples are discussed where appropriate. Artists Sophie Calle, Helen Chadwick and Alina Szapocznikow have been specifically considered for the ways in which certain works by them sit at the intersections of photography, as image/object/text, with evidence and remembrance, absence and presence, familiarity and unfamiliarity. They appear not as discrete case studies but seeded in where reflection on aspects of their work help clarify points of theory and thoughts about photography. Specific literary references such as Samuel Beckett, J. Bernlef, Shirley Kaufmann, Marcel Proust and W.G. Sebald are likewise discussed in appropriate chapters.

I use the term dementia throughout unless a type requires direct reference. As Alzheimer's is globally considered to be the most prevalent kind, and as such has been most intensively investigated for the greatest length of time, unless otherwise specified the majority of the studies referenced are drawn from research into it, and the symptoms I have focussed on in my work are largely to be found in this form of cognitive decline.

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[56] Brown, Juliette (2016), 'Self and identity over time: dementia', *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 23:5, Hoboken NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, p.1011. DOI: 10.1111/jep.12643 Accessed 02/11/2022.

I have done my best to structure this thesis in as linear a fashion as possible, but this is a research project centred in the concept of *lostness*. The process often pulled me in unexpected directions, most of which turned out to be surprisingly worthwhile. For instance, I didn't expect to find myself focussing quite so intently on literature, even after I realised how important creative writing would be to my work. The labyrinthine complexity and breadth of an enquiry spanning several very diverse disciplines is not entirely evident in either the resultant creative practice outcomes or the writing about the research that led me to them. But there are areas in what follows where I do 'talk' you, the reader, through stretches of meandering reflection, as this is how I beat paths through to conclusion. And if I could find my way, I'm confident you can too.

Chapter 1: Clouds

The title for this project stems in part from two English books and the unusual connection I drew between them, though some six hundred years separate their publications.

Wendy Mitchell's assisted memoir, *Somebody I Used to Know*,[57] is an account of her life with dementia. It was published in February 2018 and covers a three to four year period of her life, from a then recent past back to the months running up to her young-onset Alzheimer's diagnosis, in 2014, when she was aged just 58. As her Alzheimer's progresses, she describes her experience of occasional visual and auditory hallucinations, chronic short term memory loss, and reports a gradual reduction in the range of emotions she experiences (she says she can no longer feel anger, for example).[58]

The Cloud of Unknowing is the title of a spiritual guidebook. Written in the mid to late 14th century by an unnamed Christian mystic, it suggests a form of contemplation involving an emptying of the mind reminiscent of transcendental meditation – a consigning of knowledge, distractions and desires to what she or he also calls a 'cloud of forgetting':

> It is the "night of the intellect" into which we are plunged when we attain to a state of consciousness which is above thought; enter on a plane of spiritual experience with which the intellect cannot deal. This is the "Divine Darkness"—the Cloud of Unknowing. [...] It is "a dark mist… which seemeth to be between thee and the light thou aspirest to." This dimness and lostness of mind is a paradoxical proof of attainment.[59]

You may be wondering how this meditative practice can be of relevance to dementia, when the clouds of forgetting and unknowing described and the means of attaining them is a matter of conscious effort and choice, whereas in dementia the process of forgetting and unknowing is involuntary – is the result of disability rather than desire. And yet, in her memoir Mitchell describes her experience of Alzheimer's in terms of 'clouded thoughts', and of fog, and blur.[60] She also calls dementia an 'invisible disability',[61] but while it's true that her clouded thoughts and her experience of them can't be seen, when something can be described in such an imaged manner it becomes possible to imagine ways of depicting it. Clouds as metaphor have been particularly useful to me in my research, but this is just one example of the kinds of visual analogy people with dementia use to describe their

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[57] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, London: Bloomsbury.
[58] Ibid. p.250.
[59] Anon; Underhill, Evelyn Tr. (1922), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, London: John M. Watkins, pp.7-8. Accessed online 09/06/2018. Available from: http://www.catholicspiritualdirection.org/cloudunknowing.pdf
[60] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, London: Bloomsbury. The first of several references to cloud, fog and blur appears on p.21.
[61] Ibid. p.117.

experiences, and it's thus that the nature of imperceptible symptoms becomes relevant to the visual arts.

With *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the connection to dementia is neither obvious nor direct. I should stress here that I'm not a religious person, and I'm not trying to suggest a religious practice could be a solution to any medical condition, cognitive or otherwise. The benefit in making connections between things that aren't immediately clear, though, is that this can provide the means to consider a condition like dementia in an alternative way, enabling us to 'see' it in a different light – to perhaps consider it, however briefly, as more blessing than curse, for example – and I would argue that the visual arts are capable of effecting a similar shift in thinking. *The Cloud of Unknowing* also enabled alternative insight into various symptomatic agnosias experienced in dementia, which I was then able to consider as 'unknowings', and I discuss these in more detail in the chapter of this thesis with that title.

So it was in Mitchell's memoir that I first encountered 'clouded thought' as metaphor, and while researching further allusions to cloud – in dementia, both in the testimonies of other people living with it and in academic studies – I instead, by chance, discovered *The Cloud of Unknowing*. From there, I gradually learnt that the use of clouds as metaphor for states of mind is not just limited to mediaeval mysticism and 21st century experiences of dementia. Dehlia Hannah has suggested that, historically, clouds have been considered "the nemesis of philosophers – the enemy of reason."[62] As one example of this she cites Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), likening a 'land of truth' to "an island… surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean… the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank… give the deceptive appearance of farther shores."[63] Hannah posits a long history of philosophers' use of other visual analogies in their reasonings, but suggests in particular that "a clouded mind is the inward manifestation of bad weather for thinking."[64] Which is perhaps, in part, why cognitive decline is so difficult for thinking theories to approach.

In the sciences metaphor is also prevalent. In his 1543 publication *De humanis corporis fabrica*, Flemish anatomist Andreas Vesalius likened the surface structure of cerebral hemispheres to clouds as drawn by schoolboys.[65] The history of medicine is peppered with similar analogies, and food eponyms are still common in descriptions of visible manifestations of diverse

[62] Hannah, Dehlia, 'The Philosopher Against the Clouds'. In Buhl, Nanna Debois (2020), *Cloud Behaviour*, Milan: Humboldt Books, p.85.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] "[T]he gyri or convolutions…, which Eristratus very nicely compared to the twistings of the thin intestines, are found with the same frequency over the entire surface of the brain…. I believe that they cannot be compared to anything more happily than to clouds as they are usually delineated by either untrained art students or by schoolboys." Marshall, Louise H.; Magoun, Horace W. (1998), *Discoveries in the Human Brain: Neuroscience Prehistory, Brain Structure, and Function*, Totowa NJ: Humana Press, pp.44-45. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4757-4997-7_4 Accessed 17/05/2022.

pathologies.[66] Also, brains have been likened to cauliflowers due to their apparent structural similarity,[67] and this vegetable has been considered in relation to cognition as well.[68] In some of my work I have made use of this specific analogy, visually and in creative writing, and I discuss this in more detail in relevant chapters. But, returning to meteorological metaphors, throughout the five years of my studies I regularly searched for scientific papers referencing clouds and fog in relation to symptoms reported by people living with dementia, and by the end had found only two: one about cigarette smoke increasing the "fog of dementia",[69] the other about how biomarker research might "pierce the fog that surrounds these diseases."[70] In the former, fog is a metaphor for dementia, and in the latter it's used to indicate the "still incomplete understanding"[71] of Alzheimer's and related conditions in the sciences: neither are concerned with symptoms experienced by the people such research aims to assist. Since the advent of the pandemic, however, there have been increasing numbers of papers about 'brain fog' arising from Covid-19 infections, and there are acknowledged similarities between this and the 'clouded thoughts' of dementia,[72] but it's clear from these publications that the metaphors patients use to describe their symptoms are not being considered other than in relation to Covid. Although Mark Schweda claims that in contemporary popular culture (citing cinema in particular) the metaphors deployed in visualisations of dementia are predominantly meteorological,[73] these, and their usage by people living with dementia, have yet to penetrate the brume of biomedical research.

The use of metaphor in connection to the medical has not been without contention and Susan Sontag's critique in relation to tuberculosis, cancer and HIV/AIDS has been one of the most influential. At the beginning of *AIDS and its Metaphors* (1989), however, she references

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[66] Terry, S. I.; Hanchard, B. (1979), 'Gastrology: The Use Of Culinary Terms In Medicine', *British Medical Journal*, 2:6205, London: The British Medical Association, pp. 1636-1639. DOI: 10.1136/bmj.2.6205.1636 Accessed 04/03/2021.

[67] See for example: Masters, Joan; Christensen, Margaret (2000), 'Please Pass The Cauliflower: A Recipe For Introducing Undergraduate Students To Brain Structure And Function', *Advances In Physiology Education*, 24:1, Rockville MD: The American Physiological Society, pp.22-29. DOI: 10.1152/advances.2000.24.1.22 Accessed 04/03/2021.

[68] See for example: McCarthy, Rosaleen A. (2001), 'Is the Mind a Cauliflower or an Onion?: British Insights into Cognitive Organization from the Study of Abnormal Function', *British Journal of Psychology*, 92:1, Leicester: The British Psychological Society, pp.71-192. DOI: 10.1348/000712601162149 Accessed 18/05/2022.

[69] Allen, H.B.;, Joshi, S.G. (2016), 'Nicotine and Alzheimers Disease: Mechanism for How the Fog of Smoke Increases the Fog of Dementia', *Journal of Neuroinfectious Diseases*, 7:4, Hyderabad: OMICS, pp.1-2. Accessed 05/12/2022. Available from: https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/nicotine-and-alzheimers-disease-mechanism-for-how-the-fog-of-smoke-increases-the-fog-of-dementia-2314-7326-1000237.php?aid=84328

[70] Horgan, D. et al. (2020), 'Biomarker Testing: Piercing the Fog of Alzheimer's and Related Dementia', *Biomedicine Hub*, 5:3, Basel: Karger, p.3. pp.1-22. DOI: 10.1159/000511233 Accessed 05/12/2022.

[71] Ibid p.2.

[72] See for example: Matias-Guiu, J.A. et al. (2021), '"Brain Fog" by COVID-19 or Alzheimer's Disease? A Case Report', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12:724022, London: Frontiers Media Ltd, pp.1-8. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.724022 Accessed 05/12/2022.

[73] Schweda, M. (2019), 'Medical gazes and meteorological metaphors: representations of dementia in contemporary motion pictures', *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research*, 8:18, London: Springer Nature, DOI: 10.1186/s13584-018-0283-3 Accessed 30/01/2022.

a rereading of her preceding book, *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), which I believe merits quotation in full:

> 'Metaphor,' Aristotle wrote, 'consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.' Saying a thing is or is like something-it-is-not is a mental operation as old as philosophy and poetry, and the spawning ground of most kinds of understanding, including scientific understanding, and expressiveness... Of course, one cannot think without metaphors. But that does not mean there aren't some metaphors we might well abstain from or try to retire. As, of course, all thinking is interpretation. But that does not mean it isn't sometimes correct to be against interpretation.[74]

Since *Illness as Metaphor* was first editioned, Sontag's take on metaphor has been repeatedly challenged and the above defensive quotation suggests a tempering of her earlier, more critical stance.[75] All the same, Sontag retained a "faith in the power of science to dispel the myths and metaphors of disease."[76] This does ignore the fact that the sciences also use metaphor as means of understanding and explaining medical conditions, as "medicine remains essentially a descriptive science,"[77] and that its metaphors filter through to and can therefore also influence public discourse. Whatever Sontag's position, she has been understood to have usefully recognised that "disease has a simultaneous and equally important social reality"[78] – that ideas about medical conditions, often expressed metaphorically, can have real societal impact.

While I agree that not all metaphors (and, similarly, ways of critically considering them) are necessarily worthy of retention or reinforcement, there is a case to be made for their value, including attempts to displace negative ones by forwarding alternatives. Or just being patient; metaphors are not fixed and immutable, they evolve over time. As an example, Christopher J. Wernecke claims that a "metaphoric shift in American cancer rhetoric began in 2015",[79] moving away from the military analogies Sontag was familiar with towards more

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[74] Sontag, Susan (2002), *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, London: Penguin Books, p.91
[75] In a 1989 interview for Newsday, however, she is also quoted as saying, "Metaphor is a code word for misrepresentations, stupidities, false ideas. I'd say people would be better off without them," a position more closely aligned to that put forward in *Illness as Metaphor*. Sontag quote from Oransky, Ivan (2005), 'Susan Sontag', *The Lancet*, 365:9458, London: Elsevier, p.468. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(05)17853-2 Accessed 17/05/2022.
[76] Clow, Barbara (2001), 'Who's Afraid of Susan Sontag? or, the Myths and Metaphors of Cancer Reconsidered', *Social History of Medicine*, 14:2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.293. DOI: 10.1093/shm/14.2.293 Accessed 17/05/2022.
[77] Terry, S. I.; Hanchard, B. (1979), 'Gastrology: The Use Of Culinary Terms In Medicine', *The British Medical Journal*, 2:6205, London: The British Medical Association, p.1636. DOI: 10.1136/bmj.2.6205.1636 Accessed 04/03/2021.
[78] Oransky, Ivan (2005), 'Susan Sontag', *The Lancet*, 365:9458, London: Elsevier, p.468. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(05)17853-2 Accessed 17/05/2022.
[79] Wernecke, Christopher J. (2021), '"A New Moonshot": Exploring the Metaphoric Shift in American Cancer Discourse', *Southern Communication Journal*, 86:4, Milton Park (Oxon): Taylor & Francis, p.335, DOI: 10.1080/1041794X.2021.1941223 Accessed 10/02/2022.

positive metaphors related to outer space and its exploration. Additionally, Tyler Tate argues that martially themed analogies in medicine are not necessarily negative in every instance of their usage. Asking, "What exactly makes a metaphor a good metaphor… [and] by what criterion should they be appraised?"[80] she forwards the example of war veterans in palliative care for whom the language of past professional lives informs the metaphors used to describe present experiences of health conditions.[81] Citing "the largest survey of patient's metaphors to date… [t]he authors concluded that, based on their research, it is impossible to assess any individual violence metaphor without understanding its context and function… in the life of the patient."[82] For people such as Tate's veterans, proscriptive limiting of familiar metaphors seems difficult to support. Generalised assertions like Sontag's do not always neatly align with personal expression of individual lived experiences of illness, and it's important to recognise and make allowance for this.

"Like driving on a bright day right into a thick cloud."[83]

As outlined in the introduction, during my studies I produced three main projects: the first two were purely visual installations but the third and final one consists of a series of interrelated artists' books that combine creative writing and imagery. With these books, one of my main research strategies has involved drawing on metaphors used by people living with dementia, such as the aforementioned 'clouded thoughts', to then visualise their experiences. Even though access to language typically diminishes as their conditions progress (depending on the type, or combined types, of dementia they have, such as vascular and Alzheimer's), people can be very inventive in their use of language because they have to be, and (up to a point) can still make use of vocabulary to suggest what aspects of their symptoms are like. In addition to clouds, examples of other metaphoric allusions encountered in the course of research include (but are not limited to): faulty fairy lights; tangled necklaces, knitting and undergrowth; trees, forests and other landscape features (sand, mud, roads, sinkholes, mountains, skies, seas); books and libraries; maps and machines.

Metaphor is the means by which we conceive of and express things hard to otherwise explain. According to Andrew Ortony, metaphors assist communication in three key ways: in their economy, their accessibility, and their eloquence.[84] They "allow for a more succinct and

[80] Tate, Tyler (2020), 'Your Father's a Fighter: Your Daughter's a Vegetable: A Critical Analysis of the Use of Metaphor in Clinical Practice', *Hastings Center Report*, 50:5, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, p.21. DOI: 10.1002/hast.1182 Accessed 10/02/2022.
[81] Ibid. p.24.
[82] Ibid. The study in question, referenced in footnote 55 on p.29, is Demmen et al. (2015), 'A Computer-Assisted Study Of The Use Of Violence Metaphors For Cancer And End Of Life By Patients, Family Carers And Health Professionals', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 20:2, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp.205–231. DOI: 10.1075/ijcl.20.2.03dem Accessed 18/05/2022.
[83] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, London: Bloomsbury, p.166.
[84] Ortony, Andrew (1975), 'Why Metaphors Are Necessary And Not Just Nice', *Educational Theory*, 25:1, Champaign IL: University of Illinois, p.45 DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-5446.1975.tb00666.x Accessed 19/05/2022.

efficient use of language," they facilitate "expression of inner states that are difficult or impossible to describe," and they can convey "the richness and vividness of experience that is not captured by the use of literal language."[85] Metaphor thus has cognitive and cultural value, and its role in the creation of meaning is central to the way we understand the world, each other, and ourselves. As the metaphoric helps to make relatable things we may be personally unfamiliar with, such as aspects of other people's lived experiences, it can obliquely provide points of entry to empathy and understanding. Metaphors can also create fresh perspectives that permit us to reconsider our ideas about things in new ways;[86] as such, they may be reimagined and reshaped, visually, poetically, conceptually, and scientifically. An advantage of the metaphoric is that it's accessible to people in every area of public and professional life at almost all ages, and this is also true for people living with dementia (at least it is before they reach what's called the 'postlanguage' stage of conditions). Another advantage is that metaphors often evoke imagery, which is why I've found them so useful in both my visual work and creative writing. Paying close attention to what people living with dementia have to say about their experiences has been humbling and enlightening, and this strategy has greatly enriched my research.

Although references to clouds appear in other cultural approaches to dementia, such as in cinema, it's in the work of two authors that I found the most relevant references. Both used these as metaphor in writings that, I will argue, are expressive of neurodegenerative conditions from outside and/or within their experiences of them, and these artists are Samuel Beckett and Shirley Kaufmann.

…but the clouds…

> There has to be one, it seems, once there is speech, no need of a story, a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough.
>
> Samuel Beckett[87]

In the post-war 1940s, Beckett returned to Dublin to see his mother and found her living with Parkinson's Disease: "Her face was a mask, completely unrecognizable. Looking at her, I had the sudden realization that all the work I'd done before was on the wrong track. [...] What I had to do was investigate *not-knowing*, not perceiving, the whole world of incompleteness."[88] Given his description here, his mother may have been in an advanced

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[85] Golden, Mindi Ann; Whaley, Bryan B.; Stone, Anne M. (2012), '"The System Is Beginning to Shut down": Utilizing Caregivers' Metaphors for Dementia, Persons with Dementia, and Caregiving', *Applied Nursing Research*, 25:3, Philadelphia PA: Elsevier, p.146. DOI: 10.1016/J.APNR.2011.02.001. Accessed online 30/03/2020.
[86] Cazeaux, Clive (2007), *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy; From Kant to Derrida*, New York NY: Routledge, p.5.
[87] Beckett, Samuel; Gontarski, S.E. ed. (1995), *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989*, New York NY: Grove Press, p.116.
[88] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*, Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.72. My emphasis.

stage of Parkinson's Disease Dementia (PDD), though knowledge of the link between Parkinson's Disease and the dementia it can cause wasn't as clearly understood then as it is now, and also there was such stigma attached to dementia at the time that people generally tended to avoid naming it openly.[89] But Beckett clearly recognised something in her state, and his subsequent work was arguably strongly influenced by this. He went on to say that it was in his mother's house[90] that he'd begun, with *Molloy* – the opening line of which is "I am in my mother's room" – the *Three Novels* trilogy (1958), comprising *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnameable*.[91]

Tausif Noor argues convincingly that the stripping back of language that began in the above works might be seen to reveal what he forwards as Beckett's literary search for 'residua' or "the 'something'" – or nothing – "that lies behind subjectivity."[92] In the quote that opens this subchapter, I understand the 'one' Beckett mentions to be the 'self', and he seems here to be saying that speech renders this self unavoidable. Paraphrasing Dionysius the Areopagite, "If being and intelligibility coincide when we speak we are necessarily in the realm of being,"[93] but what Beckett suggests is that intelligibility is irrelevant – one speaks, therefore one is[94] – and the speaking self is not necessarily one that has a coherent narrative.

As well as lacking narrative identity, in several of the later works Beckett wrote for performance characters are sometimes almost completely disembodied as well. This means of 'stripping back' is a visual approach to "the whole world of incompleteness" Beckett sought to address, fragmenting characters in ways that make them less familiar to an audience – less easily recognisable as whole beings. In the play for television *…but the clouds…* (1977),[95] for example, all that can be seen of the anonymous female 'character' is a tight close up of her lips and unseeing, unblinking eyes fading in and out of view, and when she 'speaks', or rather mimes speech, it's someone else's voice that's heard:

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[89] There is a distinct gap in knowledge about evolving public attitudes towards dementia in relation to shame; I am basing this claim about reluctance to name it in the 1980s (when this conversation between Beckett and Shainberg took place), on past personal experiences of visiting care facilities during that decade.
[90] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*, Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.72.
[91] Beckett, Samuel (1958), *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable*, New York NY: Grove Press.
[92] Noor, Tausif (2013), 'Unclean, Unsaid, Undead: Beckett, Merleau-Ponty, and the Degradation of Body and Language', *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse*, 5:09, Boston MA: Northeastern University. [No pagination.] Accessed 19/12/2021. Available from: http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=764
[93] Frazer-Simser, Benjamin (2016), *A discourse of the non-discursive in Plato and pseudo-Dionysius*, PhD Thesis, Chicago IL: DePaul University, p.182.
[94] Salisbury, Laura (2009), '"What Is the Word": Beckett's Aphasic Modernism', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 17:1-2, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.79. DOI: 10.3366/E0309520709000090 Accessed 21/12/2021.
[95] Beckett, Samuel (1977), *…but the clouds…*, BBC Two. [Online.] Accessed 10/06/2022. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7-DUHtWUdA&t=783s&ab_channel=HenriqueXavier

> 38. w[oman]'s lips move, uttering inaudibly: '. . . clouds . . . but the clouds . . . of the sky . . .', v[oice] murmuring, synchronous with lips: '. . . but the clouds . . .' Lips cease.[96]

As another relevant example, in the short play for theatre *Not I* (1972) only the female character's mouth can be seen. In the following extract clouds are again referenced, and also insentience and the brain:

> and she found herself in the– . . . what?. . . who?. . .no!. . .she!. . . [. . .] . . .found herself in the dark . . . and if not exactly . . . insentient . . . insentient . . . for she could still hear the buzzing . . . so called . . . in the ears . . . and a ray of light came and went . . . came and went . . . such as the moon might cast. . . drifting. . . in and out of cloud . . . but so dulled . . . feeling . . . feeling so dulled . . . she did not know. . . what position she was in . . . imagine! . . what position she was in! . . whether standing . . . or sitting . . . but the brain– . . . what?. . . whether standing . . . or sitting . . . or kneeling . . . or lying . . . but the brain still . . . still . . . in a way . . .[97]

Having not seen this production in person, I consulted a recording of the 1973 televised version with actor Billie Whitelaw as the character 'Mouth'.[98] When rebroadcast on BBC Two in 1990, as part of a season called 'A Wake for Sam', the work was described as a "monologue of fragments from the life of a 70-year-old woman,"[99] which at the very least supports an interpretation of the character as representing an age-related, discontinuous experience of some unidentified type. What immediately struck me as I watched, however, was that, visually, the back of the mouth is as black as the area surrounding the lips, which (with teeth and tongue) then appear to flutter autonomously in a void – that though we know they belong to a person, the actor's physical presence around and behind the speaking mouth lacks substance. And as 'Mouth' refers to herself as 'she' throughout – one has to be aware of self to be an 'I'[100] – the titular 'not I' of the work suggests a diminished or disjointed self, the absence of a self-recognisable self behind unmoored lips adrift in the dark, even as they speak, if haltingly, of a life. The meaning or intention of this play (as with much of Beckett's work) has been the subject of varied speculation. And I have to acknowledge that my own take on it here is very much coloured by my research interest in cognitive decline. But the "drifting in and out of cloud" in this – for me – key extract, holds a further example of cloud

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[96] Beckett, Samuel (1984), *Collected Shorter Plays*, New York NY: Grove Press, p.261. The play is dated 1973.
[97] Ibid. p.217. The play is dated 1977.
[98] The BBC itself not providing this recording online, I consulted Youtube instead. BBC Two (1973), 'A Wake for Sam: Not I'. [Online.] Accessed 10/06/2022. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFQH7hhDTSE&ab_channel=lodifilmfest
[99] BBC Two (1990), 'A Wake for Sam: Not I'. [Online.] Accessed 10/06/2022. Available from: https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/3d20f6d20084452dacdc1b06c49314f9
[100] In discussion of Alois Alzheimer's first dementia patient, Auguste Deter, who was recorded as saying "I have, so to speak, lost myself," Thomas Fuchs points out that "she obviously still *had* a sense of self, otherwise her sentence would not have had a subject. What she had lost was the *self-as-object*, or her knowledge about herself, not the self-as-subject." Fuchs, Thomas (2020), 'Embodied and personal identity in dementia', *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 23, London: Springer Nature, p.667. DOI: 10.1007/s11019-020-09973-0 Accessed 29/10/2022. Emphases in the original.

as metaphor for states of mental confusion, and the direct reference to insentience and "the brain still . . . still . . . in a way . . ." – as in, almost but not quite active, but not fully at rest either – strongly suggests a character in a liminal state, between being and not, or being-non-being.

Beckett is known to have been interested in aphasia[101] and other forms of neurological dysfunction[102] throughout much of his career, but the influence on his work of his mother's Parkinson's Disease seems not to have been as widely acknowledged. And though he is also known to have had stroke induced aphasia towards the end of his life, it seems to have been almost an unspoken taboo to suggest he may also have had any form of neuropathology (such as a dementia of the vascular type, for example, that can follow a stroke or strokes).[103] And yet, to Lawrence Shainberg he said, "it's a paradox… but with old age, the more the possibilities diminish, the better chance you have. With diminished concentration, loss of memory, obscured intelligence – what you, I suspect, would call 'brain damage' – the more chance there is for saying something closest to what one is."[104] At the time of this conversation in 1981,[105] during which he also said "Now – my memory's gone. All the old fluency has disappeared,"[106] Beckett was 74 and rehearsing a version of his play *Endgame* (1957) in London. Despite the diminution of ability acknowledged in his above quotes, he continued working and his last two texts – prose piece *Stirrings Still* and poem *Comment Dire* – were finished, in that order, around 1988, roughly a year before his death. In her discussion of *Comment Dire*, Laura Salisbury quotes American author Ruby Cohn: "I asked Beckett to translate the poem [into English from French], but he could not recall having written it"[107] – and then states that "it seems significant that neither critics at the time, nor those since, have read or registered this final work as the expression of a disabled author."[108]

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[101] Early evidence of this interest has been dated to 1937, when "he began writing a dramatic fragment about Samuel Johnson called Human Wishes, and the notes Beckett took from Boswell on Johnson's life reveal an insistent interest in the author's illnesses and his disordered speech, alongside the temporary aphasia he experienced following a stroke in 1783." From Salisbury, L., Code, C. (2016), 'Jackson's Parrot: Samuel Beckett, Aphasic Speech Automatisms, and Psychosomatic Language', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 37, New York NY: Springerlink, p.207. DOI: 10.1007/s10912-015-9375-z Accessed 10/07/2019.

[102] See for example Barry, Elizabeth; Maude, Ulrika; Salisbury, Laura (2016), 'Introduction – Beckett, Medicine and the Brain', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 37:2, New York NY: Springer, pp.127-135. DOI: 10.1007/s10912-016-9383-7 Accessed 10/06/2022.

[103] "Stroke is the second most common cause of dementia… and experiencing a stroke results in a two-fold increase in risk for dementia." Pinkston, James B.; Alekseeva, Nadejda; Toledo, Eduardo González (2009), 'Stroke and dementia', *Neurological Research*, 31:8, Leeds: Maney Publishing, p.824. DOI: 10.1179/016164109X12445505689643 Accessed 10/06/2022.

[104] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*: , Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.71.

[105] Shainberg, Lawrence (1987), 'Exorcising Beckett', *The Paris Review*, 104:3, New York NY: The Paris Review. [No pagination.] Accessed 21/12/2021. Available from: https://www.theparisreview.org/letters-essays/2632/exorcising-beckett-lawrence-shainberg

[106] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*, Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.70.

[107] Salisbury, Laura (2009), 'What Is the Word': Beckett's Aphasic Modernism, *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 17:1-2, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.79. DOI: 10.3366/E0309520709000090 Accessed 21/12/2021.

[108] Ibid.

I first noticed the aphasic quality of *Comment Dire* in 2019, during a research placement at the British Library,[109] a direct result of which was the surprise realisation that Beckett would be an important artist to consider in my research. The discovery of American poet Shirley Kaufmann also came entirely by chance, while searching online for something else entirely, in September 2021. Kaufmann died of Alzheimer's in 2016, aged 93. She continued writing beyond her diagnosis and *Ezekial's Wheels*, the final collection of her work published in her lifetime, was issued in 2009, seven years before her death. Along with the poems in it that can be read as expressions of her experience of dementia, there are also ones that concern other age-related health concerns, love, desire, politics, and more.

Many of Kaufman's poems in this late collection speak of lostness and loss, however. In the poem actually entitled 'Lost', for example, which hints at blanks in memory, she writes:

> The sky is empty most of the time.
> What we can't pray to isn't there.
> What happened yesterday is lost
> and will be lost tomorrow.
> Forgetting repeats itself[110]

Like Beckett, Kaufman also references clouds in her writings, often in relation to 'vagueness'.[111] For example:

> Your face trembles
> out of a cloud
> […]
> your lips swim into focus
> smiling
> […]
> suddenly
> one of us is gone[112]

Though perhaps coincidental, the perception of facial features as insubstantial and disjointed here suggests an almost Beckettian disembodiment. Something comparable also occurs in the poem 'Bench': "The world is / too much not with me. I'm / *only two eyes with no head* / watching no presence no / writing in the sky."[113] And another similarity I see between certain poems in this collection and some of Beckett's works can be found in the following poem extract.

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[109] As part of my research placement I was required to write a blog post and the piece is focused on this discovery, with a parallel reading of *Stirrings Still* as of "a lone character who seems to exist in a state of spatial and temporal confusion: he experiences hallucinations, short-term memory loss, compulsive repetition, disorientation, and a pervading sense of non-continuous identity, or having lost previously held capacities." Carolan, Lucy (2020), 'Stirrings Still', *British Library*. [Online.] Accessed 28/02/2020. Available from: https://blogs.bl.uk/english-and-drama/2020/02/stirrings-still.html
[110] Kaufman, Shirley (2009), *Ezekiel's Wheels*, Port Townsend WA: Copper Canyon Press, p.67.
[111] "after the icecaps / strapped in my capsule / there's nothing to see / but a vagueness of clouds" Ibid. p.21.
[112] Ibid. Extract from the poem '2. YOU', p.20.
[113] Ibid. Extract from the poem 'Bench', p.28. My emphasis.

> If everyone's lost on the roads,
> you might as well fly. You might even
> enjoy what's left of your life
>
> in a state of amazement. I meant
> to say "acceptance". My slips are the best
> part. The part that's true.[114]

The 'truth' in slippages of aphasia alluded to here, though an accidental aspect of her condition rather than from an active professional interest such as Beckett's, suggest that, like him, she may have come to some understanding about how, with what Beckett called 'brain damage', "the more chance there is for saying something closest to what one is." As Craig Dworkin states: "Erasures obliterate, but they also reveal; omissions within a system permit other elements to appear all the more clearly"[115] – that it's at the point of breakdown that the essence of things may be perceived and, in Beckett's sense, alluded to, however partially. This connects with what Beckett said about the 'not-knowing, not perceiving, the whole world of incompleteness' he saw in his mother's Parkinson's that then influenced his post-WWII work, and with his own later experience of ageing and illness bringing him closer to being able to say 'what one is'.

In her analysis of Beckett's *Comment Dire*, Salisbury suggests that "...it is precisely the aphasic mode of writing that explores the possibility that a dissolution of a sense of coherent subjectivity can nevertheless sit alongside having 'just enough brain' to experience its disappearance as such."[116] She reinforces this notion with a well-known quote from Beckett's earlier work *Molloy*:

> To be literally incapable of motion at last, that must be something! My mind swoons when I think of it. And mute into the bargain! And perhaps as deaf as a post! And who knows blind as a bat! And as likely as not your memory a blank! And just enough brain intact to allow you to exult![117]

Also in the course of my research I discovered, in a collection of assisted dementia poetry,[118] the standout line "Can't think. But I am."[119] The dilemma of this is that the person who spoke these words was able to do so while feeling unable to think – which, in the Beckettian sense discussed previously, means they 'speak therefore they are'; that one may be aware (however vaguely) of a lack of ability and be able to say so, even beyond the point when

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[114] Ibid. Extract from the poem 'Amazement', pp.89-90.
[115] Dworkin, Craig (2013), *No Medium*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, p.9.
[116] Salisbury, Laura (2008), '"What Is the Word": Beckett's Aphasic Modernism', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Volume 17 Issue 1-2, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.85. DOI: 10.3366/E0309520709000090 Accessed 21/12/2021.
[117] Ibid.
[118] By 'assisted poetry' I mean the transcription of conversations with people living with dementia into 'poetic' form. Living Words (n.d.), 'The Participant: Taking Part in Care Home Residencies'. [Online.] Accessed 10/06/2022. Available from: https://livingwords.org.uk/the-participant/
[119] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.6.

one's cognitive impairment ought logically to impede such awareness and expression. Researching Beckett's work greatly assisted with reaching a better understanding of this enigma, in the sense that, as Salisbury suggests, it then becomes possible to consider modes of existence beyond cohesive narrative.

For dominant discourses around the importance of narrative to identity, the implications of this could be said to be immense, particularly in respect to people whose ongoing selves become disrupted by neuropathologies, as they call into question assertions such as: "When selfhood is tethered to the ability to tell one's life story, people with dementia may be seen to have 'lost' their 'self'."[120] Although the theatre of the absurd, as one that actively resists conventional character, language, plot and staging[121] – a theatre that Martin Esslin qualified as 'demented'[122] – can thus be considered an ideal forum for Beckett to "investigate not-knowing, not perceiving, the whole world of incompleteness,"[123] there seems to have been resistance to interpreting his contribution to it in this way and, further, to acknowledging his late works as those of an author with disability, as Salisbury forwards. But Beckett's expressions of discontinuous life experiences challenge claims, like Jerome Bruner's, that "if we lacked the capacity to make stories about ourselves, there would be no such thing as selfhood,"[124] and I further discuss the debate for and against narrative as a measure of identity, in particular relation to dementia, in the chapter of this thesis on unknowing.

