

Research Methods and Creative Practice

Explorative Research and Praxis (M7X02015)



On Not Knowing | How Artists Think

Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum

There is nothing like looking, if
you want to find something.

You certainly usually find
something, if you look, but it is
not always quite the something
you were after.

J R R Tolkien

“ Research
is what I'm doing
when I don't know
what I'm doing.

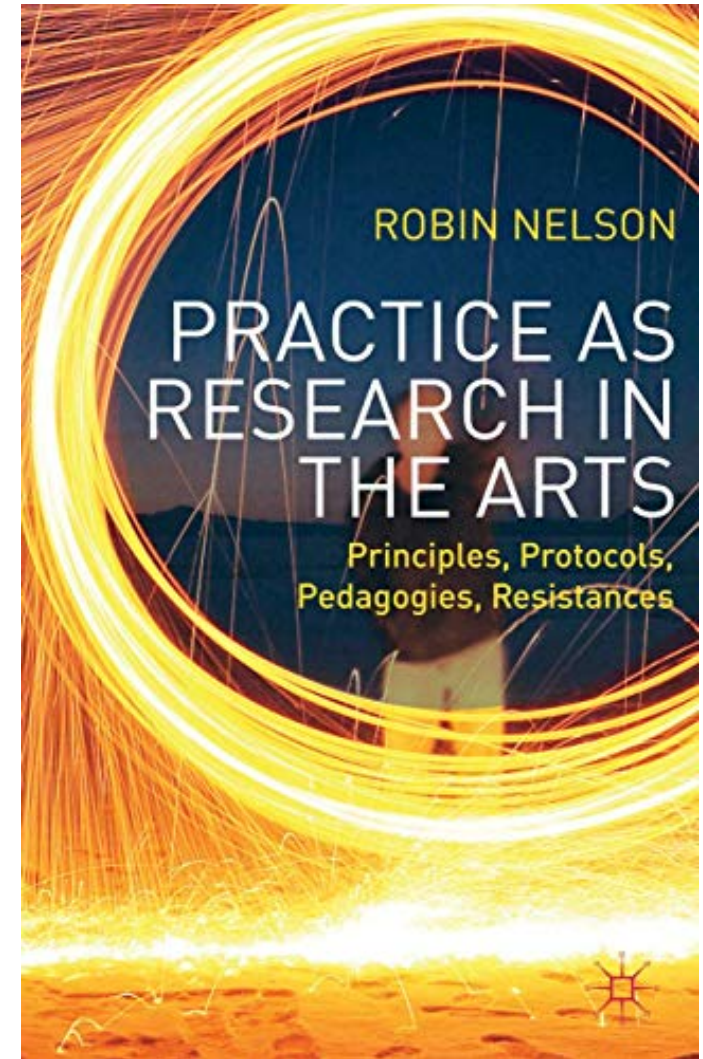
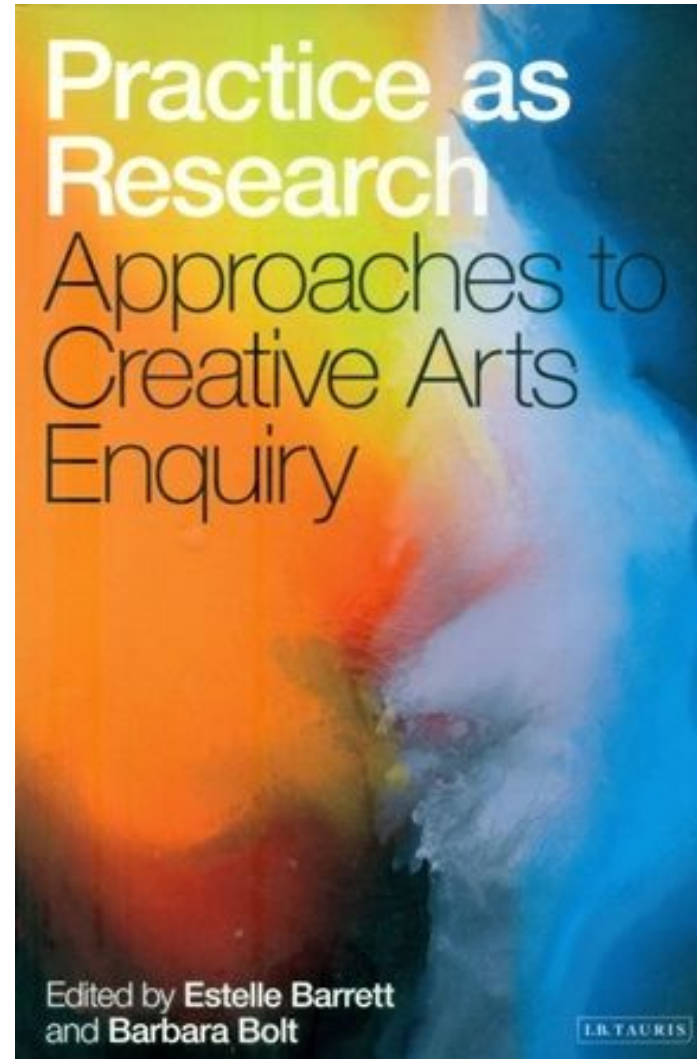
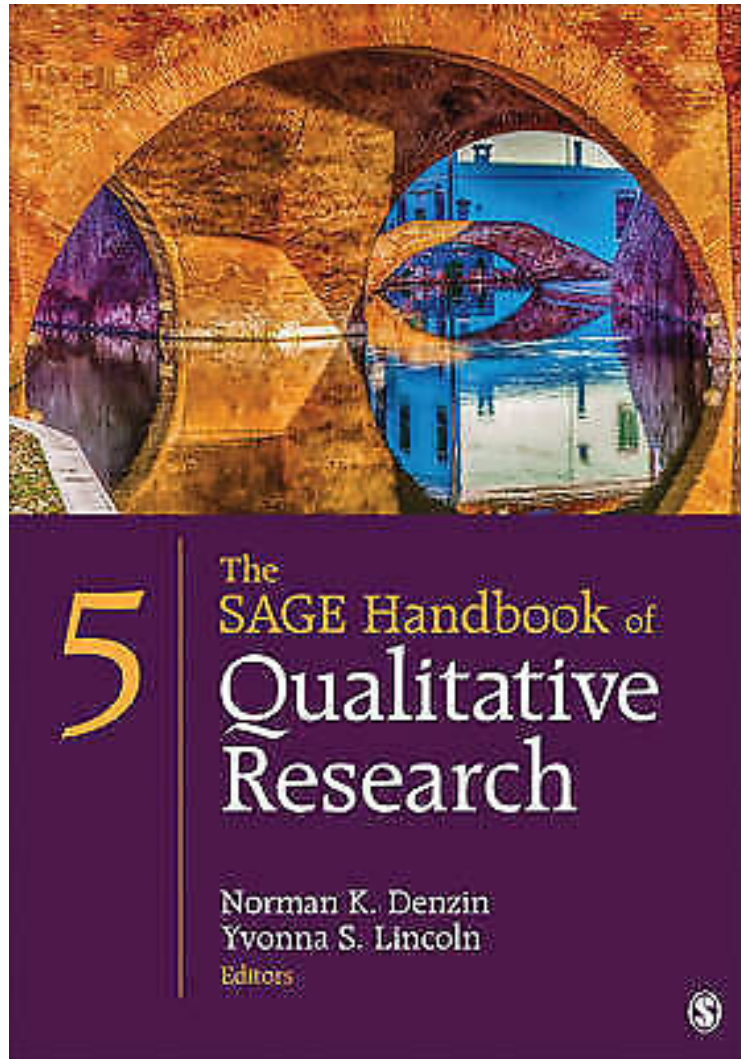
- *Wernher von Braun*



there's method to the madness

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understanding research philosophies

understanding research philosophies
useful when you are reading academic
papers to help you can work out what
paradigms and methods authors are using
and how this influences the way they
carry out research and the type of results
they get.

- three core approaches to reflecting on research philosophy will be considered: **epistemology, ontology and axiology**.
- Each contains important differences, which influence the way we think about the research process:
- **Epistemology** is the study of the theory of knowledge, including its nature, scope and limitations.
- **Ontology** is the philosophical study of the nature of being or existence.
- **Axiology** is the study of quality or value, and is often concerned with ethics and values. These three ways of research will vary depending on your choice of philosophical perspective.

ontology

the theory of being

- **Ontology can be defined as the science or study of being and deals with the nature of reality.**
- In simple terms, ontology is associated with a central question of whether social entities need to be perceived as **objective or subjective**.
- Accordingly, **objectivism (or positivism) and subjectivism** can be specified as two important aspects of ontology.

epistemology

the theory of knowledge

- **Epistemology**, on the other hand, is a theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope and the distinction between justified belief and opinion; epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge within a field of study.
- Defined narrowly, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief.
- The **Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy** defines **epistemology** as one of the core areas of philosophy.
- **It is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge.** There is a vast array of views about propositional knowledge, but one virtually universal presupposition is that knowledge is true belief, but not mere true belief.
- For example, lucky guesses or true beliefs resulting from wishful thinking are not knowledge.
- A central question for epistemology is: **What must be added to belief to convert it into knowledge?**

research paradigms

...a research **paradigm** can be thought of as a lens through which we view the world.

Different lenses necessitate different assumptions about the nature of the world and the ways in which we should attempt to understand it.

- There are **many different lenses** that exist for viewing and understanding the world, and although there is a great deal of diversity and overlap between the range of perspectives that can define paradigms, a distinction can be made between current approaches based on
 - **the physical sciences**, such as the '**positivist**' paradigm,
 - **and alternative paradigms** such as **constructivism, interpretivism, critical theory and phenomenology.**
- One difference between these two paradigm clusters involves their views on the existence of a **social world which is separate from the physical world.**
- The list of recognized paradigms includes **positivism, realism, interpretivism, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalism, radical humanist and radical structuralist.**

keywords – key concepts

Raymond Williams

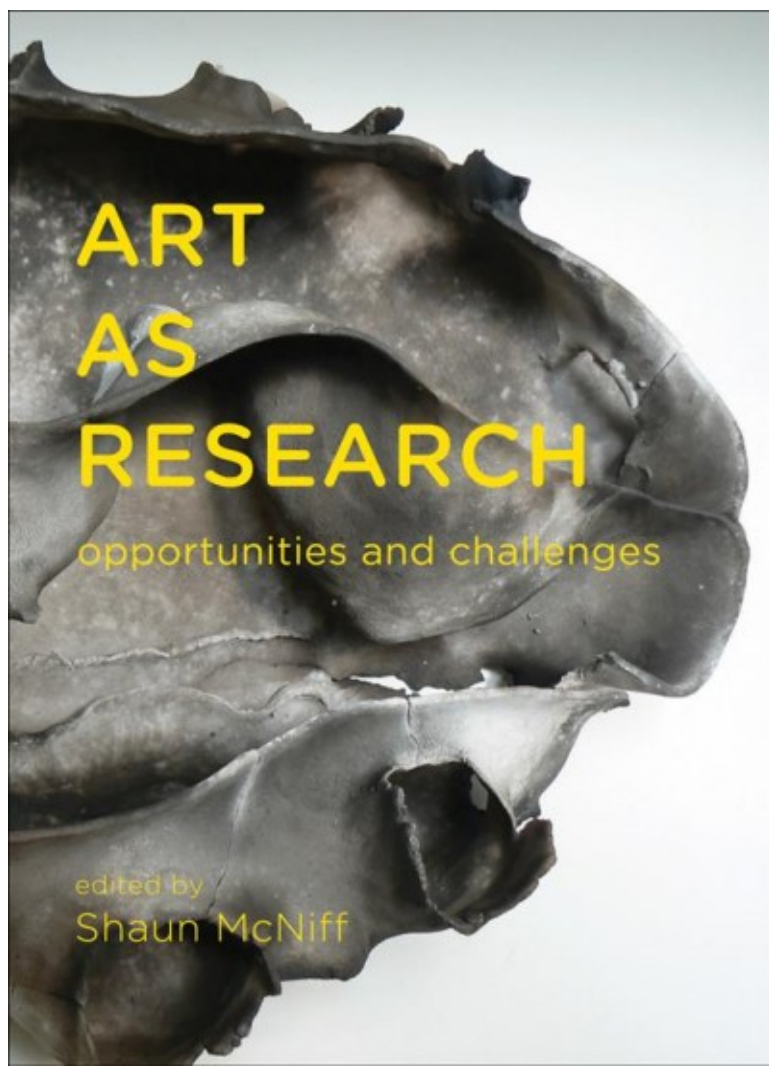
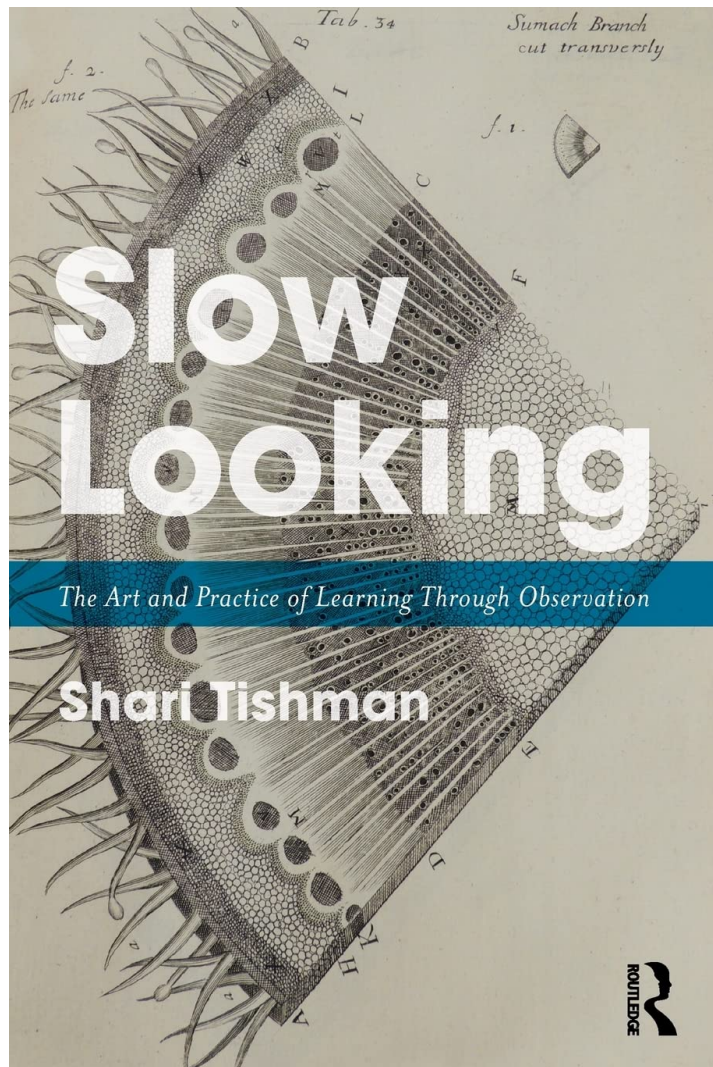
A vocabulary of culture and society

