

AN INTRODUCTION IN FIVE ACTS¹

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Setting the scene

The collection we are introducing here is for practitioner-researchers of all disciplines who find themselves working within the context of the Academy. It offers a range of possible ways of being a creative critic. Ways in which to write (about) your own practice, or one that inspires you, critically and creatively, so that it matters to others. Ways to seduce the reader into caring, ways to communicate beyond disciplinary boundaries and university walls.²

Dramatis Personae

FOLDER 1

FOLDER 2

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[We have taken the words they have contributed to this volume, often placing them wildly out of context here, for the purpose of our introduction.]

CHORUS OF THE INSPIRED AND
THE INSPIRING

The chorus stands for and often cites all those (others) that have inspired us over the years. It is an ever-augmenting circle.⁴

STANDARDISATION DEMON

Act 1. An unfolding

Two people, let's say they are women, [FOLDER 1 and FOLDER 2] enter the playing space and lay a small folded handkerchief on the floor.

FOLDER 1 Let's begin with the ideas of three people. Two philosophers and a physicist. Gilles Deleuze, Michel Serres and David Bohm.

FOLDER 2 Three men who multiply.

FOLDER 1 Michel Serres says that 'if you take a handkerchief and spread it out in order to iron it, you can see in it certain fixed distances and proximities. If you sketch a circle in one area, you can mark out nearby points and measure far-off distances. Then take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed. If, further, you tear it in certain places, two points that were close can become very distant'.⁵

FOLDER 2 *[unfolds the handkerchief by one panel]* While unfolding, two points that were close can become very far away. (Although, can I make it very clear that I am not spreading this out to iron it, Michel Serres.)

FOLDER 1 *[Folds it up again]* And while folding, we can bring far away points together.

FOLDER 2 David Bohm, in his controversial theory of the universe⁶, describes a new model of reality called the Implicate Order. Everything that is and will be in our cosmos, which is ever-evolving, is enfolded within his new order, as endless feedback cycles are created. Our manifest world *[FOLDER 2 claps her hands]*, here, he calls the Explicate Order, but this is secondary and flows out of the law of the hidden, Implicate Order. In his words, Implicate Order 'is not to be understood solely in terms of a regular arrangement of *objects* (e.g. in rows) or as a regular arrangement of *events* (e.g. in a series). Rather, a *total order* is contained in some *implicit* sense, in each region of space and time. Now, the word "implicit" is based on the verb "to implicate". This means "to fold inward" (as multiplication means 'folding many times'). So we may be led to explore the notion that in some sense each region contains a total structure "enfolded" within it'.⁷ In other words, in principle, this small piece of folded material here, as a very crude example, *[picking up handkerchief]*, as an individual element of the universe, could reveal detailed information about every other element of the universe. *[She puts it back down on the floor.]*

FOLDER 1 Watch. *[She unfolds it, very slowly. It keeps opening out. She works in silence. The task seems neverending.]*

MARY PATERSON *[Aside]* It's funny because it's impossible.

FOLDER 2 The idea of folding (and unfolding) of course is also very important for Gilles Deleuze, as a philosophical concept but also as a practical means of understanding and developing connections between ideas and practices. In his book *The Fold*, for example, he highlights the interplay of the verbal and the visual as he discusses the Baroque sensibility in both Stephane Mallarmé's and Leibniz's works, and calls it 'a

new kind of correspondence or mutual expression, an extr'expression, fold after fold,' that is, *pli selon pli*.⁸

- FOLDER 1** In Mallarmé's 1893 poem, 'Remémoration d'amis belges', he describes the city of Bruges emerging from the mist: 'That fold by fold the widowed stone unrobes itself.'⁹
- FOLDER 2** Deleuze takes up Mallarmé's expression and folds it into a new theory of mutual expression -
- FOLDER 1** Which he uses, in turn, to engage with Michaux's work, for example his anthology *Life in the Folds*, Boulez's composition *Pli Selon Pli: Un Portrait de Mallarmé* and Simon Hantai's painting method, constructed from folding.¹⁰
- FOLDER 2** As if folding begets more folding.
- FOLDER 1** In Hantai's words, you could fill the folded canvas without knowing where the edge was. You no longer knew where it stopped.¹¹
- FOLDER 2** In Brian Massumi's words, 'That seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found'.¹²
- FOLDER 1** We could think about the act of folding as an endless feedback cycle.
- FOLDER 2** In Deleuze's own words, 'the problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, make it go through the roof, take it to infinity'.¹³
- FOLDER 1** *[Still unfolding]* Let's continue then. In their book *On Folding: Towards a New Field of Interdisciplinary Research*, editors Michael Friedman and Wolfgang Schäffner approach and frame the idea within the discourse of codification. In her chapter therein, Karin Krauthausen describes a 'spatializing folding'. She talks about the multi-dimensionality of the practice of writing and reading being facilitated by the bound book, made up of folded sheets of paper. The physical action of folding those pages *[FOLDER 1 unfolds and unfolds, slightly out of breath]* both enables linear, codified reading, yet simultaneously disrupts its continuity. The reader can choose to fold backwards, forwards, interweave and extract, as the fold becomes a trickster between dimensions.¹⁴
- FOLDER 2** Between dimensions, let's return to Massumi -
- FOLDER 1** Fold back to?
- FOLDER 2** He talks about a systematic openness, an open system. Incipient systems. Creative Contagion.¹⁵
- FOLDER 1** Or contamination as Manuel Vason puts it.¹⁶
- FOLDER 2** And continuing on, augmenting all the time, Massumi with Erin Manning writes 'Thought gathers in the work. It is the event of the work's unfolding'.¹⁷

