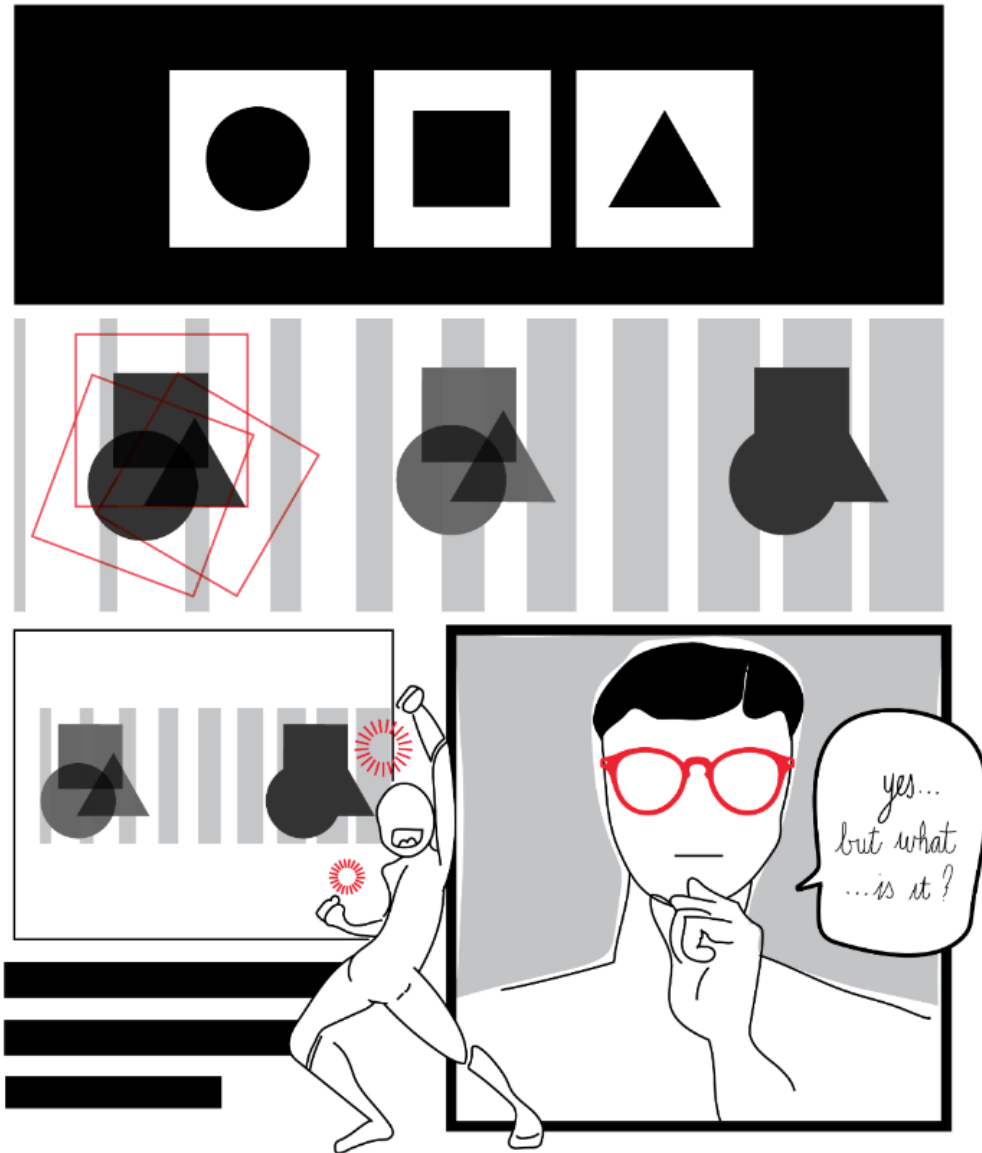


STUMBLING ON HYBRIDITY'S PLAYGROUND:
EXPLORING DESIGN-CENTRIC THINKING, MEDIA BOUNDARIES AND
LIMITATION IN A HYBRID TEXT SPACE.



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ABSTRACT

This research posits an experimental thesis statement; “creative hybridity is a boundary-making event”. The dissertation takes place through an active narrative of experimentation playing with the ideas of how creativity engenders itself through hybridity and identity of medium. Using a design-centric outlook as well as a practice rooted, and at times spatio-visual thinking, the research posits that creative production (that is hybrid) bounds itself to patterns and structure to be recognized. The dissertation uses the case study ‘S.’ by J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst (2013), a multimodal literature case study to explore hybridity, more specifically design production, through the lens of the thesis statement.

Keywords:

creative practice, research design, boundary, limitation, hybridity in research, S., Hybrid Literature

NOTE

All illustrations have been produced by the author of this dissertation.

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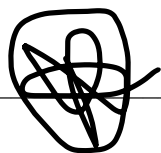


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PART 0.1

PREAMBLE AND CONCEPT**Preamble**

I am sensitive to the use of my position and voice in this dissertation, but I must acknowledge it. It has eroded, shattered, and remade what I attempt to create now. I apologise for any poetics when they occur. It somehow feels clearer and surer to write from the experience rather than only posing the facts and matter at work here. To distil content with the hardness of objectivity no longer feels sensible, no longer makes sense without the story that informs it. Perhaps this is a consequence of my training to make communication accessible. To explain it as I have experienced it rather than a lonely research outcome isolated from its original intention.

It started because my own knowledge base is hybrid, privileged and uniquely problematic. I am trained in two modalities of communication, which has over time allowed me to experience two different epistemic centre-points¹. I have separately² studied both Literature and Communication Theory, as well as Design, Graphic Design and Visual Communication³. It was, in part unintentional (I did not foresee the epistemic consequences of my youthful exuberance for studying), and in part deliberate. I struggled to find my footing as a young adult, feeling stifled and alienated by the rigidity of pure theory. I believed at the time studying practice-based arts would allow me to explore and connect to the world more intuitively and creatively.

This is perhaps the core of where the problem begins. The training of a designer in practice comes with a certain push towards 'design culture', a mentality of practice that instils a devoted passion for design, its production, and a specific ontological viewpoint of the world⁴. I came to the table of

¹ I use the term to imply different knowledge origins and positions. Centre-points could be seen as believed cornerstones or positions on truths of knowledge. Although truth is extremely subjective, here I imply knowledge of practice, knowledge of tried or tested methodologies, what is known to work or be *perceived* as successful. See footnote 2.

² *Separately* is key here. Each term of training encompassed a whole school of thought, a unique positionality of theory or practice that supports its objectives. They are not subjective.

³ Note that Graphic Design is sometimes called 'Visual Communication' for academic rigor though the two can be separated. I infer here that Visual Communication is when semiotic production and interpretation is included in the act of image-making.

⁴ On the first day of design school, we were told that 'design is everywhere'. What I refer to here is an experience of design being ontologically levelled as paramount, essential to and at the core of all things. Design being made with value and intent in mind (See Part 1.1) fills its object-outcome with a level of value, of importance. It was directed with some objective intention that will be fulfilled. It has a destiny. It was not brought into the world without serving a function or at least an opinion. Design perhaps is one of the acts of creating discourse.

I now know that this is a somewhat idealistic point of view. There can be a hierarchy of class that designed object-outcomes can bring and it is hard to shake off once it is perpetuated. Take the problem of aesthetics for example. Where 'low' cultural products are rejected and made fun of based on their stylistic qualities. The most well-known (and at times humorous) example in the design culture that I speak of is the font Comic Sans, a font based on comic books and made for a Microsoft application in the 1990s (See Garfield, 2010) is ridiculed as a 'bad design' choice

academics looking to pursue research and settled a curiosity I initially found to be termed hybrid novels. The hybrid novel rather than ‘merely’ illustrative is where materiality and visual design are fully integrated as a structural dimension of the narrative. (Brillenburger Wurth, Espi and Van de Ven, 2013). It felt close to me, as it encompassed both paradigms of my training – the written word and visuality.

As I began to pursue an academic project around visuality in Literature, I found this design mentality and practice-rooted thinking gave me a unique position from which to view texts. My knowledge, centred around a mentality of constructing and production, wondered if in the activity of making, one altered and build meaning directly, at a process level. Thus, the initial project generated a core research question which asked if design and its production knowledge could reflect on a hybrid literary work in ways that could influence its literary interpretation. This was seen as a possible effect, as the case studies I was considering were curated and designed not only to narrate the textual concept but to tell a story through a body of evidence or artifact. In this case the artifact in question took the form of a book called **S**.⁵ With its physical body as an artifact, the representation of information takes on material form, its ephemera becoming ‘proof’ of a narrative reality and existence. A further research question became apparent; asking if material and structural limitations (such as rules that bind one to genre or medium) stifled creative experimentation. This would have been a complex exploration but should have been linear enough to pursue. However, my own creative and visual cognition, things key to my creativity and expression began to wander into the realms of information architecture and design thinking. I wondered if I could produce something that reflected the complexities of my cognitive practice and knowledge as both a visual-based designer and writer. That is, could I explore interpretation of both writing theoretically as well as visually interpret my findings to respond to what I was discovering.

As the excitement of composing the visuality of my research became palpable, I began to think I could go further, that positioning myself from the centre-point of practice was not enough. I began to envision the possibility that the world of my thesis could be pursued with a conceptual fold, bringing two paradigms of theory and practice together. I wanted to be able to view the same content from two perspectives, to view the interpretation I desired from any lens.

when used in documentation and signage. It is said to be perceived as juxtaposing its look and feel (perhaps its original intention) to the intention of the current object-outcome. That is, people use it because they like it, even though many a designer will lament that it projects the wrong typographical and semiotic intention. Guy Julier (2013:6) notes “the term ‘design culture’ gets close to adjectival. It suggests the qualities by which design is practised – and I [*sic*] use the word ‘practised’ very deliberately to infer not only the way it is undertaken, but also the way it is lived, perceived, understood, and enacted in everyday life”

⁵ See section 0.2 for the expansion on the case study.

Endeavouring to explore bridging the theory-practice divide, the attempt primed itself to do so through writing a cyclical, networked dissertation. The thesis would engage illustration, book design, communication that would circle back and reflect on these modes and itself in writing. The content was planned to be drawn from examples of hybridity in literature (what I was attempting to discuss) which utilizes a mixture of textual and narrative structures blended with illustration. As 'hybrid', experimental literature has a consequence of questioning itself and its own artifactuality (it is bound by the limitations of its context or medium)⁶ this inevitably came to include the scope of materiality, design practice, transmedial and/or multimodal storytelling.

Yet the project simply did not yield the results I wanted. After many attempts at proofing my methodology, I concluded that one cannot see all things, all at once. If I wanted it to be so, the traversal of the structure needed to be far more expansive and iterated. I pursue the experiment and what this means extensively in Part 1.2. Visual informatics and design needed to be carefully mediated, but also sequenced in the correct manner. I wanted to chart a reality that was infinitely complex and layered.

An analogy I find helpful to understand my conundrum is the projection of earth's continents in the art of map making. Due to the sphere being its unique shape, when one attempts to project it onto a square for readability, one must give up qualities of the proportions. Some distortion will always occur, whether it is the land being projected or the plane it is being projected onto. Shifting one, shifts another and I felt that this ultimately failed the nature of the research question and content. The circle of information could never be perfectly round. I realised that I could continue to iterate possible projections or go back and look at what I did discover and where I went astray.

Part 1.2 is punctuated by the anxiety of failing. Of attempting to 'own' and actualize that failure is a legitimate response in research. The decision to stop iterating felt truly the end of something and there was a sadness in it. However, as a practitioner of design thinking, where I went wrong, why I had to stop became a curious thing. Design pursued correctly should always yield some form of solution. The solution can be wrong, it may incorrectly impact its scope and environment, but it is a solution, nonetheless. The idea that I did not find at least one singular instance of solution became interesting. Perhaps I patterned an incorrect thesis statement, or the design scope was misguided (it probably was).

⁶ It is reflective in the ways it propagates itself and its artifacts. The experimental nature of what is physically and structurally possible in any media type, is bound to the artifactual body or technology and its engagement processes. Any experimental process in a medium must respond, question, or perpetuate the nature of the medium in question. If it does not the medium will be at risk of losing its recognition as a its media type.

In attempting to understand failure as a designer I started to look at it as a concept through the lens of design. Where and what failure or the end-point limits of concepts are. What could I do and what couldn't I do. I turned my gaze to reflect on the experiences of academic and methodological failure, as well as the concept of failure as something to be regarded within the scope of practice. I started to look at how this effected my original scope of content. This exercise bloomed into a conceptual curiosity of looking where content structurally limits itself, how it is constrained and where it collapses. This strangely looped back to one of my original intentions, how, hybrid or experimental texts limit themselves by their materiality or medium. That is, artifacts are possessed by the cultures and physicality of their bodies, having to constantly refer to the rules and nature of their medium to be justified. If we put it into simpler terms, a book must be recognized as a book and used as a book to be believed that it is a book. When one attempts to experiment with the medium one is bound by its culture and rituals of its use⁷ - the social and physical 'know-how' of the medium. In Part 2, I look at the idea of hybridity, its relationship to design (as this is ultimately what inspired my experimentation and thinking) and the idea of hybridity collapsing, where or when hybridity can no longer hold itself particularly in balance with its lineages. In Part 3 I attempt to analyse the case study J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S.** (2013) and finally in Part 4 I reflect upon my experiments and experimental thesis statement and its potential functions.

What metamorphosed was that initial failure forced me to reposition my lens. With this the scope of content began to evolve through the continual fleshing and sculpting of how the project could be reworked. I started from the very beginning again and questioned everything to discover its limits and boundaries. By looking at what I couldn't do or what my scope would allow, I realized that I had taken some of my terminology for granted. This was surprising and enlightening in the sense that this 'lens of constraints' began to strengthen my understanding and scope of the work I had engineered so far. This was particularly relevant to my positioning of the concept of hybridity. I had taken for granted that the 'experimental' literature I wanted to work with was often called 'hybrid'⁸. This seemed to ignore the fraught history of the term's need to expose and acknowledge lineages of matter and flesh. The more I delved into the implications of using the term, the more fascinated I became. Particularly and specifically with the structural notions of the term and how hybridity was imagined through liminal and transitional spaces. Again, my design training with a strong structural

⁷ Aarseth's 1994 (2003) essay "Non-linearity in Literary Theory" inspires my use of this term. He notes that: "...In addition to its visible words and spaces which we may call a script, a text includes a practice, a structure or ritual of use. Different practices adhere to different texts; we do not read Peanuts (the comic strip) the way we read a Bible...I am not talking of interpretation here, just the algorithm and choreography that conducts the script from the text to the mind of the beholder." (pg.763)

⁸ Although I delve into Hybridity in Part 2, the use of the word was adopted from my early research and the academic writings of my case study, J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S.** (2013)

(perhaps information architecture) background I began to wonder about the meaningfulness of hybridity to creativity and its practice.

This took me to question what the core values of creative production are and designing with *intention* being an end goal of creativity. This is where the final iteration of the project lies. I intend to explore three interconnecting notions: the limits and shapes of hybridity in practice, conceptual and structural boundaries as primed by materiality and design and the problematic, conceptually difficult use of hybridity as a metaphor for creativity and design.

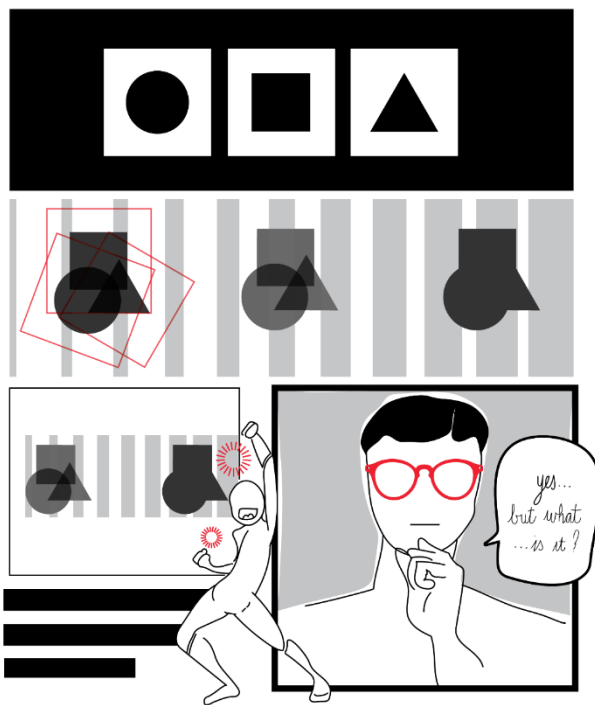


FIGURE 0.1 YES...BUT WHAT IS IT? An early expression of my thoughts (and frustrations) around creating hybrid form. Simply, I hope to explore how Hybridity may devolve into arbitrariness without its histories

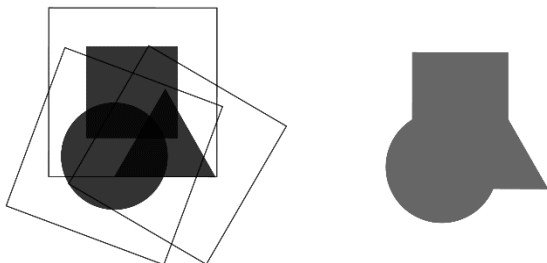


FIGURE 0.2 HYBRIDITY AS OPPOSED TO COMPLETE NEWNESS OF FORM They may be connected sharing an origin however the second 'new' form has lost its purpose without the connective reflection on the structures that created it. It cannot be viewed in isolation from its history.

Expectations of the Research

This research does not necessarily pose a research question but will use a thesis statement that will be tested through visual experiments and visual thinking as well as a case study exploration. The proposed idea may fail at being 'correct,' even disproved, or made redundant through exploration. This is acknowledged in part due to the nature of the research narrative, which was generated from failed experimentation. Failure is a mechanism that can teach us about limitation and boundary which is a part of the research scope. Also, the methodological practice of this exploration holds importance. That is, the emphasis through which this research will be practiced, will explore itself to contribute to research of methodology and epistemology as well.

Concept

The research will use a tentative and experimental thesis statement – the **creative hybridity is a boundary-making event**.

The intention of this statement is not to

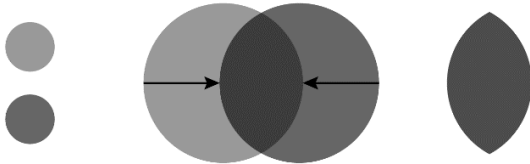


FIGURE 0.3 'PERCIEVED' TYPICAL HYBRIDITY

Intersectionality of two parental lineages to create a mixing or even third space. This third space is seen as new, above or beyond the lineages, that is transgressing of the original boundaries. The extent of this 'mixing' is subjective to situation and desire.

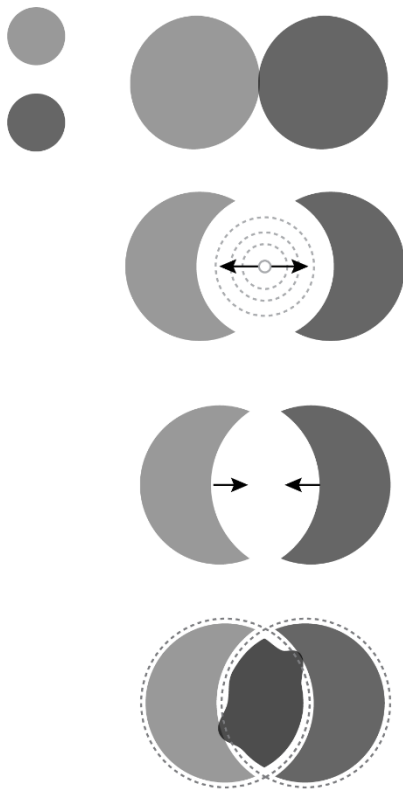


FIGURE 0.4 A HYBRIDITY 'EVENT'. A new space comes into existence by desire to create the space. This intersectionality draws on precedent or history of forms for power. It pulls what it can to use to build it and uses what it cannot as a means of structure for support. If it moves away from its lineages entirely it will no longer hybrid but become entirely new. The core liminal space becomes one of play and activity that tests these boundaries. It may deviate from its bounded form, but it will always return for supportive structure as it does not have its own.

subvert seminal knowledge around the nature of hybridity, but to explore it through a radical perspective. This will be done by proposing a potential pattern of hybridity when formed in a process of practice; whereby experimentation will limit itself to be recognized as hybrid. It is important to note that this concept will be pursued with the lens of practice and design in mind (see Part 1.1- Methodologies and The Emphasis of Design). On its surface level the thesis statement may be confusing due to hybridity often being positioned as boundary transgressing; the simplicity of the statement has been formulated (with intention) in the following ways:

1) Creative Hybridity

The concept aims to look at a pattern of hybridity when specifically engendered through practice. This could be when the influence of production, experimentation, and design is present. In speaking to politics and power, Kyed notes the typical narrative of Hybridity challenges "...the belief in fixed properties that define the 'whatness' of a given entity." (Kyed, 2017:464). They go on: "it highlights the interweaving of practices, norms and identities that empirically defy any neat compartmentalisation into fundamentally bounded or essentially distinct orders" (*ibid*). As noted above, the term is an awkward concept due to its histories and how it can be used to produce problematic tropes (See Part 2 – Hybridity Collapse). I began to use the word due to the nature of the academic texts I was reading however, it is my hope to use the word specifically

to expand and potentially add usefulness to its history.

The idea is to posit creative hybridity as a deliberate, produced-in-action phenomenon. Happening from or within the creating space, it exists specifically to hold more than one lineage of matter or embodied history. This is in opposition to it happening to, or the consequence of accidental intersections. Doing so we can pose it as a kind of activity of moving parts that collect, reiterate, and reflect upon where it comes from to solidify its standing as a work or text. Again, the purpose of this thesis statement is not to contradict typical notions of hybridity but to propose a phenomena pattern. The concept is that hybridity will stop iterating itself to be recognized, as unrestrained growth cannot be sustained. Hybridity can be posited as space where more than one lineage can be maintained, and this is only possible by specific structures. Here it will be posited that these unique structures through *process* engender themselves to sustain it.

Hybridity as a concept may still be relevant in the space of media and design, as institutional powers still perpetuate cultural production and identities. Hybridity in this space becomes consequential of the power and authoring structures that give legitimacy to texts and creative work. It will evolve only to the point where a reader-audience can still receive it. In the realm of design and practice, it leads to the idea that hybridity cannot be complete, holistic, or embodied newness as it will collapse itself without a supporting structure of types. It may bend, break, and behave in new ways. However, these will ripple outwards testing if the body is sound and return to be recognized in the contexts of the parental structures. It sets up its value and intention (See Part 1.1 on Methodology and Design) based on how it is (re)iterating *or* not repeating its past. This past, however, will always be present, adjacent to the creative work or practice. Without acknowledging the histories of its form, setting up moments of reflection on its material past, its malleable boundaries or creative position may no longer hold a stable position.

2) Boundary-making

Creative hybridity⁹ happens when a consciousness of the creative space appears. By seeing it as an active process from within (as opposed to a consequence that is put upon it) we can pose a different perspective on the patterns of hybridity. The approach which at times seems counter-intuitive is, in actuality, simplistic, merely posing that that phenomenon of hybridity is tied down, solidified by the consequences that it is drawn from. This entails looking at how forms considered hybrid unwittingly acknowledge their relationship to lineages or parental types through reflexivity and authorship.

⁹ To reiterate the concept, I imply “created” or engineered when using the term creative hybridity.

Through this one can potentially prove that hybridity engenders boundaries rather than positions itself against or to transgress them.

It is not to say that experimentation cannot go beyond any kind of histories or form, however this thesis is positing that phenomenon of hybridity is specifically when limitations are used, or boundary markers set up.¹⁰ By pursuing experimental spaces, creative production will position itself in relationship to archetypes. It does this to be known and the consequence of this means supportive structures. It will draw on and be bolstered in structure by the boundaries of its parentage types. This will look like forms of precedent and centre-points of knowledge¹¹. It will grow from the centre outwards rippling and testing itself against precedent. It will potentially push until it finds its centre cannot hold. This would be a breaking point much like my own experimental twinned thesis (see Part 1.2) where the scope became too expansive, too complex to continue. When the desire of this space intends to set itself into a final concept, it solidifies its boundary markers, staking its claim and position adjacent to its lineage.

This relationship to lineage is about recognition and status and this plays an important role in readability and recognition within an audience. The mixing or liminal space is about connecting and networking, not always building anew. Hybridity in this thesis is proposed as taking place when boundaries to these spaces are set up and used as structure or scaffolding for the creative form and its design. This is especially true when creative works are designed with an intention or an aim to create value to its audience. To do so, they draw energy from the older forms. This proposition is particularly true in the case of textual materiality and rituals of use. If hybridity is viewed as a parent-child relationship, one can posit that this boundary that marks forms is porous. Shilina-Conte's (2015:501) conceptualization of convergence through metaphor has been helpful to me in my investigation: "...the transgressions between media are not the mere crossing over of a land border but a transformation similar to the trespassing of a maritime divide." This allows for exchanges of idea and potential mimicry (see Part 2 – Hybridity Collapse) through proximity. The boundary being set up here is not a distinct order, perhaps more a landmark to a transitional liminal space that denotes shifting of matter to something else.

3) Event¹²

¹⁰ Does the third space function without walls or some kind of membrane that defines itself as third?

¹¹ See footnote 1

¹² Although somewhat unrelated, the idea of an event was inspired by Ricoeur's (1971) work on textuality. He posits that speech turns to discourse which is performed and in action and thus is positioned as an event.

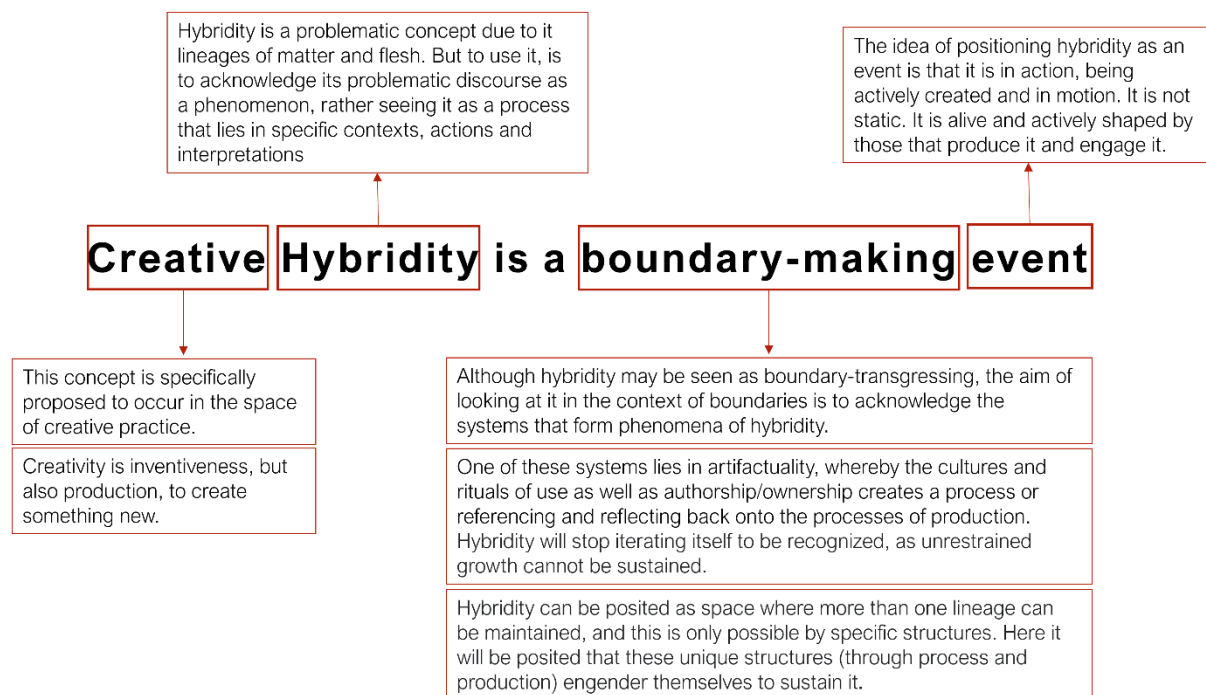
The liminal corridors of hybridity are structured on ideas of what is and what also is, and this forms a connective space of creative production. Playfulness and experimentation occur through the porous attitude of this creative space. However, the boundary of its types and lineage it draws from protect it from dilution. The attitude of calling hybridity an event is to show that this occurring is a process or an activity specific to the creative, producing space. In the words of Bruhn and Schirmmacher (2021) a media product can be 'a specific communicative object or event'. This aligns with looking at hybridity in media - it is not static. It is alive and regards processes as key to its dissemination or existence. In the act of being a process, is rather different from a state of being and takes practice and performance into account.

Practical Implications and Value

I position myself as a designer, inspired through the lens of practice. As one writing about conventions of creative practice and its implications to hybridity, this gives the narrative of the research a unique interdisciplinary position between practice and theoretical engagement. It is the hope that research can, through its methodology and choice of positionality, bring together the possibility that the discipline of practice can affect and facet well-rooted concepts and argument positions. Particularly this will be looked at regarding the text case study J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S.** (2013) and the paradigm of literary interpretation.

By giving the design practice and content production a relevance and position, it may change the stasis of power that is normally given to the authorial function alone. That is, looking at forms of practice as a mediator of semiosis is not a common position, particularly in literary interpretation. This may be due to the practice of design being mediated by cultures of authoritarian directives and conventions. That is, the designer is employed to enact design by others. Although this is not to say a designer is not or cannot be an author, it is set up so that the designer is seen as the hand that makes rather than owning the right to the directive that issues it. Although the designer makes decisions on structure and the visuality of communication, it is the nature of the designer's employment to enact and affect that also takes away the designer's agency to speak to their practice and its decisions. Rooting practice as the epicenter moves away from theory's epistemic hold and towards a more faceted and potentially practical approach. This is exciting to see whether the designer, as a practitioner and producer of meaning can hold a position of knowledge and interpretation in text spaces.

The concept of the research narrative may also hold some practical value. As a thesis statement, **‘Creative Hybridity is a boundary-making event’** may expand upon and shed light on the nature of texts and add to the cannon of hybridity, creative practice, and textual interpretation. By looking at hybridity as a specific phenomenon of boundaries and limitations and not just jargon for creative experimentation, it further curates the meaning of its vocabulary. This is especially true in terms of how the word is used in academic writing as well as the historical precedent for this use. The intended production of this content hopes to look at potentials of how production and structural interpretation can expose exciting opportunities for textual exploration.



