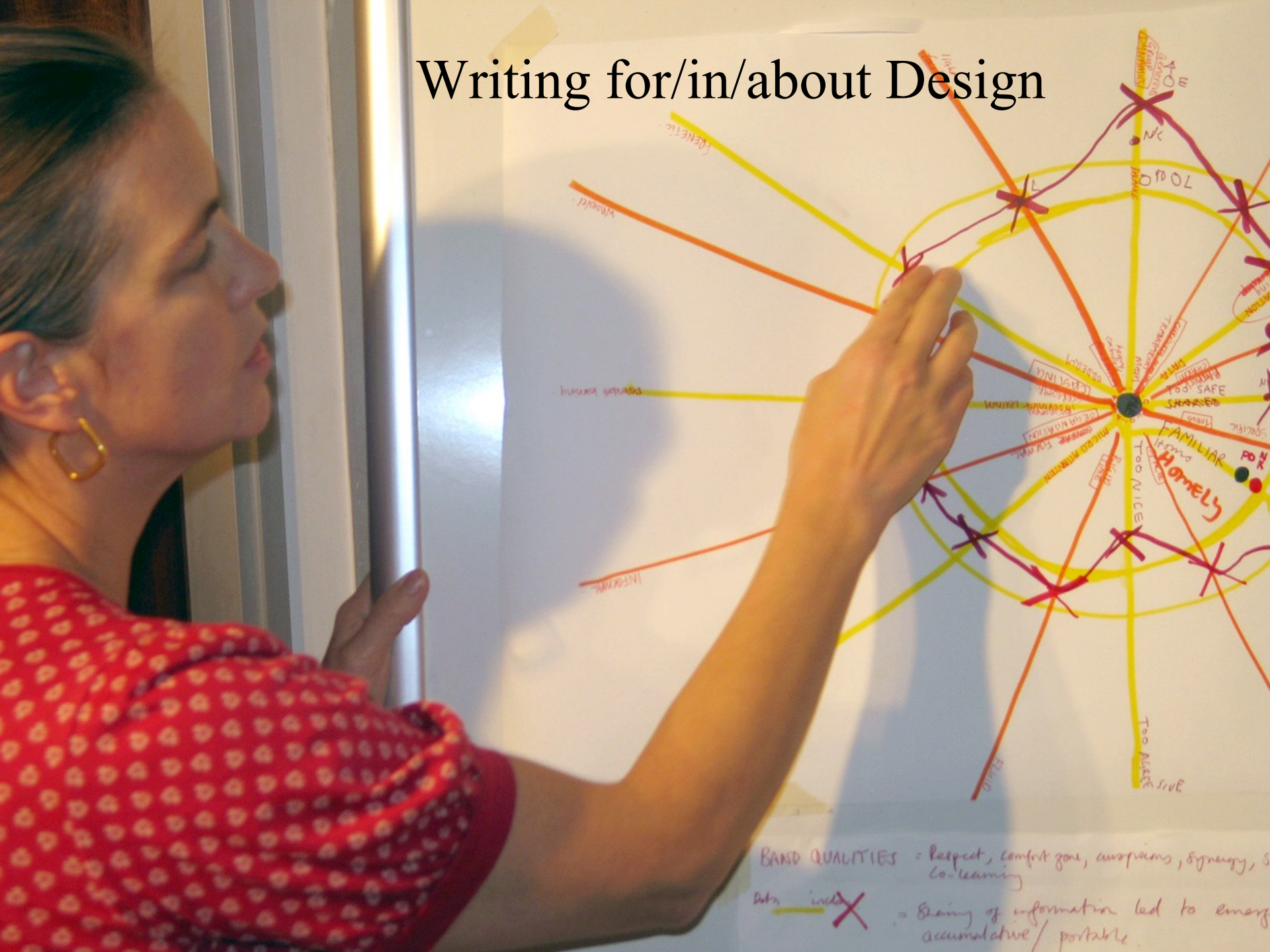
Writing for/in/about Design

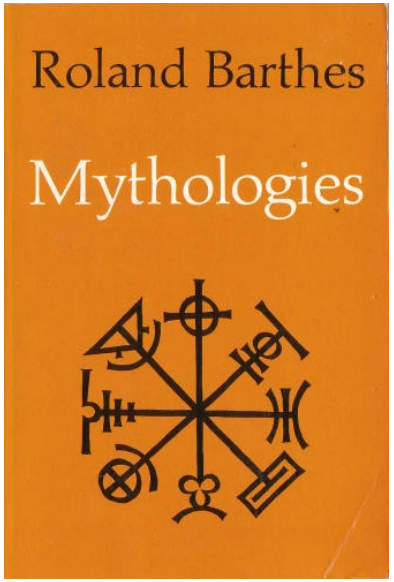


From Work to Text



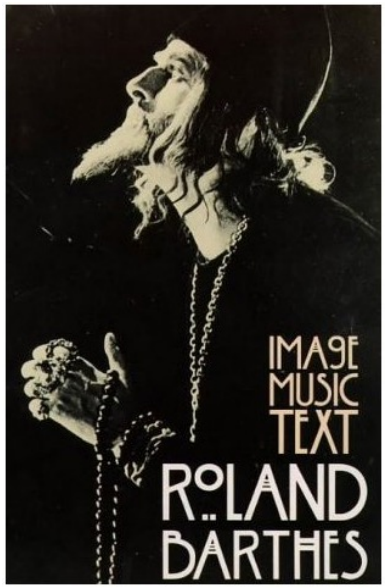
Roland Barthes
and the Death of
the Author


May 1968, Paris



Structuralism

Mythologies (1957)



Post-Structuralism

Image Music Text (1977)

Collection of essays from the late 1960s






OMO adds Brightness to whiteness
– adds Brightness to coloureds too!
OMO





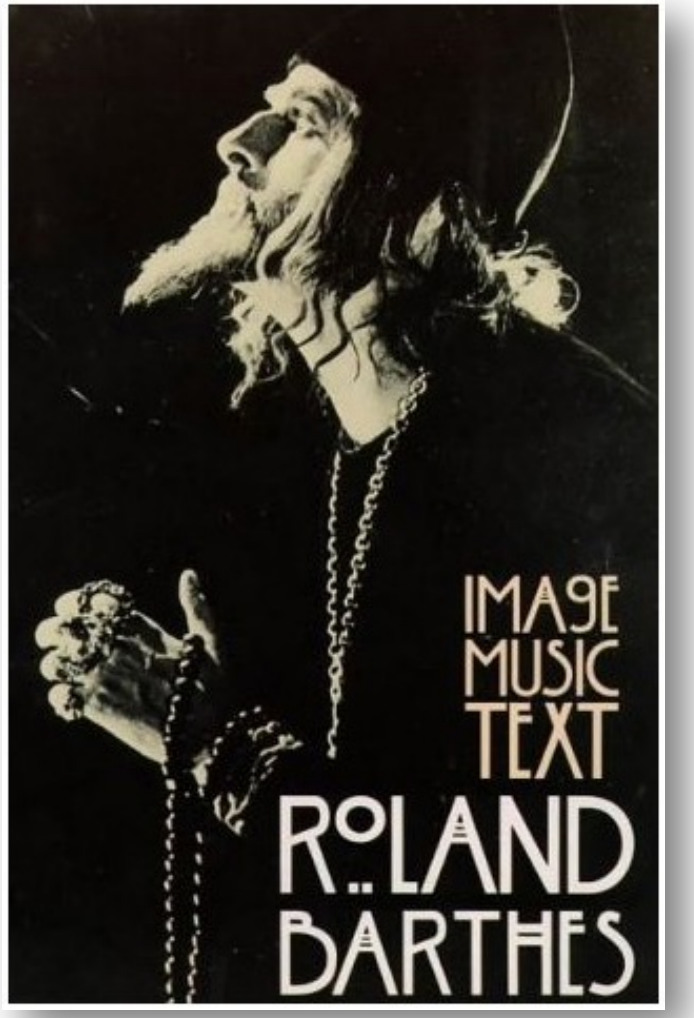
The language of gesture



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALWwK7Vz4gY

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes (1968)



The Death of the Author

= The death of authorial authority and official or authorised meaning

= A repudiation of the intentional fallacy

A text may “betray” itself

‘We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.’

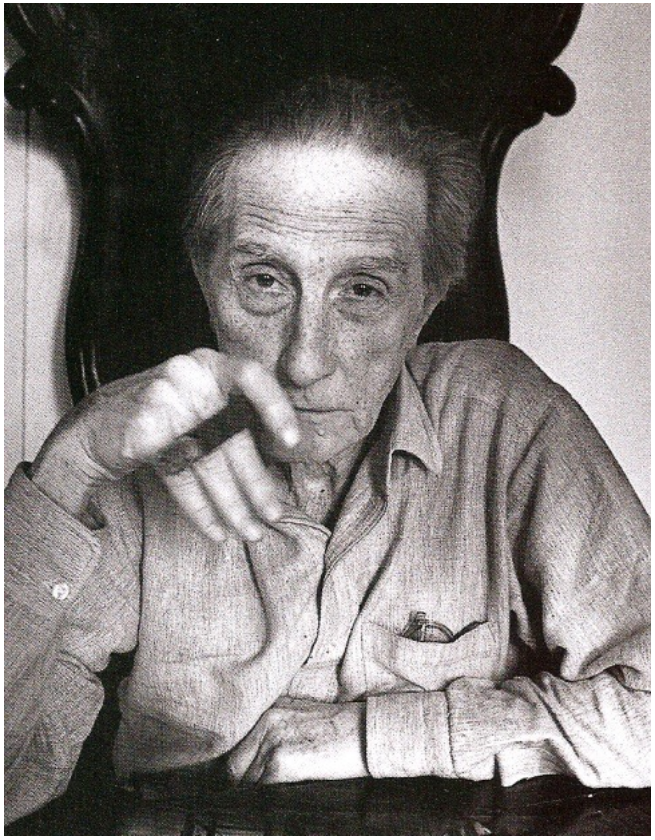
Barthes, *The Death of the Author* (1968)

The author as the maker of meaning, the critic as mediator or communicator of meaning, and the reader as consumer of meaning is radically overturned.

The Death of the Author = The Birth of the Reader

‘In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered.’

Barthes, *The Death of the Author* (1968)



‘No work of art is finished until completed by the spectator.’