- FOLDER 1** The work everywhere, if we are lucky, if it is good, within academia and outside, continues after it has apparently finished.
- FOLDER 2** It is folded into more work, different work, new work. Performance becomes film, music becomes recording, poetry becomes prose becomes criticism, words are folded or unfolded into more words, multiplied, elaborated.
- FOLDER 1** And this is good as long as the folding keeps opening out. So long as there is always an unfolding.
- FOLDER 2** The danger is when the unfoldings are expected to fit into existing moulds set out by notions of what the 'correct' scholarly outcome should look like.
- FOLDER 1** The danger comes about when we forget the unfolding is a creative act as well as a critical one. We forget that embodiment and intuition are intellectual practices.
- FOLDER 2** The key is to keep unfolding without losing the creative drive that inspired us in the first place. To insist that critical writing and thinking are crafted as artworks in their own right.¹⁸
- FOLDER 1** So let's begin.
- FOLDER 2** Let's continue.

Act 2. A multiplication.

- FOLDER 2** Deleuze says 'The multiple is not only what has many parts, but what is folded in many ways'.¹⁹

[As FOLDER 1 unfolds, a number of people appear from the folds. It is the CHORUS OF THE INSPIRED AND THE INSPIRING]

CHORUS OF THE INSPIRED AND THE INSPIRING We reiterate the words of Angelika Bammer and Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres when they say: we believe in the potential of scholarly writing to make a difference. We take its challenge seriously. *[FOLDER 1 unfolds]* We appreciate the usefulness of established rules. But when those rules – the norms and conventions of our fields and disciplines – get in the way of the work our words can do, we have to act.²⁰

[FOLDER 1 continues unfolding]

We repeat the words of Stephen Benson and Clare Connors: creative criticism, in short, is writing which seeks to do justice to what can happen – does happen; will happen; might or might not happen - when we are with an artwork. We can call that being-with an encounter.²¹ And to have an encounter is to make a thing encountered. Creative criticism is the writing out of this event, writing which endeavours in its own wordful stuff variously to register, and so to acknowledge, the event as a matter of language.²²

We take on the words of Matthew Goulish when he says: if we can destabilize the boundaries between the critical and the creative, we may enrich them both, and discover a communal practice – one that relies on another for inspiration and energy, both critically and creatively.²³

We call on Henk Borgdorff when he writes: concepts, thoughts and utterances ‘assemble themselves’ around the artwork, so that the artwork begins to speak.²⁴

FOLDER 2 Karen Barad writes: ‘It is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter – in both senses of the word...Boundaries do not sit still’.²⁵

[FOLDER 1 keeps unfolding. The space between her and FOLDER 2 keeps multiplying]

FOLDER 2 She writes, along with other materialist feminists: ‘Feeling, desiring and experiencing are not singular characteristics or capacities of human consciousness. Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers.’²⁶

CHORUS *[Echoing Massumi and Manning]* Thought gathers in the work. It is the event of the work’s unfolding.²⁷

FOLDER 1 As we unfold, two points that were close can become very far away. And while new material is made visible, other material is folded over, made underside, lost to sight.

FOLDER 2 Let’s fold over, for now -

FOLDER 1 the conventional format of the scholarly output and distanced objectivity of traditional academic writing.

FOLDER 2 Fold over, for now –

FOLDER 1 the idea that reflecting and critiquing are separate from the creative act. The idea that the theory comes in the dry writing afterwards, in the lacklustre (bit of the) talk, in the inaccessible analysis.

FOLDER 2 Fold over, for now –

FOLDER 1 The security of legitimating frameworks

FOLDER 1 Fold over, for now -

FOLDER 2 The authoritative, the dominant, the patriarchal, the binary, the ossified, the ritualised.

CHORUS *[singing]* In the words of Bammer and Boetcher Joeres, we have to expand our idea of scholarship.²⁸

FOLDER 1 We have to question and destabilize the notion of what constitutes scholarship and to make space for the possible and that which is not yet known. There is a vulnerability in leaping forward into the unknown, but such leaps are full of

potential, whether they end up in failure or a tentative grasping of something genuinely new.

FOLDER 2 We call for the legitimisation of artistic practice as a mode of thinking, as a mode of research that draws its very strength from not knowing in advance.

FOLDER 1 Boundaries do not sit still.

[FOLDER 2 is miles away now, unfolding still. She is heard repeating ends of sentences like an echo.]

CHORUS To quote Benson and Connors, let's celebrate a writing of openings in which there is room to move and air to breathe; writing which makes and maintain space for the possible.²⁹

FOLDER 1 Let's embrace the arts practitioners with the academic hats on who are reflecting on and critiquing their own work and the work of those around them. Let's embrace those thinker-makers, maker-thinkers who find themselves standing in the still contested, yet enormously rich terrain of practice as research. The practitioner-researcher, the artistic-researcher³⁰, the you (yes you) doing PaR³¹, you, doing research creation³², you, doing practice-led research³³, art practice as research, performance as research³⁴. Are you still feeling uneasy? Do you still feel as if your work comes under particularly heavy scrutiny?

CHORUS Let's call for Robin Nelson³⁵. Robin Nelson?