My brief analysis here is not intended as a claim to Beckett's work being largely or only understandable in relation to his mother's and his own eventual medical conditions; that it's purely autobiographical. I'm a photographer, not a literary scholar, and my discussion of Beckett is not intended as a direct contribution to the vast field of Beckett studies either. But for the purpose of this doctoral project it has been immensely useful for me to view in some of his works – as fiction based in keen observation, analysis, research, and openness to the ordinarily unthinkable – means to reconsider cognitive decline, and ways of expressing aspects of this, from a different perspective. Kaufmann's poetic style, and the stripping or

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[120] Bitenc, Rebecca Anna (2018), '"No Narrative, No Self?": Reconsidering Dementia Counter-Narratives in 'Tell Mrs Mill Her Husband is Still Dead'', *Subjectivity*, 11, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.129. DOI: 10.1057/s41286-018-0049-y Accessed 23/05/2022.

[121] As defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Theatre of the Absurd relates to "dramatic works of certain European and American dramatists of the 1950s and early '60s who agreed with the Existentialist philosopher Albert Camus's assessment, in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942), that the human situation is essentially absurd, devoid of purpose." Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022), 'Theatre of the Absurd'. [Online.] Accessed 09/06/2022. Available from: https://www.britannica.com/art/Theatre-of-the-Absurd

[122] Esslin, Martin (1960), 'The Theatre of the Absurd', *The Tulane Drama Review*, 4:4, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 3. DOI: 10.2307/1124873 Accessed 19/06/2022.

[123] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*, Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.72.

[124] Bitenc, Rebecca Anna (2018), '"No Narrative, No Self?": Reconsidering Dementia Counter-Narratives in 'Tell Mrs Mill Her Husband is Still Dead'', *Subjectivity*, 11, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.129. DOI: 10.1057/s41286-018-0049-y Accessed 23/05/2022.

paring back of language[125] that served Beckett in much of his work, are not things I've consciously tried to emulate in my own writings. But as two published, professional authors working, as I've suggested, from outside and within the experience of cognitive decline, parallel readings of Beckett and Kaufmann have helped bridge some of the gap between their literary works and the expressions of other people living with dementia encountered in the course of research. This has in turn influenced some of my own creative writing for this project, and I discuss my approaches to producing these texts in more detail in the sections of this thesis dedicated to relevant research outcomes.

[125] In further support of the notion that dementia 'pares back' language, another author can be referenced here: Iris Murdoch. Although she, like Shirley Kaufman, continued to write into her Alzheimer's – albeit unknowingly, given that she wasn't diagnosed until after the publication of her final novel, 'Jackson's Dilemma', in 1995, four years before her death from this disease – her grasp of the language that had served in her work prior to this had begun to slip and noticeably affect her ability to write. An interesting study was undertaken to analyse the effect of Alzheimer's on Murdoch's authorship, which compared her last novel with two written earlier in life, and found in the late work a reduced range of vocabulary and greater rate of repetition of already used words. Given Beckett's conscious interest in aphasia and other cognitive issues, it seems plausible to conclude that knowledge of how these affect access to language influenced his own repetitious and 'stripped back' approach to writing. See Garrard, Peter; Maloney, Lisa M.; Hodges, John R.; Patterson, Karalyn (2005), 'The effects of very early Alzheimer's disease on the characteristics of writing by a renowned author', *Brain*,128: 2, Oxford: Oxford Academic, pp.250-60. DOI: 10.1093/brain/awh341. Accessed 20/06/2022.

Chapter 2: Unknowing

Negative Capability

In her introduction to *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (2006), Solnit also refers to John Keats' 'negative capability',[126] "that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason – Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge."[127] Keats was here positioning himself in relation to rival poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose 'capability' he saw as being too attached to a quest for certitude. The negative, then, is meant in the sense of inverse, in opposition to, rather than nonpositive. However, Solnit is referencing negative capability in the sense that the lostness her book propounds can be considered a positive form of 'not-knowing'.

In the realm of contemporary psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, Keats' negative capability has also been embraced, or adapted to suit these disciplines. Psychotherapist Diana Voller, for example, defines it, in her field of professional practice, as "the advanced ability of a person to tolerate uncertainty. This does not mean the passive uncertainty associated with ignorance or general insecurity but the active uncertainty that is to do with being without a template and yet being able to tolerate, or even relish, a sense of feeling lost."[128] British psychoanalyst and writer Adam Phillips provides another slant. In a chapter of his book *On Balance* (2010), the only reference to Keats is in the use of his negative capability as its title, and the essay[129] instead takes an oblique approach. Centred in a 1984 poem by Miroslav Holub entitled *Brief Reflection on Maps* – which is about a scouting party lost in a snowstorm in the Alps, that somehow managed to find its way using a map of the Pyrenees – Phillips proposes his own take on lostness. For example, he writes that "being lost may be the precondition for finding the object of desire,"[130] from there suggesting that a map can be an object of desire (a map being something, anything, that provides a sense of direction or purpose), and that one can use such to orient oneself even if one is lost with the wrong 'map'. This takes negative capability beyond Keats' desire to be "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" – the capacity to be in the present

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[126] Solnit, Rebecca (2006), *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, p.6. As quoted by Solnit: "I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason."
[127] Hebron, Stephen (2014), 'John Keats and 'negative capability'', *British Library*. [Online.] Accessed 27/06/2020. Available from: https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/john-keats-and-negative-capability
[128] Voller, Diana (2010), 'Negative Capability', *Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 2:2, London: Contemporary Psychotherapy. [Online.] Accessed 26/06/2020. Available from: http://www.contemporarypsychotherapy.org/vol-2-no-2/negative-capability/
[129] This essay is sub-sectioned in four parts, with the segment under discussion here entitled 'IV The Lost', in Phillips, Adam (2010), *On Balance*, London: Penguin, pp.168-197.
[130] Ibid. p.179.

moment, alive to the unknown, for its own sake – towards lostness as an indirect means of finding one's way through uncertainty to unpremeditated conclusion. It also differs with the disorienting sense of "the familiar falling away… the unfamiliar appearing" combined derived from Solnit's definitions of lost, and meandering cross-comparative readings of Phillips with Solnit's *The Faraway Nearby* (2014), in which she writes about her mother's Alzheimer's experience, then proved instructive.

Phillips' suggestion that "being lost may be the precondition for finding the object of desire" seems apt in considering ways in which creative practice research can unfold: I may have recognised in the questions raised by Solnit's definitions of 'lost' the potential for a really interesting research project, but if I thought I also knew precisely, confidently, where I would go with it and what I should do to get there, I might not have been as attentive to the things that lostness otherwise serendipitously led me to. However, considering the same proposition with regard to the lived experience of dementia is problematic; for instance, it's difficult to see in aspects of cognitive decline the possibility of lostness being a precondition for finding anything (that we can share an understanding of) if said removes the ability to remember what the 'object of one's desire' might be, and recognise it as such or retain it when one comes across it. For example, Solnit writes of her mother that

> she wanted a lipstick; she often did in that era. I bought them regularly and they vanished regularly. We went to the plaza's drugstore, and I tried to show her some shades of pink. She didn't seem to see them even when I waved them under her eyes, so I handed the uncapped lipstick to her… I hoped she'd be able to see it if she held it… Now it's obvious that it didn't matter what shade I bought; the goal was to have lipstick because a lipstick signified something.[131]

The instant I read this it reminded me (and as such indicated just how important my own memory is in my research) of a story I'd read many years before about the Red Cross sending lipsticks to Bergen-Belsen:[132]

> Women lay in bed with no sheets and no nightie but with scarlet red lips, you saw them wandering about with nothing but a blanket over their shoulders, but with scarlet red lips. I saw a woman dead on the post mortem table and clutched in her hand was a piece of lipstick. At last someone had done something to make them individuals again, they were someone, no longer merely the number tattooed on the

[131] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta Publications, p.227.

[132] I've been unable to find a precise date for this event, but a firsthand account in the diary of Lieutenant Colonel Mervin Willett Gonin DSO, commanding officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps, places it within days of the Red Cross' arrival at the concentration camp on 21st April 1945, one week after the camp's liberation by British and Canadian troops. British Red Cross (n.d.), 'The Red Cross in the Second World War'. [Online.] Accessed 28/06/2020). Available from: https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/our-history/the-red-cross-in-the-second-world-war##

> arm… That lipstick started to give them back their humanity.[133]

The lipstick as object of desire. Desire as sense of purpose.

Solnit's mother's experience, like that of so many others living with dementia of various sorts, is one of cognitive ambiguity. Certain behaviours, such as urges to walk for no discernible reason, for example, are now better understood in terms of the person having a purpose, or some underlying sense of purpose – it's just that they can't always remember what it was.[134] Phillips suggests that "as long as you have got a map, any map, you are no longer lost; as long as you have a certain kind of object of desire, you are no longer lost."[135] But Solnit understood her mother as having a map:

> She took the ought-to-be for the actual and adhered to what she should like and how things should be. It was as though she travelled by a map of the wrong place, hitting walls, driving into ditches, missing her destination, but never stopping or throwing out the map.[136]

In Solnit's observation of her mother's Alzheimer's experience, unlike the scouting party in the Miroslav Holub poem quoted by Phillips, the wrong map was not something she was able to orient herself by. Then again, Phillips also writes: "They [the scouting party] didn't need the map of where they were, a real map, to get back; they just needed one that gave them a sense of direction."[137] Remove 'to get back' from that line, and it fits the sense of purpose previously mentioned. Solnit's observations are from the outside of her mother's experience; people living with and/or caring at distance for family members who have dementia can feel confused, saddened or upset that their respective maps, of past and present, of memories as shared reactivations of the past in the present, no longer align. My guess, then, is that Solnit's mother can be said to have had a map of sorts; it's just that neither of them could know what it was for. But I'd argue that she was still lost, therefore.

If we stay with the map analogy, cognitive decline in dementia could, broadly speaking, be imaged as the gradual and irreversible obfuscation of a person's maps and/or their access to

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[133] Gonin, Lt. Col. Mervyn Willett (n.d.), 'Colonel Gonin's order of the day 23 May 1945'. [Online.] Accessed 03/08/2018. Available from: http://www.bergenbelsen.co.uk/pages/Database/ReliefStaffAccount.asp?HeroesID=17&

[134] "It is apparent that 'wandering' suggests aimlessness, whereas in fact there is often a purpose or aim behind this activity." Research is finding that 'walking with purpose' has "unique cause or motivation for each individual. It could relate to personal life history, e.g. re-enacting their usual afternoon routine or the job they used to do, or be due to internal triggers, e.g. boredom, feeling upset or anxious, loneliness…" These possible reasons for 'wandering' are, however, conjecture. Barrett, J.; Evans, S.; Pritchard-Wilkes, V. (2020), 'Understanding and supporting safe walking with purpose among people living with dementia in extra care, retirement and domestic housing', *Housing, Care and Support*, 23:2, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, pp. 37-48. DOI: 10.1108/HCS-03-2020-0004 Accessed online 30/09/2022.

[135] Phillips, Adam (2010), *On Balance*, London: Penguin, p.177.

[136] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta, p.26.

[137] Phillips, Adam (2010), *On Balance*, London: Penguin, p.177.

them; the sense of having them might still be there, but even if they can be retrieved there's little to nothing that can be perceived in them that anyone can usefully recognise. And yet:

> ...maps,
> By which life moves somewhere or other[138]

Even when lost, we are still alive. As Thomas Fuchs puts it:

> A concept of person grounded solely in rationality and reflection inevitably stigmatizes people with severe cognitive deficits… An embodied concept of the person is based on… continuity of organic life, which the body establishes even through phases of unconsciousness… Personal existence means primarily bodily selfhood and being alive, from the beginning to the end. If we understand selfhood as primarily bodily, we therefore arrive at a different perception of the patient with dementia.[139]

The reflective research process traced here obliquely opened up different perspectives on dementia, and helped to support the conception of lostness in relation to cognitive decline as something not entirely, irredeemably negative. It also enabled confidence in intuitive approaches to research that required me to conceive work about lived experiences I have no subjective knowledge of.

"extending the boundaries of the self into unknown territory"[140]

Before leaving Phillips, in his essay he indirectly (as if almost accidentally) suggests that if we don't know something we're lost. Holub's poem begins with a name (that of the person whose story about the scouting party the poet renarrates), and Phillips writes, "for those of us who don't know [who Albert Szent-Györgi was] – and who therefore begin the poem a bit lost…"[141] This neatly brings us back to lostness as not-knowing, or not-knowing as a condition of lostness. In Solnit's definitions of lost, the familiar falling away and the unfamiliar appearing could be reworded as not knowing where and what things are (objects, faces, places etc), and also where and who one is in relation to such defamiliarisation. In *The Faraway Nearby* (2014), referring to her mother's prosopagnosia, or 'face-blindness', she writes: "She was increasingly impaired, not in her eyesight but in her brain's ability to interpret what her eyes saw, an effect of Alzheimer's called 'agnosia', or not-knowing."[142]

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[138] Ibid., from the second and third lines of Miroslav Holub's poem 'Brief Reflection on Maps', reproduced in full in the text pp.174-175.
[139] Fuchs, Thomas (2020), 'Embodiment and personal identity in dementia', *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 23, London: Springer Nature, pp.673-674. DOI: 10.1007/s11019-020-09973-0 Accessed 29/10/2022.
[140] Solnit, Rebecca (2006), *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, p.5.
[141] Phillips, Adam (2010), *On Balance*, London: Penguin, p.176.
[142] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta, p.226.

Agnosia is a term in current usage in two distinct disciplines: theology, and medicine. According to the OED, agnosia means 'ignorance, lack of knowledge',[143] but it's also possible to understand agnosia as 'unknowing'.[144] The prefix 'un–' before 'knowing' signals "negation, reversal, deprivation, or removal (as in untruth, undo)."[145] Unlike the preceding definition of agnosia as an ignorance or lack (akin to Phillips' positing that one can be considered lost when one doesn't know something), unknowing seems more suggestive of an unravelling – a process of forgetting, or unlearning, prior knowledge. Although negative theology or theological apophatism is most often traced back to the 6th century writings of the pseudonymous Dionysius the Areopagite,[146] the 20th century shift in Christian understanding of agnosia as unknowing also has origins in the aforementioned 14th century spiritual guidebook *The Cloud of Unknowing*, that was relatively obscure until its rediscovery and subsequent popularisation from the 1910s onwards.[147] As related previously, this book propounds a contemplative practice requiring a 'letting go' of "all sensual images, all memories and thoughts [until] nothing lives in the working mind but a naked intent"[148] – a 'dis-ontological'[149] process aimed towards being "neither oneself nor another"[150] through agnosia or unknowing.

In the medical sciences there are several forms of 'unknowing': common examples include aphasia, apraxia, amnesia, prosopagnosia, and agnosia proper. Aphasia variously affects access to language; the facility to read, write, speak and/or understand spoken words.

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[143] Though Oxford English Dictionary gives 'ignorance' as the translation of the greek *ἀγνωσία*, etymologically the prefix *a–* in Greek does mean 'not' (and also 'without' and 'less'), and *gnosis* means knowledge (including special knowledge of spiritual mysteries), thus agnosia can, as Solnit posits, be understood in the most literal (and less pejorative) sense as not-knowing. Oxford English Dictionary (2022), s.v. Agnosia. [Online.] Accessed 28/06/2020. Available from: www.oed.com/view/Entry/4072

[144] Ibid. One of the quotes provided with the theological definition, as an example of its usage, aligns agnosia with 'unknowing': "The *samādhi*..is..the equivalent of..the Christian *agnosia* ('unknowing') whereby God is truly known." The Oxford English Dictionary citation: Watts, A. (1968), *Myth & Ritual in Christianity*, (new edition) iv. 128. Emphases in the original.

[145] Harper, Douglas (n.d.), s.v. Un–, *Etymology Dictionary*. [Online.]. Accessed 18/07/2020. Available from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/un–

[146] In connection to *The Cloud of Unknowing* another, earlier work attributed to its anonymous author is *Dionise Hid Divinite*, which was a version of Dionysius the Areopagite's *Theologia Mystica*: "It is supposed by most scholars that *Dionise Hid Divinite…* is by the same hand which wrote the *Cloud of Unknowing*." Anon; Underhill, Evelyn tr. (1922), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, London: John M. Watkins, p.7. Accessed 09/06/2018. Available from: http://www.catholicspiritualdirection.org/cloudunknowing.pdf

[147] *The Cloud of Unknowing* was initially available only in a small number of 15th-17th century hand copied manuscripts. Although, according to Evelyn Underhill, the work was "known, and read, by English Catholics as late as the middle or end of the 17th century," it had "only once been printed: in 1871, by the Rev. Henry Collins, under the title of *The Divine Cloud*." This print version was no longer in circulation by the time Underhill wrote the introduction to *A Book Of Contemplation The Which Is Called The Cloud Of Unknowing, In The Which A Soul Is Oned With God,* her first edition of this book, which was published in 1912. Further versions of the work have been produced and widely circulated since, contributing to increasing public awareness of it. Ibid. p.8.

[148] Ibid. p.4.

[149] 'Dis' as prefix reversing the meaning of what follows. Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), s.v. Dis–. [Online.] Accessed 06/12/2022. Available from: www.oed.com/view/Entry/53379

[150] Frazer-Simser, Benjamin (2016), *A discourse of the non-discursive in Plato and pseudo-Dionysius*, PhD Thesis, Chicago IL: DePaul University, p.302.

Apraxia refers to disorders of motor function (a disjunction of brain-to-muscle signals that can affect understanding of orientational directions such as 'up' and 'down', and undertaking coordinated physical movement, including speech). Amnesia is loss of memory; particularly in Alzheimer's, short-term memory is commonly affected first with longer term-memories following as the condition advances. Prosopagnosia is the inability to recognise faces. And the medical sense of agnosia (attributed as originating in Freud's 1891 *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien*) is: "Loss of the ability to recognize objects or to understand the significance of some or all sensory stimuli."[151]

None of the above are specific to dementia. Aphasia can also be a common consequence of strokes, for example, and prosopagnosia can occur at any time in the lifecycle, as with the American artist Chuck Close who claims to have had face blindness since his youth.[152] Even the escalating nature of neurodegeneration in dementia is not unique; with the progressive form of multiple sclerosis (MS), for example, symptoms include amnesia (and, though more rarely, aphasia, apraxia and agnosia), induced as a result of a person's autoimmune system attacking their nervous system.[153] Also, the incidence of each of the above symptom categories varies from one type of dementia to another, and within each type of dementia can occur to greater and lesser degree, and at differing rates of acceleration, from one person to another.[154] However, the above symptom categories, in progressive form, do most commonly occur in dementia and can be considered as 'unknowings' in the sense that they are all orders of gradual losses of things known: loss of language, loss of memory, loss of the ability to recognise faces and other ordinarily familiar things – the lostness created in the familiar becoming unfamiliar, in becoming unknown.

The relevance of theological unknowing to the medical agnosias of cognitive decline – the link that can be drawn between them – is suggested by the 'clouded thoughts' people living with dementia describe. As previously discussed, the visual character of metaphoric allusions like these mean that the nature of symptoms are relevant to the arts, and thus connections

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[151] Oxford English Dictionary (2022), s.v. Agnosia. [Online.] Accessed 28/06/2020. Available from: www.oed.com/view/Entry/4072

[152] Farley, Todd (2011), 'Disabilities Are at the Heart of Chuck Close's Art', *Brain & Life Magazine*, 9/10, Minneapolis, MN: American Academy of Neurology. [Online.] Accessed 27/07/2020. Available from: https://www.brainandlife.org/articles/dyslexia-paralysis-face-blindness-nothing-comes-between-legendary-artist-chuck/

[153] McNicholas, N. et al. (2018), 'Cognitive dysfunction in early multiple sclerosis: a review', *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, 111:6, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. Pages 359–364. DOI: 10.1093/qjmed/hcx070 Accessed 27/07/2020.

[154] "The capacity of cognitive reserve may underlie the differential effects of neuroplasticity in ageing... [T]he common observation that the same burden of Alzheimer pathology may not impair patients' cognitive functions to the same extent is often taken as evidence of greater cognitive reserve in less impaired individuals." Cramer, Steven C. et al. (2011),' Harnessing neuroplasticity for clinical applications', *Brain*, 134:6, Oxford: Oxford Academic, p.1597. DOI: 10.1093/brain/awr039 Accessed 06/08/2020.

can be made, across disciplines, from 'unknowings' in lived experiences of neuropathologies to theological and medical understandings of agnosias via creative practice.

"I have, so to speak, lost myself"[155]

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is named after German psychiatrist Dr Alois Alzheimer. In 1906 he discovered, in changes wrought in the brain of one of his patients, what was understood as the physiological cause of her disorder.[156] Towards the end of her life this patient, Frau Auguste Deter, displayed a number of symptoms including memory loss and difficulty finding her way in familiar settings such as her own home. After her death, Alzheimer

> examined her brain and found that it was considerably shrunken (atrophied). Under the microscope, two types of pathology were observed. In the first, bundles of fibres within neurons – neurofibrillary tangles – were evident. The second, found throughout the cortex, was sclerotic plaques. These are the two pathological hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease. We now know that plaques are made up of a protein called beta-amyloid, and the soluble form of this protein is seen by many to be the cause of Alzheimer's disease.[157]

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia.[158] This neurodegenerative condition is thought to affect particular areas of the brain, such as the parietal lobe and hippocampus, leading to progressive development of several agnosias. Disorientation – getting lost – is, with memory impairment, one of the earliest observable indications of the onset of Alzheimer's (and some other types of dementia also).[159] It purportedly involves a progressive loss of neurons and the synaptic connections between these, and a general decrease in brain mass[160] while, in parallel, there is the above mentioned accumulation of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles. Studies have indicated that this pattern of cumulative damage may

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[155] Quote by Frau Auguste Deter cited in Fuchs, Thomas (2020), 'Embodiment and personal identity in dementia', *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 23, London: Springer Nature, p.665. DOI: 10.1007/s11019-020-09973-0 Accessed 29/10/2022.

[156] Hippius, H.; Neundörfer, G. (2003), 'The discovery of Alzheimer's disease', *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 5:1, Milton Park (Oxon): Taylor & Francis, p.101. DOI: 10.31887/DCNS.2003.5.1/hhippius Accessed 06/08/2020.

[157] Dudchenko, Paul A. (2010), *Why People Get Lost: The Psychology and Neuroscience of Spatial Cognition,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.222.

[158] In September 2019, WHO estimated the number of people with dementia diagnoses worldwide at around 50 million, and those with AD at 60-70% of that total. After AD, the most common forms are vascular and fronto-temporal dementia (FTD) and dementia with Lewey bodies/Parkinson's Disease, followed by other rarer forms which include early/young onset Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease dementia (both of which are genetically derived), and dementias resulting from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and infections such as HIV and Creutzfeldt-Jakob diseases. World Health Organization (2022), 'Dementia'. [Fact sheet.] Accessed 06/08/2020. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia

[159] "Memory and visuospatial deficits are common in the early stages of many diseases causing dementia. Both deficits contribute to wayfinding problems." Sheehan, Bart; Burton, Elizabeth; Mitchell, Lynne (2006), 'Outdoor wayfinding in dementia', *Dementia*, 5:2, London: SAGE Publishing, pp.271-272. DOI: 10.1177/1471301206062254 Accessed online 08/01/2019.

[160] Dudchenko, Paul A. (2010), *Why People Get Lost: The Psychology and Neuroscience of Spatial Cognition,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.231.

begin to occur in a "long asymptomatic latency period"[161] of ten to twenty years before the advent of noticeable symptoms[162] (although the presence of these plaques and tangles in the brain does not necessarily lead to cognitive decline).[163]

Unlike in other forms of harm to brain tissue, such as through traumatic head injury or stroke (albeit not systematically even in examples like these), in dementia the brain isn't able to spontaneously harness the restorative potentiality of its own plasticity in response to the sustained, ongoing damage of lesions caused by neurodegeneration. Just as "beta-amyloid may be involved in the body's response to the disease"[164] rather than its cause, there is the possibility that "compensatory mechanisms may... perhaps even become pathogenic,"[165] meaning that neuroplasticity – which, broadly defined, is the nervous system's ability to positively adapt by "reorganizing its structure, function and connections"[166] – may also have a destructive effect.

In her work on negative or destructive plasticity, Catherine Malabou has reconsidered psychoanalytic theory and neuroscience in relation to varieties of trauma that interrupt identity, including dementia. As such, she is one of the few philosophers attempting to, as it were, tackle head on questions raised by radical transformations of cognition caused by accident and illness. In Malabou's thinking, a new life comes into being through trauma – a life that's unrecognisable "less because of a change in appearance than on account of a change in nature, a molting [sic] of the inner sculpture."[167] And, Malabou suggests, this being is, in the same instance, unrecognisable to themself also:

> Something *shows itself* when there is damage, a cut, something to which normal, creative plasticity gives neither access nor body: the deserting of subjectivity, the distancing of the individual who becomes a stranger to herself, who no longer recognizes anyone, who no longer recognizes herself, who no longer remembers herself.[168]

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[161] Reza-Zaldivar, Edwin E. et al. (2018), 'Potential Effects of MSC-Derived Exosomes in Neuroplasticity in Alzheimer's Disease', *Frontiers in Cellular Neuroscience*, 12:317, London: Frontiers Media Ltd, p.5. DOI: 10.3389/fncel.2018.00317 Accessed 06/08/2020.
[162] Beason-Held, Lori L. et al. (2013), 'Changes in Brain Function Occur Years before the Onset of Cognitive Impairment', *Journal of Neuroscience*, 33:46, Washington DC: The Society for Neuroscience, p.18012. DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1402-13.2013 Accessed 06/08/2020.
[163] Espay, Alberto; Stecher, Benjamin (2020), *Brain Fables: The Hidden History of Neurodegenerative Diseases and a Blueprint to Conquer Them*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.61.
[164] Dudchenko, Paul A. (2010), *Why People Get Lost: The Psychology and Neuroscience of Spatial Cognition,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.222.
[165] Cramer, Steven C. *et al.* (2011), 'Harnessing neuroplasticity for clinical applications', *Brain*, 134:6, Oxford: Oxford Academic, p.1597. DOI: 10.1093/brain/awr039 Accessed 06/08/2020.
[166] Ibid. p.1592.
[167] Malabou, Catherine; Shred, Carolyn tr. (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.9.
[168] Ibid. p.6. Emphasis in the original.

At a stage in Alzheimer's, people do sometimes no longer recognise their own likenesses in mirrors:[169] their own faces become unfamiliar; they unknow themselves. There could be said to be a kind of through-the-looking-glass[170] effect, in which the physical façade becomes the glass darkly[171] obscuring connection and comprehension, for both the person with dementia on one side and their entourage on the other. In *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage* (2012), Malabou provides an illustration of this effect. In a description of the personal origin of this book, she explains it as a

> reaction to the ordeal of depersonalization to which my grandmother was subjected as Alzheimer's disease operated on her. I say "operated" because it seemed to me that my grandmother, or, at least, the new and ultimate version of her, was the work of the disease, its opus, its own sculpture. Indeed, this was not a diminished person in front of me… this was a stranger who didn't recognize me, who didn't recognize herself because she had undoubtedly never met her before. Behind the familiar halo of hair, the tone of her voice, the blue of her eyes: the absolutely incontestable presence of *someone else*.[172]

It's interesting that in the above quote Malabou speaks of presence rather than absence, even though it's in the sense of the presence of another, unknown and unknowable, being. It also indicates that the lack of recognition goes both ways. As Christian-Claus Carbon explains:

> We can literally say that we perceive what we know—if we have no prior knowledge of certain things we can even overlook important details in a pattern because we have no strong association with something meaningful. The intimate processing between sensory inputs and our semantic networks enables us to recognize familiar objects within a few milliseconds, even if they show the complexity of human faces[173]

– unless those faces are at once disorientingly unfamiliar *and* familiar? Do we, the fully cognisant, experience a kind of inverse prosopagnosia when faced with dementia? Unable or

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[169] For example, "A 62 year-old female with moderate Alzheimer's dementia… was normal in face recognition tasks except with her own reflected image… [which she] thought of as a live person who does not speak." Chandra, S.R.; Isaac, T.G. (2014), 'Neurodegeneration and Mirror Image Agnosia', *North American Journal of Medical Sciences*, 6:9, Mumbai: MedKnow, p.473. DOI: 10.4103/1947-2714.141647 Accessed 07/08/2020.

[170] In the OED, the definition of through-the-looking-glass is "something which is or involves the opposite of what is normal or expected, or which appears to be confused, illogical, or nonsensical." Oxford English Dictionary (2022), s.v. Looking-glass. [Online.] Accessed 07/08/2020. Available from: www.oed.com/view/Entry/110141

[171] Ibid. Also in the OED, the definition of through a glass darkly is "from an obscured, distorted, or incomplete perspective" and, in reference to 1 Corinthians 13:12, it can also mean "to perceive the true nature of God, existence, etc., imperfectly or indistinctly."

[172] Malabou, Catherine (2012), *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage,* New York NY: Fordham University Press, p.xi. Emphasis in the original.

[173] Carbon Christian-Claus (2014), 'Understanding human perception by human-made illusions', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 8:566, London:Frontiers Media Ltd, p.3. DOI: 10.3389/fnhum.2014.00566 Accessed 01/10/2022.

unwilling to see past surface appearance, as if we perceive a face but instead of reading into it (in the way we normally and continuously read meaning in photographs, films and all other familiar, everyday visual stimuli),[174] we see… nothing?

> If we lose all relation to childhood and the past the moment we are formed by destruction, what do we look like? [...] What do we look like once we are metamorphosized by destruction, once we are formed by destructive, explosive, nuclear plasticity? [...] You could say: "nothing," but what does "looking like nothing" mean? People with Alzheimer's disease in oversized, borrowed hospital garb... do they look like nothing? No.[175]

From a visual arts perspective, it could also be considered interesting that Malabou frames her questioning in terms of appearance, but she does so as if identity were something we ought to easily be able to see in the observed other (even when in anonymous clothing, such as hospital gowns). And, unfortunately, she immediately goes on to suggest that people with cognitive disorders "look like less than nothing".[176] How does this square with the earlier quote that began: "*Something* shows itself when there is damage... "?[177] What more is there to be lost once destructive plasticity has re- or de-formed identity beyond the point of normative recognition – what is the 'some thing' that then shows itself?

> We no longer look like anything living, but nor do we look like anything inanimate. We must imagine something between the animate and the inanimate, something that is not animal but that has none of the inertia of stone either. The inanimal? A between, or an instance that in no way resembles any intermediary, one that explodes mediations, outside the soul, outside the organic. A mode of being that is not even the one the death drive pushes us towards, that inorganic state of passivity, the inertia of matter.[178]

Even people with unimpaired cognitive capacity can be unknowable: if we really could 'read' everyone perfectly from their appearances, acting would not exist as a profession, and it would be impossible for anyone to successfully lie. It's also now known that animals can have forms of dementia too (though it's called Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome in veterinary

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[174] "[H]umans are constantly absorbing and processing information about our surroundings, including what we sense and how an environment makes us feel even if we are 'not always cognizant of the world around [us] at any given point in time'." Ardoin, Nicole M.; Heimlich, Joe E. (2021), 'Environmental learning in everyday life: foundations of meaning and a context for change', *Environmental Education Research*, 27:12, Abingdon: Carfax Publishing Ltd, p.1682. DOI: 10.1080/13504622.2021.1992354 Accessed 01/10/2022.
[175] Malabou, Catherine; Tr. Shred, Carolyn (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.70-71.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid. p.6. My emphasis.
[178] Ibid. pp.70-71.

practice).[179] As they – they being cats, for example – begin to forget where things are (such as litter trays) and when they've been fed, can be observed wandering seemingly aimlessly and so on;[180] do they, as Malabou suggests, also become 'inanimal'? Or do we continue to see in them what they are (or what we want to see them as – our pets, our beloved companions), even when their behaviours change over time as their neurodegenerative conditions progress?

> If the experience of the person with terminal illness is defined by the ever-present body, the epistemology of sight is trapped within a material dynamic that accesses subjectivity only through the visible aspects of that body. As long as the gaze sees as its object a diseased body *but not the diseased person's experience of embodiment*, the look only perpetuates the dislocation experienced by the person with terminal illness.[181]

The book this quote is drawn from is, broadly speaking, about embodied grief in the face of corporeal absence – the 'phantom limb' effect[182] of grieving for people no longer physically present in our lives because they have died. But Laura E. Tanner also discusses our responses to conditions that bring visibly perceptible physical changes, such as cancers and HIV/AIDS that lay waste in their end stages, and dementia, as a terminal condition that does ultimately become apparent, can also be included. What interests me here, however, is what might be happening when we're faced, as in Malabou's description of her grandmother, with a person who is unfamiliar not because they appear to be ill but because they are no longer what we can comfortably consider to be 'themself'.

"and to be without a story…"[183]

Returning to Beckett here, one thing he and Malabou can be said to have in common is that, like her when faced with her grandmother's Alzheimer's, he too found his mother with Parkinson's Disease unrecognisable. Where they may significantly differ in my view is that, while Malabou seems to have drawn back from the brink of thinking beyond appearance, Beckett was prepared to see in or through it, to the extent that he revised his prior thought in order to "investigate not-knowing, not perceiving, the whole world of incompleteness."[184] And to do this I believe, based on the evidence of his work from *Molloy* onwards, that he chose to accept the possibility that neuropathologies require one to consider that human

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[179] Gunn-Moore, Danielle *et al.* (2007), 'Cognitive dysfunction and the neurobiology of ageing in cats', *Journal of Small Animal Practice*, 48, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, pp.546–553. DOI: 10.1111/j.1748-5827.2007.00386.x Accessed 09/08/2020.
[180] Ibid. For a complete list of symptoms, see Box 3: 'Behavioural changes that can be seen in geriatric cats and may be associated with cognitive dysfunction syndrome', p.548.
[181] Tanner, Laura E. (2006), *Lost Bodies: Inhabiting the Borders of Life and Death*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University, p.32. My emphasis.
[182] Ibid. p.226.
[183] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta Publications, p.3.
[184] Shainberg, Lawrence (2019), *Four Men Shaking*, Boulder CO: Shambala Publications Inc, p.72.

existence does continue, if otherwise, in radical disruptions to – and even in an absence of – narrative identity.

In 'Against Narrative' (2004), Galen Strawson argues quite vehemently against what can be described as dominant, 'normative' attitudes to ways of being that entirely centre understandings of identity in narrative, to the exclusion of divergent life experiences. Strawson defines this as being situated in

> two popular claims. The first is a descriptive, empirical thesis about the nature of ordinary human experience: 'each of us constructs and lives a "narrative" . . . this narrative *is* us, our identities' (Oliver Sacks)... The second is a normative, ethical claim: we ought to live our lives narratively, or as a story… A person 'creates his identity [only] by forming an autobiographical narrative – a story of his life', and must be in possession of a full and 'explicit narrative [of his life] to develop fully as a person' (Marya Schechtman).[185]

Thus, as previously cited, the problematic assumption that "[w]hen selfhood is tethered to the ability to tell one's life story, people with dementia may be seen to have 'lost' their 'self'."[186] Approaches to explaining identity based solely on linear, narrative cohesion do not help towards understandings of discontinuous life experiences, including, or especially, those that lead from narratively coherent existences to ones interrupted by or ending in dementia and other traumas.