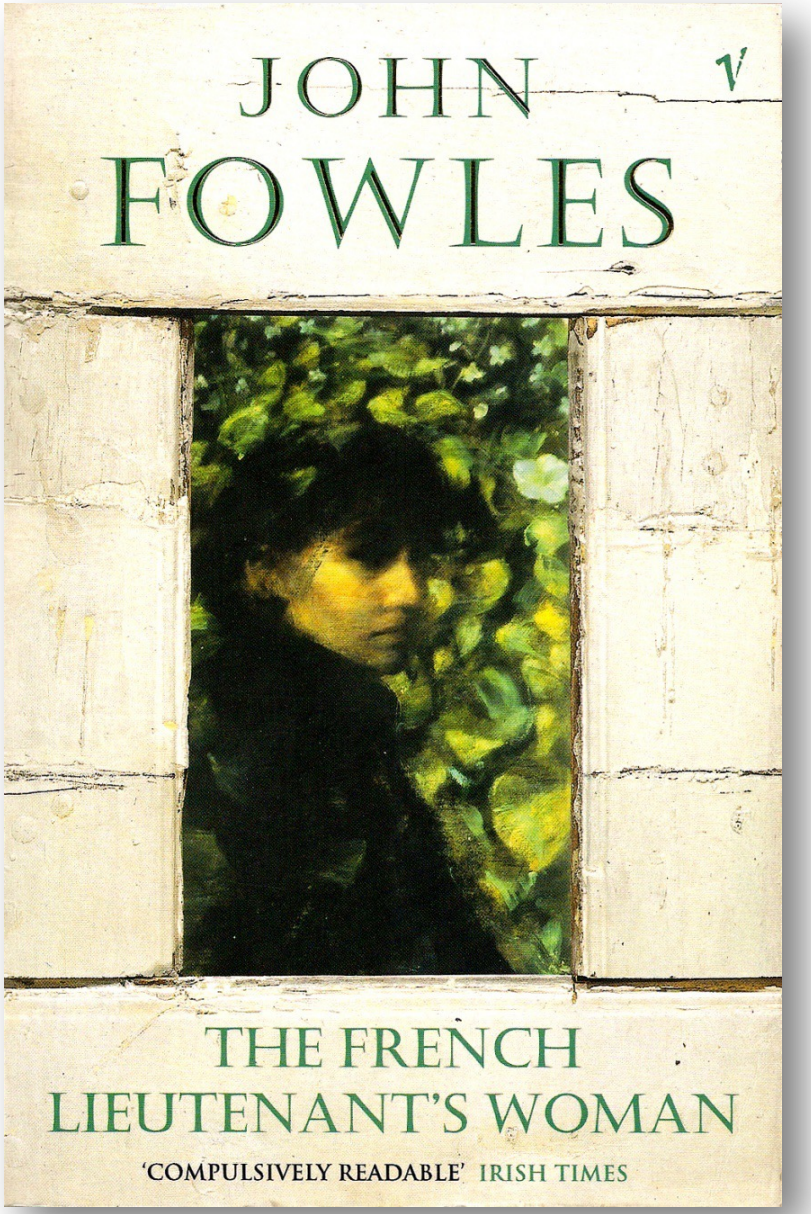
Marcel Duchamp

‘Works of art have a kind of “unconscious” which is not under the control of their producers. We have come to understand that one of those producers is the reader, viewer or listener – the recipient of a work of art is a co-creator of it.’

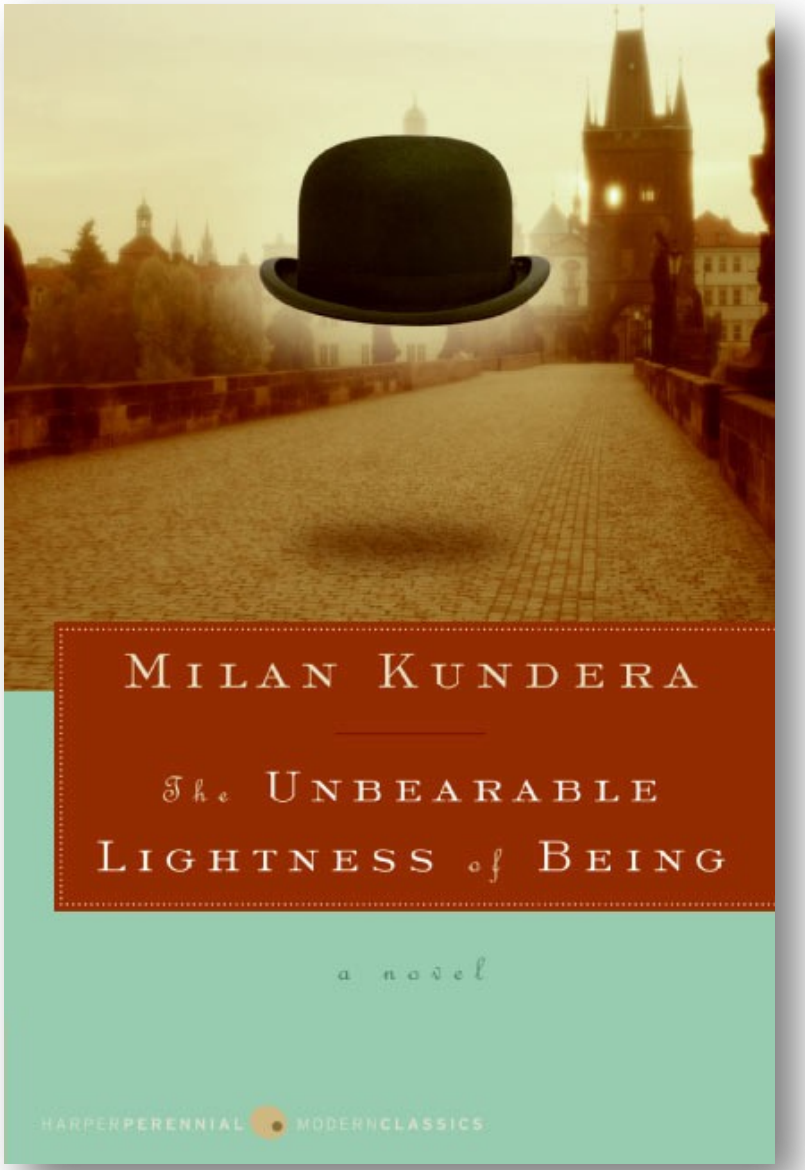
Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (2003)

The author as the reader of their own text

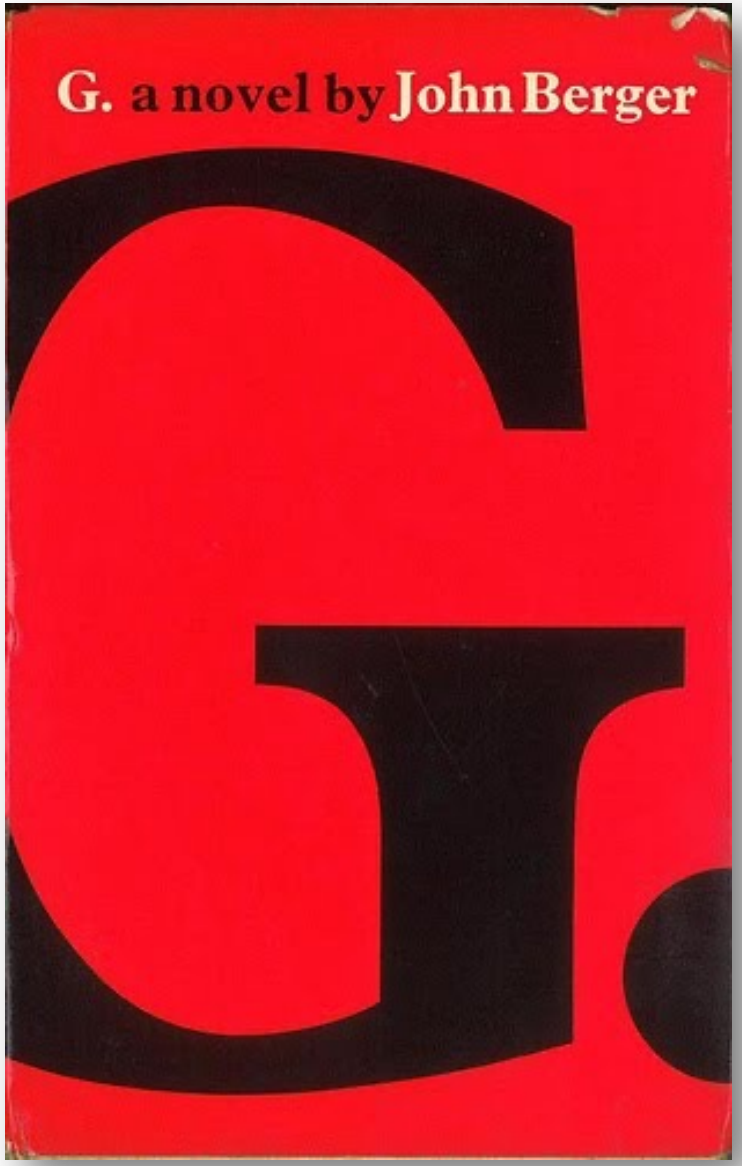
John Fowles,
The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969)



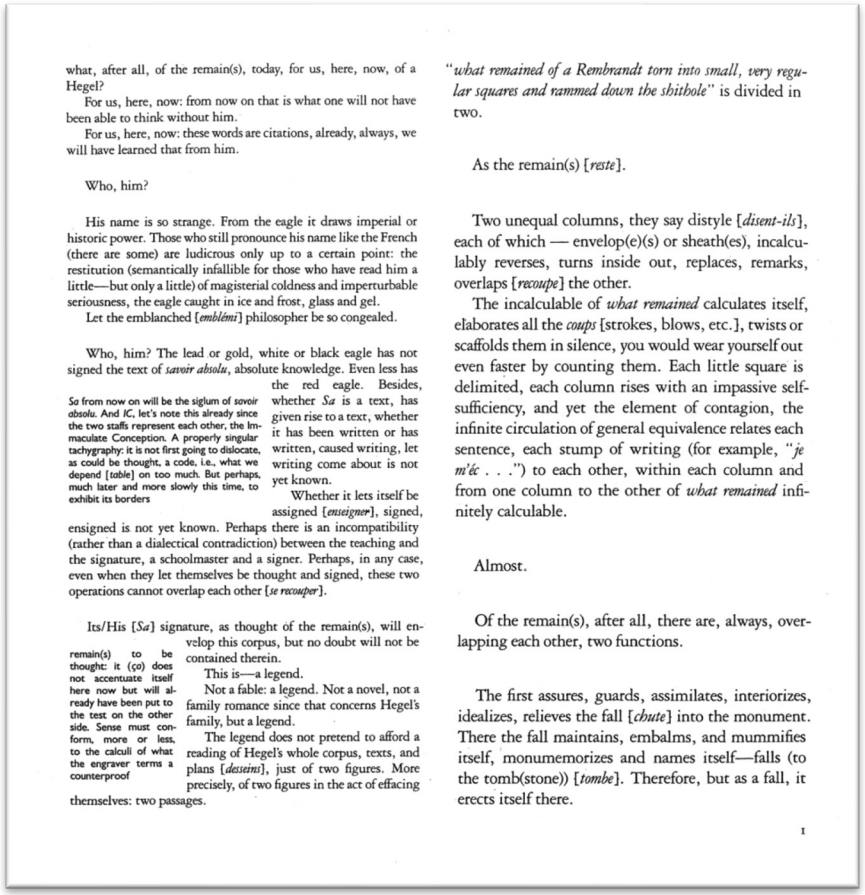
Milan Kundera,
The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984)



John Berger, *G* (1972)



The impossible passivity of the reader



what, after all, of the remain(s), today, for us, here, now, of a Hegel?

For us, here, now: from now on that is what one will not have been able to think without him.

For us, here, now: these words are citations, already, always, we will have learned that from him.

Who, him?

His name is so strange. From the eagle it draws imperial or historic power. Those who still pronounce his name like the French (there are some) are ludicrous only up to a certain point: the restitution (semantically infallible for those who have read him a little—but only a little) of magisterial coldness and imperturbable seriousness, the eagle caught in ice and frost, glass and gel.

Let the emblanched [*emblémi*] philosopher be so congealed.

Who, him? The lead or gold, white or black eagle has not signed the text of *savoir absolu*, absolute knowledge. Even less has the red eagle. Besides, whether *Sa* is a text, has given rise to a text, whether it has been written or has written, caused writing, let writing come about is not yet known.

Sa from now on will be the siglum of *savoir absolu*. And *IC*, let's note this already since the two staffs represent each other, the Immaculate Conception. A properly singular tachygraphy: it is not first going to dislocate, as could be thought, a code, i.e., what we depend [*table*] on too much. But perhaps, much later and more slowly this time, to exhibit its borders

Whether it lets itself be assigned [*enseigner*], signed, ensigned is not yet known. Perhaps there is an incompatibility (rather than a dialectical contradiction) between the teaching and the signature, a schoolmaster and a signer. Perhaps, in any case, even when they let themselves be thought and signed, these two operations cannot overlap each other [*se recouper*].