Raymond Williams' seminal exploration of the history of meaning of some of the most important words in the English language.

art behaviour class dialectic
experience family genius
hegemony industry jargon
keywords liberation media
naturalism ordinary peasant
racial sex tradition under-
privileged violence welfare

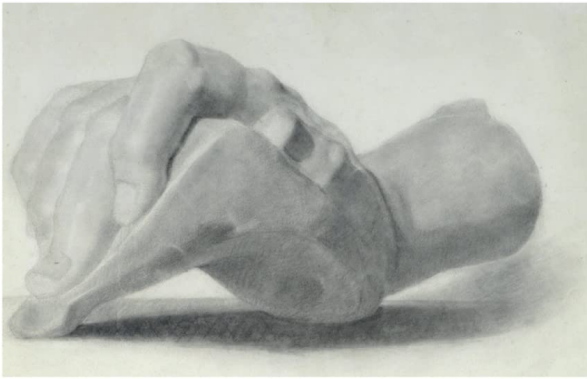
Raymond Williams

A vocabulary of culture and society



Visual Phenomenology

ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN ART AND VISUAL STUDIES

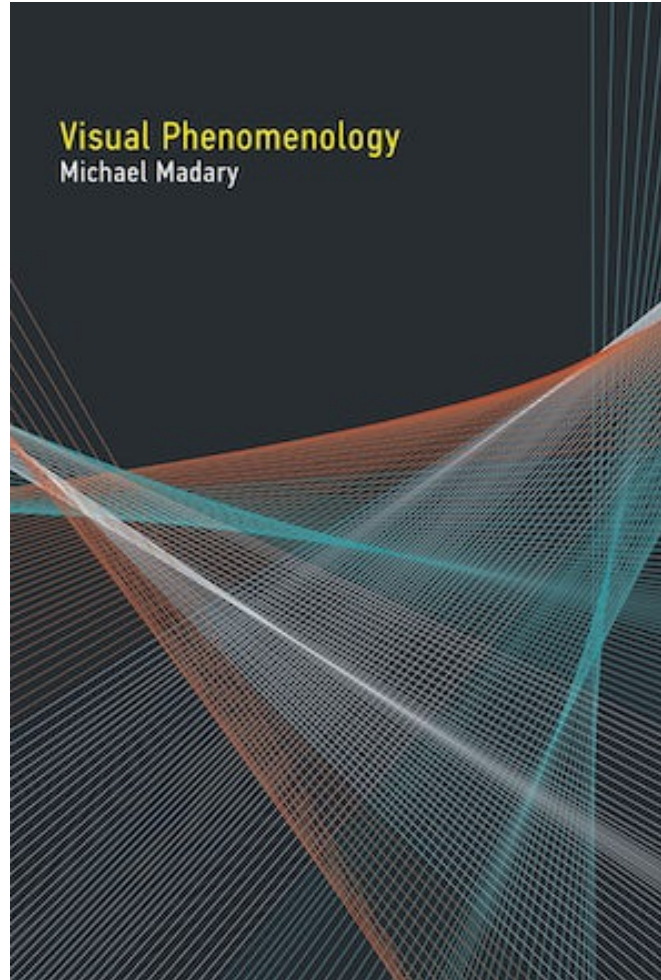


WHAT DRAWING AND
PAINTING *REALLY* MEAN
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF IMAGE AND GESTURE

PAUL CROWTHER



Visual Phenomenology
Michael Madary



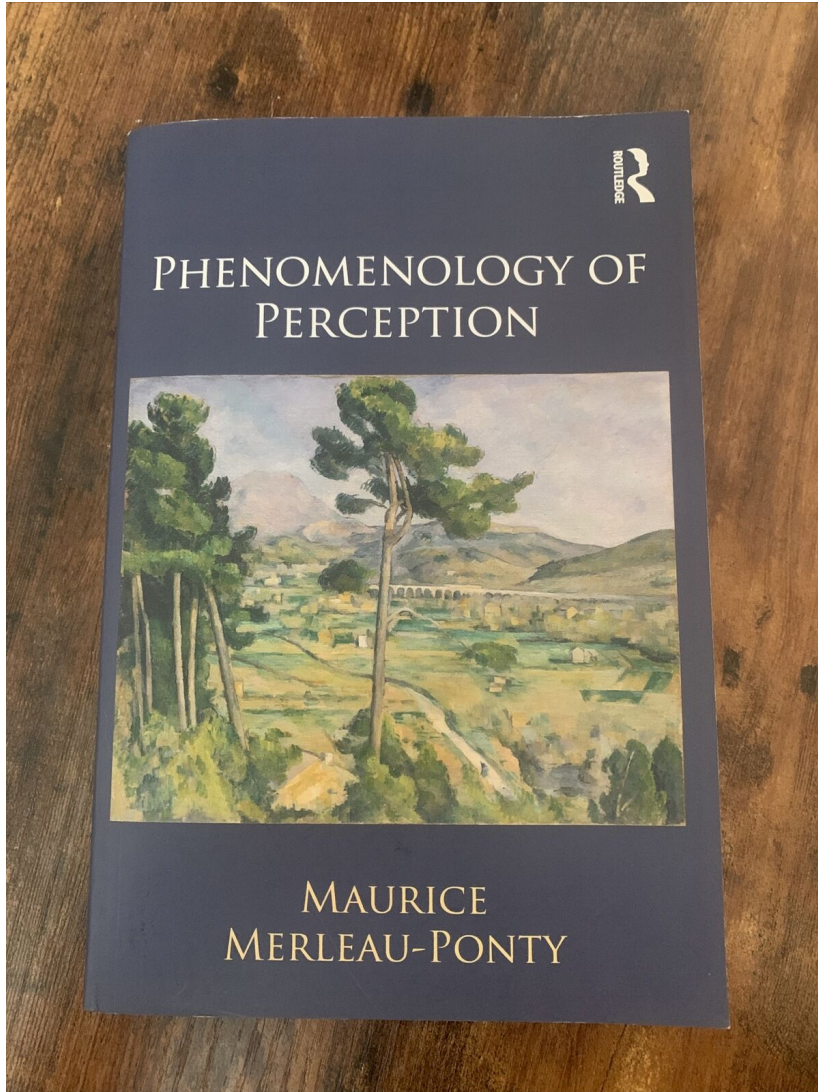
PHENOMENOLOGY OF PRACTICE

VISUAL PHENOMENOLOGY
ENCOUNTERING THE SUBLIME THROUGH IMAGES

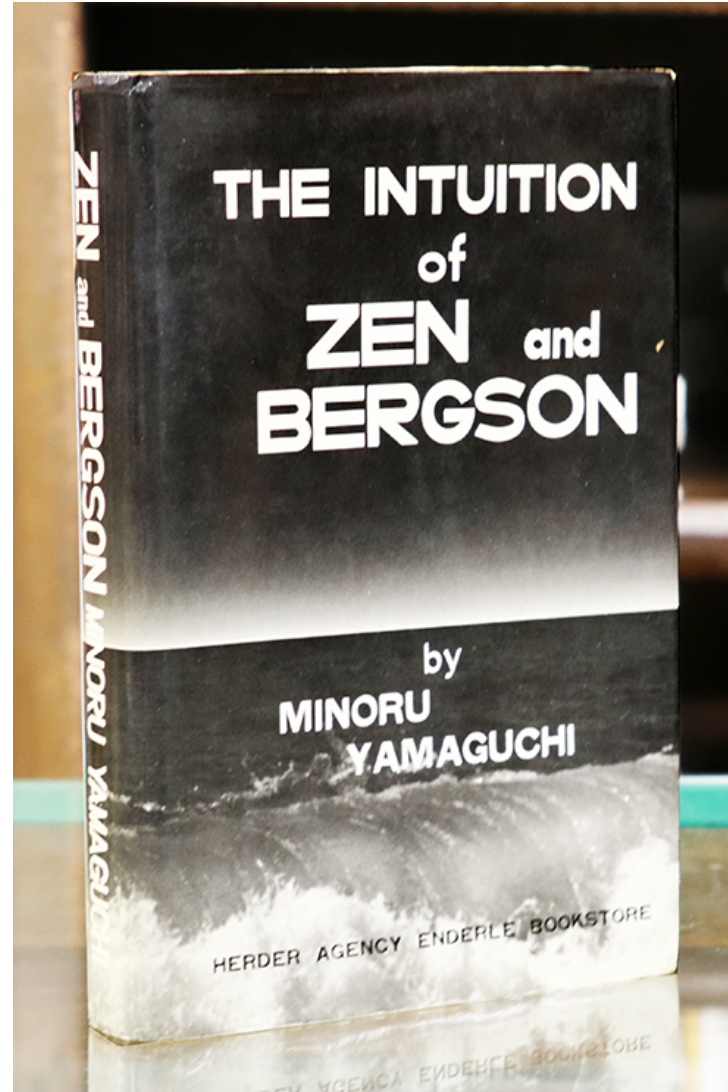


ERIKA GOBLE

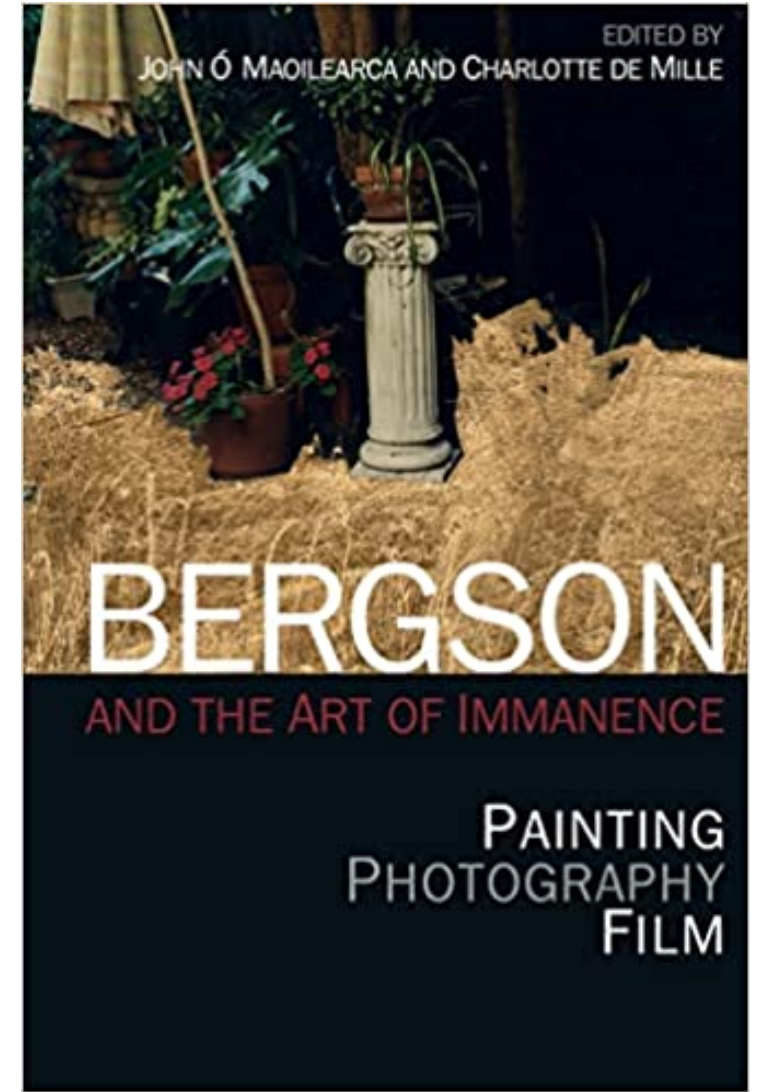




Phenomenology



Intuition



Immanence

Praxis

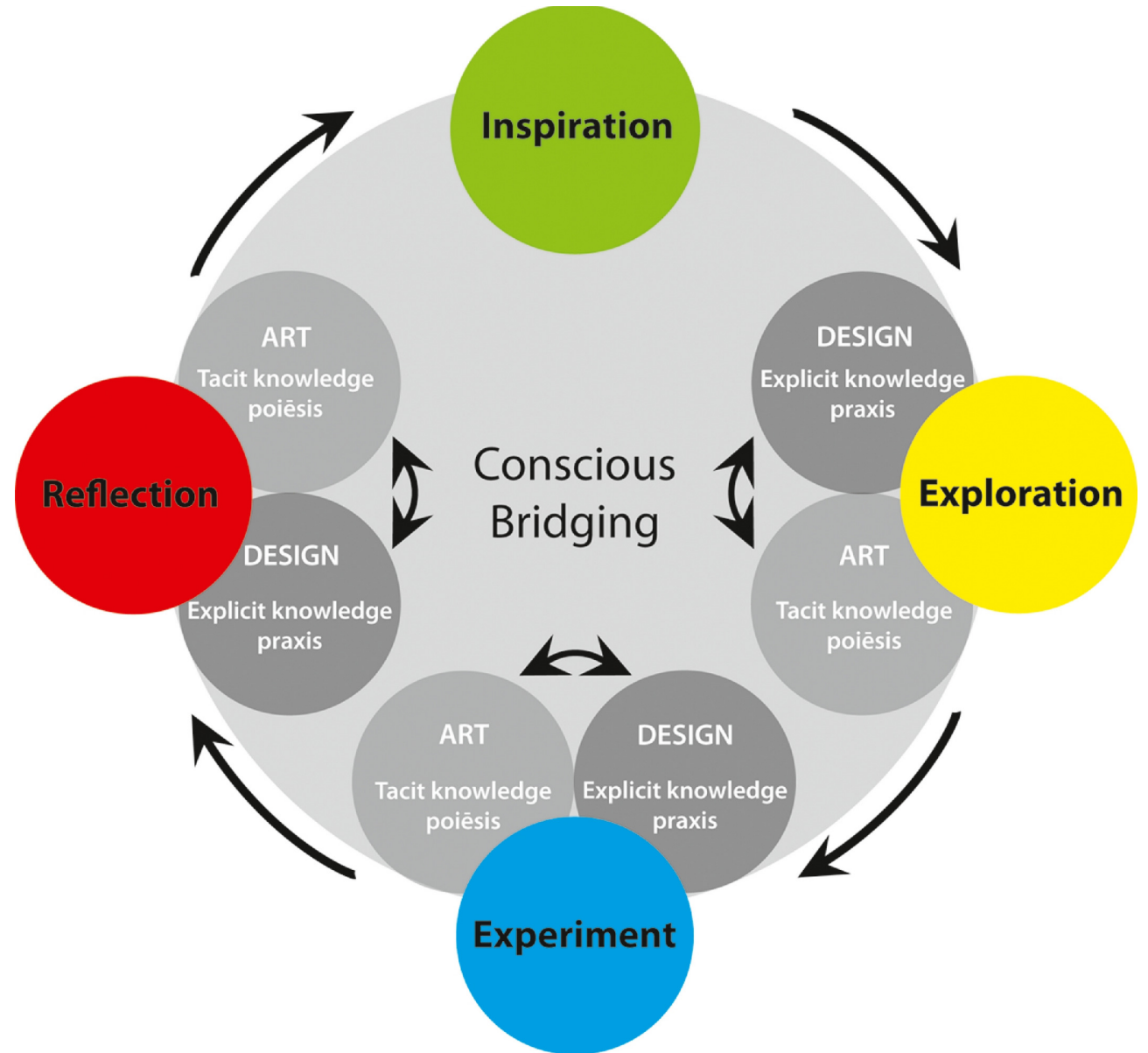
We commonly think of practice as a way of doing things, an action, application or performance that is contrasted to theory and abstract thinking. The counterpoising of theory to the practical is a legacy of Aristotle's classification of disciplines as theoretical, productive or practical. However, Aristotle also introduced the idea of "praxis", which is not merely mechanical making but a conceptually inspired **'creative doing'**. This the concept of praxis, which derives from the Greek word for **'action that shapes the world'**, seeks to dissolve the distinction between theory and practice. (Barker; 165/66)

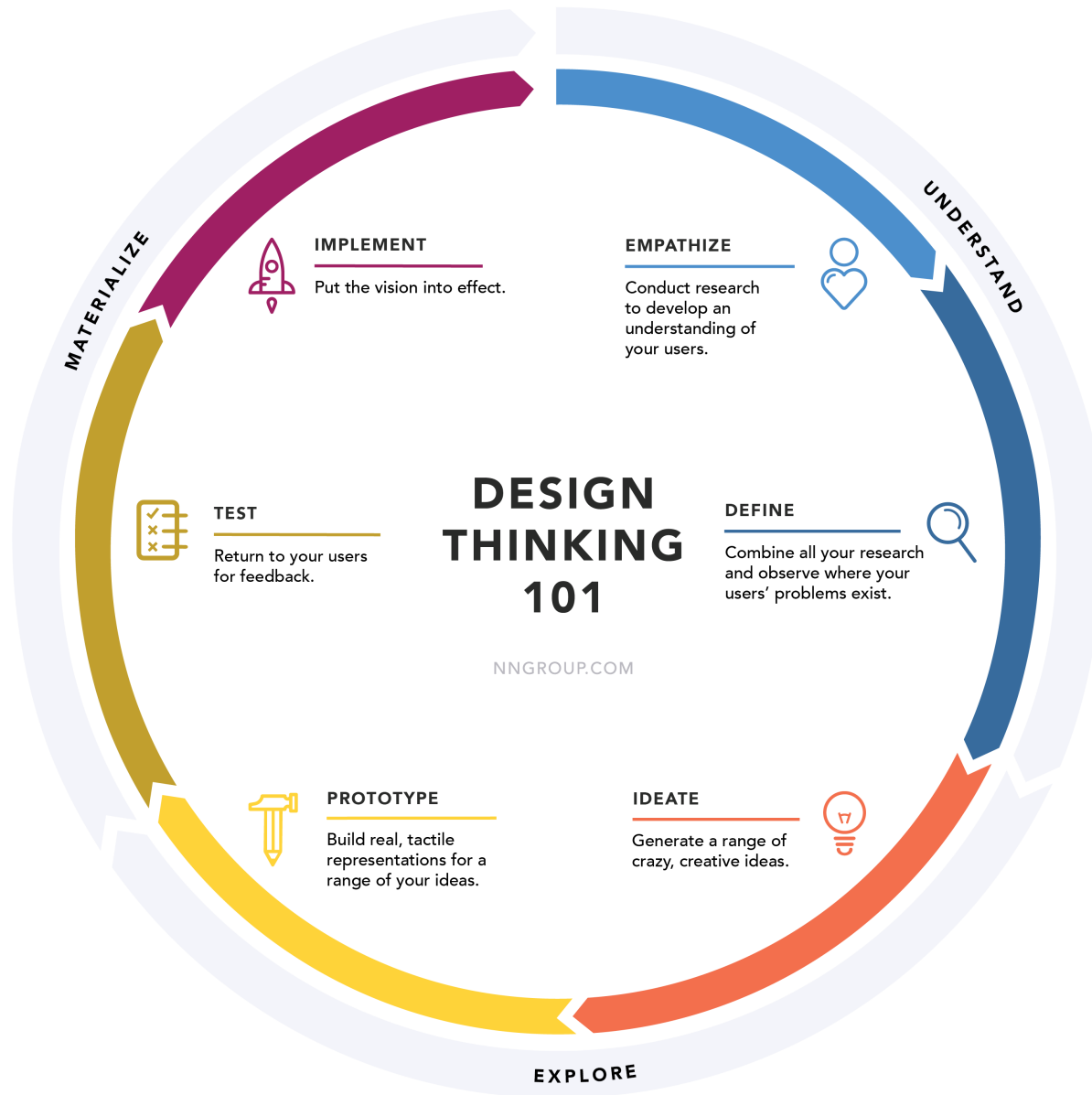


Aristotle, 384 BCE - 322 BCE, Greece

Praxis

Praxis refers to a particular philosophy used to guide and conduct research. Praxis, in its simplest construal, means **theory plus action**. It indicates life practice formed from both reflection and action. The self, striving to transform the world creatively according to an emerging vision based on its own values, actualizes itself as it actualizes its vision. Because individuals' actions always affect other people, praxis is inherently political.





As well as dissolving the distinction between **‘theory’** and **‘practice’**, the notion of praxis can also be understood as overcoming the binary divide between **‘thought’** and **‘action’**, as well as between **‘agency’** and **determination’**.