In addition to a Narrative/non-Narrative binary, Strawson forwards another; Diachronic/Episodic. Though he pairs Narrative with Diachronic and non-Narrative with Episodic with some caution, he posits that there are strong enough correlations between these to merit comparison. For Strawson, "a basic form of Diachronic self-experience [is one that] has relatively long-term diachronic continuity, something that persists over a long stretch of time, perhaps for life. I take it that many people… who are Diachronic are also Narrative in their outlook on life."[187] By contrast, people who are Episodic[188] have less sense of such continuity and, as such, "are likely to have no particular tendency to see their life in Narrative terms."[189] Although Strawson's challenge to the primacy of narrative and diachronic identity is of interest, what it suggests is that people who are either Narrative/Diachronic or non-Narrative/Episodic are more or less consistently that way

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[185] Strawson, Galen (2004), 'Against Narrative', *Ratio*, 17:4, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, p.428. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9329.2004.00264.x Accessed 07/12/2021. Emphasis in the original.
[186] Bitenc, Rebecca Anna (2018),'"No Narrative, No Self?": Reconsidering Dementia Counter-Narratives in 'Tell Mrs Mill Her Husband is Still Dead', *Subjectivity*, 11, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.129. DOI: 10.1057/s41286-018-0049-y Accessed 23/05/2022.
[187] Strawson, Galen (2004), 'Against Narrative', *Ratio*, 17:4, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, p.430. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9329.2004.00264.x Accessed 07/12/2021.
[188] Interestingly, though writing in 2004 – thus five years after author Iris Murdoch's death from Alzheimer's, and nine years after her diagnosis – Strawson forwards her as one of several examples of people he considers 'episodic'. Ibid. p.432, footnote 7.
[189] Ibid. p.430.

throughout their lives. But here I would agree with Malabou in the sense that continuity of experience can be significantly disrupted by injury or illness.

In dementia, people living with conditions can be aware or feel degrees of loss of narrative or continuity of experience with former selves, regardless of whether they previously fit any of Strawson's categories, and this awareness is expressed, as examples, in such statements as "The self is coming back sometimes, to what it was,"[190] and "Sometimes I think I'm getting better but it doesn't last – gone again."[191] This wavering between a familiar, former way of being and an unfamiliar other self, must seem disorienting. But an inability to fully and consistently access one's former self due to episodic – in the sense of sporadic – and progressive dysnarrativia in dementia does not mean one is no longer a self. Thus, cognitive decline makes apparent the limitations of narrative as a basis for understanding selfhood. As Dan Zahavi states:

> It is by no means obvious that Alzheimer's disease brings about a destruction of the first-person perspective, a complete annihilation of the dimension of mineness and that any experience that remains is merely an anonymous and unowned experiential episode… [As] no one person with Alzheimer's disease is exactly like another… there must be more to being a self than what is addressed by the narrative account. [...] Neuropathology reveals that core consciousness can remain intact even when extended consciousness is severely impaired or completely absent.[192]

Why is it important to consider divergent lived experiences as valid even if they are not narrative? A review of popular media containing references to dementia, spanning the period 1989-2018, found that descriptions included "'death before death', 'funeral that never ends', 'social death', 'psychological death', 'already dead', 'death that leaves the body behind', 'vegetable', 'there is nobody there', and 'withered shells'."[193] The authors equate this 'living dead' view of dementia to a 'hypercognitive' Western view of it in which diminished – narrative – capabilities necessarily lead to loss of selfhood, in the sense that a person can be assumed to no longer be one if they lose access to their identifying, ongoing life story. In addition, it was found that a "reduction of… human rights in depictions of people with dementia included their right to life. This hermeneutical injustice was evident in standard texts on dementia. People with dementia were shown as being killed by their loved ones in an act of 'beneficent euthanasia' because they would be 'better off dead'."[194]

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[190] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.16.
[191] Ibid. p.137.
[192] Zahavi, Dan (2007), 'Self and Other: The Limits of Narrative Understanding', *Royal Institute of Philosophy,* Supplement 60, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.185. DOI: 10.1017/S1358246107000094 Accessed 23/05/2022.
[193] Low, LF.; Purwaningrum, F. (2020), 'Negative stereotypes, fear and social distance: a systematic review of depictions of dementia in popular culture in the context of stigma', *BMC Geriatrics*, 20:47, London: Springer Nature, p.11. DOI: 10.1186/s12877-020-01754-x Accessed 12/06/2022.
[194] Ibid.

A 2018 article by Polly Toynbee is a 'good' example of the prevalence of this attitude. The opinion piece was primarily supposed to be an argument in favour of assisted death, but the example of a case in which she believed this would be justified was that of her former Observer columnist colleague Katherine Whitehorn, who was aged 90 at the time and living with advanced Alzheimer's. Toynbee writes:

> Her sons say without doubt that if the *real* Katharine could see herself now she would be horrified, never having wanted to end up as she is. Indeed, most people find the prospect of this ending a negation of self, denial of a life's work and character, a mortifying indignity no one should suffer. Who wants to leave family and friends with a final memory of themselves as a vegetable, a distortion, an alien being? [...] But the greatest horror of all is Katharine Whitehorn's fate, not dying, yet dead to all that makes life worth living.[195]

Bernard Lyall (one of Whitehorn's sons) responded with a piece in which he said that, while his mother, pre-Alzheimer's, would have agreed with Toynbee, she had since changed – that, as she was in 2018 (she died in 2021), she was ending her life not horrified but "usually, pretty content."[196] And though he was clear that his and his mother's experience was not easy, he emphasised that what seemed to him of greater import was "not how to die with dementia, but how to live with it."[197]

Toynbee's article seems to assert that, in an existence that concludes with dementia, the dementia retroactively negates the experiences and achievements of the life preceding cognitive decline. And this attitude can be said to stem from the belief that "to be without a story is… to be lost in the vastness of a world that spreads out in all directions like arctic tundra or sea ice."[198]

"But in the end there is something I can know and touch"[199]

We live in societies that prize cognition and coherence very highly. A condition like dementia, about which little is yet understood, can therefore seem particularly alarming – especially as there are no known ways to prevent, effectively treat or cure its various forms, despite decades of research. To suggest that it might render the people affected by it not just less than human but less than animal, when we know that dementia is not unique to the human mammal, implies a value judgement that places those of us not 'afflicted' with it not only

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[195] Toynbee, Polly (2018), 'The writer Katharine Whitehorn would rather die than live like this', *The Guardian*, 26th May. [Online.] Accessed 03/07/2018. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/29/assissted-dying-katharine-whitehorn-alzheimers My emphasis.

[196] Lyall, Bernard (2018), 'My mother favours assisted dying. Now she has dementia I'm not sure I agree', *The Guardian*, 1st July. [Online.] Accessed 03/07/2018. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/01/katharine-whitehorn-dementia-alzheimers

[197] Ibid.

[198] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta Publications, p.3.

[199] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.113. I would love to know what the person with dementia recorded as saying this meant by it.

above people who are but also other non-human life forms, and also tends to infer that it is our – intact – cognitive faculties that are to be valued because they supposedly, solely make us who we are. While as a species we may collectively have depth and breadth of knowledge about a great many things, a clear understanding of what the individually lived experience of dementia is like is not yet one of them. In that respect, we could be said to be as lost (albeit differently) as those people living with the condition – that, after Phillps, ours is the lostness of not yet knowing.

Malabou's neuropathologically centred concept of destructive plasticity and, at the other end of the spectrum, approaches to dementia that place emphasis in the self as relationally networked (as in Kitwood's person-centred care) might, at first glance, seem incompatible. One thing they could be said to have in common is that they tend to consider cognitive decline in its end stages. In dementia, people experience *gradual* disruption to relationships, with their own bodies (in the sense of these not serving in the familiar ways they did prior to onset, such as through visual misperceptions), and with their connections to other people and the world around them.[200] This multifarious process of *becoming* can, as Juliette Brown alternatively proposes, be reconsidered in terms of a "plasticity of identity"[201] that may pave ways between otherwise seemingly incompatible neurobiological and social standpoints on what dementia is or might be, and who we are in relation to it. If we can accept – and this is a hypothesis of the present research – that it's in the processes of unknowing that the essence of things may more easily be perceived, it must be worth attending to dementia in that, even 'postlanguage', it may reveal what it means to navigate life beyond reliance on fictions of narrative identity.[202] Radical disruption to cognitive function should lead us to ask who we become when thus lost – embracing an understanding of 'who' that includes cognitive ambiguity as a part of our human condition – and ask this further than what we might just look like.

[200] van Wijngaarden, E.; Alma, M; The A-M (2019), ''The eyes of others' are what really matters: The experience of living with dementia from an insider perspective', *PLoS ONE*, 14(4): e0214724, San Francisco CA: PLOS, p.1. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0214724 Accessed 15/11/2022.
[201] Brown Juliette (2016), 'Self and identity over time: dementia', *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 23:5, Hoboken NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, p.1011. DOI: 10.1111/jep.12643 Accessed 02/11/2022.
[202] "We all operate under a fiction of a coherent continuous identity." Ibid. p.1009.

Chapter 3: Picturing

The photographic medium is of central importance to my research, and I begin this discussion by defining it as the material either generated with any number and variety of photographic apparatuses (cameras both analogue and digital, with and without lenses), or that produced by means of cameraless techniques with light sensitive supports, such as cyanotype contact prints and other photograms. In addition, some forms of process that require light to produce photographic objects, such as photocopies and Polaroids made with an Instant Lab Printer, can be included here.

As an art, photography can then be said to encompass what the material thus generated may be in and of itself, and/or what the artist subsequently makes with it, though the artist may not necessarily have produced the photographic material they use (for instance, collagist John Stezaker appropriates and transforms vintage Hollywoodian publicity portraits of actors),[203] and it may not involve recognisably figurative imagery (as in Christiane Feser's series of abstract relief works collectively entitled 'Partitionen').[204] As will be demonstrated by an installation produced in the course of this research, the material may be indirectly photographic (e.g. as video footage of Polaroid emulsions) but still arguably be considered as such, or at the very least be understood as being about the photographic. There is, of course, much more to photography than this. In ensuing sections of this thesis dedicated to my creative practice research I will discuss specific materials and their usages more closely than here.

As I deliberately chose not to approach dementia by photographing people, I feel no need to include critiques of the medium in relation to its purportedly abusive potentiality[205] – although I would acknowledge this to be one of the most enduringly dominant lines of thought about it, in this instance it has not been deemed necessary to address it given that the photographs I've made and used in my research are largely of objects. Another dominant strand of photography critique is related to technology, as summarised by Sabine T. Kriebel: "How do we speak in one breath of photography, and unproblematically incorporate a range of objects and practices that includes daguerreotypes, calotypes, 35-millimeter [sic] prints, Polaroids, and digital photographs into a convincing theoretical model?"[206] To objects and practices can be added qualities and functions and, as Kriebel's almost rhetorical question concisely suggests, a unifying theory of photography that satisfactorily encompasses every

[203] Saatchi Gallery (n.d.), 'John Stezaker'. [Online.] Accessed 16/01/2022. Available from: https://www.saatchigallery.com/artist/john_stezaker
[204] Feser, Christiane (n.d.), 'Partitionen'. [Online.] Accessed 16/01/2022. Available from: https://christianefeser.de/works/partitionen/
[205] For an in depth discussion about why certain photographs are "tarred as voyeuristic, exploitative, and pornographic" see Linfield, Susie (2010), *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, London: University of Chicago Press.
[206] Kriebel, Sabine T., 'Theories of Photography: A Short History'. In Elkins, James ed. (2007), *Photography Theory*, London: Routledge, p.3.

available means of production has proven elusive.

James Elkins otherwise helpfully breaks the very broad field of photographic theory into three areas of ongoing debate: its standing as a contemporary fine art, its social significance (its history, usages, and the cultural implications of these) and, finally, how it operates as "a way of capturing the world."[207] The first, he suggests, tends to attract art historians, curators, art critics, and also some artists. The second can equally appeal to art historians but also commentators working in socio-political sciences and cultural humanities. The third is largely the realm of thinking theories, concerned with photography's relations to such matters as "representation, time, memory, duration, presence, love, loss, mourning, and nostalgia,"[208] though his list is not exhaustive.

This breakdown, though a useful starting point, is restricted to theorists writing about the photographic. What is overlooked is an important fourth area of inquiry: practice-led approaches by photographers and artists using the photographic as means of interrogating the medium and their other concerns, materially and conceptually, across all three of the critical theory categories outlined. This omission is somewhat astonishing, as in the absence of considered engagement by practising artists, theorists would arguably have less rich material to respond to. Elkins does specifically cite Jeff Wall as an example of an artist working with photography who also writes about it,[209] but Wall is best known as an artist whose works "challenge the traditional pictorial protocols linking the photographic image with its referent",[210] questioning the temporal and visual veracity of the photographic in, for instance, tableaux made by stitching together images produced in separate time frames and theatrically staged for that purpose. Elkins nonetheless positions Wall as a theorist in the first of the three areas above, that of "the status of photography as fine art",[211] when the nature of Wall's work, and his writings about both it and the photographic more broadly in relation to it, better fit in Elkins' third or thinking theories category, based on his own definition of that. And this, in one example, demonstrates a certain blindspot in photographic theory – a lack of acknowledgement of practice-centred enquiry as a form of critical thinking.[212] As Alan Trachtenberg observed: "There has been little notable effort to

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[207] Elkins, James ed. (2011), *What Photography Is*, Oxford: Routledge, p.vii.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Vasudevan, Alexander (2007),'"The photographer of modern life": Jeff Wall's photographic materialism', *Cultural Geographies*, 14:4, London: Sage Publications Ltd, p.563. DOI: 10.1177/1474474007082294 Accessed 03/01/2022.
[211] Elkins, James ed. (2011), *What Photography Is*, Oxford: Routledge, p.vii.
[212] It has to be said that the vast majority of critical thinking about the photographic is by non-practitioners. Photographers and artists using photography have largely not helped themselves in this respect, as they have thus allowed the theoretical field to be defined and dominated by critics who Linfield (rightly, in my opinion) classifies as people who don't like the medium: "They approach photography – not particular photographs, or particular photographers, or particular genres, but photography itself – with suspicion, mistrust, anger, and fear." Linfield, Susie (2010), *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, London: University of Chicago Press, p.5.

address the medium itself, to examine its evolving character, its social and cultural properties, its complex relations with other media, and the great variety of roles it performs."[213] Kriebel rightly points out that this quote is drawn from a text (*Classic Essays on Photography*) published in 1980, since when aspects of Trachtenberg's criticism have been explored to varying degrees. But she then indicates areas of enquiry which she thinks have yet to be addressed: "...how does matter mean? How do the material and physical processes of different photographic practices contribute to the meaning of the image represented? [...] …how does the photographic physicality transform into meaning?"[214] This research found responses to these interesting questions with the help of Walter Benjamin, through reflections on specific works by certain artists and – most importantly – in the experiences of people living with dementia.

"The act of photography is one of phenomenological doubt"[215]

By the time phenomenology began to take shape photography was already in its sixth decade of existence.[216] But though philosophers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre were aware of it to the extent of "mention[ing] photographs as an illustration in… discussion of imagination,"[217] Cheung Chan-Fai suggests that beyond these early references there was no in depth analysis of the medium from a phenomenological perspective.[218] This is no longer the case, and the Vilém Flusser quote opening this subchapter is the starting point for discussion of this shift.

At the root of 'doubt' is the Latin dubitare, meaning "'to question, hesitate, waver in opinion' (related to dubius meaning 'uncertain')... with a sense of being in 'two minds, undecided',"[219] corresponding to current understanding and usage of the word. For Kriebel, "the experience of uncertainty yields a pleasurable state of unknowing,"[220] and she suggests that doubt can be a productive space between the binary positions of "those who have insisted that photography is an absolute construction and those who long maintained its ontological referentiality";[221] a zone in which to approach alternative understandings. This space,

[213] Kriebel, Sabine T., 'Theories of Photography: A Short History'. In Elkins, James ed. (2007), *Photography Theory*, London: Routledge, p.42.
[214] Ibid. pp.42-43.
[215] Flusser, Vilém (2006), *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, London: Reaktion, p.38. The full quote is: "The act of photography is that of 'phenomenological doubt', to the extent that it attempts to approach phenomena from any number of viewpoints."
[216] Cheung, Chen-Fai, 'Photography'. In Sepp, H.R.; Embree, L. eds. (2010), *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics: Contributions to Phenomenology 59*, Dordrecht: Springer, p.259. DOI: 10.1007/978-90-481-2471-8_51 Accessed 10/03/2019.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Cheung, Chen-Fai, 'Phenomenology and Photography: On Seeing Photographs and Photographic Seeing'. In Cheung, Chen-Fai; Yu, Chung-Chi eds. (2007), *Phenomenology 2005 Vol. 1: Selected Essays from Asia*, Bucharest: Zeta Books, p.31. DOI: 10.7761/9789738863224_1 Accessed 12/01/2022.
[219] Harper, Douglas (n.d.), s.v. Doubt, *Etymology Dictionary*. [Online.] Accessed 07/01/2022. Available from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/doubt
[220] Kriebel, Sabine T.; Zervigon, Andres Mario eds. (2017), *Photography and Doubt*, London: Routledge, p.3.
[221] Ibid.

Douglas R. Nickel proposes, is one of indeterminacy:

> Doubt is not a property of the photograph: it is a tendency of the human mind. [...] At a phenomenological level, the photograph offers its hypothetical viewer occasion for both confidence *and* doubt, and in the act of viewing, this viewer connects ambient social knowledge to what he or she takes as the attributes of the object.[222]

The confidence he speaks of here is situated in familiarity, recognition that "something that looks like a photograph almost always is one";[223] that what the viewer brings to their encounter with the photographic are "assumptions about how a medium represents and the empirical status of the thing represented… it is the *assumed ontology* that matters to our faith, doubt, or any other kind of meaningful response we might have [and] entails not confusing 'what is' with 'what is perceived to be'."[224]

This confusion can be said to be deeply ingrained in our approaches to photography. From its beginnings, claims that photographic imagery perfectly 'mirrored' whatever was before the camera when a photograph was made[225] have arguably always been exaggerated, but this has not necessarily impeded our perception of it as realistic. As Steffen Siegel points out, Louis Daguerre himself, aware of his photographic process' flaws (e.g. images being in black and white, not colour), led the campaign forwarding its detail and realist qualities to counter criticisms of its deficiencies, and thus initiated discourse about the medium's "representational perfection."[226] Between 1839, when the first photographic processes were announced (both by Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot), and the advent of technically and commercially accessible colour processes – beginning with the autochrome, invented by Auguste and Louis Lumière, and manufactured by them for sale from 1907 onwards – there is a gap of nearly seven decades, during which time the only way to introduce colour was to tint black and white photographs by hand. The distinctive colour castes of early processes like autochrome, while 'truer to life' than black and white, were still not wholly accurate pictorial representations of 'the world'. Even as colour processes gradually improved and more photosensitive materials were developed (allowing for the 'capture' of movement and increasing ability to photograph in lower light levels, for example) – work that continues apace with digital technology – straightforward photographs have only ever been crude approximations compared to what the naked human eye is more flexibly capable of seeing.

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[222] Nickel, Douglas R., 'Three or Four Kinds of Indeterminacy in the Photograph'. In Kriebel, Sabine T.; Zervigon, Andres Mario eds. (2017), *Photography and Doubt*, London: Routledge, p.10. Emphasis in the original.
[223] Ibid. p.14. The advent of photorealistic illustrations generated by means of AI now calls for greater vigilance in this respect.
[224] Ibid. p.13. Emphasis in the original.
[225] "[I]t is a mirror that records every impression." Quote by art critic Jules Janin, describing the daguerrotype shortly after the announcement of its invention in 1839. Siegel, Steffen, 'Daguerre and his first critics'. In Kriebel, Sabine T.; Zervigon, Andres Mario eds. (2017), *Photography and Doubt*, London: Routledge, p.33.
[226] Kriebel, Sabine T.; Zervigon, Andres Mario eds. (2017), *Photography and Doubt*, London: Routledge, p.8.

Imperfections have ranged from the grain and contrast of analogue processes, to the pixellated 'noise' and other aberrant visual artefacts of digital technology (none of which are necessarily disadvantageous if they are considered as inherently photographic and exploited as such).

What photographic processes can do that distinguish these from unfiltered human perception is to permit ways of seeing that are distinctly different. As well as pictorially arresting framed instants of time they can show things close to and far away, and so on. The technologies developed are, as can be traced back to Freud for example, "forms of auxiliary apparatus which we have invented for the improvement or intensification of our sensory functions [and that] are built on the same model as the sense organs themselves or portions of them: for instance, spectacles, photographic cameras, [hearing] trumpets."[227] The 'prosthetic' devices cited have all evolved since Freud's day, particularly in the case of hearing aids, but in large part remain at human scale, even as improvements allow for greater subtlety and sophistication in the way they function for our benefit. As tools, they extend and ameliorate human physical limitations and defects (sight deterioration and hearing loss due to ageing, for example).

In the specific case of photography, the apparatuses and techniques of their usage to produce photographic materials requires skill and practice: there is more to photography than the brief action of releasing a camera's shutter. The act of photographing can involve keen observation: a heightened awareness of the world around one, an openness to the images that might be perceived there, a kind of pattern recognition – Charles Baudelaire's notion that "the whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs."[228] Baudelaire was talking about painting (specifically the painting of Eugene Delacroix), but it seems even more apt to consider his quote in relation to photography given that, since its invention, the medium has provided increased means to analogically see images in, and draw them out of, the world. American street photographer Garry Winogrand famously said that he took photographs "to find out what something will look like photographed."[229] Underlying this quote is an awareness of the process of transformation that the act of photographing entails – the rendering of a subjectively time-based, three-dimensional, multisensorial experience (of sound, smell, texture, and so on), into a stilled two-dimensional and purely visual representation. Or analogy, as photographs show us familiar things differently to how we visually perceive them in real time, and additionally show us aspects of things we could

[227] Bate, David (2010), 'The Memory of Photography', *Photographies*, 3:2, Milton Park (Oxon): Taylor & Francis, p.224. DOI: 10.1080/17540763.2010.499609 Accessed 23/12/2018. The quote Bate cites is drawn from Freud's 'The 'Mystic Writing-pad' in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, the original publication of which dates from 1925.
[228] Benjamin, Walter (2002), *The Arcades Project*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, p.240.
[229] Papageorge, Todd (2014), 'About a Photograph: New York, 1967, by Garry Winogrand', *Transatlantica*, 2. [Online.] DOI: 10.4000/transatlantica.7084 Accessed 15/12/2021.

not otherwise see even if present at the time of their making, meaning that they can be at once familiar and unfamiliar.

The use of different light sources, high and low shutter speeds, lenses, filters, double exposures, and many other technical choices, can all serve to affect the pictorial outcomes of whatever photographic instrument or process is used. Photographic technology does not dictate these technical choices, anymore than the process imposes points of view or subject matter. Also, though photographic images can be said to reflect only the surface appearance of what they flatly and mutely depict, such transformations can still be perceived as evocative and thus contain potentially transcendent qualities, in that the imagination of the subsequent viewer may fill their sensory and narrative 'gaps', much in the way that conjunctions of objectively abstract letters, as words, can generate mental imagery and feeling in their reader. Although we may be still "a long distance from being able to say what happens while we are reading a text,"[230] in the sense of being able to 'explain', neurocognitively and philosophically, what takes place when we engage with reading matter (be such stimuli pictorial or textual), perceptual and emotive responses may be aroused, and "almost all people imaginatively project themselves into texts as a fundamental part of any act of linguistic understanding."[231]

In addition to the transformations outlined above – from the embodied experience of the photographer into the photographic work that is then experienced by its viewer – other kinds can be cited. Despite the objective-seeming fixity of photographic imagery the medium (or, more accurately, our response to it) is in fact unstable, in that the forms, scales and contexts in which it is seen influence our perception of it. An encounter with an identical picture in a family album, on a social media platform, in a publication, pasted to an advertising billboard, and displayed in an exhibition space affects our reading, as it is seen in different materials, at differing scales, framed by disparate surroundings or supports, and viewed in conjunction with other images and/or texts. Also, though the instant in which a photograph is initially made cannot change (other than through loss or deterioration of the original), our responses to it may shift over time: the image is both of the past and in the present moment of our engagement with it. The ever widening gap between past and present allows for a distancing that in itself is a space of recontextualisation – or indeed multiple spaces, given that the present is perpetually unfolding, attitudes evolve over time, and our encounters with images may not be singular events.

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[230] Di Paolo, Ezequiel A.; Cuffari, Elena Clare; De Jaegher, Hanne (2018), *Linguistic Bodies: The Continuity between Life and Language*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, p.304. DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/11244.001.0001 Accessed 29/09/2022.

[231] Gibbs, Raymond W., 'Embodied Dynamics in Literary Experience'. In Burke, Michael; Troscianko, Emily T. eds. (2017), *Cognitive Literary Science: Dialogues between Literature and Cognition*, Cognition and Poetics, New York NY: Oxford Academic, p.222. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190496869.003.0012 Accessed 29/09/2022.

Understandings of photography as temporally ambiguous lead us to Walter Benjamin; despite his purported reservations about the medium,[232] he too considered that photographs occupy past, present and future as "document[s] of history *and* possibility."[233] In *Little History of Photography* (1931, henceforth *Little History*) he writes:

> The beholder feels an irresistible urge to search… a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the here and now, with which reality has (so to speak) seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long ago forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it.[234]

This is actually quite a romantic notion, in that it strongly suggests that any such contingency resides in the photographic image rather than its viewer – that it's just waiting there for us to see. But it can be argued that this is not the case, and to illustrate this point it helps to consider the specific photograph Benjamin's quote was inspired by.

The image, an oval daguerrotype, was titled 'The Photographer Karl Dauthendey with his betrothed Miss Friedrich after their first attendance at church, 1857.' Kaja Silverman posits that Benjamin saw it not in the original (somewhat ironically)[235] but as a reproduction in the book *Aus der Frühzeit der Photographie, 1840–1870* by Helmuth Bossert and Heinrich Guttman,[236] and that he was familiar with the background story of the couple in it via the 1912 memoir *Der Geist Meines Vaters* by Max Dauthendey, youngest son from Karl's marriage with Charlotte Friedrich.[237] Charlotte was Karl's second wife; his first, Anna Olschwang, committed suicide in 1855,[238] two years before the cited daguerrotype of Charlotte and Karl was made. And yet Benjamin mistook Charlotte for Anna, and read the image accordingly. The following is what Benjamin wrote directly before his preceding quote:

> Or you turn up the picture of Dauthendey the photographer, the father of the poet [Max], from the time of his engagement to *that woman* whom he found one day, shortly after the birth of her sixth child, lying in the bedroom of his Moscow house

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[232] "Benjamin was in some ways highly critical of the photographic enterprise…" Linfield, Susie (2010), *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, London: University of Chicago Press, p.17.
[233] Ibid. p.18. Emphasis in the original.
[234] Benjamin, Walter (1999), *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931-1934*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, p.510. Accessed 17/12/2021. Available from: https://monoskop.org/Walter_Benjamin
[235] Ibid. p.519. Benjamin wrote that "the difference between the copy, which illustrated papers and newsreels keep in readiness, and the original picture is unmistakable. Uniqueness and duration are as intimately intertwined in the latter as are transience and reproducibility in the former. The peeling away of the object's shell, the destruction of the aura, is the signature of a perception whose sense for the sameness of things has grown to the point where *even the singular, the unique, is divested of its uniqueness – by means of its reproduction*." For Benjamin, very early photography, especially the daguerreotype, had greater authenticity or auratic qualities than later photographic reprints as replicas of originals, which technically was what the image of the Dauthendeys he saw really was – a reproduction – another copy of which also appeared in the quoted essay – see p.511. My emphasis.
[236] Silverman, Kaja (2015), *The Miracle of Analogy: Or The History of Photography Part 1*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, p.144.
[237] Ibid. p.141.
[238] Ibid. p.145.

> with her veins slashed. Here she can be seen with him. He seems to be holding her, but her gaze passes him by, absorbed in an ominous distance. Immerse yourself in such a picture long enough and you will realize to what extent opposites touch, here too: the most precise technology can give its products a magical value, such as a painted picture can never again have for us.[239]

André Gunthert suggests that certain factors may have influenced Benjamin's interpretation. One is that, though he could not have seen the portrait of Anna with Karl Dauthendey, a brief description of it is in Max Dauthendey's memoir, and Gunthert believes this may have been enough for Benjamin to mentally merge this with the image of Charlotte.[240] Another concerns Benjamin's personal circumstances; the year before he wrote his *Little History* his mother had died, he had divorced, and he was known to have suicidal tendencies, any or all of which could plausibly have led him to identify with what he knew of Anna's story in a way that coloured his consideration of the image of Charlotte.[241]

Although it means comparing responses by two authors to two photos of two different people, it is still interesting to consider Max Dauthendey's description of Anna's photograph: "a woman in a wide crinoline skirt . . . who is sitting on the veranda, watches [Karl] with intelligent eyes. There is no trace of her unhappy future in this image."[242] He was born after her death, so he could only have known her as a photograph and from anecdotes about her in his family's narrative. As this extract from his memoir suggests, he took what he knew of her suicide from that familial source, searched for some presage of it in her portrait, and could not find it – because it was not there to be seen, any more than it was there to be seen by Benjamin in the portrait of another woman altogether.

Whatever the reasons underlying Benjamin's interpretation may have been, the point I wish to make here is that the meanings we ascribe to photographic imagery are not inscribed within it. Even when we have – or think we have – some contextual information to draw on that might help us to read the photographic, we can still be mistaken, as Benjamin has helped illustrate. As a photographer and, more importantly, in the context of this research project, this is not an issue in that the work I have made use of photography for does not pretend to any evidential or factual function: it is intended to evoke. In this respect, the capacity of the viewer to see in imagery things more or other than what they are seemingly 'of' is not a problem; imaginative engagement is what leads the images to become 'about'

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[239] Benjamin, Walter (1999), *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931-1934*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, p.510. Accessed 17/12/2021. Available from: https://monoskop.org/Walter_Benjamin My emphasis.
[240] Gunthert, André (2010), 'Archéologie de la 'Petite histoire de la photographie'', *Images Re-vues*, Hors-série 2:7, Paris: Centre d'Histoire et Théorie des Arts, p.6. DOI: 10.4000/imagesrevues.292 Accessed 14/01/2022.
[241] Ibid. section 16.
[242] Silverman, Kaja (2015), *The Miracle of Analogy: Or The History of Photography Part 1*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, p.146.

something more than what they could otherwise seem to flatly depict.

This recognition of a 'more than' as advantageous is what can seem, at times, to be missing in many discussions about the photographic, especially those focussing narrowly on its technological or veridical aspects. Just as with plays, poems, performances and other art forms, photographs can be perceived by their audiences as having truth value, or some kernel of such (be this something universally pertinent and/or personal to the individual encounter), even if the work in question is evidently fictional or abstract. According to Hegel, "In art we have to do not with any agreeable or useful child's play, but with an unfolding of the truth;"[243] that works of art 'aim at truth' and can provide 'truth-accessible possibilities' in ways that are 'freely interpretable' and autonomous,[244] with and without the artists' consciously conceived (or unconsciously channelled) intent. Although photography has long been accepted as an artform, an historical, but fairly persistent, conflation of photographic indexicality (the image as inseparable from the thing photographed) with its character as a similar-but-different referent or analogy, can trouble our perception of it. While, compared to other art forms, photography's indexical or objective qualities are not necessarily epistemically disadvantageous,[245] issues arise if, as Martin Lefebvre forwards, "a sign (a photograph) is interpreted in such a way that its epistemic value is understood to rely chiefly on its existential connection to what it stands for,"[246] as this then "reduces the image's contribution to knowledge and limits any potential semiotic growth."[247]

"I am a blurred photograph, one that might remind you of a face"[248]

In a certain sense, the photographic medium is so difficult to define due to the multiplicity of ways in which it is used and viewed, who by, how, when, where and why, as these differ enormously. The relationship between photography, perception and memory has been hotly debated, but how this might be related to dementia, particularly with regard to lived experience, needs to be more fully explored.

Take, for example, Wendy Mitchell. In her 2018 memoir *Somebody I Used to Know* and related blog[249] Mitchell has, in writing and with supporting imagery, evidenced the various ways that photography serves her in her everyday life:

- In display on the walls of a 'memory room'; printed images of her past openly

[243] Hamilton, Andy (2012), 'Artistic Truth', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 71, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, , p. 229. DOI: 10.1017/S1358246112000185 Accessed 03/10/2022.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Costello, Diarmuid (2018), *On Photography: A Philosophical Inquiry*, London: Routledge, p.2.
[246] Lefebvre, Martin, 'The Art of Pointing. On Peirce, Indexicality, and Photographic Images'. In Elkins, James ed. (2007), *Photography Theory*, Routledge, London, p.222.
[247] Ibid. p.221.
[248] Malabou, Catherine; Shred, Carolyn tr. (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.12.
[249] Mitchell, Wendy (n.d.), 'Which me am I today: One person's experience of living with dementia'. [Online.] Accessed 27/07/2018. Available from: https://whichmeamitoday.wordpress.com/

arranged where she can see them at a glance, rather than hidden within family albums.[250]

- As a practical aide-memoire; prints of photographs taken of the inside of her kitchen cupboards remind her of their contents, and of the fact that their doors are doors rather than blank surfaces that would otherwise be invisible to her.[251]
- As an orientational tool; by photographing with her tablet a route she is taking as she goes along (e.g. from a station to a venue), she can later retrace her steps by reconsulting the images,[252] and by screen grabbing still images from Google Street View she can plan future routes and use the images to guide her when later in situ.[253]

Mitchell can thus be said to perhaps use photography more than many people, and in more diverse ways also. The instantaneity, accessibility and affordability of the digital technology she inventively employs enables her a degree of autonomy. But there is more than the utilitarian in Mitchell's visual note-making, in that she additionally photographs for the same reasons others do; for the pleasure of recording images (photographing as a process or activity), for aesthetic enjoyment, and as means of sharing observations – showing where she's been and what she's seen. In other words, and overall, photography as a mode of communication – by and to herself (these items are to be found behind this cupboard door, this is what the place I visit later will look like), and also to other people.