Its/His [*Sa*] signature, as thought of the remain(s), will envelop this corpus, but no doubt will not be contained therein.

remain(s) to be thought: it (*ça*) does not accentuate itself here now but will already have been put to the test on the other side. Sense must conform, more or less, to the calculi of what the engraver terms a counterproof

This is—a legend.

Not a fable: a legend. Not a novel, not a family romance since that concerns Hegel's family, but a legend.

The legend does not pretend to afford a reading of Hegel's whole corpus, texts, and plans [*desseins*], just of two figures. More precisely, of two figures in the act of effacing themselves: two passages.

"*what remained of a Rembrandt torn into small, very regular squares and rammed down the shithole*" is divided in two.

As the remain(s) [*reste*].

Two unequal columns, they say distyle [*disent-ils*], each of which — envelop(e)(s) or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps [*recoupe*] the other.

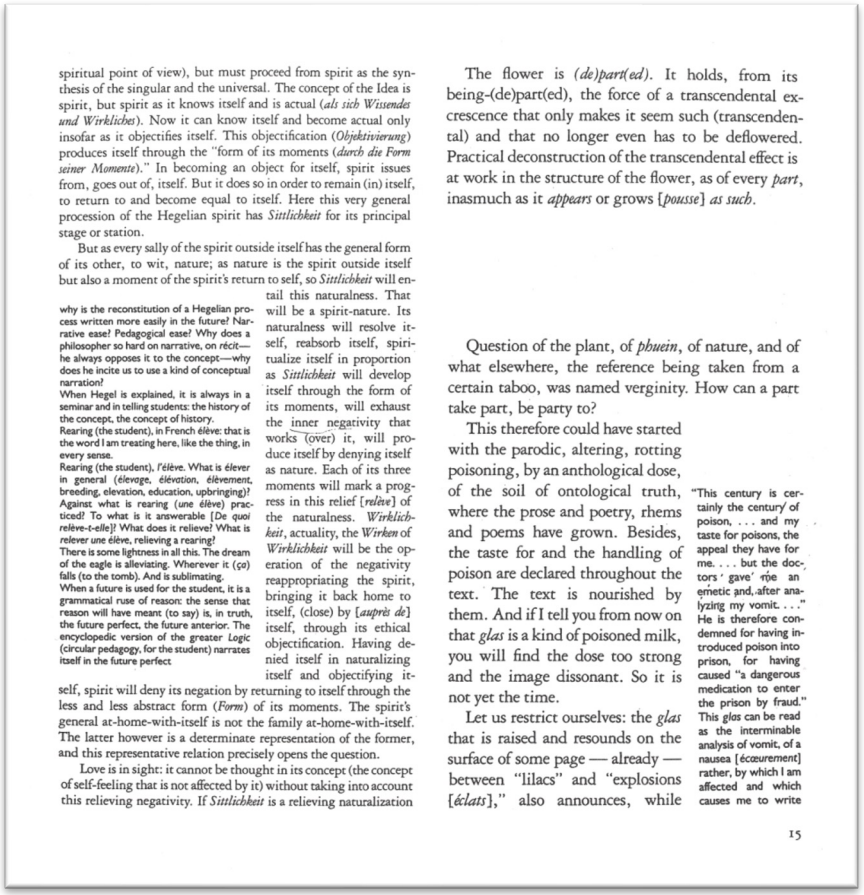
The incalculable of *what remained* calculates itself, elaborates all the *coups* [strokes, blows, etc.], twists or scaffolds them in silence, you would wear yourself out even faster by counting them. Each little square is delimited, each column rises with an impassive self-sufficiency, and yet the element of contagion, the infinite circulation of general equivalence relates each sentence, each stump of writing (for example, "*je m'éc* . . .") to each other, within each column and from one column to the other of *what remained* infinitely calculable.

Almost.

Of the remain(s), after all, there are, always, overlapping each other, two functions.

The first assures, guards, assimilates, interiorizes, idealizes, relieves the fall [*chute*] into the monument. There the fall maintains, embalms, and mummifies itself, monumemorizes and names itself—falls (to the tomb(stone)) [*tombe*]. Therefore, but as a fall, it erects itself there.

1



spiritual point of view), but must proceed from spirit as the synthesis of the singular and the universal. The concept of the Idea is spirit, but spirit as it knows itself and is actual (*als sich Wissendes und Wirkliches*). Now it can know itself and become actual only insofar as it objectifies itself. This objectification (*Objektivierung*) produces itself through the "form of its moments (*durch die Form seiner Momente*)." In becoming an object for itself, spirit issues from, goes out of, itself. But it does so in order to remain (in) itself, to return to and become equal to itself. Here this very general procession of the Hegelian spirit has *Sittlichkeit* for its principal stage or station.

But as every sally of the spirit outside itself has the general form of its other, to wit, nature; as nature is the spirit outside itself but also a moment of the spirit's return to self, so *Sittlichkeit* will entail this naturalness. That will be a spirit-nature. Its naturalness will resolve itself, reabsorb itself, spiritualize itself in proportion as *Sittlichkeit* will develop itself through the form of its moments, will exhaust the inner negativity that works (over) it, will produce itself by denying itself as nature. Each of its three moments will mark a progress in this relief [*relève*] of the naturalness. *Wirklichkeit*, actuality, the *Wirken* of *Wirklichkeit* will be the operation of the negativity reappropriating the spirit, bringing it back home to itself, (close) by [*auprès de*] itself, through its ethical objectification. Having denied itself in naturalizing itself and objectifying itself, spirit will deny its negation by returning to itself through the less and less abstract form (*Form*) of its moments. The spirit's general at-home-with-itself is not the family at-home-with-itself. The latter however is a determinate representation of the former, and this representative relation precisely opens the question.

why is the reconstitution of a Hegelian process written more easily in the future? Narrative ease? Pedagogical ease? Why does a philosopher so hard on narrative, on *récit*—he always opposes it to the concept—why does he incite us to use a kind of conceptual narration?
When Hegel is explained, it is always in a seminar and in telling students: the history of the concept, the concept of history.
Rearing (the student), in French *élève*: that is the word I am treating here, like the thing, in every sense.
Rearing (the student), *l'élève*. What is *élever* in general (*élevage, élévation, élèvement*, breeding, elevation, education, upbringing)? Against what is rearing (*une élève*) practiced? To what is it answerable [*De quoi relève-t-elle*]? What does it relieve? What is *relever une élève*, relieving a rearing?
There is some lightness in all this. The dream of the eagle is alleviating. Wherever it (*ça*) falls (to the tomb). And is sublimating.
When a future is used for the student, it is a grammatical ruse of reason: the sense that reason will have meant (to say) is, in truth, the future perfect, the future anterior. The encyclopedic version of the greater Logic (circular pedagogy, for the student) narrates itself in the future perfect

Love is in sight: it cannot be thought in its concept (the concept of self-feeling that is not affected by it) without taking into account this relieving negativity. If *Sittlichkeit* is a relieving naturalization

The flower is *(de)part(ed)*. It holds, from its being-(de)part(ed), the force of a transcendental excrescence that only makes it seem such (transcendental) and that no longer even has to be deflowered. Practical deconstruction of the transcendental effect is at work in the structure of the flower, as of every *part*, inasmuch as it *appears* or grows [*pousse*] *as such*.

Question of the plant, of *phuein*, of nature, and of what elsewhere, the reference being taken from a certain taboo, was named verginity. How can a part take part, be party to?

This therefore could have started with the parodic, altering, rotting poisoning, by an anthological dose, of the soil of ontological truth, where the prose and poetry, rhems and poems have grown. Besides, the taste for and the handling of poison are declared throughout the text. The text is nourished by them. And if I tell you from now on that *glas* is a kind of poisoned milk, you will find the dose too strong and the image dissonant. So it is not yet the time.

"This century is certainly the century of poison, . . . and my taste for poisons, the appeal they have for me. . . . but the doctors gave me an emetic and, after analyzing my vomit. . . ." He is therefore condemned for having introduced poison into prison, for having caused "a dangerous medication to enter the prison by fraud." This *glas* can be read as the interminable analysis of vomit, of a nausea [*écœurement*] rather, by which I am affected and which causes me to write

Let us restrict ourselves: the *glas* that is raised and resounds on the surface of some page — already — between "lilacs" and "explosions [*éclats*]," also announces, while

15

Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (1986)

Leonard as the reader of the text of his own life

Christopher Nolan,
Memento (2000)



Mutually contradictory versions of the same story

Akira Kurosawa,
Rashomon (1950)



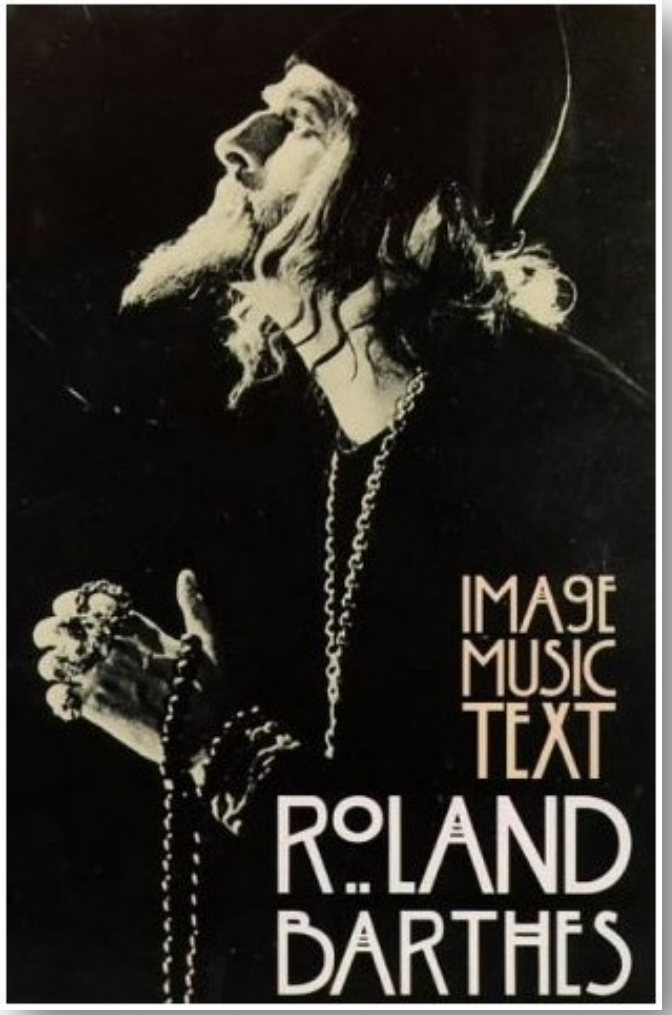


The Guardian 1986 ‘Points of View’ Advert

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6wh_5xdGvA

From Work to Text

Roland Barthes (1968)



Textile, Texture:

Text as a weave or cloth

From *textus*: texture; *texere*: to compose or weave

Context

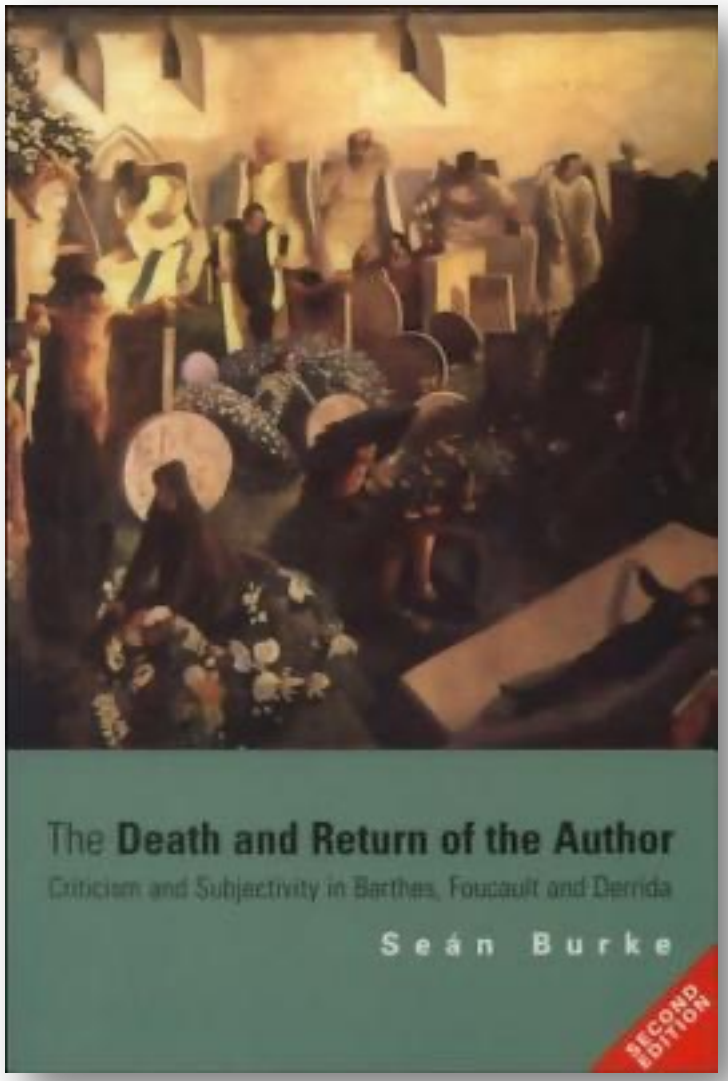
Text in its relation to a particular environment

From *contexere, com* + *texere*: to weave together

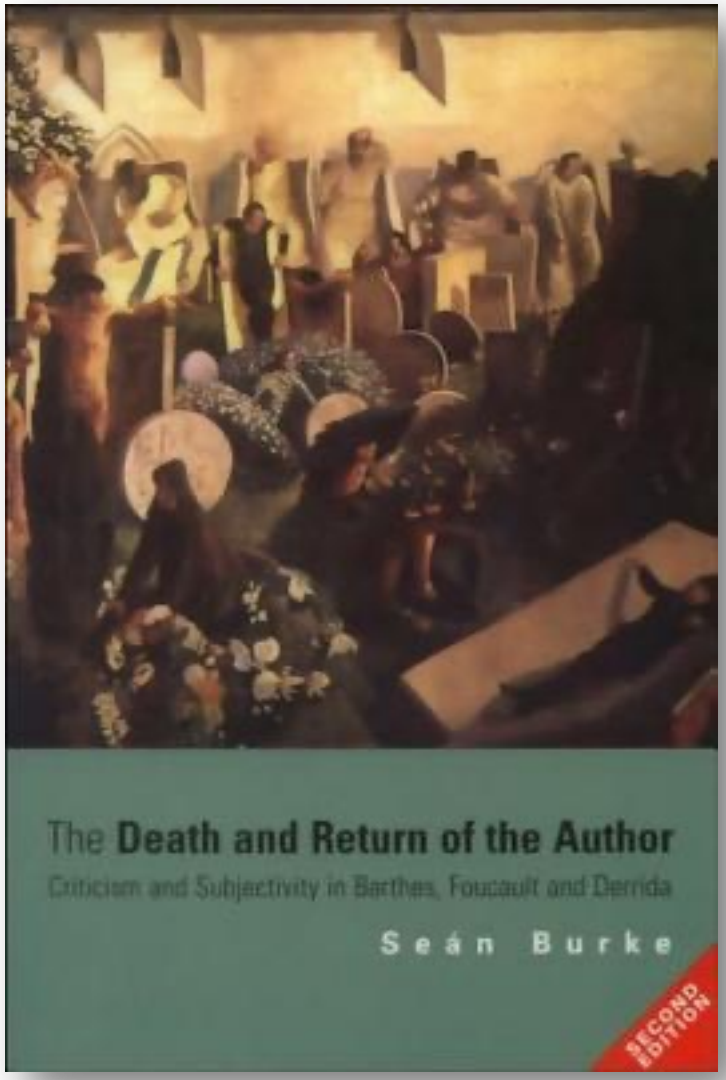
- The work is an object; the text is discursive
- The work has an authorised meaning; the text has no assured meaning
- The work is singular; the text is plural

- The work begins with the author, the text begins with the reader

- The work establishes a hierarchy of quality, the text a quality of reading



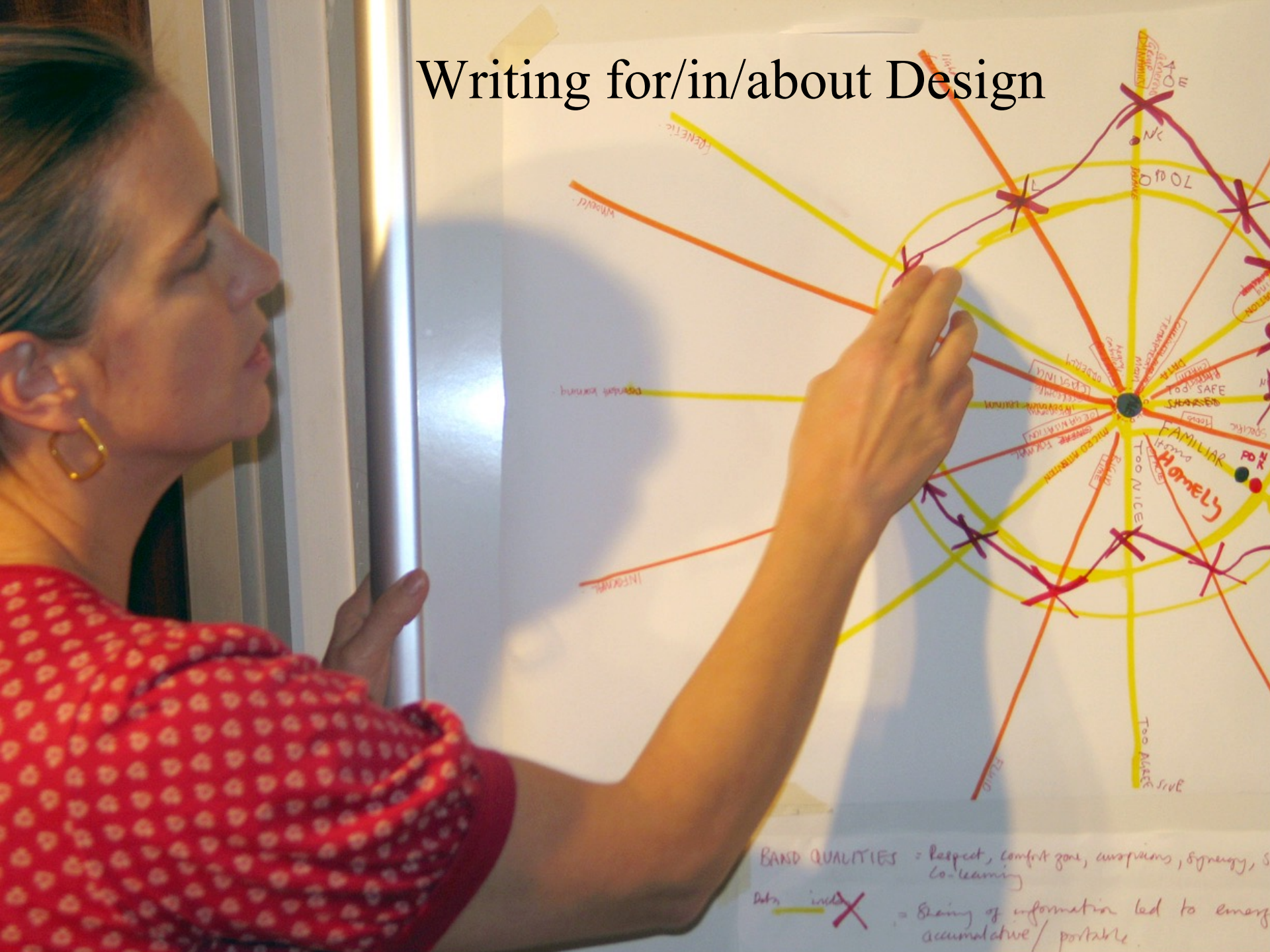
Criticisms of Barthes' 'death of the author' argument



The author never really died.
Barthes suggested a moving away from the idea of an Author-God ruling the text.

Barthes ultimately returned to what he called 'The Pleasure of the Text', reasserting the author as a creator of language who fills necessary gaps in the stylistical sphere.

Writing for/in/about Design



“Words began, in a sense, as magic”

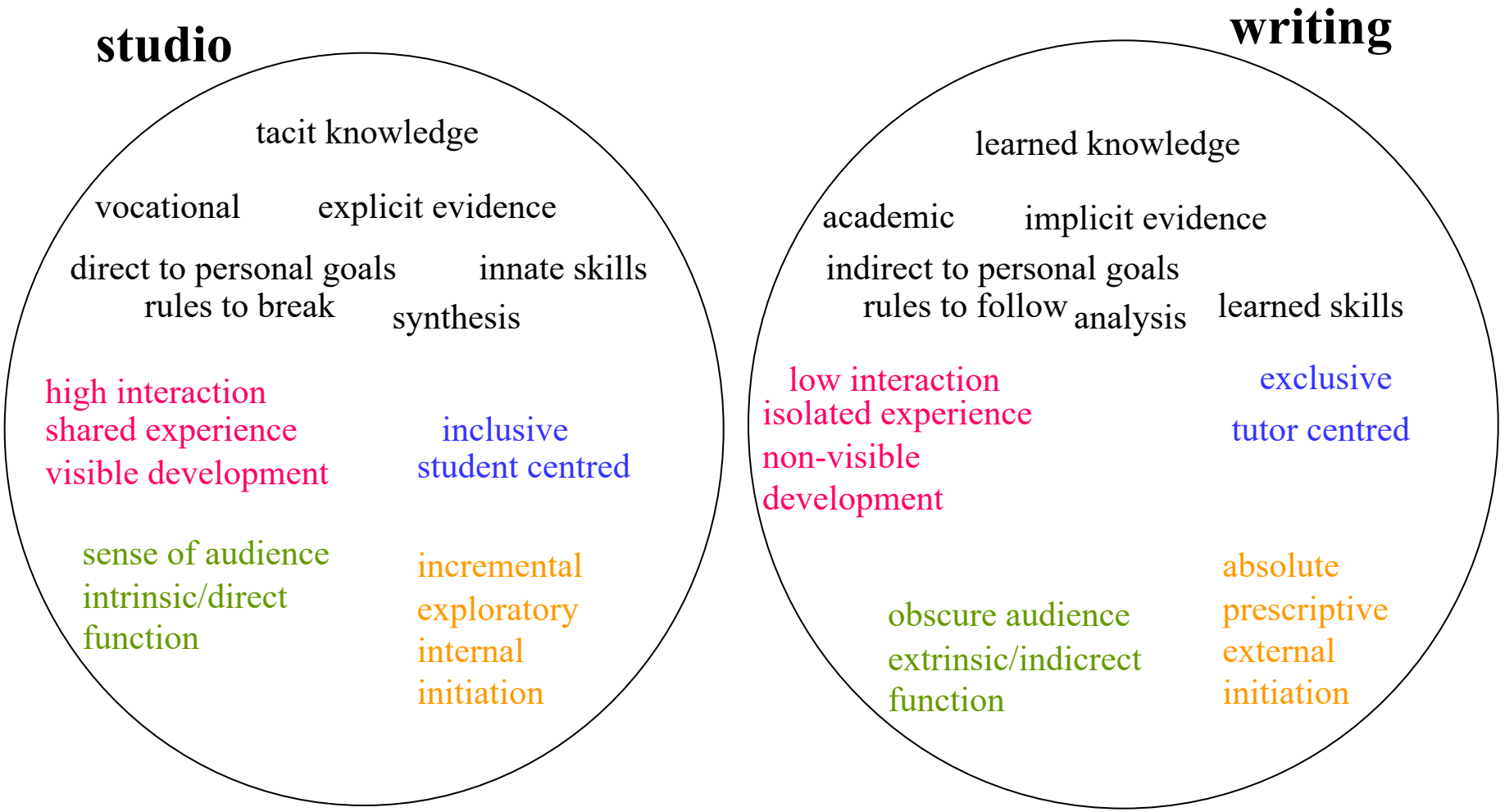
Borges: This Craft of Verse 2000

“A book is a physical object in a world of physical objects. It is a set of dead symbols. And then the right reader comes along and words - or rather the poetry behind the words, for the words themselves are mere symbols - spring to life, and we have a resurrection of the word.”