FOLDER 1 He talks about artistic research as theory imbricated within practice.

CHORUS Robin Nelson!

FOLDER 1 He has coined the term 'complementary writing'

CHORUS *[whispering]* Complementary!

FOLDER 1 To describe writings that work alongside practice, helping to articulate the research inquiry and afford new insights.³⁶ Although he differentiates this kind of writing from practice, he does not suggest that they are mutually exclusive or that they need to be separated.

FOLDER 2 *[passing FOLDER 1 and the CHORUS holding a corner of the handkerchief]* This idea of complementarity of writing as artistic research and about artistic research is also echoed by Henk Borgdorff

CHORUS Henk Borgdorff was among us. *[Calling]* Henk Borgdorff?

FOLDER 1 Where he suggests a 'third way' of writing about practice, one that does not interpret the artwork or reconstruct the artistic process, but involves an 'emulation or imitation of, or an allusion to, the non-conceptual content embodied in the art.'³⁷

CHORUS The third way!

- FOLDER 2** A writing-alongside.
- CHORUS** Simon Jones? Simon Jones! We were inspired by your 'The Courage of Complementarity' chapter.³⁸
- FOLDER 1** He says that the best writing-alongside 'becomes a kind of manual without a model, a means to no end, a history that speaks of the future, a manifesto'.³⁹
- FOLDER 2** Or what about a writing-*beside*?
- CHORUS** And now, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. [*Calling*] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick?
- FOLDER 2** She suggests a critical practice of positioning oneself 'beside' the artwork in question.⁴⁰ To adopt a position of besideness is to look for a new way 'round the topos of depth or hiddenness, typically followed by a drama of exposure, that has been such a staple of critical work of the past four decades'.⁴¹ It means letting go of 'beneath', 'behind' and 'beyond', and challenging the traditional hierarchical and dualistic positions these entail, of tracing beginnings and analysing intentions.
- FOLDER 1** She writes, 'Beside is an interesting preposition also because there's nothing very dualistic about it; a number of elements may lie alongside one another, though not an infinity of them. Beside permits a spacious agnosticism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking: noncontradiction or the law of the excluded middle, cause versus effect, subject versus object'.⁴²
- CHORUS** Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick! We are beside ourselves.
- FOLDER 2** This idea is echoed by Irit Rogoff
- CHORUS** [*whispering*] Irit Rogoff!
- FOLDER 2** When she suggests that the practice of 'writing with' is a dehierarchization of the social relations governing the making of meaning in visual culture.⁴³ And it is also present in Jane Rendell's discussion-
- CHORUS** [*singing*] Jane Rendell! [*calling*] Jane Rendell?
- FOLDER 2** - of site-writing, a critical spatial practice that she developed which combines critical and creative writing modes, essay and text-based installation. She questions prepositional vocabulary in order to investigate how position informs relation, and so determines the terms of engagement between critic and artwork.⁴⁴ A shift in preposition -
- CHORUS** Shift. Under. Behind. On top. Beneath.
- FOLDER 1** Alongside.
- CHORUS** To. To you.

- FOLDER 2** A shift in preposition allows a different dynamic of power to be articulated, where, for example, the terms of domination and subjugation indicated by 'over' and 'under' can be replaced by the equivalence suggested by 'to' and 'with'. Rendell goes so far as to suggest removing prepositions entirely and simply writing the work under scrutiny (rather than writing about or to or with it) and in so doing aims to shift the relation between the critic and her object of study from one of mastery – the object under critique – or distance – writing about an object – to one of equivalence and analogy – writing as the object. The use of analogy – the desire to invent a writing that is somehow 'like' the artwork – allows a certain creativity to intervene in the critical act as the critic comes to understand and interpret the work by remaking it on his/her own terms.⁴⁵
- FOLDER 1** The critic responds as artist, and so the artwork generates further creative and critical work.
- NIC CONIBERE** *[Aside]* Same difference, doubling up differently.
- FOLDER 2** The artwork does not stop there, at its encounter with its audience, but keeps moving, influencing, inspiring and infecting in different ways. The work continues.
- GOULISH AND HIXSON** The spell the performance cast in me never faded; the door that it opened never closed.
- DIANA DAMIAN** Thinking is revealed in texts that are not allowed to end, in the same way in which the performance, over its duration, unfolds in continuity.
- OWEN PARRY** Fandom comes into being through multiplicity, through a simultaneous affection, dissatisfaction and desire to transform existing narratives. It extends the work rather than capturing it.
- FOLDER 2** As well as site-writing, there is an expansive range of other modes of hybrid and trans-disciplinary creative critical enquiry, fusing poetry, prose, theory and criticism, which continues to grow.
- CHORUS** *[singing]* Performative writing,⁴⁶ art writing,⁴⁷ new nature writing,⁴⁸ auto-ethnography,⁴⁹ fictocriticism,⁵⁰ anecdotal theory,⁵¹ mytho and psychogeography,⁵² as well as other forms of experimental, poetic and philosophical methods that cannot be so succinctly defined.⁵³
- G.D. WHITE** *[Aside]* ...again, critical and creative, how do I work with, or between, or among, which could be the term, or trans, just trans, or inter, or intra, or perhaps con, or cum, criticalcumcreative, criticalitycumcreativity, creatcumcrit...
- FOLDER 1** Each of these modes of writing investigate the transition between theory, criticism and practice in slightly different ways and in doing so open up exciting possibilities for the critic and ask whether critical thinking itself can be used to generate imaginative contexts.
- SUSANNAH THOMPSON** *[Aside]* We will not be constrained by categorisation. We are the antithesis of Greenbergian medium-specificity. We are impure!