The concept of praxis helps us to grasp the actor as simultaneously culturally situated, that is, determine and as a choice making actor. Theoretical knowledge and practice can never be separated so that culture can be understood as the embodies praxis of performances. For example, the creative , expressive and symbolic work of youth cultures is constituted by a situated creative doing- the praxis of performativity Thus, according to Hebdige, British Punk was a ‘revolting style’ that was not simply responding to the crisis of British decline manifested in joblessness, poverty and changing moral standards but performed and dramatized it in an angry, dislocated, but self – aware and ironic mode of signification. (Barker: 166).

Performativity in Praxis



deconstruction of the binary pair of theory & practice

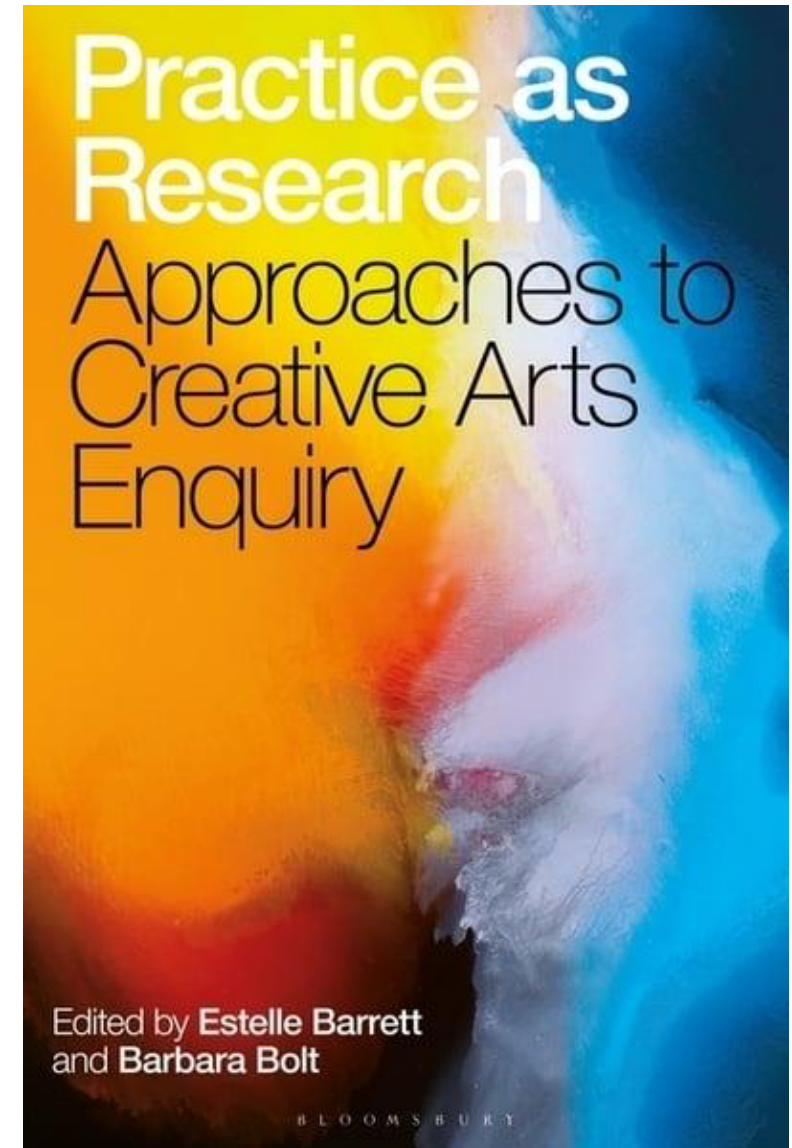
- The concept of praxis involves a deconstruction of the binary pair of theory and practice involving recognition that each belongs to and in the other.
- For example, theory is not an unproblematic reflection or discovery of objective truth about an independent object world but a culturally situated practice.
- Equally, the meaning of a practice does not adhere within the action itself and no amount of empirical data about practice can produce a meaningful story outside of the the structures of language and theory.
- **This overcoming of the divide between theory and practice is the meaning of praxis that has most concerned modern users of the concept. (Barker: 166)**

Praxical Knowledge

‘Understanding comes from practical handling....it is only through handling that we come to understand the Being of our materials, tools and equipment’.

(Bolt, Heidegger, (2007:31).

The Magic is in the Handling, Barbara Bolt
Barrett, E and Bolt, B., (ed), (2007) *Practice as Research
Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. New York and London:
I.B Taurus & Co.



Heidegger, Handability and Praxical Knowledge

Barbara Bolt School of Creative Arts University of Melbourne

Dasein as Being-in-the-World



Heidegger's three room cabin in the Black Forest Mountains, south Germany, 1922

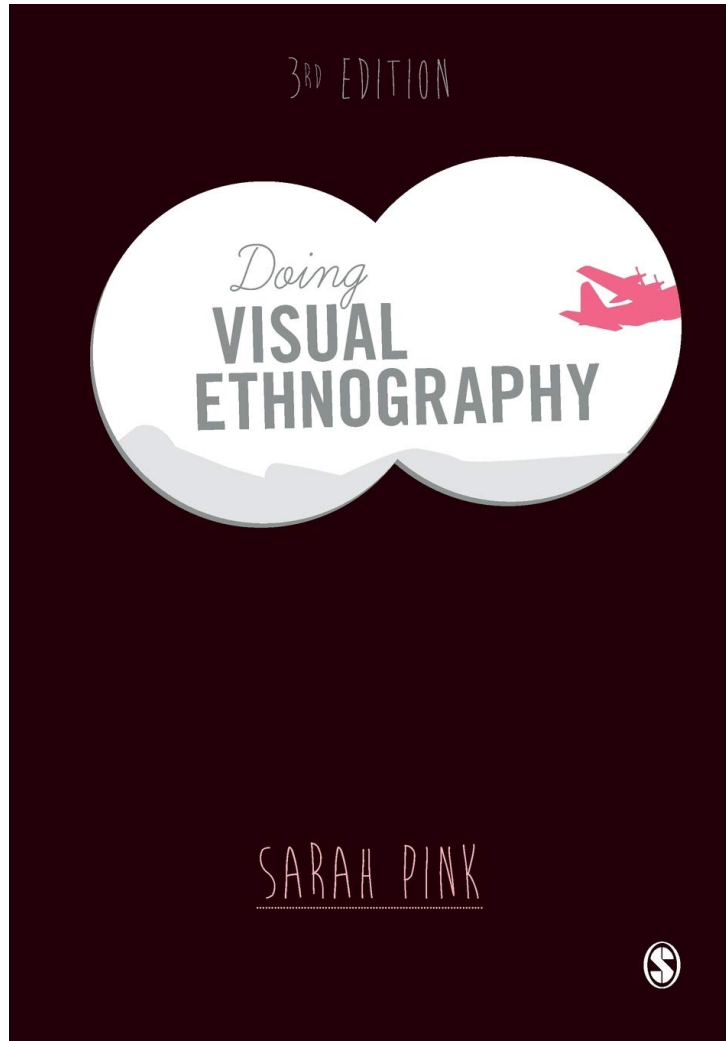
The focus on artworks, rather than practice, has produced a gap in our understanding of the work of art as process. Working with Martin Heidegger's notion of "handability", I propose that in creative arts practice, "research" commences in practice – in our dealings with the tools and materials of production, rather than a self-conscious attempt at theorisation. By focusing on enunciative practices, that is, the systems of fabrication rather than systems of signification, I argue that there is a possibility of opening up the field of an "art of practice" from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. According to such thinking, such logic of practice follows on from practice rather than prescribing it.