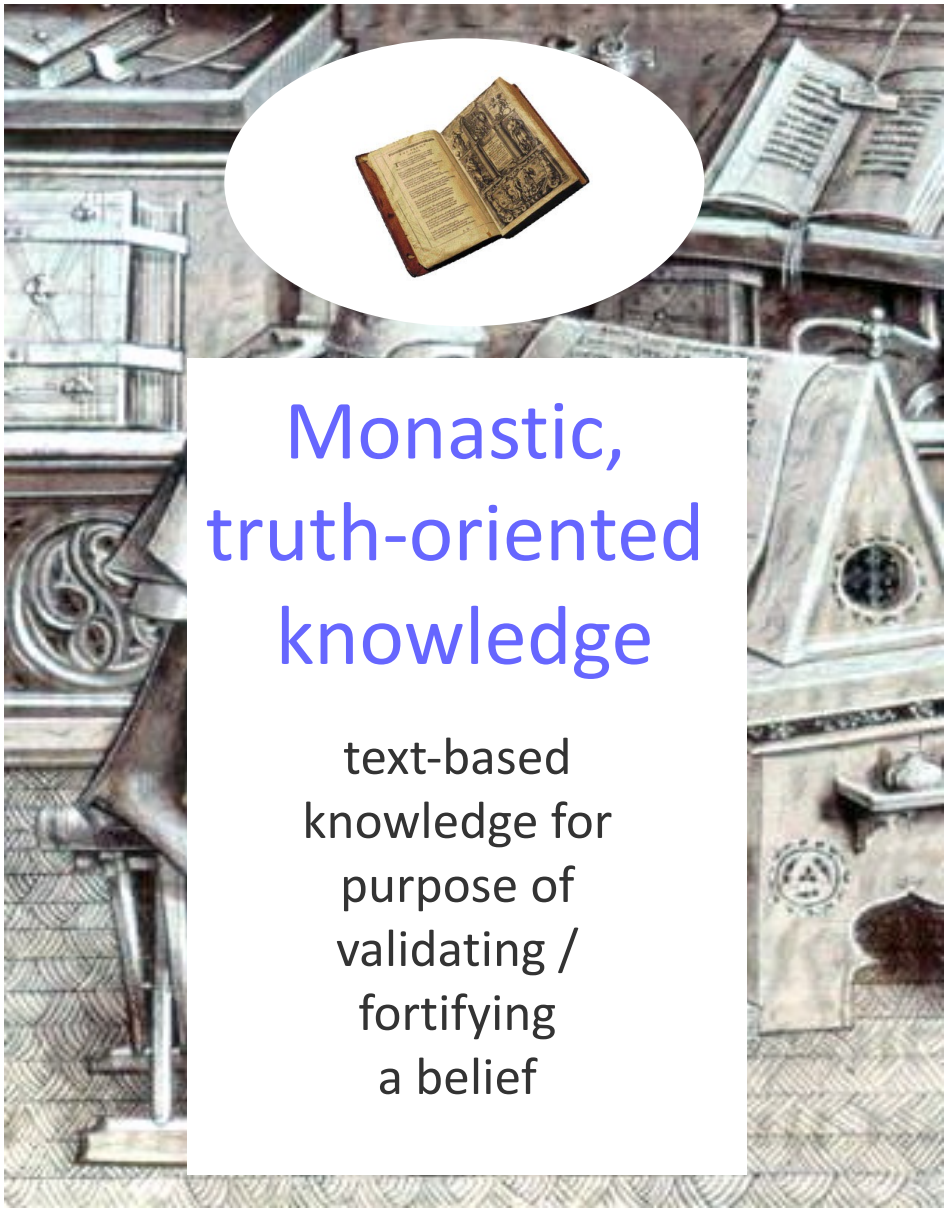
Borges: This Craft of Verse 2000

“I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence.”

Plato: Phaedrus

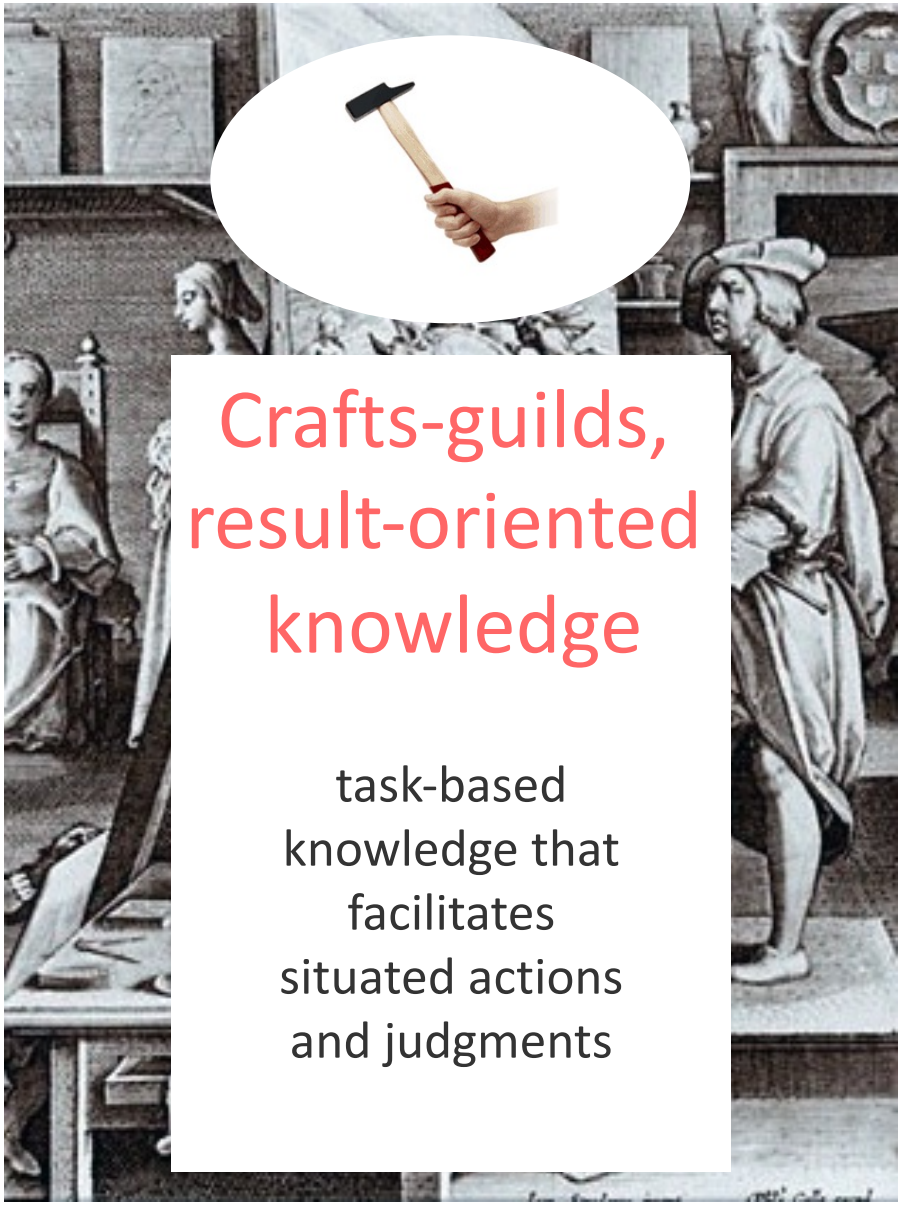


Guy Julier and Wendy Mayfield, 2005



Monastic, truth-oriented knowledge

text-based knowledge for purpose of validating / fortifying a belief



Crafts-guilds, result-oriented knowledge

task-based knowledge that facilitates situated actions and judgments

epistemological tension between theory + practice

theory?

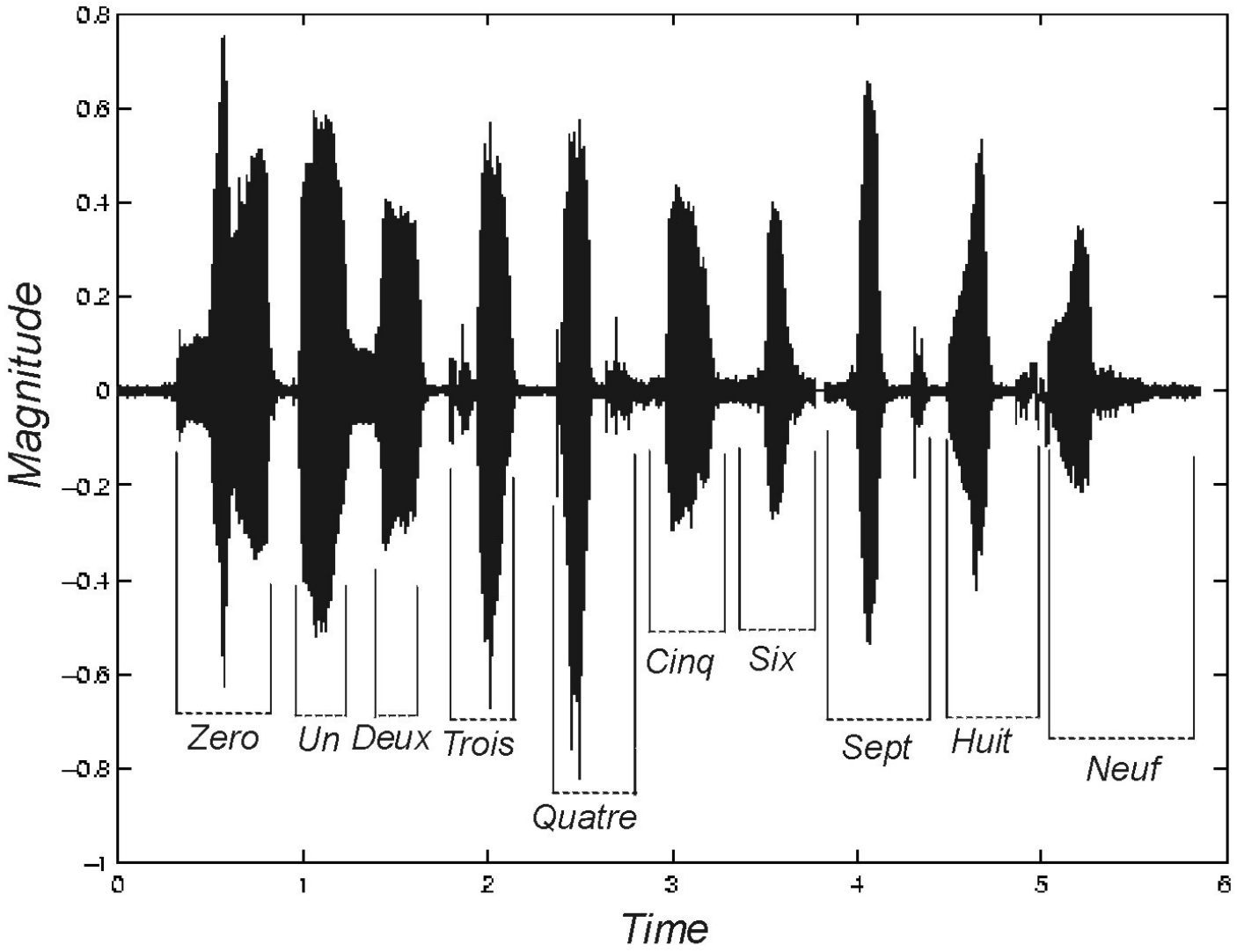


PRACTICE?