- FOLDER 2** We could call these multiple forms of critical enquiry writings-beside.
- CHORUS** [*whispering*] Besideness-writings
- FOLDER 1** [*She calls from across the border*] You need to explain.
- FOLDER 2** The act of writing beside an artwork is not about uncovering something other in the work but rather about allowing space and time to encounter it (whether it is your own creation or someone else's). This is not necessarily easy or comfortable.
- FOLDER 1** [*Again from afar*] As any child knows who's shared a bed with siblings... That's Kosofsky Sedgwick.⁵⁴
- FOLDER 2** Being, and indeed staying, beside a work (be it object or event) is a messy business. Such is our work.
- FOLDER 1** And we fold to tidy. [*She keeps unfolding*]
- FOLDER 2** Writing-beside involves, first and foremost, an attending to, a listening, a level of care.
- FOLDER 1** A methodology that P.A. Skantze (drawing on the work of Sebald) calls a narrative of care.⁵⁵
- FOLDER 2:** What Iain Biggs in his chapter here calls an act of noticing or one of 'notitia'
- IAIN BIGGS** [*Aside*] A careful attention that is sustained, patient, subtly attuned to images and metaphors that tracks both hidden meanings and surface presentations.⁵⁶
- FOLDER 1** And this may take place across temporal and spatial planes.
- ELLA FINER** [*Aside*] As everyday auditors we listen to multiple temporalities at once, whether we are conscious of our practice or not...
- SALOME VOGELIN** We do not hear entities but relationships, the commingling of things that generate a sonic world, which we grasp not by inference not by synthesizing various viewpoints, but by centring, decentring, and re-centring ourselves from moment to moment in the complex continuity of sound...
- ELLA FINER** Air recycles, and through doing so can touch other times.
- FOLDER 1** Writing-beside might involve a remembering or returning to a particular object or experience, or a projection of what might be, could have been, around it. And inevitably, the listening calls forth a response, so an exchange or conversation ensues.
- EMMA COCKER** [*Aside*] Conversational sparring enables a form of thinking and articulation beyond what is often conceivable on one's own; it is a means for drawing,

forcing – even forging – language into being, a practice of *poesis* as much as of poetics.

PA SKANTZE

Whoosh, let go, try
Again, separate, regroup, listen and
Speak, return to your refrains – try out new
Verses, wander off, come back. Enter a
Chorus you're not sure of, Concatenate,
Agitate, Rest, Reverberate, Resound.

TRACY MCKENNA

New dialogues release previously unknown forms emerging as connective mutations across a range of diverse registers.

PHIL SMITH

Get inside as quickly as you can and use your time to find out what the elsewheres of this place are...

FOLDER 2

Indeed, each of the contributions in this volume can be seen as dialogues, some more explicit than others.

FOLDER 1

Simon Jones?

CHORUS

Simon Jones! Come back!

FOLDER 1

- reminded me that David Bohm discusses the notion of dialogue, describing it as talking 'while suspending your opinions...Not trying to convince, but simply to understand... It is a kind of implicate order, where each one enfolds the whole consciousness...'.⁵⁷

FOLDER 2

Some dialogues occur between the practitioner and their own artistic and thinking process, some between the artist and a particular work (or event) of their own manufacturing, and some between the thinker and a work (or event) made by someone else.

RAJNI SHAH

[Aside] I hope that they will give you a glimpse of a certain way of working...

AUGUSTO CORRIERI

...by steeping the self into itself, zooming into its processes, we might find that it is actually an open discursive space...

FOLDER 2

Each of the contributions here, in different ways, experiment with besiderness, blurring the bifurcation implicit in Western thinking, reconfiguring or superseding (somehow) the conventional task of critical inquiry.

FOLDER 1

And of course Deleuze says 'The multiple is not only what has many parts, but what is folded in many ways.'⁵⁸

FOLDER 2

You said that already.

FOLDER 1

I am folding.

Act 3: An explication

CHORUS Rigour!

[A cloaked figure appears. It is the Standardisation Demon.]

DEMON I go by many names. One of my guises in the UK is Research Excellence Framework,⁵⁹ but I exist everywhere. I am loathed but really I am fighting for good work to be taken seriously.

[Folders 1 and 2 keep unfolding in silence. They are now oceans apart.]

Rigour is important here but it puts people off. In the REF guidelines, rigour is defined as ‘intellectual coherence, methodological precision and analytical power; accuracy and depth of scholarship; awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work.’⁶⁰

CHORUS Break this down Demon.

DEMON I will. ‘Intellectual coherence’ - the work has to make sense conceptually, follow a path or series of paths, guide the reader through. ‘Methodological precision’: the work needs to be explicit about the methods in which it is engaging. ‘Analytical power’: a questioning, a breaking down, a finding a way around. ‘Accuracy and depth of scholarship’: the work needs to map a clear thinking-through of its own intricacies. ‘Awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work’: the work needs to be aware of where it comes in the world and who is around it, what came before and why it matters. As PA Skantze writes, it is a matter of ‘taking care to think all the way through the complexities of what we are making, taking care to acknowledge what we might be excluding and why.’⁶¹ It is not, as perhaps we assume it to be at first, restrictive or rigid,⁶² but an attentive way of looking at and handling material.