Visual Ethnography

Ethnography is the study and interpretation of social organisations and cultures in everyday life. It is a research-based methodology, and when this research is conducted using photography, video or film, it is called visual ethnography

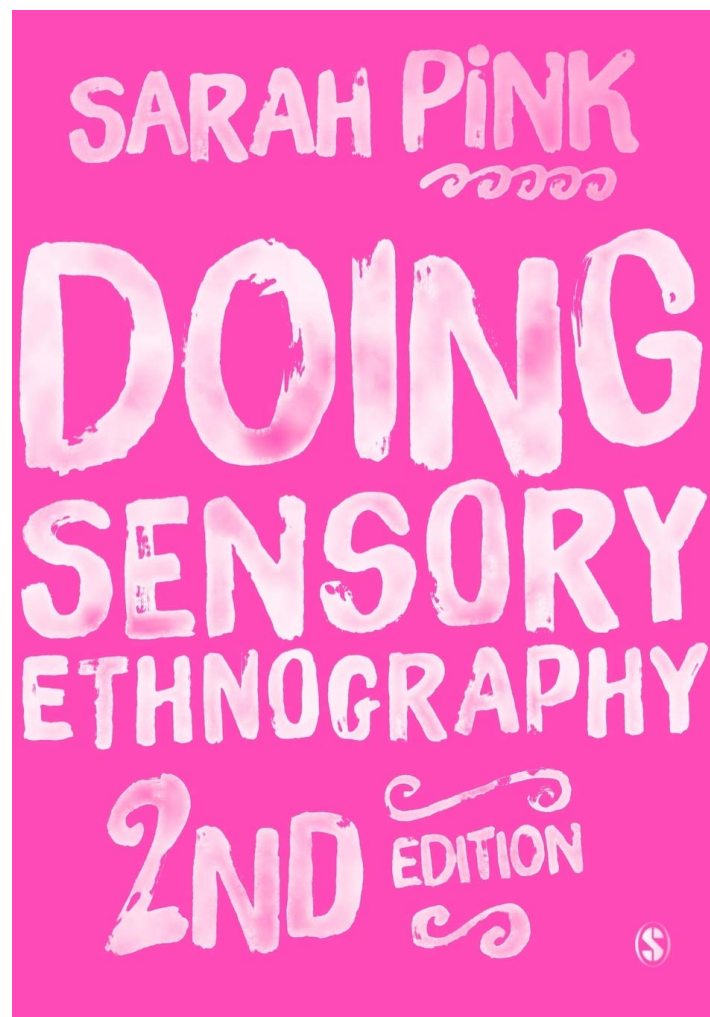


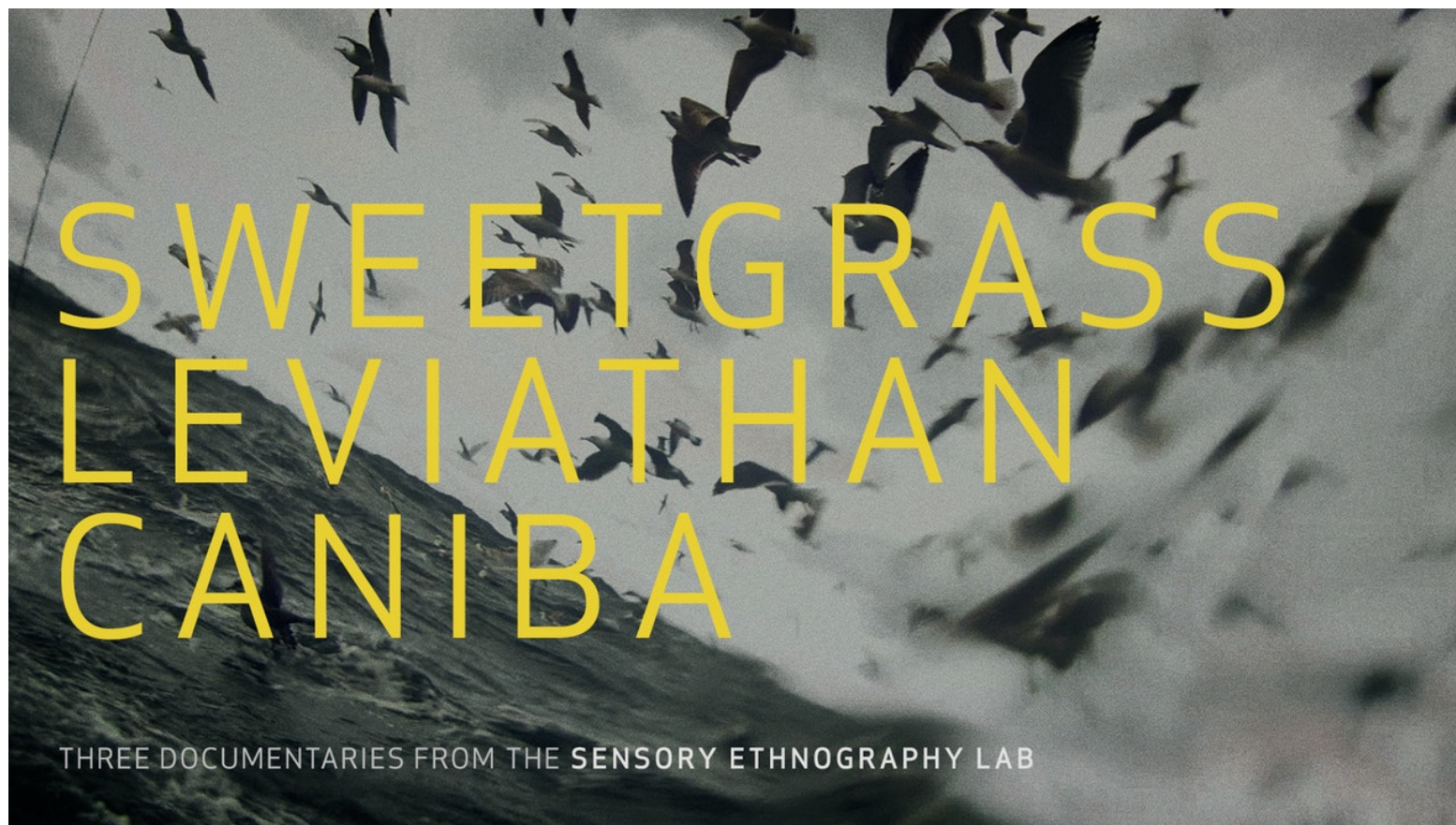
Jeremy Deller
The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All) (2001)



Visual Methods in Ethnography

Visual ethnographic techniques provide a means for empowering participants to reflect on their personal concerns and interests as well as to access and share their perceptions on various issues and problems that may exist in their lives.



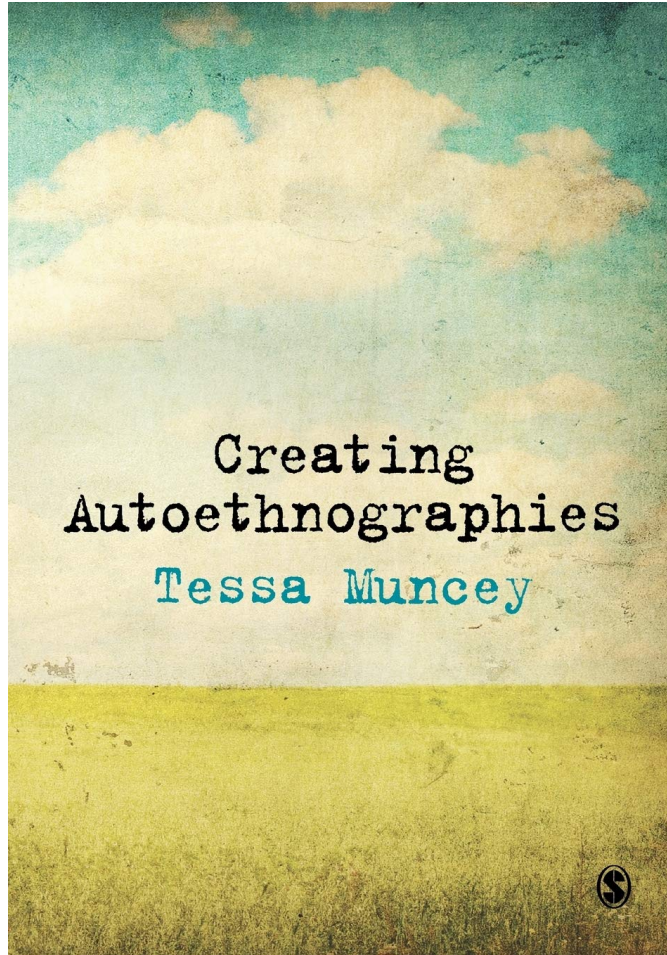


Sensory Ethnography Lab

The Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL) is an experimental laboratory that promotes innovative combinations of aesthetics and ethnography. It uses analog and digital media, installation, and performance, to explore the aesthetics and ontology of the natural and unnatural world.

<https://sel.fas.harvard.edu/>

Autoethnography

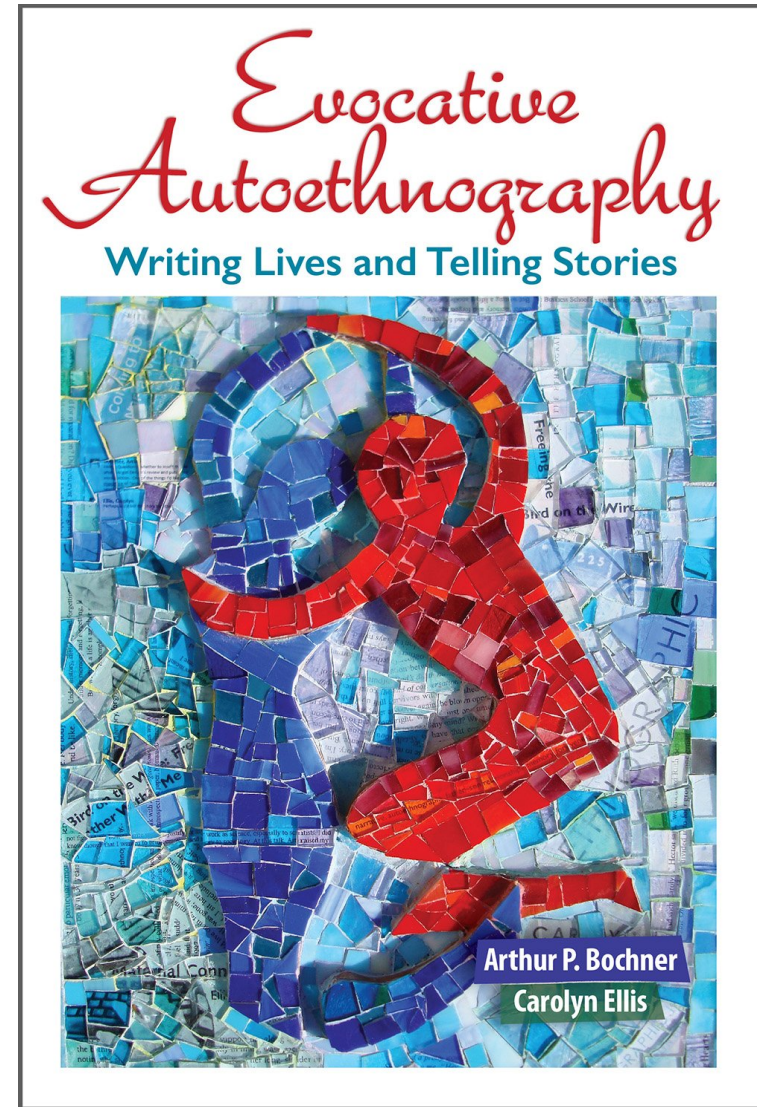


A search for the critical in the creative, and the creative in the critical

Autoethnography is an avant-garde method of qualitative inquiry that has captured the attention of an ever-increasing number of scholars from a variety of disciplines. (*including the arts*). Personal experience methods can offer a new and unique vantage point from which to make a contribution to social science yet, autoethnography has been **criticized for being self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective, and individualized.** (Sarah Stahle Wall, 2016).