SUMMARY HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

WHERE I STARTED	WHERE I WENT	WHERE I OVERSCOPED	WHERE IT ENDED	WHERE I WENT
the initial project generated a core research question which asked if design and its production knowledge could reflect on Hybrid Literature in ways that could influence its literary interpretation. That is, could practice, influence theoretical engagement. This was seen as a possible effect, as the case studies I was considering were curated and designed not only to narrate the textual concept but to tell a story through a material evidence or artefact.	A further research question became apparent; asking if material and structural limitations (such as rules that bind one to genre or medium) stifled creative experimentation.	Due to my epistemic practice, I envisioned the possibility that my thesis could be pursued with a conceptual fold, bringing two paradigms of theory and practice together. I wanted to be able to view the same content from two perspectives, to view the interpretation I desired from any lens but in one body. I attempted to scope this as an artefact rooted in an information architecture feedback loop. I explored this but felt it was over-scoped.	Yet the project simply did not yield the results I wanted. After many attempts at proofing my methodology, I concluded that one cannot see all things, all at once. If I wanted it to be so, the traversal of the structure needed to be far more expansive and iterated. In attempting to understand failure as a designer I started to look at where and what failure is, or what the end-point limits of concepts are.	I started to look at how this effected my original scope of content. This exercise bloomed into a curiosity of looking where content structurally limits itself, how it is constrained and where it collapses. This strangely looped back to one of my original intentions, how, hybrid or experimental texts limit themselves by their materiality or medium. I eventually came to the core of my origin story – hybridity. I looked at its potential limits and constraints and if it could collapse. This led me to what is now my core thesis statement and concept.

PART 0.2

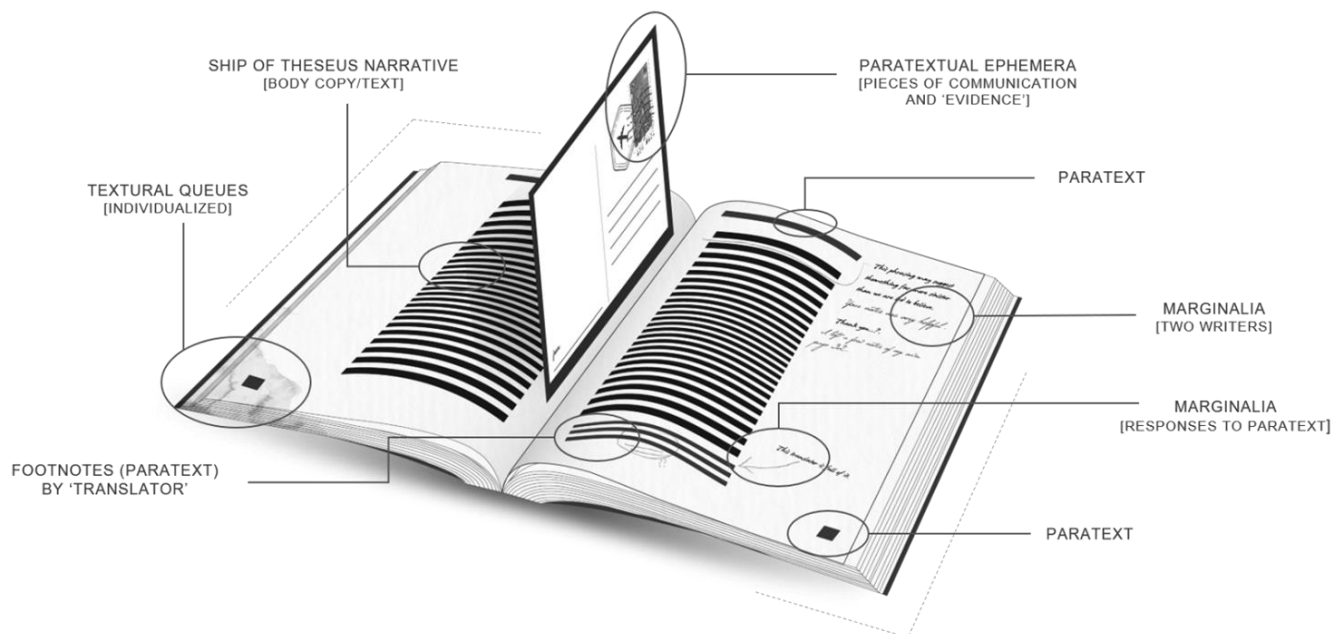
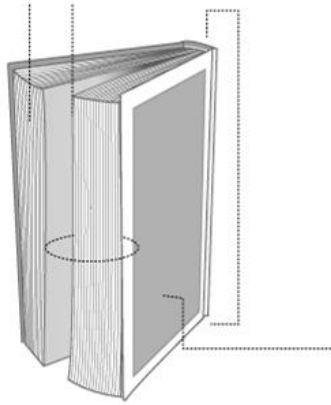
INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDY AND CONCEPTS

FIGURE 0.5 Illustrative diagram showing multimodal and literary aspects that play a storytelling role within **S**.

The main case study I will be exploring is J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S**. (2013) The literary work is presented as a packaged fictional novel called 'Ship of Theseus'. **S**. refers to a hardcover novel by fictional author V.M. Straka as well as additional ephemera¹³, that are interspersed throughout the pages of the book. **S**. can be roughly divided into two interlinked stories, the first being the printed narrative of the novel, *Ship of Theseus*. The *Ship of Theseus* printed narrative can be considered its true body copy, the tangible literary content of what is assumed to be the 'original' narrative.

The second storyline takes place in the margins of the physical copy of *Ship of Theseus*, whereby two characters, Eric and Jennifer (Jen), begin to communicate through handwritten notes about the novel and its history. They leave both notes, cards, clues maps and ephemera dispersed through the book which the reader can interrogate as they make their way through the two stories that are playing out concurrently. Due to this, the book is complex in its representation and writing, creating a literary

¹³ I have chosen to use the term *ephemera* as it closer responds the 'spirit' of the inserts within the novel. Rickards (2000: np) proposes a definition of printed ephemera (such as bus tickets, greeting cards, lottery bills, football programmes) as "the minor transient documents of everyday life." Although it has been noted that not every ephemeron is minor or transient, the word responds to the collecting nature that brings these seemingly 'throwaway' documents together.



work that is multifaceted, multilayered, and structurally difficult in its reading mechanics. This could be said to be intentional (its quest and reading tries to facilitate a mystery experience) however it makes for intriguing debate and interpretation of the narrative itself. The book has been termed hybrid and is also multimodal and metafictional, reflecting on its body as a textual artifact. This meant that its system and histories of the text are thematically apart of the narrative and structurally bound to its medium, that is the book (Figure 0.6).

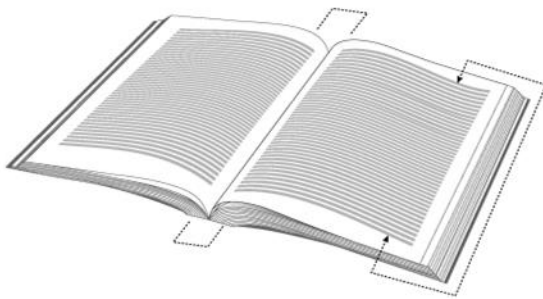


FIGURE 0.6 Material boundaries of form, here being a book. This can be the material content, the act of binding the content together as well as its physical body and the visual communication. See Part 3.2 - Artifact

The ways in which **S.** addresses itself and its inner story constantly using its narrators to question its ability to witness their story as well as the mystery around its narrative creation leads one to directly confront its artifactuality and narrative representation. Its reality, told through messages within its margins as well as the ability to interpret clues through visual ephemera is what leads one to ask questions of a reality that sits so closely to ours in representation. This is in part due to the artifacts that create and situate it in a tangible reality, despite being completely

fabricated, which can be attributed to its materiality and production that makes it texturally feel real. This hybrid literary form does more than just tell a story in its bodily presence, it has also brought to the fore questions of narrative boundaries and what it means to stretch the ideas of physical book-bound story forms.

The novel's modalities pervade the structure of the literary work. The physical layout of the double narrative (alongside the ephemera) allows one to perceive the layers of story and communication concurrently (Figure 0.5). The two narratives and multiple inserts vie for the reader's attention. In this way the engagement may feel spontaneous as one actively must make choices on how to read the narrative and in what order. The excitement one feels to explore the *Ship of Theseus*' narrative, is increased by Eric and Jen's side-by-side narrative conversations about its content and their drive to

solve the mysteries of the author's life. The eclectic immaculately produced¹⁴ ephemera add a layer of complexity to Eric and Jen's quest and give the multiple narratives a sense of real-world weight. It is strongly suggested by the translator that the book is encoded with answers and so the characters search for them, taking the reader along too.

It feels as if the plot is pushing towards a narrative truth, however the structure of the information we (as readers) are given to work with often leads you away from them. Each aspect – whether the *Ship of Theseus* narrative, Eric and Jen's margin notes or the physical ephemera inserted amongst the pages - can potentially complicate or enhance the reading experience of the narrative.

I found the process of reading **S.** almost cyclic in my need to reassess every word, every visual queue and piece of evidence. My own reaction to the engagement with the book turned from curiosity and determination to frustration. I felt like it was playing a game with me, one that I could never win. As a reader who was attempting to understand the mystery as a puzzle that could be deconstructed; its suggestions, flirtations of accessibility to an internal narrative truth bothered me. This book felt like a determined, impeccably tangled knot that could not be undone.

There is a true joy in the experimentation and playfulness of a hybrid this complex, especially with its intense attention to aesthetic style in its production. Yet it is impacted by its need to reflect and simulate conventions of its structure. That is, it works to make itself believable as an artifact and a book, implying narratively that the story-world could potentially exist). Its multi-narrative and decision to apply many structural conventions to its single, artifactual body (i.e., the idea of a 'book'), begins to subvert the cultures of reading and communication that are ritualized and conventional. The immersion is sometimes conflicting as we acknowledge its fabrication but accept the boundaries it gives us as we will ourselves into the state of its play. There is a war between the power structures and 'playfulness' of the world it creates and this ties into the need to explore the thesis statement.

The following represents some vocabulary and explanations that will assist with speaking about the complexities of this work:

Marginalia

The word "Marginalia," originates from the plural of the Latin *marginale*, from the adjective *marginalis* meaning "in the margin," was imported into the language by Samuel Taylor Coleridge when he first

¹⁴ In terms of production, the design of the ephemera has been made to look physically authentic – aged and styled in line with the medium. That is, a newspaper article looks and feels like it has come from a newspaper, as does the photographs, letters, postcards, and tokens. This creates visual and tactile experiences while reading.

published some “things in the margin” of his own in 1819 (Jackson, 2001: 13). Jackson in her book *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* plainly describes the book’s aims as “to describe and illustrate the behavior of annotators in the English-speaking world during the past three centuries, and to test current assumptions about the potential value of readers’ notes for historical studies of reception and reader response” (2001:6). Jackson concentrates on original discursive notes that express a reaction to the text or an opinion about it, which situates itself as extremely useful to the nature of marginalia within the case study.

Paratext

Introduction to the Paratext (Genette, 1991) is a seminal starting point in defining the nature of its subject. The article attempts to define vocabulary around editorial practices and information structures of printed/published writing. Genette premises the idea that a text (here the body of work in question) in its published form never appears alone, “...without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations” (Genette 1991, p.261). Genette called these “paratext”: “a certain number of verbal or other productions [which] surround [the text] and extend it, precisely in order to present it” (ibid.). Genette goes on to further define paratext by the concepts of peritext and epitext. Genette notes peritext by its “positioning”, which one can situate in relationship to that of the text itself (263), that is, around the text, in the space of the same volume text which often take the form of chapter titles, prefaces, captions and notes. The latter, epitext encompasses elements beyond the text but intricately involved with it - such as interviews, announcements, or reviews. The implications of paratext are wide ranging and Genette’s concept critically debates the authorial/editorial role of paratext in the intention and interpretation of text it accompanies.

As Tanderup (2017) and Gibbons (2017) have displayed, although Abrams and Dorst’s **S.** may utilize traits and editorial modes of traditional media, it is finitely rooted in digital culture and can potentially be read as a digital text. This relationship of analogue and digital principles within **S.** is important to understand, as it directly effects the process of reading and interpreting the text. In his article on Digital Paratexts, Vitali-Rosati (2014) explores the role of authorship and how the attachment to the concept still holds, despite theorists such as Barthes and Foucault proclaiming this role to no longer be relevant. Using the understanding of the Web and Genette’s concept of paratext, he hypothesizes in this paper that the work of these theorists did not provide the conditions for a shift towards a world without authors because of its “inherent lack of concrete editorial practices different from the existing ones” (2014: 110). That is, digital space has evolved into new set of writing and reading practices in which the author is increasingly less central. Vitali-Rosati

traces the figure of the author as one created for commercial and economic reasons. As there was a need to regulate print's economic models, editors needed to find a way to protect their publications and to justify the fact that these publications were their property (Vitali-Rosati, 2014:113). He goes on to connect this implication to the interpretations of paratext and the dynamic actions produced by text in the digital space. Editorialization practices and structures of digital spaces have value regarding the shift in the production of meaning.

Textuality

Aarseth's essay *Non-linearity in Literary Theory* (2003(1994)) has been seminal in my conception of texts as well as how I framed my understanding of all theory currently being engaged with. In the essay, Aarseth does not undertake to define a historical exposition on non-linear works as they (at the time) seemed different and isolated from one another but offers an attempt to create a framework on which computer-mediated textualities can be defined. He breaks down the understandings of text to entail "a set of powerful metaphysics...the three most important ones are those of reading, writing and stability." Regardless of mutual contradiction, Aarseth argues that the three work together to control what our notion of what text is. He conceives a text in three levels:

(1) a text is what you read, the words and phrases that you see before your eyes and the meanings they produce in your head. (2) A text is a message, imbued with the values and intentions of a specific writer/genre/ culture. (3) A text is a fixed sequence of constituents (beginning, middle, end) that cannot change, though the interpretation might. (2003:763)

Aarseth goes on to posit that this means we have two perspectives: the text as [a] technical, social and historical object and the text as it individually received and understood. These aspects which we might call the informative and interpretable, are governed by different rules, but they are interdependent and influence (and sometimes intrude on) each other in many ways. The informative aspect of the text is usually the harder to see because it is the most obvious. In addition to its visible words and spaces, which we may call the script, a text includes a practice, structure, or ritual of use (2003(1994), p.763). Aarseth notes that he does not wish to delve into the interpretable unless it impacts his conversation of the informative.

This expansion on the case study alongside concepts will weave throughout the dissertation and bolster the conversations around structure. They are crucial to start with in order to create a framework for the coming explorations and argument.

PART 1.1

METHODOLOGIES AND THE EMPHASIS OF DESIGN**Context**

The thesis of this dissertation, **‘creative hybridity is a boundary making event’** has been inspired by an ontological viewpoint of design and its practice. That is, creative hybridity, that which is specifically engineered, will build and bolster with, rather than break down known elements. It is important to remark because the knowledge being used to prove this experimental statement, belongs with a history that is not typically aligned with philosophical hybridity. Design as an epistemological phenomenon relies heavily on information architecture, logic, and structure (both material and informational). These notions will support the coming argument and be integrated into the conversation around hybridity. Specifically, this will look at hybridity in creative practice – hybridity that is actively produced, orchestrated and possibly material.

It is my hope that this will position design as a useful paradigm for interdisciplinary work and thus the expansion of known concepts. The designer or the position of design is uniquely situated to interpret. As a maker, we manage and construct, giving us unique insight into the process of meaning making and its effects on the reader-audience. The designer works with meaning, desire for value and the intention to procure purposeful outcomes. Thus, to position interpretation from this point is unique as it will use practice and the concepts it implies to expose its context, content and their structures and connections. The design position also emphasizes a viewpoint that focuses on the process of its activities and expressions. It is a space ripe for experimental forms of playfulness with meaning as well as deeper epistemologies of expression.

I intend to apply these structuring ideas of design to the concept of hybridity. An act with intention builds with foresight rather than forming naturally. In this way design whether directly intentional or not became a lens to this dissertation. It positions hybridity in a way that is actively building towards something. It is important thus, to start with a foundation in the discourses of design that will inspire the proposed research methodology, to create a foundation for our argument.

What is Design?

To state the position simply, to be a designer, is to design. Design¹⁵ as an activity can be seen as a rational problem-solving process¹⁶. The popularity of design as an approach to problem solving gave widespread rise to the term 'design thinking'. Herbert A. Simon first referred to design as a way of thinking in his book *The Sciences of the Artificial* (1992), proposing a structured approach for translating an existing situation into a preferred situation using design methods. This contributes to a solution by connecting different elements together (Tomitsch and Wrigley, 2020). In the problem-solving process there is much stress on the rigour of the analysis of design processes, the ability to observe objective findings (Dorst and Dijkhuis, 1995). The problem-solving approach means looking at design as a search process, in which the steps taken towards a solution is limited by the information processing capacity of the acting subject (*ibid*). This mode of thinking around design is contrasted with an action-centric approach (Ralph, 2010) based on Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (1983). In Schön's paradigm he posits design as 'Reflection-in-Action'. This is where design is a reflective dialogue between the designer and the situation. The designer alternates between framing (conceptualizing the problem), making moves (where a move is a real or simulated action intended to improve the situation) and evaluating moves (Ralph, 2010: section 2.2). The two paradigms for design methodology represent two fundamentally different ways of looking at the world, positivism, and constructionism (Dorst and Dijkhuis, 1995) which line up with the two different approaches of performing research.

Design is a purposeful activity. Lee and Paredis (2014:10) note that this 'purpose' is what distinguishes Engineering from the Natural Sciences. They remark that this purpose is characterized in systems engineering and design literature as "the goal to satisfy a stated need which then leads to the formulation of a set of requirements to be satisfied". As a practitioner, I hold the belief that design as an activity is value centric, which is similar to the ideas of constructing with purpose. Design creates value by making meaningful connection with individuals and as Visocky O' Grady & Visocky O'Grady (2017:28) note, research is one of the ways we can begin to foster that connection. One can imply that from an economic perspective, designers, as all humans do, strive to achieve more preferred outcomes over less preferred ones (Lee and Paredis 2014:10). Simply put it is important here to note that design as a practice weighs its outcomes on the value it has to the creator and end-user or reader-audience. Here the choice of activity is directed by an intention or an end-goal.

¹⁵ Design is both a verb and a medium.

¹⁶ "The problem-solving approach means looking at design as a search process, in which the scope of the steps taken towards a solution is limited by the information processing capacity of the acting subject." (Dorst and Dijkhuis, 1995)

There is a concept, one that must meet a need, a practice to enact the concept and an expressed outcome.

When one takes design into the realms of communication, one will often deal with graphic design and the concepts of visual communication as its extension. Graphic Design at its surface level, is often considered to be the activity of creating imagery or due to its etymology, the act of “mark-making” (Barnard, 2005). There is a large (and growing body) of evidence that it is more than this. As Barnard (2005: 10) notes the difficulty of defining the term’s activity but argues “the presence of ‘planning’ and ‘designing’ should alert us to the fact that thought, and reflection are already included in the process of producing written and drawn marks”. Kim (2017:17) states plainly that the aim of “graphic design is visual communication”, which when reflected upon holds a truth that graphic design has evolved into a practice that deals with visibility, spatial management and strategies of presenting communication. Visual communication here can be assumed to be the ritualized practice of creating as well as reading visual signifiers. This responds to Walker’s (2017) conception of graphic design that remarks that graphic designers try to illuminate or explain things using graphic language, which may be verbal, pictorial or schematic, and presented on paper or screen. Graphic designers work with illustrators, photographers, coders, editors, writers, and others involved in the graphic presentation of language (Walker, 2017)¹⁷. Walker continues however, that “as with all designing, it is a planning and problem-solving discipline, concerned with purpose, process, visual judgement, engagement with users and circumstances of use.” (*Ibid*:549)

Design Practice and Design as a lens

Meaning making and communication may start at the intent to create a simple exchange of knowledge. In traditional communication mediation will occur between a sender and user. This is performed by a mediator or designer. Kim (2017) notes:

...in the age of complex, persistent, immediate, and individualized communication - there is a growing need for a professional to control this process: a mediator or communicator to facilitate understanding and guide the message from sender to user through the clearest, most effective means...(437)

¹⁷ “Throughout the design process, graphic designers must integrate various communicative elements: the content of the message with the expectations of the sender (usually within the context of a governing economic relationship), the perceptions of the audience, the subjective and objective qualities of written and pictorial language, the dissemination technologies of the media, and the designer’s own particular vision” (McCoy, 1990 as cited in McCarthy and de Almeida, 2002)

Kim goes on to expand on its process:

While it is being created the design is in constant flux, as factors involved in a given situation are always evolving. Thus, a completed design is not static but a product of concrescence: a growing together of parts previously unlinked, an event, a whole that at its best must maintain the interconnection of all its constituent parts. A designer must focus on the overall event - the moment of concrescence embodied by a design - and have an understanding of the history of every step and consideration that will lead to that event. Thus, a designer must also be an ontologist. (*ibid*)

Kim's idea of design as concrescence, bringing together parts untethered to enact a purpose, creates an event of meaning. Those that inhabit the role of designer become ontological agents - they construct frameworks upon which other story and system agents act. That is, designers are information architects as well as administrators of materiality, that which is tangible. They provide and enact structures upon which information exchange takes place.

The outcomes of mediated communication create a design event through deliberate construction and structuring. The event is one that is experienced in the act of dissemination. What is important here, is that the actions taken to enact communication may leave evidence in the material artifact, the script of actions used and the experience (see Part 1.2) of it by the user. Thus, a design event and its artifact will reflect a framework or structure where all relationships relating to the act of communication (i.e., its purpose) will take place. We can decode these relationships of materiality, script, and experience as they are generated for the communication to be fulfilled. As the event created by design will facilitate connections between these fundamental parts, a facet of the thesis is that we can position design as a lens or role of interpretation.

Design and visual communication principles as a methodological lens can be useful and this niche will be explored. Responding and acting upon content with methods of design situates the speaker at both the planning and outcome stages. This connects the purpose of communication to its end goal and value proposition. Proposing that an argument and research narrative can be put together with design as methodology (here, taking the form of research design) and visual communication, proposes a more faceted and exploratory way of viewing meaning making and textual communication. It is ideal to use these paradigms as they are situated in the realm of visibility, message exchange and its subsequent readability; frameworks that respond to textual and visual interpretation.

The idea of 'design as interpretation framework' hopes to contribute to the validity and canon of practice-centric knowledge, by bringing to the fore the effort and considered actions taken to create meaning. If we create meaning, have a hand in the ways in which it is produced, we have a stake in it. As Kim (2017) notes:

the job of a graphic designer is not to provide senders with what they want, but through this process provide them with what they need in order to successfully reach users. This is the designer's dominion; this is signification. This dominion is not just the territory in which the designer works, but the realm in which the designer's episteme gives authority to create visual language. (440)

Therefore, questioning if notions of a design practice can turn to reflect on itself is not too far to pursue an exploration of. Design here, becomes tied to hybridity in the ways in which it may be engineered or generated to enact unique intents. This purpose or intent may borrow from other mediums, genres, or modes to stabilize its presence and legitimacy. These choices may not fall under a rigid concept of rules and may be applied in line with the purpose intended. Designers especially involved in research before the processing stage of a design may pick and choose what methods may be appropriate for the transmission of idea, experience, and content. Therefore, the methodology intends to incorporate and explore design as mediator (the ship's rudder if you will) as it has ultimately influenced the narrative and story of this research. The boundaries of one's creative practice may look towards reference and generic standards from which to root itself from, but this is a starting point. Precedence may also be key in this exploration – whether this is standards supplied by the medium and materiality (for example all books will generate certain standards and rituals of use) or cultural reflection.

The intended experimental analysis will use design and production rooted thinking to delve into J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S.** (2013) as it crosses the genre of being a designed visual artifact as well as written text with a structure. This dissertation will specifically look at a case study of hybrid, experimental literature because of the relationship design has to the artifacts produced and the purpose they portray. There, we will look at the final design, the visuality and the potential decisions made to enact the final artifact through the lens of design and the thesis statement. We also may potentially get a more faceted scope of interpretations, due to unique insights that stem from its design, decision-making and thinking practice around its communication processes.

The notion of hybridity in literature is especially interesting to explore when we can understand how design choices reflect back on the genres of media forms, either choosing visual rigidity and/or relaxing of conventions. Hybrid texts are a unique in their concrescence as it brings together media and technology into one body but not enough that these motifs disappear and create a wholly new form. The boundaries of these forms that come together still read as themselves. Nostalgia and recognition of textual forms are important here and help the text remained closed enough to be deemed as complete. Design choices play a major role in how this occurs¹⁸. In the case study at hand the text uses design tactics to visually communicate time and spatial elements through ephemera as evidence of a storyworld and its history.

Methodologically when we position the design event as the lens or a designer as an inhabitable role, it becomes a position that acts as a locus from which the hierarchies of information constructs of the text are formed¹⁹. This will acknowledge the systematic, artistic, and sometimes technical practices that create works and texts. This role of design or designer will become an agent that can be interpreted like an author, narrator, or scripter²⁰ who constructs with purpose and intent to create value. We may not ask the same questions of semiosis directly to an author, rather relying on paratextual elements to interpret. However, as the designer is actively involved in the practical elements of the output, we can ask these questions of the role rather than making assumptions that this or that was intended in a certain way. Design functions on a level of deliberateness, where decisions (when done well and with the correct intent) represent exactness of purpose. This may or may not be opposed to the authoring process, where the decisions of visibility (such as the book cover, the typesetting) may not be made by the author or alone.

I feel that when a designer is present in the constructing of text, such as within experimental and multimodal texts their position and role as producers (and producers of meaning) is often ignored. There is a certain level of decision-making as a designer that may be seen as similar to or even parallel to the authoring process and I hope to show this through the analysis of design choices and outcomes of decisions made within the case study. In the few academic texts, I have been able to scope about the case study²¹, writers gloss over or do little to instigate conversations around the practices and processes or design choices constructed as part of the analysis. 'Design' is taken as the artifact seen through the outcome, and not as the process. I wish to bring together the role as a

¹⁸ I will explore this in my analysis – Part 3

¹⁹ Both in text and paratextually.

²⁰ See Aarseth's essay *Non-linearity in Literary Theory* (1994). A scripter is one who creates the script. This would involve what Aarseth noted as 'choreography that conducts the script from the text to the mind of the beholder' (763). It would be opposed to an author, in the sense that a scripter will also direct actors (potentially the reader-audience) in the ways in which they transverse the text.

²¹ Tanderup(2017), Gibbons (2017), Wocke (2014), Ghoshal (2019) for example

maker of meaning into the light of literary and semiotic interpretation as well as how this effects the boundaries and limitations of creativity and its practice.

Design is relegated to fall under the concepts of multimodality which to a large extent works in the favour of semiotics, but I feel that it neglects the practice and intent. This is especially true when creative labour is considered. If one looks at interpretation through a role, we can see the act of meaning making as deliberate and put together by an instigator, someone who is deliberately 'scripting' and constructing the visuals we see. It is important to position the designer and the design as someone or thing not only making intangibles material by the physical production, but they are active in the processes of creating the output, getting the sender and user to respond to one another.

Although the author will largely be seen as the progenitor of concept, when one posits the design or designer as central to investigation; literary interpretation, expressions and communication seem to overlook this role. It is a footnote or even absent in paratextual or core textual documents. Ellen Lupton (in Bestley and Noble, 2017:7) has noted that we tend to think of graphic design in terms of its finished goods: "...a neatly polished poster, a logo, layout, or web site. Yet graphic design is also a process..." These processes can shed light on why the final form found its way into being. Perhaps this may be due to the abundance of design to be everywhere as Barnard (2005:1) remarks "... it is often taken for granted, passing unnoticed and unremarked as it blends in with the visual culture of everyday life." Barnard continues to note that the term 'Graphic Design' is not found in most dictionaries, and it is strange "that entire cultures have a blind spot to something that is so obvious, that literally stares people in the face every time they turn on a tap, glance at a newspaper, open a pack of gum or click on a website..." (*ibid*). It may also be relevant to note that there is a regime to ways in which graphic design contributes to cultural production. As Adkins (2005) notes:

Specifically, in regimes of cultural production organized by the principle of the author-function, creative labour is figured (via a range of socio-technical devices) as a property of the person, while in regimes of cultural production organized via branding and exhibition value, creative labour is defined (again via a variety of socio-technical devices), not in terms of the relations of personhood but in relations external to the person. Thus ownership of that labour is made less in terms of claims concerning the creativity and uniqueness (that is the capacities and abilities) of the cultural producer (the individual) and more in terms of process of reception, that is, in terms of the commercial effects of cultural goods vis-à-vis the intended audience. (119)

Before where creative labour was ordered by authorship, originality and signature has become one ordered by the brand, branding and simulation (Adkins, 2005:118). Creative labour needs recognition “which crucially include the audience’s ability to decipher the signs of creative labour in the cultural product” (Lury as cited by Adkins, *ibid.*). The process of attempting to decode the designer as a framework of decision making, is a process of looking at the structures as evidence of decision making. The designer becomes the connective tissue of how the concept is turned into a thriving ecosystem of semiosis for its reader-audience to absorb and act within.

It is also important for designers to write about themselves and their processes. Not only to record but to build canon for those that will come after us. As mentioned beforehand, when we do so, we bring light to the importance of practice, and this sees process as a legitimate knowledge form. But as Ellen Lupton (in Armstrong, 2009:7) notes ‘creating design theory is about building one’s own community, constructing a social network that questions and illuminates everyday practice – making it visible’. But I have not answered a fundamental question then. Who is the designer here? One may think that this is a concerning question but one I think is exciting in terms of the research. Armstrong notes that graphic design is

...a discipline that continually moves between extremes – anonymity and authorship, the personal and the universal, social detachment and social engagement. Through such oppositions, designers’ position and reposition themselves in relation to the discourse of design and the broader society. (Armstrong, 2009:9)

I think anyone can take on the position of designer as long as there is a connection to the output or design event and the decisions that define what that is. The evidence or proof of concept is what is important here, and the role may shift from person to person in terms of the hierarchy of decision making as well as the labour taken to enact the output or deliverable²². It is the purpose and the output that defines who takes on this role. It is my hope that answering this question may shed light on the ability to interpret texts in new and exciting ways. Whoever may hold the role at any moment, or whoever is sighted by the lens in question, these queries are important. It will begin an unfolding of the nature, boundaries, and layers of how we communicate through text and artifacts.

²² It is my hope to explore the relationship between the designer and author and how these roles mix and separate given different ways of looking at the research question.

Design Toolbox

The following diagrams explore some of the tools and thoughts I will be engaging in, in my analysis. As mentioned above the methodology is developed from design as being built through and from purpose and value. This will use the concepts of the Author, Artifact, Script, and Experience as markers for engaging in a hybrid and multimodal textual interpretation.