FOLDER 1 *[looking up]* We might say, then, that rigorous scholarship is, like writing-beside, a matter of taking care. Or put another way: in taking care, writing-beside is a form of rigorous scholarship.

DEMON I am not blind, I see the growing sense of helplessness and cynicism within university arts and humanities communities everywhere. I, too, am disheartened by the current political environments worldwide and increased pressures to produce outputs and justify outcomes.⁶³ There is a sense of trepidation (in scholars themselves and in scholars assessing other scholars) in breaking existing moulds and challenging so-called legitimating models. But it is not the ‘Academy’ (whatever and whoever that really is) that is closed to new forms of criticism (ones that might not be immediately documented, rated, compared, and neatly archived) only we tend to assume that it still is.

[With that the Demon turns into a sparrow and flies through an open window.]⁶⁴

CHORUS Let us reinterpret and reconfigure the notion of rigorous scholarship. Let us look for it in new places. Places that are meticulous and playful, conscientious and experimental.

It is too easy to say that rigorous scholarship equates to 'good' academic writing, but it is not as simple as that. There are already many conflicting views on what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' writing⁶⁵, and whether being clear is the same as being accessible is the same as being democratic is the same as being conformist.⁶⁶ Let's just say, for now, that 'good' writing is one that makes us think.⁶⁷

FOLDER 1 *[momentarily begins re-folding the nonsensical and now enormous handkerchief, which surrounds everyone]* Rigour, if we think about it, might be as much about folding inwards. Not as an act of closing down but one of return. Returning, again and again. To check, verify, practice, rehearse, make sure, repeat, try again.

BRIGID MCLEER *[Aside]* Each time I return the stories begin anew

GÖZE SANER Repetition by definition necessitates difference.

KREIDER AND O'LEARY All of this, or something similar, will happen again. The vortical logic will hold. The pattern will repeat, each time with a slight variation, each time leaving behind a wall.

TIM ETCHELLS The good news is that nothing lasts forever. Think of Rome. The Empire.

MOJISOLA ADEBAYO I don't want to marry a man! Not now, NOT EVER!

FOLDER 2 *[quoting Michel Serres]* Then take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed.

FOLDER 1 Rigour, if we think about it though, is as much about folding outwards.

[She continues unfolding. The chorus, one by one, disappear into the cosmic planes that the handkerchief now occupies. FOLDER 2 is light years away now.]

Act 4: An implication

VOICES OFF We find ourselves in outer space

[Everyone is present but suspended as and between celestial bodies, amidst the vast unfolding. FOLDER 1 and 2 are still at work but nowhere to be seen. Slowly forms emerge, like constellations, satellite clusters]

MIKE PEARSON *[as voice only]* This is (Is this?) THEATRE after all?

KAREN CHRISTOPHER *[as voice only]* Often a train of thought starts with an image.

CHORUS *[as voices only]* We call on Hamlet in this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o — erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire.⁶⁸

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* Well, as Stephen Hawking says, to confine our attention to terrestrial matters would be to limit the human spirit.⁶⁹

LOUISE TONDEUR *[as voice only]* This wasn't the sort of place for a person to hide or find anything at all.

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* Form is not a container for scholarly content: it is part of the scholarship.⁷⁰

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* The contributors in this volume, while presenting different ways of writing beside, all take the aesthetics or form of the writing as seriously as its content. Their criticality is embedded, often, in the shape, style and tone of the writing itself.

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* Some of the writings appear more conventionally formatted than others but each of them challenge the orthodox ways that arguments are put together and analyses drawn out. Each of them open up a different range of creative possibilities.

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* Many aspire to polyphony, some with the use of columns, mirroring and doubling.

[Nic Conibere, Diana Damian, Simon Piasecki enter the orbit.]⁷¹

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* And some with commentary in sidenotes and footnotes.

[Mojisola Adebayo and Mike Pearson also enter the orbit.]

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* And some with the use of carefully built-up layers.

[Tracy Mckenna and Lucy Cash now are pulled in.]

LUCY CASH *[as voice only]* I am always drawn to looking at the deliberate patterning and arrangement of bodies in space...

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* And some through scripts and imaginary dialogue.

[Stephen Loo, Undine Sellbach, G.D. White, Johanna Linsley, Augusto Corrieri and Owen Parry navigate the gravitational pull.]

LOO AND SELLBACH *[as voice only]* Each have distinct perceptions, orientations, appetites and inner worlds, related to their specific outside environments.

FOLDER 2 [as voice only] Some contributions include leaps in register and pitch, or adopt specific tones and attitudes. There are those playing with the form of the manifesto.

[PA Skantze and Susannah Thompson drift in to circle the Earth.]

FOLDER 1 [as voice only] And those with the voice of the activist.

[Iain Biggs, Mary Paterson and Phil Smith enter the orbit.]

FOLDER 2 [as voice only] And those with dreamlike and evocative narratives, fictional and real. Those with annotations in prose, commentaries in poetry.

[Tim Etchells, Hayley Newman, Mitch Rose, Joe Kelleher, Chris Goode, Louise Tondeur and Taru Elfving are the next satellites to fall in with the gravitational pull.]

CHRIS GOODE [as voice only] This, of course, is a fantasy, triggered partly by experience – other projects, elsewhere – and partly by wishful, or even wilful, thinking.