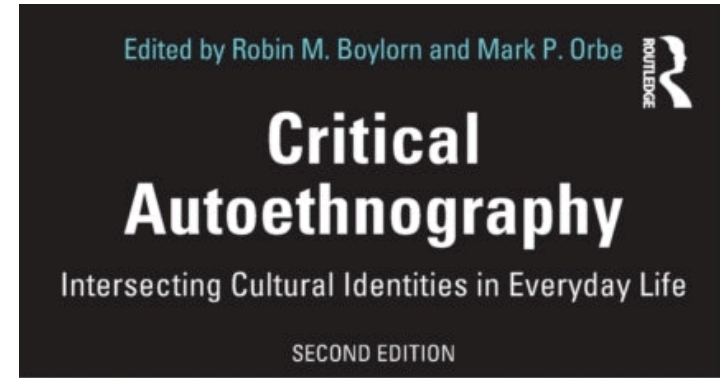
Evocative Autoethnography

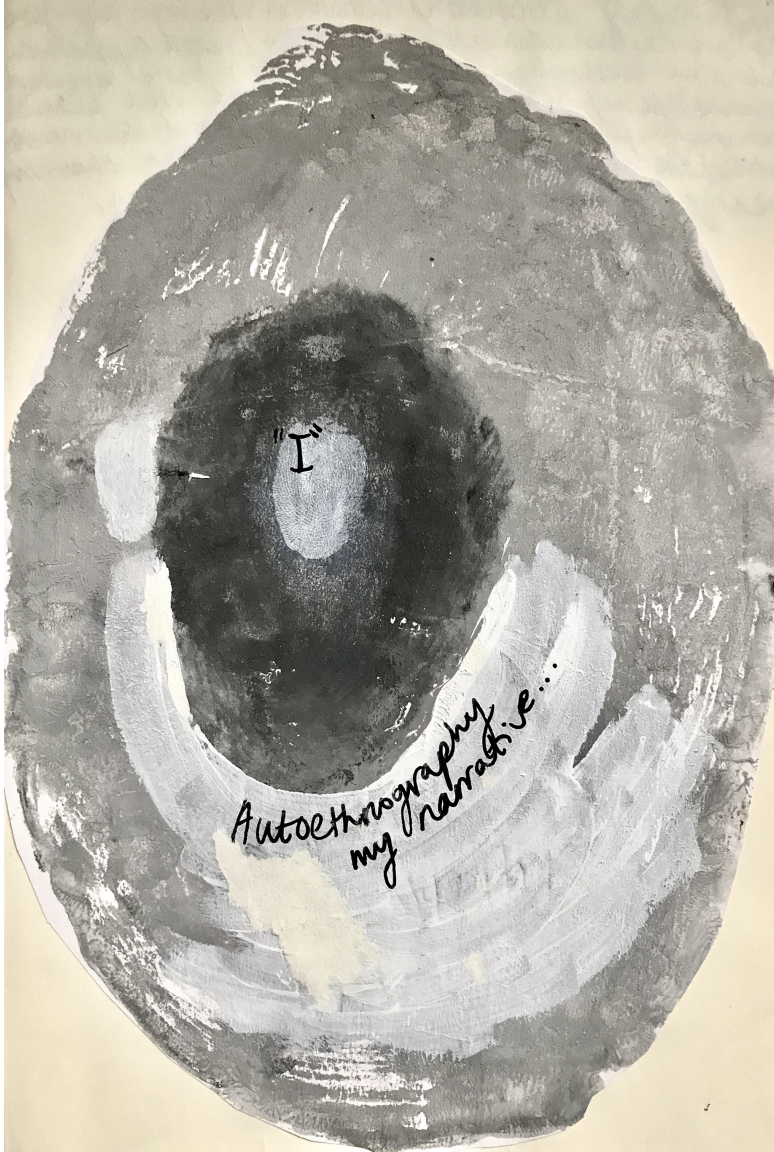
an evocative, (post modern) narrative form of autoethnography that “**shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning**” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433).



Analytical Autoethnography

Anderson (2006) argued in favour of an analytic form of autoethnography that is congruent with Hayano's earlier support for a view of autoethnography as realist ethnography that includes, but is not limited to, the **reflexively positioned self of the author/ethnographer**, arguing that **"autoethnography loses its sociological promise when it devolves into self-absorption"** (p. 385).





Moderate auto-ethnography

Ultimately, I propose a moderate and balanced treatment of autoethnography that allows for innovation, imagination, and the representation of a range of voices in qualitative inquiry while also sustaining confidence in the quality, rigor, and usefulness of academic research”

(Sarah StaWall: 2016)

Experimental Ethnography

Experimental ethnography is an approach to studying and interpreting the cultures of everyday life that uses the techniques of experimental filmmaking, like montage, found footage and surrealism, to create new ways of seeing the world around us

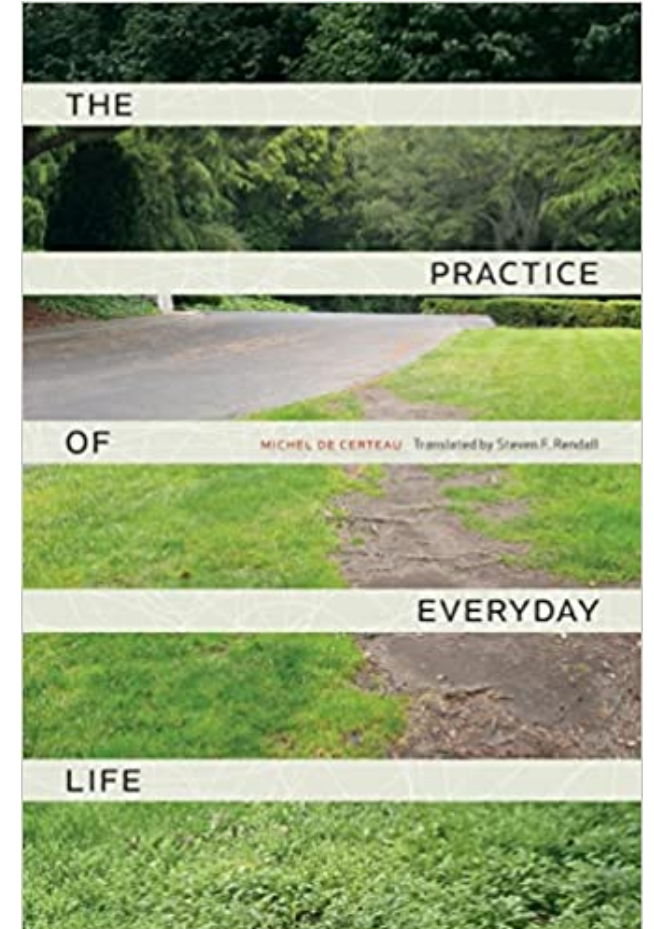


Chantal Akerman *D'Est* 1993/1995 Five-channel video piece

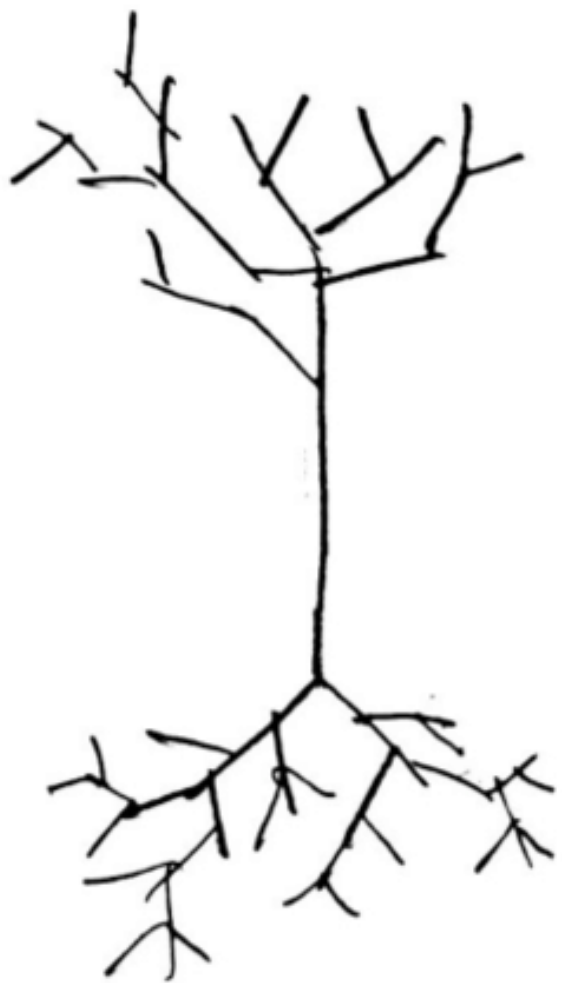
BRICOLAGE

Bricolage approach uses different methodologies that flexibly examine the complex dimensions of a studied phenomenon. The research process is characterized by observation from multiple perspectives that are sometimes competing with each other ([Rogers, 2012](#)). The bricolage approach combines in one study many methodological practices and empirical materials, different perspectives, and is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any investigation ([Denzin and Lincoln, 2011](#)). **the virtuoso art of bricolage research**

Originally, the term “bricolage” referred to a variety of non-professional occupations carried out in an improvised and amateurish way. It has been used to describe a postmodernist technique of creatively recycling leftover items. The technique can be applied in a variety of fields, including visual art, industrial design, music, architecture, philosophy, and linguistics.