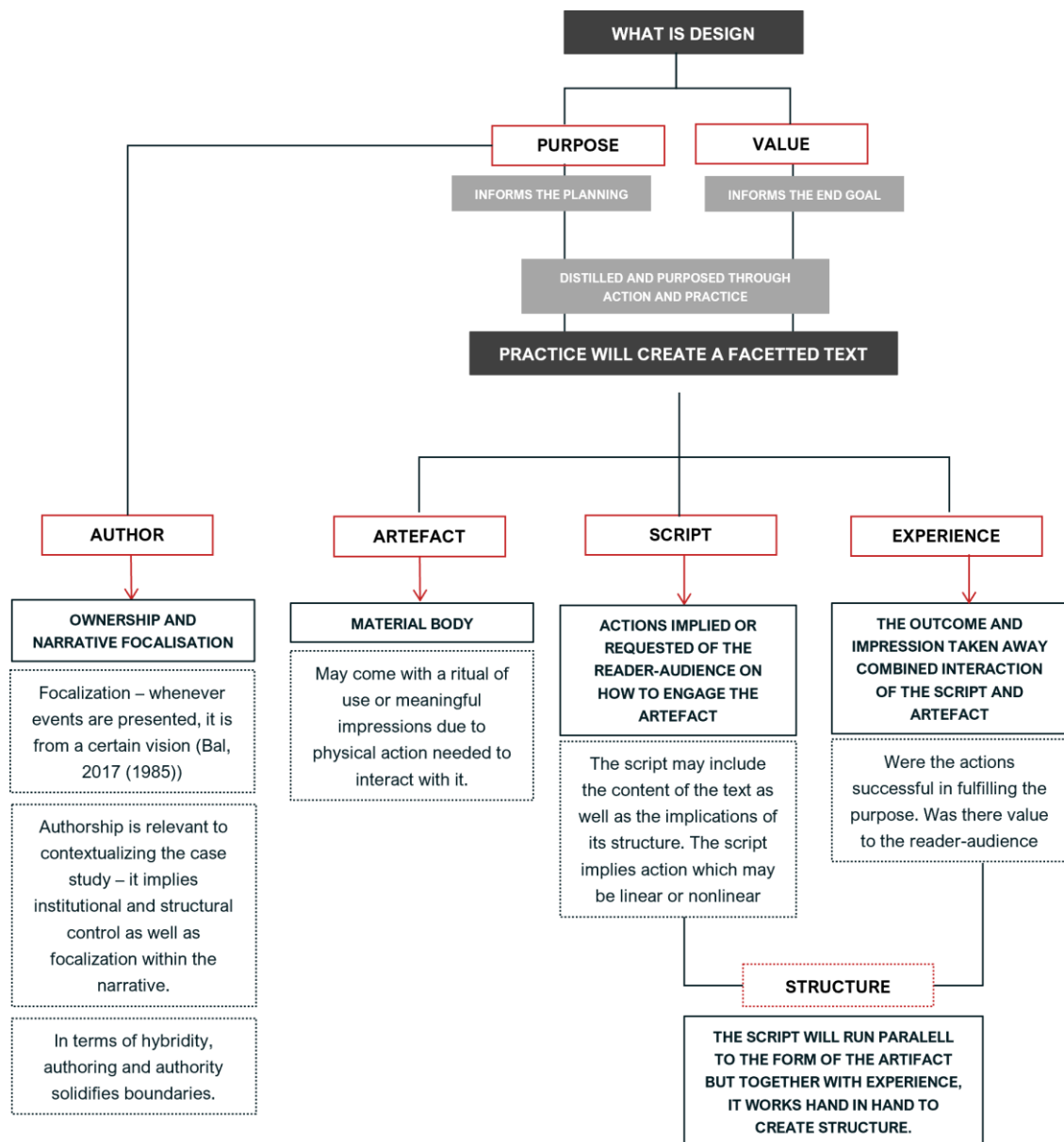


FIGURE 1.1 The diagram that formulates my position on design and how it will relate to the case study of hybrid texts.

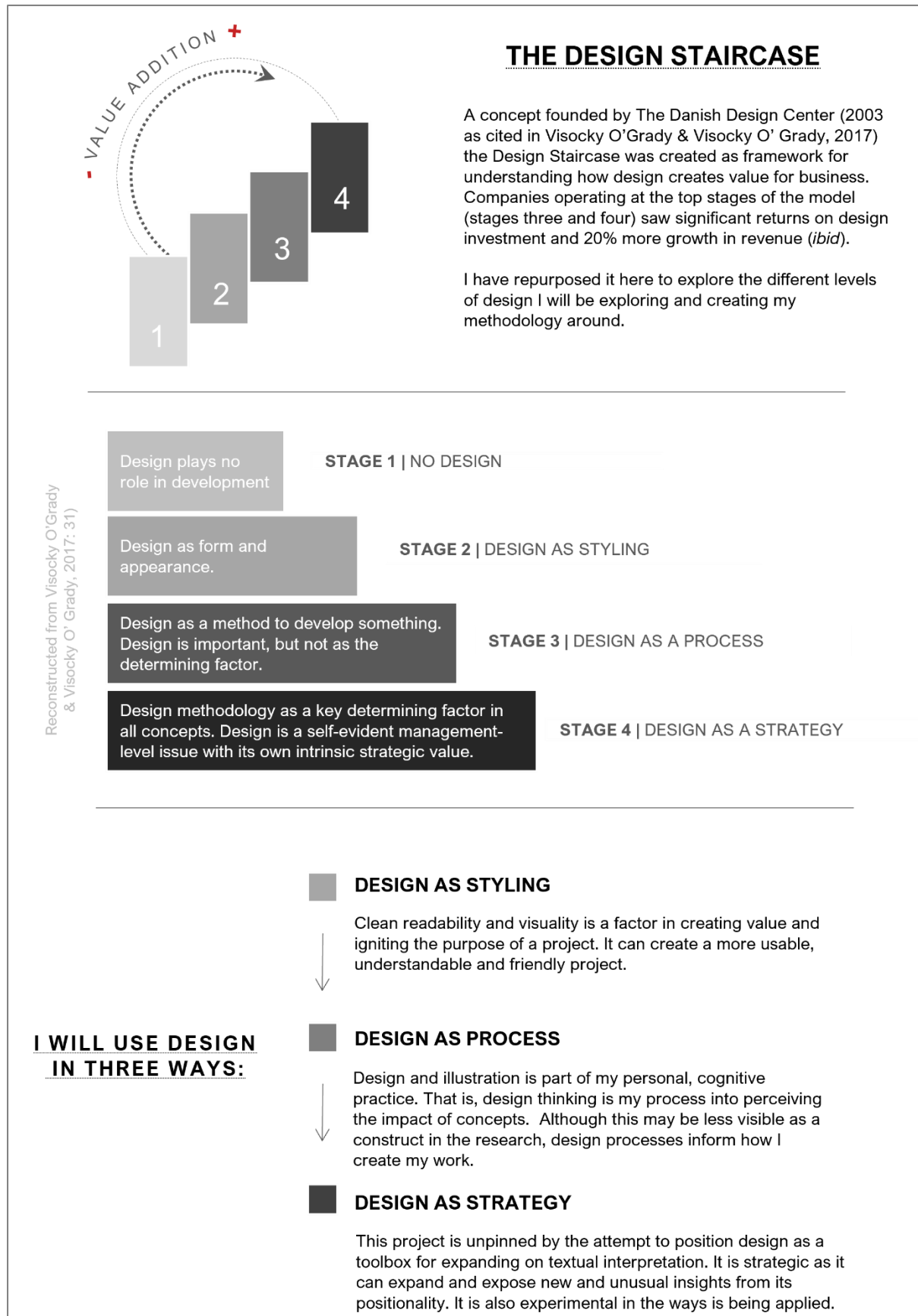


FIGURE 1.2 The design staircase helped me explore the layers of my methodology as it relates to design.

TOOLBOX AT A GLANCE

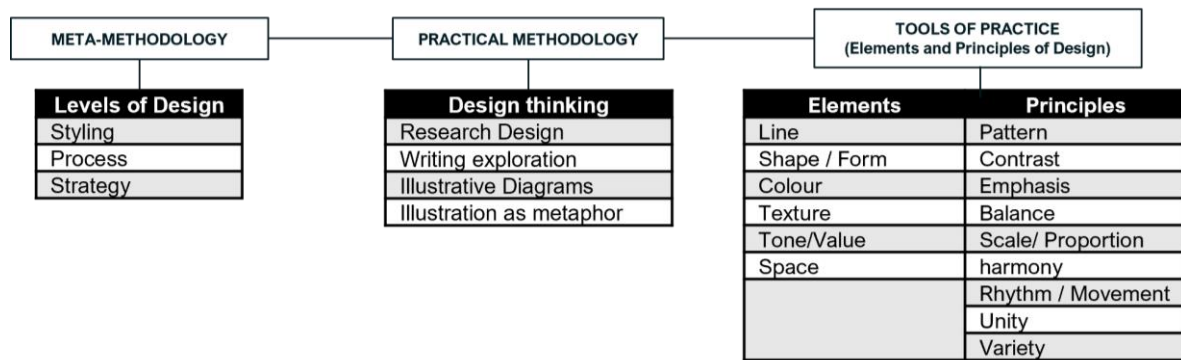


FIGURE 1.3 My methodological Toolbox at a glance

The procedural nature of this design toolbox is one of my own devising, but it is my intent to break down my case study and practice my research through these methods. The tools of practice (Elements and Principles of Design) are not a method of research practice and are derived from design practice. They will become markers for interpretation or markers of the basic meaning making resources, particularly within the visual scope. Thus, the research design will follow a research narrative as proposed in the preamble and concept section. This will culminate in an analysis that will position itself in through the lens of design and design thinking to imply and explore the thesis statement - **creative hybridity is a boundary-making event**.

I wish to reiterate here that these elements alongside the ideas and spirit of design will punctuate and ensconce my investigation. It is important to note, because design, its practice, and the exploration of such has ultimately influenced my engagement with theory and the practice of research. The next chapter is where I explore a wild investigation into the limits of designing an expansive unique research structure. It is a chapter that remains of a version of my masters that I abandoned, where I momentarily thought about using my failed experimentation to focus on creativity and failure in creative practice. Again, the problem was that I created a conceptual structure that was potentially endless in its ability to iterate. This eventually led me to explore the idea of a hybridity collapse (See Part 2) where or when hybridity can no longer hold itself in balance with its lineages. Thus, the narrative of how I came to my current thesis statement began here. I reiterate, this chapter is punctuated by anxiety which may feel slightly off in terms of narrative voice and style, but I have kept it as is and purposefully to reveal the steps that brought me to my current position and thesis.

PART 1.2

THE FAILED EXPERIMENT

“Surprise, doubt and anxiety are what make the beginnings of, or more accurately the reasons for, research: ‘Each branch of science begins with a new phenomenon which violates a sort of negative subconscious expectation’.”

(REICHERTZ, 2013, CITING CHARLES PEIRCE, 1901)

In Steven Hall's *Raw Shark Texts* (2007), protagonist Eric Sanderson, finding himself missing all of his memories under strange circumstances, goes in search of a 'crypto-conceptual oceanologist'²³ called Trey Fidorous who can shed light on his situation. In his quest he meets a mysterious man called Mr. Nobody. These two have something in common: they are both the target of a Ludovician, an intangible, conceptual apex predator – a shark that attacks the concept of themselves. Mr. Nobody tells the story of how he was once a research scientist who worked in the realm of 'pure thought, pure concept'. Every day as he sat at his desk, he was paddling further and further away from the bricks and stone of the house. “There aren't that many people who could take a boat out as far as I could, who could get out over such depths.” After a moment, Mr. Nobody tells Eric:

Geniuses don't go mad, that's what people don't understand. They get so far out that the water is like glass and they can see for miles and see so much, and in ways people have never seen before. They go out over such depths, down down down and down, and some of them get taken. Something rushes up out of their thoughts, from the insides of their own heads and through the act of looking and the thinking itself – because the deep blue is in there too, do you understand? And it takes them. (140)

I think about this narrative moment often. In my dedication to understanding sense-making, I wonder why I chose an infinite sea as my current home. I am no genius, very far from one. But perhaps the desire within me to discover and piece together something unseen took me too far out into a conceptual ocean. Where a world is clear as glass, the mind can become porous; where too much is seen, it can be consumed too quickly and in false orders. There are limitations to what can be handled at once. I failed many times to weave what may be an impossible task, to replicate and organize the patterns of my knowledge into an argument. I still see it all, but the imprint, the reflection of this knowledge, does not match.

²³ This is the term Mr. Nobody uses for his employer, and he notes that Trey Fidorous 'founded the school'. For conceptual symmetry and succinctness, I have used the word here.

Contexts and the Influence of Communication Design

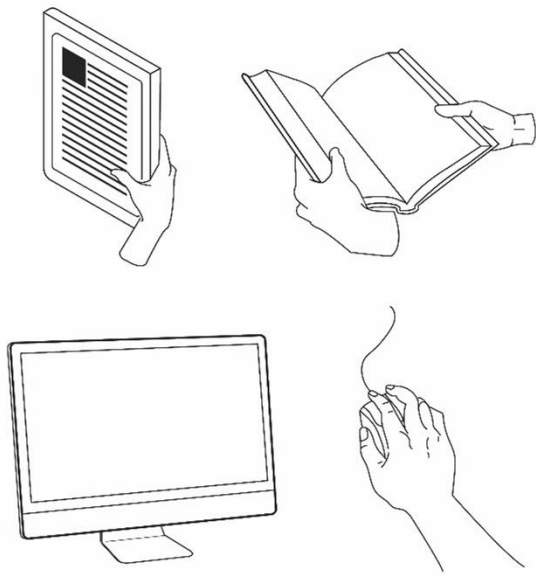


FIGURE 1.4 The materiality in this case is the nature of the medium and the narrative's representation. Materiality will affect its user-audience experience through its affordances. The ways in which we interact with a narrative, or a narrative event physically can change its structural potentials and thus its reception. See Part 3.2. Artifact.

I had come back to the place of my academic childhood to pursue research, and my curiosity settled on the dividing line of my experiences and interests. I found myself looking towards the place where writing and design collided, choosing a case study that falls into hybrid, experimental literature as my context. As noted, Brillenburg Wurth, Espi and van de Ven (2013: 94) conceptualize hybrid novels as “rather than ‘merely’ illustrative; materiality and visual design are fully integrated as a structural dimension of the narrative.” These dimensions fascinated me, how the threads of a literary concept's design within a medium mutated and evolved the reading experience of it. This will happen by the means in which its chosen physicality or materiality is presented, which follows that it will have subsequent implications to visuality (See Figure 1.4). I felt that attempting to

understand these relationships through practice-based knowledge of design could allow one to expose the micro-contexts and histories of these forms, particularly how they are revealed through the viewers' interactions with them. The research question was formulated with the intent to ask if ‘insider’ knowledge (here being design and practice-rooted awareness of how one produces representations) could change or shed light on its literary interpretation. This lens would then speak about the tensions between structural power and experimentation that came with the exploration of playfulness in their forms. This focus was to allow me to engage my own production knowledge as well as speak to the connection between narrative structures and metafiction's self-consciousness of its own artifactuality.

I became aware in my early struggles to contextualise hybrid literature that to understand the research, anything stated needs to be premised with a case study or artifact. There is a problem, however, in the sense that the transition of an artifact (such as a literary text in the form of a book) into hybridity will always be individual. To work with it as an example, only a certain amount of prior knowledge can be relied upon. The complexity of these textual organisms was the starting point of

my potential argument, but without direct physical interrogation of the artifact, to explain even my aims was taxing.²⁴ As one moves away from the structural form and cultures of a known artifact, the need to articulate clear definitions, spatial contexts²⁵ and rituals of use becomes a pressing matter. This meant that each piece of evidence, whether in form or structure, needed its own context to relate to its purpose and positionality. In my deliberate top-down approach developed from communication design, I would start with core content, moving towards the literary concept's intention and follow through to look at the implications of its production and potential justifications for creative choices. I found that even beginning this, to decode a work's parts in words, was an atomistic process and unsustainable.

Communication design, in the specific context of research, must have clarity in its ability to describe and maintain a framework of logic. Perhaps I focused too heavily on the success of the case studies to be received and understood by anyone and in any context, but what I thought was most curious about these conditions was that there was a wavering disconnect in my ability to transfer a concept through explanation only²⁶. My mind and my training told me that if I could not explain it simply, I needed to find alternative means to clarify each case study's form. I struggled and stumbled at this task emphasising and focusing on the problem through my skillset and positionality as a designer. Even as a young child, frustrations around communication have always led me to illustration. If I can see it, understand its position in space, and how it relates to the forms around it, I can understand its systems and structure. I mind-mapped. I indexed what I wanted to say, again and again, creating images and informatic skeletons to try to uplift how I wanted to position my argument. Slowly it dawned on me: visual representation has become a part of my cognitive practice— perhaps, informatics has always been my first language.

Practice and the Theory-Practice Divide

As I began to discover the difficulty of choosing how to communicate my knowledge, I found that theoretical engagement and practice constantly conflicted. I began to realise that to plant my claim in a singular paradigm throws the other into shadow. To project one means the other loses its ability to be seen. And yet, somehow together, they work to uplift each other. I believed that my positionality of being able to engage in theoretical discourse while entrenched in practice was a ripe condition to bridge this theory-practice divide. The divide, sometimes referred to as the theory-practice gap, is a concept applied fluidly to the phenomena of how knowledge production and

²⁴ Therefore part 0.2 was actualized with illustration.

²⁵ In terms of both materiality and information design

²⁶ The initial case study, J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's 'S.' (2013) should be noted to be an extreme example of a structurally complex literary hybrid (See Part 0.2 and Part 3 – The Analysis)

conditions of its use may not align. It is well documented in the practices of education, as well as midwifery, nursing, clinical practice, and even non-profit management (Roth, Mavin and Dekker, 2014). I have taken a particular interest in this as a creative and Designer, as I proactively experience how the knowledge taught of design practice does not necessarily transfer over the socially situated conditions (See Lave, 1996) in which we find ourselves using it. When one finds themselves in a sphere of an organisation or institution of creativity and design, such as where one participates in the practice of communication and graphic design, it is important to understand that it is an active site of production. This is a space where content must be curated to both the organisational hierarchy and its standards as well as the audience-user (as its end-point receiver). Although practices here can be rooted in modes of design histories and art periods, the rigidity of design knowledge in the present day relies on its many site-specific principles, for example, readability, information architecture, user/human centrism, and value-based interactions. Whatever the specificity of the brief may be, the tools that create its solution must be fluid and adaptable; their use must creatively resolve the query under its given conditions and contexts.

The theory-practice divide is rooted in Cartesian dualism, which predicates hierarchies of how we practice and use knowledge, as well as a dominance of positivistic attitudes towards knowledge formation. Society's dependence on professionals in almost all areas stems from the idea that knowledge has become the special property of specific professions (Hoshmand & Polkinghorne, 1992). Professional knowledge does not consist of propositional knowledge only (knowledge of content concerning the underlying theoretical basis of practice) but also process knowledge, personal knowledge, and value-based knowledge (Fox, Martin & Green, 2011). The discrepancies of how instruction by theory and practised-gained knowledges work together can be seen in situated professions, such as the complexities of schooling and nursing (see Fox, Martin & Green, 2011). There are inherent biases against the knowledge gained from skill and practice-learned professions against more academically rigid counterparts due to the favour of scientific objectivism within academia. Hoshmand & Polkinghorne (1992) note that the result of this strain of thinking lead to three implications: the acceptance of a legitimate knowledge base is considered only by evidence generated by the experimental and objective modes of theory testing, a commitment to a mathematical language as an expression of logical, 'naturally occurring' relationships, and the claims of scientific validity depended on procedural integrity and public scrutiny. Although to some, this attitude may seem sound at first reading, the epistemological implications of this have and will continue to marginalise a range of activities and subjective experiences.

My desire to emphasise practice-based knowledge feels validated when I looked towards epistemological and paradigmatic alternatives. 'Practice Theory', or the 'practice turn' in

epistemology, is seen as a means of decentring knowledge from permanence and tangibility (Raelin, 2007), negotiating and recognising what has been trimmed or even excluded from positivistic-inclined research. Schatzki (2005) notes that under the concepts of Practice Theory, contemporary understandings of diverse issues are being discovered. These include the “philosophical and social scientific significance of human activity; the nature of subjectivity, embodiment, rationality, meaning, and normativity; the character of language, science, and power; and the organisation, reproduction, and transformation of social life.” (*ibid.*:10). Practice situates the importance of knowledge in context, the act of doing and experiencing. Bell (2019) notes that there seem to be four main tenets that practice in contemporary theory focuses on:

Firstly, social practices are constitutive of a social reality. Society is socially constructed, as are forms of subjectivity, object-hood and knowledge which appears in it. Secondly, practice involves non-propositional forms of knowledge, whether in the form of direct sensory and emotive experiences or in mediated experience captured in image and sound. Thus, while language is a social practice, practice is not a text or a bounded system, and cannot be interpreted as such. Thirdly, practice because it is embodied in social and cultural relations is inextricably bound up in ethical and political issues of conduct. Finally, the practice turn undermines various forms of theoreticism – systems theory, semiotics, positivism, structuralism – which have been dominant within the humanities and social sciences. Such forms of theory tend to marginalise practice-based forms of knowing as a basis for research, including artistic activity...

The more I negotiated surface readings and semiotic interpretations of Hybrid case studies, the more my histories around materiality and visibility tried to overtake me in how to define them. The undeniable link between theory and practice is complex in its waves of divergence and convergence. I am fond of Steve Klabnik's (2012) expression of the relationship: “These two separate realms are connected through a process of abstraction and application. To explain this relationship by way of theory, Theory deterritorialises Practice, and Practice reterritorialises Theory... To explain this relationship by way of practice, Theory is abstracted Practice, and Practice is applied Theory”. Perhaps my history biases me, but I wanted to find the threads that tie them to one another to negotiate the validity in both. If there was a way to achieve this, it could ultimately expose more about the links between knowledge structures and practice - both cognitive and expressive.

If I aimed to investigate bridging or relating the two paradigms of thought and process, I must acknowledge why I centre myself within the scope of practice, even if I have never directly asked myself this question. There is something that has always drawn me to practice, and it has always called on me. The growth of my own practice (both in learning and creative spheres) comes from a deep need to make sense of, partake in and bring value to the contexts I belong to. It drives me to dedicate myself to sense-making and the ways in which we connect through the acts of making meaning. If I can contribute and bring value through understanding, I contribute to my personal growth and validate the world contexts I reside in. Partaking in any kind of practice is embodied, especially where the chosen skillset is utilised in an array of activity and creative perception. When I create work and compositions, I follow an instinct, a gut-feeling that sometimes I describe as a 'singing', something that feels like many echoes moving towards being perfectly in key. In visual and technical terms, I would tell you that it was a combination of visual hierarchy, balance, and movement in the design. If typesetting is involved, kerning, spacing, grid structures and font choices are added to this as well. Although Practice Theory can emphasise intangibility, there is a strong sense of legitimacy in one's instincts to connect to artifacts as a means of producing evidence or representation of the process. This participation within the life cycle of an output or artifact, making it with your hands or by your direction, strengthens your bond to it. Something that tells you 'I did that'; I brought the spheres, streams, and cross tensions of meaning into a harmonious focus. This 'feeling', the deep connective experience when one embodies a practice, lends legitimacy to maintaining its existence, and thus there is an instinctual desire to follow its habitual patterns of thinking. If anything, coming back to research has only allowed me to understand my practice more, especially through concepts brought to the fore by Practice Theory. I unquestioningly see the value of both the related artifacts and efforts of practice, as well as the security of theoretical structure in my own experiences and work.

Planning

I decided to explore the facets of my knowledge to see if it is possible to integrate practice knowledges (such as the nature of artifacts, production, construction, and editing) as contributing (or contradictory) to the meaning and sense-making of Hybrid literary works. The nature of materiality and artifactuality, after all must be acknowledged in these case studies as they contribute to the narrative structure²⁷. When I started, the theory-practice divide felt like a fractured bone - a form inherently, conceptually whole but split due to circumstance and perspective. I was excited to see how, and if, I could bring it together, even if it were partially through engaging both in a singular methodology. I have mentioned that Hybridity in literature was a specific opportunity to look at the

²⁷ See Wocke (2014), see Part 3.

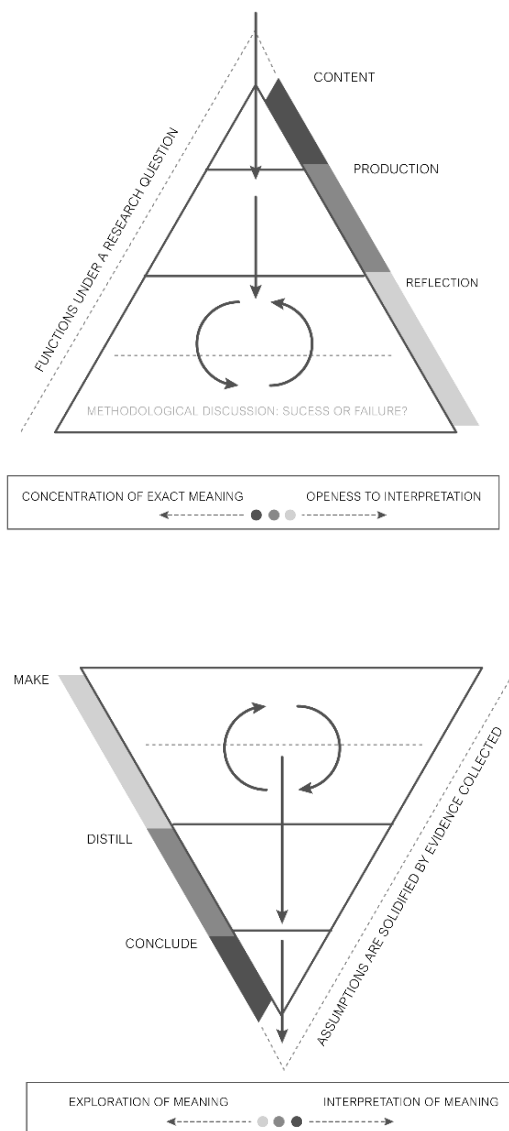


FIGURE 1.5. Thinking through first Deductive and then Inductive Logic. From the perspective of a linear, top-down pyramidal approach, the idea seemed extremely viable.

theory-practice divide, but it is important to reiterate that this exploration of ‘hybridising’ methodology would not necessarily work in all media or its spaces of interpretation. The potential to experiment or curate a cross-disciplinary or hybrid methodology needed a small and specific batch of content that emphasised the blending of media tropes and expectations from both sides of the spectrum. This would be essential to sustain and fuel the experimentation by drawing evidence from both sides of the divide. This would have to include literary theory and interpretation studies as well as the semiotic, representative, and production-specific principles and experiences.

The initial outline of the exploration aimed to produce something that would unify and recognise the histories of both. I was learning, particularly from having taken up the positionality of a designer (and ‘design’ thinker²⁸) to engage in this way, was radical, perhaps political as Bell mentions. This power to acknowledge, to give light to aspects of something unheard (in this case, the values of production potentially ignored in interpreting meaning), felt enormously valid. We do not consult the maker or the engineer to understand

how meaning is made unless we are situated within the making space itself. When an artifact is attributed to and by a maker or a practice, there are questions around the effects and role of authorship in the contexts of artistic commodities²⁹. This added to the feelings of validation in rooting myself in this position because the very nature of graphic design and visual communication lies within a messy context in which authorship is perpetually negotiated and questioned. This is often due to the hierarchy and political economies of who owns the message or the product when it is

²⁸ Design thinking emphasizes creative problem-solving and solution-centered production.

²⁹ This notion came about specifically around Hybridity, while negotiating my original case study ‘S.’ (2013). Designers (Melcher Media) were consulted to lend authenticity and meaning to the visual artifacts and ephemera of the work. Interpretation of these visual choices is never considered as contributed to or even authored by the producer. Although this conflict of ‘designer as author’ is negotiated and written about in graphic design literature, it is not approached or considered in Hybrid or literary interpretation. Please see Part 3.1. for the exploration of this.

meaning itself. I was curious about what may happen if I tried this, and I leaned into my desire for informatics and made the decision to blend interdisciplinary modes of communication. The attempt would challenge how content, informatics and visual communication could be utilised as one, under one interpretive research question. Following this, I aimed to research and write my dissertation, produce this as visual content, and reflect upon its impact or limitations in one brief. I believed that if I accomplished this, it could produce a 'circular' dissertation, one that would be responsible for the content it produced. On paper, it was hopeful and has a wonderful balance to it, to produce something so contained that it could interrogate itself - as a twinned thesis, the case study that *becomes* the case study. But there was a fault line in my enthusiasm waiting to crush or rupture - the project envisioned produced three different levels of scope (that is, content and writing, production and reflection) that increasingly drifted away from each other. The attempt to contain them within a linear chain of logic and rigid methodological structure was extremely clumsy. In retrospect, the idea behind the project has the potential to be completed, but on a scale that is much larger and further than I had ever envisioned.

Processing the Research Logic

I began by framing the research through the scope of Art-informed research. Given (2012) notes that this is when the researcher is inspired by an art form, an artist, or a body of artistic work to create innovative research processes. The validity in my own representation and production objectives aligned with Given's formation of this, particularly how "representation of the research (the telling of the research story) relies heavily on art forms characteristic of the arts' preceding defining qualities" (2012:32). The initial conceptual stage (Figure 1.5) saw me fashioning the methodology within a foundation of deductive reasoning. This is perhaps the most familiar to the student in me as it echoes the style and writing of discursive essays. Deductive approaches lend a certain sense of security to the process of producing research as they "begin with a valid law and asserts that something will behave in a certain way" (Reichert, 2013: 130). Using a thesis statement to guide the direction of one's argument, for example, creates a need for a specific conclusion that is attainable. Although deductive logic "interprets the world 'from above', from within a system of rules" (*ibid*), it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Where structures are not linear, and the territory in which we engage is one of experiences, deductive reasoning may force individual, unique data points into ill-fitting categorisation if the scope is not framed correctly. For example, embodied practices, personal or person-to-person experiences that are resolutely individual may not fit the mould of this approach. This could become a problem if I aimed to infer concrete unmovable truths about the innate and personalised experiences of a practice and how its artifacts may be received.

Alternatively, I considered looking at emphasising a framework of inductive logic for my approach. I thought that this might be more amenable to work with as a mechanism to fuse different natures of theory and practice together. By collecting observations, questions, and events through the artifacts of practising visuality, I could extract potential experiences and similarities of knowledge where they align with one another. Reichertz notes that in qualitative inductive logic, the existence of certain qualitative features in a sample implies the presence of other features, that is, the observed case (token) is an instance of a known order (type) (2013:129). If one frames design practice as falling within a 'community of practice' there is a flicker of validity to use this kind of logic. As Lave & Wenger define 'community of practice' the term does not "imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group or socially visible boundaries", but rather "participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means for their lives and for their communities" (1991:98). The output and artifacts of design are broad and transitory; however, while situated and active in the phases of production there is a socialised or socially navigated culture partaken in even at the level of graphic and communication designer³⁰. Broader examples that affect the practice holistically can be seen in how representation will be curated, often following global or cultural stylistic trends to inform visuality. Technological specifications can also impact design principles. For example, preparing a document for printing purposes can affect visual expression and decision making, and thus, there are broad rules followed by and taught to graphic designers to make this process easier³¹. A third but important area where this can occur is how responsive principles and interface grid systems (the compositional structures of an interface such as a website) are often shared, built upon, and replicated as a means of ritualising usability and navigational knowledge. Thus, design through a creative practice holds a history of reasoning and activities that are socially situated in both a production technology and its cultures as well as the social and communicative cultures it caters for. Inductive logic could create a viable schema to work within, connecting a singular investigation of practice to the broader universe of paradigms I was looking for ties within. I fully stood behind this until I attempted to pin down and resolve the implications of reflective feedback in the process.