MITCH ROSE [as voice only] Stories make the world real by effacing the reality that they purport to reflect.

HAYLEY NEWMAN [as voice only] The reverse journey takes seconds...

JOE KELLEHER [as voice only] The scene, already, displaces itself.

TIM ETHELLES [as voice only] Night falls in the airport.

FOLDER 1 [as voice only] Others disrupt the linear movement of the text by using fragments, quotations, spacing and visual imagery. They experiment with these as performative devices that interrupt the reader's process, reminding her of her own process of looking, reading and making sense.

[Douglas Kearney, Kristen Kreider and James O'Leary, Cathy Turner, Brigid Mcleer, Joanne Whalley and Lee Miller, and Karen Christopher are drawn into orbit.]⁷²

DOUGLAS KEARNEY [as voice only] FREEDOM FREEDOM CUT ME LOOSE

[FOLDER 1's body appears, a corner of the now infinite handkerchief in her hand]

FOLDER 1 So we have folded together, while we also unfold, this anthology with which we hope to unsettle a number of conventions. We have brought together a rich collection of short contributions, fragments in themselves, including a Foreword, an Afterword, and three Middlewords (forewords that come in the middle of the book, reflecting on the twelve or so chapters that come before them) to model the dynamic of a wider conversation.

FOLDER 2 [as voice only] A wider unfolding.

FOLDER 1 We asked each author here to frame their contribution with a sentence or two about how they situate their own writing. This was interpreted in different ways, sometimes included within the body of the text, sometimes placed as an epigraph, sometimes elaborated, sometimes not.

FOLDER 1 *[disappearing again]* We are all satellites now.

CATHY TURNER *[as voice only]* How does one dance a place into being?

JOHANNA LINSLEY *[as voice only]* I could literally disappear and I wouldn't mind.

TARU ELFVING *[as voice only]* Writing, like witnessing, is always for something. If not aimed at truth or disclosure, visibility or voice, what is it for? Situated, with care, its transversal potential may lie in how it calls for further encounters. Contagiously.

JOANNE WHALLEY & LEE MILLER *[as voice only]* We infect each other's images.

HELENE FRICHOT *[as voice only]* Writing is a world-historical delirium, which passes through peoples, places and things. It is a delirium that imagines a new people, a new Earth.

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* Some contributions spill off the pages

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* Folds

FOLDER 1 *[as voice only]* Folds of the book and into digital forms that can be found in the web companion,⁷³ moving from printed monochrome script and image to colour, movement and sound. The ever expanding range of digital technologies at our disposal today offer alternative ways of responding, prompting changes in the ways that scholarly writing happens, opening up new processes of collaboration and experimentation. As text becomes unfixed from the page and other media gain equal weight, the act of writing as a means of inquiry and presentation, becomes a choice⁷⁴. There are other ways to communicate and respond.⁷⁵

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* With this collection of samples, however, we were interested in the work of writing, on pages. Responding on paper, first and foremost, -

SIMON PIASECKI *[as voice only]* The paper cannot be too porous -

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* - to artworks and processes, exploring how that translation from bodily experience (whether it be one of watching or making, or watching oneself making) to writing can and does occur.⁷⁶

FOLDER 1 *[reappearing, still holding the handkerchief]* We were interested in 'techniques which embrace their own inventiveness'.

FOLDER 2 *[as voice only]* The insights offered by each chapter might apply to others and we hope they will. But their value is not to be found in their 'generalisability', rather they offer new paths forward.

CHORUS *[as voice only]* Rather than the sense of an ending the aspiration here is towards the possibility of an opening.⁷⁷

[The earth's gravitational pull dissolves and the contributors float out of orbit and into the cosmos once again.]

FOLDER 1 *[as her body disappears again]* If we unfold enough, we find openings.

Act 5

OFF-STAGE ECHO In Deleuze's own words, the problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, make it go through the roof, take it to infinity.⁷⁸

[A door in the roof opens.]

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¹ Five in homage to ancient Greek, Elizabethan and Noh theatre, but also five because Pierre Boulez's composition *Pli selon pli: Portrait de Mallarmé* [Fold by Fold: Portrait of Mallarmé], which premiered in 1960 in Germany, was made up of five movements. The title is taken from a Mallarmé poem, in which the poet describes how a mist that covers the city of Bruges gradually disappears. Boulez described his work: 'So, fold by fold, as the five movements develop, a portrait of Mallarmé is revealed.' We hope that fold by fold, in five acts, our introduction here becomes apparent.

² Bammer, Angelika & Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres (2015:21).

³ One of the many factors that inspired this collection was an event that Jane Rendell organised in June 2010 at the Bartlett School of Architecture called ‘-writing’, bringing together a group of people to present their own creative modes of critical writing. Many of the contributors on that day find themselves here.

⁴ We are particularly indebted here to a range of books and journals that have argued for and brought together important collections of creative critical writing: Peg Rawes, Stephen Loo and Timothy Mathews (2016) *Poetic Biopolitics*; Angelika Bammer and Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres (2015) *The Future of Scholarly Writing*; Ivan Callus and James Corby (2015-ongoing) *CounterText: A Journal for the Study of the Post-Literary*; Stephen Benson and Clare Connors (2014) *Creative Criticism*; Jackie Stacey and Janet Wolff (2013) *Writing Otherwise*; and Julia Lockheart and John Wood (2008-ongoing) *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*.