Returning here to Mitchell's memory room, what she writes about beginning to select the images she would display in it is:

> The upturned box of photographs is scattered across the ivory lace duvet. I pick one up from the pile and turn it over in my hands; [daughters] Sarah and Gemma, aged around six and three, chubby legs neatly fitted inside towelling shorts on a sandy beach. I smile as the moment comes back to me: our first holiday just the three of us, I-spy games on the journey and counting different coloured cars, favourite sweets to make the time go faster, brand new boxes of wax crayons and bumper colouring books opened on the way. We'd arrived at our chalet on the Norfolk coast, dumped our bags and run straight to the sea, and this photograph was taken the first moment their feet sank into the sand. I could still hear their excited squeals… […] Am I really going to forget all this? Will I, one day soon, clutch this photograph in my hands and not know the two happy faces that smile back?[254]

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[250] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, London: Bloomsbury, p.73
[251] Ibid. p.209.
[252] "Wendy uses her iPad constantly, taking photos of streets and buildings to remember where she has walked and to find her way back." Millar, Lisa (2018), '"I like to outmanoeuvre dementia": Learning to navigate the fog of Alzheimer's', *ABC News Online*. [Online.] Accessed 30/09/2022. Available from: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-12/how-wendy-mitchel-learnt-to-navigate-the-fog-of-alzheimers/9636350
[253] "I look at my dear friend Google and see where I'm going and print out a walking map to get there and not forgetting to print a walking map back." Ibid.
[254] Mitchell, Wendy; Wharton, Anne (2018), *Somebody I Used to Know*, London: Bloomsbury, p.69.

The detailed information she gives – about the identity and approximate ages of the girls in the photograph, the occasion and location of its making, and the events leading up to that – are not apparent in the image she describes. What this anecdote indicates is that she didn't consider such photographs as memories in and of themselves; they are there to serve as prompts for recollection. It also illustrates the synaesthetic potentiality of the photographic; the image stimulates, through memory, the impression of hearing sounds.

Mitchell is also aware that, as her neurodegenerative conditions progress, she will cease to identify the people in her pictures. While she may still be able to recognise this print as a photograph and what the image formally depicts – two small girls on a beach – it may not, as so vividly recounted in this anecdote, spark the memory that allows her to specifically recall its particular significance to her. What does this help us to understand about the photographic and memory? In the process of unknowing the analogic thinking learnt through photography, does the person with dementia-related memory issues eventually start to see the photographic in ways that we can't – because we can't help reading significance in imagery (as Benjamin has illustrated)?

The author J. Bernlef can perhaps help us here. The following is extracted from his award winning 1988 novel *Out of Mind*, which is a first person fictional account of the dementia experience of Maarten Klein, a retired Dutch marine consultancy employee who had emigrated to America after surviving the Nazi occupation of Holland. Here, in an inner monologue, he considers the effect of looking at a family album with his wife Vera, who is unaware that she'd just had to identify his mother in a photograph for him:

> Strange how after a certain page – October 1956 – the past suddenly springs into colour. But even the colours do not help me. Maybe it is because of the photographs themselves. A camera makes no distinction between important and unimportant, foreground or background. And at this moment I myself seem like a camera. I register, but nothing and nobody comes closer, jumps forward; no one touches me from the past with a gesture, a surprised expression, and these buildings, streets and squares exist in towns and cities where I have never been and shall never go. And the closer the photographs approach the present, as appears from the dates written underneath, the more impenetrable and enigmatic they seem to become.[255]

There are several things of note here. Firstly, Maarten's observation that recent photographs seem more inscrutable to him than older ones is a photographic variant of the book metaphors used in discussions of short term memory loss in dementia.[256] Secondly, it's clear

[255] Bernlef, J.; Dixon, Adrienne Tr. (1988), *Out of Mind*, London: Faber and Faber, p.48.
[256] As an example: "I thought of my mother as a book coming apart, pages drifting away, phrases blurring, letters falling off, the paper returning to pure white, a book disappearing from the back because the newest memories faded first, and nothing was being added." Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta Publications, p.11.

from the text that Maarten recognises photographs as the objects they are, and also what they depict, albeit to a limited degree: he sees people, architecture and place in them, though they draw no recollection or emotion. As an example, of the image of his mother is written; "'Mother,' I say, and I look at the bespectacled woman who leans with broad hands on a white garden gate."[257] Of course, Maarten is a fictional character, and it never becomes clear in the novel what precise type or combined types of dementia he is living with. Nonetheless, the experience described in the above extract can be said to be well observed. In 2010 Astell et al. conducted a study which found that people living with dementia respond better to generic photographic imagery than to photographs drawn from their personal archives.[258] The study also concluded that it didn't matter if the generic photographs were in black and white or colour, as they still served as prompts for story telling or conversation. In contrast, the more personal photographs were notably less successful in stimulating conversational responses, and the authors suggest that we can understand this marked difference in the sense that, unlike images with direct connection to a person's past, generic photographs are not "tied to a right answer".[259] As is the case for real people living with dementia, Maarten's anxiety about not being able to recognise his own mother in a photograph without his partner's help (and even then), rings true.

Finally, that Bernlef's character likens himself to a camera is fascinating. All photographic cameras are, in essence, enclosed spaces with apertures,[260] not so very far removed from camera obscuras, the understanding of which eventually enabled the invention of photography once light sensitive materials were developed. To function, a camera needs to be operated; as Flusser pointed out, decisions have to be made about what to photograph and how[261] – about what might be significant enough to warrant the effort of recording it. The camera does not make such decisions, however, and the photographs that result are, in a sense, brute recordings of what was before the camera in the moment of exposure: while photographers can suggest significance by means of familiar, legible aesthetics in the images they produce, what these depict can still be seen as indiscriminate in the sense that, objectively, there is arguably no hierarchy of information – a blade of grass in the foreground

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[257] Bernlef, J.; Dixon, Adrienne Tr. (1988), *Out of Mind*, London: Faber and Faber, p.47.
[258] Astell, A.J. et al. (2010), 'Stimulating people with dementia to reminisce using personal and generic photographs', *International Journal of Computers in Healthcare*, 1:2, Geneva: Inderscience, pp.177–198. DOI: 10.1504/IJCIH.2010.037461 Accessed 02/02/2022.
[259] Ibid. p.196.
[260] This is true even of cameras in smart phones. In these, light passes through lenses and an aperture to reach a digital sensor. As there is no shutter mechanism, smart phone cameras are akin to camera obscuras in that the hole or aperture through which the light must pass doesn't close; for an image to register, a sufficient quantity of light must reach the sensor, and for a required time the sensor is activated then deactivated so that the pixels on it can record and process the light as an image. The Smartphone Photographer (n.d.), 'How Does A Smartphone Camera Work? A Detailed Walk Through'. [Online.] Accessed 07/01/2022. Available from: https://thesmartphonephotographer.com/how-phone-camera-works/
[261] Flusser, Vilém (2006), *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, London: Reaktion, p.39.

of a landscape photograph is, for the camera, an equal part of a composition as a whole and it is the viewer who decides, when decoding it, what elements are more or less noteworthy. What Bernlef seems to suggest, then, is that while Maarten can recognise what is depicted in photographs, he lacks the ability to analogise and thus read meaning in them. To rephrase Eduardo Cadava, "What makes photography photography is not its capacity to present what it photographs, but its character as a force of…" *interpretation*.[262]

In the aforementioned 2010 study by Astell et al., the authors raise another interesting point: noting that the generic imagery shown to participants with dementia did not always elicit responses that seemed directly related to their subject matter, they write, "Although… there is clearly information that goes along with whatever is depicted in the photograph, e.g., a beach or people at a birthday party… [i]f a person with dementia tells a story that is not apparently connected to the immediate stimulus, is this wrong?"[263] They conclude, of course, that it's not, as in this context the focus is in the use of photography as means of generating social interactions that are stimulating and support a person's confidence and sense of self. As the present research is centred in photography such is of particular interest, as it confirms the medium's relevance to dementia, and further demonstrates that access to visual imagery can "provide and facilitate a conversational space in which experiences can be shared… where less importance is assigned to rational cognitive responses, and, in particular, where personal experiences are valid."[264] But it also suggests that, in this study, participants retained an ability to analogise to a degree, albeit not in a way that could be recognised by onlookers, similar to Solnit's observation about her mother's 'wrong map'.

With this in mind, does it matter that Benjamin misread the Dauthendey daguerreotype previously discussed? The people in the image he responded to had no direct (as in familial) connection to him and, as such, their image was generic so could be likewise understood as having no 'right answer'. However, Benjamin's misinterpretation was expressed in a text that has since become part of the accepted canon of photo theory and therefore has influenced critical thinking about the medium in ways that may need to be reconsidered. Silverman contends that the paragraph about the Dauthendey portrait is "one of the most important passages [about photography] that he ever wrote, [and] begins with a description of the

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[262] In the original quote the word 'interpretation' (my emphasis and addition) is 'interruption'. Cadava, Eduardo (1997), *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, p.XXVUI, Accessed 04/02/2022. Available from: https://monoskop.org/Eduardo_Cadava

[263] Astell, A.J. et al. (2010), 'Stimulating people with dementia to reminisce using personal and generic photographs', *International Journal of Computers in Healthcare*, 1:2, Geneva: Inderscience, p.196. DOI: 10.1504/IJCIH.2010.037461 Accessed 02/02/2022.

[264] Morgner, C. et al. (2019), 'Conduct in Dementia: Video Analysis of Arts Interventions', *Sociological Research Online*, 24:4, p.536. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780419835564 Accessed 14/06/2020. See also Fenner, Patricia; Allen, Jan (2014), 'The participatory installation – Forming the evidence of experience', *Journal of Applied Arts & Health*, 5:2, Bristol: Intellect Ltd, pp.179–187. DOI: 10.1386/jaah.5.2.179_1 Accessed 14/06/2020.

daguerreotype that emphasizes its uniqueness, its non-reproducibility, and its elusiveness—i.e., everything that distinguishes it from mechanical reproduction."[265] As his claim about the 'aura' of the specific type of photograph that is the daguerreotype – its authenticity as a unique referent with direct indexical connection to the subjects it depicts – was based on the erroneous reading of one he saw as a reproduction in a book rather than in engagement with the original, do the conclusions he reached about photography and mechanical reproduction still hold true? Does this misreading, in fact, undermine claims about the 'auratic' value or perceived authenticity of certain forms of photographic imagery? While daguerreotypes can undoubtedly fascinate, Benjamin's contention that they make "a more vivid and lasting impression on the beholder" for the precise reason that, in the lengthy exposures required, their subjects have time to 'grow' into the pictures,[266] is questionable.

Benjamin's *Little History* was originally published in 1931, by which time Charlotte Dauthendey had been dead for 58 years, and the daguerreotype of her dating from 1857 was roughly 74 years old. As Benjamin's encounter with this image was as a reproduction in a book, he must have also drawn, in his imagination, on familiarity with the daguerrotype as a photographic material in order to extrapolate from the reproduction what an encounter with it as a unique original might be like. As he can be said to have successfully achieved this, given his influential writing about it, what does this indicate in relation to the materiality of the photographic?

"Photography is my skin."[267]

We do live in an age in which technology permits us to rapidly record and save data. Photographs that would once have required time to process and print in order to be viewed can now be made, seen, shared, and stored (in the virtual shoeboxes of folders in clouds, hard drives and memory sticks) in shorter spaces of time than ever before. In this respect, photographic images as tangible objects could be considered almost anachronistic: Robert Heineken's claim that "the photograph… is not a *picture of…* but an *object about* something"[268] dates from 1965, coincidentally a short time before the advent of the digital revolution in 1969, but decades before widespread domestic access to (and reliance on) such technological artefacts as tablets and smartphones became possible. And yet, the photographic still includes daguerreotypes, reproductions in books and more; thus, the materiality of imagery remains relevant, and it's the photographic as 'object about' that I now wish to discuss.

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[265] Silverman, Kaja (2015), *The Miracle of Analogy: Or The History of Photography Part 1*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, p.141.
[266] Ibid. p.143.
[267] Chadwick, Helen (1989), *Enfleshings*, New York NY: Aperture, p.109.
[268] Heinkeken, Robert (1965), 'The Photograph: Not A Picture Of, But An Object About Something'. In Respini, Eva (2014), *Robert Heinecken: Object Matter*, New York NY: The Museum of Modern Art, p.155. Emphases in the original.

Elena Filipovic forwards that "sculpture is conventionally thought to be concerned with materiality, solidity, and space, while photography – a fleeting moment imprinted on a light-sensitive surface – seems its diametrical opposite."[269] It is perhaps for this reason that critical appraisal of the medium as spatial or sculptural is significantly lacking: despite the quantity and variety of photographic theory now widely available, searches for any relating to its materialities tend to bring up analyses of its usage in pictorially recording sculpture. Art and photography commentators alike address what images are of and about, but rarely in relation to their 'object-ness'. In order to discuss the medium as dimensional, I've had to turn to practitioners such as Alina Szapocznikow (1926-1973) and Helen Chadwick (1953-1996), some of whose works challenge the assumptions outlined above by Filipovic.

There are many interesting similarities between these two artists, who have not before now been critically considered together.[270] Both approached the corporeal and embodied experience in what can be understood as visceral ways. At times, both used casting as means of making – a way of creating traces arguably not so far removed from photography in the sense that, as a cast is "a direct registration of the real… the specificity of photography['s indexicality] can be effectively extended to casting."[271] But it is their respective approaches to photography as a material or spatial, and evocative, medium that is of import here.

Although Szapocznikow gave the title *Photosculptures* (1971) to a work that was a series of twenty straightforward printed photographs of chewing gums after they were sculpted in her mouth, the term 'photosculpture' can be aptly applied to other late works by her. In 1967 she began embedding photographs in semi-translucent resin, and neither material was then in wide usage in the arts: "Photography as a medium was only just becoming accepted as a fine art form, and it was rarely used in relation to sculpture."[272] With *Pamiątki (Souvenirs)*, a series she worked on 1967-1971, layers of "skin-like resin coats images of celebrity figures"[273] such as the model Twiggy, but also artist friends like Christian Boltanski, self-portraits, and media imagery such as pictures of the holocaust. These latter were also included in the series *Tumeurs*, begun following her cancer diagnosis in 1969. Although Szapocznikow wrote of

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[269] Filipovic, Elena, 'Photosculptural: Alina Szapocznikow's Index of the Body'. In Filipovic, Elena; Mytkowska, Joanna eds. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, New York NY: Museum of Modern Art, p.64.

[270] Other than curator Susannah Greeves' *Dreamers Awake,* a 2017 White Cube Bermondsey survey show of fifty-one artists including Szapocznikow and Chadwick, I have found no other instance of considered connection between them in any form, and the rare opportunity presented by this exhibition to evaluate them in relation to each other went unrecognised. White Cube (2017), 'Dreamers awake'. [Online.] Accessed 29/11/2022. Available from: https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/dreamers_awake_bermondsey_2017

[271] Filipovic, Elena, 'Photosculptural: Alina Szapocznikow's Index of the Body'. In Filipovic, Elena; Mytkowska, Joanna eds. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, New York NY: Museum of Modern Art, p.70.

[272] Ibid. p.75.

[273] Hauser & Wirth (2019),'To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972'. [Online.] Accessed 14/10/2022. Available from: https://www.hauserwirth.com/news/26624-exhibition-guide-alina-szapocznikow/

Photosculptures "[o]ne has only to photograph and enlarge my masticated creations in order to achieve a sculptural presence,"[274] it's her embedding of photographs in resin that reframes the photographic dimensionally, as sculpture.

Unlike other parts of the body (both interior and exterior) that have distinct forms and functions to perform, there is no beneficial symbiotic relationship between a cancerous tumour and its host, and as tissue it has no reason to be other than to shape its own augmenting self. As Malabou says, "[d]estruction has its own sculpting tools,"[275] and the bulbous, irregular masses of Szapocznikow's *Tumeurs* (1969-1971) can seem, then – similarly to the chewing gums depicted in *Photosculptures* – like emanations of matter sculpted in the artist's body. In this sense the *Tumeurs* can be read as votive objects,[276] with the difference that – unlike ancient anatomical ex voto, the majority of which do not depict afflictions[277] – they manifest disease. The inclusion of photographs in these resin excrescences personalises them; the artist 'invades' the symbolic cancerous interlopers by placing something of herself within them. As prints, the embedded photographs are materials in the same way that the gauze, newsprint and other ephemera also incorporated in the resin are, and as image traces they can be seen as adding spatial and temporal dimensions as well as pictorially alluding to potential meanings. For example, the *Grand Tumeur* (1969) works and *Souvenir I* (1971) include the same image of a holocaust victim, but in the latter work this is collaged into resin with a family snapshot of the artist as a young girl sitting on her father's shoulders.[278] Reading this artwork in conjunction with the title, which (in French) invites us to engage with it as a formed memory,[279] it can be seen as a materialised allusion to the complexities of a life containing extremes of pleasure (carefree childhood) *and* pain – the trauma of concentration camps, in several of which Szapocznikow had been incarcerated during WWII.[280] No matter how incongruous their pairing may initially seem, the fusing of a holiday photo and a

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[274] Ammer, Manuela,'"My American Dream": Alina Szapocznikow's Take on Conceptual Art'. In Jakubowska, Agata ed. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Awkward Objects*, Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, p.152.
[275] Malabou, Catherine; Shred, Carolyn tr. (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.4.
[276] Norton, Margaret, '"Nothing is Definitive": Alina Szapocznikow's Radical Instability'. In Zebrowski-Rubin, Stefan ed. (2019), *To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972*, New York NY: Hauser & Wirth, p.15.
[277] Draycott, Jane ed. (2017), *Bodies of Evidence: Ancient Anatomical Votives Past, Present and Future*, London: Routledge, pp.9-10.
[278] Hauser & Wirth (2019),'To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972'. [Online.] Accessed 14/10/2022. Available from: https://www.hauserwirth.com/news/26624-exhibition-guide-alina-szapocznikow/
[279] While in both English and French 'souvenir' can mean 'memento', its primary meaning in French – the language Szapocznikow used to title works like *Souvenir I* (1971) when not otherwise naming them in Polish – is in relation to memory and remembering. Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé (n.d.), s.v. Souvenir, *Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicalles*. [Online.] Accessed 29/11/2022. Available from: https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/souvenir
[280] Gola, Jola, 'Chronology of Alina Szapocznikow's Life and Work'. In Filipovic, Elena; Mytkowska, Joanna eds. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, New York NY: Museum of Modern Art, p.178.

holocaust portrait together in one object arguably gives them comparable weight, but the placing of the holiday photo above the holocaust portrait could suggest a hierarchy of importance, raising questions about analyses of this work that interpret the former through the latter. In an oft quoted letter from 1972, Szapocznikow wrote "[n]othing is definitive in my work, if not the immediate pleasure of feeling the material, of touching and palpating… the mud as children [do] on a riverbank."[281] Less than a year later she died,[282] but even writing close to her own death, after having also experienced at close hand that of others in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen earlier in life, she was still capable of connecting, in her work with materials, with child-like delight.

For comparison, consider now the *Grand Tumeur* elements *of the Tumeurs* series, a group of three works that similarly appear to broach pleasure and pain, albeit in another way: in them, the same holocaust portrait image is paired with a headshot of actor Emmanuelle Riva drawn from Alain Resnais' 1959 film *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, "head thrown back and mouth parted in apparent ecstasy."[283] This is suggestive of adult pleasure, different to that which is seemingly alluded to in the image of the artist as a child in *Souvenir I*, but the juxtaposition of superficially conflicting subject matter is very similar and, considered together, all these works suggest, to me, a both/and rather than a binary either/or understanding of pleasure and pain over the life course.

But I have myself fallen into the trap here of discussing these sculptures in terms of the images in them being 'of' and possibly 'about'. In the *Grand Tumeur* series the photographs, while still legible as such when the works are viewed from certain angles, are materially recontextualised by the resin and transformed by changes in scale – enlargement being an advantage of photography over direct casting. The convex and concave resin volumes distort the images like reflections in an extremely warped fairground mirror, cast in 3D. Although these works have most often been documented from a vantage point that allows the photographs to be clearly seen, the few views of them photographed from alternative perspectives aid understanding of them as distinctly different to conventional photographic objects, in that they are meant to be explored from all sides and, in so doing, the images in them are revealed and concealed. With some of the smaller sculptures from *Tumeurs,* the resin is so thick that photographs, if that's what's within, are secreted. In other works, such as *Sans Titre* (*Hommage à Pierre Restany*, 1969) and *Alex* (1970), areas of resin appear to have

[281] Postscript dated April 1972. Szapocznikow, Alina (1972), 'I was educated as a classical sculptor'. In Zebrowski-Rubin, Stefan ed. (2019), *To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972*, New York NY: Hauser & Wirth. [No pagination.]
[282] Gola, Jola, 'Chronology of Alina Szapocznikow's Life and Work'. In Filipovic, Elena; Mytkowska, Joanna eds. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, New York NY: Museum of Modern Art, p.178.
[283] Filipovic, Elena, 'Photosculptural: Alina Szapocznikow's Index of the Body'. In Filipovic, Elena; Mytkowska, Joanna eds. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, New York NY: Museum of Modern Art, p.76.

been polished, creating an impression of glassy depth and contrasting textures that make one wonder what these objects feel like.

To better understand in what ways these sculptures differ from conventional photography, however, I return here to *Souvenir I*. As an object, the finished work is very different to the preparatory collage for it: while we cannot help but continue to see the photographic, the resin the images are fixed in give the embedded prints the form, colour and apparent texture of preserved tattooed skin[284] – and, crucially, this impression is generated not by the photographs but the material object as a whole. For Griselda Pollock, *Souvenir I*, then, is "horribly reminiscent of one of the atrocious remnants of National Socialist sadism in which human skin was harvested from corpses, especially when that skin bore a tattoo."[285] This isn't something I was aware of, but I didn't need to be in order to also see the work as skin-like, which indicates that this quality is successfully suggested by the work. But in strongly associating it with historical atrocity there is the danger of overpowering additional appreciations. *Souvenir I* is far from being the only work by Szapocznikow that's fleshy, with the difference that this particular piece is distinctly personal in that it is dominated by a picture of herself from what can be seen as a happier time in her past. As she also famously wrote: "Despite everything, I persist in trying to fix in resin the traces of our body: I am convinced that of all the manifestations of the ephemeral, the human body is the most vulnerable, the only source of *all joy, all suffering, and all truth*…"[286] However consciously inadmissible it may seem, one of the "paradoxes and absurdit[ies]"[287] of Szapocznikow's *aesthesis* – which Pollock defines as "a form of knowing and an economy of affects that holds the sensuous, sentient and reflective together"[288] – is that suffering does not necessarily preclude joy.

It becomes interesting here to consider Chadwick's approach to photography. The thirteen works in the series *Wreaths to Pleasure* (1992-1993), for example, use the seductive qualities of photography to allegorise, in combinations of natural and synthetic materials, "the manipulation of human biology within scientific research and medical practice,"[289] amongst other things. Chadwick was known to have thought of the circular forms these pieces took in

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[284] Angel, Gemma (2010), 'Curious Skin', *Wellcome Collection*. [Online.] Accessed 28/11/2022. Available from: https://wellcomecollection.wordpress.com/2010/05/25/curious-skin/
[285] Pollock, Griselda, 'Too Early and Too Late: Melting Solids and Traumatic Encryption in the Sculptural Dissolutions of Alina Szapocznikow'. In Jakubowska, Agata ed. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Awkward Objects*, Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, p.85.
[286] Szapocznikow, Alina (1972), 'I was educated as a classical sculptor'. In Zebrowski-Rubin, Stefan ed. (2019), *To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972*, New York NY: Hauser & Wirth. [No pagination.] My emphasis.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Pollock, Griselda, 'Too Early and Too Late: Melting Solids and Traumatic Encryption in the Sculptural Dissolutions of Alina Szapocznikow'. In Jakubowska, Agata ed. (2011), *Alina Szapocznikow: Awkward Objects*, Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, p.74.
[289] Sladen, Mark, 'A Red Mirror'. In Chadwick, Helen; Sladen, Mark ed. (2004), *Helen Chadwick*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, p.25.

several ways; as eyes, as 'libidinous bubbles' (in reference to the bubble as symbol of transience in the vanitas tradition), and as petri dishes in which the artist's cultures form.[290] The seductiveness of photography referred to, and knowingly utilised by Chadwick, is that of its capacity to aestheticise: she saw the rich depth of cibachromed colours in the *Wreaths* as "key" to the viewer being "lured" into looking[291] at organic matter in the forms of chocolate, fur, fruit and flowers, arranged as atoms, cells[292] and "indifferent, ambiguous genitalia"[293] in contrasting sumps of "dangerous fluids"[294] such as engine oil, Swarfega, Germolene and washing up liquid. The flowers in particular, though seen as "fresh, beautiful and alive"[295] are, in fact, "dying organs"[296] in that, once cut, they are the amputated hermaphroditic reproductive parts of plants. Photographed between life and death, the "membranous skin-like quality"[297] of petals simulated, in *Wreaths to Pleasure No. 10* for example, "contrasting textures of penile and scrotal skin".[298] For Chadwick, these were not simply substitutions of one substance for another but "propositions for being in the world,"[299] a world in which there is an "[a]bolition of all frontiers + dissolution of finite existence into infinite continuity of matter."[300] This 'continuity of matter' occurs at quantum level as "[p]articles interact so intimately with each other that they *are* each other."[301] At such level identifiable boundaries between all things – solid and fluid, corporeal and cognitive – are immaterial and, in the sense that the photographic makes no distinction between living or dead, large or small, nutritious or noxious, it is the perfect medium for Chadwick's *Wreaths*.

Chadwick was well aware of how photographs can be seen to function. Though she aimed to avoid it by working towards visual expressions of what lays beyond language, she knew that "as soon as you try to embody things, it [sic] becomes a language."[302] All the *Wreaths* began as sculptural mises en scène, and what the substances in the resulting images might feel and smell like – the cloy of engine oil, the tang of tomato juice – are sensually alluded to in these photographic objects but can only be accessed through memory and imagination, much in the way that Benjamin 'grasped' a Daguerreotype from a reproduction of one. The images

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[290] Raikes, Sophie, 'Unravelling the Wreaths'. In Saltoun, Richard (2014), *Helen Chadwick: Wreaths to Pleasure*, London: Ridinghouse, p.17.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid. p.14.
[294] Chadwick, Helen (1989), *Enfleshings*, New York NY: Aperture, p.29.
[295] Raikes, Sophie, 'Unravelling the Wreaths'. In Saltoun, Richard (2014), *Helen Chadwick: Wreaths to Pleasure*, London: Ridinghouse, p.14.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Chadwick, Helen (1989), *Enfleshings*, New York NY: Aperture, p.109.
[300] Chadwick, Helen (1987-96), Notebook 2003.19/E/8, ms Helen Chadwick Papers, Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, p.9.
[301] Walker, Stephen (2013), *Helen Chadwick: Constructing Identities Between Art and Architecture*, London: I.B. Tauris, p.74. Emphasis in the original.
[302] Cocker, Emma; Chadwick, Helen (1996), 'Indifference in Difference'. In Walsh, Maria; Throp, Jo eds. (2015), *Twenty Years of Make Magazine: Back to the Future of Women's Art*, London: I.B. Tauris, p.38.

are at once 'analoga'[303] of what they depict but also analogical in the sense that they metaphorically gesture to things beyond what they portray, as "narrative[s] of material objects."[304] A way of understanding the photographic in works like these is that, sitting at a "threshold of representation, not quite real, not exactly alive,"[305] it skins the bounds of vision and our other senses, and this may be something Chadwick and Szapocznikow have in common.

"a reality that is both subjective and a record of something"[306]

In this chapter I have discussed photography in ways that could be seen as contradictory. On the one hand, I've forwarded photography as a meaningful material, with works by Szapocznikow and Chadwick as examples of its seductively allegorical qualities. On the other, I've disclosed how dementia reveals the full extant to which photographs depend for their meaning on interpretation. Are these two positions necessarily antithetical?

Reconsidered from the perspective of dementia, Barthes' contention that in photography the "image is penetrated through and through by the system of meaning, in exactly the same way as man is articulated to the very depths of his being in distinct languages"[307] does not hold, given that access to language of every kind is eventually disrupted by cognitive decline. What changes is not the photographic but the capacity to read it. Prior to dementia's advanced stages, people living with it can, like us, recognise photographs as such, but the ability to also decipher imagery in ways that align with the comprehension and expectations of other viewers is, as exampled in the cited study by Astell et al. (2010), not necessarily a given.

However, when Barthes calls photographs "matte and somehow stupid,"[308] in a sense he is not wrong in that photographs are, at base, raw 'data', and it's we who draw 'intelligence' from them. A "photograph is always invisible: it's not it that we see"[309] but our interpretations of the image it presents us with, as we bring to our encounters with photography "assumptions about how a medium represents and the empirical status of the thing represented"[310] – assumptions that can confuse "'what is' with 'what is perceived to be'."[311] As one does not need to have a form of dementia to misread photography, theorisations of it (including this) can be seen as more revealing of its interpreters and their

[303] Barthes, Roland; Heath, Stephen tr. (1977) *Image Music Text*, London: Fontana Press, p.15.
[304] Chadwick, Helen (1989), *Enfleshings*, New York NY: Aperture, p.11.
[305] Ibid. p.29.
[306] 'Interview with Mark Haworth-Booth'. In Chadwick, Helen (1996), *Stilled Lives*, Edinburgh: Portfolio Gallery, [No pagination.]
[307] Barthes, Roland; Heath, Stephen tr. (1977), *Image Music Text*, London: Fontana Press, p.47
[308] Kriebel, Sabine T., 'Theories of Photography: A Short History'. In Elkins, James ed. (2007), *Photography Theory*, London: Routledge, p.21.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Nickel, Douglas R., 'Three or Four Kinds of Indeterminacy in the Photograph'. In Kriebel, Sabine T.; Zervigon, Andres Mario eds. (2017), *Photography and Doubt*, London: Routledge, p.13.
[311] Ibid.

socio-historical contexts than of the medium. This is not to say that interpretation is without value – it greatly enriches our understandings of what photography can mean to us. But awareness of what it is relative to cognitive decline can help us to reevaluate certain assumptions about the medium.

According to Siegfried Kracauer photographs reveal nothing, as in them "a person's history is buried as if under a layer of snow."[312] At the beginning of my research I would have categorically disagreed. Now I think there's some truth in it, especially when considered in relation to dementia, but it's equally true – in a both/and, familiar/unfamiliar way – that there is more to them than this, if only because we want there to be. We just have to keep in mind that the 'more than' is in the eye of the imaginative beholder.

[312] Kracauer, Siegfried (1995), *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, p.51.

Chapter 4: Photography, Lostness, And Cognitive Decline

Picturing dementia

When I began my research, I brought to it three potential starting points for practical enquiry: dye sublimation printing, Polaroid, and image/text. With each project write up that follows, these will be discussed in terms of: what they are; the reasons for their selection in relation to the research project overall and specific areas of enquiry within this (e.g. various agnosias or unknowings in dementia); how they were deployed in trials leading to artworks completed in exhibition; and how thinking through these materials and methods of working with them contributed to the progress of my practice research.

Contemporary photographic praxis is what I'm most familiar with professionally, and awareness of the ways in which the medium has increasingly been used to interrogate complex medical concerns (beginning with Jo Spence's works on cancers from the early 1980s onwards)[313] is in part what enabled me to consider conducting my own research into dementia. In order to place the creative practice aspect of this into context, I will open by briefly tracing key photographic approaches to dementia in the work of comparable practitioners.

My starting points for this discussion are eight contemporary photographers who have completed or ongoing projects related to dementia: Matthew Finn, Maja Daniels, Christopher Nunn, Stephen DiRado, Sofie Mathiassen, Jalal Shamsazaran, Cheryle St. Onge and Peter Granser, all of whom have won awards and/or produced acclaimed publications on this subject and, as such, can be said to represent primary examples of contemporary photographic practice in this field. Finn was a recipient of the 2015 Jerwood/Photoworks Award for his long-running project entitled *Mother*.[314] Daniels, Nunn, DiRado, Mathiassen, Shamsazaran, and St. Onge each received Bob and Diane Fund photography awards 2016-2021 respectively.[315] With Granser, whose book *Alzheimer* was published by Kehrer Verlag in 2005,[316] these projects are principally responses by single photographers to recognisable individuals with dementia. Of the eight, Finn, DiRado, Mathiassen, Shamsazaran

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[313] In a 1991 interview for American publication *Artpaper*, Spence said of the first showing of work about her breast cancer (in, possibly, the 1982 group show *Family Fantasy and Photography: The Polysnappers* at Cockpit Gallery in London): "I just put up these photographs of my illness and progress and I got no feedback from *anyone*… This may sound like an exaggeration today; so much work has been done on illness recently, but it hadn't been done then." Spence, Jo (1995), *Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression*, London: Routledge, pp.213-214. Emphasis in the original. Exhibition details drawn from Saltoun, Richard (n.d.), 'Jo Spence Biography'. [Online.] Accessed 11/12/2022. Available from: https://www.richardsaltoun.com/artists/36-jo-spence/biography/

[314] Finn, Matthew (n.d.), 'Mother'. [Online.] Accessed 07/12/2022. Available from: https://www.mattfinn.com/mother

[315] Inaugurated in 2016, The Bob and Diane Fund is an annual award for "visual storytellers [working] on stories about Alzheimer's Disease or dementia" and selects one recipient per year. Martin, Gina (n.d.), 'The Bob and Diane Fund'. [Online.] Accessed 15/09/2022. Available from: https://www.bobanddianefund.org/

[316] Granser, Peter (2005), *Alzheimer*, Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag.

and St. Onge's works are the most 'traditional', using as they do a classic black and white or colour social reportage approach. Nunn's work differs slightly from these in that it sits more towards the canon of contemporary colour documentary with portraiture, but likewise revolves around an individual person with dementia (though in this case the central subject is an acquaintance rather than a relation).

Variation to the above can be observed in the works of Daniels and Granser, both of whom have produced bodies of work about groups of people communally living with dementia. Daniels' *Into Oblivion* (2016) was made in a French 'protected care' setting, while Granser's *Alzheimer* was produced in Gradmann Haus, an 'assisted living' centre in Germany. Both of these bodies of work draw to a degree on deadpan strategies[317] in the form of typologies (sets of comparable headshots, or identically framed images of the same pair of locked double doors), but do not quite align with Charlotte Cotton's definition of deadpan as "cool, detached… an objective and almost clinical mode [that] moves art photography outside the hyperbolic, sentimental and subjective."[318] Daniels' forwards her work as an investigation into "the politics of ageing in modern society,"[319] which situates her approach as a critique of institutionalisation, and her use of the word 'oblivion' in the realm of being forgotten or abandoned. But 'oblivion' also brings to mind darker associations such as nothingness and void.[320] Also, both Daniels and Granser have made images in which certain of their subjects can appear (or be interpreted as appearing) 'demented' in the sense of 'deranged'; strange facial expressions and gestures or behaviours creating a sense of 'otherness' that seems to undermine any concern (as in 'concerned photography') or desire to inspire empathic awareness in audiences of the work for the individuals depicted.