practical design makes sense in 4-D space

I designed this phone app in an eco context for this client



words make sense in a particular order

I designed this phone app in an eco context for this client

for this client





in an ecological context



this phone

I designed



I designed this phone app in an eco context for this client

for this client





in an ecological context

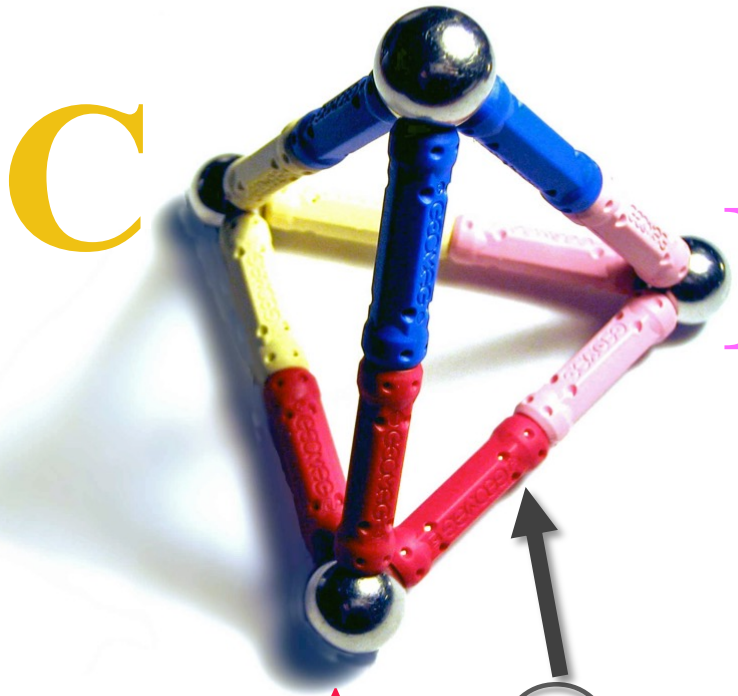




this phone

I designed

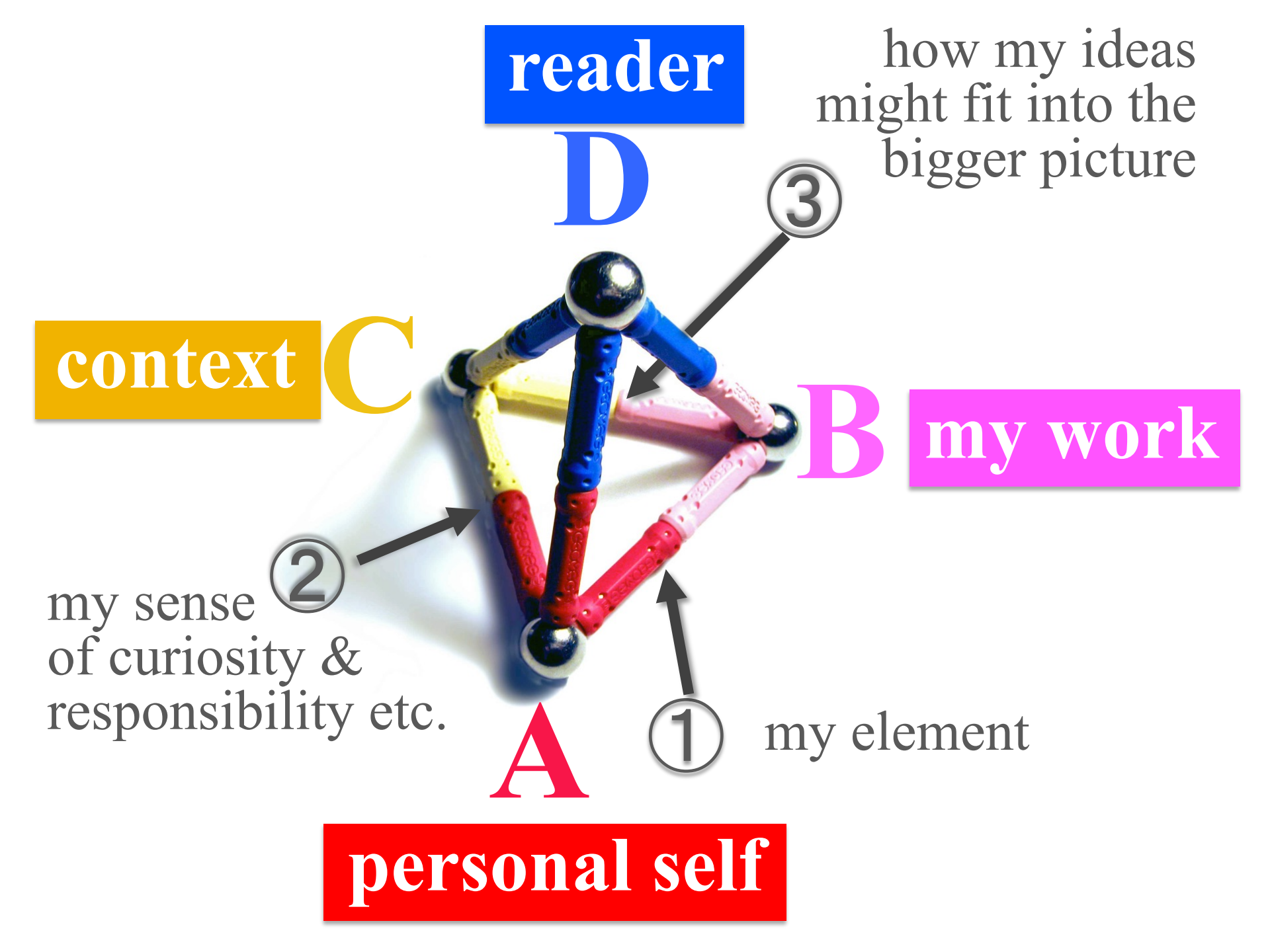


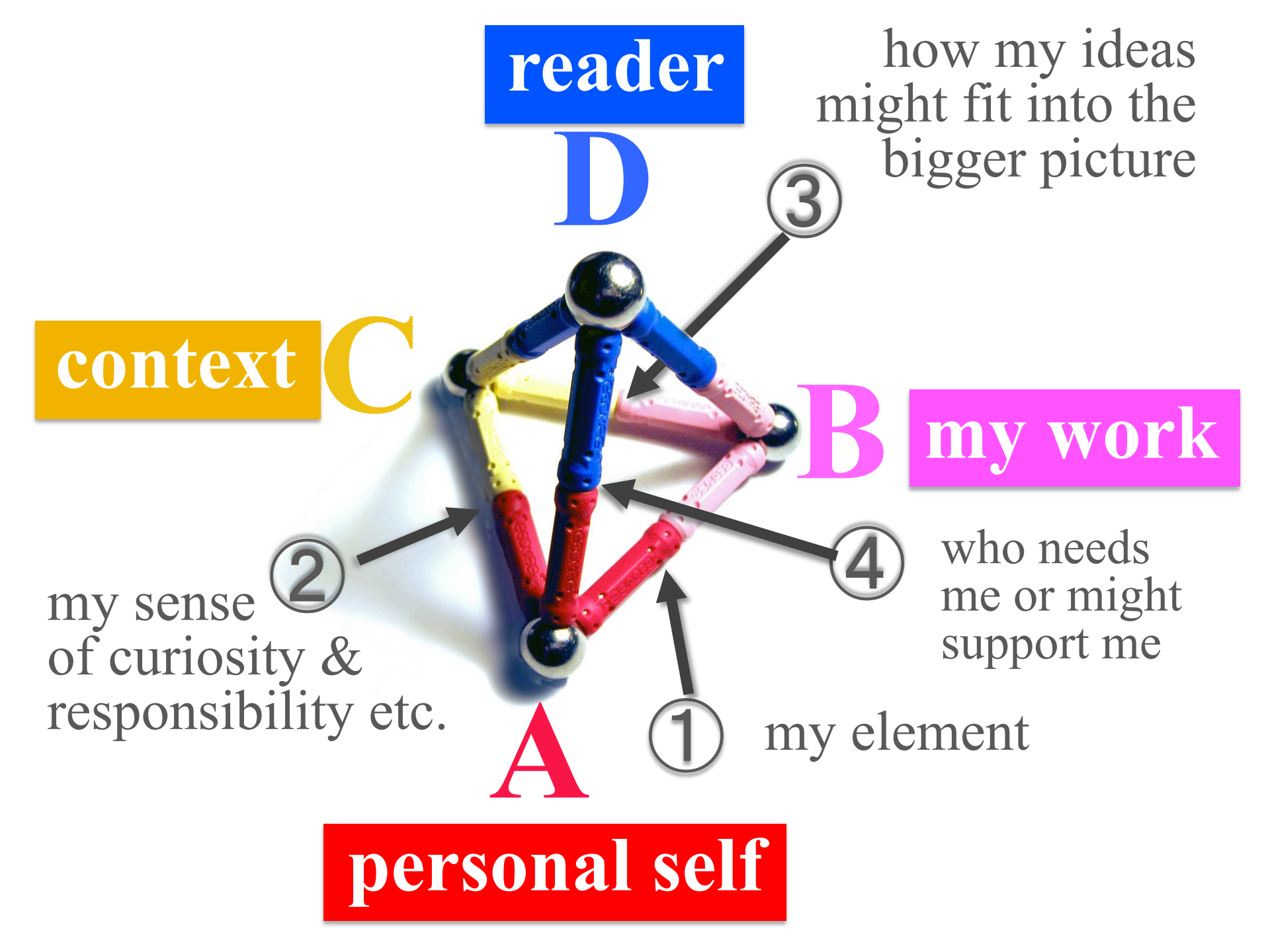


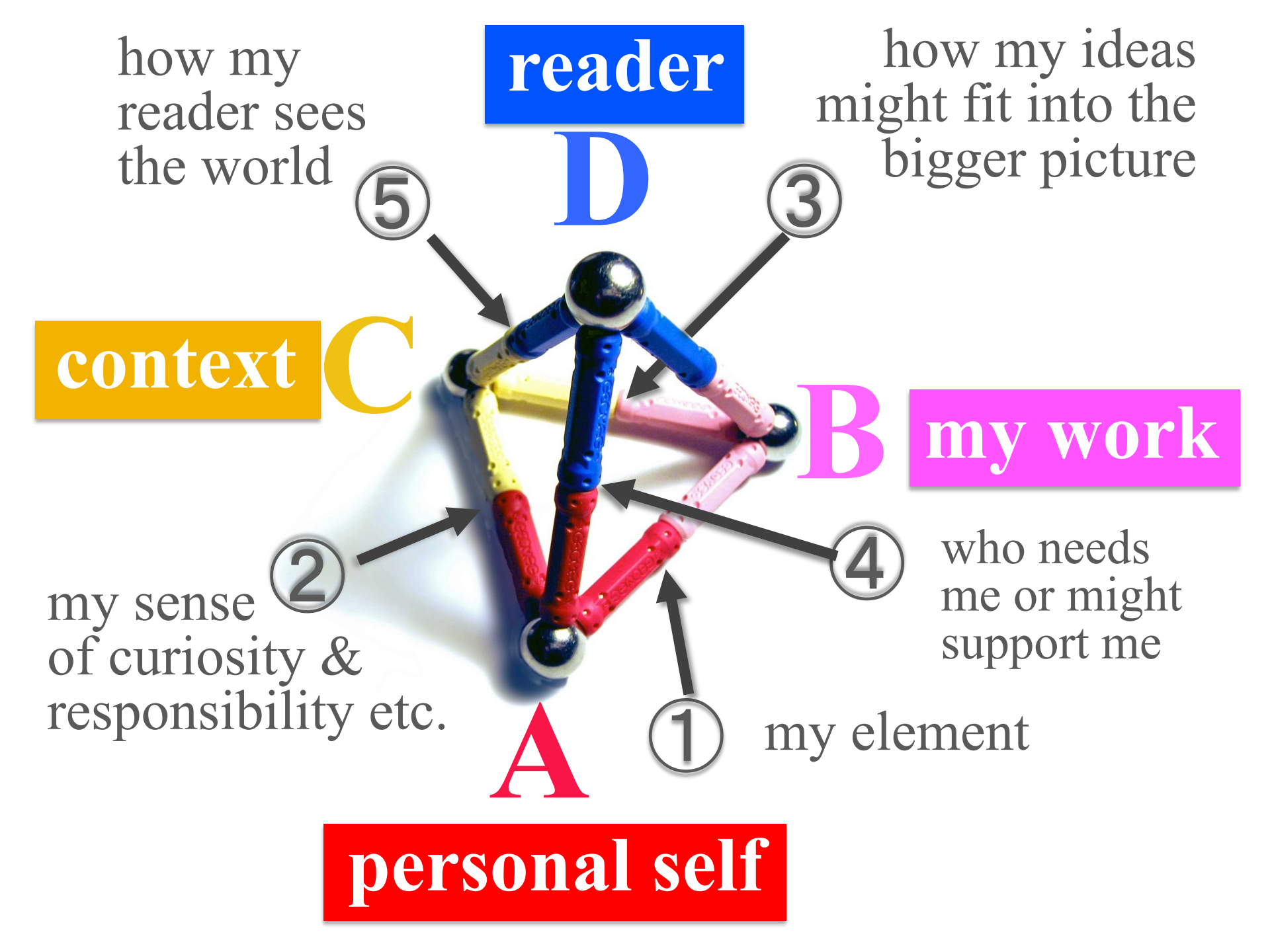
my work

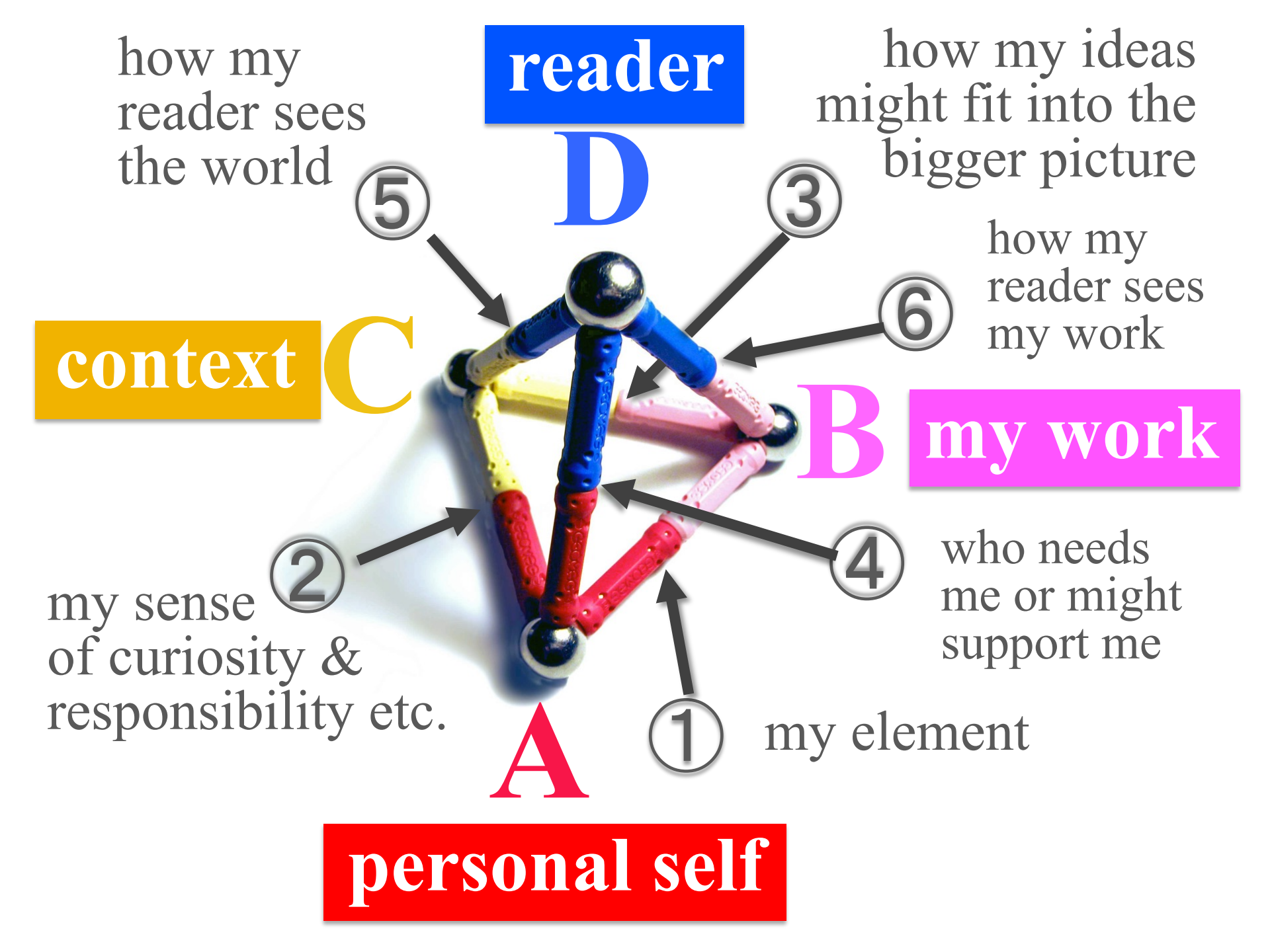
① my element

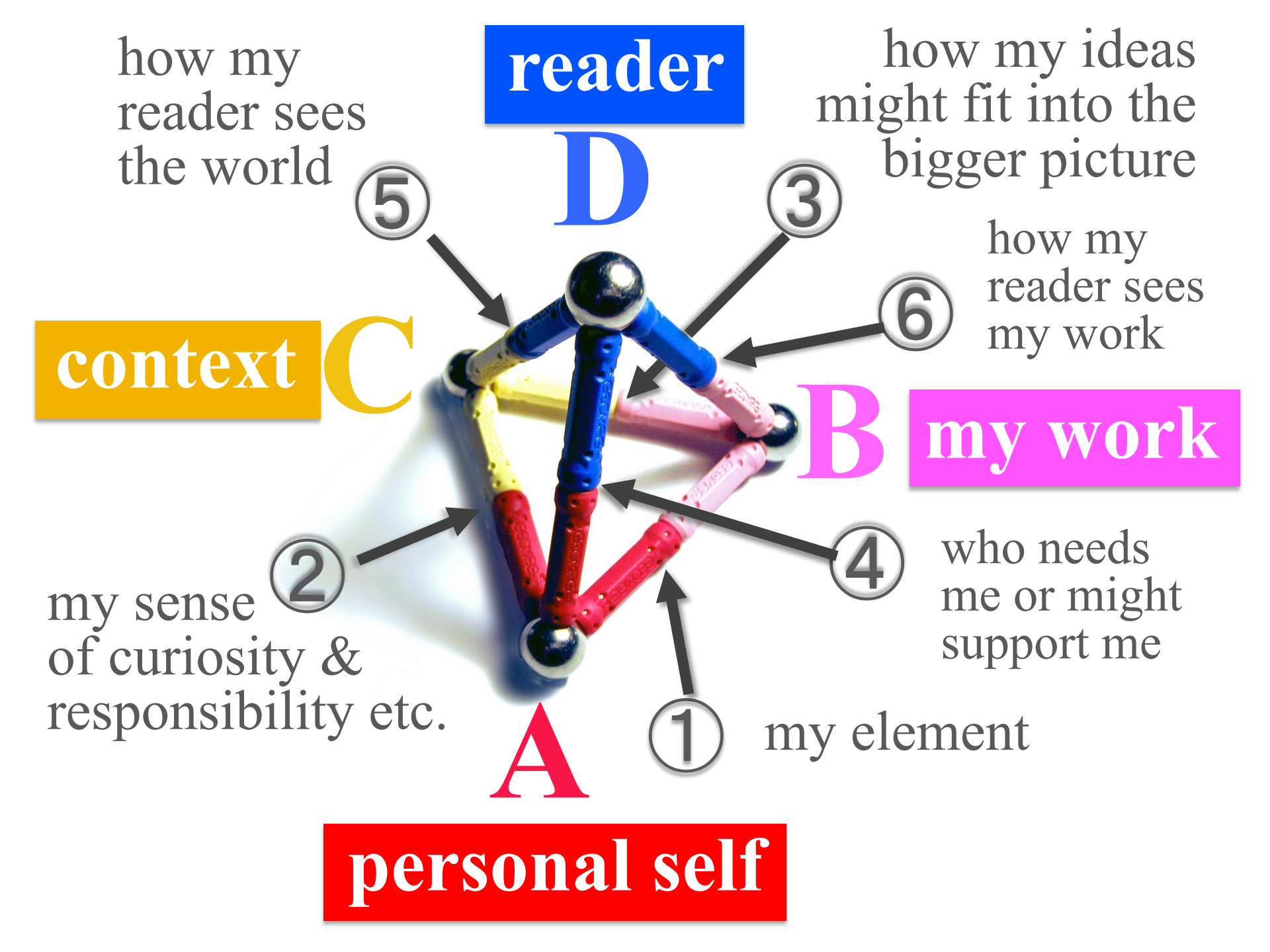
personal self


reader
D
how my ideas might fit into the bigger picture
3
context
C
B
my work
2
my sense of curiosity & responsibility etc.
A
1
my element
personal self


reader
D
how my ideas might fit into the bigger picture
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context
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my sense of curiosity & responsibility etc.
4
who needs me or might support me
1
my element
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personal self


how my reader sees the world
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6
context
C
B
my work
2
4
who needs me or might support me
my sense of curiosity & responsibility etc.
1
my element
A
personal self

TASK 3

- Find a keyword and define it using two or three sources.

- Find a (one) natural, meaningful or designed object (provide an image).

TASK 3

- Link the word to the object and write about the following 4 perspectives:
  a) The context of the object (its history, contemporary context, design context);
  b) What the reader (your client) needs to know,
  c) Your personal view point,
  d) The view point from the context of your work and practice.

TASK 3



Sustainability

b. *spec.* The property of being environmentally sustainable; the degree to which a process or enterprise is able to be maintained or continued while avoiding the long-term depletion of natural resources.

Thesaurus »

1980 *Jrnl. Royal Soc. Arts* July 495/2 Sustainability in the management of both individual wild species and ecosystems..is critical to human welfare.

1992 *Oxfordshire Bull.* Nov. 1/1 This country is now pledged to move towards sustainability; that is, to conserve resources, to curb pollution, and to achieve the better balance between demand and supply that will protect the environment not only for us, but for our descendants.