⁵ Serres, Michel (1995a: 60). His assertion here is that time is more like the crumpled handkerchief than the ironed-out one. His readings of history, particularly scientific history, are based on this notion so that past, present and future discoveries are always intermingled and inform each other.

⁶ Controversial because it is/was alternative and did not adhere to the general understanding of quantum theory. Rather, he proposed that electrons are guided along paths by what he called the quantum potential. His cosmic view is based on the essential wholeness of nature and experience, where there are no independent elements of reality, rather everything is connected with everything else and always in process. His ‘hidden variable’ theory so offended the scientific establishment that it was met with not only rejection but sheer silence, which was deeply distressing to Bohm. Although he went on to develop the theory further his work was always regarded as eccentric and nonconformist.

⁷ Bohm, David (1995: 188).

⁸ Deleuze, Gilles (1993: 31).

⁹ Mallarmé (1979). Translation our own.

¹⁰ See also Charles J. Stivale’s *Gilles Deleuze’s ABCs: The Folds of Friendship* (2010).

¹¹ Simon Hantaï, in conversation with Geneviève Bonnefoi, (Bonnefoi 1973: 23-24; translation our own).

¹² Massumi (2002: 43).

¹³ Deleuze (1993: 34).

¹⁴ Krauthausen (2016: 33). She draws on Derrida and Genette, but also references S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, and their experimental work with folding found text. See for example, their *The Third Mind* (1978). See p.42 of ‘On Folding’.

¹⁵ Massumi (2002: 19).

¹⁶ Vason (2015).

¹⁷ Manning and Massumi (2014: 65).

¹⁸ See specifically, Jane Rendell, who writes that ‘the use of analogy – the desire to invent a writing that is somehow “like” the artwork – allows a certain creativity to intervene in the critical act as the critic comes to understand and interpret the work by remaking it on his/her own terms.’ (*Site-Writing*, 2010, p.7). The Chicago-based and now disbanded performance group Goat Island equally acknowledged the performative nature of documentation and created a series of works to be read and viewed alongside and after their performances, exploring the question ‘How is a performance performed after it has actually been performed?’ (n.p.). In a similar vein to Rendell’s concept of Site-Writing, they sought to produce texts and films about their work ‘that are artworks in their own right’ (Goulish, 2004-5: n.p.)

¹⁹ Deleuze (1993: 3)

²⁰ Bammer & Boetcher Joeres (2015: 26)

²¹ Benson and Connors (2014: 5)

²² Benson and Connors (2014: 5)

²³ Goulish (2007: 211)

²⁴ Borgdorff (2011: 58)

²⁵ Barad (2009: 135)

²⁶ Barad (2012: 59)

²⁷ Manning and Massumi (2014: 65)

²⁸ Bammer and Boetcher Joeres (2015: 65)

²⁹ Benson and Connors (2014: 12)

³⁰ The term used in continental Europe. See Freeman (2010); Borgdorff (2011) and Nelson (2013, especially Arlander, pp.152-162; and Lesage, pp.142-151).

³¹ The term Practice-as-Research is favoured in the UK and South Africa. For UK, see, for example, Nelson (2013), Kershaw and Nicholson (2011), Mckenzie *et al.* (2010); Allegue *et al.* (2009), and Smith and Dean

(2009). As for South Africa, see Veronica Baxter in Nelson (2013: 163-174); Hauptfleisch in Hunter and Riley (2009: 42-50).

³² The term used in Canada. See Kathleen Vaughan in Dean and Smith (2009: 166-186), and more generally the definition on the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council website <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22> (accessed 20 Sept 2016)

³³ The term used in Australia. See Julie Robson in Nelson (2013). She also defines it practice-based research, practice as research, studio research, artistic research, p.130. See also Brad Haseman's call for 'performative research' in Haseman (2006); and Barrett and Bolt (2010).

³⁴ Terms used more commonly in the US, see Sullivan on visual arts research (2010 [2005]); Shannon Rose Riley in Nelson (2013); and Suzanne Little in Bendrups and Downes (Little 2011).

³⁵ See especially Nelson (2013).

³⁶ Nelson (2013: 36).

³⁷ Borgdorff (2011: 58).

³⁸ In Allegue *et al.* (2009).

³⁹ Jones in Allegue *et al.* (2009: 26). Here Jones is differentiating it from the 'writing alongside' that Matthew Goulish (2000) describes in his *39 Microlectures in Proximity of Performance*, which can only ever draw attention to, point towards, or project away from. Jones evokes the analogy of the leper's window in the side of the Viennese cathedral that permitted the outcast a small glimpse of the holy event of transubstantiation. If we cannot experience an event but only know it through writing, it is doomed to failure.

⁴⁰ Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 8). She is looking, in particular, at her response to art works of Judith Scott.

⁴¹ Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 8).

⁴² Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 8).

⁴³ Rogoff (2008: 104).

⁴⁴ She looks, for example, at the preposition 'to', discussing feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray's insertion of the term 'to' into 'I love you' producing 'I love to you' in order to stress reciprocity and mediation – the 'in-direction between us', and Michel Serres's focus on the transformational aspect of prepositions. See, Luce Irigaray (2001); and Michel Serres (1995b). Rendell also references Irit Rogoff's (2008) discussion of the work of artist and film-maker Trinh T. Minh-ha, who draws attention to the significance assigned to the shift in use of prepositions (particularly from speaking 'about' to speaking 'to', see pp. 6-7 of *Site-Writing*). Important here too is Tim Mathews' chapter in *Poetic Biopolitics* where he discusses what he calls the 'optimism' of Luce Irigaray and Roland Barthes as they 'rebuild difference'. He shows how both writers do this by intervening in the rules of grammar, removing spaces and apostrophes and adding prepositions. See Timothy Mathews in Rawes *et al.* (2016).