Although Parkinson's Disease is not strictly speaking a form of dementia – people with Parkinson's have symptoms in common with dementia (particularly of the Lewey Bodies type), such as motor difficulties and cognitive impairment, and can go on to develop Parkinson's Disease Dementia (PDD) in addition – an interesting counter example of work in this related field is Tim Andrews' *Over the Hill* (2007-2019) of which Andrews is both the subject and instigator.[321] Two years after his diagnosis he embarked on a portrait project that

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[317] 'Deadpan' is often associated with the Dusseldorf School, due in large part to the influence of Bernd and Hilla Becher, whose teaching and typological practice began at the Kunstacademie there in the 1990s. Vinegar, A. (2009), 'Ed Ruscha, Heidegger, and Deadpan Photography', *Art History*, 32:5, Hoboken NJ: Wiley Online, p.854. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8365.2009.00708.x Accessed 15/09/2022.
[318] Cotton, Charlotte (2009), *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, p.81.
[319] Simcox, Shannon (n.d.), 'Into Oblivion'. [Online.] Accessed 27/12/2018. Available from: https://makingsenseofalzheimers.org/into-oblivion/
[320] Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), s.v. Oblivion. [Online.] Accessed 27/12/2018. Available from: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/129744
[321] Tim Andrew's blog documenting the project is no longer online, but an overview extracted from BBC Two's 'The Culture Show', broadcast on 10 February 2011, can be seen on Youtube. BBC Two (2011), 'The Culture Show'. [Online.] Accessed 15/09/2022. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd4jOWzMyx8&ab_channel=luxxart

had, by the time of its conclusion, involved four hundred and twenty-five photographers,[322] all selected and invited by him to take his photograph, and the resulting collection of imagery is comprised of a very wide range of portraiture styles which, together, provide a heterogeneous impression of the same central 'character'. The diversity of approaches by so many photographers, all in awareness of Andrew's degenerative condition, serves to demonstrate that visual strategies applicable to people with neuropathologies need not be limited to the kinds of social documentary and contemporary art photography identified as examples previously, however exemplary they may be.

While Arabella Plouviez and Anna Fox are, again, examples of individual photographers focussing on specific individuals (i.e. their parents), both take a more oblique approach, and the inclusion of significant text with the imagery also distinguishes their works from previous examples. In Plouviez' 2013 work *Alzheimer's: A Quiet Story*,[323] the photographs are only pictures of a someone with Alzheimer's in the sense that they are of the particular domestic context in which that person – Plouviez' mother – once lived. Images of empty chairs and beds in a home setting are paired with minimal text (single words such as 'absent', 'lost', 'forgotten')[324] that, in conjunction with the project's title, serve to imply deeper meaning to the oblique photographic 'portraits' that these might otherwise not have immediately suggested.

Similarly, Plouviez' contemporary Fox also combines a use of text with image in *My Mother's Cupboards and My Father's Words* (2000).[325] This tiny limited edition artists' book (7.5cm x 10cm) pairs images of Fox' mother's very tidy cupboards with aggressive quotes by her father in a cursive font reminiscent of those used in formal cards (such as wedding invitations or expressions of condolence) – a typeface more in keeping with the photographs of flowery china and cut crystal than the words they are used to express, that Fox qualifies as her 'father's rantings',[326] e.g. "She should be fried in hot oil."[327] Fox doesn't make explicit whether either of her parents suffered from any specific disorder, but the verbal and emotional disinhibition in the text seems reminiscent of that which can be observed in people with

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[322] London Institute of Photography (2019), 'Tim Andrews – Over The Hill… And Far Away'. [Online.] Accessed 29/09/2022. Available from: https://liop.co.uk/talks/tim-andrews-over-the-hill-and-far-away/
[323] Plouviez, Arabella; MacKay, Carol (n.d.), 'Alzheimer's: A Quiet Story'. [Online.] Accessed 01/11/2017. Available from: https://www.photography-at-sunderland.co.uk/ArabellaPlouviezweb/Alzheimer's/Alzheimer'sHome.html
[324] Plouviez, Arabella (2011), 'Augen-Blicke'. [Online.] Accessed 15/09/2022. Available from: https://sure.sunderland.ac.uk/id/eprint/2870/
[325] Fox, Anna (2000), *My Mother's Cupboards and My Father's Words,* London: The Shoreditch Biennale. [No pagination.]
[326] Fano, Niccolò (2013), 'An Interview with Anna Fox'. [Online.] Accessed 11/11/2022. Available from: https://americansuburbx.com/2013/06/interview-anna-fox-asx-interviews-anna-fox-2013.html
[327] Fox, Anna (2000), *My Mother's Cupboards and My Father's Words,* London: The Shoreditch Biennale. [No pagination.]

various dementias, which can cause sometimes quite dramatic changes in behaviour.[328]

In all the above discussed works, the emphasis is in identifiable or identified individuals or groups of people, variously (directly and indirectly) depicted in contemporary styles. Of the examples forwarded, those by Plouviez and Fox are of most interest in relation to the present research, in the sense that their approach is more oblique. Also, the play of text and image in the works of theirs cited allows for the expressions of complexities images alone cannot always carry, even when presented in narrative series. Overall, however, the strategies outlined are very different to those explored in this research. Further discussion of text with image, and additional examples of approaches to dementia in the broader fine arts, will follow.

[328] Feast, A. et al. (2016) 'Behavioural and psychological symptoms in dementia and the challenges for family carers: Systematic review', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 208:5, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.429–434. DOI: 10.1192/bjp.bp.114.153684 Accessed 18/11/2022.

Picturing Clouds Of Unknowing One

The initial idea for this work (*PCU1*) came in response to a 2008 BBC online video piece about three people at different stages of their Alzheimer's.[329] One of these, Christopher Devas, was recorded in a moment during which he struggled to recall 'moon': though it seemed he knew what he was looking at, he couldn't name it unless repeatedly prompted by his wife Veronica. For Devas, the difficulty with name recollection observed in the video can be attributed to aphasia-related anomia,[330] and I began wondering how I could approach this in a piece of work.

With the moon in mind, I started to consider additional objects. A key narrative thread in Solnit's *The Faraway Nearby* (2014),[331] interweaving the unfolding account of her mother's dementia, concerns a crop of apricots as metaphor for cognitive decline and Solnit's attempt to come to terms with this. As well as rotting fruit, the list inspired by Solnit's mother came to include other circular objects, such as a watch, and things misplaced such as keys, spectacles, phone, lipstick – all familiar everyday items the losing or forgetting of I, and by extension the audience for the ensuing exhibition, could relate to. In relation to misperception, I also sourced some partially destroyed prints and emulsions from my archive. The prints had suffered water damage, and the ways in which this had altered them – the surfaces in areas where faces once were having been partially or wholly obliterated – visually corresponded to the dementia induced prosopagnosia Solnit's mother experienced. As for the emulsions, these were negatives that had curled away from 5" x 4" glass plates in ways that partially concealed portraits of children in clothing reminiscent of the 1950s. Given their apparent age and state, I thought they might be seen as traces of childhood memories that, in dementia, are often reported to be last to fade.[332] So this installation began with a specific incidence of anomia, and grew to include consideration of related agnosias such as progressive forgetfulness and inability to recognise familiar things and faces, all of which I intended alluding to through images of objects.

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[329] Derbyshire, Victoria (2008), 'A month in the life of people with dementia', *BBC Two*, 00:11:05 – 00:11.35. [Online.] Accessed 27/12/2018. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nlylw?fbclid=IwAR1DOkY78dmUFX8wDoKB4xRWN9_2WfLx-fZE1VOPagDM_usyTaksaz_g3wA

[330] "Aphasia is ubiquitous in ADOD [Alzheimer's disease and other dementias] at later stages of the illness and is characterized by impairments such as word finding difficulties called anomia." Weekes, B.S.H. (2020), 'Aphasia in Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias (ADOD): Evidence From Chinese', *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias*, 35, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publishing, p.2. DOI: 10.1177/1533317520949708 Accessed 21/11/2022.

[331] Solnit, Rebecca (2014), *The Faraway Nearby*, London: Granta Publications.

[332] "[Alzheimer's] patients retain the ability to recall remote memories, but are unable to learn new information or recall relatively recent events." Gold, C. A.; Budson, A. E. (2008), 'Memory loss in Alzheimer's disease: implications for development of therapeutics', *Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics*, 8:12, Milton Park (Oxon): Taylor & Francis, p.1884. DOI: 10.1586/14737175.8.12.1879 Accessed 18/11/2022.

In parallel, I selected the material to use in the finished work, which had its source in a small domestic dye sublimation printer; the Canon Selphy CP780, hereon in referred to as the Selphy. This machine produces 10cm x 15cm prints resembling typical family album snaps, which is the usage it was originally marketed for. What interested me, however, was its printing process: cyan, magenta and yellow dyes plus a clear protective overcoating are separately layered in sequenced 11cm x 17cm rectangles onto a 'ribbon' of very fine acetate. This long ribbon is housed within a sealed cartridge which, once used, is normally discarded and, as such, is a waste byproduct. Extracted from their cartridges, used ribbons reveal images – or rather, vestigial images, as what can be seen are the traces remaining after areas of ink are transferred to prints via thermal evulsion. When unspooled, the ribbon's fragility also becomes apparent; the thinness of the acetate gives it a very delicate, diaphanous quality. The fragility and semi-transparency of this material suggested that it could potentially be used in relation to visual misperceptions in dementia and the ephemeral nature of memory. The starting point for work with this material was a test piece produced during an artist residency in 2016. For this, I randomly selected CMY ribbon frames and mounted each colour section onto separate pieces of sheet perspex, which were then cemented together with the images aligned, one on top of another, to form a block. The test was the result of a question about form rather than content; it proved that the ribbon could be used to create a photographic object that had an illusion of three-dimensionality, but the resulting object didn't help to suggest how to take the idea further until I began my doctoral project.

In colour discrimination studies, people with dementia (of the Alzheimer's type in particular) were found to more easily perceive colour difference in the yellow to red than green to blue spectrums.[333] In addition to colour, sensitivity to contrast can become impaired[334] and yellow, as the palest of the three Selphy ribbon colours, could be more easily accentuated with lighting and thus made to stand out most clearly in an installation. With these points in mind, twelve objects selected for inclusion in an installation were photographed, printed in black and white (to enhance contrast), and selected strips of Selphy ribbon were then trimmed, transferred to perspex rectangles, and cemented together with the cyan layer at the bottom, the yellow uppermost, and the magenta sandwiched in between.

Choosing to develop the 2016 residency test piece necessarily involved cementing Selphy ribbons into perspex blocks, which meant putting aside the advantages of this material's delicate quality, but a method of display evolved from this decision that, to a degree,

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[333] Wijk, Helle et al. (1999), 'Colour discrimination, colour naming and colour preferences among individuals with Alzheimer's disease', *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 14:12, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, p.1002. DOI: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1166(199912)14:12<1000::AID-GPS46>3.0.CO;2-E Accessed 27/12/2018.

[334] Gretton, C.; ffytche, D.H. (2014), 'Art and the brain: a view from dementia', *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 29:2, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, p.112. DOI: 10.1002/gps.3975 Accessed 20/11/2022.

restituted some of its 'floatiness' – by suspending the blocks from above with fishing lines. The decision to then hang the perspex pieces together in a diffuse group, rather than individually dot them around the available space, was based on an evaluation of the size and shape of the room in which they were exhibited, which measured 3.5m x 6.5m. The positioning of the work took audience circulation into account but, more importantly, created the condition in which the space became part of the installation in the sense of framing it. Given the restricted size of the perspex encased Selphy ribbon segments (11cm x 17cm x 1.8cm as finished blocks), this created an installation in which this material could have presence in terms of scale and import despite the small size of its individual elements. The addition of a white circle on the floor below the work was intended to further define the physical boundary of the piece by visually indicating that work was present, and thus prevent anybody walking into it , but also act as a light reflector, activating the images suspended above by illuminating them indirectly.

When backlit, all that could be seen from a distance was the light reflecting off the blocks' yellow top surface. During the exhibition period I tested two different kinds of lighting: one source was a powerful old tungsten photographic studio lamp, and the other natural light from the window, the former in place for the evening of the preview only, the latter used throughout the remainder of the exhibition. Both means of illumination successfully created the desired backlighting effect for the top surfaces of the pieces, and also provided reflected light via the white circle on the floor, allowing the embedded images to became apparent as you approached – albeit not to the degree initially hoped. The ability to walk all the way around the work, regardless of how it was lit, altered the way the perspex pieces appeared to the viewer due to the fact that the lighting sources were on one side only.

An interesting precedent for the use of perspex in work about dementia is Becky Shaw's *Twelve Museums* (2002).[335] This sculptural work resulted from regular conversations between Shaw and filmmaker Michael Gill about his "thoughts on… the origins of civilisation, sometimes using this as a material through which to articulate his extraordinary insight into the processes of his [Alzheimer's]."[336] According to Joan Gibbons, this piece traced Gill's increasing difficulty in communicating coherently – an inability to maintain his train of thought leading to "sentences that lost their goal and changed direction midway."[337] The resulting labyrinthine artwork is a glassy architectural construct "incorporating deadends, false corridors, rooms that back on [sic] themselves and rooms that are too small to have

[335] Gibbons, Joan (2007), *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance*, London: I.B. Tauris, p.141.
[336] Shaw, Becky (2013), ''A'. The Christmas Party'. [Online.] Accessed 15/10/2018. Available from: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/specialisms/culture-creativity-research-institute/what-we-do/projects/fine-art/a-the-christmas-party
[337] Gibbons, Joan (2007), *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp.145-146.

anything in them,"[338] into which the artist archived meaningful items, images and words, mapped into the form according to temporal charts of Gill's recorded utterances. Through the transparent perspex bounding these representations, repetitions are said to have been visible,[339] which leads me to think of the work as a fitting attempt to 'echo' Gill's disordered thought processes, albeit in a highly structured way. Also, though the artwork is closely tied to a specific person, the result is an abstraction rather than a portrait and, as such, can be seen to have transcended its source in the sense that, in order to appreciate it, it's not necessary to know the identity of the person with dementia collaboratively involved in the work's creation. Shaw's piece also combines image and text, and points to what Chadwick called "the idea of photography as potentially a three-dimensional medium,"[340] which is something I've also endeavoured to achieve in my research as a way of materially rendering the photographic both familiar and unfamiliar.

In my finished installation, the suspended perspex blocks were immediately apparent as you entered the exhibition space due to reflected light. By hanging them from above with near invisible fishing line they also drew attention in that they appeared to hover weightlessly in mid-air, an impression reinforced by their pleasing tendency to move – at the slightest touch, they would slowly, gently turn for extended periods of time. The images embedded within the blocks drifted into partial view as you approached them. These traces appeared to be almost holographic as the Selphy ribbon's three colour separation, distanced by 6mm thick perspex, hazed image contours, creating a shimmering effect. Although I'd realised that the 'gilt glinting' I'd observed (the light reflecting off the yellow top surfaces of the perspex blocks) reminded me of gold leaf, it wasn't until the installation was in place that I realised why this might be significant: gold leaf is not a material a viewer would expect to be able to see through. As such, the coming into view of images through something one might have assumed to be entirely opaque reinforced the effect of conceal/reveal I'd aimed to produce – the falling away and appearing of familiar and unfamiliar in Solnit's definitions of lost, the combination of which I'd conceptualised as lostness and was using, in this installation, in relation to the agnosias suggested by Devas' and Solnit's mother's Alzheimer experiences. As the white circle beneath the blocks didn't reflect light as much as initially hoped, the slightly greater effort required to see the images in them struck me as reminiscent of that involved in memory retrieval, specifically in the phenomenon called tip-of-the-tongue (TOT) or lethologica: the feeling that occurs when something – typically a word or name – can be almost but not quite accessed.[341] At such times (which can be of short duration or last for

[338] Ibid. p.146.
[339] Ibid.
[340] 'Interview with Mark Haworth-Booth'. In Chadwick, Helen (1996), *Stilled Lives*, Edinburgh: Portfolio Gallery. [No pagination.]
[341] "We typically have partial recall: we know the type of word we are looking for… or one that sounds fairly close… but the word is temporarily inaccessible." Montague, Jules (2018), *Lost and Found: Memory, Identity, and Who We Become When We're No Longer Ourselves*, London: Sceptre, p.69.

days), what we seek to remember is at once known and unknown; we often say in such moments that we 'know' the thing we're trying to recall, even though it is 'beyond us'. In the experience of TOT, then, the feeling is at once of familiarity and unfamiliarity combined and, in the sense that we are then in a liminal space, constitutes a form of lostness. The fact that I arrived at this insight through an accident of the light in this piece of work doesn't make it any less relevant or illuminating.

A serendipitous 'failing' of the work was that, over the two week period of the exhibition, three of the twelve suspended blocks fell to the floor. Each time, I removed the fishing line but left the blocks exactly as and where they had come to rest within the white circle. If this failing could be considered a form of progression, the pieces in question thus shifted from semi-legibility when still suspended to complete obscurity as, on the ground, no light could shine through to activate the images within. While lethologica is something that anyone can experience and increases in frequency as we get older,[342] it becomes notably more acute in dementia.[343] Veronica Devas rightly points out that, compared to people not living with dementia, her husband Chrisopher's difficulty with recalling things like 'moon' is dissimilar[344] in that what he forgets falls increasingly beyond retrieval. Although cognitive abilities are known to change as part of a normal, healthy ageing process, in dementia there is marked "progressive decline in two or more cognitive domains, most commonly involving episodic memory and executive functions, that is sufficient to cause social or occupational impairment,"[345] and it's this irreversible functional impairment that distinguishes difficulty with lexical retrieval or naming in dementia from the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon the rest of us sporadically encounter. I was initially disappointed that some blocks had failed to remain in position but, ultimately, their falling served to remind me that the route to

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[342] "Tip-of-the-Tongue (ToTs) state is considered a universal phenomenon and is a frequent cognitive complaint in old age." Campos-Magdaleno, M. et al. (2020), 'Longitudinal Patterns of the Tip-of-the-Tongue Phenomenon in People With Subjective Cognitive Complaints and Mild Cognitive Impairment', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11:425, London: Frontiers Media Ltd, p.1. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00425 Accessed 22/11/2022.

[343] "In healthy elderly people, the lexical-retrieval difficulties have been taken to reflect weakening of the connections between the semantic and phonological levels of the mental lexicon, resulting in an omission or an instance in which a speaker does not find the phonological form for the target word (a tip-of-the-tongue state)... In AD [Alzheimer's], by contrast… [a]s the disease advances, the error rate keeps increasing and unrelated words, nonwords and utterances with empty syntax are produced." Pekkala, S. et al. (2013), 'Lexical retrieval in discourse: an early indicator of Alzheimer's dementia', *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 27:12, London: Informa Healthcare, pp. 907. DOI: 10.3109/02699206.2013.815278 Accessed 22/11/2022.

[344] "And when you get it [Alzheimer's] people say, oh I always forget what I've gone upstairs to collect… You know, it's different, and I used to say to people, *it's different*." Derbyshire, Victoria (2008), 'A month in the life of people with dementia', *BBC Two*, 00:10:40 – 00:10.50. Accessed 27/12/2018. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nlylw?fbclid=IwAR1DOkY78dmUFX8wDoKB4xRWN9_2WfLx-fZE1VOPagDM_usyTaksaz_g3wA My emphasis.

[345] Tarawneh, R.; Holtzman, D. M. (2012), 'The clinical problem of symptomatic Alzheimer disease and mild cognitive impairment', *Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Medicine*, 2:5, Cold Spring Harbor NY, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, p.1. DOI: 10.1101/cshperspect.a006148 Accessed 22/11/2022.

empathic understanding – through lethologica, via lostness – that this work helped me to discover had limitations compared to the severity of cognitive decline.

Picturing Clouds Of Unknowing Two

Unlike *PCU1*, which originated in observation of aphasia in a video, this project (*PCU2*) began with thinking through a specific photographic process – Polaroid, which I first played with in 1987. At that time I didn't have particular reason for my interest, as in a specific project to use it for, but I was curious about it as a material and so undertook some experiments, in the course of which I accidentally discovered how to 'pop' prints: holding one up to a heat source in hopes of speeding development, its acetate window and chemical backing unexpectedly separated, creating an empty pocket of space between them and, in the process, altering the quality of the image in the emulsion. These tentative experiments ended there, as without a purpose – an idea they could be meaningfully applied to – it wasn't clear to me how or why to continue with them. But they were stored away for future reference. It just took me three decades to finally come up with a project Polaroid as material had a relevant place in.

Currently, Polaroid is a photographic support that, once exposed, is immediately processed and rapidly becomes a positive print. Each Polaroid consists of a light sensitive emulsion sealed within a pouch that also contains its means of development. My interest in using Polaroid in my research stemmed initially from an understanding of it as a familiar – iconic, even – photographic object. As Polaroids have traditionally been exposed with dedicated cameras and developed in the moment and in situ, and as the most popular (i.e. domestic) forms of this material can therefore seem unique, in that they are supposed to be one-off positive prints rather than derived from any replicable process, they tend to be imbued with an aura of authenticity (of the Benjaminian kind previously discussed). As such, I thought it might be interesting to play with that perceived authenticity by making work that rendered this material at once familiar and unfamiliar, as another means of testing the Solnit derived definition of lostness at the origin of and central to my research.

The material I had to work with, however, was not the same as that encountered in my 1980s experiments as, in 2008, Polaroid Corporation began to wind down production of the films I'd initially tested. Another company, Polaroid B.V. (previously Impossible Project), then took on the challenge of continuing instant film production, but this required a complete reinvention as it didn't inherit the corporation's original photochemical formulas, which meant that I too had to begin experimentation from scratch. The discovery that the Polaroid B.V. product didn't perform like its predecessor was a disappointment, but this setback resulted in a different approach, enabled by another way in which Polaroid B.V. differed from Polaroid Corporation – it had developed a printer, called Instant Lab, which permits the exposure of its films via smart phones rather than cameras. With the aid of this machine and an app, phones that fit its 'dock' can expose the films within. This printmaking process is advantageous in that it enables the reproduction, at will, of any digitally born or digitised analogue images – an experience very different to using the films with a camera. The ability

to reprint photographs repeatedly removes any anxiety one might have about destroying unique originals, opening up more possibilities for work with this material than I might otherwise have been able to envisage.

Experimentation began with the extraction of emulsions. A disadvantage of these is that, removed from their iconic pouches, they no longer look like Polaroids so lose the 'aura' of assumed uniqueness their otherwise familiar, culturally charged appearance can suggest. But the extraction process itself is what sparked the idea for the final work. Separating emulsions from the acetate windows they're attached to requires their submersion in water and, once freed, their movement in liquid is reminiscent of jellyfish. Delicate, undulating contractions and expansions ruffle then unfurl the material, concealing and revealing images in fluid movements that are fascinating to observe, in part because they appear to transform a photographic substrate into something more akin to lively organic matter. And from there, the material itself began to suggest what it might be used for.[346]

At the same time as the above discovery, I was trying to find out whether there was any known neurological basis for the clouded thoughts experienced in dementia. As discussed in the Cloud chapter, the sciences seemingly have no interest in this subjective phenomenon, so I turned instead to theorisations of memory function and dysfunction:

> Memories are formed when chemical signals strengthen the connection between neurons… If the connections among neurons weaken or are lost, so is the memory.[347]

In current understanding, memories are thought to form and become reinforced in repeated reformation as neurons 'communicate' with each other across synaptic clefts. These gaps between neurons are extremely small (~20 nanometers) but significant because neurons aren't contiguous, so it's in this space between them that their electrical signals, translated into chemical messages, are transmitted to other neurons for reconversion into 'comprehensible' electrical signals again. While neurons throughout the brain are thought to have different functions or specialisms, the above outlined communication process is understood to remain the same, so neural processing – of perception, language, learning and memory, for example – also involves electrical-chemical-electrical signal translation between neurons through synapses.[348]

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[346] I also tried drying emulsions, freezing them in water, hanging them on walls by means of static; I considered embedding them in resin, covering them in wax, using them as screens for back projection, filming them as the ice they were in melted or while they floated in air like feathers. Although I didn't pursue these options in my research, they all have potentials for development into future pieces of work.

[347] Gladstone Institutes (2016), 'Scientists discover a missing link between tau and memory loss', *Medical Xpress*. [Online.] Accessed 30/03/2020. Available from: https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-03-scientists-link-tau-memory-loss.html

[348] Bear, Mark; Connors, Barry; Paradiso, Michael A. (2016), *Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain* (Enhanced Edition), Burlington MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, p.44. Accessed: 24/11/2022. Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2437548&site=ehost-live

In relation to this, the Polaroid emulsions seemed to have a lot of potential. I first considered using them in a work that was kinetic (real emulsions in containers rocked by mechanical means) but, having filmed several in water while washing them, projection seemed a more appropriate way of alluding to electrical-to-chemical processing in the brain. As "water is the main ingredient of both the fluid inside the neuron… and the outside fluid that bathes the neuron,"[349] the latter also known as the 'extracellular fluid' that fills the synaptic cleft, it still seemed important to use water in the piece, which meant that this had to be an installation rather than a typical multichannel video work. This also suited me in that the latter way of exhibiting tends to seem two-dimensional (e.g. videos displayed with screens or projected onto flat surfaces), when a key aspect of what I've been investigating through my research is how the photographic can be, or seem to be, sculptural, and thus both familiar and unfamiliar.

As water was to be a material in the work, determining the finished form of the installation began with deciding what kind of vessel to contain it in – working my way from science lab glass equipment (such as Petri dishes) through goldfish bowls and cookware to arrive, finally, at washing machine windows as the best solution. Given that the experience of dementia is, for those people living with it, more domestic than medico-scientific, it seemed appropriate to use objects drawn from familiar home settings even if, once removed from washing machines, the windows appear less recognisable as such – become found objects or 'readymades', and readymades are also the familiar made unfamiliar. The particular window I eventually selected had a base that was convex or 'dimpled' rather than flat, which meant that a greater quantity of liquid was required for coverage. For the water to serve as a projection 'screen' pigment was also needed; white ink and paint were tested but rejected in favour of whole fat milk, which was the medium that best remained homogeneously suspended in water over time. This was a also a pleasing solution in that the use of an everyday organic matter, like milk, as means of creating a cloudy projection screen paralleled the use of other familiar domestic materials in my research. The milky liquid in the dimpled window base resulted in a softening of the projected image towards the circumference, where the water was deepest, and in the centre, where it was shallowest, the dimple's proximity to the liquid's surface appeared as a small darker circle, the overall effect reminiscent of the pupil and iris in an eye.

Three projection tests were undertaken in two different spaces, and in each instance I used fishing line to hang washing machine windows within a steel frame. During the first test I was so focussed on how well the projection up into the glass vessel from below would work, I forgot that the light would continue through it to the ceiling above. My first thought when I saw this was that it was a disaster – that I might have to work out how to block or hide the

[349] Ibid. p.58.

secondary projection if I decided to take the work further. But this 'accident' of the light ended up being a key element of the finished work. Though the glass and liquid also alters the projected imagery, the quality of the secondary projection is mostly affected by the distance between projector and ceiling. In my third and final test the ceiling of the space, at approximately 6m, was significantly higher than previously, so the image apparent on it was larger and less distinct, reminiscent of what can be seen within a dim camera obscura. The distance between projector and ceiling also served to mitigate the danger of the secondary projection overpowering the more intimate scale of the smaller one in the washing machine window below it, while increasing the impression of it being sky-like. It then also began to remind me of seeing a moon semi-obscured by a hazy layer of cloud, with the movement of the Polaroid imagery across the projection area like another layer of cloud drifting by, as with skies in which lower clouds can sometimes move at different speeds and directions than ones at higher altitude. I'd hoped a transformation in the secondary projection would visually suggest a breaking down of chemical communication between neurons, but its cloud-like appearance was unexpected – and very welcome.

Two slow motion videos of Polaroid emulsions in water were used in all three test projections; one a studio photo of coins (that had originally been made for *PCU1* as another example of the kinds of objects people often tend to forget/lose), the other of children visiting a zoo drawn from a View-Master reel in my collection. Of the two, the latter was most successful in the sense that the image was less abstract. This legibility proved particularly interesting in the third test; the more distinct the imagery in washing machine window was, the more comparatively abstracted it seemed on the ceiling above it – familiar and unfamiliar both originating in the same projection – and this transformation became the way to visualise the disruption of memory the work was intended to allude to.

I reached this stage of the project in March 2020, and Covid restrictions meant that I had to wait until June 2022 before I could begin work towards completing it in exhibition. In my tests I'd suspended washing machine windows with fishing line as a direct development of the method used in *PCU1*. I considered that, similarly to the perspex pieces in that work, a washing machine window is a weighty object, and while I hoped the video projected into one would create a floating effect, I knew from the experience gained with *PCU1* that suspending it by almost invisible means would definitely reinforce this impression. But I also knew it would be hard to justify in a public display, as there were durability and safety issues (e.g. liquid hanging over electrical equipment), so had to come up with another approach. A 1:10 scale maquette was made of the form I imagined, which I then produced for exhibition. In the finished work, the washing machine window was held in position on steel rod fashioned into a hoop with single leg support. Its base was a vaguely eye-shaped wooden frame, surfaced with Dibond and cupped by curved clear perspex sheets held in place by

bolted strips of steel. The size of the piece was determined by the throw of the projector – the optimal distance between it and the washing machine window base. Similarly to the white circle on the floor under *PCU1*, the perspex sheet was partly there to define boundaries around the washing machine window but, though transparent, it also gave the object physical presence in the exhibition space.

As to the video this floor piece framed, it was comprised of two different kinds of footage. The first was multiple recordings of different Polaroid emulsions in water, the second 'filler' shots of winter light in my kitchen. The window glass is Victorian, and looks perfectly smooth until its fabrication defects – irregular dimples and waves – are revealed by projected light. In addition, at a certain time of day in the year the sun shines through a tree at the end of my street and, if it's also breezy, shadows of waving branches animate the rippled light hitting the kitchen wall. Filmed, this looks vaguely organic, like abstract medical imagery of microscopic structures pulsing, perhaps, but as you watch faces reminiscent of old photos seem to emerge and dissolve in the shimmer. In a way, this confluence of glass, branch, breeze and light producing something I could use was pure luck, but several decades of practice as photographer means I'm well trained in observation and recognition of potentialities in chance appearances and patterns. Though fascinating to watch in itself (in the way that flames are), the footage became the 'material' in which undulating Polaroid emulsions appear to surface before blurring back into the wash of flickering light. The piece as a whole is obviously not a magnified, literal representation of what might occur in the synaptic cleft as neurons attempt and fail to process perception and memory, but it is intended as an abstracted visualisation of this. Misperception can be seen as the 'clouding' of imagery on the ceiling – as a disturbance of the electrical-chemical-electrical flow towards recognition and comprehension.

According to Caterina Albano, moving image "figuratively replicates the physical and psychological thresholds of the self, the flow of stimuli that move through the conscious and unconscious layers of reality and mind alike."[350] For scientists and philosophers the cinematic soon became a metaphor for conceptualisations of subjective perception and cognition, likening these to "the images of a film camera"[351] which reflect the self as "an assemblage of disjointed sensations, thoughts, emotions and memories."[352] This in turn enabled artists to exploit the medium's potentials as means of visually representing "the inner film of the mind,"[353] with the screen as an externalised projection of this.[354]

[350] Albano, Caterina (2016), *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.17.
[351] Ibid. p.4.
[352] Ibid.
[353] Ibid. p.3.
[354] Ibid. p.36.

As such, it's easy to understand why contemporary artists making work about cognition are so drawn to video: as examples, Suki Chan and Matt Denham. In 2022, Chan exhibited, at Bluecoat in Liverpool, three videos under the collective title *Conscious*: *Memory* (2019), *Hallucinations* (2020), and *Fog In My Head* (2022).[355] *Memory* pairs single channel panning shots of such things as rock formations, aerial landscapes and brain imagery with voiced over recollections of past life piloting experiences. In both of the other films people living with dementia appear – Wendy Mitchell and Pegeen O'Sullivan – and in *Fog In My Head,* Mitchell is briefly joined by an actor representing her mother in a reconstruction of an hallucination. The same footage of, for example, aerial landscapes, reappears across all three works, but this repetition doesn't seem to be related to that which can be experienced in cognitive decline. The gallery staging of *Hallucinations* and *Fog In My Head* seemed more reminiscent of care settings my mother used to take me to in the early 1980s (dated furniture and clothing, wheelchairs and zimmer frames), jarring with the more contemporary and homely settings in which Mitchell and O'Sullivan were filmed, and this made much in the videos then also seem more illustrative than equivocal. By contrast, in Matt Denham's *Martha [Alzheimer's Machine III]* (2016-20),[356] the characters are fictional. The work is comprised of a series of six short films that aim to "explore the effect of Alzheimer's disease on the way we see, interpret and understand the world," presented in immersive, and vaguely Beckettian, installations. Interestingly, algorithms fragment narrative by shuffling the videos so they can't be reseen in the same order (a different approach to repetition), and overall there's more a sense of the gallery as a frame than a viewing room. Nonetheless, the use of recognisable people, real or fictional, in the work of both these artists raises similar questions about the limitations of personification that I've discussed in relation to photography, in that we then tend to look at dementia rather than into cognitive decline.

Although Chadwick used images of identifiable people in her earlier practice (herself, her mother), she gradually turned into the bodily in ways that opened towards much bigger questions about identity and lived experience than she tends to be credited with:[357] "On the threshold of biology and language, being both body and sign but not strictly either, is it possible to create object-images of a conscious flesh that takes pleasure in its non-submission to the word?"[358] Chadwick's resistance to consideration of the self as other than embodied perhaps helps to explain why she was more attracted to the materialities of sculpture, installation and photography, with light occasionally deployed as the 'ethereal' link

[355] Bluecoat (n.d.), 'Suki Chan: Conscious'. [Online.] Accessed 09/06/2020. Available from: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/library/event/suki-chan-conscious
[356] Denham, Matt (n.d.), 'Martha [Alzheimer's Machine III]' (2016-20), [Online.] Accessed 12/06/2022. Available from: http://www.mattdenham.co.uk/martha-alzheimers-machine-iii.html
[357] The front dust jacket flap of *Enfleshings*, for example, makes the dubious claim that "The subject of Helen Chadwick's work is herself." Chadwick, Helen (1989), *Enfleshings*, New York NY: Aperture. [No pagination.]
[358] Chadwick, Helen, 'Withdrawal: Object, Sign, Commodity'. In Benjamin, Andrew ed. (1992), *Architecture, Space, Painting: Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts*, London: Academy Editions, p71.

between these, rather than media like film. Chadwick's use of light in series of works such as *Enfleshings* (1989) feels closer to my use of projection in *PCU2* than the video art examples I've just discussed, in the sense that it animates and alludes without recourse to narrative. Comparison of Chan and Denham's dementia specific works with Chadwick's might seem difficult to justify, given obvious differences, but Chadwick can be said to have been approaching similar concerns in her own way: "As object *Enfleshings* embodies selfhood as conscious meat… a synthesis of energy and matter that is living meat. A red mirror."[359] A stripping of self back to matter, to what matters in matter:

> trying towards the realm of pure perception, beyond words, unformed / unshaped, lost, latent… There is a lost knowledge, another eloquence… no structures, no subject object, no language. Flesh-mind… How to grasp that space yet be of this world? Is it courage or folly to abandon to the sweet death of words? Brain stilled.[360]

[359] Ibid.
[360] Chadwick, Helen (1987-96), Notebook 2003.19/E/8, ms Helen Chadwick Papers, Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, pp.74-75. This intriguing, undated text appears to be a draft letter addressed to someone unnamed, and was written between notes about *Viral Landscapes* (1988-1989) and *Wreaths to Pleasure* (1992-1993).