The chain of logic within my argument should have been linear enough that the intentions (although multipurposed and layered) should have been producible. But it was not the logic at fault here; it was the guiding principle and framing, the directive or ability to transverse and move between chosen schemas of thinking that was breaking down. If I were to engage in a singular event of reflection as in most cases of interpretive study, this would be satisfactory. However, I had envisioned a project that looked at the facets

³⁰ I was introduced to 'Design Culture' in Graphic Design through the well-documented, widespread and at times humorous antagonism of the Comic Sans font. More serious instances of social learning may be seen in organizational mentorship (which I will not speak to here), as well as the need to abide style documentation such as Corporate Identity Manuals (where strict standards of brand style and its use are documented) create cultures of correct practice.

³¹ One must understand the interactions that will take place with the design for example, will the design need to be cut or folded, added to, opened, or used in a certain way. Also, printers can only print in a limited spectrum of colours and this must be catered for if relevant.

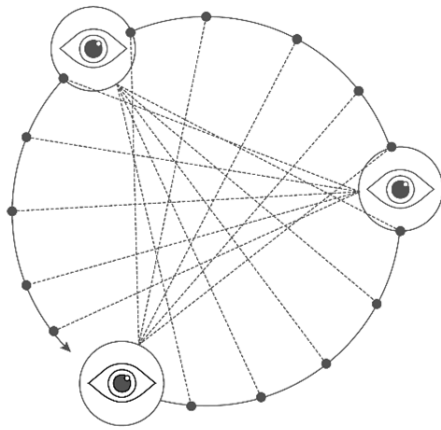


FIGURE 1.6 A multi-entry perspective envisioned. What was interesting about the visual articulation of this problem was that we see a shape form from the negative space of the action and streams of thought. If we were to analyze the relationships of transversal here this perspective could tell us much. However, with the intention (somewhat idealistically and naively) thinking that we would be able to see a shape forming out of the knowledge addressed here, there is only an impression or an echo of what has come to pass or currently be. Another question may ask is what if the transactions created by the reflective connecting process are individual, what if the particular aspects are not traversed? This works within non-linear narratives where a story can be individualized for a unique experience. This is a threat to an attempt as creating a holistic image of a communication process. Without potentially traversing all points of reference the image would not complete unless built into the functions of the system.

of both practical application and theoretics, specifically the connective tissues that linked and tied the paradigms together (again, Klabnik's expression of theory-practice territorialisation is useful here to frame the locus of this). There was an implication in this that a complete imprint of (at least, the visually and representational) content needed to be reflected on as it involved a uniquely human element of creativity. Human reflection is the action of a subject towards an object, and Archer (2010:2) notes that the distinguishing feature of reflexivity is that it has the self-referential

characteristic of 'bending- back' some thought upon the self, such that it takes the form of subject- object-subject. To create a twinned reflection, for the concept of circular interrogation to take place, reflection on selective pieces or concerns may not be enough.

There may be a need for cross-referencing, a continuation of the reflection. Through its association with facets of the constructive processes, it would be acknowledged how, for example, the content or production scope was curated with each other in mind. This means that *all* points within the argument and information cycle were being constructed to be continually open or activated. This construction, this idea of creating a bridge between them, was

intentional; the very experiment intended to produce a

research artifact that could support both paradigms within its structure. This was to give both paradigms of theory and practice the ability to reference one another while also standing equally on their own. This would result in a writing framework that was intentionally open ended, referencing and directing the reader to the next paradigm or schema to round out the scope of each node of content. Looking back on this, it feels like insanity. I see it now as a potential infinite loop that would weaken itself as it continued to transverse its own schemas.

Visualizing Alternative Structures

Despite the potential wormhole I envisioned, I believe reflection as a concept is crucial to creating additive value to research. When the self-conscious directives of reflection are fused into the structure of research, it may create new forms of flow and logic in which the reader can negotiate

the framework and discursive argument. The act of 'reflecting back' is important because it can also shed light on origins or connection. Early on in this strange constructive phase of my research, I believed that by speaking to and of the histories of knowledge being used, the centralising argument would connect, cluster, and pave a range of networks from one information node to the next. This emphasis would acknowledge alternative information that may be situated elsewhere in the artifact or document in question. Attempting this grand experiment of double faceting this work in the current form of a dissertation is problematic, and I failed to see that the potential forms needed more investigation. The threat of failing to produce this structural concept was too high, not because of the failure itself, but the possibility of doing an injustice and convoluting the histories that came before it.

I learned that when three concepts of scope inhabit one concept-body (whatever its physical outcome or final representative form will be) in the same quantities, dimensions, or strength; they would fight, dilute each other, or eat themselves as the dominance of a leading idea was not established. I have concluded that in the scope and framework of a dissertation, this could not be undertaken in a singular concept-body. My next conceptualisation explored if perhaps the concept-body were extrapolated upon, expanded into many incarnations, multiple entry points to each perspective needed to be established (See Figure 1.6). This could take the form of separate volumes or separate artifacts; the stress or importance would be on the ability to begin where the reader desired and travel to the next contained section when ready. I see this alternative as more encyclopaedic in structure, using referencing as a means of connecting and associating the levels of scope to one another through hypertext (in this instance, indications or links to other sections, nodes and places within the text). The original alternative, a hybridised or malleable platform, would result in writing that produced non-linear nodes of knowledge, and due to this 'faceting', engagement in any part or portion would offer at least two pathways of discussion – one that stayed within the paradigm or lead on to and by the relationship of the other. In this however, a discursive and semiotic framework would still need to be plotted with potentially multiple nodal points of entry and egress for each statement. Hypertextuality would be essential here, using the nature of traversing and navigating between three different dimensions of scope. One may then look towards interactive literary principles such as creating an interactive structure and/or the ergodic text³² to deal with the need for non-linear, repeated interrogation. An interactive text could make this possible but architecting and plotting would still lead to the same kinds of problems. In this kind of framework, the starting point loses its significance and creates a loop without stating the significance of the loop

³² The concept was coined by Aarseth in his seminal work *Cybertext—Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997). Aarseth notes that in ergodic literature, "nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text". If ergodic literature is to make sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature, where the effort to traverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages.

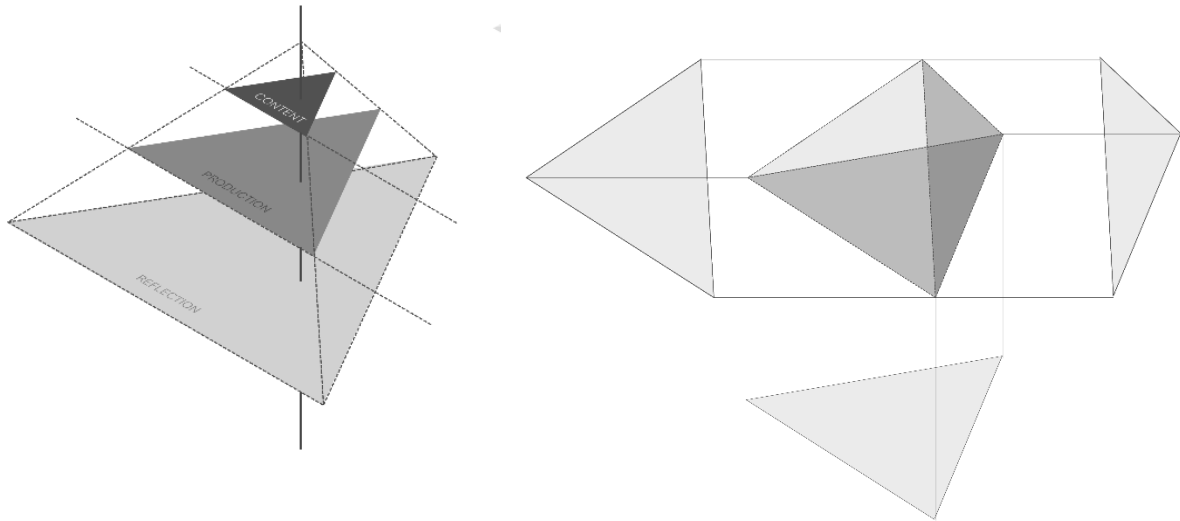


FIGURE 1.7 In the quest to view the structure of communication, one may propose the need for an observer-relative model.

itself. This was another wormhole in the making, a perpetual motion machine or potentially an infinite bowl of ouroboros spaghetti that could never truly be eaten.

One night in insomniac despair, I happened to watch an episode³³ of *The Big Bang Theory* (2007-2019); the characters of Amy and Sheldon have an epiphany that their research, which was previously thought to be redundant, was not without merit but “observer-relative”. Although I am not a physicist, I have shown that spatial perception of concepts is important in how I interrogate the nature of processes. Perhaps my desire to correlate theory and practice was much like this; the proof of concept was in the ability to see the facets from different angles, with the emphasis on layering (Figure 1.7). Movement was key here, where dependent on where one may situate their centerpoint, key concepts and scopes would create an emphasis where relevant. The theory-practice divide perhaps shows that although multiple kinds of action and scope stand as fundamentally different and separate, their actions and influence still acted upon one another while remaining connected and holding a central theme or strain of thought. In this kind of model, it feels that the active or acting elements of scope create the shape and understanding of the processes. Perhaps I could go as far to posit that these scopes were dimensional, expanding and contracting through the situated positionality of its reader-user. This may seem obvious in a theoretical sense, but as an envisioned structure that intended to be used for production purposes, it told me very little on how to use or curate it in a meaningful way.

With each attempted structure, something was fundamentally missing or immovable and thus *intention* as a reflexive requirement of research revealed itself. Somehow, I had missed fully

³³ season 12, episode 10

actualising whether the research would be practice-led or practice-based.³⁴ Having concentrated so much on my own positionality within the argument, I failed to recognise or acknowledge if the artifact would take precedence and if the audience experience were paramount. I was so intent on and strongly believed in the archetypes of research practice that was known to me, I did not question the external implications of two paradigms being squeezed into one deductive conclusive ending. For a hybridised methodology to be successful, theory and practice as paradigm would have to come together and blend. Alternatively, they could be looked at in association but far less holistically. It is also important to acknowledge that bridging of the two paradigms was not going to be entirely solved by my attempt alone, and ironically, thinking in this way ignored the continued trajectories of their histories and existence outside of the intended research. For them to still be relevant in the current frameworks of theory and practice, the conclusions, data, and content would have to separate again and be curated to respond to the forms and requirements of each.

I forgot my basic design principles at their core:

Who was this for?

What was its core intention?

Where would it reside?

*How was this going to be accomplished?*³⁵

Although research does not concentrate on intent or value-based decision-making the way visuality and design might, it does inevitably accomplish its purpose through the rigidity and cultures of its own practice. This is clear in positivist/objectivist-inclined research (as mentioned earlier in this chapter by Hoshmand and Polkinghorne (1992)) in the ways in research culture is organised to mediate itself. Where positivist/objectivist-inclined research cannot encompass the scope of embodiment or practice, one still needs to answer questions of intent and validity of the process. In this journey of exploring the elasticity of methodology, I have come to believe that one must look at research as subjective and entrenched in a life cycle or, at least, one must acknowledge the limitations, contexts, and specificities of its ecosystem.

³⁴ Skains (2018) notes that “the distinction lies in the role of the creative artifact. For practice-led projects, the artifact is not as important as the process of creating it. In practice-based projects, however, the final artifact is a key element.” (85). I feel that in retrospect, my project or final iteration of this dissertation has leaned to being practice-led.

³⁵ The fifth member of this Beatles would be “Can this, practically, be accomplished?”. The difference here is the difference between the system or navigation of it and the practical, physical efforts needed to sustain the system or architecture. Please note that I am speaking to my own methods and design principles here, however J & K Visocky O’ Grady’s *The Designer’s Research Manual* (2017) is an illuminating reference on design methodologies and where their appropriateness lies.

Articulating the Nature of my Failure Matters

Ecosystems of any kind encompass, produce, and contain patterned systems and reactive cycles of life. Not all can work with or even be compared to each other. They do, however, potentially influence each other. I had strange and intense anxiety while writing the last two sections. I know that what I have set out so far in its conceptualisation is difficult and atypical to research and writing tropes. However, acknowledging how and what I was doing is extremely important, even if, in retrospect, it seems unnecessary, out of context and out of scope.

I have not encountered research that writes openly and honestly about the anxiety around its formation, particularly when the anxiety itself is not the object of the research. Perhaps it is out there but I have yet to encounter it as a normalizing part of research. Even in my own readings of the above chapter, I came back to wondering how I travelled so far away from my initial scope of Hybridity. It is not something I have even come to address here (although I will speak to it in the next chapters), which would be especially problematic if this dissertation was following typical research frameworks and introductions.

One of the most diverging qualities of coming back to theoretical research was the process of reframing I had to come to terms with. This was not just regarding the tropes and cultures of theoretical research but the nature of research design itself. I have been at ease within design's frame of thinking; that is, everything can be looked at as a product or service. In this way, the value and solution are inherently coming first in the framework of activities; the emphasis is put on the output and deliverable. How one gets to the end result is the trick and wonder of design, the paths taken to get there are endless in number, but the destination is always fixed. What this means is that if a particular outcome or system is desired, it can be produced and designed³⁶. Any *thing*, such as the resources needed to make this happen, can be re-curated and cultivated to engender the desired outcome. But in research, if the validity of the journey is not weighed, its output can be corrupted ethically, foundationally, and constructively.

This created hubristic confidence in me, leading me to believe I was strong enough to wade out further and further into the waters of possibility. If I believed that design was a catch-all patch and fix, I hang my head in shame. One cannot build a bridge from its center-point with no foundation, one cannot begin within the centre to describe the functionality of its boundary alone. The further and further away I paddled out into my own research ocean, the less land I encountered, and the less

³⁶ In theory... Though when things are entirely improbable - their inner workings, frameworks and functionalities will inevitably be altered.

confident I became. The anxiety grew a face and followed me. The harder I pushed onwards, the less there was to grasp and the stronger it became. In an ocean, one still must survive, and if there are no resources to consume, the project is simply unsustainable. I was looking for portals between fixed points in space, willing them with my own ingenuity to move and appear.

In my very first draft (approximately 2019) I recall writing:

The tapestry of communication is not of Cartesian making. It flows through and within itself. As Shilina-Conte (2015:501) positions a kind of convergence through metaphor "...the transgressions between media are not the mere crossing over of a land border but a transformation similar to the trespassing of a maritime divide." The waters here do not adhere to the directions of our social making. It flows and connects and subsumes itself again -

What is north and south - and again -

Left, or right? - it does not speak the language of direction, only proximity -

and again.³⁷

It seems befitting to find myself at the end, and yet also at the first beginnings, of my journey. It is a lesson in humility taught to me by the wondrous, untameable epistemological ocean. How do you catalogue the particles of an expanding universe? The answer is you can't, or you don't. But we watch for ripples and document the positive tangibles, the moments that can be measured.

Through the many iterations of my research, I realized that I myself am of a hybrid mind and practice. Although this does not make my thinking new or aberrant, it offers insight into how the individualized practices of research can be opened and vulnerable, perhaps revitalized and more honest. Even if I did not accomplish what I set out to do, I can still speak to the knowledge and experiences I have gained in the hope that they may benefit and contribute to the collections of knowledge that has come before me.

³⁷ See Appendix.

THE FIRST INTERMISSION

FAILURE?

Failure is so entrenched in discourses of negativity that the very notion of beginning my research with it left me in a quandary. Did I just refute my own (design) practice, while attempting to advocate its kind in the alien space of theory? I resolved myself that it was not a disproof entirely, what was in question here, was the research process, the functionality as well as the practicality of its production. I pushed it too hard and too far or fast, and despite the potential of hybridity, its chain of logic shifted away from sensibleness. Through bending, stretching and finally exploding it, I lost the elasticity, and the security of my research question. This experience is what ultimately leads to my final concept and thesis statement - **creative hybridity is a boundary-making event**. The logic of newness must protect itself with means of production. It will use known practices and structures to incubate itself.

In the failed experiment, my own exuberance allowed me to forget my own understanding of practice: that all usable activity must address the open spaces between instigating idea and solution. If the connective threads of reason between instigating idea and solution are not utilized, practice can only exist as an outcome expressed – this means design or intent is not present. It must be said though practice will rarely if ever be the solution itself³⁸. What has been curious, and enlightening is the shift of experiencing the failure firsthand and not in the act of the planning and proofing. This became a critical part of the research process later. There is still a modicum of shame that lingers, and yet it is wonderful to have learned, and meaningfully. When the array of activity falls within a structured or rigid framework it is very possible to fail. Why this may happen is perhaps a situation of what is forgotten – was it the essence of the question, the intent, and cultures of the practice? The failure becomes the practitioner's or the locus or set up of rules, but never the practice itself.

What I did in my own way and through iteration and design practice, was create the opportunity for my own cognitive processes to teach me. It allowed me to restate why acknowledging limitations and constraints in the design process is essential as it pins down the lenses and boundaries of where we will experiment and play. By knowing where we cannot go or knowing where we must stop searching, provides a structure from which we can support our research quest. I never intended to explore the meaningfulness of methodology and my own epistemological intentions. However, as my project has shifted and evolved, I realized that there is a value in acknowledging the cultures of research practice and its tried approaches; not to validate them as the only way, but to learn from them and build upon that which works. In this era of creative research, this process can be a

³⁸ Unless perhaps when the question is one of choosing a sound methodology.

delicate operation. Creative research or research that diverges from style, structure or tone falls into questionable territory when held up to the rigidity of traditional and positivist-inclined research.

My quest has become one of boundaries, artifacts, and their construction. Some are undulating and shifting, some are rigid and calcified. What matters now and what we will look at is the principles, the roads and networks, the identifiable pathways that take us from conceptions to resolutions and back again. Even though I failed initially, it brought about exciting new potentials. The idea of hybridity collapse and the boundary event was a direct consequence of wondering into structure permutations of research. In the next section I move forward and talk about my experiences directly considering hybridity. I move from assuming hybridity to grounding it in theory and active phenomena such as liminality and mimicry.

In light of my exploration, I am reminded of Robert Bringhurst (2012:10) who speaks to the nature of rules and principles in creativity. He notes in his work *The Elements of Typographic Style* that "...That is precisely the use of the road: to reach individually chosen points of departure. By all means break the rules, and break them beautifully, deliberately and well. That is one of the ends for which they exist." I believe now in the strength of connective lines and structure in thought, not to follow them from start to end, but as anchors for new nodes and establishing new networks. By acknowledging precedence, we strengthen our argument by acknowledging what came before us. And my precedence was about to tackle the looming concept of hybridity.

PART 2

HYBRIDITY COLLAPSE

After the 'downfall' of my original project, I noticed that I was still left with my cognitive practices naturally reverting to practice-rooted design thinking. Due to my practice being where the outcome's intent and its value is weighed³⁹, giving oneself a meaningful end or goal to work towards brings a certain comfort. There is a certain security in creating a clear line between a question, the problem or niche that incites it and the end-goal or potential outcome. It gives one an important boundary to work within. If you can comfortably see the narrative holistically, its beginning and its end, you can frame activities that need to be accomplished within them. What I believe is, I may have been subconsciously moving the goalposts further away to accommodate more, in the belief that it mattered to the end goal. But if one views design as an embodied practice, I failed to acknowledge that scope can only be so elastic. I needed to concretely iterate, proof and playtest the design as part of a plan of action.

The failed experiment (as I started to call it) and the attempts to formulate a kind of circularity of research became instigating to a thought experiment: I was trying to create something unique in structure in the space of research practice and with this, I was also commenting on its practice. I tried to do so by blending two instigating theory and practice paradigms of thought. However, in this act of creative hybridity, did I envision an expansion that pushed the boundaries to the point of collapse where it could no longer hold shape? Was I filling the voids of a potential body that had not solidified as such? In his Essay *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, Heidegger (2001(1971):152) notes that:

...a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. That is why the concept is that of horismos that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds.⁴⁰

I wondered, if the boundary is continually pushed or is being replaced and repaired through production, does the act of 'presencing' begin to fail if the boundary stops functioning as defining parameter? When the boundaries of a hybrid space continually change one can posit that the uniqueness of the in-between space either reverts to parental lineage or it fails placing itself in

³⁹ See Part 1.1 on design for conversations on intention, purpose and value.

⁴⁰ See Bhahba, 1994

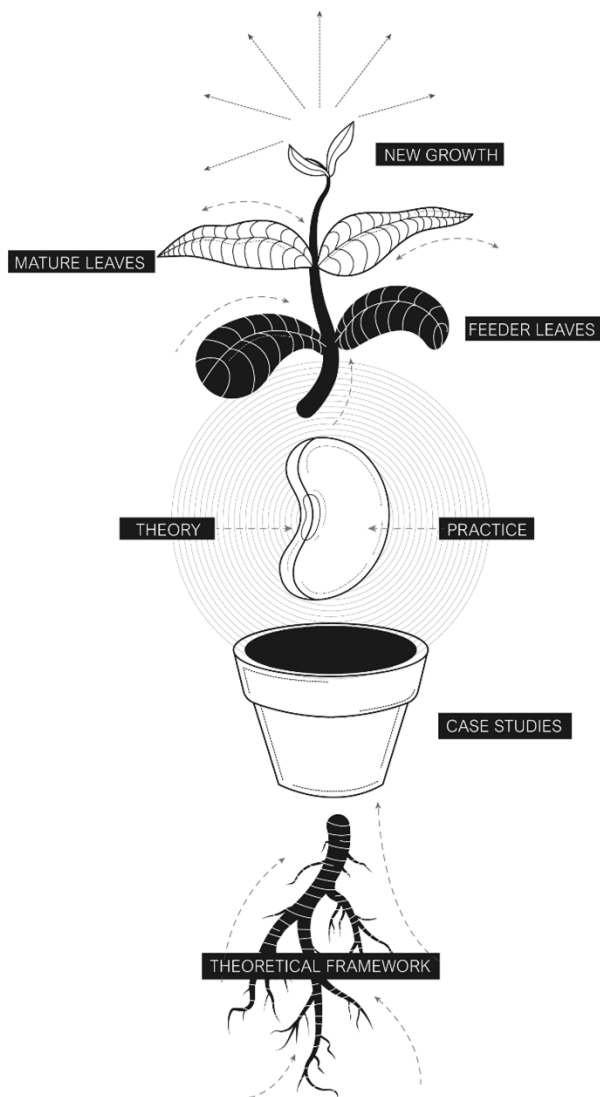


FIGURE 2.1. An early visualized interpretation of this thesis' investigative methodology. See Appendix for the original.

reference to other paradigms, thus losing the privilege of defining oneself as in-between. The collapse of my own attempt at a hybrid research structure led me to some observations. I realised I needed to ask myself why the activities of a hybrid approach were so important. Why did I choose to follow this path of creative structuring? In readdressing the incomplete work constructed so far, I realized there was a void that I had yet to address. I practically ignored the concepts of hybridity (which came as history to choosing my case study⁴¹) and what this implied to the work I was creating. Interestingly, I found evidence that I had thought about hybridity, but never connected it as a structural implication to my work. The following is a note that I left for myself in the digital file of an illustration (Figure 2.1):

As I began to construct the metaphor of this hybrid approach, I had to acknowledge the context of the metaphor itself. Agriculture and Horticulture have a history of cultivation and selective breeding for desired traits. Even anomalies that are indicative of disease (such as variegation) and mutation are selectively bred as they are seen as visually desirable. Does hybridity equate to engineering socially constructed concepts of what is natural or correct? The metaphor was chosen for the concept of a dicotyledon, the intention to visually represent the core proponent of exploration - can two unrelated paradigms be used as the sum of the whole, building on itself to create new knowledge. I have to ask myself however, as the concept of the seed is an artifact of biological mechanics, does

⁴¹ At the time of beginning to investigate **S.** as a case study, the academic literature specifically using the experimental novel as its sole case study referred to it as 'Hybrid Literature'

**this equate to commenting on the epistemic centerpoint of what constitutes correct or ‘natural’
research procedure? (March 2020)**⁴²

The note goes on - I attempt to convince myself that the metaphor *can* work believing at the time that design as a framework of thinking (being value or outcome-based and individually constructed) is free from structuralist and essentialist dynamics of thinking. I now believe this is not the case, particularly when looking at how structure impacts texts. I was incorrect in my assumption that hybridity as pure creativity or creative decision making can be removed from the histories of its activities and motivations.

I wish to begin again at an integral starting point in my original exploration because in retrospect, I erred in fully actualizing how the framework and implications of hybridity would affect my explorations, especially as the realm I was investigating was initially found under the umbrella term of ‘hybrid literature’. The act of revisiting the notions I was pursuing and breaking them into their components allowed me to view and review their meaningfulness to the project and possibilities that may have been ignored. It is essential in creating good research, not to take concepts and terminology for granted, especially when a term that is being used may provide some knowledge and understanding of what is at play here. Thus, it is important here to acknowledge its context, roots, and discourses. In this chapter it is my wish not to give a detailed account of the entirety of hybridity’s discourses and problems but negotiate its philosophical implications to creativity. In this I will contextualize the role of design in a hybrid process. This aims to lay a foundation to understand how the construction of a text’s identity occurs through its modes and production, design, and the term’s relevance to production of hybridity in literature.

Defining Hybridity, its Usage and Relevance

Hybridity is complex and interdisciplinary. Nederveen Pieterse (2001) notes the meaning of hybridity has varied not only over time but also in different cultures, and this informs different patterns of hybridity. Guinery (2011) notes the term has been used in connection with such notions of métissage, creolization (linguistics), syncretism (anthropology), diaspora, transculturation and in-betweenness and has become a buzzword in cultural and literary studies. Coombes and Brah (2000:1) add to cultural criticism stating the importance of hybridity’s relevance to “post-colonial studies...debates about cultural contestation and appropriation and in relation to the concept of the border and the ideal of the cosmopolitan”. Hybridity has a history of being used carelessly to

⁴² See Appendix

describe a divergent body of topics in many domains. It is a term that has shades of nuance and can be averse to being pinned into a singular definition. Similarly, dependent on where it is being placed in a suggested discourse, hybridity can have alternative and often colonial connotations. In my own reacquaintance with the term I have become fond of Kyed's (2017:464) iteration which positions Hybridity as "challenging the belief in fixed properties that define the 'whatness' of a given entity. Kyed notes that "It highlights the interweaving of practices, norms and identities that empirically defy any neat compartmentalisation into fundamentally bounded or essentially distinct orders"⁴³. Hutnyk (2005) notes that the slipperiness of the term's ability to change in category is useful and it is also purposefully contested and positioned to claim change.

To engage with hybridity is to engage with its deeply engrained historical problems. I must reiterate here is that I aim to use the term hybridity to denote a phenomenon of structural implications and power play in creative practice that is not necessarily equalizing, potentially even limiting. As Nederveen Pieterse (2001) notes, the most conspicuous shortcoming of hybridity is that it skips over questions of power and inequality. The word itself holds its roots in biology and botany where it indicates a crossing between two species by cross-pollination that gives birth to a third 'hybrid' species (Guinery, 2011). Cuddon (2013:344) introduces the term as "the characteristic of a culture or cultural form produced by the interaction of two (or possibly more) separate 'parent' cultures or forms. The hybrid may feature aspects of either or both of its parents but is a new and distinct formation". In the sciences of agriculture and horticulture the term hybridity is used with little concern. Even if one attempts to argue the act of hybridity engenders positively connoting ideas of strength and resilience here, even agriculture and botany sees unusual variants being widely sought after for their 'uniqueness' and legitimised by increasing its population⁴⁴. Hutnyk (2005: 82) notes that in the world of vegetation, hybrid combinations are produced by grafting one plant or fruit to another. "Although in this field such graftings may seem legitimate, only a mildly imprudent jump is needed to move from notions of horticulture and biology to discussions of human 'races' as distinct species that, upon mixing, produce hybrids." Thus, it is crucial to recognize within the traditional usages of the hybrid concept is an embedded narrative of evolution especially as a hybrid was originally conceived of as infertile and thus often as an inferior copy of the models that came before it (Hutnyk, 2005). The implications around hybridity positioning itself to imply a mixture of two precedent types is problematic. The legitimization of a vocabulary to recognize a history of differing "parental" lineage implicates authority and the correctness of typing and categorization; by emphasizing 'mixture' these parental types differing from one another are assumed to be normative

⁴³ Kyed uses this to speak to the examples of "state/society or modern/traditional"

⁴⁴ My own reference to this is artist/scientist/botanist Tyler Thrasher who encourages his audience to go 'sport' hunting, that is, look for natural variations in plants such as the *Monstera Deliciosa* (Delicious Monster). These plants that show unusual qualities are widely sought after and can be bought and traded for thousands of dollars, citing their 'unique' traits.

and pure. Coombes and Brah (2000) expand on this noting that hybridity signals the threat of 'contamination' to those who espouse an essentialist notion of pure and authentic origins. Hutnyk (2005) continues to question hybrid creations at this level:

A key question would be: to what degree does the assertion of hybridity rely on the positing of an anterior 'pure' that precedes mixture? Even as a process in translation or in formation, the idea of 'hybrid identities' (Chambers 1996, p. 50), relies upon the proposition of non-hybridity or some kind of normative insurance (2005:81-82).

Kourtti and Nyman (2007:4) establish that "owing to colonialist ideologies of race emphasising the alleged purity of the white colonizers..." hybridity has a history that it cannot remove itself from its past and thus is understood in a negative manner when establishing its origins. Hybridity has to some extent been appropriated and used in a manner that evokes the formation of identity and is used to describe innovations of language (creole, patois, pidgin, travellers' argot etc). Kyed (2017) reflects on the political dynamics of hybridity and acts of hybridized relationships of power. This means paying attention to the moments when hybridisation involves enactments and contestations of power. Hutnyk (2005) also notes that it has become a code for creativity and for translation. Guinery (2011) notes that although technically speaking, the product of zoological hybridization is often a sterile animal, the term hybrid is often used metaphorically to designate creativity, the creation of new specimens.

Hybridity in Literature and the Concepts of Mimicry and Liminality

The term hybrid literature has seemingly come to denote where the hybridity lies in the potential experimentation of the narrative form, and the structure and physical permutations of it. As I begin to situate myself to speak on my case study in the coming chapters, I must look at how the term shifts and situates itself in the interpretative theories of the mode and medium. In Literary Theory, Mikhail Bakhtin was the first theorist to consider the implications of hybridity in *Rabelais and his World* (1984) where he discusses the capacity of the chaotic pleasures of the medieval carnival to challenge the authority of the church and Feudal Law (Cuddon, 2013). Kuortti and Nyman (2007) note that for Bakhtin, hybridization is a process involving both linguistic and cultural aspects, and it emerges when different linguistic codes meet with each other. Cuddon elaborates that for Bakhtin, as with *Rabelais and his World*, the hybridity relies on heteroglossia, or polyphony; similarly, he contends that polyphonic narrative has the potential to call into question authoritative discourse (*ibid*).