Assemblage, Bricolage, and the Practice of Everyday Life



'closed' arboreal system

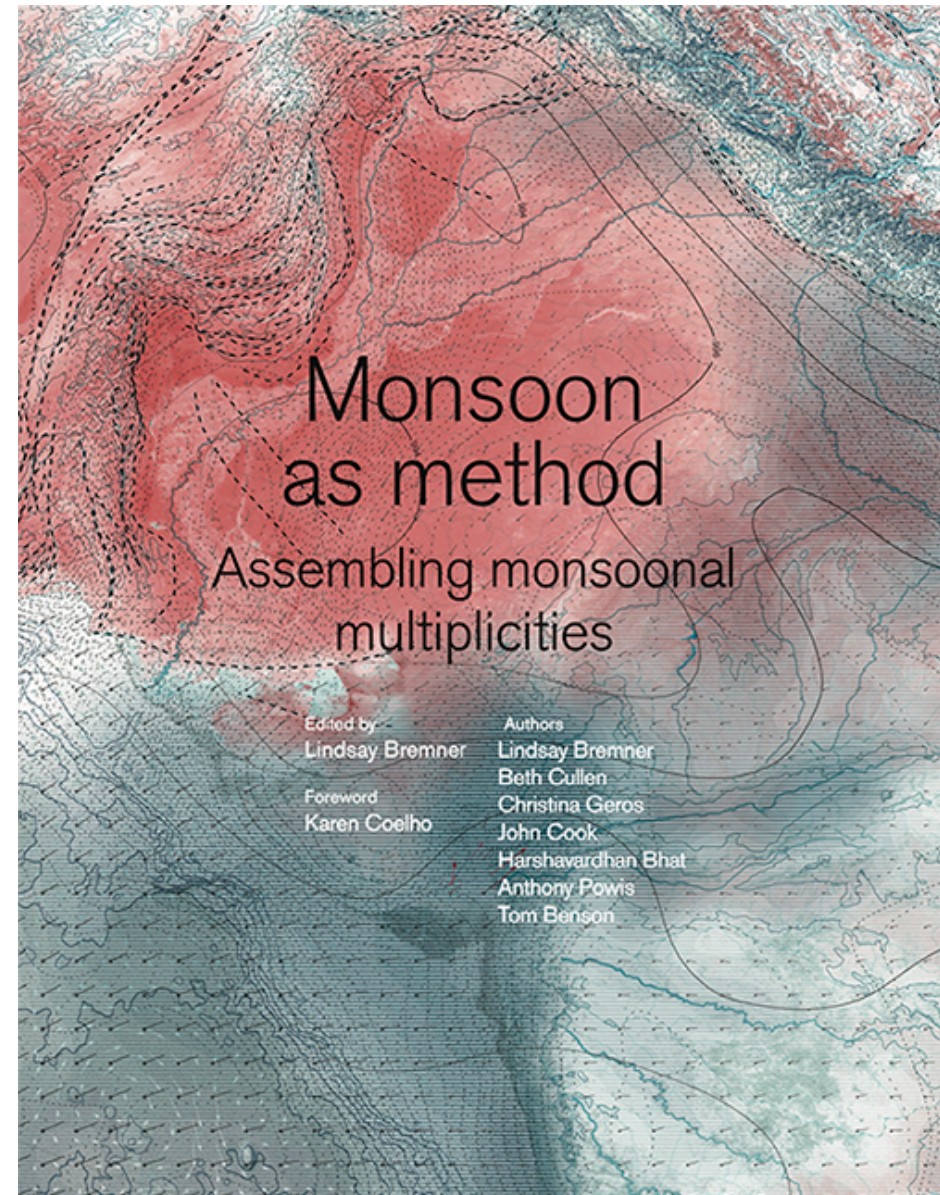


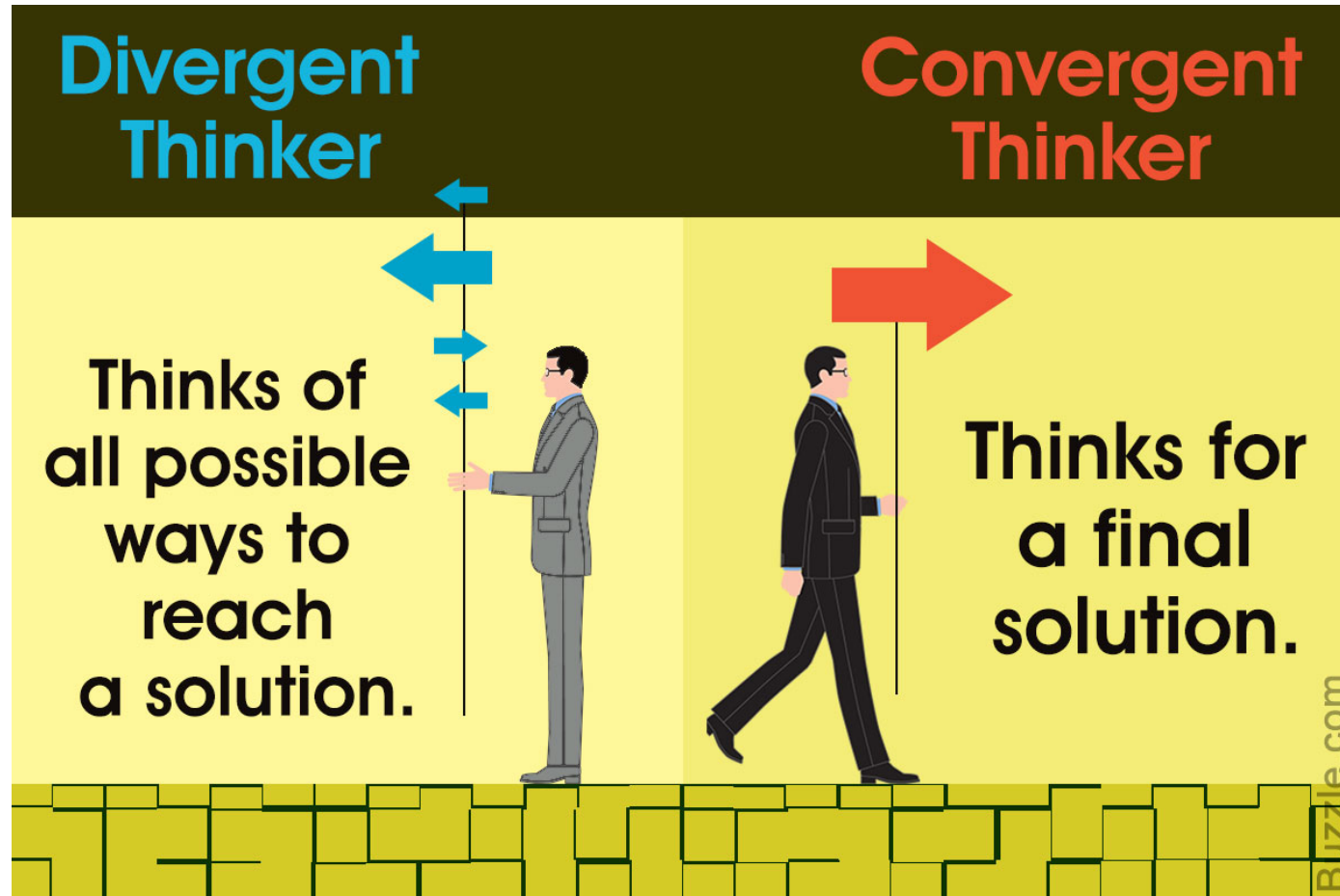
'open' rhizomatic system

Monsoon as Method

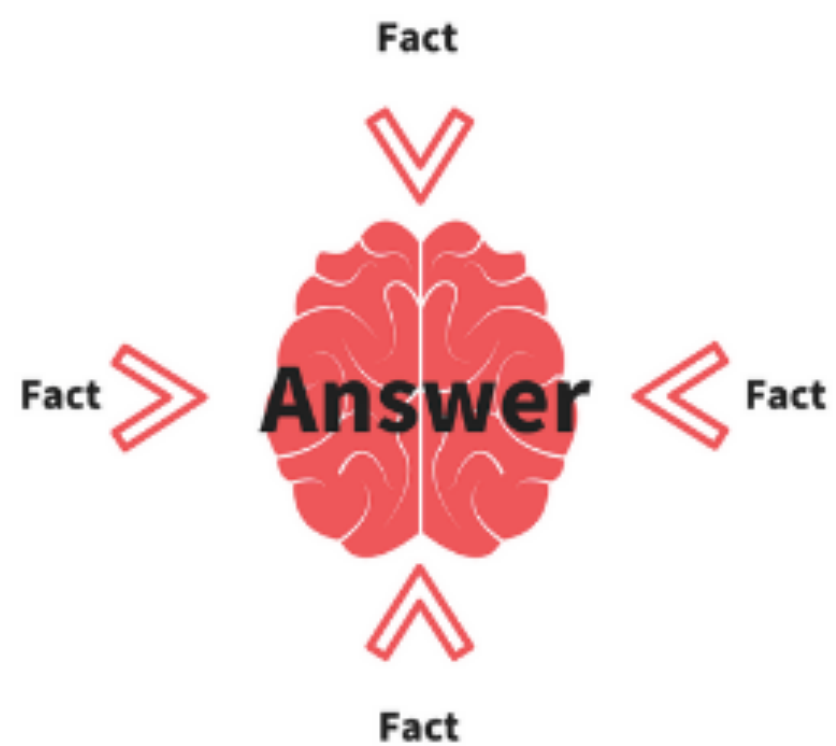
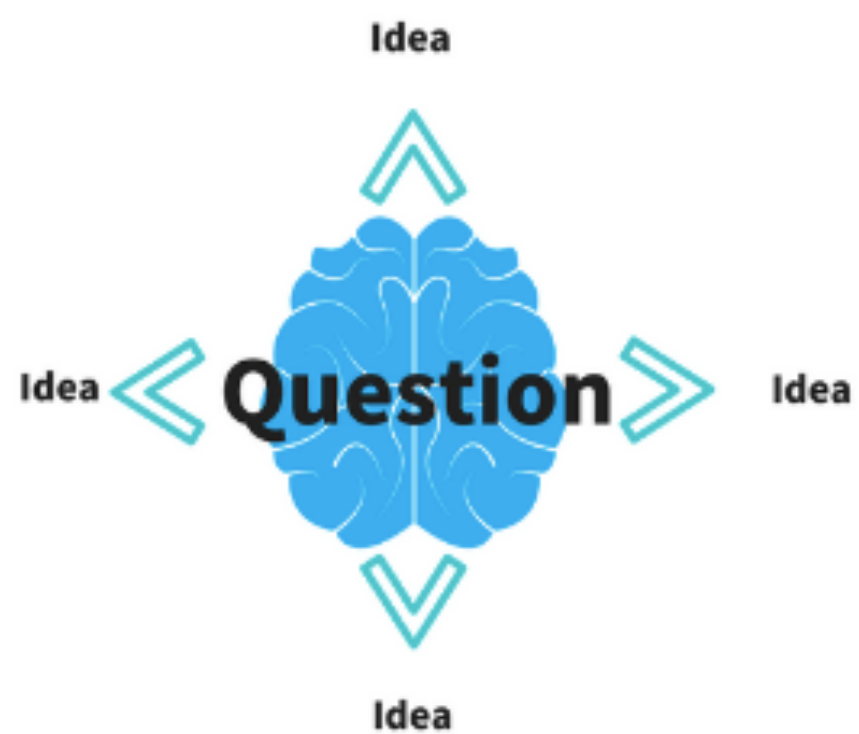
Assembling Monsoonal Multiplicities

The book presents the methods that Monsoon Assemblages has evolved for engaging the monsoon, a globally connected weather system, as a co-producer of urban life and space in South and Southeast Asian cities. It challenges views of climate as an inert backdrop to urban life, instead suggesting that it is materially and spatially active in shaping urban politics, ecologies, infrastructures, buildings and bodies. The book invites urban practitioners, from architects to policy makers, **to think differently about space, time, representation and human and non-human agency.** It offers intra-disciplinary, intra-active methods for rethinking human and non-human relations with weather in ways that meet the challenges of climate change and the Anthropocene.





divergent | convergent

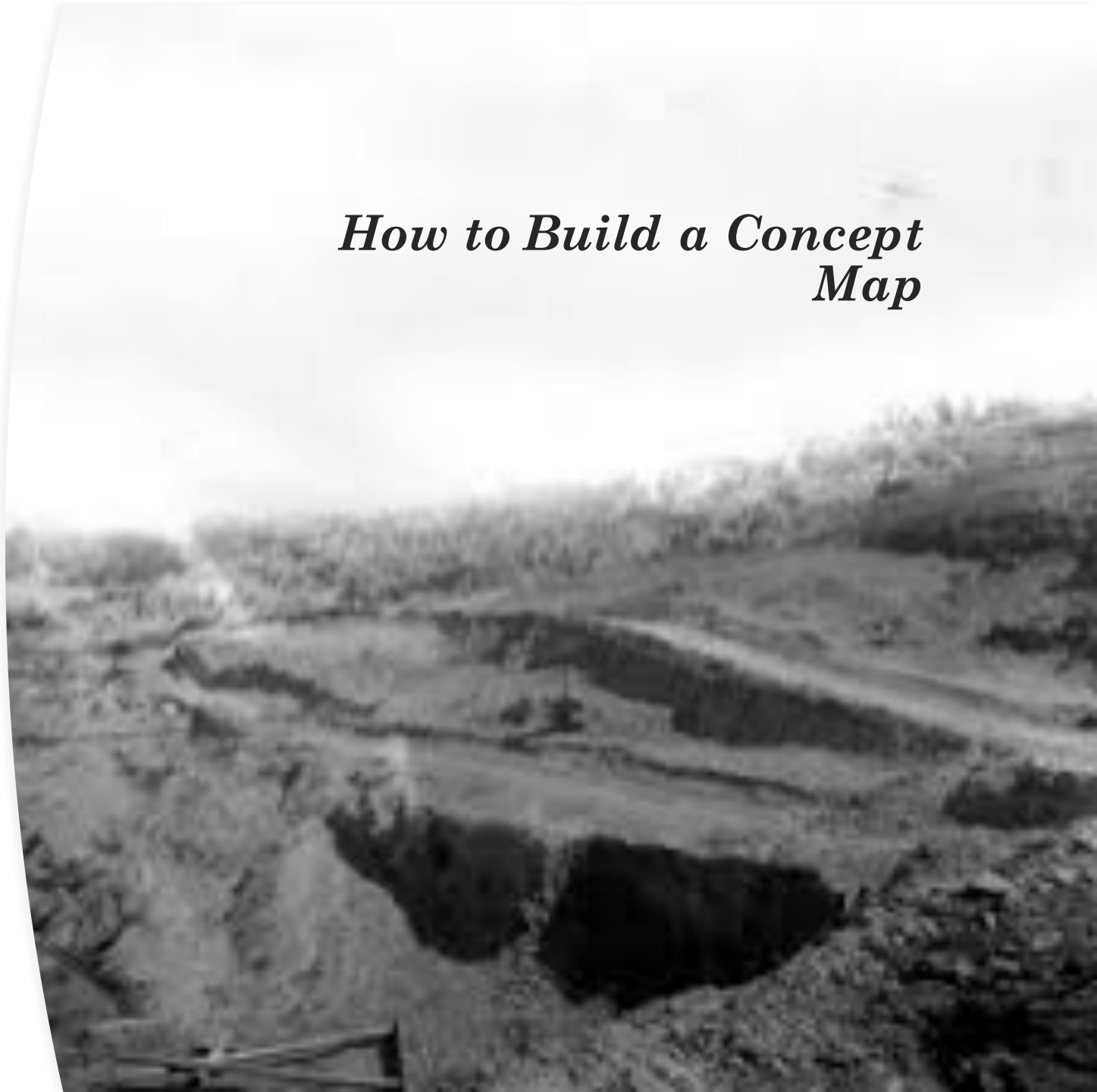


Concept maps are typically **hierarchical**, with the subordinate concepts stemming from the main concept or idea.

This type of graphic organizer however, always allows change and new concepts to be added.

The **Rubber Sheet Analogy** states that concept positions on a map can continuously change, while always maintaining the same relationship with the other ideas on the map.

How to Build a Concept Map



Start with a main idea, topic, or issue to focus on.

A helpful way to determine the context of your concept map is to choose **a focus question**—something that needs to be solved or a conclusion that needs to be reached. Once a topic or question is decided on, that will help with the hierarchical structure of the concept map.

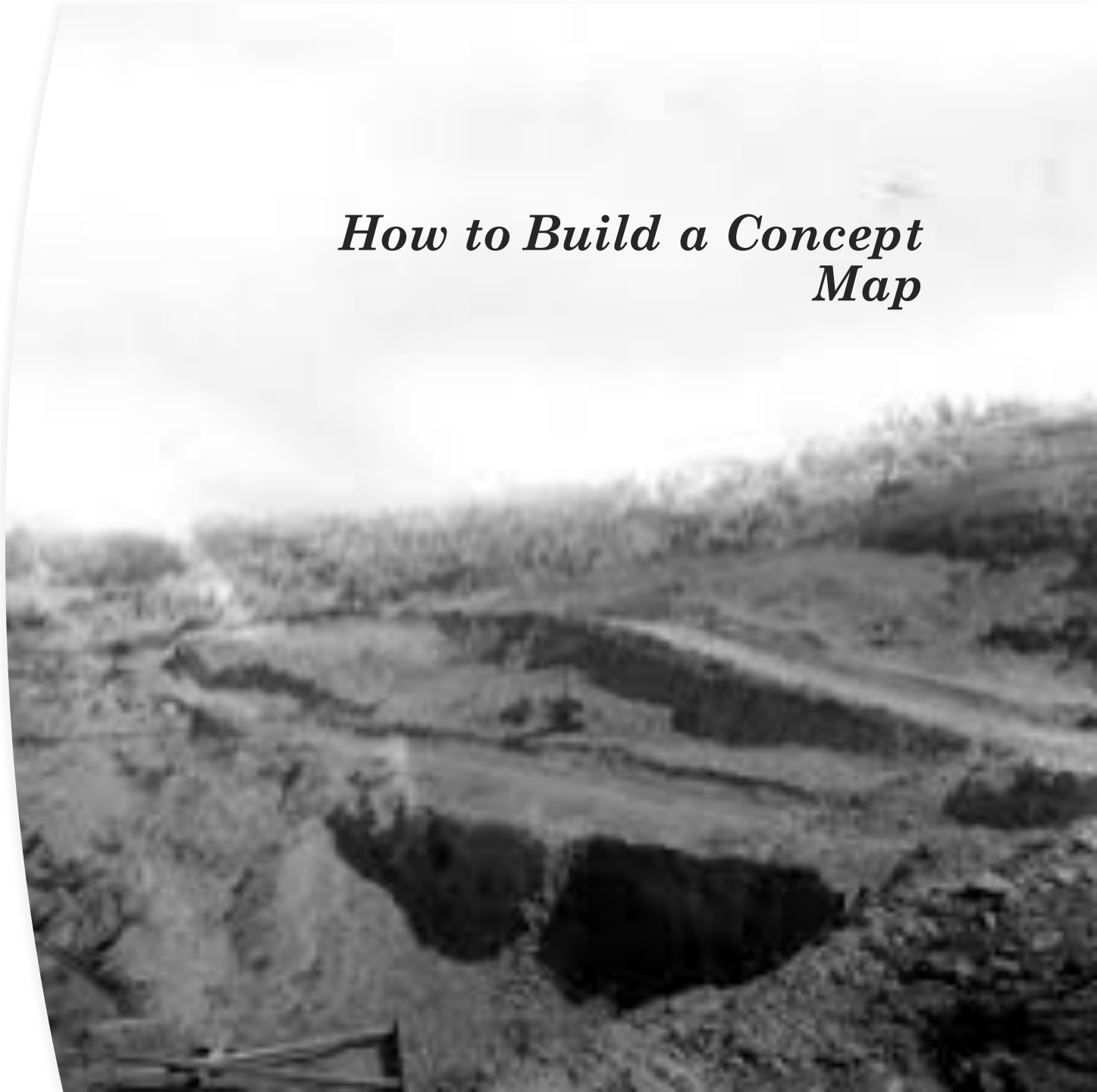
Then determine the key concepts

Find the **key concepts** that connect and relate to your main idea and rank them; most general, inclusive concepts come first, then link to smaller, more specific concepts.