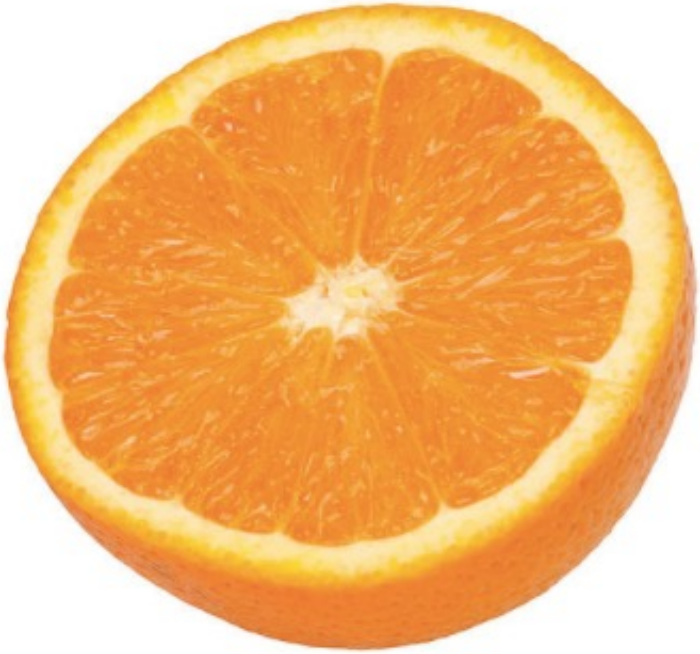
2005 *Guardian* 15 Nov. (Educ. section) 10/3 The University of Bradford..will be promoting sustainability in everything from course content to student housing.

2010 *N.Y. Mag.* 28 June 48/3 Stringent conservation measures, including a minimum size and maximum size of keepable lobsters, have made the Maine-lobster fishery a rare story of successful sustainability.

(Hide quotations)

What is the Context of the Orange





How can we make orange production sustainable?

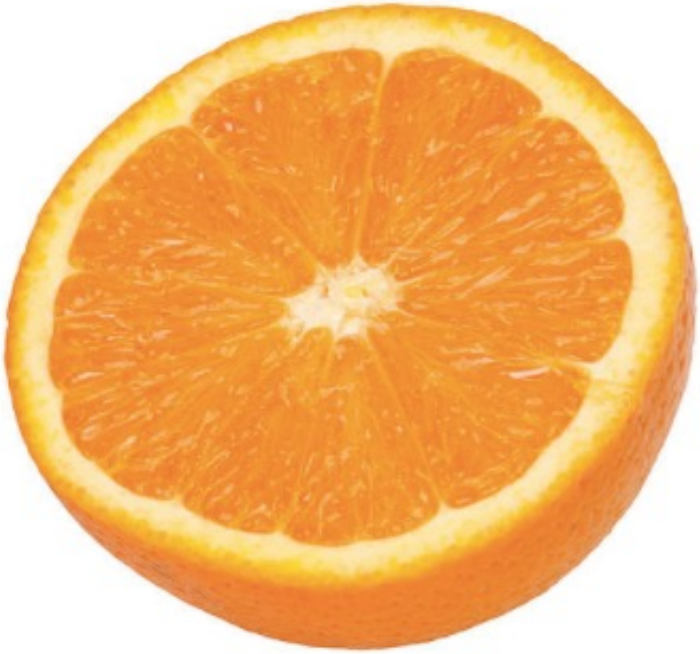
What is the Context of the Orange



How can we make orange production sustainable?

Who wants to know about the Orange

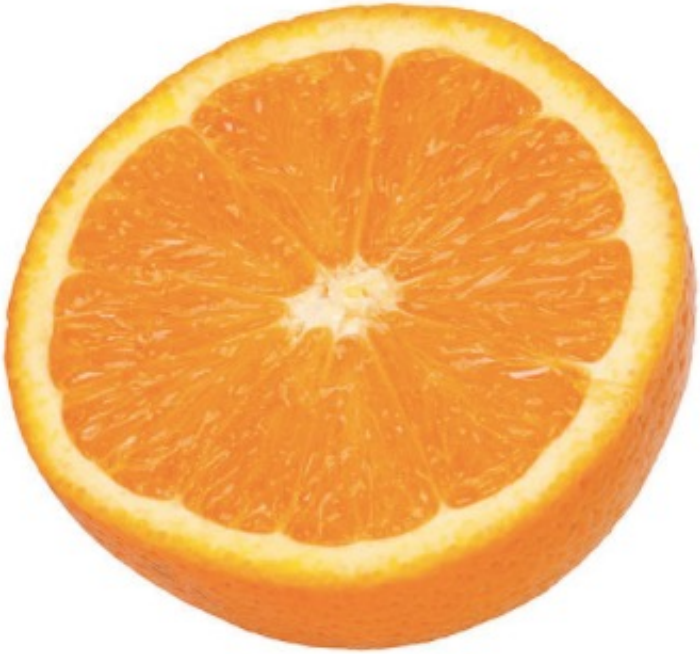




Be specific about your reader/ client.

What do I think about Oranges?

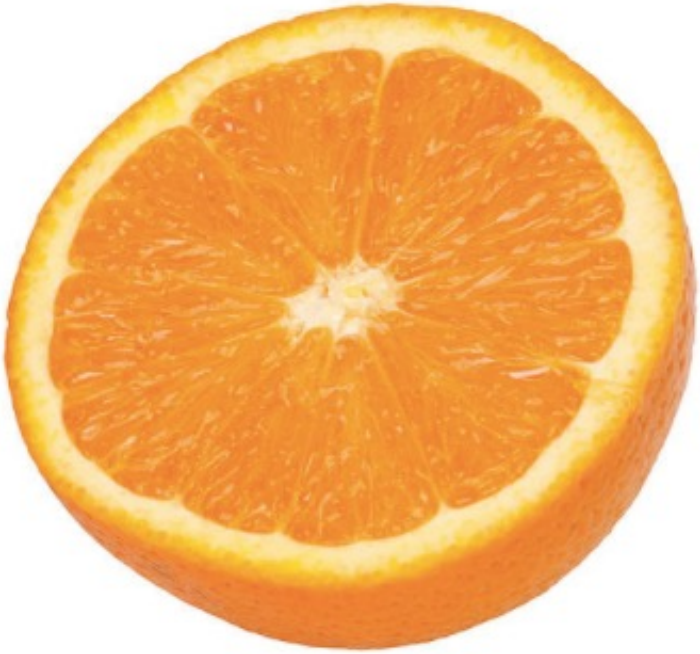




Be specific about your opinion - based on factual information rather than supposition.

How can I design this better?





Be specific about what could be done based on your research.

Mapping in sentences

Orange + Sustainability

- A-B What is the relationship between your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability to your design practice (with research)?

- A-C What is the relationship between your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability to your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability?

- A-D What is the relationship between your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability to your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client?

Mapping in sentences

Orange + Sustainability

- B-A What is the relationship between your design practice (with research) to your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability?

- B-C What is the relationship between your design practice (with research your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability?

- B-D What is the relationship between your design practice (with research) to your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client?

Mapping in sentences

Orange + Sustainability

- C-A What is the relationship between your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability to your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability?

- C-B What is the relationship between your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability to your design practice (with research)?

- C-D What is the relationship between your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability to your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client?

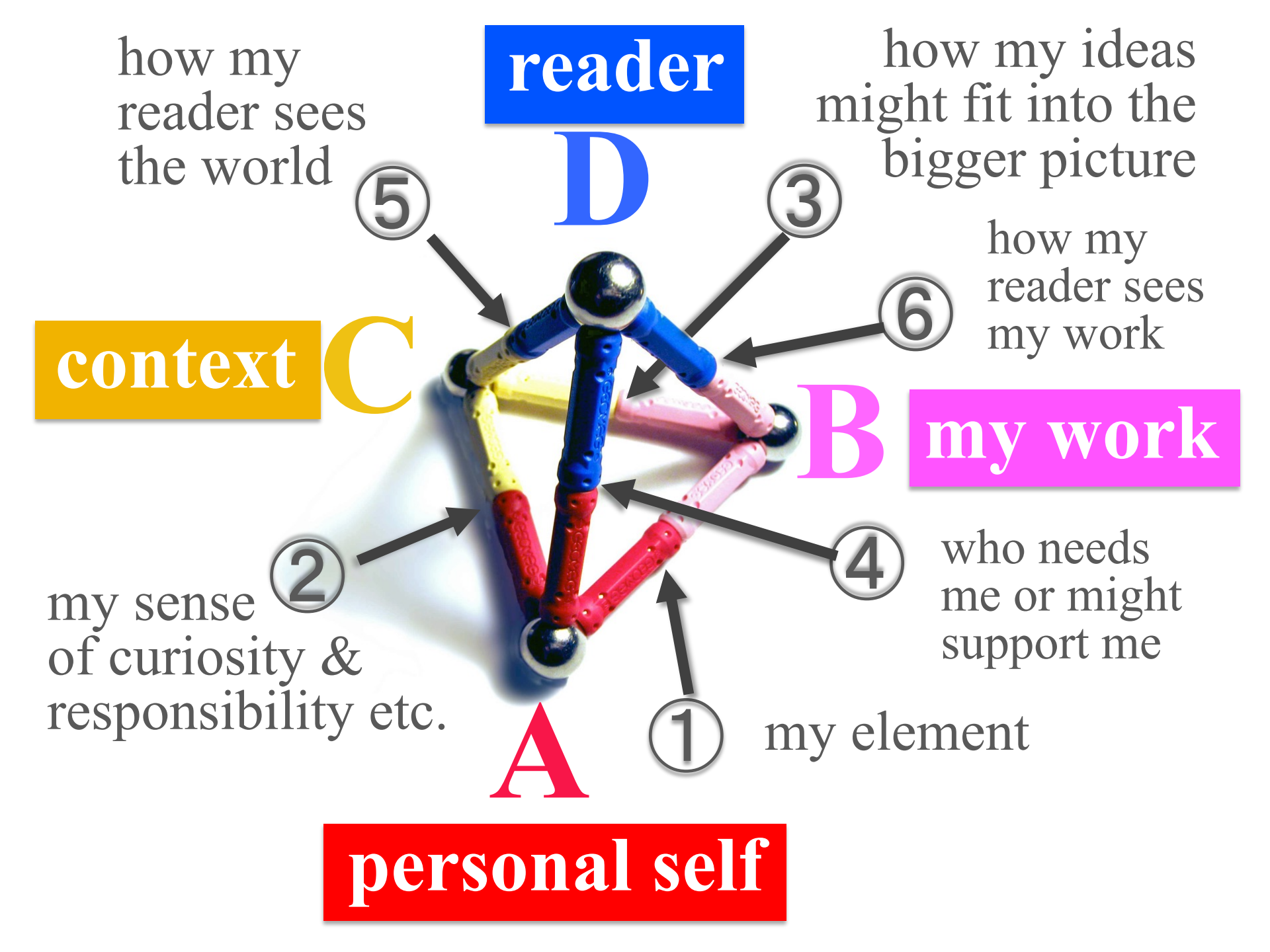
Mapping in sentences

Orange + Sustainability

- D-A What is the relationship between your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client to your personal self opinion (with research) of Orange/Sustainability?

- D-B What is the relationship between your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client to your design practice (with research)?

- D-C What is the relationship between your understanding of the needs of the Reader or Client to your research about the context of Orange/Sustainability?


how my reader sees the world
reader
D
how my ideas might fit into the bigger picture
5
3
how my reader sees my work
6
context
C
B
my work
2
4
who needs me or might support me
my sense of curiosity & responsibility etc.
1
my element
A
personal self

TASK 3



Have a go for next week

Bring a map of these 4 aspects as a starting point.

Mapping in sentences

What is the relationship between…

- A-B Personal Self – Practice?
- A-C Personal Self – Context?
- A-D Personal Self – The Reader or client?
- B-A Practice – Personal Self?
- B-C Practice –Context?
- B-D Practice –The Reader or Client?
- C-A Context – Personal Self?
- C-B Context – Practice?
- C-D Context – The Reader or Client?
- D-A The Reader or Client – Personal Self?
- D-B The Reader or Client – Practice?
- D-C The Reader or Client – Context?