Picturing Clouds Of Unknowing Three

When I began my PhD I thought that text/image interplay would be important to consider given certain facets of dementia, such as aphasia, but wasn't sure in what precise way. As my research progressed, I became increasingly aware of the varied metaphors used by people living with dementia – and also by organisations advocating for them, and others (e.g. artists such as Rebecca Solnit[361]) – as means of accessibly describing aspects of cognitive decline. In the course of my research I categorised the most common of these visual analogies as falling into three broad categories: the archival, the environmental, and the meteorological.

The archival covers metaphors that reference libraries and books (mainly, but also other organisational objects, spaces and principles), most often in relation to memory disorders. The environmental draws on elements of nature and landscape, such as woods, trees, undergrowth etc, typically in reference to the confusions of disorientation and misperception, and in relation to the Tau tangles in the brain that have been associated with Alzheimer's. Finally, the meteorological references clouds, fog and haze to suggest the perceptual effect of moments when people with dementia experience a 'zoning out' or loss of focus, as well as difficulties with recalling such things as vocabulary. The archival and environmental, in analogy, evoke a sense of material form and structure, albeit labyrinthine or chaotic, where the meteorological is more amorphous, but all, though unstable, suggest forms that have easily imaginable tangibilities. As such, they are ways of expressing mental states that aid visualisation, as they use familiar form and imagery to convey something of experiences that are far from familiar, for both the people living with them and those of us attempting to apprehend what those lived experiences might be like. Thus, it can be said that these metaphors have relevance to the visual arts broadly, and they have been invaluable in my own research more specifically in that, when something which in reality can't be seen – such as disrupted thought processes resulting from neurodegenerative conditions – but can be described in a way that can be envisioned, it becomes possible to conceive means of representing it.

The base medium selected for this third and final project is that of the artists' book, in direct response to the many dementia-related book and library analogies encountered in the course of my work. The project is in part grounded in a 2019 PhD placement undertaken in the department of contemporary publications at the British Library St Pancras, during which I researched representations of memory in the library's artists' book collections towards a possible future exhibition. It can also be said to have been influenced by the onset of the

[361] As an example, this from Solnit's *The Faraway Nearby* (London: Granta, 2014), p.11: "I thought of my mother as a book coming apart, pages drifting away, phrases blurring, letters falling off, the paper returning to pure white, a book disappearing from the back because the newest memories faded first, and nothing was being added. The words were beginning to vanish from her speech, leaving blank spots behind." Whether by accident or design, the back pages of my copy of this book began separating from the spine as a result of repeated consultations.

global pandemic and the restrictions this placed on my practice in that, while obliged to work from home, the conception and production of artists' books was more accessible to me than, for example, a large installation. But, in the main, the impetus for the work was the drawing together of much of my research into dementia, and the move towards working with text and image would have likely led me towards artists' books as medium regardless of the pandemic. In what follows I briefly consider what artists' books are or can be considered as, after which I discuss each of the three artists' books created in the course of this final research project, contextualising where appropriate.

A "familiar structure as a frame [for]… otherwise elusive meanings"[362]

Joanna Drucker acknowledges certain precedents (giving as examples the 18th-19th century book works of Williams Blake and Morris), but situates the "idea of the artists' book [coming] to maturity in the latter half of the 20th century"[363] as the time period in which this form came to be acknowledged as medium, since when there have been many attempts to define what they are, as they

> take every possible form, participate in every possible convention of book making, every possible "ism" of mainstream art and literature, every possible mode of production, every shape, every degree of ephemerality or archival durability. There are no specific criteria for defining what an artists' book is, but there are many criteria for defining what it is not.[364]

For example, publications such as exhibition catalogues and artists' monographs can be largely excluded because, however aptly designed, they are classifiable as containers for content in a similar way to illustrated books. Confusingly, though this suggests that artists' books must therefore be radically unconventional by comparison, this isn't necessarily the case. Even if mass produced and resembling popular formats (pamphlets etc) they can still be artists' books. Sophie Calle, who amongst other things is known as a prolific book artist, has produced numerous works that, superficially, not only look like ordinary books, they've also been editioned in similar fashion. Rather than in special collections, her publications are often to be found on library shelves alongside books about her, which neatly demonstrates how accessible artists' books can be, or seem to be at face value, as they are not necessarily unique objects. So artists' books don't need to be singular in the sense that they're unusual in some way – though they can very much be that – and don't need to be hand-made or individually crafted objects either, though they can also be that way. And while they can, as with Calle's work, resemble popular publications, like novels, they can also not look like books at all, or look like books without arguably, actually being such.

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[362] Drucker, Johanna (2004), *The Century of Artists' Books*, New York NY: Granary Books, p.115.
[363] Ibid. p.21.
[364] Ibid. p.14.

Marcel Duchamp's *Green Box* (1934), for example, was produced in an edition of 320. Each archival box in the edition contains ninety-four unbound items, a few of which are images, but mainly facsimiles of handwritten notes on scrap paper. Twenty of these books were special editions which additionally included original artworks. Duchamp's 'multiple' here demonstrates one way of stretching the bounds of what a book can be, and it can be said to have been quite influential. A less well known work by Klaus Scherübel further illustrates just how far artists' book forms can be pushed, in that it's an example of something that's considered one even though it isn't, strictly speaking, a book at all. It was produced in response to 19th century French poet Stéphane Mallarmé's concept for an impossible book – a book so impossible he never managed to do more than conceptualise it as something that, somehow, "would reveal nothing short of 'all existing relations between everything.'"[365] In Scherübel's take on this, the work is a block of 24cm x 16cm polystyrene with a dust jacket wrapped around it, produced in an edition of 1,500 by Printed Matter in New York.[366] The forwarding of these examples is intended to make evident why defining what artists' books are is so difficult. Once you realise they can be boxes full of bits of paper or blocks of polystyrene, it becomes easier to accept that they can take different scales, be made of all sorts of materials, and have many forms. They can have pages made of glass, as in the sculptural *A View Becomes a Window* by Olafur Eliasson, which was published in an edition of nine by Ivorypress in 2013.[367] They can have the scale and weight of encyclopaedias, be small and slight as passports. And they can be monumental and unwieldy, as in several works by Anselm Kiefer. *The Secret Life of Plants* (2008),[368] for example, is a unique object with pages 190cm x 140cm. Despite their large size the pages appear to be articulated, but as they're made of lead, so are both toxic and incredibly heavy, it's hard to imagine anyone turning them. For Drucker, artists' books embody experiences in that they have a 'life', an "ability to circulate on their own [that] suggests an animate quality… the capacity of books to be in the world with an independence and mobility unlike that of any other work of art."[369] The suggestion is that artists' books are accessible as artworks in that they can be engaged with in many different contexts, from formal gallery settings to people's homes, without the circumstances in which they're encountered necessarily affecting how they may be read – with the obvious exceptions of Eliasson and Kiefer's works.

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[365] Gligo, N. (2015), 'Hans Rudolf Zeller's 'Mallarmé and Serialist Thought' Reconsidered. How Mallarmé Influenced the Serialist Thought? And Did He Influence It at All?', *Primerjalna Knjizevnost*, 38:2, Ljubljana: Slovensko društvo za primerjalno književnost, p.67. Accessed 12/12/2021. Available from: https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/hans-rudolf-zellers-mallarmé-serialist-thought/docview/1692020627/se-2

[366] Printed Matter (n.d.), 'Klaus Scherübel: Mallarmé, The Book'. [Online.] Accessed 12/12/2021. Available from: https://www.printedmatter.org/catalog/18046/

[367] Ivorypress, (n.d.), 'Olafur Eliasson: A View Becomes a Window'. [Online.] Accessed 12/12/2021. Available from: https://www.ivorypress.com/en/editorial/olafur-eliasson-a-view-becomes-a-window/

[368] Ivorypress, (n.d.), 'Anselm Kiefer: The Secret Life of Plants'. [Onlime.] Accessed 07/11/2021. Available from: https://www.ivorypress.com/en/editorial/anselm-kiefer-the-secret-life-of-plants/

[369] Drucker, Johanna (2004), *The Century of Artists' Books*, New York NY: Granary Books, p.358.

It's difficult to avoid what Beckett called "[t]he danger… in the neatness of identifications,"[370] in the sense that attempts to define anything often fail as exceptions inevitably arise – especially in the arts, where conventions are things that tend to be critically and creatively challenged and engaged with. Drucker's contention that artists' books need to maintain some connection to the 'book', at the very least as an idea or concept,[371] could seem risky in this respect. For the purpose of my research the 'idea of the book' has been important, however, in that I could then approach books as forms that seem familiar.

[370] Read, David (1982), 'Artistic Theory in the Work of Samuel Beckett', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 8, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.7. Accessed 12/12/2021. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/44782286

[371] "To remain artists' books, rather than book-like objects or sculptural works with a book reference to them, these works have to maintain a connection to the idea of the book – to its basic form and function as the presentation of material in relation to a fixed sequence which provides access to its contents (or ideas) through some stable arrangement." Drucker, Johanna (2004), *The Century of Artists' Books*, New York NY: Granary Books, p.123.

Book One: *The Stereoscopic Atlas of Agnes Osias*

During the first year of my PhD I came across a copy of *The Edinburgh Stereoscopic Atlas of Anatomy* (1905, hereon referred to as the *Edinburgh Atlas*),[372] by chance, in the Wellcome Collection. The form this publication takes is as large sets of A5 cards in volumed boxes.[373] Each card has a pair of stereo photos depicting anatomical details of dissected human bodies that had had numbers pinned to them, with legends corresponding to these numbers (anatomical names of the areas pinpointed), plus a larger piece of explanatory prose. The cards detail the human body head, toe and everywhere in between, but the ones that initially interested me most were those of heads and their contents – or gradual absence of contents, as heads were photographed at different stages of step-by-step dissection processes. The medical texts are very dry in style, which seemed to me to contrast with the images, in some of which the dissected person's face, or other recognisable personal features like ears and hair, can be clearly seen. Studying these cards led to thoughts about:

- emptied/emptying space;
- the familiar/unfamiliar inherent in the simultaneously 2D/3D spaces particular to stereoscopic photography;
- harnessing the potentials of dissonance/incongruity and collocation – between text and image, style/content of pictures, tone of voice in prose and poetry, plus the contrast between medico-scientific perspectives of the body/brain and the domestic, lived experience of dementia (the 'patient voice');
- 'putting people in the picture';
- the possibility of drawing all the above into a book.

My first testing of this book idea took place in the spring of 2018. It began with selecting one of the *Edinburgh Atlas* cards I'd photographed while at Wellcome and simply rewriting the numbered legend on it – I replaced the words with ones mainly by Wendy Mitchell, whose Alzheimer's memoir I'd just finished reading at that point, but also some of my own in response. The words of Mitchell's I used had to do with descriptions of confused thought and the difficulties of living with short term memory loss, but also advantages of said (better ability to keep secrets, for example), aspects of her daily life (i.e. kitchen cupboards, scrambled porridge), and so on. The result was a partially 'found' poem in numbered legend form which, paired with the numbered emptied skull in the stereo photos, project into that stereoscopic space the thoughts a person with Alzheimer's might have in mind still, despite

[372] Waterston, David (1905), *The Edinburgh Stereoscopic Atlas of Anatomy*, London: Caxton Publishing Company.
[373] It's interesting to note here that the previously cited 1934 artists' book by Duchamp, *Green Box*, was not without precedent – although the *Edinburgh Atlas* differs in several respects (purpose, audience), like Duchamp's work its boxed contents were looseleaf, and it's just one example of this kind of book format in circulation prior to Duchamp's.

the brain atrophy and neuronal damage symptomatic of that condition's pathology. The found poetry in the legend also sat at odds with the dry, anatomical prose above it, which I didn't alter at that stage.

Following this tentative experiment I undertook further research into medical usages of stereoscopic imagery, also in the Wellcome Collection library, and this led to the discovery of other sources of inspiration: Thompson's *Stereoscopic Atlas of the Eye* (1912)[374] and Bothman's *Fundus Oculi* (1939)[375] – both ophthalmological equivalents to the *Edinburgh Atlas* – and Wright's *Selected Pictures of Extraocular Afflictions with Explanatory Notes* (1938).[376] The latter publication's content was inappropriate to my research, but its form was of interest in that it was comprised of two separate booklets side by side, bound together by a central spine. The book opening to the left contained explanatory texts about the stereo images in the book opening to the right. I noticed with the right-hand book that I was reading it backwards and found this unnerving, which made it stick in my mind – could a similar device be used to suggest disorientation in dementia? Thus, this double book format later helped to inform, in part, the design decisions that led to the creation of *The Stereoscopic Atlas of Agnes Osias* (hereon referred to as *Atlas*).

As an object, then, my *Atlas* was conceived as two books bound side by side, their pages designed to open to the left and right, and the content split across both, e.g. page 4 of the book on the left and page 4 of the book on the right resemble one related page when viewed in tandem, but because this 'page' can be split centrally it's possible to read their content (both text and stereo images) out of synch with each other. This split page format thus holds the possibility of materially disorientating the reader if they choose to view the pages out of sequence. Initially, the layout of my pages took that of *Edinburgh Atlas* cards as starting point, a loose constraint to structure the design, but the layout evolved as I considered particular aspects of the book. For example, to write the prose sections of text so that they could flow from left to right pages and still seem to make some kind of sense (grammatically, at least), regardless of whether the pages were in or out of sequence, led to the decision to divide them from one text block, as in the *Edinburgh Atlas*, into two columns, one per split 'page'. After mocking up a rough dummy, I realised that the eventual reader of the book might need to use both hands to turn the left and right pages, and that this would be easier if they did so from the bottom rather than the top. As I wanted to integrate a stereoviewer into the book cover, this meant that it would be best placed at the top of the

[374] Thomson, Arthur (1912), *The Anatomy of the Human Eye, as Illustrated by Enlarged Stereoscopic Photographs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Also referred to as 'Thomson's Stereoscopic Atlas of the Eye'.
[375] Bothman, Louis (1939), *Fundus Atlas: Stereoscopic Photos of the Fundus Oculi,* Chicago: The Yearbook Publishers. Also referred to as 'Bothman's Fundus Oculi'.
[376] Wright, Lt Col. R.E. (1938), *Selected Pictures of Extraocular Afflictions with Explanatory Notes*, Madras: Government Press.

book, which in turn meant that the stereo images would need to be at the tops of the pages. There are not many stereoscopic books with integrated stereoviewers in existence, but those I found in the course of research tended to have the viewers at the bottom of the books.[377] Therefore, I had to design my own cover from scratch.

To begin with, the writing of prose sections involved a 'hacking' process, whereby I took text from the *Edinburgh Atlas* and altered single words – e.g. 'subarachnoid' became 'subconscious' – then gradually intervened more and more until the original was unrecognisable. The 'rule' for this 'hack' was that the words in the numbered legend poem should appear in the prose it was being paired with, the idea being that both prose and legend poem would be linked and could also be read in relation to the numbers pinned within the head in the stereo images, as if the numbers 'floating' within the emptied head cavity might be where the words/thoughts had occurred. Not all the prose and legend poems in my Atlas were produced using this same method, however, as in the process I devised and tested several different writing techniques, developed for the express purpose of creating this book. In all but two prose pieces – one derived from thoughts about aphasia and crosswords, the other inspired by two passages in Annie Ernaux' *Les Années* (2008)[378] – my texts had at their origin existing texts which I transformed by edit and addition, be the starting points extracts from scientific articles or recipes for calf's brain soup. As for the imagery the book contains, there is a mixture of photographs, in 2D and 3D, either appropriated from various copyright free sources or produced by myself, which to a degree mirrors my approach to all the written elements the images are bound with.

From the late 19th century through to the mid-20th century in particular, stereoscopy was widely used for educational, military and scientific purposes,[379] but is best known as a popular Victorian parlour entertainment. It has not been commonly used in contemporary photography and the wider fine arts – the words 'popular' and 'entertainment' in the above perhaps helping to indicate one reason for this, in that it has been seen by many as 'gimmicky' and, as such, less worthy of serious consideration than more conventional

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[377] Starkman, David (2020), 'An Abbreviated History of Stereo-Pair Illustrated books', *The Stereosite*. [Online.] Accessed 19/05/2021. Available from: https://stereosite.com/history/an-abbreviated-history-of-stereo-pair-illustrated-books/

[378] Ernaux, Annie (2008), *Les Années*, Paris: Gallimard, pp. 35 and 38.

[379] 3D imaging and modelling, in the sciences especially, is still in use to this day, albeit no longer in the 19th – 20th century form of stereoscopy under discussion here. For an example, see: Rubio, Rodriguez et al. (2019), 'Stereoscopy in Surgical Neuroanatomy: Past, Present, and Future', *Operative Neurosurgery*, Vol 18:2, San Francisco CA: University of California, pp.105-117. DOI: 10.1093/ons/opz123 Accessed 23/07/2021.

photographic imagery.[380] As someone with a long interest in the sculptural potentials of photography, however, I was open to stereoscopy precisely because the optical illusion it produces is perceived as three-dimensional. For it to not seem a contrivance, apt reason for its use seemed key, and my chance encounter with the emptied head imagery in the *Edinburgh Atlas*, with its potential for suggesting mental spaces, convinced me that my research project provided a perfect opportunity for meaningful application of this photographic technique. In what follows I contextualise my work with it in relation to how it has been understood and utilised in literary and fine arts, and the ways in which it can be considered as relevant to lived experiences of misperceptions in dementia.

"'Unknown reality' works like a stereoscope"[381]

Stereoscopy is a form of photography that produces an illusion of three-dimensional space; when two slightly diverging images – one for each eye – of the same scene or object are viewed simultaneously with the aid of a viewer, our brains can process the paired photos as one and interpret them together as having volume and depth.

What's the difference between the ability to 'see' stereoscopic images as 3D and our everyday binocular perception of volume and depth, when in both instances we need our brains to 'read' as one the otherwise two-dimensional views we see with each eye? One could be that what we see in real life is before us in both space and time – objects in spatial contexts that we perceive in volume because they are in reality three-dimensional, and that we see as such in real time. By contrast, stereoscopic imagery is a significant step removed from both the spatial and volumetric qualities of the things they depict, and the past moment in which they were photographed; even if we need the same kind of binocular vision to perceive the three-dimensionality in stereoscopy as in our everyday lives, when we use it to view stereoscopic imagery something different occurs. Through the stereoviewer, the space that seemingly opens before us is, in reality, only existent in our minds; it is our brains that 'see' the images as three-dimensional, not our eyes, and this psychophysiological effect of binocular vision is called stereopsis.

My *Atlas* plays with this effect in that there are three ways to view the stereo pairs of photographs: as familiar two-dimensional prints, in 3D when looking at matched pairs

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[380] "Duchamp's numerous stereoscopic works, beginning around 1918 and extending to his last pieces in 1968, have been credited variously to his erudite studies of perspective, the fourth dimension, and the viewer's role in "completing" the artwork; Dali's 1970s stereoscopic canvasses, by contrast, are generally framed facilely as somewhat gimmicky efforts at achieving heightened illusionism." King, Elliott (2018), 'The Spectator Makes the Picture: Optical Illusions and Viewer Experience in Dali's and Duchamp's Stereoscopic Works', *Avant Garde Studies*, 3, St Petersburg FL: The Dali Museum, p.1. Accessed 14/07/2021. Available from: https://beta.thedali.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/King_Final.pdf

[381] O'Riley, Tim (1998), *Representing Illusions: Space, narrative and the spectator in fine art practice*, PhD Thesis, London: Chelsea College of Art and Design, p. 56.

through a stereoviewer and, when unmatched, as 'double exposures' that also only exist in the mind. The split page construction of the book allows the reader to look at the imagery in and out of sequence both with and without a stereoviewer – and when images are seen out of sequence through a viewer there is a vaguely hallucinatory effect, as both can be seen as overlapping but one will appear to 'ghost' the other. This can be compared to the cinematic effect of 'cross-dissolve',[382] which Bettina Mosbach calls a 'third image':

> [S]till photography achieves the static equivalent of this 'third image' in basically three ways: (1) through double exposure, whereby an exposed piece of film is reshot with a second image on top of the first; (2) through 'sandwiching', whereby two images are printed on one piece of photographic paper; (3) by shooting into a transparent, reflective surface, capturing both the reflection on the surface and the object behind it. All of these techniques produce a single picture composed of two transparently overlapping images… As Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, surrealist photographers made use of sandwiching and double exposure in order to infiltrate the photographic print with spacing and so 'testify' to a 'cleavage in reality', the essential surrealist 'experience of the real itself as a sign'.[383]

In stereoscopy, Mosbach's photographic 'cross-dissolve' happens in the viewer's mind rather than in print, so the effect that occurs when looking at dissimilar images through a stereoviewer can be considered a 'fourth image' following on from her classification. The relevance to dementia of this way of 'seeing' the images lies in the visual hallucinations some people living with it can experience[384] – an even greater 'cleavage in reality' in that they, like stereoscopy and mismatched stereoscopic images, only occur in the mind.

Although stereoscopy has not been widely applied and appreciated in the fine arts there are some notable exceptions, and its surreal qualities have been particularly influential in literary circles. Marcel Proust and W.G. Sebald are known to have been interested in the concept, if not its practice; as both writers were, in their own ways, drawn to the photographic more

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[382] In Oxford Reference, a cross dissolve is defined as the moving image editing technique that overlaps "two shots in which the first gradually fades out as the second is fading in…. This typically signifies the passage of time." Oxford Reference (n.d.), s.v. Cross dissolve. [Online.] Accessed 06/12/2021. Available from: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095649918

[383] Bettina, Mosbach, 'Superimposition as a Narrative Strategy in Austerlitz'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel, eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.391.

[384] "Among the clinical symptoms of DLB [Dementia with Lewey Bodies], recurrent visual hallucinations are most characteristic... Visual hallucinations can also occur in Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia; however, most are attributed to delirium. Delirium-induced hallucinations are temporary, whereas DLB hallucinations continue to recur intermittently. Furthermore, unlike individuals with delirium, many people with DLB can report the details of their hallucinations afterward as they lack the disturbance of consciousness associated with delirium." Yumoto, A.; Suwa, S. (2021), 'Difficulties and associated coping methods regarding visual hallucinations caused by dementia with Lewy bodies', *Dementia*, 20:1, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, p.292. DOI: 10.1177/1471301219879541 Accessed 06/12/2021.

broadly and to themes of time and memory, it could be said that they were perhaps interested in stereoscopy's 'cross dissolve' potentialities for similar reasons. As to the visual arts, Marcel Duchamp and William Kentridge are key examples of artists who have used stereoscopy.

Duchamp's almost career-long interest in optics, binocular vision and optical illusion centred in the fact that, with these, art is "not only sited in the work itself, but also in the interaction between the work and the viewer,"[385] in that it is "the spectator who 'makes the picture'."[386] For Duchamp, "the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."[387] As in stereoscopy the finished artwork can only be completed by coming into being – by 'blossoming'[388] – in the mind of its viewer, it is a form of imagery that is Duchampian par excellence.

According to Octavio Paz, stereoscopy's attraction for Duchamp also lay in his "preoccupation with the relationship between the second and third dimension."[389] In the sense that I'm interested in the sculptural potentialities of photography I feel some affinity with this concern. The particular stereoscopic work by Duchamp that I would here like to draw attention to is his *Stéréoscopie à la main* (1918). It consists of a pair of black and white stereo photos of a seascape onto which Duchamp drew, in pencil, geometric forms, thus producing a 'rectified readymade' a little reminiscent of stereoscopic cards used in the same period by ophthalmologists as means of correcting astigmatism in their patients.[390] For Gavin Adams, in Duchamp's *Stéréoscopie à la main* the illusion of three-dimension is so disappointingly weak as to be barely stereoscopic at all, in that the seascape selected is both featureless and almost flat, and the octahedron overdrawn on it hasn't the volume one might expect of it when seen through a stereoviewer.[391] I would argue that this is not so difficult to understand when considered with Duchamp's career-long propensity to bend and

[385] King, Elliott (2018), 'The Spectator Makes the Picture: Optical Illusions and Viewer Experience in Dali's and Duchamp's Stereoscopic Works', *Avant Garde Studies*, Issue 3, St Petersburg FL: The Dali Museum, p.176. Accessed 14/07/2021. Available from: https://beta.thedali.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/King_Final.pdf
[386] Clair, Jean (1978), 'Opticeries', *October*, 5, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, p.103. Accessed 14/07/2021. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/778648
[387] Sanouillet, Michel; Peterson, Elmer eds (!975), *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames and Hudson, p.140.
[388] "In Duchamp's work, the word blossoming signifies a transformation, a change in state… [and to] Duchamp's life-long interest in stereoscopy… [which] entails an *épanouissement*, a blossoming of the monocular picture plane, in the mind." Haralambidou, Penelope (2007), 'The Stereoscopic Veil', *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 11:1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.42-43. DOI: 10.1017/S1359135507000486 Accessed 14/07/2021.
[389] Adams, Gavin (2015), 'Duchamp's Erotic Stereoscopic Exercises', *Estudos de Cultura Material*, 23:2, São Paulo: Anais do Museu Paulista, p.176. DOI: 10.1590/1982-02672015v23n0206 Accessed 14/07/2021.
[390] Ibid. Adams briefly details the history of this ophthalmological therapy pp.172-176.
[391] Ibid. p.180.

break 'rules', including his own – to challenge conventions by disrupting an audience's perceptions, assumptions and expectations – and it can be said that he has succeeded in this aim in that, as Tim O'Riley has forwarded, the work "ultimately seems to achieve a confusion of spatial conventions: the perspectival, the stereoscopic and the photographic."[392]

I have observed in my own work that placing a non-stereoscopic drawing over a pair of stereo photos can produce a sense of incongruity. For my *Atlas*, I layered a clockface drawn by a person with Alzheimer's over images of a retina from Bothman's *Fundus Oculi:*[393] the drawing was sampled from a common diagnostic tool used in assessment of cognitive decline called The Clock-Drawing Test, and the style of sketch selected is deemed typical of Alzheimer's.[394] When seen through a stereoviewer, the clockface in the foreground – which logically ought to appear to be flat – seems to warp into the illusion of space behind it. This space then looks very distant, like a landscape as stereoscopically photographed from a great height (as if from outside the earth's atmosphere), though what we are actually looking at is the inside of someone's left eye. These two very different kinds of imagery are readable separately, but their pairing troubles our encounter with imagery that we cannot help but anticipate will appear to be familiar. The inclusion of the clock face was initially intended as means of introducing numbers to the stereo images that would correspond to the numbered legend below these, and visually mirror the suggestion of temporal disorientation in the prose. The idea for this 'rectified readymade' occurred long before I became aware of Duchamp's, and before I learnt of his interest in optics and stereography more broadly but, though after the fact, the comparison is still relevant and subsequent discovery of Duchamp's approach to the stereoscopic has expanded and enriched my own.

Turning now to Kentridge, *Tummelplatz* (2013-17)[395] is a pair of hand bound artists' books containing sets of ten stereoscopic photogravures each, provided with an antique desktop stereoscope (of the sort originally used by the military to study aerial reconnaissance photographs and topographical maps in the early 20th century). This is not the only work by Kentridge using stereoscopy – another example being a folio of six looseleaf photogravures with stereopticon called *The Stereoscopic Suite* (2007)[396] – but *Tummelplatz* is of specific interest in that it takes the form of an artists' book and, as such, represents a useful

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[392] O'Riley, Tim (1998), *Representing Illusions - space, narrative and the spectator in fine art practice*, PhD Thesis, London: Chelsea College of Art and Design, p.62.
[393] Bothman, Louis (1939), *Fundus Atlas: Stereoscopic Photos of the Fundus Oculi,* Chicago: The Yearbook Publishers, card 24.
[394] Agrell, Berit; Dehlin, Ove (2012), 'The clock-drawing test', *Age and Ageing*, 41:3, Oxford: Oxford Academic, pp.iii41-iii45. DOI: 10.1093/ageing/afs149 Accessed 03/09/2020.
See also: New Atlas (2015), 'Digital pen technique can diagnose dementia faster and earlier'. [Online.] Accessed 02/10/2020. Available from: https://newatlas.com/digital-pen-dementia-diagnosis/38955/
[395] Ivorypress (n.d.), 'William Kentridge: Tummelplatz'. [Online.] Accessed 20/07/2021. Available from: https://www.ivorypress.com/en/editorial/william-kentridge-tummelplatz/
[396] Kentridge's 1999 film, though entitled *Stereoscope*, is not stereoscopic.

precedent for my own work. And, in the sense that the stereoscopic imagery in Kentridge's artists' books combine drawing and photography, they may also be seen as loosely comparable to the work by Duchamp previously discussed.

In *Langenscheidt Dictionary*, the literal translation of Tummelplatz is 'playground',[397] though for Siri Hustvedt the German also carries connotations of a space of action and commotion, as applicable to adults as it is to children, and points out that in Freud's use of the term, in his 1914 paper 'Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through', it is "an intermediate region between illness and real life… a field of 'struggle' or, more dramatically, as 'a battlefield' between doctor and patient… where analysis happens."[398] Kentridge's use of the term in the title of his artists' book is described by him as being about "finding the similarities between the studio and the psychoanalytic space"[399] – "the nature of the studio and the activity of making sense in it… [and] the material, that is, the format of the artists' book and specifically the virtual pop-up book: the three-dimensional book that lies flat."[400] This concern with two and three dimensions also has parallels to Duchamp, but in Kentridge's case it additionally takes into consideration the work, in book form, as both a two-dimensional and three-dimensional object in a way that Duchamp's *Stéréoscopie à la main* does not. How successful Kentridge's attempt to equate psychoanalytic and artistic spaces of endeavour in this work is hard to assess, as I have not been able to study it for myself, or find any scholarly critique of it. But I have found it useful to consider Kentridge's approach to introducing illusion, through stereoscopy, within an artists' publication.

The images in his artists' book are of drawings and text, arranged in his studio as if this space were a stage set, which were then photographed stereoscopically and reproduced as printed pages. The work, then, was constructed as sculpture and deconstructed as photographs which, in the Duchampian sense, then need to be 'reconstructed' in the mind of the book's viewer: "The studio becomes a place for the world to be deconstructed – taken apart and then put back together."[401] The lecture from which this quote is drawn references Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899)[402] which Kentridge later links to the origin of the idea for *Tummelplatz*. As Kentridge has, in this work, drawn an equation between psychoanalytic and creative space, and as the work of psychoanalysis takes place in the mind or psyche, it is

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[397] Langenscheidt Dictionary (n.d.), s.v. Tummelplatz. [Online.] Accessed 20/07/2021. Available from: https://en.langenscheidt.com/german-english/tummelplatz
[398] Hustvedt, Siri (2012), 'Freud's Playground: Some Thoughts on the Art and Science of Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity', *Salmagundi*, 174/175, Saratoga Springs NY: Skidmore College, p.60. Accessed 20/07/2021. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41638790
[399] From an interview with William Kentridge (Johannesburg-Madrid: correspondence, 21st May 2018). In Brandon, Clare ed. (2021), *Stories*, Madrid: Ivorypress, p.313.
[400] Ibid. p.309.
[401] Kentridge, William (2013), 'Thinking on One's Feet: A Walking Tour of the Studio'. In Brandon, Clare ed. (2021), *Words*, Madrid: Ivorypress, p.340.
[402] ibid.

possible to interpret the book as means to enter an aspect of Kentridge's inner creative process, and in this sense the 'dream-like' illusion of stereoscopy is key.

At the beginning of my *Atlas*, I reproduce a single image of a numbered brain selected from a pair on an *Edinburgh Atlas* card. This now resolutely two-dimensional photo is printed across two pages with the split between them running down the centre of the brain. To enter the book one must pass through this image, the idea being that the reader will tacitly understand that they are entering the fragmented world of Agnes, my fictional character and, in a similar way to Kentridge's *Tummelplatz*, experience the book, as a whole and through the stereographic imagery within, as suggestive of mental spaces.

"the possibility of simultaneous time"[403]

Duchamp was known to have been interested in the second and third dimensions, but he was also drawn to a fourth. In 1936 he signed Charles Sirato's 'Dimensionist Manifesto',[404] which posited three areas in which the 'dimensionist tendency' had already begun to take effect: "literature leaving the line and entering the plane, painting leaving the plane and entering space, sculpture stepping out of closed, immobile forms," and a fourth possible area for future development of an entirely new art form – 'Cosmic Art', in which "the human being, rather than regarding the art object from the exterior, becomes the centre and five-sensed subject of the artwork".[405] In other words, Duchamp's proposal that the spectator 'makes the picture'. The non-Euclidian fourth dimension is not something we can spatially perceive, or even easily imagine, and the same can be said of time, which is another way of understanding the fourth dimension. In the work of Proust and Sebald, that I will now forward here as examples, impressions of time as non-linear – of perceptions of the past surging into the present or the present collapsing into the past – can be read as "literature leaving the line" in the sense of a literary application of stereoscopic simultaneity.

In Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1913, hereon referred to as *Recherche)*, the young Marcel reflects on his capacity to vividly mentally visualise recollections, likening this to being "as though one had placed [images] behind the lens of a stereoscope."[406] Jessica Wiskus

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[403] "The 'spatialization of time', an idea explored in much contemporary [art]work, is anticipated in Proust's visual metaphors for differing relationships between remembered and present experience, which he divides… into three modes: the cinematographic image, montage, and the stereoscopic image… but it is only in the last that the successive ordering of time is replaced with the possibility of simultaneous time." Farr, Ian, 'Introduction'. In Farr, Ian ed. (2012), *Documents of Contemporary Art: Memory*, London: Whitechapel Gallery/MIT Press, pp.18-19.

[404] The signees also notably included Francis Picabia, Kandinsky, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay-Terk, Sophie Tauber-Arp, Hans Arp, Alexander Calder, Joan Miró and László Moholy-Nagy. Siratot, Charles (1936), The Dimensionist Manifesto'. [Online.] Accessed 22/07/2021. Available from: https://artpool.hu/TamkoSirato/manifest.html

[405] Ibid.