It is this establishment of discourses that can disrupt authority and Cuddon notes this to be an attractive concept to postcolonial theorists. In Cultural Theory the notions of hybridity have been extended to refer to the mixed or hyphenated identities of persons or ethnic communities, or of texts that express and explore this condition, sometimes themselves employing mixed written and visual discourses (Brooker, 2002). In its more textual reference, hybridity is therefore close to the meanings of 'collage' and 'bricolage', which is noted to have been derived from the Aesthetics of Modernism (*ibid*). Cuddon connects hybridity to Homi Bhabha's argument that it is "the *ambivalence* of the colonial subject's hybridity which is so disturbing to imperial authority. In taking on habits, values and knowledge of the colonizer...the colonial subject is able to mimic his or her master...which hovers between respect and mockery (2013:344). Beya (2017) notes that "The simple presence of the colonized Other within the textual structure is enough evidence of the ambivalence of the colonial text, an ambivalence that destabilizes its claim for absolute authority or unquestionable authenticity."

In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha's essays look towards concepts that work to undermine the binary split of the world into Self and Other (see Huddart, 2006). Where I wish to focus, is Bhabha's ideas around mimicry and liminality as I believe they will be useful in identifying a relationship between multimodality and the 'hybrid' narrative form. Many literary writers are noted to engage in hybridization around the means in which they express narrative forms, for example, author Salman Rushdie. Kuortti and Nymann, (2007:6) for example note "When Rushdie writes counter-narratives for their colonial, national, and fundamentalist interpretations, he 'reiterates hybridity as a narratological posture". Additionally, many non-literary writers such as sociologists and anthropologists have explored this emphasis. Their writings undermine any claims to pure or authentic cultural identities or forms (Huddart, 2006: 4). But Bhabha insists less on hybridity than on hybridization; in other words, he insists on hybridity's ongoing process (Huddart, *ibid*).

Singh (2009) notes that under colonialism and in the context of immigration, mimicry is seen as an opportunistic pattern of behavior. When one copies the person in power, one hopes to have access to that same power oneself. Bhabha's (1994:85) concept of mimicry sees it as 'one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge. In his essay *Of Mimicry and Man* he notes (1984:126) that mimicry is "...the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite. Which is to say that the discourse of ambivalence to be effect, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference." Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) note that:

When colonial discourse encourages the colonized to ‘mimic’ the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a ‘blurred copy’ of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever, it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized. The concept of mimicry stresses the connections between the colonizer and the colonized by sharing construction of their individualities (124-125)

Singh (2009) notes that although mimicry is important in thinking about the relationship between colonizing and colonized peoples, many people have historically been mocked as ‘mimics or mimic-men’. He goes on to comment that “it is interesting that almost no one ever describes themselves as positively engaged in mimicry: it is always something that someone else is doing”. Mimicry reveals the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse, almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: 125). The menace of mimicry does not lie in its concealment of some real identity behind a mask but comes from its “double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority” (Bhabha, 1994: 88 as cited in *ibid*). Thus, the threat of post-colonial writing does not develop from an automatic opposition to colonial discourse, but comes from this subversive disruption of colonial authority, opening mimicry to being potentially mockery.

Mimicry is an interesting concept to navigate when aligned to the concepts of production and representation. Reflecting on my own positionality, as designers we are taught by mimicking other’s works or at least studying precedent as means and a vehicle to learn how elements and principles of design can be applied. Creative, produced hybridity at a visual level is celebrated as its production implies work that is new and yet reflects on the conditions of media systems and structures we inhabit. We ‘bound’ ourselves in the knowledge, forms, and styles of the past. This could be seen as an issue of structural power and organizational politics which is not a part of this current discourse.

In a hybrid novel such as **S.**, what is genuinely curious is how the implication of its immaculate attention to detail and style and production creates an intense reflection of realism. In a way, this legitimizes the artifact to the reader-audience as its visual production creates a situation to read it as a contained simulacrum. However, to do this needs the mimicry of structure and style, whether is the informational constructs or aesthetic style to legitimate itself. It feels ‘real’ and gains legitimacy through the textural and visual communication queues of its handwriting, and ephemera. It uses the

semiotic queues we are socially conditioned to knowing and recognising to lend the authenticity to the artifact as a record. In this way, the reader-audience is led through the novel, firstly engaging in its double narrative as well as the immersion into a world that feels or could be their own. The hybridity here, becomes a patchwork of structures that reference rituals of use and queues that the reader can look back towards. This could not be done in the way it has without the hand of a designer to render these queues of meaning. Directed with the intention to make it feel this way; tangible from the ephemera and textural queues and handwriting, it uses what the reader knows and comes from to create a narrative experience that is unusual, delightful, and often frustrating.

One can ask if this textural reflection is one of mockery. Tanderup (2017:147) presents an argument that the book is "...a reflection of the changing status and function of the printed novel in the digital age. As an experimental novel with yellowing pages and handwriting in the margins, **S.** appears to reflect a 'material turn' in literature." This nostalgia is directly influenced by the effects of visual representation and production which engenders recognition of the patterns of analogue communication in the reader's mind. It is perhaps not directly inciting mockery here but largely read as imitation through playful and experimental creativity. Pushing the concept of what a book can represent narratively however, limits itself in its structure because it has physical mechanisms and limitations that enforce similar structures. It is here where I postulate that where creative and actively practiced hybridity aims to mix, it will pull authorizing structures from its lineages to uphold itself. It will practice itself by using parentage structures to stabilize the fluidity of experimentation. The activity or experimentation will blend but also mimic, relying on the safety of its multimodal parentage. But in terms of stability the hybridity can only stretch to a point that its media-parentage will allow. If it attempts to expand beyond its elasticity of parental structures, it will collapse. Thus, mimicry must occur, in some form. Any collapse will be because it has moved too far away from the institutional structures that give it legitimacy to be recognized. Thus, creative hybridity makes its boundaries around liminal fluid ones. It brings them, weaves them into a concept skeleton where creative playfulness can occur, however, it will bound itself by the rules of the structure it sets.

The evidence of mimicry can only be garnered or echoed upon already existing structure, and these may not always quite fit the original mould. But internally within these structures, the mixing of internal contexts and events create fascinating playfulness and idea. They are active and present and test the media boundaries and sometimes the social contexts they find themselves in. In this liminal space, a hybrid experimental recipe is only possible by the coming together of parts of two different parental lineage's boundaries (Figure 0.4). These boundaries stabilize the creative product piece and its place of production. Two parental structures (conceptually pure or not – but structurally

sound) create liminal spaces because their internal workings must find rest amongst them. Ideas may have difficulty in motion.

Thus, Liminality is the second concept that is important to speak about around the nature of a bounded hybridity, The shades of identity within hybrid literature can shift dependent on the ways in which we interact with it. To take **S.** as a site to engage this, we read it as both a book and as an experience, we read the narrative's copy and components alongside ephemera as signs and indications that reflexively refer to one another. This connects to the larger grand intentions of the hybrid literary project. The story and narrative create a process of perpetual reflection, leaving its boundaries to move as the reader directs its possible flow and structure, aligning it with their own desires for the narrative. The book evokes a liminal space where multi-narratives exist and come together. In this experience, the story never feels quite secure in one's grasp, confidently directive or finished.

The word 'liminality' or 'liminal' is derived from the Latin *limen* meaning 'threshold'. Liminal space is the 'in-between' location of cultural action, in which according to various cultural theorists, anthropologists and psychologists meaning is produced (Chakraborty, 1996:145). Chakraborty (2016) highlights the emphasis of its meaning:

...In more general terms it marks the place, line or border at which a passage can be made from one space to another. Such a spatial structure has an essential influence on social interactions: relationships and social status are negotiated at the threshold; one is either rejected from or welcomed to the other side. The term 'threshold' evokes images of entering and leaving, passages, crossings and change. It marks the point at which choices and decisions must be made in order to move on, and it would be unusual to think of it as a place to stay, a place of permanent existence.

Liminality's origins trace back to Arnold van Gennep's work *Les Rites de Passage* (The Rites of Passage, 1909) at the turn of the twentieth century on the ritual patterns that societies invoke to identify the process of transitions. Van Gennep considered the middle stage in a rite of passage the liminal one, the "in-between" stage in which a known and familiar stability is left behind before the new point of reference can be fully embraced. (Bode and Jacobson, 2018). The terms 'liminal' and 'liminality' gained popularity through the writings of Victor Turner in the second half of the twentieth century who popularized van Gennep's ideas on the importance of ritual by applying them on a broader scale to societal and communal shifts (Chakraborty, 1996).

Bhabha uses the concept of liminality to imply not beginning with an idea of pure cultures interacting, rather to direct our attention to what happens on the borderlines of cultures, to see what happens in-between cultures (Huddart, 2006). The in-between space of fixed identifications is itself a site of hybridity that facilitates the mingling and crossing of race, class, gender, and other differences (Bode and Jacobson, 2018). The importance of the liminal for post-colonial theory is precisely its usefulness for describing an 'in-between' space in which cultural change may occur. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007:117) note that "the transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be elaborated, a region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states." For Bhabha the liminal goes hand in hand with hybridity. He references art historian Renée Green's characterization of a stairwell as a 'liminal space, a pathway between upper and lower areas, each of which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness' (Bhabha 1994:4). Bhabha uses the metaphor of the stairwell to explore liminal space. He notes that:

... in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell. The temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (1994:4).

Guinery (2011) tries to simplify that this is what Bhabha terms his 'Third Space of Enunciation' (Bhabha, 1994:37) contending it can be simplified to 'The idea that the intercultural space where hybrid identity is formed is a space of in-betweenness and liminality. It is a zone of exchange and negotiation. Bode and Jacobson (2018) note that Bhabha's "Third Space" is a zone of ongoing cultural exchanges, interventions, and mediations that make "the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process" (37) but that also make new transcultural formations possible. In explaining Bhabha's relevance, Huddart (2006:5) comments "...to give privilege to liminality is to undermine solid, authentic culture in favour of unexpected, hybrid, and fortuitous cultures. It suggests that the proper location of culture is between the overly familiar forms of official culture." Because Bhabha focuses on signification (the creation of meaning) rather than physical locations (borders between nations), his position has been dismissed as idealistic and unrealistic (*ibid*). Huddart argues that when he refers to the location of culture, this location is not metaphorical as

opposed to literal. Instead, the location is both spatial and temporal: the liminal can be found in precise post-colonial social spaces. It implies the continual process of creating new identities what Huddart notes as 'their open-endedness or their 'becoming'. Due to the nature of this investigation, this expression of liminality is useful to explore. When literary hybridity interrogates materiality and its characteristics, becomes an interesting site of seeing how hybridity in an artefactual creation is occurring. This leads us to see the potentials of storytelling and how it dances and weaves itself within modes of dissemination.

The ways and means in which media and its multimodal forms interacts within a hybrid literary project such as **S.** implies how older, traditional forms of communication can be a liminal site for which experimentation and forms reflect and build upon each other. This space is both an echo of the old but interrogates newness through its structuring and suggestive reading and navigation patterns. In using the idea of hybridity having a collapsing point, I believe one must acknowledge that although the reflection process, the mimicry and replication of forms may be stifling to creative possibility, the works that fall under this ideal of hybrid literature cannot exist without the reference to the parental types and lineages of its forms. This is economic as it hinges of the identity of the media-generic form such as the book and will be sold as such for an audience that will buy into its nostalgia. It is also practical as it informs the reader on how the story must be activated by relying on those rituals and cultures of the media in question. Whether hybrid or not, any work created for an audience must be correctly coded with a known key to be decoded and engaged with. With our example, this means that a book will be read and engaged with as a book, and thus the creators of the narrative experience can guarantee that certain actions in the reader-audience experience will occur.

Regarding my thesis statement **Creativity is a boundary making event**, I don't see this as changing the idea of hybridity and liminality, only the idea of how it builds and sustains itself through production. The boundary of hybridity is built upon a double lineage and thus by the act of pulling itself into a space of produced creativity it cradles the liminal space, which is fluid, active and alive. The liminal is the crucial space where hybridity is acknowledged and celebrated. It celebrates the parental cultures or systems that contain it and use this as boundary to contain the melding and playfulness of movement. To remove a boundary, however, is to remove the engendered movement of hybridity and may lead to a phenomena of hybridity collapse.

THE SECOND INTERMISSION

Does Hybridity Exist in Design?

The exploration of creativity as hybridity has led me to understand that there is a pointed usefulness and practicality of creating works that engage with the histories of its forms. However, in my own personal experience of creative work and visual communication, I have never felt a particular affinity with the concept of hybridity. Perhaps this is due to design as a practice being often rooted in the philosophy of business and key performance indicators. By placing its methodologies within the scope of how much value it can engender in the realm of its activities, it rarely interrogates its role and philosophies around power unless pointedly aiming at critical reflection. In terms of creativity and production it may be the case that naming an activity as hybrid, is a deliberate action to engage the nature of identity and the cultural products created by it. From this however, we can acknowledge that it is difficult to separate the conversations of post-coloniality with the activities of creating hybridity; especially when the amalgamation of forms and elements transverse from one boundary to another. I believe however that the underlying scope that must tether the two is the power of the authorial mechanisms and structures that create the boundary markers from which these acts take place. With the looming acknowledgement that hybridity refers to anterior purity as Hutnyk suggests, I wondered if it was the correct decision to continue using the concept of the hybrid as a foundation to my initial investigation.⁴⁵ This is important to acknowledge as Coombes and Brah (2000:1) note that when we assume a symbiotic relationship without paying adequate attention to economic, political, and social inequalities, the celebrations of cultural syncretism are uncritical and unacknowledged.

In questioning if design practices are of hybrid nature, the first thing to critically investigate is the ways and means with which we experiment with modalities. In terms of Graphic Design, one can argue that hybridity is the cross-blending of multiple elements, themes, and stylistic artefacts in the visual plane. We can from this assert two subplots that can apply hybridity to art and visual design. The first is material hybridity, where multiple modalities and physical materials are positioned together to create art forms that can be considered hybrid. That is, this may involve combinations of visual design principles and images, motion graphics or video, digital media, sound, objects, and different textures can create new hybrid interactions. The second would be cultural hybridity which has been the subject of many theorists in postcolonial studies. What is relevant here is through the engagement with motifs, structure and / or material interactions we can engage and navigate different cultures and references points simultaneously. Through a reflective and mirroring process a

⁴⁵ Allen (2013) for example makes a strong argument against the use of Hybridity as a useful concept in Genre studies

designer, artist or maker can imbue art objects with new meanings often rooted in genre-specific or cultural identities. Levinson (1984:5-6) notes that:

A somewhat more tempting, though ultimately unsatisfactory, answer is that we think of art forms as hybrid when they can be decomposed, conceptually, into two or more distinct artistic activities or ostensible media. This is not right, however, because with ingenuity, almost any art form can be conceived so to appear the combination of simpler artistic strands...

Elements	Principles
Line	Pattern
Shape / Form	Contrast
Colour	Emphasis
Texture	Balance
Tone/Value	Scale/ Proportion
Space	harmony
	Rhythm / Movement
	Unity
	Variety

FIGURE 2.2. The Elements and Principles of Design

Material and cultural hybridity is a useful starting point, however, is not enough of a directive into the act or practices of creative, produced hybridity. Perhaps the extent of what defines hybridity needs to be rather intentional in the activities of blending multiple identities. It also does not answer my questions of what it means to create and when this creation is defined as 'new' or 'hybrid'. This is important to my main thesis, as the ways in which creative produced hybridity exists will emphasize the patterns of boundaries. Levison (1984:6) continues stating that in short "hybrid art forms are art forms

arising from the actual combination or interpenetration of earlier art forms." These self-same art forms that have not come about this way, although theoretically analysable in their various possible or actual structural or 'mediumistic components', are not hybrids in the primary sense according to Levison.

Although design is directive and value orientated, this conversation has led me to revisit and reflect on my position as a designer. As one who creates with an intention and set directive, a designer positions themselves to work towards an idealized outcome that is often orientated through a multimodal and interdisciplinary approach. By contrasting, adding, composing a multitude of elements, to create a desired effect –does that warrant itself to be called hybrid? Elements and Principles (Figure 2.2.) that are used to guide design are a set of tools that inform meaning-making rather than singular concrete concepts. They will often lack a historicity to called themselves identity markers. Even if they can encode meaning and expression, it is perhaps more relevant to see them as activities of the practice of design, that brings together artifacts into a centralized, codified representation of meaning. I cannot be certain that design is a hybrid activity unless one predicates

the nature of the design methodology first. For example, design of intermedial and/or intertextual products and narratives may be seen as hybrid in process due to the means in which it refers and reflects on the history and tropes of the media types it is engaging in. Intermediality for example plays with the identity politics of media as bounded in its qualities and shines a light on how it mixes with other lineages and types. Within the scope of hybrid literature this may have relevance to understanding artifacts. **S.** as a case study is a metafictional and reflexive of its own state as an artifact. As mentioned previously through Tanderup's (2017) argument of the material turn and its nostalgia, its very hybridity is requisite based on the multimodal histories and materialities it presents as itself. It presents a certain wistfulness and reflection into the pasts of media, ephemera, and the histories of communication. It may be useful to call into question our definition of hybridity in Literature. Hybridity in literature reflects on its own media identity to incorporate materiality and visual design as structural dimensions of the narrative.

Design and its mechanisms of action may be a possible methodology that can maintain or collapse the boundary of identity. This can be seen in narrative intentions, by either forming or obliterating the potential third space⁴⁶ to foster its desired outcome. The means in which design engages the motivations and objectives of a project, will always allow for the establishment of new frameworks to achieve a desired goal. This can be seen in the case of hybrid media and literature in the ways in which it brings about new thoughts and interrogation of forms of visibility, taking from and referencing, bringing about emphasis on or negating the strict cultures of structure and boundaries. We also see this in places such as poster and editorial design (when the maker given liberty to mix and experiment with imagery and its cultural significances). This ability to move, change or obliterate boundaries could be seen as both a positive and negative. On one hand, in terms of visibility, graphic and communication design brings together different visual markers that can respond to many kinds of identity whether in style or brand frameworks to create meaningful messaging and the instigation of unique branding personification. On the other hand, in its ways and means of building upon aesthetic styles and trends, folding to the organisation ideologies and hierarchy; the unique identity and style of a designer may be overridden. What seems more natural and personal to the instigator of the message may be lost in the structural power and philosophies of value making over substance.

In terms of systems and structural design boundaries are essential as we learn and engage media by learning the cultures and rituals of use based within that media⁴⁷. Boundaries and structures can dissolve in the scope of information architecture and hierarchies of knowledge, but this cannot be

⁴⁶ Such as I experienced, adding too much insight and scope into one artifactual body.

⁴⁷ The example I have been using: a book assumes that those that engage it understand it as a book.

assumed, and alternative structures and guidance must be set first before this can take place. Recognition of the initial and known identity of what we engage and how we are directed to engage it is paramount. Hybridity cannot take place without it. Nederveen Pieterse (2001) asks of Modes of Recognition:

Can it be that recognition is an exercise in reproduction, recycling the categories in which existing social relations have been coded while stretching their meaning? Recognition, then, stretches or revalues social boundaries but does not transgress them. To what extent is the politics of recognition a politics of musical chairs – as one more identity is acknowledged, another is left behind? As the spotlight turns to one identity, does another fade into the shadow? To what extent does the politics of recognition chase the social horizon which ever recedes as one comes closer? To what extent is ‘progress’ (such a difficult word) measured not simply in attainment (because any attainment is partial and entails a price) but in process and motion? And then what would such acknowledgement of process entail? (219)

He goes on to note that: Recognition and difference are a function of the existing identities and boundaries that are available on the social and cultural maps. Recognition is part of a process of struggle over cognition. Hybridity is a journey into the riddles of recognition (*ibid.*:220). And I wonder if the idea of a hybrid collapse and my own experimentations with it were due to the shifting and expanding boundaries that I would not allow to stay still.

Much of post-colonial writing has concerned itself with questions of whether a hybridised nature of post-colonial culture can be viewed as a strength rather than a weakness. Such writing focuses on the fact that the transaction of the post-colonial world is not a one-way process in which oppression obliterates the oppressed or the coloniser silences the colonised in absolute terms. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003[1995]:183) In practice it rather stresses the mutuality of the process. It lays emphasis on survival of distinctive aspects of the culture even under the most extreme oppression and shows how these become an integral part of the new formations which arise from the clash of cultures characteristic of imperialism(*ibid*) There is a liberation in the collapse of monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth. As Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, (2003[1995]) notes “it emphasises how hybridity and the power it releases may well be seen to be the characteristic feature and contribution of the post-colonial, allowing a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past...”

Nederveen Pieterse (2001:221) notes that new hybrid forms are significant indicators of profound changes that are taking place because of mobility, migration and multiculturalism. However, “hybridity thinking also concerns existing or, so to speak, old hybridity, and thus involves different ways of looking at historical and existing cultural and institutional arrangements” (*ibid*). Although I may have overwrought my own attempt at research hybridity, it has opened a scope and understanding of how it is a phenomenon of both creativity and expression as well as historical change and exchange. Literary Hybridity is an extremely interesting site to test the applications of hybridity as it involves narrative and written content, structure, and materiality as its tools of engagement. The case study in question reflects the thesis statement as it is constrained in its potentials. Thus, it was curious to investigate its boundaries and presencing. Although my case study looks at an extreme form of literary hybridity, it does show one way in which the boundaries and histories of a medium can be pushed, expanded on, and tested in the realms of what an audience can handle. Although my lens may look at where hybridity ends, solidifies and wavers, it may be a matter of when the information architecture becomes untethered from reach of where it came from, that really emphasizes what hybridity is. Parental structures and lineages give us frameworks to exist within, and without them we find ourselves have difficulty navigating the scripts of how to approach media. This is because reader-audiences can use prior knowledge in which to engage. In terms of the structure itself, the structure may be open, but it must keep a rhythm in which it asks to be engaged or set up with rules – whether this is prior knowledge of the ritual of use or literal written information on how to do this.

From here I will go on to analyse the case study **S.** and explore my four components I have set up as making the substance of a text. The substance of text is what will move and iterate itself in light of hybrid identifiers within it. The four components that make the substance are authorship for focalisation, artifact for materiality and script and experience to explore structure. These will contribute to the discussion of hybridity and enlighten where the thesis statement comes and bolster the surrounding discussion of how it can be utilized.

PART 3.1 ANALYSIS

AUTHORSHIP IN / AS CONTEXT

The case study I have been exploring is J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's **S.**⁴⁸, a book that premises its entire concept on the ideas of ephemera and artifactuality. In a CNN interview (DuChateau, 2013) J.J. Abrams explained the origin of the interactive book concept: he was at LAX airport where he saw a Robert Ludlum novel sitting on a bench. Inside someone had written in pen on the title page of the book "to whomever finds this book please read it and take it somewhere and leave it for someone to read." (*ibid.*). Abrams noted that he loved the idea that someone could use a book for communication:

What happens if you read the notes in it, what if you responded to those notes? Could there be a story or maybe even a romance that begins between two people over a book?

In an interview with the New Yorker (Rothman, 2013), Abrams mentioned that

It made me smile, this optimistic, romantic idea that you could leave a book with a message for someone. It reminded me of being in college and seeing the notes that people would leave in the margins of the books they'd checked out of the library.

Doug Dorst was handed the concept in the summer of 2009 and was asked what kind of story he would write for this idea (Rothman, 2013). Reading on the 'Shakespeare question'⁴⁹ at the time, it led him into reading about the B. Traven controversy⁵⁰ (Rothman, 2013). Dorst commented that he "started thinking that, if the notion of a book is central to this idea, what if there were a mystery about its author?" (*ibid.*).

Although evidence suggests that the author mystery in **S.** was generated creatively, it becomes a driving narrative force in the novel and a key to how well the hybrid experimentation functions. The work plays into traditional ideas of the author being a fundamental indicator and representative of meaning making. In this way **S.** and the mystery of the *Ship of Theseus*'s author V.M. Straka becomes an internal theme of the work as the other characters work to discover the book's (and in a sense Straka's) intentions. It brings a subtle implication to how we read the text as the role of the author and his life has been positioned narratively as essential to the true meaning of the text. Using Straka as means to tie the experience together, the authorial intent becomes a trope and a centralizing force which impacts the structure and the storyworld. With this the voices of Eric, Jen and Straka's translator Caldeira (who features in the paratexts) begin to influence the ways in which

⁴⁸ I have introduced **S.** in detail in Part 0.2: Case Study and Introductory Concepts. As the book is extremely complex in structure, please refer to this chapter for the book as a concept.

⁴⁹ This is a question of authorship and authenticity of Shakespeare as the singular author of his work. The Shakespeare question is referred to on page viii of the foreword of *Ship of Theseus*.

⁵⁰ B Traven is the author of works like *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *The Death Ship*. Little to nothing is known about his real name or his exact history which mirrors the themes and quest to uncover who V.M. Straka is.

we read the *Ship of Theseus* text as they bring depth to Straka's words on the page. This includes the paratexts and artifacts that are provided which bolster the evidence of authority through the voices of the narrative. It is a particularly useful motif to create layers to the work and weaves the structure into a hybrid stance. Using the function of the author in this way frames the experimental work of **S.** in the histories of the novel as well as its textuality which creates a secondary layer of meaning. Overall, this layering creates a web of fictitious authorial intent which as readers we find ourselves engaging in to derive meaning.

The meaning derived from authorship in literary theory has a long and sometimes complex history of voices. Perhaps one can start with the romantic poets who were a turning point, where Bennet notes (2004:3) there was a shift in poetics and literary theory to showcase a move from focusing on the literary work towards the subject who makes or creates the work, "towards the poet or author as a site of analysis and exploration". This may be seen as the point where artistic activity and the culmination of tradition to admire the artist and creator "more than any other civilization ever has" and convinces us that "a life spent in artist creation or performance is eminently worthwhile" (Taylor 1989, as cited by Bennett, 2004:4). If one applies the idea of performativity to writing practice, it emphasizes that creation and creativity is also an event and participated in with action. The display of a performance, the evidence of text can be then broken down or interpreted via a structural mediator. In **S.** the author V. M. Straka becomes a performative role which indicates a structuralizing element to the reader. By playing on the idea that author implies deliberate control and action, the reader uses this to unravel the experimental structure of the work. The function of the author also implies that the causation of time and action in the narrative has some merit and intent. Authorship implies that meaning is being actively pursued with the intention of being displayed.

The author today is often considered irrelevant to the interpretation of a literary text, and this view as Claassen (2012) notes "as persisted in literary theory for a rather long time". However:

At the same time the author concept remained implicitly or explicitly present in different areas of the literary field... and there is remarkable discrepancy between literary theory on interpretation (where the relevance of the author was disputed) and the practice of literary reviewing (from where the author has never disappeared). (Jannidis et al, 1999 as cited in Claassen, 2012:2).

Whether one engages in it or not, the authoring identity and the concept of it as a pillar of meaning making does not come without its cautions. Barthes' 1967 essay *Death of The Author* focused on the artifact of writing existing after the author and its implications (Bennet, 2004) such as being able then to remove the author from the acts of interpretation. Barthes argued against using an author's biography and intentions to interpret, rather looking to the structure of the text itself. Following this, Foucault's 1969 Essay *What is an Author?* speaks to the death of the author but also the author function. This is where the idea of where the writer who performs the act of writing the work is replaced by the concept of an author function or the discourses that surround the author and body of the text. That is, the author function is the ideals and set of beliefs, and the commercial value that comes with the association of a body of texts with 'a proper name', or the identification system

(Beard, 2009). Vitali-Rosati (2014) explores how despite Barthes and Foucault proclaiming possibilities to explore texts without the author-function, there is still an attachment to the concept. Vitali-Rosati traces the figure of the author and echoes it as one engineered for commercial and economic reasons. As there was a need to regulate print's economic models, editors needed to find a way to protect their publications and to justify that these publications were their property (Vitali-Rosati, 2014). This suggestion has implications implying that the author can represent ownership in their authority. This can be related to pedigree and power over how a given thing acts and replicates its 'purity'.

In his introduction *'Begetting and Forgetting the Author'* Powers (2021) attempts to trace a surmised history of the author and the problems that arrived with and after Barthes' claims of the 'death of the author'. Interestingly he notes that Barthes conceived the author as modern. Barthes at the outset of his famous essay does imagine a primitive society before the author in which "narrative is never undertaken by one person, but by a mediator, shaman or speaker whose 'performance' may be admired (that is his mastery of the narrative code) but not his 'genius'" (Barthes as cited by Powers, 2021:np). Later Powers comments that "This of course is the appeal of the obscure ancient society imagined in Barthes' 'shaman'. In the absence of author, the text is free. But the meanings of these texts are also up for endless debate." (Powers, 2021: Birth of the Author). Perhaps the debate of the author is one of looking towards possibilities of freedom from ownership and control. It is important to note these historical contrasts of the conventions of the author to get an understanding of how it exists in literary interpretation. However, **S.** plays on the cultures and rituals of authorship and novelization - it falls into the category of a typical authorial figure that performs and presents itself as a structuralizing or meaning-making mechanism. What is important to take away is that in the scope of authorship, texts can exist without an author, or even have multiple authors especially in an age of growingly digital works and collaboration. However, there are textual spaces such as **S.** where the author takes on a role which structuralizing and thus can be deconstructed.

There is an interesting preoccupation with authority or the guidance of one's knowledge under the role of a personhood. Identity here plays a role in **S.** through the voices of characters in the paratexts such as Eric and Jen's marginalia and Caldeira's footnotes. Positioned as characters who are seeking the truth behind the *Ship of Theseus* with readers, Eric and Jen encourage us to build a structure of truthfulness alongside with them as they seek to figure out the intentions of Straka and Caldeira (by their implied relationship as uncovered by Eric and Jen). As they look to find meaning in the work's thematic and authored parentage, the characters are unconsciously authoring on top of the text. The weaving of this relationship in the marginal conversations and its act of referencing the core text and paratexts of the book, overlays the *Ship of Theseus* text. This creates an extreme and somewhat open-ended, multiple-pathed story and possibilities of enquiry. The mystery of the author emphasizes and builds upon this as it is a main point of investigation in **S.** In this reality Straka is either dead or disappeared and this creates a core text that is haunted by its potential in the storyworld. It becomes inaccessible, even maintained to such an extent that it is purposefully hidden. This act of hiding is perhaps deliberate as the two meta-authors (J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst) who have created the mystery mechanism in turn acts as reflective device on its body artifact (its materiality). That is, the more we seek the truth behind the novel, the more we must muse over the physical permutations of the book's textuality and ephemera as evidence. How the concept of the

text (its core information) is laid out, is sewn into the materiality – its structure and layout. Ultimately, the mystery within the artifact becomes like a spring. It opens at the desire of the reader-audience but only to a point where the reader must let it go or activate the artifact's structure to find answers. It winds and unwinds at the reader-audience's desire to investigate but it will never lose tension unless made to break, it will never fully reveal an ultimate truth.