Finish by connecting concepts--creating linking phrases and words

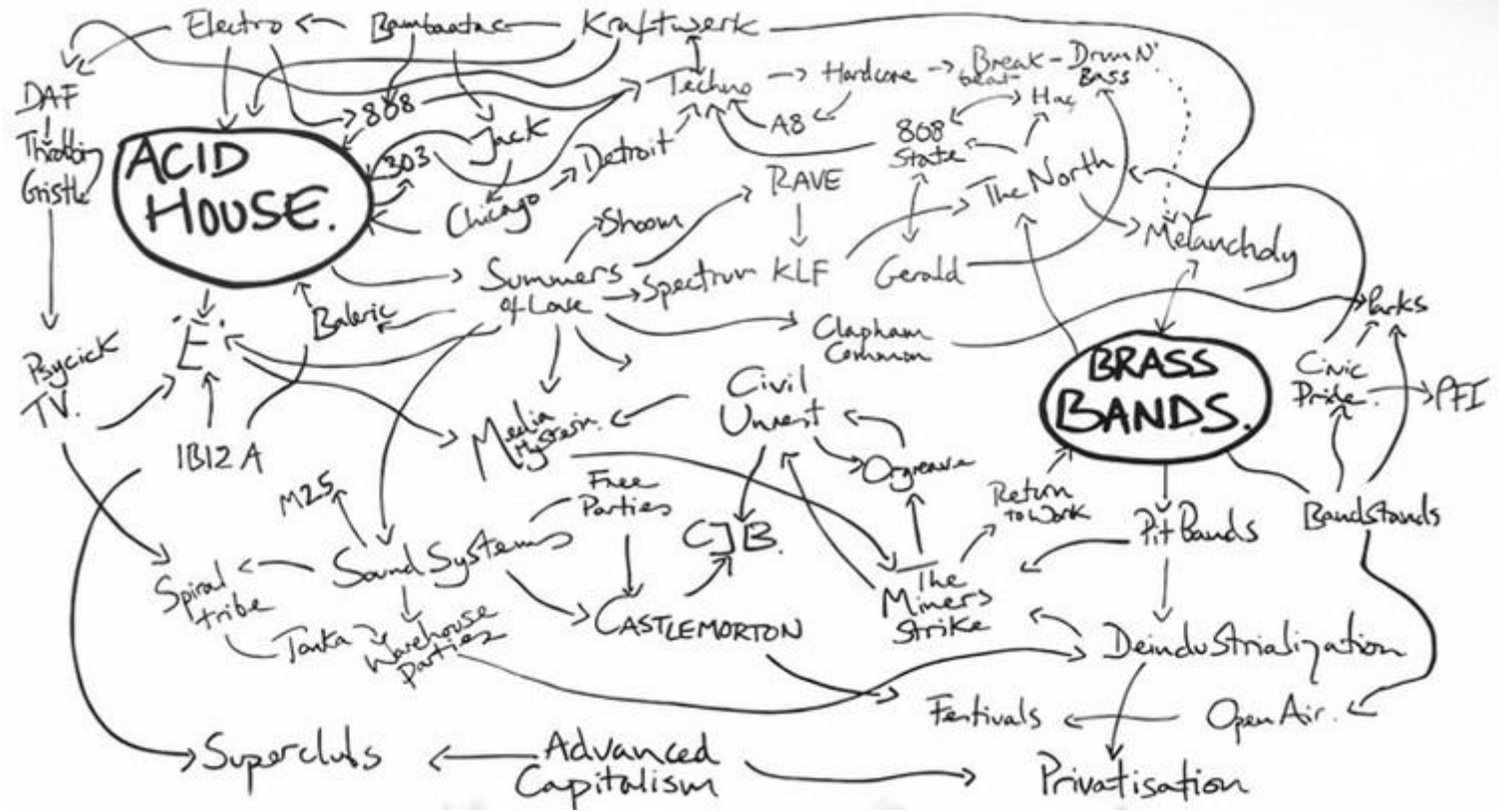
Once the basic links between the concepts are created, add cross-links, which connect concepts in different areas of the map, to further illustrate the relationships and strengthen student's understanding and knowledge on the topic.

How to Build a Concept Map



mind maps

a kind of concept map ?



The Differences Between Mind Maps and Concept Maps

What is a Mind Map?

Mind maps are diagrams that are primarily used for generating and exploring ideas, **brainstorming**, creative thinking and organizing information.

It is vital to understand that **mind maps revolve around one main focus topic** which branches out in nodes in a center-out hierarchical structure. Each different node represents a specific subtopic described with symbols and images, which can be further elaborated and branched. When mind mapping, aside from branching out the subtopics, it is possible to randomly add words or sentences as independent clouds. This characteristic makes mind maps more personal than concept maps.

Generally, to some extent **mind maps diagrams can be flexible, but they are always radial**, i.e. they are radiating from a shared center. As **opposite to concept maps** where there can be more key topics that are branched out separately and at the same time interlinked with other topics, mind maps represent a central topic that expands in a few subtopics that are also branched out separately but not interlinked with other topics.

What is a concept map?

Concept maps are primarily used for organizing and visualizing tacit knowledge, analyzing complex problems, identifying solutions and taking action. They encapsulate a larger and more complex amount of information and are also used for explaining how these complex concepts relate to each other.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that concept maps are more **factual as they identify more main concepts** and the systematic and complex relationships between them.

One important difference between mind mapping and concept mapping is that concept maps include cross-connections between concepts that are described with 'action verbs' such as, contributes to, causes, requires, leads to, etc.

Concept maps are organized in a top-down hierarchical structure and are used to show multiple complex concepts and the relationships and cross-connections between them. In this regard, the topics featured in a concept map can have more parent and child topics while in a mind map can have only one parent topic.

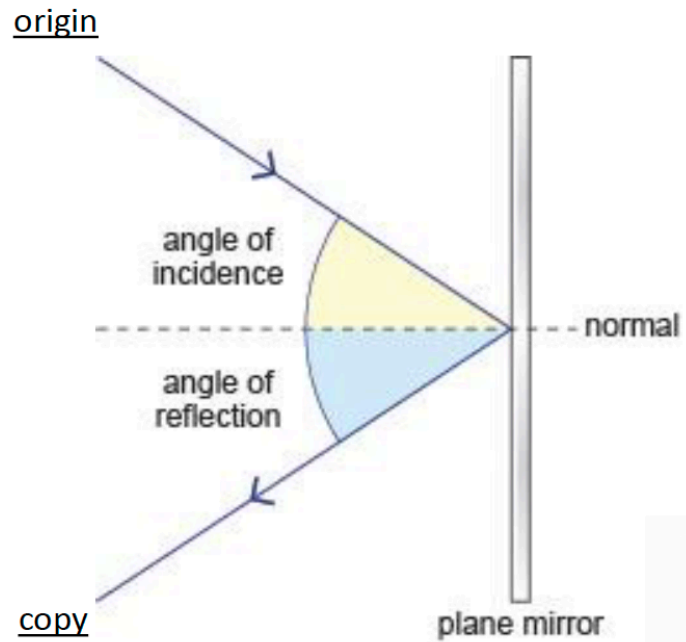
*the **diffractive**
practitioner*

Deterritorialisation and Diffraction

towards a
Posthuman Praxis

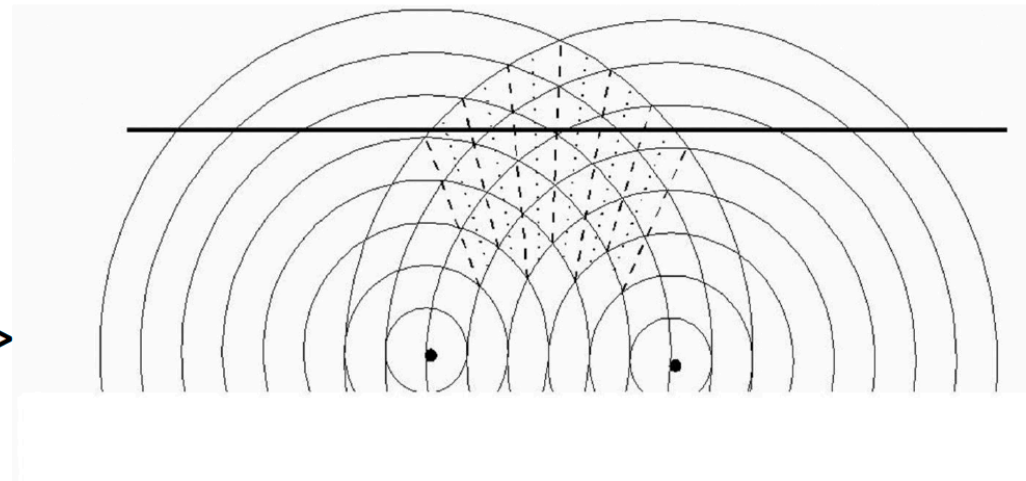
Posthumanism provides **counter perspectives to humanism** whilst also allying itself with other politico-pedagogical projects such as feminism, postcolonialism, anti-racism

humanist education theories typically view knowledge and learning as something that is ‘**constructed**’ or ‘**achieved**’, **posthumanist** ontologies rather configure pedagogical practice as **convergences of flows and intensities**



< Reflexion

Diffraction >

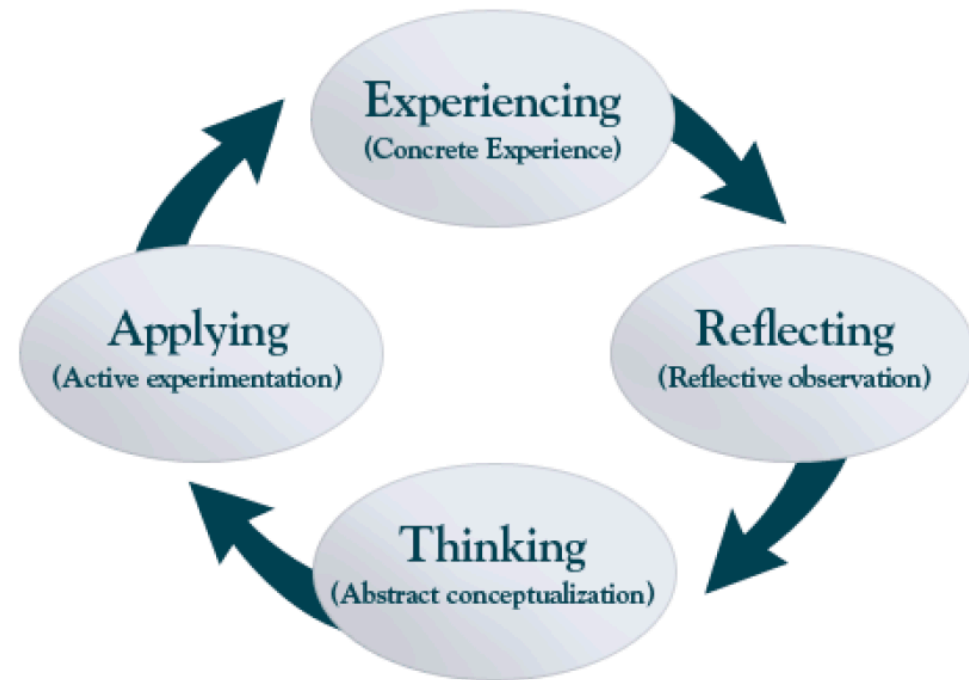


‘quantum thinking’ – diffraction and/or reflection – creative entanglements – meaning in matter and matter in meaning