[406] Wiskus, Jessica (2013), *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature, and Music after Merleau-Ponty*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, p.26.

points to this serving as an analogy for "a play of the mind as it strives to negotiate the depth between perception and memory... a dimension revealed as if the mind itself operated as a kind of interior stereoscope… that serves as a principal theme throughout the *Recherche*."[407] This 'internal depth' is also the dimensional distance between past and present – is time. Wiskus convincingly forwards that the structure of the entire novel is stereoscopic in the sense that it is built around pairs – of characters such as the young Marcel and his older self as narrator – operating in a similar way to pairs of stereoscopic photographs that, when combined, provide an impression of depth: "This sense of the past… springs not from two views of what is immediately present, like binocular vision, but from two views that are temporally dislocated."[408]

Although the memories of Proust's characters are intensely visual, they are often triggered "not from a conscious retrieval or his visual imagination, but from the lesser senses of taste and smell."[409] As Proust writes, "It is a labor in vain to attempt to recapture [our past]: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling."[410] The suggestion is that it's only by chance that senses assist memory function, and that memories involuntarily retrieved in this way are, as a consequence, likely to be more vivid and authentic.[411] But are all such memories of unquestionable worth?

In the following passage from W.G. Sebald's *Vertigo* (1990), which I quote at length as there are several aspects to it that I found both striking in relation to dementia and useful to consider in relation to aspects of my *Atlas* work, Sebald's unnamed narrator accompanies the character Clara on a visit to her grandmother in what one assumes to be a care facility:

> The St Martin's home is a large, rectangular building with massive stone walls dating from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Clara's grandmother, Anna Goldsteiner, who was afflicted with that extreme kind of forgetfulness which soon renders even the simplest of everyday tasks impossible to perform, shared a dormitory on the fourth floor. Through the barred, deeply recessed windows there was a view down onto the tops of the trees on the steeply sloping ground to the rear of the house. It was like looking upon a heaving sea. The mainland, it seemed to me, had already sunk

[407] ibid.
[408] Ibid. p.28.
[409] Ibid. p.29.
[410] Ibid, p.32.
[411] There is "evidence that the vividness and specificity (and, by implication, accuracy) of odour-cued memories may be exaggerated because of their emotional quality, which creates a greater sense of being 'brought back' by the memories, leading them to be reported as more vivid and specific than they actually are." Troscianko, Emily T. (2013), 'Cognitive realism and memory in Proust's madeleine episode', *Memory Studies*, 6:4, Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, p.444. DOI: 10.1177/1750698012468000 Accessed 08/12/2022.

> below the horizon. A foghorn droned. Further and further out the ship plied its passage upon the waters. From the engine room came the steady throb of the turbines. Out in the corridor, stray passengers went past, some of them on the arm of a nurse. It took an eternity, on these slow-motion walks, for them to cross from one side of the doorway to the other. *How strange it is, to be standing leaning against the current of time*. The parquet floor shifted beneath my feet. A low murmuring, rustling, dragging, praying and moaning filled the room. Clara was sitting beside her grandmother, stroking her hand. The semolina was doled out. The foghorn sounded again. A little way further out in the green and hilly water landscape, another steamer passed. On the bridge, his legs astride and the ribbons on his cap flying, stood a mariner, signalling in semaphore with two colourful flags. Clara held her grandmother close as they parted, and promised to come again soon. But barely three weeks later Anna Goldsteiner, who in the end, to her own amazement, could no longer even remember the names of the three husbands she had survived, died of a slight cold. At times it does not take much. For weeks after we learned of her death I could not put out of my mind the blue, half-empty pack of Bad Ischl salt under the sink in her council flat in Lorenz Mandl Gasse and which she would never now be able to use up.[412]

Sebald only indirectly refers to dementia here, but at the time of this book's first publication dementia was still not a condition as well understood as at present, or as easy to openly discuss. Anna Goldsteiner is presented to us as someone defined not by who she had been or what she was still able to remember of her past but by some of what she had forgotten – namely, a general ability to function and, more specifically, the identities of people she would ordinarily have been able to easily recall. Sebald thus denies this character the possibility of stereoscopic depth that Wiskus identified in Proust's pairings of younger and older selves which, she argues, allow for a full-bodied, coherent sense of a person's life across time. As we're informed that Anna Goldsteiner was surprised by her inability to name her husbands, we're left to guess that she may still have been able to express herself in some way – how else would Sebald's narrator know of her astonishment? – but, unlike Clara, Sebald doesn't allow her any other kind of expression.

In a move that can be understood to be at once Proustian and anti-Proustian, Sebald uses involuntary memory in a way that suggests this can have debatable value. The banality of the packet of salt under Anna Goldsteiner's former sink, the memory of which inexplicably and persistently imposes itself in the narrator's consciousness following her unexpected (and equally banal) death from a "slight cold", contrasts with Proust's estimation of involuntary memory as providing depth and meaning: "Just as two photographs of the same scene, flat and out of phase, when viewed through a stereoscope, suddenly bind together in a vivid

[412] Sebald, W.G.; Hulse, Michael tr. (2002), *Vertigo*, London: Vintage, pp.45-46. My emphasis.

dimension, *the disjunction between Marcel and the narrator coheres, at the end of the novel, as a single, rich understanding*."[413] Sebald seems to agree that memory retrieval can be involuntary but, unlike Proust, from there suggests this is no guarantee that memory thus retrieved will be significant, even to the person remembering it.

While the salt can also be linked to Sebald's narrator's imaginary "heaving sea", what his memory of Anna Goldsteiner's packet of it unexpectedly brought to my mind was Lot's wife. This may not have been Sebald's intention in *Vertigo*, but I subsequently discovered that in his previous work *After Nature* (1988)[414] he had gestured towards the biblical story. In this narrative poem, his mother was leaving Nuremberg when it was being bombed during WWII and saw it in flames, yet "cannot recall now / what the burning town looked like / or what her feelings were / at this sight,"[415] and Sebald links this unremembered event to a later encounter by him with "a painting / by Altdorfer depicting Lot / with his daughters."[416] As a result of "see[ing] the world as she knows it destroyed,"[417] Sebald's mother doesn't become a pillar of salt, or have a "catatonic reaction,"[418] but her response to what can be understood as psychological trauma is memory loss – the 'blanking out' of a lived experience that Sebald later approaches indirectly by associating it with the symbolic representation of an old testament story in a painting.

In *Vertigo*, however, it seems that the recollection of Anna Goldsteiner's salt packet presents Sebald's narrator with an association of ideas whose significance can't be accessed because his involuntary memory hasn't also provided a comprehensible link between her person, her possession, and himself. Sebald doesn't make explicit any connection between Anna Goldsteiner, her salt, and the story of Lot's wife but, if my own association of ideas can be accepted as plausible, it suggests that Sebald has used his narrator to reinforce the notion, outlined above, that involuntary memory isn't necessarily meaningful, and further imply that context is key to interpretation – to making sense of memories that may otherwise seem nonsensically random.

Sebald layers and blends discordant things over and into each other, and does this so seamlessly that we're already immersed in troubled familiarity before we realise the text is moving the narrative in unexpected ways. Other than in the line I've emphasised – "*How*

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[413] Wiskus, Jessica (2013), *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature, and Music after Merleau-Ponty*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, p.26. My emphasis.
[414] *After Nature* was published first in German in 1988 and in English in 2002, while *Vertigo* was first published in German in 1990 and in English in 1999. Romer, Stephen (2002), 'Beyond Strangeways', *The Guardian*. [Online.] Accessed 16/10/2022. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jul/06/poetry.shopping
[415] Harries, Martin (2009), *Forgetting Lot's Wife: On Destructive Spectatorship*, New York NY: Fordham University Press, p.76. DOI: 10.1515/9780823237647-007 Accessed 15/10/2022.
[416] Ibid. p.77.
[417] Watson, Ariell (2015), 'Witnessing Lot's Wife', *Lumen Et Vita*, 6:1, Chestnut Hill MA: Boston College, p.2. DOI: 10.6017/lv.v6i1.9142 Accessed 15/10/2022.
[418] Ibid.

strange it is, to be standing leaning against the current of time." – the entire passage takes place in the past tense and yet gives a jarring sense of being recalled in the present. Though the bars in the window could have served, as with Duchamp's drawing in *Stéréoscopie à la main,* to break the perception of depth in the landscape beyond them, Sebald's character projects himself through them nonetheless, and does so in a way that interweaves, in a stereoscopically hallucinatory manner, the 'present' recollected experience of mundanity in the moment of visiting Anna Goldsteiner, with a more dramatic, multisensory fantasy conjured by association of ideas – the swaying tops of trees viewed from above that remind the character of an ocean. In the simultaneity of these two conflicting experiences it's the hallucination that is most vivid – much as, when looking at two non-stereoscopic images through a viewer, both can be seen overlapping but one seems more 'real' than the other. It's almost as if, in the selected passage, Sebald's narrator has an empathic 'episode' in which he experiences a little of what it might be like to be Anna Goldsteiner, an impression reinforced by the fact that, while he twice names her in full, like her he fails to identify the three husbands she could no longer remember.

"the co-existence of two messages"[419]

Although, like Proust, Sebald didn't make direct use of stereoscopic imagery in his works, he is known to have been influenced by this form of photography, visually as well as in writing. Of 1950s Viewmaster reels, which he mentioned in several interviews as being "the original source of his later attraction to found photographic images,"[420] he described the experience of looking at them as providing "an effect that is familiar from my childhood… You had the feeling that with your body you're still in your normal bourgeois reality. But with your eyes you are somewhere else."[421] Lise Patt suggests that, in stereoscopy, "the indexical capture of *place* was traded for a phenomenological experience of being *in place*,"[422] a perceptual overlapping of experience that is slightly hallucinatory in that, as Sebald was aware, it can lead to feelings of being almost in two places at once.

Regardless of whether they are stereoscopic or not, Sebald has been recorded as saying, "I always have the feeling with photographs that they exert a pull on the viewer and in this entirely amazing (ungeheure) manner draw him out, so to speak, from the real world into an

[419] Barthes, Roland; Heath, Stephen tr. (1977), *Image Music Text*, London: Fontana Press, p.19.
[420] Patt, Lise, 'Searching for Sebald: What I Know For Sure'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.64.
[421] Schultz, Christian, 'But the written word is not a true document': A conversation with W.G. Sebald on Literature and Photography'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel Eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.105.
[422] Patt, Lise, 'Searching for Sebald: What I Know For Sure'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.64. Emphases in the original.

unreal world."[423] However, in his novels it's the texts that are stereoscopic, not the accompanying images. The inserted photographs could be seen to operate in a similar way to Duchamp's geometric drawings over stereoscopic photos, in that they interrupt the flow of narrative and impose imagery that disrupts the formation of mental imagery suggested by the text. The reader (of Sebald, or any other author) can be said to complete a text in their minds by visualising images and imagining other sensory and emotional stimuli alluded to in writing. Sebald's two-dimensional, and often bland or enigmatic, photographic interventions draw the reader out of their imaginations and back to the page. This manipulation on the part of the author is of interest in that it can be said to give the reading experience another sense of depth – in the shift from the three-dimensional (or temporal four-dimensional) in the mind to the two dimensionality of the photograph and lettered sign on the flat page of the book, and back again, Sebald troubles our attention and perception, affecting our engagement with his work. Unlike Proust's drawing together of past and present to suggest narrative significance in stereoscopic depth, the pairing that Sebald provides is that of texts with images that, together, act both with and against each other.

Given the sometimes hallucinatory content and writing style of his seemingly 'unreliable narrators', and observations I've made about involuntary memory in a particular passage of *Vertigo*, it's additionally possible to see the inserted photographs as a directly visual imposition of unbidden recollection, especially in instances where the images and their placement in the texts have no obvious illustrative function. But their inclusion serves a particular purpose for Sebald, in that he was known to have certain reservations about the truth value of words, and saw the photographs as lending authority to them, in an abstract but still evidentiary way:

> [W]e tend to believe in pictures more than we do in letters. Once you bring up a photograph in proof of something, then people generally tend to accept that, well, this must have been so.[424]

As Jon Sears puts it, "The images in Sebald's writings are a central feature of his exploration of the relations between memory and representation, explorations which exert a simultaneous 'documentary' insistence on the presence of meaning within the word, and a 'literary' assertion of the absence of meaning."[425] In addition to Sebald, there are many innovative authors who have variously used photographic imagery in their otherwise literary

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[423] Schultz, Christian, 'But the written word is not a true document': A conversation with W.G. Sebald on Literature and Photography'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.105.
[424] Wachtel, Eleanor, 'Ghost Hunter'. In Schwartz, Lynne Sharon ed. (2007), *The Emergence of Memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, New York NY: Seven Stories Press, p.41.
[425] Sears, Jon, 'Photographs, Images, and the Space of Literature in Sebald's Prose'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.211.

works – to name some that can be said to be significant: André Breton,[426] Virginia Woolf,[427] Annie Ernaux,[428] Anne Carson,[429] Leanne Shapton,[430] and Mark Z. Danielewski.[431] But the artist I now wish to discuss, specifically in relation to presence and absence of meaning in combinations of image with text, is Sophie Calle.

Although recognising that, as a visual artist, Calle is also well known for her installations and filmmaking, the particular focus of this study is in a small selection of the many artists' books she has produced throughout her career, as this aspect of her oeuvre is most relevant to the present research. Calle's bibliography is extensive, and many of her publications have been considered. There are works that are time-based (*Douleur Exquise*[432]), that involve her making photographs in response to other people's perceptions (*Aveugles*[433]), and that use investigative methods and photographs as evidence in attempts to apprehend and create composite 'portraits' of people she doesn't know (*Suite Vénitienne*,[434] *The Address Book*[435]). Some are particularly autobiographical, e.g. *Douleur Exquise* again, plus *Rachel, Monique…*[436] and *Les Histoires Vraies*,[437] to cite but three examples. With *L'erouv de Jérusalem*[438] and *Fantômes*,[439] she addresses the complexities of memory in the absence, or failing, of representation. This seam of absence in her works – of how to relate to people in their absence, of how absence affects memory – has been particularly fruitful to consider in relation to dementia and has partially influenced some of the books I've produced in my research.

Of relevance too is the fact that she has openly stated in interviews that much of her work relates to lostness. Of *Suite Vénitienne*, for example, she says, "At the beginning, I created

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[426] Breton, André (1928), *Nadja*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard. The author that seems most likely to have influenced Sebald's use of image in text is Breton: in Breton's surrealist work *Nadja*, there is a distinctive photograph of four pairs of eyes, most noticeably similar to eyes depicted in Sebald's *Austerlitz* but also in *Vertigo*, to give two examples. As well as eyes, throughout *Nadja* are seeded black and white photographs of architecture (whole structures, portions of façades) and interiors, monuments, facsimiles of printed and handwritten texts, portraits, street scenes with and without people, art objects, paintings and drawings, items of clothing such as a glove, and isolated body parts such as hands. In Sebald's *Austerlitz* and *Vertigo*, the subject matter of the images included covers identical range.
[427] Woolf, Virginia (1928), *Orlando: A Biography*, London: L. & V. Woolf.
[428] Ernaux, Annie (2005), *L'Usage de la Photo*, Paris: Gallimard.
[429] Carson, Anne (2010), *Nox*, New York NY: New Directions.
[430] Shapton, Leanne (2009), *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion and Jewellery*, London: Bloomsbury.
[431] Danielewski, Mark Z. (2001), *House of Leaves*, London: Doubleday.
[432] Calle, Sophie (2003), *Douleur Exquise*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[433] Calle, Sophie (2011), *Aveugles*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[434] Calle, Sophie; Baudrillard, Jean (1983), *Suite Vénitienne: Please Follow Me; Écrit Sur L'image*, Paris: Éditions de l'étoile. Also known as *Suite Vénitienne*.
[435] Calle, Sophie (2012), *The Address Book*, Paris: Siglio Press.
[436] Calle, Sophie (2012), *Rachel, Monique – Elle s'est appelée successivement Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler: ma mère aimait qu'on parle d'elle*, Paris: Éditions Xavier Barral. Also known as *Rachel, Monique…*
[437] Calle, Sophie (1994), *Des histoires vraies*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[438] Calle, Sophie (1996), *L'erouv de Jérusalem*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[439] Calle, Sophie (2013), *Fantômes*, Arles: Actes Sud.

these experiences [of following strangers] because I was lost."[440] Of *En Finir*,[441] a book that, somewhat ironically, successfully traces her failure to complete a specific piece of work in over a decade, she writes, "Je ne sais plus où j'en suis…"[442] Although Calle has stated that her work is "not about discovering anything,"[443] in many of her projects she starts from a point of not-knowing and uses Oulipian constraints or rules-based methodologies, either self-imposed or set for her by others (for example, a collaboration with author Paul Auster which resulted in the box set *Doubles-Jeux*)[444] to orient the creation of work. She has claimed that, to begin with at least, she used photography only as means of creating evidential documents to accompany text because "[w]riting is my main interest. I need a narrative within the type of work I do."[445] A conscious shift to a greater interest in photography occurred with *Prenez Soin de Vous* (2007).[446] For this work, the text was written by the 107 women Calle invited to respond to a 'Dear Jane' email she'd received from a former lover, which led to her wondering what her part of authorship was – "If I hadn't created the text, what did I do? Where did I stand?"[447] – and as a result put more of herself into the photographic element of the work. However, in many of her projects the words of others (be they gathered in interviews or gleaned from found publications) have seemed to serve her as a base material or medium – another form of constraint – with which to construct works. This is also of interest in relation to my *Atlas* as I, too, have used 'found' materials, in both image and text, albeit not in precisely the same way as Calle. But it's here that I wish to develop the discussion, begun with Sebald, of the ways in which image and text can work with and against each other.

"I have a tendency to use failure"[448]

In the introduction to *L'erouv de Jérusalem*, Calle explains what 'l'erouv' or eruv are. During the Jewish sabbath (from dusk on Friday to the first appearance of stars in the sky the following day) there are restrictions on what can be done outside of one's home, such as what's considered to be work – Calle lists as examples carrying objects like keys and books, and activities like pushing a pram.[449] At these times, specially designated outdoor areas can be used in the same way as private or domestic spaces without breaking Talmudic law. Such areas are "symbolically enclosed by a wire boundary"[450] which, in Calle's book, are delineated by telephone cables outside the walls of old Jerusalem. These public spaces that can

[440] Trinder, Kingston (2016), *Sophie Calle: Close Circuit*, Berlin: Mono.Kultur #42, p.9.
[441] Calle, Sophie (2005), *En Finir*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[442] Ibid. p. 81, "I no longer know where I am." My translation.
[443] Trinder, Kingston (2016), *Sophie Calle: Close Circuit*, Berlin: Mono.Kultur #42, p.4.
[444] Calle, Sophie (1998), *Doubles-Jeux*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[445] Trinder, Kingston (2016), *Sophie Calle: Close Circuit*, Berlin: Mono.Kultur #42, p.24.
[446] Calle, Sophie (2007), *Prenez Soin de Vous*, Arles: Actes Sud.
[447] Trinder, Kingston (2016), *Sophie Calle: Close Circuit*, Berlin: Mono.Kultur #42, p.24.
[448] Ibid. p.20.
[449] Calle, Sophie (1996), *L'erouv de Jérusalem*, Arles: Actes Sud, p.7.
[450] Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), s.v. Eruv. [Online.] Accessed 15/05/2020. Available from: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/240914

temporarily be considered private interested Calle, and she asked inhabitants, Israeli and Palestinian, to take her to places like this which, for them, had personal significance.[451] Fourteen of the memories collected in this way appear in text accompanied by black and white photos Calle made of the locations they were associated with. In only one of the photos can a person be clearly seen, but they aren't significant to either the story their image is paired with or the composition of the photograph. All of the memories are anonymous; the reader can't always be certain of the storyteller's gender, age etc. Their anecdotes are gathered together in a central section of the book, sandwiched between typological series of images of the posts and wires that define the boundaries of the eruv – these images effectively surrounding, like an eruv, the private memories made public in the book.

As an object, this book is small and simple: 19 cm high x 10 cm wide, with seventy-two matte cream paperback pages perfect bound within a smooth soft cover. But the above described organisational structure is impressive in that the content is arranged to powerful effect. The central personal stories range from tales of childhood games, missed opportunities, loves unrequited and passions lost, to bad accidents and close escapes. Though the particular photographs accompanying these anecdotes seem more evocative than documentary because they're beautifully composed, there is still the sense that they are supposed to serve as evidence – but evidence of what? As the images are enigmatic, like Benjamin I can't help but search for signs – for 'sparks of contingency' – in the imagery that might provide extra context for the poignant texts. But though one trusts the images to be of the places where recalled past events occurred, there's nothing of them that the viewer can discern. One tries to make a leap of imagination between the past moment of the event related from memory, and the past moment the accompanying image was made by Calle, to the present moment of our engagement with both in the book, and it's impossible. What comes across instead is a sense of absence, in that the images fail to provide a bridge between the spaces depicted and the layers of time separating us from imperceptible memories of the human experiences of others.

Another work by Calle, *Fantômes*, becomes interesting to consider here as it too is about absence and memory. In its second edition, this book collects together two conceptually related works initially conceived for exhibition: *Fantômes* and *Last Seen*. 'Fantômes' is the name given to signs placed by spaces left on walls when galleries and museums remove artworks from display (in order to lend them to another institution, for example).[452] *Last Seen* begins with absent works famously stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston on 18th March 1990: in some cases the paintings only had been taken, leaving empty

[451] "J'ai demandé à des habitants de Jérusalem, israéliens et palestiniens, de m'emmener dans un lieu public ayant, à leurs yeux, un caractère privé." Calle, Sophie (2009), *L'erouv de Jérusalem*, Arles: Actes Sud, p.27.
[452] Sauvageot, Anne (2007), *Sophie Calle, l'art caméléon*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, p.49.

frames behind and, as Stewart Gardner's will stipulated that her collection should remain exactly as displayed in her property during her lifetime, the spaces where the missing works once were had to be left empty. For both of these projects, Calle asked institutional staff members (curators, conservators, and other employees) to describe the absent artworks from memory. In the case of *Fantômes,* she also asked for sketches, and the collected texts and drawings were exhibited in the empty spaces left by missing works. For *Last Seen* she similarly collected descriptions, and photographed the places in museums where the stolen works had been, prints of which were framed for display. In each of these projects, the descriptions of the artworks were anonymised and presented as lists arranged in blocks of text.

Although all the people contributing memories should have been familiar with the paintings and other artefacts because they encountered them on a regular basis in their work, none could recall them in detail, and their descriptions are very varied, sometimes quite dramatically so. For example, one person's description of Magritte's 1926 painting *L'Assassin menacé*[453] is of "clothed men standing around a woman who's not only nude but dead, as if she was a sacrifice in the middle of the room,"[454] while another said "There's a body. I believe it's male. It's just flat. I don't think there's any woman in the painting, although there is some strange feeling of rape."[455] And though Calle's 'witnesses' are talking about the same objects as each other, the inconsistency of their accounts points to a failure of memory, individual and collective. Singly and cumulatively, their descriptions do nothing to help us imagine or remember what the unseen artworks were/are like – in fact, considered together, they are even less helpful as guides to mentally picturing the works described than single accounts as, conjoined, they cacophonously contradict each other. In the absurdity of this there is something amusing, yet it points not just to failures of memory and perception but also to the limitations of words to speak about, or for – to represent – the visual, which by extension raises questions about the value of writings about art (of which this thesis is, admittedly, now part). In *L'erouv de Jérusalem*, Calle's photographs serve as 'fantômes' for lived experiences reconstructed as written memories, whereas in *Fantômes* it's the written memories that serve as placeholders for absent imagery – or they endeavour to serve these purposes, but fail to do so in interesting ways. In both cases, Calle's attempts to represent absences in image and text tend to make their lack even more keenly felt.

[453] Rene Magritte: Biography, Paintings, and Quotes (n.d.), 'The Menaced Assassin, 1926 by Rene Magritte'. [Online.] Accessed 09/12/2022. Available from: https://www.renemagritte.org/the-menaced-assassin.jsp
[454] Calle, Sophie (2013), *Fantômes*, Actes Sud, Arles, pp.22-23.
[455] Ibid.

Benjamin suggested that texts help to "anchor… photographic meaning, offering it a constructed depth that rescues it from surface meaninglessness."[456] The specific kind of texts he had in mind here were captions – short, factual lines that disambiguate imagery by providing specific contextual information (such as 'The Photographer Karl Dauthendey with his betrothed Miss Friedrich after their first attendance at church, 1857.'), and thus should tell us enough about what photographs are of to indicate what they are about and fix their meaning. In *L'erouv de jérusalem* the texts can initially be seen as 'anchoring' the photographs, in the sense that they invite us to read the images in relation to the specific memories they're paired with. But despite the texts, what the photographs ultimately seem to evidence is their inability to represent what they are supposed to, such as spacial and temporal boundaries that are more conceptual than material – that are invisible – and the insubstantiality of lived experience in the tangible, durational world. The recorded memories fail to 'people' the photographs, and this impression of lack is reinforced by the fact that the images are, in all but one instance, of empty spaces. Like several of Calle's other works, this book points to something we cannot see and yet, paradoxically, itself becomes a palpable, visible 'proof' of inaccessible absence.

Something different to Benjamin's 'anchoring' may occur, however, when the texts paired with photographs are fiction: inversely to Benjamin, Sebald saw the photographs in his novels as lending factual plausibility to the stories they accompany. "The written word is not a true document, after all, the photograph is the true document par excellence. People let themselves be convinced by a photograph."[457] At the same time the images, inserted into fiction, can become 'fragment[s] of a narrative"[458] because they don't necessarily need to be 'true' – the important thing, for Sebald, is that we perceive them to be so. But this can create tensions, as in the previously cited "simultaneous 'documentary' insistence on the presence of meaning within the word, and a 'literary' assertion of the absence of meaning"[459] in Sebald's use of image with text in his approaches to memory and representation.

Clearly, then, images and texts paired can work in multiple ways; photographs can be, or seem to be, contextualised by the words that accompany them, as Benjamin forwarded, and also, as Sebald preferred, be seen to 'anchor' the texts instead. An interesting aspect of Calle's works is that she arguably tries to make use of both of these possibilities and, in the process, raises doubts about the assumed stabilities of image/text relations (amongst other

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[456] Sabine T. Kriebel, 'Theories of Photography: A Short History'. In Elkins, James ed. (2007), *Photography Theory*, London: Routledge, p.11.
[457] Schultz, Christian, 'But the written word is not a true document': A conversation with W.G. Sebald on Literature and Photography', in Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.105-106.
[458] Ibid. p.105
[459] Sears, Jon, 'Photographs, Images, and the Space of Literature in Sebald's Prose'. In Patt, Lise; Dillbohner, Christel eds. (2007), *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*, Los Angeles CA: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, p.211.

things). The projects under discussion can be understood in terms of "seeing what happens when two equal and autonomous media, photograph and written text, come together in dialogue,"[460] and though Calle has, as previously cited, expressed greater preference for text than image, her approach to it is quite photographic. In the chapter of this thesis on photography, I discussed the process of making images as transformative, in that the camera takes whatever is before it and translates this into a two-dimensional and purely visual representation. In Calle's *L'erouv de Jérusalem* and *Fantômes* real things, once seen and experienced by people but since disappeared from view, are metamorphosed into words. Though the end results of photographing and writing processes differ, in each instance there is the transition of one thing into another form. In a sense, Calle's works demonstrate that, like photographs, text and memory are also not accurate or reliable reflections of referents (meaning the thing depicted, described or recalled) but something other that can only gesture towards sources, more or less imperfectly. They become differently equivalent, or analogous, representations.

Unlike Sebald, Calle collects and collages texts rather than fictionalise them: "I don't have the ability to *invent*. I can invent an *idée* but I can't invent a situation. I have to look at it, use it as material."[461] In the two books of hers discussed, however, it can be said that she relies on her participants to fictionalise for her as, scientifically, memories are understood to be reconstructions in that "retrieval of memories does not occur in some completely accurate form… but rather that recollection of memories involves a process of trying to reconstruct past events. In fact, systematic errors in memory [recall] are the primary evidence for its reconstructive nature."[462] Calle's participants help to illustrate this almost perfectly, calling into question the representational value of memories and the words we use to describe them. Any assumption that memory can make absence present seems undermined not only by the conflicting accounts of missing artworks but also by Calle's photographs, in *Last Seen*, of empty painting frames. The authority or grounding that Benjamin thought text lends to the photographic, and that Sebald thought photographs afford texts, is complicated by the works of Calle I've discussed because it isn't really situated in either. Although the descriptions of artworks in *Fantômes* are inconsistent with each other, there is still a sense that, while not accurate, they are people's genuine responses to Calle's brief – that they are authentic. But their authority as texts, paired with that of Calle's images, is largely centred in the seeming matter-of-factness of her rigorous, ritualistic and semi-anthropological

[460] Welch, Edward (2019), 'Literature and Photography', *French Studies*, 73:3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.440. DOI: 10.1093/fs/knz129 Accessed 04/06/2020.
[461] Jobey, Liz (2020), 'The artist Sophie Calle: "People think they know me. But they know nothing"', *Financial Times*. [Online.] Accessed 15/05/2020. Available from: https://www.ft.com/content/098e7b26-31a9-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2 Emphases in the original.
[462] Roediger, H.L.; DeSoto, Kurt A. (2015), 'Reconstructive Memory – Psychology of', *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2:20, Amsterdam: Elsevier, p.50. DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.51016-2 Accessed 23/10/2022.

approach to both image and text as materials generated by ideas, and in the contexts – as installations in cultural settings, and as book objects – where the resulting works are encountered.

"And now I am nothing, just a nothing with nothing. So real, so true, yes"[463]

Prior to beginning work on the *Atlas* I didn't consider text, especially creative writing, to be part of my practice. Words did appear in my work at times, but they tended to be embedded in the photographs – such as portraits of people whose sloganed T-shirts captioned their images for me. But the decision not to photograph people in this research, coupled nonetheless with the desire to 'put people in the picture', obliged me to consider how I could use text with image in a more proactive way.

Although I'm confident I would have produced my *Atlas* regardless, had it not been for the pandemic I would, like Calle, have collected firsthand the words to inspire and apply in my work. The images I paired these with would likely also have been different as a result. Researching at distance has, instead, obliged me to seek reliable secondhand sources, and be creative in my responses to what I found. During this process I gave a great deal of thought to certain kinds of 'equivalence' and authority with respect to how images and text work with and against each other, as I was aware that the semi-fictional nature of the *Atlas* would benefit from this. By 'borrowing' academic styles of writing, some of the texts I produced can seem to possess their own scientific authority regardless of any imagery they're paired with, and this then became a 'base layer' whose reassuring familiarity could be troubled or undermined by merging into them unexpected text elements in contrasting tones. Although this strategy began intuitively, study of Sebald later reinforced my understanding of the effectiveness of this blending approach. At the outset I realised that pairing medical photographs with unrelated text alters how the imagery can be read, and this entire book work originated in this observation. But I also wondered if some of the scientific images I wanted to use, such as those drawn from the *Edinburgh Atlas*, might similarly confer some of their authority as 'objective' seeming documents to other photographs in the book, as well as to texts. As one person I showed an early draft to asked if the preserve jar images contained a brain, when it in fact had a cauliflower inside, the answer to my question seems to be yes, though the fragments of various texts about neuroanatomy seeded through the work will likely also have influenced this pleasingly unexpected misperception.

Some of the images I've used are almost comfortingly illustrative in that, on first impression, they and the texts they're paired with seem to align; stereo photos of a clouded sky hovering over prose which begins with the history of meteorology, is one example of what I mean by this. In other cases it's not immediately obvious why the images are there; for example, the

[463] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.117.

stereo photos of an elephant behind bars that accompany mock crossword clues and a fictional text related to aphasia, that also nods to Beckett's multilingualism and his last poem *Comment Dire*. In this instance, the images don't help us to guess what the text will be about, and we may understand them differently after reading the text – and even then, the photographs can be seen as visual metaphors, gesturing towards something not directly alluded to in the writing. The varied styles of image and text working differently throughout the book provide a variety of textures to the reading experience. The intention was that there should be no evident hierarchy of authority, an impression further reinforced by the fact that the pages of left and right book can function independently of each other.

Like Calle, I've used the anonymised words of real people as an authentic material – in my case the words of people living with dementia, such as the "So real, so true, yes" in the title of this subchapter – but I've not applied any rules-based strategy to their collection and usage. Instead, and similarly to the surreal or stereoscopic dissonances in Sebald's layerings of multiple perspectives, they are sometimes blended into other texts, such as the blurring of 'kitchen cupboards' and 'scrambled porridge' into an anatomical description of the brain. I've also hinted at ways of interpreting the images texts like these are paired with, e.g. the possibility of seeing links between the numbers embedded in certain photographs and the numbered legends below these, and accordingly reading something into them that, while it can't be seen, can perhaps be imagined. This is one of the means by which I believe I've managed to evade (if partially) the kinds of absences or failings discussed in relation to the works of Calle's I've forwarded. And another key way of sidestepping these is in the evocation of a specific – albeit fictional and fractional – named person.

The title for this book was conceived after I had drafted the first three pages of content. This was the point at which I realised that, as part of the 'putting people in the picture' aim that had underpinned the project from the start, and given the way my texts were forming, it might be a good idea to suggest at the outset, in the title, that the work as a whole could be about *someone*. As it had by then occurred to me that the work had the potential to draw together aspects of dementia as classified in different agnosias associated with it (as discussed in the chapter 'Unknowing'), I considered a play on the term 'agnosias', in conjunction with the *Edinburgh Atlas* that was the original source of inspiration for this book work, and settled on *The Stereoscopic Atlas of Agnes Osias* as my title.

At several points during the creation of this book I tested it by forwarding it for feedback to a variety of people – artists (two of whom have backgrounds in dementia research as scientists), writers, designers, members of the public (one of whom a GP), both within and outside academia – and a large number (roughly 40% of those canvassed) admitted having Googled 'Agnes Osias' in an attempt to find out more about her: was she real or fictional? Did her life/work have some significance in relation to dementia, perhaps specifically of the

Alzheimer's kind? And so on. I believe this desire to know more, based on the assumption that Agnes Osias might be a real person, is indication of the successful creation of character in this work. The desire to know more also suggests that Agnes, though believable, is still interestingly elusive. In the texts, she 'speaks' in the first and third person, is also spoken of, around and over by other, unidentified characters, and these perspectives are not distinct – an interweaving further complicated as the pages to left and right can be read out of sequence. But this is also intended to reinforce the sense of character and cognitive fragmentation.