⁴⁵ Rendell (2010: 7). See also Michael Shreyach's chapter in Elkins and Newman (Shreyach 2008), where he writes 'some writers of criticism, that is, have the capacity to develop a mode of description that does more than just mirror its object. They instead produce an "equivalent" of it' (pp.5-7).

⁴⁶ See, for example, Della Pollock's chapter in Phelan & Lane (1998), Peggy Phelan's chapter in Heathfield (2004), Adrian Heathfield's chapter in Christie *et al.* (2006), and Ronald J. Pelias (2014).

⁴⁷ For example, see David Carrier (1987), Yve Lomax (2005), Mieke Bal (2001), T.J. Clark (2006), Timothy Mathews (2013), Kristen Kreider (2014).

⁴⁸ See Jason Cowley (2008: 7-12). Examples include the work of Kathleen Jamie (2005, 2012) and Robert Macfarlane (2012, 2015).

⁴⁹ For example, Ellis *et al.* (2011); and Herrmann and Di Fate (2014); Adams *et al.* (2015); and Spry (2011).

⁵⁰ For example, Fusco (2010, 2015, 2017); Muecke (2016); and Kerr and Nettlebeck (1998).

⁵¹ For example, Gallop (2002).

⁵² See Smith (2010) and Richardson (2015).

⁵³ See, for example, Manning and Massumi (2014), and collections by Butt (2005), Benson and Connors (2014), Schad and Tearle (2011).

⁵⁴ Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 8).

⁵⁵ Skantze (2013: 8).

⁵⁶ He draws on James Hillman's 'Archetypal Psychologies' here. See Watkins (2008).

⁵⁷ David Bohm quoted [enfolded] in Jones (2009: 27). Original reference: Bohm (1996: 118).

⁵⁸ Deleuze (1993: 3).

⁵⁹ The mechanism by which the quality of research produced by UK universities is evaluated.

⁶⁰ REF (2012).

⁶¹ Skantze (2014: 250).

⁶² See Biggs and Buchler (2007). They write: 'An etymological approach may mislead us, since some have associated rigor with *rigor mortis*: a certain stiffness of intellectual attitude or worldview that is incompatible with change and the new' (p.62).

⁶³ See Hallock (2016).

⁶⁴ In Greek mythology, the sparrow is associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, love and joy. We can only hope.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Culler and Lamb (2003), which explores this debate. Other relatively recent books on the topic include Pinker (2014); Hayot (2014); Sword (2012); Strunk, White and Kalman (2007).

⁶⁶ The editors of *The Future of Scholarly Writing*, Bammer and Boetcher Joeres, succinctly outline the 'good' versus 'bad' academic writing debate (2015: 14).

⁶⁷ Bammer and Boetcher Joeres (2015: 14).

⁶⁸ Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act 2, scene ii, 324).

⁶⁹ From Hawking's Foreword to *The Physics of Star Trek* (Krauss and Hawking 2007: xiii).

⁷⁰ Bammer and Boetcher Joeres (2015: 1)

⁷¹ Other great examples of texts using columns are Koestenbaum (2007); Spahr (1998); Derrida (1979); and before all of those, Cage (1961).

⁷² For useful discussions of the modular form or fragment as genre, see Elias (2004); and Jaeger (2014).

⁷³ Please see the companion website to this book: www.creativecritic.co.uk

⁷⁴ Bammer and Boetcher Joeres discuss this in their introduction. They write: '...the emergence of new media and digital technologies confronts us with the obvious (but often ignored) fact that writing is not a given, but an option. The question then becomes why choose it?' (2015: 10).

⁷⁵ *The Journal for Artistic Research (JAR)* and the associated documentary database Research Catalogue; and SenseLab, an international artistic network and the associated *Inflexions: A Journal for Research Creation* offer exciting examples of this kind of work. There is also Greg Ulmer's notion of the *Mystory* which, as a web-based research tool/form, prioritises a non-linear journey beginning with a sense of not-knowing in the maker and 'reader'. See Bammer and Boetcher Joeres (2015: 8)

⁷⁶ Many of the contributors here, as well as experimenting with form and tone, also use the first-person, openly claiming responsibility for the way they attend to their own and other's work. They make their presence felt explicitly in the writing, pitching their own voice as a source of knowledge and form of evidence (Bammer and Boetcher Joeres p.7), and challenging the now tired assumption of objectivity as a given in academic discourse. This does not mean that the writings lack critical distance, but that it is achieved through a sense of openness and generosity, rather than a detached perspective (if there is indeed such a thing). The first-person voice allows for a greater level of self-reflexivity, clarification and exploration, which all are undoubtedly important qualities in academic writing, but also challenges the official, dry and indifferent tone that has come to be associated with it. The different voices adopted in these chapters invite the reader to move beside the work (object, event) under investigation, compel us to listen, to respond, remind us of the necessary partiality of the subjective position. Not that using autobiographical writing in academic contexts is not a new phenomenon, only that the contributions here highlight its validity.

⁷⁷ Benson and Connors (2014: 12).

⁷⁸ Deleuze (1993: 34).