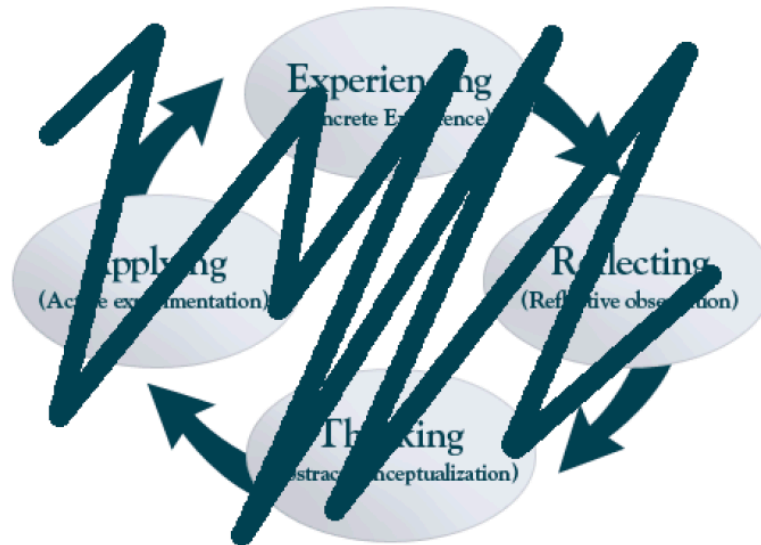
the reflective practitioner

In reflection, the emphasis is on what is reoccurring, what is the same,

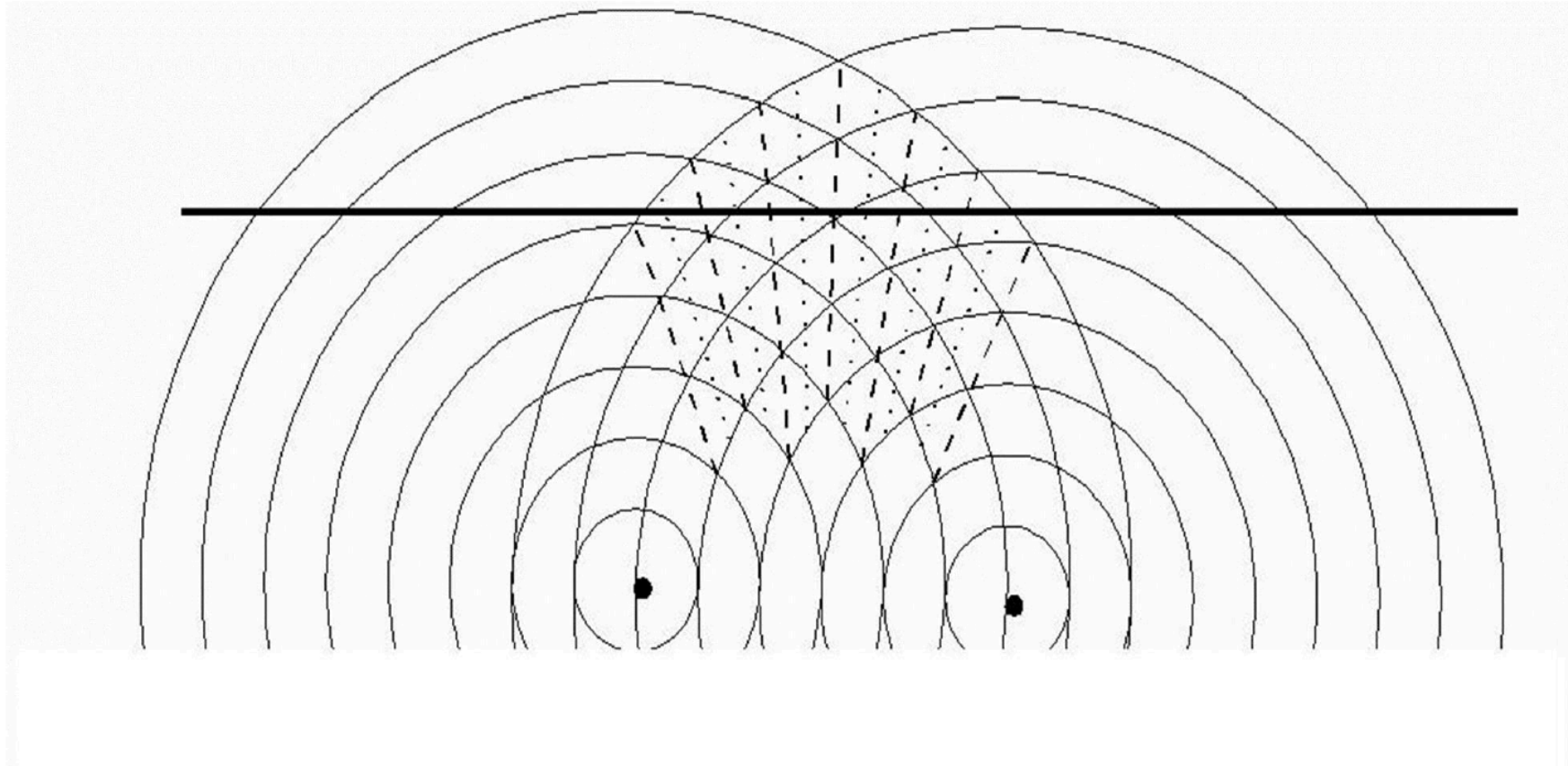
Kolb's Learning Cycle

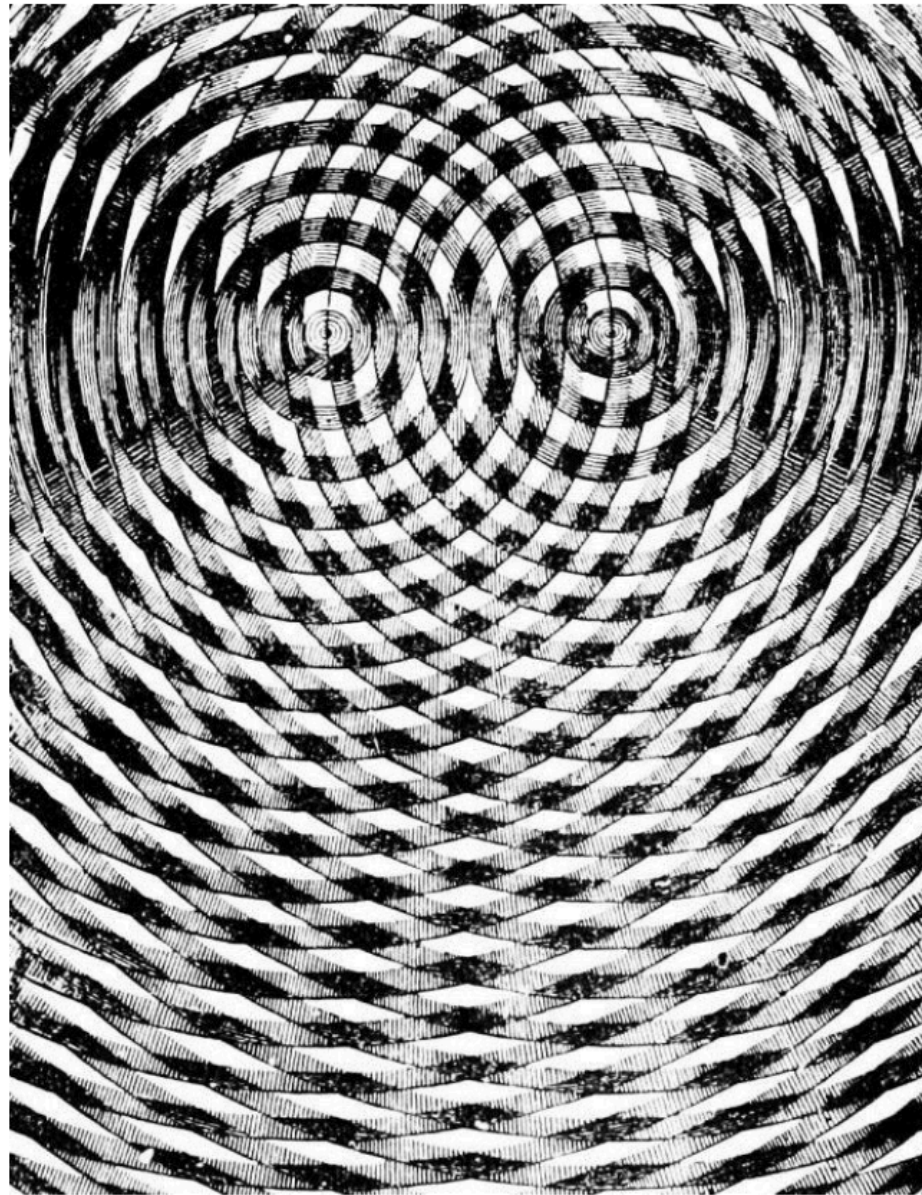
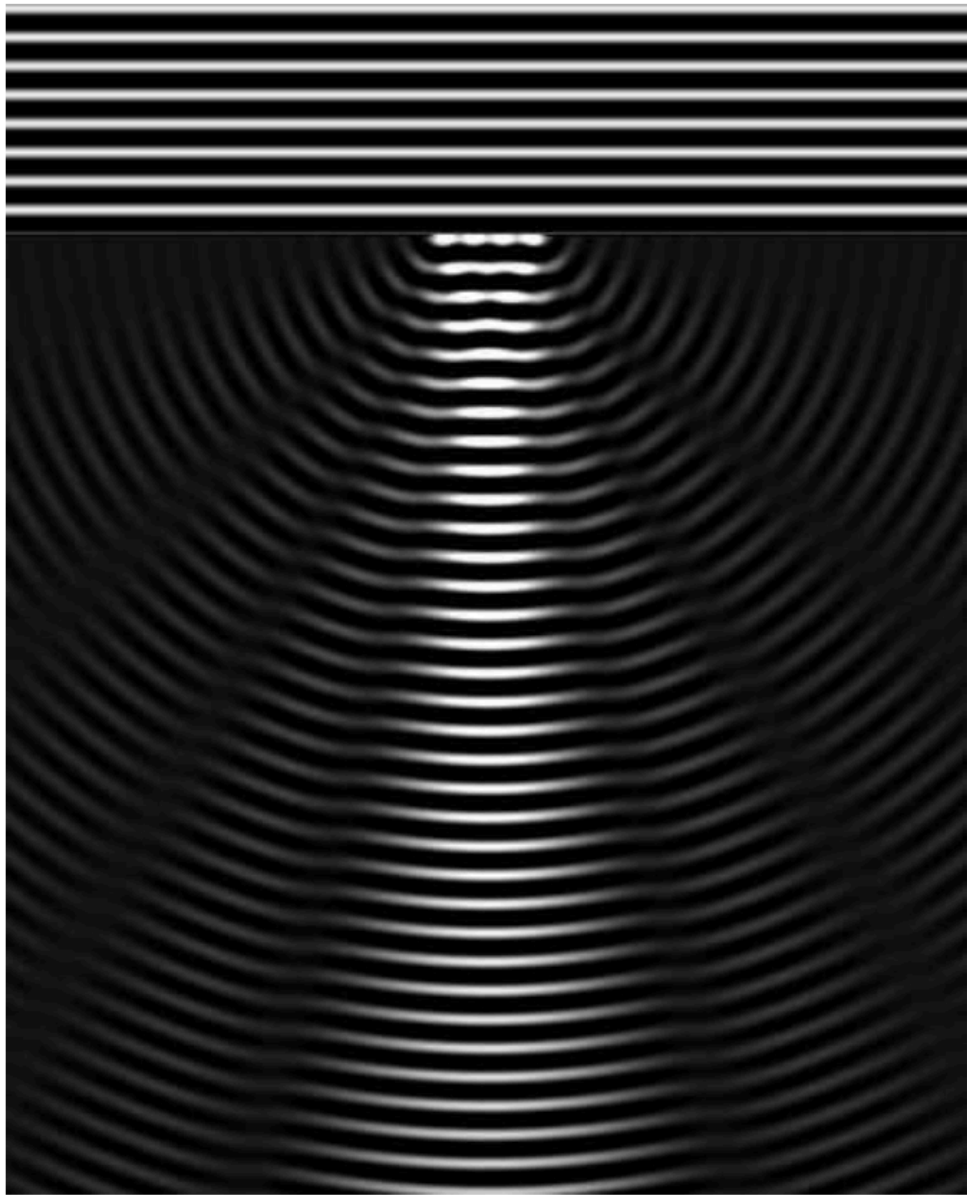


It is rather a melting pot



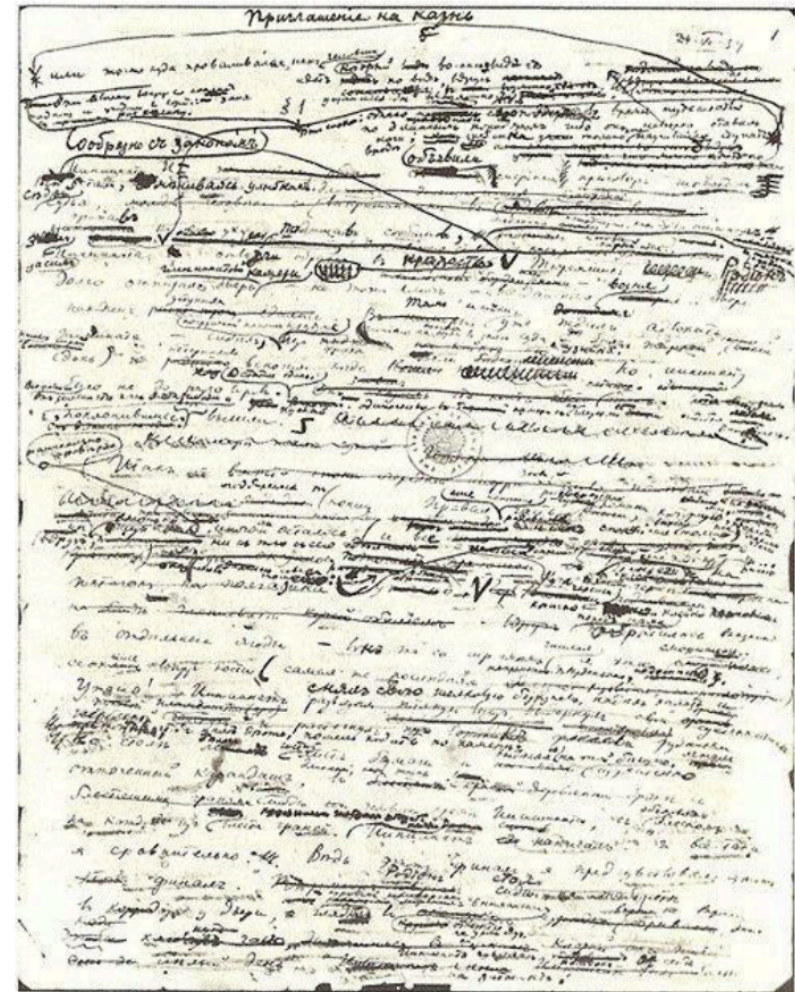
Diffraction: wave pattern superposition





the diffractive practitioner

...whereas **diffractive thinking** attends to **interferences and differences** that are enacted in the “specific material configurations of the world’s becoming” (Barad, 2007)





Medical Student

- Consolidated set of skills and notions to be learned
- Knowledge can be represented well enough by marking
- Final results have a clear and direct impact on employability



Fine Art student

- Developing an autonomous self-critical methodology
- No clear/univocal/official knowledge to be acquired
- (hence) Marking represents the value of one's practice much more arbitrarily
- Final results do not mean professional success

creativity

the performing of a kind of care that is both **critical** and **reckless**