Early on in the writing process I realised that, by combining the scientific and domestic, I might unwittingly reinforce certain prejudicial stereotypes. In the texts are hints of Agnes as child, lover, spouse and parent, as a person who dances and desires, cooks and knits (or tries to), remembers (if indistinctly), and so on. There is, arguably, no good reason why the reader should assume a female character might not in addition be a professional, such as a scientist, or have been such prior to the onset of dementia, while in parallel also baking cakes, knitting jumpers and mothering children. But, in an attempt to quash any such misapprehension, towards the end of the work I give Agnes the title of Dr, the idea being that the perceptive reader might then understand that one or more of the scientifically themed fragments of texts preceding this could have been authored, or encountered in the course of her professional life, by my character. In this respect also, the materially fragmented aspect of this book, with its split pages, does more than just reflect the splintered nature of a projected experience of cognitive decline. It equally evinces the complexities of lives that cannot be categorised in neat, singular roles – be these cultural, social or professional etc – as in the course of our lives we can be many things, simultaneously and evolving over time. This layering of identity and experience, as temporal and disparate but enmeshed, is as valid for the person living with dementia as for the rest of us. Making Agnes a doctor should add depth to our sense of her as a character and person, and disrupt assumptions that she may 'just' have been a housewife.

The intuitive decision to end the *Atlas* with a rephotographed reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's 1503 portrait *Mona Lisa,* was initially a response to a line from an assisted dementia poetry collection: "My face. It's gone."[464] But I eventually also traced it back to Malabou's insistent questioning about appearance: "If we lose all relation to childhood and the past the moment we are formed by destruction, what do we look like?"[465] Although, as previously discussed, she concludes that we "look like less than nothing"[466] this is surely not the case, but I did find it very useful to think about. For instance, if we can easily, instantly recognise

[464] Bellingham, Linda; Living Words (2014), *The Things Between Us*, Edinburgh: Shoving Leopard, p.49.
[465] Malabou, Catherine; Shred, Carolyn tr. (2012), *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.70.
[466] Ibid. p.71.

the *Mona Lisa*, even in a replica of the painting that has been literally defaced, and nonetheless see significance in it, is it really impossible to do likewise with living people, as Malabou seems to claim? Mona Lisa, both as a person and a painting, has been an object of intense speculation, from Freud seeing in the image da Vinci's unfulfilled need for motherly attention,[467] to neuropsychological attempts to analyse her gaze in relation to its "direction… and the affective expression of her eyes."[468] Is it not odd that so much curiosity and effort can be expended on the irresolvable enigma of a renaissance painting, while the question of what might be happening in and beyond the outward appearances of people living with dementia (even those we may have close personal connection to) remains inscrutable and unimaginable because the desire for answers is insufficiently addressed?

As a whole, the *Atlas* became the vehicle for consideration of several aspects of dementia (agnosias, clouded thoughts) rather than narrowly focussing on one alone, and in that sense it more accurately engages with the experiences of people with dementia in that they tend to live with multiple syndromes and intermittent symptoms at once. It also served as an exercise in bringing together very different perspectives on dementia – medico-scientific on the one hand and domestic/lived on the other. Further, this work can be seen as a creative version of my thesis, in that it draws together much of what I have learned and understood about dementia, and the many questions it has raised for me as a result. Such as, how are we capable of understanding forests as neural networks, and entities like bees and slime moulds as sentient, when we have such difficulty recognising the value in human experiences of cognitive decline?

[467] Kobbé, Gustav (1916), 'The Smile of the "Mona Lisa"', *The Lotus Magazine*, 8:2, New York NY: Thomas J. Watson Library/The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp.67–74. Accessed 12/12/2022. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20543781

[468] Zavagno, Daniele et al. (2022), 'Looking Into Mona Lisa's Smiling Eyes: Allusion to an Illusion', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 16:878288, London: Frontiers Media Ltd, pp.1-13. DOI: 10.3389/fnhum.2022.878288 Accessed 12/12/2022.

Book Two: *Last Seen*

This work initially stemmed from feelings of frustration with a series of artists' books about lost property, encountered during my 2019 research placement at the British Library. In the same timeframe I was reading about archival principles in artistic practice, and also thinking about the unused, clear sections of dye sublimation ribbon collected together during my work with that material for *PCU1*.

All the lost property related artists' books I studied at the British Library were based on a formulaic typological format à la Christian Boltanski, in which objects photographed are presented in the same ways: pictures of all manner of objects, from dolls to suitcases to hats and so on, are printed either in grids or one image per page in small books, with the objects depicted scaled to fit the frame or page as if they were all the same size.[469] While the absence of hierarchy inherent in this approach could have interesting potential, the overall effect seems to be a flattening or diminishing of the objects depicted, an impression of lack that didn't inspire a desire to compensate in imagination (it's also visually dull, especially when multiple artists are reusing the same strategy without interrogating it). From this, I began wondering if a change of scale and organisational principle might be a way to make new work around similar subject matter.

The relevance of the lost object to dementia is in the 'unknowing' that occurs in visual agnosia, the effect of which is that people "cannot recognise by sight objects that they would have previously known."[470] Additionally, the misplacement of objects for other reasons has been studied, identified in three symptomatic clinical subcategories: 'lost and found' (forgetting where things are or should normally be), 'hidden away' (hoarding), and 'odd places' (putting things in unusual locations). Instances of some people living with dementia losing things in the latter subtype has been well documented;[471] as a typical example, putting spectacles in a freezer.[472] These misplacement phenomena have been recorded in studies of people with various dementia types, including vascular, frontotemporal and Lewey Bodies/Parkinson's, but it appears to be most prevalent in Alzheimer's, and while it can happen at all stages of neurodegeneration, from mild cognitive impairment (MCI) onwards, occurrence increases significantly as conditions progress into severity.[473]

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[469] As an example see: Lewandowska, Marysia; Cummings, Neil (1996), *Lost property*, London: Chance Books.
[470] Greene, J.D.W. (2005), 'Apraxia, agnosias, and higher visual function abnormalities', *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, 76:5, London: BMJ Journals, p.v26. DOI: 10.1136/jnnp.2005.081885 Accessed 30/05/2022.
[471] McGarrigle, L. et al. (2019), 'Characterizing the symptom of misplacing objects in people with dementia: findings from an online tracking tool', *International Psychogeriatrics*, 31:11, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-7. DOI: 10.1017/S104161021800220X Accessed 20/09/2022.
[472] Ibid. p.5.
[473] Ibid. p.4.

Last Seen is comprised of a series of photographs of items people tend to lose and misperceive – hearing aids, engagement rings, and so on. Originally, I hoped to photograph objects in a lost property office, but the pandemic made this impossible. Instead, I researched a list online and collected objects to photograph at home. Each item photographed is printed singly and centrally on 29.7cm x 31.4cm acetate at 1:1 scale (life sized). The advantage of acetate as a material is that no matter how transparent the sheets are separately, multiples piled together become opaque. Thus, in a book with lots of pages, the images at the back are concealed, while the transparency of small numbers of sheets together allow the content of several pages to be more or less visible at once, and the objects depicted, one on top of the other, also conceal each other – seem hidden in plain sight. This also fits the 'familiar falling away… unfamiliar appearing' theme central to my research and its questions concerning lostness and unknowing in dementia.

The text, comprised of just seven words – 'last', 'seen',[474] 'used', 'held', 'worn', 'felt' and 'lost' respectively – originated in thoughts about how we lose things and how we try to recall where they may be. In the 'lost and found' sub-category of the study mentioned, people reported being able to "remember using something but can't remember where they put it."[475] While we most often can't find items because we can't recall where precisely they were last seen, we often also can't recall when they were last used, held, worn or felt, which are more embodied experiences of objects. As all of these words have four letters, and 'last' and 'lost' are so similar, I realised I could arrange them in the same way as the other contents of the book – each term on separate pages, one on top of the next, the words masking each other until their pages are turned.

I considered two possible organisational or archival principles that could be used to determine the order in which the images were sequenced. My first thought was to place the smallest items at the front, gradually leading through to the largest at the back. I then wondered if the objects could otherwise be arranged in terms of age and in reference to long and short term memory, e.g. things a person would have lost when young, such as a baby's dummy, could be at the back of the book, while things lost when older, such as a hearing aid, could be at the front, or vice versa. I tested both of these options, ultimately preferring the first – partly because it means the larger items are more surprising to discover in this way as they are 'hidden' by much smaller objects, and partly because organisation by size disrupts any notion of chrono/logical order. The imposition of a sequential structure can imply coherence even where there may be none: "Books of lost objects, found texts, destroyed titles, remade photographs – all [gain] some value by using the book form,

[474] The similarity of the title to that of the Sophie Calle work previously discussed is coincidental.
[475] McGarrigle, L. et al. (2019), 'Characterizing the symptom of misplacing objects in people with dementia: findings from an online tracking tool', *International Psychogeriatrics*, 31:11, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.5. DOI: 10.1017/S104161021800220X Accessed 20/09/2022.

insisting on its familiar structure as a frame to the otherwise elusive meanings of these constructions."[476] After Michel Foucault, Ernest van Alphen classifies dis/organisational principles like this as 'heterotopia', in that such can be seen as "a kind of disorder that suggests a possible order, but one that at the same time cannot be thought."[477]

As with all the artists' books I've produced, *Last Seen* was developed during the pandemic. In order to get feedback for it, I made an early dummy available to view in a video, as I couldn't present it for critique in person or post out multiple copies. While the finished object does work as a book, I found the video version interesting in that this emphasises its ethereal qualities, with the objects depicted looming up from a confusion of forms and into brief clarity, then disappearing, as the pages are turned. The addition of 'captured' motion provides a further layer of perceptual instability to the photographs than the still images have alone.

The surrealist cross-dissolve effect discussed in relation to stereoscopy can also be seen to apply in this work through the layering of semi/transparent acetate, both in the book as object and the video of it, albeit differently in each of these forms. On the last page of the book is an image of a biscuit tin of the same type that Boltanski used and reused in many of his installations, such as *Les archives de Christian Boltanski 1965-1988* (1989):[478] Although in this example the tins are said to have held photographs and documents drawn from his archive,[479] they could just as well have been empty given that their contents couldn't be seen. But in *Last Seen* I had an opportunity make it appear as if my tin contained objects, by superposition, even though it was empty – a storage space which one might assume contains lost items one is looking for, but in which neither they nor anything else can actually be found. To trouble any impression of familiarity I used the tin's outer edge to form a video mask, thus providing an abstract shape – in which the filmed images are concealed and gradually revealed – that only becomes recognisable towards the end of the video as the tin appears through the last remaining pages of the book. The decision to use video of the book then helped me to determine a way to display both together in my final exhibition.

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[476] Drucker, Johanna (2004), *The Century of Artists' Books*, New York NY: Granary Books, p.115.
[477] van Alphen, Ernest (2018), *Staging the Archive: Art and Photography in the Age of New Media*, London: Reaktion Books, p.132.
[478] Grenier, Catherine (n.d.), 'Christian Boltanski: Les archives de Christian Boltanski 1965-1988 (1989)', *Centre Pompidou*. [Online.] Accessed 12/12/2022. Available from: https://www.centrepompidou.fr/fr/ressources/oeuvre/c4rrdBq
[479] Ibid.

Book Three: *Cloud Complex*

Although *The Stereoscopic Atlas of Agnes Osias* contains many and varied references to clouds and meteorology, I felt there was scope to develop this further and with greater specificity in a separate book object. *Cloud Complex* emerged from thoughts about how I might more materially suggest an experience of clouded thought than in the *Atlas*. Initially, I imagined enveloping content (texts and images) in increasing layers of paper such as glassine – a material I thought appropriate because it's used in photo albums and for preserving printed artefacts in archives, but also because its semi-opacity could serve as another means of approaching the reveal/conceal strategies explored in *PCUs 1* and *2*, and in *Last Seen*. Two separate testings of this idea (using cheap tissue paper in lieu of glassine), conducted in 2019 and 2020, almost resulted in me abandoning it altogether; though it worked well in practice, the way it functioned didn't help to suggest what precisely it could be used to express. Then, in 2021, while researching clouds and whiteout conditions for writings towards the *Atlas*, I came across two interesting publications that I realised could serve as starting points for *Cloud Complex* text: *The Climatology of the Cold Regions: Northern Hemisphere II*,[480] and *The International Atlas of Clouds and of States of the Sky*.[481] The former was particularly helpful as the poor quality of photographic reproductions on one page in it[482] led me to completely rethink my earlier experiments, and overall both inspired the reconfiguration of my initial idea.

Firstly, both of these publications led me to wonder: when people describe having clouded thoughts (including fog, mist, haze etc), what kinds of clouds might they have in mind? In the meteorological reference publications I'd discovered, categorisations of different weather conditions vary immensely, with clouds defined as 'ragged', 'feathered', 'wrinkled', 'veiled' and more besides. This descriptive language seemed rich with possibility – something for me to play with as means of suggesting that there may be subtle variations to individual experiences of the 'brain fog' people living with dementia report – and a way to consider the 'texture' of those experiences in a different way. I also began to think more about fog and sea fret in relation to whiteout, drawing on memories of experiencing these in person – for example, how the colours of things are attenuated, and how details and distances diminish, as mists thicken.

Punctually throughout my research I made several attempts to photograph cauliflowers – as analogous, or as 'equivalents', to brains – for inclusion in work. The first involved gradually

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[480] Wilson, Cynthia V. (1969), *The Climatology of the Cold Regions: Northern Hemisphere II*, Cold Regions Science and Engineering: Monograph I-A3b, Hanover NH: Corps of Engineers US Army.
[481] International Meteorological Committee (1930), *The International Atlas of Clouds and of States of the Sky*, Paris: Office National Météorologique.
[482] Wilson, Cynthia V. (1969), *The Climatology of the Cold Regions: Northern Hemisphere II*, Cold Regions Science and Engineering: Monograph I-A3b, Hanover NH: Corps of Engineers US Army, p.95.

slicing one up, millimetre by millimetre, similar to the way brains are prepared as tissue samples in brain banks.[483] For the *Atlas*, I also stereo photographed a small cauliflower immersed in water in a large preserve jar. Afterwards, I left it as it was, and several days later was surprised to notice that it had begun to exude a milky discharge into the water which gradually obscured it from view. From there I devised a means of reproducing this effect in a controlled manner: placing a cauliflower in a large fishbowl, I gradually added drops of milk to mimic the naturally occurring 'clouding' of water previously observed, and photographed each stage of the process. Having determined that the images were of interest, it took four further attempts to produce image series of a good enough quality for print. From there, I wasn't sure how to make use of these pictures; I thought they were in need of text, but wasn't at all sure what kind. Then, while going through *The Climatology of the Cold Regions: Northern Hemisphere II*, I came across the line: "As a result of the diffuse reflection and scattering [of light] from cloud and ground… all irregularities and crevasses at the snow surface are invisible; in the air it is akin to 'flying in a bowl of milk',"[484] and realised my cauliflower images could accompany the text I was then preparing for *Cloud Complex*.

This text was formed using a cut-and-paste technique. I first went through the two meteorological publications mentioned, highlighting words and phrases I could link in mind with experiences of clouded thought in dementia. These were then typed up and printed, cut into strips and reordered in a sequence which seemed to have some flow. To improve that flow I then rewrote parts and made additions of my own (including quotes extracted from a poem by Emily Dickinson[485] and a prose piece by Samuel Beckett,[486] plus reference to Kant's metaphoric island of clarity surrounded by obfuscating fog banks[487]). Further rewriting and reordering of the text (including the late addition of a short introduction in the form of 'instructions' for use of the book, laid out roughly in the shape of a cloud) occurred each time it was prepared for print – for two work-in-progress dummies, followed by the final book.

The writing process was also informed by a predetermined page layout design. The main text is arranged as single lines across several pages, with the lines gradually positioned lower and lower on these as the text progresses – the idea being that the lines suggests a horizon, bearing in mind that as fog rolls in and thickens it increasingly obscures what can be seen of

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[483] Annese, Jacopo (2013), 'From the Jar to the World Wide Web: Designing a Public Digital Library for the Human Brain', *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 38:3, London: Maney Publishing, pp.222-231. DOI: 10.1179/0308018813Z.00000000054 Accessed 03/02/2019.
[484] Wilson, Cynthia V. (1969), *The Climatology of the Cold Regions: Northern Hemisphere II*, Cold Regions Science and Engineering: Monograph I-A3b, Hanover NH: Corps of Engineers US Army, p.94.
[485] "The brain is wider than the sky". Seth, Anil K. (2014), 'Darwin's neuroscientist: Gerald M. Edelman, 1929–2014', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5:896, London: Frontiers Media Ltd, p.1. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00896 Accessed 24/02/2022.
[486] Beckett, Samuel; Gontarski, S.E. ed. (1995), *The Complete Short Prose: 1929-1989*, New York NY: Grove Press, p.193. The prose piece in question is 'Ping', dating originally from 1966, and the quote used is, "Traces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white."
[487] Hannah, Dehlia, 'The Philosopher Against the Clouds'. In Buhl, Nanna Debois (2020), *Cloud Behaviour*, Milan: Humboldt Books, p.85.

immediate surroundings. To reinforce this hint at the text being a horizon I used ellipses extensively to link the wordings across the pages in a visually continuous way. What I had in mind, with both the ellipses and my choice of typeface (Courier) in capitals, was telegrams; a form of paper-based message transmission now obsolete but which seemed appropriate for the fragmented text I'd produced. I subsequently discovered that there exist precedents for the use of ellipses in the work of other authors (e.g. Samuel Beckett,[488] and J. Bernlef[489]) who also used these as a device in their writings about dementia and neurological conditions. The text-as-horizon also helped me to determine the shape of the pages – a long thin landscape format to suggest a panoramic vista.

Glassine is difficult to print (other than with commercial laser or expensive direct-to-media printers) so I decided to try using inkjet printable tracing paper instead: a test dummy produced with this material confirmed that it worked well – and, in fact, was a better option in that it's 'milkier' in colour than glassine. As I ended up having to make the prints myself for various reasons, and the size and format of my page designs is bespoke, I realised that trimming them one by one would make consistently clean, flush edges extremely difficult to achieve, if not impossible. But by deciding to tear each individual page to size by hand instead of cutting them, I turned an obstacle into an advantage as, in a book about clouds, the tears soften the page edges appropriately. Given the cloud and cold climate references in the text, the other materials to use then almost suggested themselves – 'icy' clear perspex as backing board, and semi-opaque silicon sheet for the cover, silicon being a substance that's slightly clammy to the touch, and is another material that's normally intended for domestic use. The book binding method I devised is not one I've come across in my research, but instead stems from familiarity with fishing line from its use in prior projects such as *PCU1*. The clearness of the line is intended to complement the perspex book backing, and the position of the binding also allows the 'horizon' text to emerge from the inner crease, suggesting a continuous flow of words like a stream of consciousness. As lines of text can be discerned through the tracing paper but not clearly read until the pages are turned, there is a 'ghosting' or misting effect that also provides an impression of depth.

The main text ends with "In the air it is akin to flying in a bowl of milk…", the quote from the climatology book previously mentioned. Once this line has 'fallen off' the page, cauliflower images are gradually revealed as through cloud lifting or fog dispersing. This use of reveal/conceal is, again, of relevance to dementia, and to clouded thought in particular, in that people who experience this hazy feeling report that it 'drifts' in and out irregularly. Unlike the weather, there is no known way to accurately predict the onset or duration of

[488] Beckett, Samuel (1984), *Collected Shorter Plays*, New York NY: Grove Press, pp.255-262.
[489] Bernlef, J.; Dixon, Adrienne tr. (1988), *Out of Mind*, London: Faber and Faber, pp.119-130. It's only in the last twelve pages of the novel, as the narrator with dementia (Maarten Klein) slips into final stages of disorientation and confusion, that ellipses are brought into play.

episodes like these, and this is a key point of this artists' book. As similar experiences began being reported by people with long Covid[490] – and a comparable symptom, called 'chemobrain', is known as an occasional side effect of cancer treatment[491] – might the sciences begin to take more interest in this symptom as it occurs, for some, in dementia?

Of all the books I've produced, *Cloud Complex* is closest to certain works by Calle, at least in terms of the way found text is used as material. And although *Cloud Complex* is an artists' book rather than another kind of photographic object, there are also links that can be made to the material conceal/reveal effects observed in Szapocznikow's resin works, and to Chadwick's use of 'equivalents'. I've discussed this strategy in relation to the flowers used in her *Wreaths to Pleasure* (1992-1993), but it equally extends to other things, such as the meat in *Enfleshings* (1989) which she considered as providing "intimate encounters with equivalents for our bodies,"[492] and my use of a cauliflower as 'stand in' for a brain is with similar intention. I could, like Chadwick in *Self Portrait* (1991),[493] have used a real brain – though of necessity this would have had to be animal rather than human. But the cauliflower is not just useful as a visual equivalent, it's also a medically related metaphor[494] that I drew on in the *Atlas* also and preferred to remain with for consistency.

Of course, clouds too are "placeholders… for another, unrepresentable object"[495] – and in the context of this research the object is an otherwise indescribable aspect of lived experiences. Given the difficulties people with dementia can increasingly have with telling us what their experiences are like, is it not all the more important to pay attention to what they *are* able to say about these? *Cloud Complex* is a way of manifesting a specific symptom, an artists' book as placeholder for subjective experience, and it represents just one possible approach to listening and creatively responding to evocative 'fantômes'.

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[490] See for example: Asadi-Pooya, Ali A. et al. (2022), 'Long COVID syndrome-associated brain fog', *Journal of Medical Virology*, 94:3, Hoboken NJ: Wiley, pp.979–984. DOI: 10.1002/jmv.27404 Accessed 11/03/2022.
[491] See for example: Nguyen, L.D.; Ehrlich, B.E. (2020), 'Cellular mechanisms and treatments for chemobrain: Insight from aging and neurodegenerative diseases', *EMBO Molecular Medicine*, 12:6, Heidelberg: EMBO Press, pp.1-17. DOI: 10.15252/emmm.202012075 Accessed 11/03/2022.
[492] 'Interview with Mark Haworth-Booth'. In Chadwick, Helen (1996), *Stilled Lives*, Edinburgh: Portfolio Gallery. [No pagination.]
[493] Warner, Marina, 'In Extremis: Helen Chadwick and the Wound of Difference'. In Chadwick, Helen (1996), *Stilled Lives*, Edinburgh: Portfolio Gallery. [No pagination.]
[494] McCarthy, Rosaleen A. (2001), 'Is the Mind a Cauliflower or an Onion?: British Insights into Cognitive Organization from the Study of Abnormal Function', *British Journal of Psychology*, 92:1, Leicester: The British Psychological Society, pp.71-192. DOI: 10.1348/000712601162149 Accessed 18/05/2022.
[495] Mieves, Christian, 'From Nimbus Cloud to Cloud Canyon: Artistic Practice and the Idea of Wonder in Contemporary Art'. In Mieves, Christian; Brown, Irene eds. (2017), *Wonder in Contemporary Artistic Practice*, New York NY: Routledge, p.110.

Completion In Exhibition

The first lockdown of the pandemic was imposed in late March 2020, the week after I'd finished testing *PCU2*. It can be said that my research was interrupted at a crucial stage in its development, then, as instead of completing that work in exhibition the same year I had to wait until 2022, at which point the three artists' books produced for *PCU3* also needed to be shown. My final exhibition took place in the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle. The allotted gallery space was particularly ideal for displaying *PCU2* in that it has a smooth suspended central ceiling at a good height (4.1m) for this piece's secondary projection, and the lack of outside openings made it easier to direct and control lighting, despite some indirect glow spilling into the space from neighbouring galleries.

Displaying small artists' books in such a large area required thought about spacial qualities and staging. Having decided to place three books on individual lecterns – one copy of *Cloud Complex* and two of the *Atlas* – past experience of working in theatres led to the decision to individually illuminate each of these, creating bright islands over and around them. This light had dramatic effect, drawing the eye to the lecterns and giving these greater presence in the gallery, while also making the books easier to read, but without negatively affecting video projections nearby. A third copy of the *Atlas* was displayed in a perspex cube hung from a wall, and the light illuminating this copy of the Atlas was identical to those clipped to the lecterns opposite it, but stepped away from the wall above it by means of a bespoke fitting. Finally, a plinth topped with a 40cm^3 clear perspex case displayed *Last Seen*, which was lit by a video of the book's pages being turned, projected onto frosted film on the back face of the cube. Though encasing this work in perspex placed it out of reach and rendered it inert, the video both illuminated and animated it, drawing the visitor's eye in a similar way to the books on lecterns, and providing depth as the imagery appeared to float above and behind the flat, closed book in an almost three-dimensional manner.

PCU2 was the result of research not directly related to the artists' book project, but in the exhibition there were links to be seen between the works nonetheless – via the clear perspex used in its construction and that in the display cases with books inside, and the video mirroring that of *Last Seen* on the other side of the gallery. These material and visual correspondences helped to create an impression of cohesion between all the exhibits and thus imbue the exhibition as a whole with coherence – the sense of being presented with a body of work even though the separate elements in it were different to each other. As a sculptural floor piece, *PCU2* was set apart from the books however, occupying an entire corner of the gallery, with space for viewers to walk all the way around it. The video projecting upwards into the bottom of the washing machine window serving as a vessel, and onwards through this to the gallery ceiling, helped to give the work greater presence in the space too, despite the fact that the base was not an imposing size and largely transparent.

I didn't consciously plan it that way, but the three copies of the *Atlas* included in the exhibition neatly triangulated the space; two copies of the *Atlas* on lecterns flanked the centrally placed *Cloud Complex* on one side of the room, with the 'dummy' version in its perspex display case across the gallery from them, positioned between *PCU2* and *Last Seen*. This perspex case was intended to mirror that used for *Last Seen*, in the sense that it was an identical (if, at 33cm^3, slightly smaller) display solution. All the lamps used had the same choices of setting – three different colour temperatures and ten intensities. I used the brightest and coldest options available, with the aim of creating an impression somewhere between the cosiness of a library reading room and the clinical cool of a surgical display in a museum – a nod to the medical/scientific references and images in the *Atlas* and *Cloud Complex* (with the archival tone further reinforced by the use of perspex cubes). Helpfully, as the temperature of light apparent through openings to adjacent gallery spaces was much warmer, this made the contrasting whiter light I'd selected for the lamps more distinct. The intention wasn't to put people off engaging with the books but to hint that they might need to be treated with some respect, as I recalled being told by British Library curators that consultable display copies of books tend to be roughly treated in exhibitions: this tactic didn't entirely work, as (for reasons unknown) someone attempted to pull all the pages of *Cloud Complex* out of their binding, but this was an isolated incident.

Although the encased *Atlas* was, like *Last Seen*, an object that visitors couldn't touch, across the gallery from it copies were available for consultation. The reason for providing two such copies was due in part to the amount of text the *Atlas* contains, and also the time it can take for people's eyes to adjust when looking at stereoscopic imagery through viewers – which were also provided, attached to the *Atlas* lecterns using the same adjustable gooseneck stems as for the lamps. Giving more than one person at a time opportunity to approach a work that might, if they wished, require lengthy engagement, was intended as a courtesy initially, and as means of making it more accessible. The inclusion, in addition, of a copy of the *Atlas* in a case allowed me to show an almost finished book as these are designed to be, with a stereoviewer integrated in the cover – because, as an object, it's intended to be a standalone, autonomous artists' book rather than fixed to lecterns in a gallery setting.

In my introduction to the photography chapter, I frame photography as a material, and suggest that this can be indirectly photographic but still arguably be considered as such, or at the very least be understood as being about the photographic and, as an example, I forwarded the video footage of Polaroid emulsions I produced for *PCU2*. To this can be added the video version of *Last Seen* that I produced for exhibition. Benjamin's ability to reach rich understanding of one type of photographic material while observing it in a different form, by drawing on memory (visual, haptic) and imagination, helps to support the notion that the photographic and its materialities can have substance beyond palpable

supports, however reliant on interpretation this may be, and this is something I have drawn on in all the works produced in my research, and considered in their display.

Conclusion

This research project was inspired by questions arising in response to Solnit's definition of 'lost' as having "...two disparate meanings. Losing things is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing."[496] I began by wondering if the ultimate expression or experience of lostness could be found in combinations of the familiar and unfamiliar – if such lostness might be located in neurodegenerative conditions, or serve as a lens through which to approach insights into cognitive decline.

People living with dementia are capable of advocating for themselves, as evidenced by the facilitated Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP)[497] and, in academia, the small but increasing number of studies in which they lead and/or are involved in designing research as 'experts by experience'. What I and other artist practitioners are able to do differently is apply creative expertise (in my case acquired over several decades) to 'speak' about rather than for, and this doctoral project points to the potentials for further enquiry, through the specific mediums utilised (photography, moving image, installation, creative writing, artists' books) and beyond.

My work has always been about other people, and in my practice pre-PhD this involved using photography in a more conventional way. The decision to take an entirely different approach in this research involved a complete change of strategy in order to circumvent an "epistemology of sight… trapped within a material dynamic that accesses subjectivity only through the visible aspects of" the 'bodies' one is looking at,[498] so as to 'see' not a diseased or disabled body as object "but… *a person's experience of embodiment*."[499] If, as discussed, dementia is considered as unknowing, and creative practice research is, or begins with, not-knowing, both are forms of lostness that, while dissimilar, have proven in this research to be productively complementary. In the process of addressing the research questions, a body of work was produced that formed, in a series of related artworks, novel photographic approaches to cognitive decline. It found the familiar and unfamiliar combined to be relevant to aspects of dementia as lived experience, and discovered that photography as medium can be ideal for such enquiry as it, too, holds this paradoxical combination.

This reflective creative practice research has generated new knowledge and identified the need for further scholarship in several domains. It has considered together, for the first time, Alina Szapocznikow (1926-1973) and Helen Chadwick (1953-1996), two 20th century artists whose works challenge the separation of photography and sculpture, and in so doing points

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[496] Solnit, Rebecca (2006), *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, p.22.
[497] DEEP (n.d.), 'DEEP: The UK Network of Dementia Voices. [Online.] Accessed 12/12/2022. Available from: https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/
[498] Tanner, Laura E. (2006), *Lost Bodies: Inhabiting the Borders of Life and Death*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University, p.32.
[499] Ibid. My emphasis.

to a gap in critical thinking about photography as a dimensional medium that begs to be addressed. While stereoscopy has greatly influenced literature, in the visual arts it has been less appreciated, both art historically and in practical application, as this research indicates. Julien C. Hughes' assertion that engagement with dementia can lead to beneficial broadening of our perspectives[500] has been confirmed. As an illustration of this, dementia reveals the extent to which interpretation is significant to visual perception, which consequently invites review of photography as an analogical medium. Attention to the conceptual implications of dementia can, then, provide insights with ramifications beyond enhanced comprehension of it as lived experience. While this research found that lostness and unknowing provided obliquely productive modes of approach to visually addressing perceptual disorientations in cognitive decline, the discovery that understandings of dementia can in turn be lenses through which to reappraise the assumed familiarity of things, like photography, has been a revelation.

As my research concluded I found myself thinking back to the woman my mother introduced me to in the 1980s, who I saw then as 'still and silent, there and oddly also not, *like a photograph*.' I still wonder, perhaps now more than ever, what she might have said if able to speak. But this does indicate further need for work that, in Chadwick's words, may "open up a crease in language and look at what cannot be articulated"[501] – that seeks to know, even if "there's nothing to see but a vagueness of clouds."[502]

[500] Hughes, Julian C. (2013), 'Philosophical issues in dementia', *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 26:3, Philadelphia PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, p.284. DOI: 10.1097/YCO.0b013e32835f675e Accessed 29/10/2022.
[501] Chadwick, Helen, 'Withdrawal: Object, Sign, Commodity'. In Benjamin, Andrew ed. (1992), *Architecture, Space, Painting: Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts*, London: Academy Editions, p.69.
[502] Kaufman, Shirley (2009), *Ezekiel's Wheels*, Port Townsend WA: Copper Canyon Press, p.21.

Covid Impact Statement

The first lockdown in 2020 began with the closure of my university, at very short notice, on 18th March. Prior to starting the PhD, I'd spent decades as freelancer so thought working from home again wouldn't be an issue, but the enforced (and often unpredictable) restrictions, with concerns about illness and other uncertainties, were surprisingly difficult to adapt to.

Over the first year of the pandemic it was easier to gauge the impact on my research – the closure of research facilities, the cancelled events and opportunities, the abandonment of plans etc – and, as mentioned in the thesis, Covid disruptions began at a pivotal point in my studies, a time when it felt like I had a lot to lose. As the pandemic wore on and nothing noteworthy happening become normal, its negatives became less easy to identify: it's difficult to be disappointed by might-have-beens you've no awareness of.

On the positive side, I've yet to catch Covid, and the protracted period of reduced opportunity unexpectedly gave me an insight into what life for the elderly might be like. A questionnaire I considered using in a piece of work included tests intended to rate disorientation by, for example, asking participants to identify the date an interview was taking place. Sometime in early 2021 I woke up, realised I didn't have a clue what day it was and, as a result, and concluded that this means of gauging whether or not someone may have cognitive decline is likely flawed if it doesn't take the interviewee's featureless living conditions into consideration – but I found that really interesting to think about, and my artists' book *Cloud Complex* was partly influenced by this.

Otherwise, my PhD took longer than it should have, getting things done was much harder than it would otherwise have been, and the Covid extensions I was granted, though very welcome and necessary, couldn't really mitigate for disruption. Extra time didn't make up for lack of access to a studio in which to make planned works that required space and specialist equipment. Extra time didn't replace scrapped arrangements to meet people living with dementia, and find out how this might have altered the course of my research. Extra time led to me running out of funds in a cost of living crisis. But then: "To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now."[503] The research I was able to achieve is something I feel good about regardless of the circumstances it was undertaken in. Things could have been worse.

[503] Samuel Beckett quoted in Olney, James (1999), *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, p.12.

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Appendix A: List of Moving Image Work

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: Last Seen (2022), finished moving image work projected in installation at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 August – 3 September 2022.
Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: Last Seen (2022), documentation of this exhibit in the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 August – 3 September 2022.
Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: Last Seen (2022), documentation of preparatory work.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Two (2022), finished moving image work projected in installation at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 August – 3 September 2022.
Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Two (2022), documentation of this exhibit in the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 August – 3 September 2022.
Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Two (2022), clips of footage for finished moving image work.
Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Two (2022), documentation of preparatory work in Ex Libris Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 12 – 13 March 2020..

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing One (2018), documentation of this exhibit in The Project Space, Newcastle upon Tyne, 31 August – 15 September 2018.

Appendix B: List of Photographic Work

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing (2022), documentation of the Hatton Gallery exhibition, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 August – 3 September 2022. Image files 2022_Hatton_01–03.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: The Stereoscopic Atlas of Agnes Osias (2022), documentation of finished and preparatory work. Image files 2022_Atlas_01–30.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: Last Seen (2022), documentation of finished and preparatory work. Image files 2022_LastSeen_01–23.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Three: Cloud Complex (2022), documentation of finished and preparatory work. Image files 2022_Cloud_01–15.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing Two (2022), documentation of preparatory work. Image files 2020_PCU2_01–11.

Picturing Clouds of Unknowing One (2018), documentation of finished and preparatory work. Image files 2018_PCU1_01–12.