Caldeira's influence should be noted as well. Caldeira's work on the text has been situated in within the confines of the fictional but still legitimate part of the printing process and as the footnote (S., 2013: v) situates the original publishers of Straka's work as shutting down abruptly "without notice to its employee" (presumably it is F.X. Caldeira herself). Caldeira notes that she has "at considerable personal expense (financial and otherwise)" begun her own publishing venture so that Straka's work could be appreciated by the public. Thus, she has the political economy of being the publisher and translator to add her own footnotes and opinions. She has by inhabiting this role a power over the text and we know that she has pieced together or may have written the last chapter. This is noticeably even contrasted with Caldeira's noting that "...the author was adamant that only his writing should appear between the covers of his books. Am I then violating his authorial wishes now? Doubtlessly so." (S., 2013: v). She does go on to imply that this is her attempt to reach Straka and that he would find her motivations "sound and sincere" (*ibid*). She speaks in a tone here that puts seems to imply she speaks for Straka which places her in a position of control and perhaps desperation knowing that her footnotes that are admitted being sacrilegious to his intentions for his work hold hidden clues for Straka.

Caldeira is one of the many hidden authorial positions within the structure of the work. But in the real world there are many authorities and authors that assisted in creating the vision of **S**. Although presumably overseen by a creative director⁵¹ for a consistent vision, we also can assume that design or graphic design has been utilized to construct the visuality of **S**.⁵² I wish to posit that this storyworld would not feel as real, as pressing, and pertinent without the context-driven visual cues in the textual artifact (the aesthetic qualities and textures of the paratexts and ephemera). This is a feature worthy of note as for a mass-produced novel experience it has 23 pieces of loose ephemera that are individualized down to the paper grammage. This excludes the stylistic choices that make the novel look aged and handwriting on every page in multiple colours, presented within the liminal play space of the work (the slipcover and novel). This all takes a thoughtfulness and a directed intent to accomplish. The cues, such as the grid system and hierarchy of the newspaper or the composition of official-looking stamps and typography, are semiotic resources which are derived from what we know of visuality and cultures of visual practice. The ontology of the storyworld may even be dependent of specific incorporation of graphic design, which brings the authors' vision to a state of lived-in and liveliness that cannot be achieved with the single format of print work⁵³. This helps achieve an artifact that is bound in temporal context (of style and aged textures) but also an ontological one (the use of multiple communication formats in the ephemera).

⁵¹ An author-producer perhaps. A position responsible for the vision of the text's final form to be executed.

⁵² Melcher Media notes on their website that it used a team of "Abrams, Dorst, designer Paul Kepple of Headcase Design, and our publishing partner, Mulholland Books." (Melcher Media, n.d.)

⁵³ By this I imply that multiple types of textures, paper, ink and processes are used to produce the ephemera in **S**. It is not printed in one format.

The debate around the designers being authors can be disputed because of the epistemological structure designers work within. That is, often designers are briefed and then try to create a vision that is imposed by someone else. As McCarthy (2013) notes, designers who wish to be authors find themselves getting involved in the content of the work, which may not always be controlled by the designer. But I think it is important to acknowledge the influence of the designer position here, one who did not write the book or decide on its point of view but amplified and positioned its context through modalities and nonverbal cues of the aesthetics, texture, and stylistic qualities of the handwriting. These have meaning that have been guided by a hand knowledgeable in communication histories and tactics. This is a competence that is learned and mastered. The ontology has been authored with intent and thus designed. It has given the structure legitimacy through a representational semiotic practice. The hybridity of the work is solidified and legitimized by the design. It gives the work authority by bounding it in cues and mimicry of a reality that we are comfortable in.

From here I wish to focus on the author as it pertains to structure and meaning. On authority, Vitali-Rosati (2018) notes that one of the most important forms that we learn to identify and to respect is the authority of authors. This is the authority of what has been written by someone who knows more than someone else about a particular subject:

This form of authority manifests itself in a number of different ways. It may be simply the authority of someone who has learned something – by studying or by practicing a specific discipline. Specialized knowledge underpins the authority of a medical doctor, or of a lawyer, or of a carpenter: in these cases, authority is issued by competence. And behind the competence there is always some function, which further strengthens authority... (11)

As readers, we come to **S.** with no knowledge of its world but the tools of a visual-reading audience. We are struck by the nostalgia and visual ephemera it offers us and delight in it, but to keep our interested vested we rely on the voices within the work that continually indicate where we should go and what we should believe in terms of the ultimate truth of the work. **S.** does this in two ways. The first is the authorial figure of Straka who is positioned as the competent true identity of meaning. The display or evidence of his work *Ship of Theseus* is the text that is constantly taken apart and is the core of **S.** The mystery of what it all means, the implications that there is more meaning ask us to investigate further. The second means of which this happens is through the themes of academic practice of Eric and the university institution. It emphasizes the tantalizing power of an epistemological 'truth' and makes us feel that there is a correct objective reality that happens behind the interplay of the two narratives within the text. This power of what we feel is the true authorial intent in **S.** is what begins to construct the implied pathways of meaning in the experimental work. As Eric is positioned as being there before Jen in knowledge and is an accessible authority (even if he does not have all the answers) we often confer to his opinions despite there being others in the text. We trust him as a source of knowledge.

Vitali-Rosati (2018) notes that a fundamental characteristic of authority is something that we trust. He speaks to an interesting part of this trust that lays out a distinction between authority and power:

As small children, we trust our parents; we think that what they say is true, that they are able to guide us because they know the world and how it works. It is important to point out, though, that in these examples authority is not the same as power. Parents have the power to decide for children and to impose on them ways of behaving and conducting themselves, but this is not the source of their authority. Authority, as it is understood here, stems from the fact that children trust their parents because they believe their parents are right. (12)

Trust stabilizes textuality through its relationship with the reader. If we do not buy into the rituals and culture of the medium, the book's structure is devalued and inevitably will not hold momentum. Authority here, as Vitali-Rosati explains stems from the perception of what is right, and once we trust this, it gives us the ability to buy into structures of the text as put together by an author. This is their perceived role. The author comes to represent the authority of the text through the practices and production that engineered the literary product. As mentioned, readers often may try to resolve a work's intent around this sometimes-structural pillar. Thus, the implication of the author is a figure of authority.

Vitali-Rosati uses the parent-child relationship to explain authority and it is reminiscent of the relationships around power and hybridity. As the author here is a narrative key to the text as well as a personified structural 'instigator', one may ask how authorship contributes the 'hybridity' or blending and experimentation of the novel. To start with a contextualization of the work, **S.** was brought into being by its two creators J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst. They were the instigators of creating a novelized experience that brought the blending of different contexts and narrative threads into one artifact – the book. The ephemera in the book are also intentionally tangible, physical pieces of evidence. Abrams has noted that they wanted to "include things you can actually hold in your hand: postcards, Xeroxes, legal-pad pages, pages from the school newspaper, a map on a napkin..." (Rothman, 2013) and it can be said that these have been designed and produced with a visual intention – using techniques, specific styles and aesthetics that author meaning (spatial and temporal contexts) to the different parts of the work. This is the reason **S.** falls under the scope of the term 'hybrid novel' with mixture of visual and textual cues in a body artifact of the book - something that only ever considered the text and flat printing in its traditional form.

This mixing of information forms, the double narrative, handwriting, the polyphony of voices, blends and creates a liminal space in which authority is on the border of being fluid. It has been designed and produced in section and layers to make the work function ambiguously. For example, the core text was written first and then the paratexts were applied to make the work's creative hybridity to be successful (DuChateau, 2013). Particularly the paratexts (marginalia and ephemera) give the reader multiple opportunities to make assumptions, pick and choose where they want to take the story. Motifs that are applied, such as the ship, letter S, the monkey and number 19 also assist in creating

assumptions. One can read both narratives methodically of course, but these motifs are left across the novel in order to make us renegotiate the grand design and the intention of each layer – Straka's work and design intentions as well as the story of Eric and Jen. This is not to mention the agency and power of the reader-audience and their will to follow cues and clues left inside the text and the physical novel.

Authorship and the choice to use the author as a theme and reading mechanism bounds the work to structure. It implies (whether textually or paratextually) a production where there are histories upon which the system will be based. Even ignoring authorship thematically, without some kind of immovable center, the hybrid or shifting nature of the work will not hold and the hybridity will collapse without a vessel on intent. Hybridity can be an accident or incident of nature, but hybridity or mixing of 'parental' types with intent is designed⁵⁴. In creative, produced work, the space created for hybridity to take place will be one of experimentation and playfulness. It will reflect upon the structures it is born from; but with some kind of evident change so that new interpretations can form. This change is a mechanism of fluidity or adaptation, so that it becomes open to interpretation and new referencing. In the next chapters I will speak to examples of this - particularly in the next section of how the artifact bends a few editorial and design conventions or cultures of the book artifact. This is to accommodate the creative blending of different design additions that make it an example of hybrid literature. A created, produced hybrid work will also specific enough in structure to reflect or react to a system of media and knowledge. This is what stabilizes it through known media conventions and helps establish reader-audience trust. This is especially important since it must be indicated when and how to engage the work. This becomes the genetic code upon which the reader-audience will use to interpret the script of the artifact, legitimizing and stabilizing the structure.

Authorship or authority, the process of creating a system of trust and intention in creative works limit the play space or opportunities for experimentation within hybrid spaces. It creates a boundary to support itself through prior knowledge of media conventions. Authoring in a structure is intentionally selective, to reflect on the bodies it is hybridizing. It may be limiting when looking at creative or the holistic potentials of textual work, but it does this with purpose. It closes the possibility of true change. It leaves a reflection that is so close but will never entirely match because the referencing potentials is what engenders it as hybrid. It is a mimic, but not a replication. It mixes and chooses carefully in its liminality to represent an intention. Ultimately the authoring process allows for the codification of the medium and tell us how to process it spatially, temporally, and physically. This is done without forgetting its history, where it begins and ends its presencing.

⁵⁴ This word is used with reference to Part 1.1 on methodologies and design

PART 3.2 ANALYSIS

ARTIFACT

The artifactuality is the next subject of substance in the case study. The physicality of **S.** instigates interesting conversations around textuality, materiality, and its boundaries. We know from the start, even written on its slipcover, **S.** is positioned as a 'love letter to the written word' (**S.**, 2013). We know that J.J. Abrams was inspired to produce a work from an experience with a book left on a bench with a message in it. He found it romantic, that one can leave notes to another person in physical body the book (Rothman, 2013) and this sparked the idea that turned it into the final product that we now interact with. But the work goes further than just marginalia, it curates its materiality through specific design interventions. Its marginalia are stylized and handwritten as well as colour coded, its ephemera are designed to thematically fit within the book and the storyworld of **S.** as well as contextually speak to temporal, media, and site-specific design aesthetics. Its pages are aged, and textures create a sensibility of history and time (this includes literal date stamps at the back of the book). The work shouts an emphatic nostalgia of the book's history.

Tanderup (2017: 149) notes that **S.** "reflects a 'material turn' in literature" and celebrates "It celebrates the book as a space intimacy and memory, positioned in opposition to new digital media" (*ibid.* :147). It draws the reader in with its designed attention to detail. Its tangibility, its materiality was intentional. In an interview with CNN (DuChateau,2013), J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst mention how they went about this:

J.J. Abrams: When we first met it was part of our discussions that we wanted this thing to have not just notes inside but the idea that it could actually have some physical, tangible, removable pieces, of artifacts of their relationship and investigation in there. So it was part of the fun to imagine what it could be, but the truth is that kind of stuff can become gimmicky. Doug focused on telling the story, and it wasn't until we'd really finished the whole thing that the question came up: What would be the great wish list of things that we could have in there?

Doug Dorst: My wish list was ridiculously long, but that was part of the fun, too. There were times as I was writing it might occur to me that there would be some sort of exterior piece of information or document that might go with that nicely and I would make a note of it. We didn't really sit down to figure out which ones would serve the story best until later.

The intent to create a text with many moving parts ultimately draws a connecting line between the ideas of the text (its main body copy / text and concept) with a material, quantifiable nature that changes it to artifact. **S.** takes the fictional work *Ship of Theseus* and captures the modality of the written, it accentuates words with the personality of handwritten marginalia and incorporates evidence of the storyworld reality through ephemera. Tanderup (2017: 153) notes that "the book may indeed be read as an archaeological artifact, containing different strata, traces of texts from

different times to be revealed and interpreted into a coherent narrative.” And Ghoshal (2019:201) notes that: “Unlike Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*, where spatial metaphors rely on lexical reference, the codex in **S.** literally functions as a closed space holding other things in it”. This means that we as the reader-audience are asked to protect, manage, and attempt to logically assemble the semiotic resources we have given in the existing spaces of the work. The words, colours, images, and typography are signifiers that are piecing and pulling together a story both lexically and visually. We scope these resources to attempt to uncover the true meaning from the evidence we are given. The multimodality and our experience of it is here is heightened by the ability to touch, feel, and move around the artifactual body.

Due to **S.** being an artifact, we see the book become a playful space of mediation and storytelling. The artifact here holds on to the seminal Straka story *Ship of Theseus*; Eric and Jen’s extensive marginalia or notes; as well as previously mentioned, 23 pieces of ephemera⁵⁵, which creates a complex storytelling experience and malleable reading structure. Through proximity of the artifact’s spaces, these different components and parts begin to influence, play, and reference each other, even sometimes unintentionally through repeated motifs⁵⁶. The extensive and detailed production is something rarely seen mass produced, due to the intricacies and many working parts of the artifact, especially the individualized textural qualities of the ephemera. But through this we begin interpreting that there is a powerful framework of multiple semiotic contexts that are holding **S.** together. The book thus functions with bounded structures – it is designed in ways that constrains its contexts and signifiers strategically to partake in the bookish nostalgia that inspires it.

Thus, I posit that **S.** is a hybrid text in the ways in which it deals with the identity politics of its medium, particularly in the book’s physical presentation and representation. It may not have been designed with the specific intention to reflect on the abilities of its media type (the literary book), but the intent to create an artifact that holds multiple story threads leads it to such a position. The creative intent to use the space of the media type as a playground for multiple ways of telling a story, fills its body with hybrid potentials. These begin to replicate, reminisce, and mix different patterns of communication. By experimenting and bending analogue techniques of the media type’s typical construction and setup, the artifact “ironically grounds itself in digital culture” (Tanderup, 2017). It leads readers, taking on qualities of an open work (see Wocke, 2014)⁵⁷ and imitates “...the modes and logics of electronic textuality”⁵⁸ as well as “intensifying the traditions of print” (Hayles, 2008 as cited in Tanderup, 2017:161). This nature of the medium type holding different identifying structures simultaneously feels and reiterates ideas of hybridity. What is under scrutiny here, however, is how the idea of or the acts of hybridity relay a patterned behaviour of holding onto or encircling its lineages to avoid collapse of concept.

⁵⁵ There are transmedial ephemera if one looks for it, as Shipman (n.d.) notes that there are two trailers, the EOTVOS Wheel website, ‘McKay Magazine’s review of *Ship of Theseus*’ by Edsel B. Grimshaw, The Summersby confession and Jen Heyward’s Tumblr Blog that are officially part of the cannon of **S.** These however will not be addressed in the scope of this dissertation.

⁵⁶ This is what makes the mystery so tantalizing as we see ourselves finding more and more intricacies within the story as it suggestively flirts with the secrets encoded by Straka and Caldeira.

⁵⁷ Umberto Eco’s concept of an open work is rendered open by its author and can be completed by its performer or reader-audience for example.

⁵⁸ For example, the marginalia of Eric and Jen imitates digital communication.

Although **S.** takes on *almost* new structural permutations through the bending of the mise-en-page, this can only be pushed so far in its playfulness. **S.** inevitably must question and reiterate the cultures, structures, and rituals of use within the realm of bookishness only so far that it doesn't push beyond the power structures that lend the medium its believability. The work turns to meta-fictionality as it inevitably draws resources from the concept of the artifact to support its storyworld. That is, everything that goes on in the experimental text must be believably delivered through the material body of the book. What happens in this space is unusual and at times form-breaking, but the boundaries that define the media type have been taken on, are relied on, and bent to capacity within the limit of a storyworld. The following is a deconstruction of the work's parts to explore the artifact, the consequences of the materiality and moments where hybrid identities align and reveal themselves.

A Deconstruction

The Physical Object of the Book

There has been a discussion over why the book (as a concept) was chosen, but the physical implications of the book have not been expanded on. The book is a bound text block (the block of folded sections of paper that becomes its pages) which typically holds the story concept between two covers connected by a spine. The spine holds two practical functions, it holds the text block together and is covered with a name, authors, and printers. This grounds the work in time, context, and ownership of idea. It also becomes symbolic of the work's center, or centralizing structure as the spine literally holds the concept together in its context. That is, it signals to us that we are about to partake in a (literary) experience that is here a space of play or a space of experimentation. The spine tells us of a contained boundary that is named and actualized as idea. In light of how **S.** functions, conjoined layering of paper does well to echo the possible complexities of the storyworld that we must travel through to experience the story taking place. It also functions well as a filing system for the evidence and ephemera that hold importance to the storyworld characters of Eric and Jen. Just as Ghosal (2019) notes that **S.** functions as "...a closed space holding other things in it", the book in this way becomes a system for the two characters to prove their thinking and archive it. The book is 6.5" x 9.7" (16.51 x 24.64 cm) which makes it a large tome, but still believable as one. It is fairly easy to hold in one's hand despite its thickness.

Pages that Turn

The pages of the work must be considered in a separate light and have a bounding impact on the experiential implications of the work. The book as a media type functions to tell stories or to communicate logical information. Thus, it works on a chain of logic. As a Western piece of media, the reader-audience will start at the left side of the book and move through it until they get to the end of the work on the right side. After the frontmatter (all that comes before the first chapter), the reader-audience will turn the pages methodically as each page will respond to the page that came before it. This hinders and bounds **S.** to a certain structure of diegesis that favors linearity. Although

we do not have perform the ritual of use that typically comes with a book⁵⁹, the work is bound to its existence through pages. This means that despite **S.** having multiple authors and scripts (the storyworld or structural indications of what do next) that take us in different directions and infer clues in different places, we are still under the rule of the book's body logic. Even the Eric and Jen's marginalia that is written at different times (noted by the different colours) we can still see a pattern of linear time they are still passing through the book methodically. One colour set is more dominant in the beginning and becomes less prevalent later in the book as other colour/time frames take over. The problem is that the book's body was not born from nonlinearity. The work becomes hybrid through its taking on of alternative messaging systems (the marginalia and ephemera), but its body and media type bounds the book in a context of use, behaviors that are set within the rituals of the media type itself.

The Slipcover

The slipcover may unconsciously imply a strategically designed creative hybridity. Although it is obviously a practical mechanism to the protect the work and its extreme intricacies, when we view it as part of the storyworld it does not represent or fit the ontology of what we will come to experience. It reminds us that this is a threshold we must pass in order to enter or activate this reality. It bounds the work in a way that makes us conscious of its extreme design challenges rather than unitizing the design to make a seamless, joined user and storyworld experience. It reminds us that it exists out a natural reality. It could also be said it is hybrid in a practical sense as books often come with dust covers but not full slip covers unless it is protecting; or implying the status of the book as special, other, or containing more than one text.

The Cover and Endpapers⁶⁰

Once we pass the slipcover we come to the true artifact - the book *Ship of Theseus*. The modernist cover feels reminiscent of book covers created by designer Alvin Lustig or some of the animated film credits of Saul Bass. The choppy, cut up feel of the shape motifs and chunky geometric sanserif font frames the work in the context of a stylistic choice and period. It starts the journey through the metaphor of the Ship of Theseus. The spiral-like motif around a ship may represent waves and water together with the idea of Theseus' ship signals journeys, shifts and liminality. The spiral-like effect of the cover could signal the deepening mystery and bending truths you must come to terms with. The effect is completed with a library sticker with refers the Melvil Decimal (Dewey) annotation for American Literature of the 20th century (approximately 1945-1999)⁶¹. Interestingly, there is no blurb for the main *Ship of Theseus* text, we only get a semblance of its contents from the slipcover blurb.

The book has a wealth of frontmatter, which assists in creating a space for Jen and Eric's introductory notes, but the endpapers are of artifactual interest. The front endpaper has "Book for Loan" Stamped in red and the last end paper has several stamps that befit its temporal context. One stamp ironically asks to "KEEP THIS BOOK CLEAN" with a caveat to borrowers that if they find

⁵⁹ We don't have to literally start with the first chapter, we are merely conditioned to. Because narrative is causation often the perception of linear time (Porter Abbott, 2002) we tend to confer to the logic and script of actions that is presented to us so that we can follow the story by obeying its structure.

⁶⁰ By endpapers I mean the very first flysheet or layer of paper that is often used to stick to the textblock to the cover.

⁶¹ I employed <https://www.librarything.com/mds> to find this.

marginalia it should be reported to the librarian. Another has a large stamp “RETURN ON OR BEFORE – LATEST DATE STAMPED BELOW” that is used to show the library stamps of when it was taken out of its library and received again. The dates range from the 1950’s and stop at the year 2000 presumably when the character of Eric did not return the library book again. This is all confirmed by the “Property of Laguna Verde H.S. Library” stamp on the second page (the title page). These endpapers serve to wrap the book in its fictional histories, its first being a stolen library book. It creates a context for Eric’s origins and how he came to be introduced to the mysteries of V. M. Straka. It is also ephemeral in the way that it creates textural history. This is something that we are not normally interested in when purchasing a new (clean) book, but it serves to tell the story of the artifact. The last endpaper is also where the real and necessary copyright information is collected as well as the design information of resources that have been used. It’s important to note that the design of this work was a collaboration between many resources and under many names. This is different to the author’s names because the authors take ownership and copyright of the idea, not the visual resources that have been used to create the vision. Although semiotic resources can be created by singular people, I feel that it is interesting to acknowledge that the artifact and its intention was created by many hands and instances of creativity. The multiplicities of identity are hidden amongst the grand intentions of the artifact. Even though as an artifact it feels like one representation of an idea, it is in fact a fragmented and sewn together instance of many modalities, people, and information.

Paratexts and margins

The paratexts can be divided into to three different components. The first is part of the editorial layout where page numbers and running heads (such as the title and chapter names we might see at the head of the page) would count be valid as paratext. These emphasize and root the main *Ship of Theseus* text in bookish and logical structure. They need little discussion beyond structurally contrasting with the almost ‘non-linearity’ of Eric and Jen’s marginal paratexts. We then have Caldeira’s footnotes and foreword. As noted in the previous chapter, Caldeira as the publisher has a political economy or a control over how the *Ship of Theseus* text has been formatted editorially and informationally. This may have infected the work’s true intention or *is* the work’s true intention. That is, **S.** is specifically open-ended and ambiguous as to how far Caldeira’s secondary authorial bias has influenced *Ship of Theseus* text (beyond certain discovered ciphers and codes) to keep the mystery flowing. Then the largest portion of paratexts would be the marginalia of Eric and Jen which responds to the Caldeira paratextual footnotes and the main body copy.

What I want to specifically discuss however is how these paratexts affect and embody the artifact. All three entomb the main body copy in a structure and must be acknowledged in the printing process. I have noted before, although fictional, as the publisher and editor of the text Caldeira has seen to it that the first two paratexts have been engineered into the storyworld’s print run and process. However, there is one thing that goes awry in the realism of the artifact, Eric and Jen’s marginalia and its effect on the space of the artifact. Imagine the text without the colourful marginalia for a moment. The margins would be overstretched, empty and thus extremely bare. The spread of pages 344-345 is an example of where one can see the effect of the space on the body copy. Compositionally it makes the body copy shrink into the page and makes the upper and lower marginal space more noticeable. It becomes a liminal space of expectation without return. One may

argue that due to cost and affordances this amount of space is unusual. Page grammage and space would not be wasted in a real print run and thus the margins don't align with the ontology of the storyworld. We obviously know that this is affordance made to begin to compose the extensive marginal notes (Berman, n.d.), however when one looks at it from the perspective of the artifact it speaks to a hybrid-making choice that became a necessity. The margins are one of the material functionalities that bend to take on the hybrid reality.

On the handwriting and margins, Lauren Nathan, a Melcher Media editor noted "It took us a little while to figure out how to get the handwriting to fit," (Berman, n.d.). Two people at Melcher wrote out all the handwritten comments on tracing paper, Nathan explained. All of this was scanned and placed in the computer (*ibid.*). Berman (n.d.) interviews Paul Kepple, principal, and designer at two-man studio Headcase Design, who was responsible for crafting the look and feel of the book. Kepple noted that "Sometimes if a line bumped, it would actually force that handwritten comment that goes with it on to the next page ...to avoid continuously going back and forth, we had to lock down the *Ship of Theseus* printed book before diving in for the final handwriting [placement]." The layering system how we must carefully consider the ways in which **S.** holds itself together. It speaks to a hybrid system that hold multiple media identities at once, that by proximity begin to influence each other (refer to Figure 0.4).

Textures and handwriting

S. is filled with textural artefacts and aberrations, that is, it uses changes in 'surface' consistencies and patterns to imply uniqueness to the artifact. It is surprising to the ocular senses that there is so much variation in detail but somewhat almost expected of a work that strives for an ontological realism. Each page is yellowed, stained, and seemingly worn from aging, the cover is printed on Arlin, an imitation cloth (Berman, n.d.) and even the marginalia seem to have a certain feel of different pens. Fjellestad (2019:44) notes that "the mimicry of wear and tear be viewed as a sly strategy of creating a (faux) 'uniqueness effect'." This adds to the artifactuality, its badge of historical 'authenticity'. Fjellestad (2019:45) continues:

...stains, scratches, and ruptures are tangible manifestations of the material having been – at times roughly – handled. Employed to authenticate the tactile physicality of the fictional world, "smudged" script and stains intensify the sense of materiality, become markers of a specific time and place, individualize characters, and conjure up a sense of their singularity

The many singularities of stains and grains come together striving for imitation and speak to artifact haunted by a history we cannot access. This is perhaps interesting in the sense that the stains are a mystery we cannot take apart or align to specific identifiers other than age and handling. But some don't quite align to the realistic textural histories that we know of. The cover for example does not quite match the cloth texture that is printed on it. Two of the ephemera, newspapers⁶² are not

⁶² **S.**, page 33 and 257

printed on newsprint, the largely wood pulp low-cost paper of the newspaper's mass medium. Perhaps this is being picky but again it begs the question of where the line of simulating the realism stretches especially as to go far as printing on thick tissue paper for the map that is included on a table napkin.

Another notion of textural quality that can be seen in the artefact is the handwriting. Neef and Van Djick (2006:9) note that "handwriting is traditionally regarded as an autography, an un-exchangeable unique and authentic 'signature' that claims to guarantee the presence of an individual writer during a historically unique moment of writing" Handwriting is also an aesthetic category that we will uniquely associate with manual craft: from calligraphy to urban graffiti, from tattooing to signing, the physical human hand is pivotal in the production of letters and texts. (*ibid.*:8) Ghosal (2019) has extensively analysed the spatial orientation and multimodal significance of handwriting within **S.** but here I will mention it as part of the textural qualities of the work, as individualized and patterned sequence that becomes texture on in the margins to its extensiveness. The stylistic choices of Eric and Jen's handwriting 'actors', whomever Melcher Media cast for the handwriting, contrasts the rigidity of the typographic and editorial elements of the *Ship of Theseus* body copy. Together both layers blend instances of semiotic and signifying identities. One is linguistic and phonetic patterned information, and one is stylized and personified.

A note of the materiality of the digital version

Melcher Media's website notes that following publication of the book, they had the opportunity to produce an e-book version of the story. A choice that was made was to give readers "...the ability to turn the handwriting on or off, so they could read the novel on its own or with the added notes in the margins." (Melcher Media, n.d.) They also note that they "...made the ephemera interactive - tapping on an item allows you to move it on the page or turn it over to examine it in detail." (*ibid.*) This is slightly problematic to the artifactuality and experience of the work of **S.** The physical version's layering of storyworld could not be taken apart at all, leaving the reader to choose which way they waded through the complexities of the artifact. In the digital version the ritual of use has been changed and so thus the experience of the analogue will be as well. Perhaps we must acknowledge that the digital version exists for accessibility and cannot completely replicate the analogue experience of the artifact. As Jensen (2016:7) notes the digital computer represents a third degree of medium, or what has been referred to as a 'metamedium' (Kay & Goldberg, 1999 as cited in Jensen, 2016). The implication is that different media can be reproduced and recombined on the same technological or material platform. We see this within **S.** as ephemera represents different kinds of physical media that have been remediated into a work of multiple media typologies and identifying characteristics. This is perhaps why **S.** has often been contrasted as digital (Wocke; 2014; Tanderup, 2017; Gibbons, 2017) despite its intentions to be analogue. We know that without digital technology and programs (for example, Berman, n.d. shows the technical specificities that were used in **S.**'s production) the conception of **S.** as a mass produced by experimental experience would not be possible and it would be relegated to an artist book or art object. Tanderup (2017:148) notes that the arrival of digital media makes it possible to question the status and function of the printed book. The nature of digital work has allowed us to contrast and reflect on what has come before it. In a way **S.** acts an archive or timeline of possibility where we can witness the transitory nature of media to blend, change and activate itself.

PART 3.3 ANALYSIS

SCRIPT; EXPERIENCE**AND THOUGHTS ON THE ONTOLOGY OF LINEAR SPAGHETTI**

Lastly, I will speak to script and experience in my quest to pin down the structure of **S.** as a case study. In the early explorations of my dissertation, I came towards the conclusion that design and its subsequent production may affect the ways in which we interpret hybridity in texts due to my first interactions with the case study. When I interrogated the work, it was unlike anything I had come across before. My conscious navigation of the text was first dazzled and delighted by the ephemera and the unique approach to representing personality and narrative voice through the handwriting of characters⁶³. However, this conscious interrogation was also led by my own structural and practical knowledge of how this may have been designed. I found myself hyperaware of the mechanisms in place that were working the unit towards a grand semiotic intention. When the production choices are used as the lens to understand interpretation, it places an emphasis on the way the product has been scripted and architected for its reader-audience or the potential actor⁶⁴. It became useful and curious to think this way, as the structural histories of the book (that is, materiality which represented a system of logic) was creating the very space in which new kinds of meaning were being made. As I struggled to align two paradigms (what I knew or could assume of production and well as what literary theory illuminated) I found myself continually intrigued by what this case study was doing. For me as a reader viewing the text from this perspective, the ‘how’ or the ways in which the potential chains of logic seemed to take precedent over the ‘what’, the content of the narrative was something to note.

As the novel’s hybrid media identities pervade the structure of the literary work, one must begin to interpret from the starting point of the physical layout. The double narrative alongside the ephemera allows one to perceive the layers of the story and communication concurrently (See Part 0.2). The two narratives and multiple inserts vie for the reader’s attention. In this way the engagement may feel spontaneous as one actively must make choices on how to read the narrative and in what order. The excitement one feels to explore the *Ship of Theseus*’ narrative is increased by Eric and Jen’s

⁶³ I feel it must be noted that the visually of the ephemera should not be underestimated in terms of experience. The attention to production detail, the intent to simulate real world ephemera and media creates a feeling of a real-world ontology that not many multimedial or transmedial experiences do.

⁶⁴ The reader-audience can also be an actor. The two terms both imply roles that can be inhabited but the agency of the roles is different. The reader-audience consumes (and is also the market where the product is going), but the actor participates. The actor may also follow the underlying script of a text, that is the set of actions inferred upon actor to complete the text. This goes beyond the rituals of use, in a choose your own adventure novel for example this will be a “turn to page (n)” indication. In **S.** for example the script is derived from Eric and Jen whose active voices imply that the reader-audience can find answers in different places of the work, leaving the reader-actor to actively pursue this.

side-by-side narrative conversations about its content and their drive to solve the mysteries of the author's life. The eclectic immaculately produced ephemera add a layer of complexity to Eric and Jen's quest and give the multimodal (and sometimes transmedial⁶⁵) narratives a sense of real-world weight. We must not forget how it is strongly suggested by the translator that the book is encoded with answers and so the characters search for them, taking the reader along too.

What happens from this is that it feels as if the plot is pushing towards a narrative truth, however the structure of the information we (as readers) are given to work with often leads you away from them. Each aspect – whether the *Ship of Theseus* narrative, Eric and Jen's margin notes or the physical ephemera inserted amongst the pages - can potentially complicate or enhance the reading experience of the narrative. The reader is then tasked whether- and which aspects to take and read, explore, and consume. Nothing is explicit unless the meta-authors (J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst) have dictated it to be so, this can be seen in some of the repeated signifiers and motifs which become potential instigators of a journey one can take within the novel. Others, we as readers, audience and actors take on, knowing that some mystery (though what the nature of this is, we do not always know) lays within the lines of text, notes, and ephemera before us. It is the very nature of **S.**, as an artifact that enhances the idea that it is evidence of something that has passed, it stands as a kind of unlockable testament to the experiences of the characters and the reality it represents. I found the process of reading **S.** almost cyclic in my need to reassess every word, every visual queue and piece of evidence. As Wocke (2014:7) notes "This forms part of the structural displacement at work within the text – we come to doubt the integrity of *Ship of Theseus* through the marginal notes, which furthermore sensitize us to a number of parallel narratives at work within the integrated text". My own reaction to the engagement with the book turned from curiosity and determination to frustration. I felt like it was playing a game with me, one that I could never win. As a reader who was attempting to understand the mystery as a puzzle that could be deconstructed; its suggestions, flirtations of accessibility to the narrative truth bothered me. This book felt like a determined, impeccably tangled knot that could not be undone.

Due to the complexity of the artifact, **S.** plays on many semiotic resources and conventions and this creates many different shades and potential lines of meaning. Considering this, its mystery and ambiguity stand out. These two aspects subconsciously frame the work in a way that keep it from collapsing. That is, in terms of it's the semiotic identities at play, the work only offers information that can bend enough to fit into the hybridity and the work's storyworld. One can ask if this limitation has any adverse effects. Perhaps none that are detrimental to the work itself, however it may mean that all conceivable possibilities will not always be readily available. It becomes a shaping mechanism for

⁶⁵ See Gibbons, 2017

the book, and in this case, it leaves open ended possibilities to relieve the pressure compounded by its body's form. This is why one must investigate these open-ended ambiguities on their own rather than being part of the artifact and the active experience. One must activate these mysteries to achieve their experience, and this creates an event of meaning-making. One mediates one's own immersion here and transmediality is hinted and suggested at within the main artifact⁶⁶. We know that it exists, but one actively must search or engage in it progressing outside of the book. The book in this way almost creates a liminal space of play where a hybrid saturation has been achieved so anything else that works with it needs to exist outside the work. The work floats between nostalgia and collapse point when you place it terms of potential and possible concreteness of the narrative truth.

I bore a frustration that I could not achieve the absolute narrative truth in this work. I slowly realized this frustration came out of the lens I had engendered to use at the beginning, giving precedence to the structures, and the ability to follow it, rather than value of the multimedial holistic form it represented itself as. What was interesting however, is how this opened the novel for a different kind of interrogation. I have already made note in a previous chapter about rituals of use (Aarseth, 1994) and from this we can understand that we come to an object or artifact through a culture of practice. That is, we read texts with the knowledge that the content we are engaging and activating, is situated within its chosen medium. The media type (the 'book' in the case of **S.**) applies its own structures upon the content. Wocke (2014) pays particular attention to the structure of **S.** and the ways in which the work decentres aspects of the debate surrounding the book. He suggests that the decentred narrative structure and its use of the margin can be understood in terms of Derrida's essay *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*. Particularly the idea of the narrative structure holding a centre. He quotes Derrida:

The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure-one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the play of the structure. By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. (Derrida, 2001: 352 as cited in Wocke, 2014: 4-5)

⁶⁶ One could perhaps argue that the multimodality and extent of analogue ephemera is transmedial, but here I am suggesting the media that is beyond the artifact – the evidence from the storyworld that exists outside the body of the text.

Using Derrida, Wocke positions **S.** as having no fixed center, but rather a function or “non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions” (Derrida as quoted in *ibid.*: 353) can exist. With “the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences” (Derrida as quoted in *ibid.*: 354), and thus rather it can be seen as a result of the play between these differences (Wocke, 2014). Thus, we can appreciate the joy in the experimentation and playfulness of a work this complex, in both its structure and intense attention to aesthetic style in its production. Yet, its connection to its form, its medium it is impacted by its need to reflect and simulate conventions of its boundaries, its structure - the book. It needs a limiting framework that to make sure it does not collapse when one attempts to activate it. Thus, the extent of the playfulness and experimentation may be hindered by the fact that intends to hold itself to the conventions of its form. It works hard to make itself believable as an artifact and a book, implying narratively that the story-world could, potentially exist. Its multi-narrative and decision to apply many structural conventions to its single, artifactual body (i.e., the idea of a ‘book’), begins to subvert the cultures of reading and communication that are ritualized and conventional. This creates a hybrid formation however there is a war here between the power structures and ‘playfulness’ of the world it creates. It bounds itself without noting itself doing so.

Looking at the work through a design and production lens does bring with it certain useful opportunities. We begin by placing the text between its design (its creation and intent) and the experiences it begins to circulate with its reader-audience. It creates a transient map or aerial view from which we can view the body and conception of a text. This will take us from its concept to its functional systems and ending at a place where we can decide its intent (and possibly look at if it has been fulfilled). We can here understand structure and within it the script, the architecture of a work and its implications. Although the structure may imply something immovable, it is important to understand it as something rather like streams and movement. What we look at in the system is the pathways and directions of its flow. In creative work such as texts we look for hierarchies and order in the relationships of these paths and whether there are levels or boundary lines that will imply meaning.

Looking for order or orders in a system may also be supported by the concept of Media Archaeology. In Jussi Parikka’s and Erkki Huhtamo’s expansion on the subject, *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (2011:10) they refer to Siegfried Zielinski’s concept of media research in which they felt that media archaeology “in a pragmatic perspective means to dig out secret paths in history, which might help us to find our way into a future”. Particularly, Huhtamo’s noted media archaeology approach within the text also is applicable and resonates with my own conception of **S.** as it seeks familiarity in the cultural object of the book and its ephemera. Huhtamo

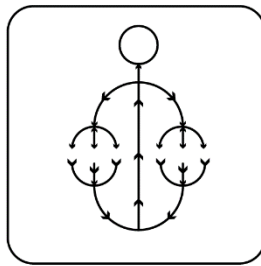
attempts to pin down the idea of media archaeology by applying the concept of *topos*. This approach "...eschews 'the new,' which is so often the focus of media-cultural discourses...instead, it emphasizes the clichéd, the commonplace, and 'the tired...' (*ibid*:14). The idea that underpins this is that we must understand how media culture relies on the already known and determine how it embodies and promotes the never before seen (*ibid*). Parikka and Huhtamo note in the introduction that these concepts relate to each other; "the new is 'dressed up' in formulas that may be hundreds of years old, while the old may provide 'molds' for cultural innovations and reorientations." (Parikka & Huhtamo, 2011). This resonates with the ways in which **S.** remixes specific analogue forms to create something more akin to a work that has digital contexts and structures. Also, even though we seek newness in experimentation, we often find ourselves leaning on the boundaries or finding the impressions left by the strata of the old, and this affects the decisions and root systems we engender to use.

My early explorations aimed to understand how the boundaries of the book's form impact the ways in which experimentation was capable of being held within the artifact. This ultimately inspired my thesis statement '**creative hybridity is a boundary making event**' as the histories and similarities within an artifact are what holds it from collapsing. If one looks at boundaries as part of structure it is akin to lines or peaks in the shifting sand or clash of where forms test the boundary of another and thus identify themselves. Boundaries do not have to be drawn lines, but as Heidegger notes can be where forms start their "presencing" (2001)⁶⁷ This is where we see interesting interactions take place. The impact of the relationship between the structure-making nature of the content and script may expose the nature of experimental communication and how it can occur in media artifacts and in new ways. We know that the book as 'form' is the vehicle for the content, that which drives the experience of **S.** and its overarching concept. This is potentially opposed and contrasted to typical literary works where the concept-story imposes structure on the narrative⁶⁸. I wished to see if one takes the narrative from its disseminated physical form, from its context and boundary, if it still existed in the same way. In the case of **S.** as a product of experimentation, this could potentially show how it could be used to inform creative multimediality as well as integrate existing technological forms into media and communication experimentation that have cultural status. From the perspective of production, it also shows the emphasis of the visual tangible form as well as what technology can do to impact grand narrative intention and meaning and make it accessible to all.

One of my early explorations in attempt to pin down the structure of the text was to think about non-linearity as a possible structural implication of **S.** I tried to map it, to see if there are consequences to

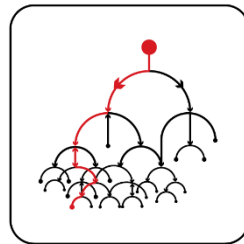
⁶⁷ See Part 2 for the full quote

⁶⁸ That is, where the content of the story takes precedent over the way the body of the work exists. The book exists deliver the story, where in a specimen like **S.**, the story supposedly exists because of the book.



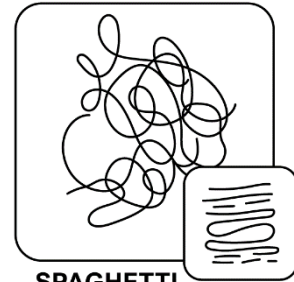
CIRCULATORY

Choices are seemingly random;
always circulates back to an origin
point or grandnarrative



INTERACTIVITY. DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN IT IS NON-LINEAR

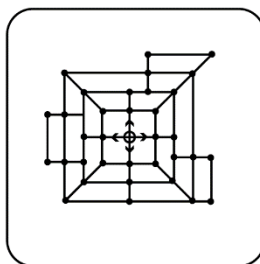
Even if one has choice, it is still
one directional. This is can be
debated, however.



SPAGHETTI

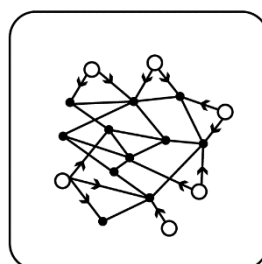
Looks random at the outset,
however strands overlay one
another, not necessarily
connective. Potentially
transmedial - relies on
associations, rather than true
narrative connections

FIGURE 3.1. Visual permutations of structure. I postulate that circulatory structures are often seen in game narratives and Tree structures are similar to choose your own adventure novels. Spaghetti, although an eccentric name, is what I originally postulated structure of **S.** to look like



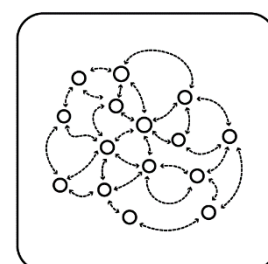
RADIAL SCALING

Narrative has a central starting
point and be transversed by
choosing any direction, even
returning to a starting point. Can
this have an endpoint or does it
end when actor decides to? How
is the direction determined?



NON-RADIAL SCALING

a starting point that can never be
returned to. If it has a starting
point, does that mean it has to
have an end point? When/where
would it end?



TRUE NONLINEARITY(?)

Or is it action that creates
connection? No Beginning, no
endpoint closes the system.
Cannot be influenced externally?

FIGURE 3.2. Visual permutations of structure. These however are not necessarily connected to actual examples but are explorations of possible structures of non-linearity. They were considered through visual exploration first, understanding non-linearity through Aarseth's Essay of Non-linearity in Literary Theory (1994)

visually laying out the nature and notions of structure. As I briefly mentioned above visual mapping allows for one to see the system holistically from an 'aerial', observer point of view. If we could learn something from the spatio-visual relationships being engendered here, this could allow me to understand the structure as a narrative organism. For example, in Figure 3.1.2. I learned that interactivity is not truly non-linear as it does follow a linear trajectory, even if there are many to choose from. Early on, I envisioned **S.**'s structure through the metaphor of spaghetti or noodles in a bowl (Figure 3.1.3). The strings of narrative give an illusion to multiple pathways, but it is illusion of

strings overlayed over each other. **S.** flirts with the idea of a mystery which is compounded due to meta-narration of Eric and Jen's notes as well as the artifact book that they are using as the shell and storage of their investigation. As I mentioned, perhaps there was a bias in my own desire to see how the mystery unfolded, or at least find the grand semiotic intention of the author-creators in the finality of their creation⁶⁹, what it's intended presentation meant. I concluded that there may be none in terms of finality of the structure. The structure itself may exist in state of reader-activated movement, that keeps the end nodes and empty suggestions of truth from being perceived as finished. But without the context-boundary of the story and the artifact, it is not completable, and the illusion of the story-experience may fall apart.

Even if we look at the colours⁷⁰ used in the handwriting marginalia of **S.** it may look nonlinear, but due to the nature of the artifact it exists in, I argue it is not. Again, we see the medium or technology curate the structural possibilities of experimentation. The culture or ritual of the book is to page through from start to end, the coloured writing even if it reflects, overlaps and plays on other moments of marginalia, there are processes and phases of time seen in the phasing of colour, so it cannot possibly be truly non-linear (Figure 3.2.3). The colours appear in a particular order and appear with a phased frequency.

Even if my own postulation around structures is limited (because there will always be exception), there were still interesting moments that can be drawn from the metaphor. Just as if one took the spaghetti out of a bowl, it would lose its context of a plate of food, when one took the strings or spaghetti (the narrative beats) out of the context of the boundary or bowl (the artifact of the book) it loses its defining quality of a story experience. The book no longer stands as an artifact of the narrative reality, and one does not get the experience of actively paging through it with the characters of Eric and Jen who are discovering and experiencing the story as we go along. The artifact stands as the rule system or predicates itself on its ritual of use for the story to be activated. Thus, the ontology of the storyworld of **S.** and its ability to be activated and read can be argued to be founded on the materiality and nature of the artifact. This is specific to a hybrid structural form, one that contains many histories and pathways. It must rely on something that can solidify it. If it is not the center of the structure then it is the boundaries of its choosing, whether these are the most external or ones that slice through the spaces of play to contextualize. All in all, we must acknowledge the importance of structure and how we are able to follow it. Structure is unique and can be changing but it is ultimately skeleton or exoskeleton which we must all fall within or along.

⁶⁹ How otherwise do you deem the work finished? Even if it is an example of Eco's 'open work' as Wocke (2014) postulates, in terms of the production, in terms of its semiotic intention where does one say stop?

⁷⁰ Shipman (2015) places that there are 5 different 'passes' through the book noted by the different colours Eric and Jen use to write in the margins.

Thus, this concludes my exploration of the substance of the book. Together the author, artifact, script, and experience all work together to engage and perform the idea of the text. Together these can be broken down and used to reflect different facets of its inner workings, different points of referencing in the map of its literary position. I have used these positions to explore hybridity and attempt to reflect my thesis statement. From this point onwards I reflect upon the exploration I have pursued and expand on the nature of thesis statement and research position.

PART 4.1

REFLECTING ON AND FURTHERING THE CONCEPT OF THE BOUNDARY EVENT

Hybridity is a concerning term and it is problematic when in creative production and its analysis without recognizing the effects and implications of its histories. This is especially pertinent to notice when one is dealing with or reflecting on institutional power and attitudes that are premised on acknowledging purity of lineages or types. I am specifically using the term creative hybridity here to convey a produced and performed activating phenomenon where two (or more) inherently different, bounded types are mixed, specifically to reflect on the relationship and interplay of both⁷¹. To reiterate my proposed thesis, creative hybridity is boundary-making where the forms and functions of the engaged types pull upon the boundaries of chosen types to stabilize itself. The space in play which results from this can be seen as a third space (See Bhabha, 1994) but it is the nature of this space, the push and pull of it, the way it draws its energy that is so intriguing. Akin to two hands moving to cup water, the substance of or the space being defined is one of fluidity, changing or ambiguity, and importantly rippling⁷². It is here that the substance being shaped echoes and blends the natures of its two (or more) types that are holding it in place. It is when it cannot exist without the support structure or at least an osmotic membrane (that allows recognition and playfulness of forms), is what I am attempting to describe as hybridity. If rules exist, they do so to assist in performativity of reflection.

The experimental thesis statement '**creative hybridity is a boundary-making event**' implies that mixing a set of forms or types creates a space of intersection, a byproduct of which is patterns of boundary-making and constraints. This is an active space where two or more lineages are moving towards each other. It is here that (re)iteration or aberration is experienced and performed as they collide into each other's spaces. The significance of creative, produced hybridity is its intention. There is an intended purpose and a value set, a design intent which demands stability. As we are speaking of creative, produced hybridity, it is important to note that it is not determined how or where this happens unless deemed so by its author-producer. The bounded space of play is determined and solidified by the author-producer's design intent. The consequence of the way this works is that the hybrid text will always become a reflection of an objective and thus a boundary will appear. It is how it binds itself to form. The patterns of the bounded or 'presencing' limits help the forms find their threshold, using it as foundation, the boundary to echo or ripple from and thus mimic form. This becomes recognition, and this leads to stability. Too many forms create too many boundaries which need to be opened and collapse may occur. Alternatively, when the space of play, the third space, the place of intersection does not have a solidified body or an untransmutable pillar or center to hold on to, the experimentation or iteration cannot survive either. This is because performs its identity in recognition of its history of lineages, or at least leans on these, whether materially or structurally.

⁷¹ I note in Part 2 – 'Intermission' that "In terms of creativity and production it may be the case that naming an activity as hybrid, is a deliberate action to engage the nature of identity and the cultural products created by it."

⁷² Rippling is mimicry.

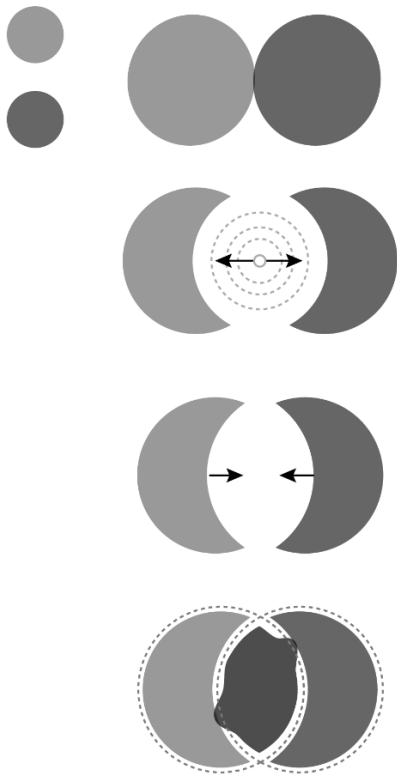


FIGURE 4.1 A HYBRIDITY 'EVENT' 'The first iteration.

This patterning or action of recognition or reflection in hybrid media spaces is one that can be seen in the study of media. Critical study of media emphasizes form (here being technology and affordances), ritual of use and the limitations of such a way that describes functionality and intent first. In analysis we do not define media from the narrative experience first but rather focus on the media system and then its ability to communicate. This means that media and its analysis may be premised or geared upon lineages of types. That is, we keep media segregated in their media types or genres and acknowledge these histories and affordances when mixing and remediating occurs. Is it not hybridity of forms when we watch intermediality being taken up as a means of analysis? The use of the term hybridity is problematic yes, but it does give one the opportunity to speak to the power of institutions, its limitations and the opportunistic spaces upon which we engage in playfulness of forms. Hybridity as term should not be used to portray creativity only, but the relationships, patterns, and phenomena of blending to reflect upon the bounded typologies it uses.

As I attempted my analysis of my four components that I felt made up the nature of the case study (the Author, the Artifact, the Script, and Experience) I began to ask myself whether this was enough to prove my original thesis statement. It was important to explore my case study as it was foundation and inspirational for some of the experiences that lead me to my thesis. It spoke to hybridity and boundedness, how institutional power especially seen in media types inhibits true playfulness. But it felt something was missing. A conclusive element of how this tied back to the thesis statement. At the time I was looking back at how I positioned structure and some of the suggestions I had made experimentally to how hybridity worked.

My initial suggestions were that a hybridity event worked as follows. This can be seen in Figure 0.4 that is reproduced here as Figure 4.1. My note on this was that it was a 'hybridity event':

A new space comes into existence by desire to create the space. This intersectionality draws on precedent or history of forms for power. It pulls what it can to use to build it and uses what it cannot as a means of structure for support. If it moves away from its lineages entirely it will no longer hybrid but become entirely new. The core liminal space becomes one of play and activity that tests these boundaries. It may deviate from its bounded form, but it will always return for supportive structure as it does not have its own.

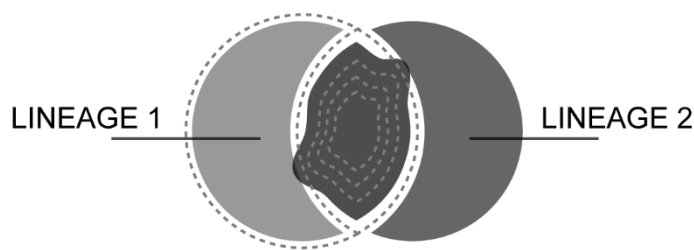


FIGURE 4.2 ACTIVATING A BOUNDARY

One thing I feel I failed to address in my experimental endeavor was the fourth moment in the 'hybrid' event (Figure 4.1), the nature of the membrane or boundary and where the substance of the hybrid play space comes from. I realize now that my conception

only speaks to hybrid spaces of play and not the boundary, performativity, or activeness that I originally imagined. I still stand by the pattern of push and pull of conception, however, the way the boundary works needs more address; how the forms of types are bent to create spaces of liminality and play through intersectionality. After accidentally playing with my original boundary lines of the illustration it led me to a completeness of the idea. The artefact, script and experience make up the text. These make up the malleable substance of text that can be experimented with. When tested or activated, these will attempt to portray information in new logical manners or experiences. Together and within the text, the substance is what hybridity will take place in and with which hybridity will imprint its reflection on. Evidence of hybridity will always exist in the outcome and substance.

One thing I have realized is that hybridity is not a structural phenomenon. It is an event of movement, play and reflection. That is, it does not make structures but influences how they work and exist. Hybridity is the reflective processes, the activities that are born from the phenomenon of intersection. In this experimental proposition of how hybridity may work in creativity spaces, creativity as we have been using it implies a directed inventiveness and thus when one intends to create hybridity, a space of play will come into existence. The space will be bounded by two (or more) lineages being engaged or activated as this is where newness and exchange of form will be drawn from. The substance of these lineages may bleed into this third space, passing through both new spaces and bouncing back to older spaces they once inhabited. That is, this will happen when they find themselves mixing in a cultural artifact or situation that has been decided upon by the intent and purpose. At the right saturation, at least one aspect of the hybrid intersection will solidify into a boundary or structure. This is inevitable as the reflective process needs something to contain itself, a vessel to participate in. This is how the boundary activates. It steps forward in the intersection of play to become the structure. This is to ensure the blending (or in our case the experimentation) will not

collapse. Again, this may be seen in creative hybridity, an artificial but deliberate intersection made with intent and purpose. This hybridity is designed. Hybridity will occur once the boundary has solidified or come into existence. This may take the form of its artefact like we have seen with **S.**; it is the book that becomes the vessel that holds the experimental histories. This lineage will be activated by the fact that it is no longer with its original lineage. It bounces from and reflects the nature of the dominant lineage creating an echo chamber. From the moment it is bounded it activates either taking on similarities to the bounded lineage (reflection back onto the dominant lineage) or it will defend itself and exemplify its differences. Either way the substance of forms become active due to hybridity and will perform reflections creating a politic of identity. In this way creative hybridity is a boundary making event.

The idea is experimental of course and it must be reiterated that the premise is creative hybridity, creatively produced and activated by an author-producer. This is essential to its conception. It is also rooted in spatio-visual thinking and metaphor. All in all, even if perhaps relegated to a thinking experiment, the idea brings value because it is exploratory and plays, even stretches a facet of hybridity. This playfulness sheds light and possibility into a trained subject matter. It is my hope that this can be built upon, proofed or taken up as a legitimated possibility, also shedding light onto potential new methods and legitimating practice as valid in bring new processes to research.

PART 4.2

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

AND OTHER STRAY THOUGHTS

In writing in the second half of my final thesis iteration I came across another anxiety:

Are you completely mad?

Not completely, maybe half. Just a little.

Am I trying to prove that something perfectly forward is reversed? Something good and epistemologically vital is twisted and switched? Am I ignorant of what has come before me?

I tell myself: I am only here to develop my ability to proof and argue.

What is simply at play here is the evidence of experiencing and pushing research boundaries.

My experiences of failing in creating and designing a hybrid method and form meant I unintentionally have spent a longer time with my dissertation and its iterations than many typically do. It means I spent longer times having conversations, digging, learning, and wading my way through research and a unique experience of its practice. I have made a lot of mistakes. I have asked extraordinarily stupid questions of theory and tried to 'Frankenstein' things in to being in the name of design. I have recoiled at angry academic faces.

Why can't I?

Because...

Because why? Because what?

I consistently find myself falling into a (perhaps a naïve) practice of asking questions of obvious things. At the outset it looks redundant, even wasteful and at times has even belittled me in eyes of others, but it has always taught me something. Truth may be subjective, but it is nothing obvious until you test the limit of it. It reveals the boundary of the thing, its nature.⁷³ It reveals the workings of its structure. I believe that is the core of this thesis and dissertation. Out the outset it may look like a wild idea, a quilt of things and experiments and practice-rooted points of view, but I believe at its core, it is about limitations and constraints and how activities react to them. It's about production, creative textual practice and how it performs itself. The idea of hybridity collapse came from my own explosion of a potential hybrid thesis structure and dissertation. Failure is my secondary methodological practice. It also teaches me the viability of ideas and their boundaries.

The work takes one not through a controlled dissertation of neatly interlocking pieces (although I wish it had worked that way), but rather a research narrative where this researcher (or theoretical explorer if you will) experienced a research story, with highs and lows, where the road was bumpy, and the journey changed courses at times. Where discoveries were made at inconvenient times but

⁷³ Is this part of the designer in me? I am not sure, but it is a methodological tool that validates the safety parameters of a paradigm.

led to interesting places. It was difficult to ignore that the experience of this research has influenced how it has been presented.

• • •

This thesis uses a mixture of voices, from the personally situated and reflective to the knowing and academically referenced. There is a vulnerability in work produced through a personhood. It has perhaps certain weaknesses, but it became important towards the end that it happened because it reflected process and the acts of research as human. It gave way to the understanding that research can be individual, and a journey of experiences and traversal as opposed to a reflection of something static. As Ralph notes (See Part 1.1 on Methodology), this may align with the ideas of reflection in action. “This is where design is a reflective dialogue between the designer and the situation. The designer alternates between framing (conceptualizing the problem), making moves (where a move is a real or simulated action intended to improve the situation) and evaluating moves (2010: section 2.2). Experience as and of research is valid. The journey of this research also echoed the fluid potentials of interaction, questioning and producing responses to engagement.

The mixture of voices concerned me at first because it means I am not presenting the work as a complete and articulated skeleton, a finished product with a static or developed chain of logic. Perhaps one can say that I am building the skeleton and articulating its bones as I go, evolving and completing the process the more I engage it. I am in a sense here articulating my practice of research. I would like to think this important because it expands on process and not just outcome. One of my intentions was to explore practice-rooted research after all. In this way I tried to show the work how I experienced it, because the work did not feel like it made sense without the story of it. As my very first sentences note “I am sensitive to the use of my position and voice in this dissertation, but I must acknowledge it. It has eroded, shattered, and remade what I attempt to create now. I apologise for any poetics when they occur.” I found it incredibly hard to explain what I was trying to do and justify its origin and relevance without expanding on the story of how the thinking came into existence. My individuality, my practice and experiences began to influence the work, and this began to invade the evidence of what I was producing. There were at least three different versions of this thesis that came before the final. Each one built upon the other. Without failing at producing research, I would not have learned something about the process. The current research would not exist without the experience of the former. Without ‘what came before’ my thesis statement would have not been engaged with.

In a sense the work is hybrid through individuality, histories, as it mixes lineages of ideas, process, intentions, and experience of research and then reflects them back to the reader to make conclusions. In terms of my thesis statement, it is bounded in a sense, perhaps to a chain of process logic (although perhaps a little eccentric) and to writing with a consistency. I do not really speak to creative practice theory extensively in this dissertation as the scope was expansive to deal with, but one can say that this dissertation falls under the idea of it. I feel that by engaging design culture and practice as part of my methodology and perspective speaks to the nature of production and reflects the collective spirit of this dissertation. It is about building and exploring potentials as well as the limits of what we can do with the parameters we are given. The experience of the research reflects intent and value while creatively engaging the practice of research and producing it.

• • •

Something I find amusing is that I drew the comic on the first page before I came realized my final thesis statement. I was frustrated at the fact that I could make something, a little out there for sure, but one that addressed multiple points of view and yet it lacked recognition, lacked validity without a point of reference. I could shout “but I made something new!” but without a boundary, a reference and known structure (epistemological or physical) to fall back on, it didn’t mean much. It would not be validated in the eyes of others, or those who hold the key to theoretical validity. But it also meant that communicatively, it lacked direction to anyone that may come across it. Ultimately it must mean something, hold value in a new way but mostly it must reflect back on what has come before it. The comic scrawled in 30 minutes, eventually became a part of my final iteration.

• • •

This leads me to a question that I may have not answered clearly enough, but I found it difficult to find a place to do so.

Why hybridity and *not* multimodality?

As I noted in the preamble and concept section, part of my research practice was going back and revising things I had I thought I had resolved, to make sure I understood not only the content but the consequences of it. I have stated that my early readings (Wocke, 2014; Tanderup, 2017 for example) referred to or used the definition of ‘hybrid’ to discuss the case study. This is ultimately what began the narrative of where I began to work with my experimental thesis statement. However, I do not mention that there were other writers that used the safer (or perhaps more appropriate) term ‘multimodal literature’. The thesis statement however was born from conversations around hybridity and my incidental stumbling onto its history and why it matters. This means that I landed up specifically wanting to work with the idea of hybridity to see where it could take me and what I could do with it (Part 0.1 deals with this).

But there are also other reasons now that I reflect on it. Much of my work and practice is rooted in constructive thinking and producing. This meant that I looked at structural elements first and the implications of semiotic resources secondary. It is a way of thinking and acting that has influenced my approach to this research. I have hopefully attempted a half decent analysis of my case study from a production and structured center point. It has become a kind of subplot to my dissertation that I have used a particular means of thinking through things, which has also influenced the creation of my thesis statement. I feel that I have actively positioned the use of word in a way that acknowledges that it speaks to identity politics and is not just a hollowed-out synonym for creative blending.

It also opened a more forgiving space where I could speak to a narrative and media type identities (media genres or products) which was potentially bigger, more encompassing than only semiotic modes inhabiting my case study. It meant I could discuss a phenomenon, a situation and experimentation on a bigger scale that may be applied to different situations rather than just the case

study alone. Perhaps this was bold and brash of me to try but I *wanted* to try. I wanted to add something, bring something new to the table of research practice. If it wrong of me to do so it still factors. Because it leaves evidence of something that did not work, shedding light onto a space where we do not need to go anymore because it is understood.

• • •

Another thing that is perhaps important to acknowledge is the limitations of scope. Can this practically be applied to other media, studies, or structural systems? I think it could be. However, there is one caveat I must acknowledge. The thesis statement “**creative hybridity is a boundary-making event**” came from the experience of potential hybridity collapse...that expending too much energy into a transitory third space, an unhardened body. The original ‘failed’ experiment did not garner understanding because it lacked strong enough scripting boundaries to keep itself stable. What I learned from the experience of this dissertation and experimentation is that the case study is an extreme example of this thesis’s version of hybridity. It packs itself to the brim with semiotic resources leaving it to brush up against and put pressure on the planes of semiotic understanding, thus performing a boundary event. It resonates and solidifies its boundaries to protect itself from collapsing. It builds until it brushes up against its boundary knowing that to go beyond it, its concept will collapse. Thus, it is an unusual and yet severe example of creative hybridity. I feel that many motions of hybridity may use hybrid boundaries in different ways. They will reflect upon where they came from and where they are drawing energy to perform a concrescence, but there may not be this extreme sense of boundaries being limitations to the creative process.

PART 4.3

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The scope of this study was born from an experience of attempting to create hybrid methodologies and structures. This was to be performed with design thinking and design theory in mind, which was inspired by my own cognitive practices and histories that favored visuality. As I attempted to design or engineer something with a new kind of structure, I came across difficulties in communicating with simplicity and clarity. I learned that hybridity or the act of intersecting multiple paradigms and thought processes may fail when there is not a boundary or bounded form to perform a structural framework for the newness to be applied. As I noted early on, one cannot see all things all at once. From this I came to an understanding that hybridity may collapse when there is no framework to reflect on the histories of forms. This seemingly became important as the recognition allows for the audience to understand the cultures of its performance, its rituals of use.

Thus, two goals bloomed from my experimentation. The first was the attempt to use design, graphic design, and visual communication to explore a case study of literature deemed to be 'hybrid'. The component of design was important because it was constructive and structural and spoke to intent. It aimed to explore if there was direct intended meaning at the production level rather than wading through semiotic possibilities and connotations of the outcome to discover this. It was also experimental in the sense that it was using practice-rooted potentials and construction to add to the cannon of other paradigms of analysis. Although the information garnered isn't wildly new or different, it does position it from a different perspective. This gives it validity and legitimacy to other forms and possible styles of research as it still worked to produce an understanding of the evidence and content. The analysis was split into four components, the author for focalization, the artifact for materiality and the script and experience for structure. These elements were seen to be the substance of the book's form where hybridity left an imprint or impression within.

The second goal was to explore the experimental thesis statement **"Creative Hybridity is a boundary-making event"**. This was what was surmised by and after the idea of hybridity collapsing without boundaries. As I note in the preamble and concept (Part 0.1):

The concept is that hybridity will stop iterating itself to be recognized, as unrestrained growth cannot be sustained. Hybridity can be posited as space where more than one lineage can be maintained, and this is only possible by specific structures. Here it will be posited that these unique structures through process engender themselves to sustain it.

I came to realize that hybridity is not structural but rather the phenomenon or activities of intersection. Boundaries allow for a 'sounding board' or place where echoes can be acknowledged rather than haunting the texts or forms that it intends to engage.

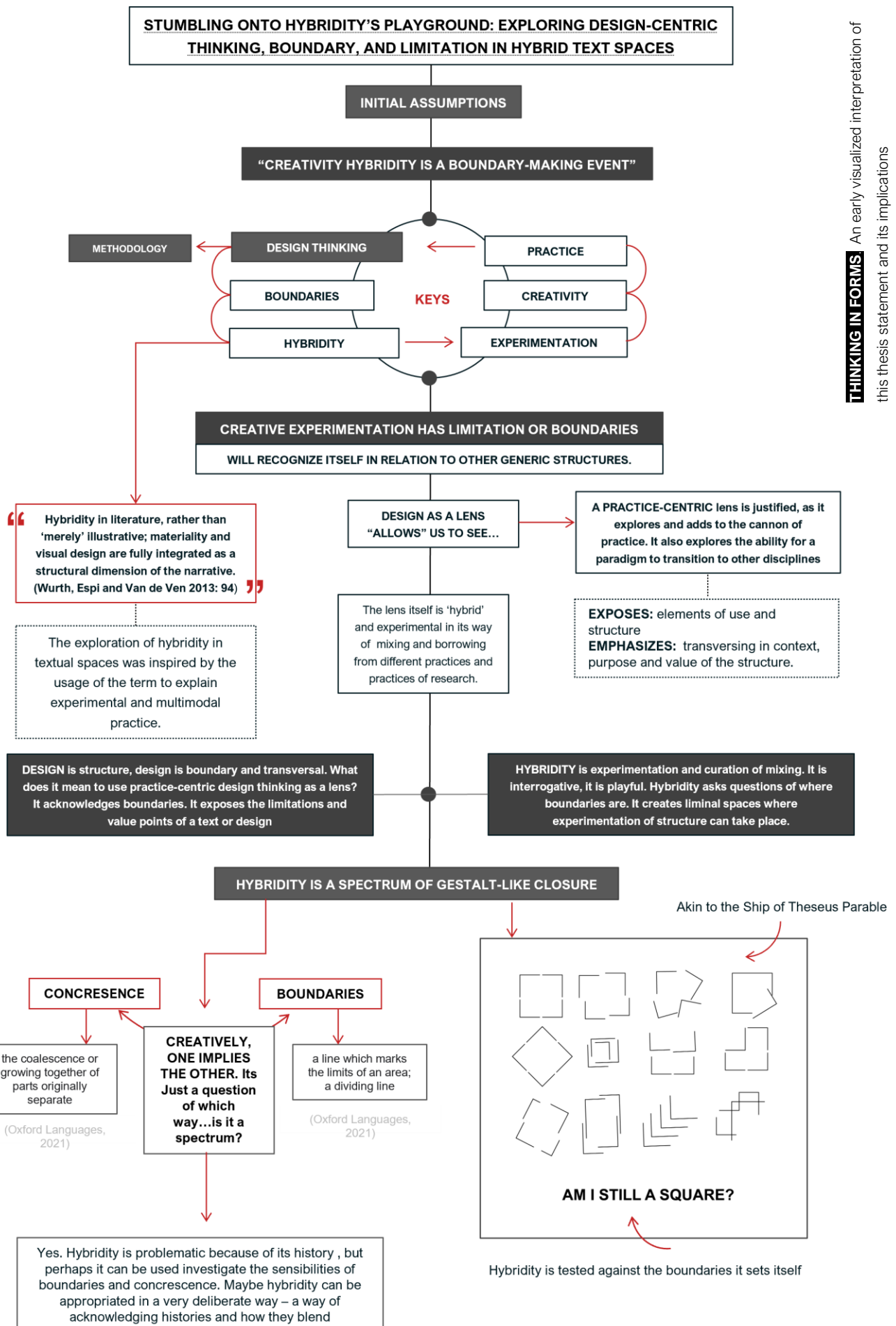
Lastly, I must make a note of the nature of the experimentation. The initial assumptions of this dissertation proposed a thesis statement **"Creative Hybridity is a boundary-making event"** which was specifically positioned as experimental. I cannot stress enough that although my language speaks with a style of knowing when speaking to the thought experiment, it is exploring potentials rather than attempting to state them outright as correct. I had to choose a voice that spoke surely to not undermine myself and the validity of the exploration. The research could be said to be a mixture of deductive and inductive (see Part 1.1) in reasoning. Although it attempts to be specific in the way it goes about proving itself, the narrative of the research searches and shows learning as it goes, providing specificities when they have been discovered rather than the other way around of being specific first and then expanding. The research was not intended to be set out this way but came about from its experimentation in thinking and practice.

I feel the research has value in a specific facet. It asks questions of theory and interpretive studies but in the realm of using it in practice. It bases itself off the premise of the phenomena occurring when in practice of intent or design. It shows the potentials for research and theory to be applied to creative practice and vice versa. Where the research may lack (because of its experimental nature) is the potential to be further proven by expanding its scope of evidence.

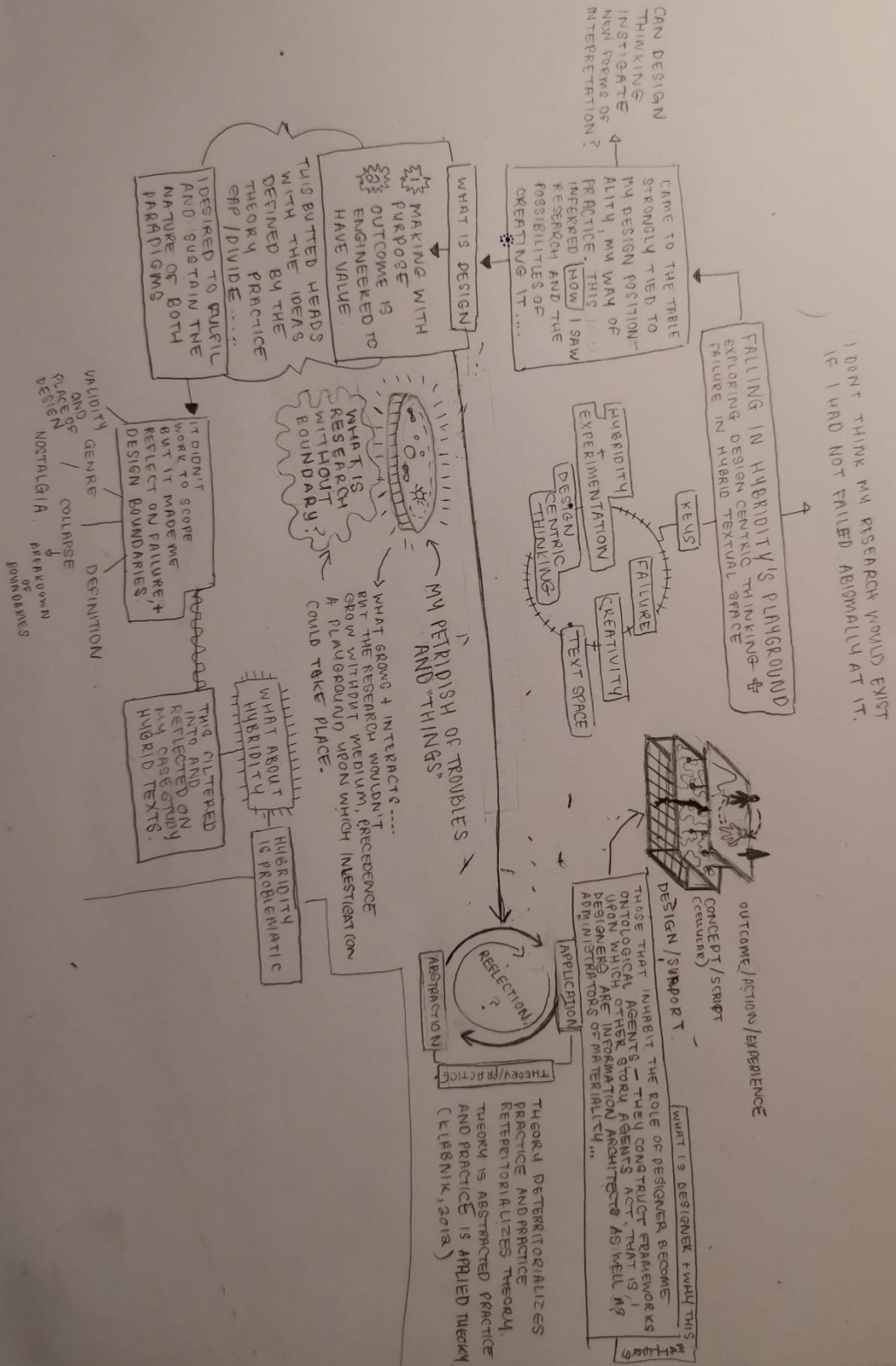
This was an incredibly hard and alienating experience, leaving me to doubt what I have done and its validity. I want to just reiterate that **this dissertation is experimental** and should not be seen as attempting to wash away or ignore seminal theory or conventions of practice. It has attempted to explore theoretical ideas in a new way to see what can happen when one takes a theoretical notion outside its comfortable syntactical context. It has also relied on pictorial descriptions and visual permutations to do this. This has shown, if not a validity in doing so, then a power in visuality's ability to create new meaning from its processes of spatial contextualization when applied to theory. In conclusion I feel that whether you actively engage in the thesis statement and acknowledge it or if you feel it is unusable or incorrect, it has still achieved something. It has shown an expansion on the limits or boundary to where a theory can be taken and explored.

Appendix

Residues of Experimentation



THINKING IN FORMS One of the many mind maps I used to think my way through the thesis



I have a fascination with media and information architecture. I have an obsessive need to learn and understand the workings of the world around me. I do not know why, but I think this stems from deep-seated anxieties of finding myself unable to communicate and be understood. To fit into and be accepted by the system. But is it that simple, to translate knowing into replication and participation? There is something missing in between here, a strata unseen. Our social world predicated on the culture and objects of communication imply tapestries of interweaving and interlocking constructs that provide a riot of information to the reading eye.

The tapestry of communication is not of cartesian making. It flows through and within itself. As Shilina-Conte (2015, p.501) positions a kind of convergence through metaphor "...the transgressions between media are not the mere crossing over of a land border but a transformation similar to the trespassing of a maritime divide." The waters here do not adhere to the directions of our social making. It flows and connects and subsumes itself again -
What is north and south - and again -
Left, or right? - it does not speak the language of direction, only proximity -
and again.

Jenkins (2006, p.3-4) notes that the phenomena of convergence occurs within the brains of individuals consumers and through social interactions with others. Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives. I think there is something to be said in the very need to define convergence. The vastness of our knowledge exists, but it is us who hunger for definition. Communication, like a body of water separates us by its enormity and scale of malleable, moving form. The bodies of knowledge are too large for one individual to consume alone. We live in an age of transmediality, where the mediums of communication overlap and reconstitute one another. The desire to connect, to know becomes the need to control. Thus, the building of knowledge networks becomes the building of a latticework, of dams and lakes and harbors. We must know nature to form it, its magnitude is mapped and developed, wrought into the placid beast of our desire.

To know is animal, to define is human.

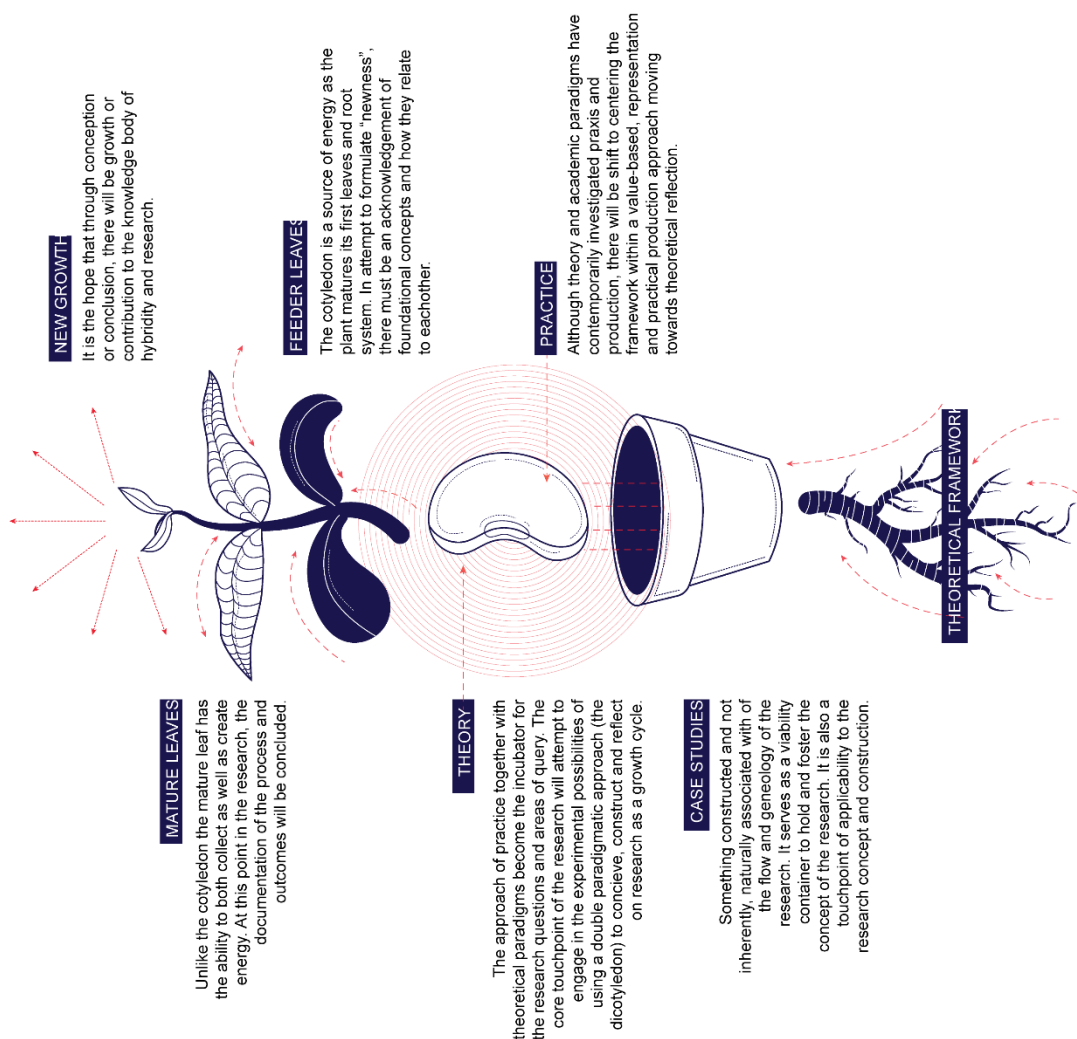
ORIGINAL THESIS DRAFT, A QUOTE. See page 45.

As I began to construct the metaphor of this hybrid approach, I had to acknowledge the context of the metaphor itself. Agriculture and Horticulture have a history of cultivation and selective breeding for desired traits. Even anomalies that are can be indicative of disease (such as variegation) and mutation are selectively bred as they are seen as visually desirable. Does hybridity equate to engineering socially constructed concepts of what is natural or correct?

The metaphor was chosen for the concept of a dicotyledon, the intention to visually represent the a core proponent of exploration - can two unrelated paradigms be used as the sum of the whole, building on itself to create new knowledge. I have to ask myself however, as the concept of the seed is a artefact of biological mechanics, does this equate to commenting on the epistemic centerpoint of what constitutes correct or 'natural' research procedure? Although a value-based approach may come with the threat of commodification and class, I do not think there is the threat of this here. In this framework, there is no centerpoint, no conception of natural and 'rightness' in experimenting and pushing the boundaries of what can be.

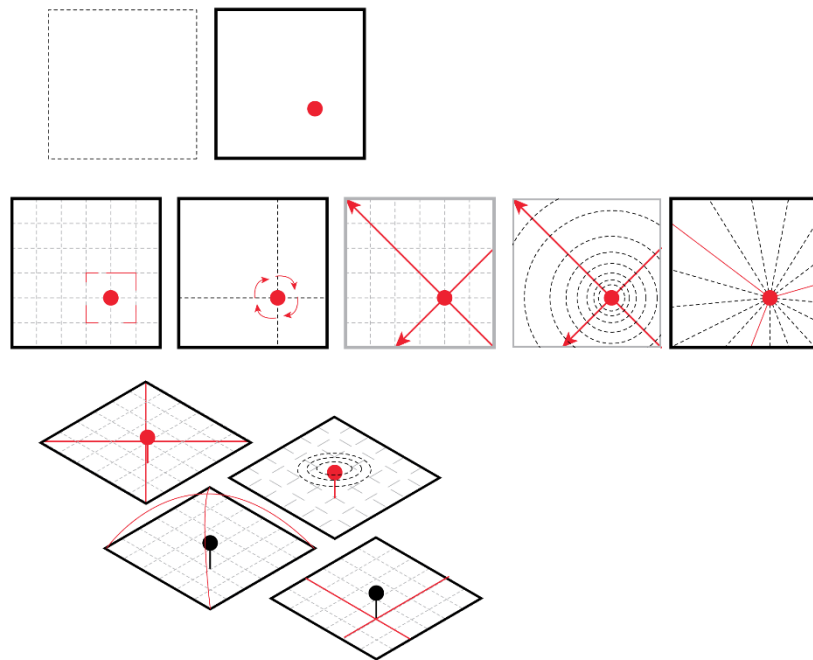
There is something refreshing positioning this project through the mechanisms of an exploratory design approach, something that speaks to hybridity itself. One can partake in hybridity by cross-pollinating two positions or compatible geneologies, but the outcome is unknown and has no ties to essentialist or dualist philosophies. There is also no need for critique as a means of classification. There is also no need to define or weight the validity of knowledge or process against another body of thought.

Even so, there must be respect for what has come beforehand.



THIS IS NOT A SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF A DICOTYLENOUS PLANT

AN ILLUSTRATION OF METHODOLOGY An illustration of a potential methodology for bridging the theory-practice gap. As I began to write on it, I realised hybridity was problematic. The quote from here was used on page 49.



7 DEC 21

SPATIAL VISUALISATION
HOW DOES HYBRIDITY WORK?

SCOPE

REACTIVE POINT

ONE OR ALL?

CREATION OF BORDER OR SCOPE OF VIEW.
PINPOINT IS THE CATALYST OF REACTION
POINT FROM WHERE INTERACTION TAKES PLACE.

HOW DOES
ENGAGE
THE SCOPE

PINPOINT IS THE FIRST POINT OF / AS
A BOUNDARY
MARKER.

DOES IT
CREATE SPACES,
DIVIDE
OR REINFORCE

BY HAVING A
REACTIVE POINT
YOU ARE EMPHASIZING
STANCE AND MEANS OF
POTENTIAL TRANSVERSAL...
AKA WHERE THE BOUNDARY ARE.

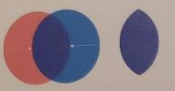
IS THE SCOPE OF VIEW HYBRIDITY OR IS IT
IT THE TRANSVERSAL?

IS THE SCOPE ALL POSSIBILITIES OF HYBRIDITY
AND THE INTERACTION WHAT CREATES
LIMINALITY

WHY ONE POINT
NOT 2?

7 JAN
What is a boundary here it is a metaphor but also a line drawn in shifting sand. It acknowledges its wholeness from its mother body that it separates itself from but acknowledges supports

PERCEIVED TYPICAL VIEW OF HYBRIDITY



Intersectionality of two parental lineages to create a mixing or even third space. This third space is seen as new, above or beyond the lineages, that is transgressing of the original boundaries. The extent of this 'mixing' is subjective to situation and desire.

Outwards >> In

PROPOSED VIEW OF 'CREATIVE' HYBRIDITY



The new space comes into existence by desire to create the space. This intersectionality is produced by the rippling of the creative space as it moves. It pushes against its lineages or parental types to see what it can carve out, bend and produce without moving away from its lineages. If it moves away from its lineages entirely it is no longer hybrid, it becomes entirely new.

Inwards >> Out

lichen?
concreteness?

① ? ② ③
④ ⑤ ⑥
⑦ ⑧ ⑨

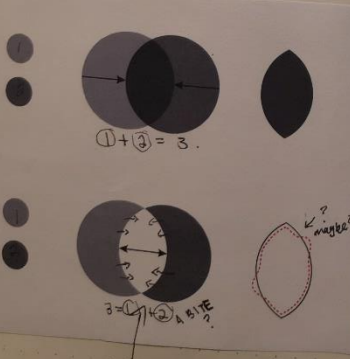
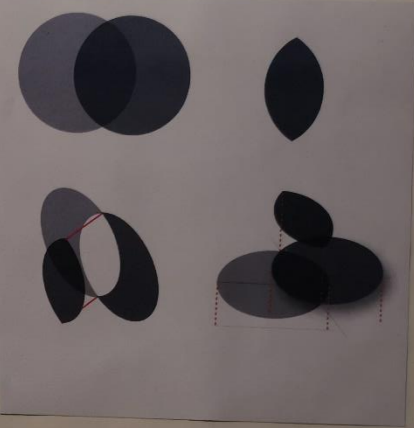
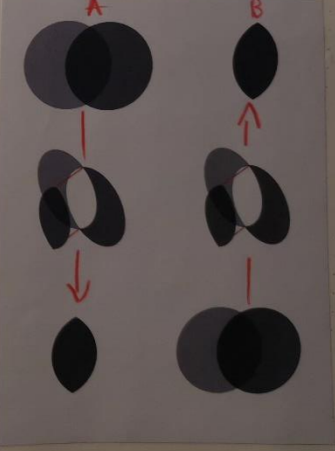
by the act of creating a space it draws on parental types (only types that can support) to keep it from deviating. Parental types stabilize it and become its boundaries.

Third space = corridor
What if the corridor exists and space forms around it?
Does that make sense?
the third space exists first through desire however it cannot be empty. It fills itself with what it knows by metaphor?

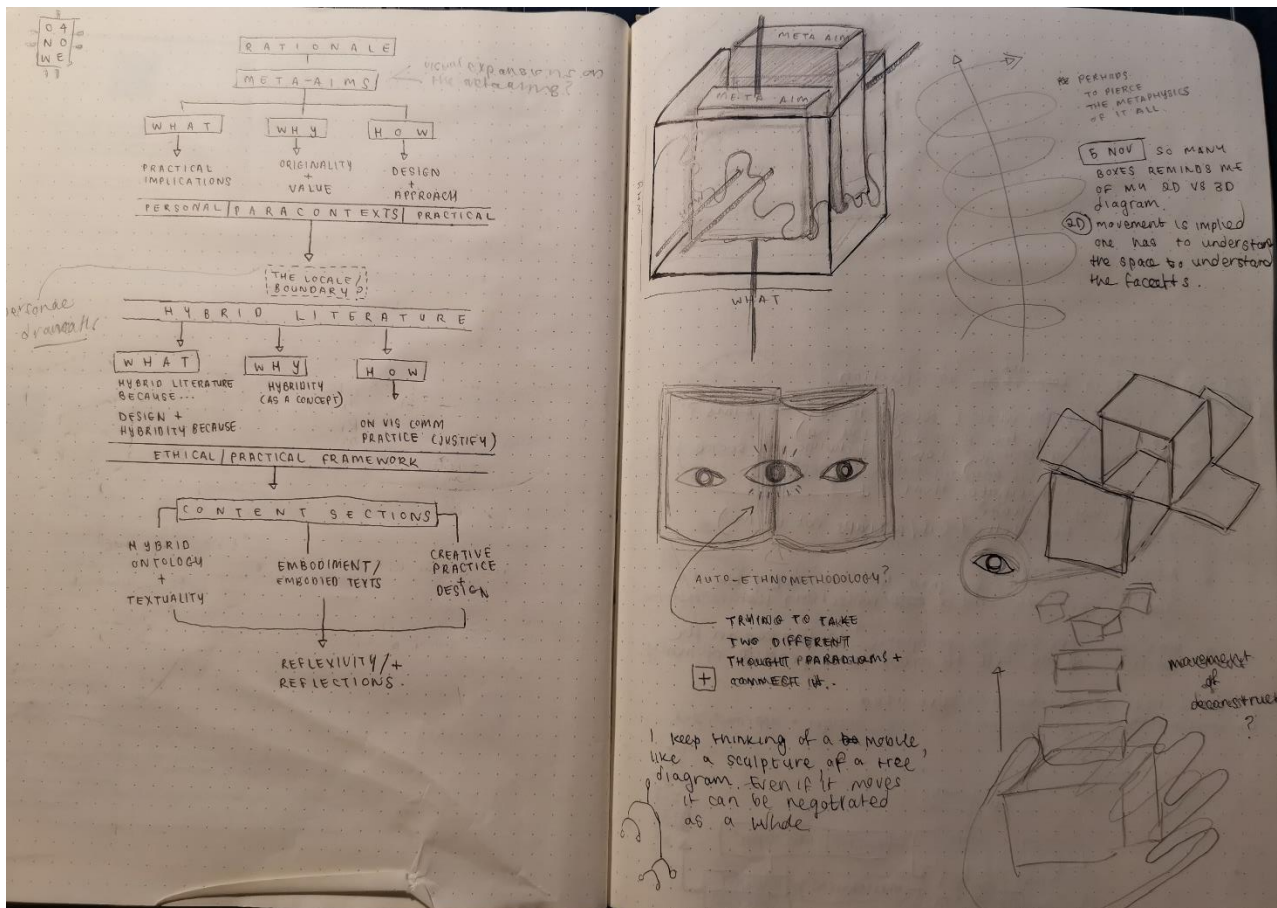
① + ② = 3.

③ = ④ + ⑤? it demands space

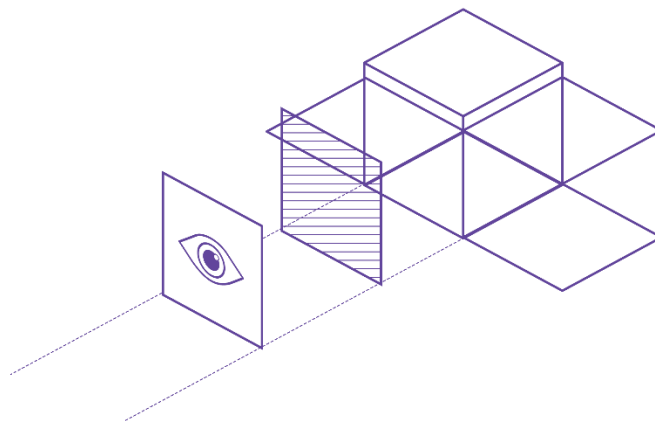
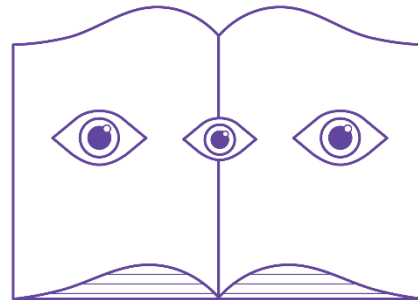
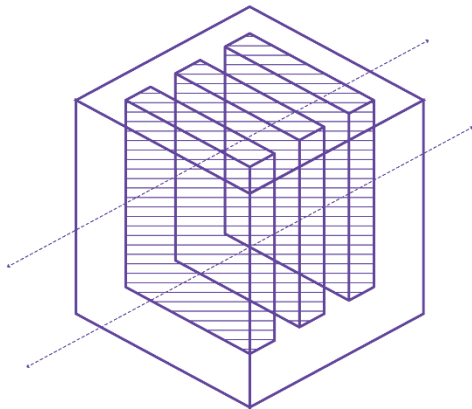
← ? makes?

HOW DOES HYBRIDITY WORK?



THINKING ABOUT METHODOLOGY



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