

Comments from ev-ent-anglement.com

1.  [Sarah Kember](#)

Afternoon. Thought I'd send you an update, wittily entitled 'The Last Cut is the Deepest'. Maybe not. I could send you a report on what I've been doing in my summer holiday, but I'm still doing it. I am, to be precise, three chapters in to my latest monograph, a feminist critique/parody of the gendering of smart media. I've been talking about this as a 'monovel' – a cut again into the differential relation between monographs and novels.

One of the events at which I talked about it was on Feminist Writing. It was held at Goldsmiths in June. I was one of the organisers, with Sara Ahmed and I spoke on a panel of what Sara calls 'strays', academics who have wandered off, so to speak. The highlight for me was Nina Wakeford singing her paper. Check it out: <http://vimeo.com/98648597>

My paper was about writing out of turn as a feminist deconstructive, creative-critical intervention. I'm pasting it below and you should be able to listen to it on Goldsmiths iTunes U. I run this, but I need to check if its there yet 😊

I'll get back to you later in the week. In the meantime, I hope you like this:

Writing Out of Turn
the (cautionary) tale of a wench in the works

At the end of my introduction this morning, I spoke about the political potential of feminists writing out of turn which would always necessarily be a rewriting of the history of feminist writing as well as a rethinking and repurposing of once new provisional concepts and forms. I'm referring to concepts such as phallogocentrism and forms such as the manifesto. Phallogocentrism exposes the gendered hierarchical division between speech and writing, presence and absence, fact and fiction, the empirical and the theoretical that, I suggested, function as regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms in what we should still refer to as a patriarchal culture insidiously because more invisibly entrenched in old institutions like journalism and academia that are remediating with new ones like facebook, youtube and twitter. The academic Mary Beard, writing in The

Guardian argued that the trolling and death threats against women who speak out of turn, who speak about the need to represent women on bank notes for example, may come through Twitter but have very deep roots. In our becoming-with social media, our by no means universal transformations in and as the complex environment of media and technology that we have never merely inhabited or only used, we remain entangled in these roots, enmeshed in self-regulatory mechanisms like sexist and racist citation practices, ageism and the differential exploitation of free labour that it remains important to speak and write about. But unless we concede to the structuring and ordering terms of the empirical vs the experimental, of description vs performance (of theory vs theatre as Jackie Orr puts it) then we have never only spoken and written about but have always, to a certain extent been speaking and writing out. It is this aspect of writing – as a process of invention and intervention – that feminists from Cixous to Haraway have highlighted precisely because the culture around them does not.

At a time when creativity is reduced to market competitiveness and the alternative to being a neoliberal entrepreneurial subject writing to secure intellectual property and turn a profit is being a hopeless romantic subject writing for love and starving in a garret, it is more important than ever that we do not accept the alternatives and that we reject the terms of the debate. The terms of the debate in what Haraway would refer to as the nexus of trouble that is writing, publishing, privatization and marketization might include: print and digital; mainstream and independent; academic and trade; open and closed access and institutional and experimental. Such terms, along with any absolute division between innovation and intervention, act as forms of enclosure and effectively delimit the politics of communication. The point is not or not only to flip the binary and elevate one term over the other but to attempt to move beyond the enclosures that both enable and constrain writing as word and world-making.

This is what I mean by writing out of turn. For me, it is a GOF feminist materialist post-humanist deconstructionism not as a badge of allegiance (because most of those words would not fit on it) but as an ongoing survival strategy in which survival itself – for books, academic or otherwise; for newspapers, digital or otherwise; for feminism and feminists, humans and post-humanists – is by no means guaranteed. In other words, writing out of turn is very risky. It lacks guarantees and endpoints. It is, in Samuel Weber's words more about experimenting than the experimental, the difference being in the present participle that works against the past. I am sympathetic to the point of being implicated in the opening up of feminist methods and

modes that cut across and make new cuts in media and genres. With Joanna Zylińska I have argued for creative modes of critique that make and do knowledge differently not in order to arrive at a magical new mode or method or indeed to scrap the old ones but to move against false divisions like the creative and the critical, imagination and reason, theory and practice and to engage the politics of communication precisely at the point of its disengagement through norms and naturalized forms such as the photograph and the monograph, the image and the concept. One of the risks we took was in bringing the critical tradition back to bear on process philosophy and material feminism so that we could ask, again, what is at stake in making new cuts, or rather, in cutting against the standardization and instrumentalism of media and genre in and through which we are co-constituted. Such a question places contingency and responsibility above any kind of determinism (human or machinic) and control.

Experimenting by writing out of turn is indifferent to success or failure, career progression or regression and should not therefore be regarded prescriptively as “a turn” from the mainstream to the experimental. There is, for me, no ‘from’, or ‘to’ that does anything but create new orders of hierarchy. I did not defect, or even stray from writing monographs to novels as much as I sought, and continue seeking to expose and explore the differential relation between them. My new provisional concept, or made up material metaphor for evoking this movement (which is not a movement – even a feminist, materialist, posthumanist deconstructive movement – as much as it is movement itself) is not straying (with its connotations of the waif and stray, the stray dog, the mangy cur, the endangered and dangerous, possibly even rabid outsider) but invitalising because it, this movement is about vitality, the vital in its relation to the instrumental, its about the creative evolution of forms as well as processes. Invitalism connotes invitation, not prescription and an injection of growth and energy in and against stagnation and entropy. I think of invitalism as being somewhat invitalising.

When I wrote OEL, my first novel, marketed as gothic sci-fi for the 21st century, I think I was trying to revitalize 19th century gothic sci-fi or that moment in time when huge changes in science and technology, including experimental science and technology like galvanism and mesmerism/hypnosis were literally, meaning materially changing what novels were. If you like, science and technology created their own literary genres, genres that have since been disaggregated, separately marketed, so that the literary becomes a non-genre, a pure kind set against (the mixed breeds and monsters of) sci-fi and the gothic, cleansed of the science and technology that contributed to creating it. OEL is against such purification and very

much an experimental novel that throws these disaggregated genres, plus a few more besides (remember what I said about first novels) back together again, Frankenstein style. It has numerous textual forms including a science protocol for human cloning, a diary, a case file, a notice of intended building, a pastiche of a 19th century gothic fragment and a newspaper report about a man running on a beach who is struck by lightning. Lightning joins up with galvanism and electrofusion to join together cells, books and bodies, texts and genres and jolt them into a life as yet unknown.

OEL probably is a bit of a stray, an explosive, dangerous, audacious monster that got in through the back door of the literary establishment having charmed some editors and scared others and having left marketers wondering what the hell it was. There was a long and protracted attempt to tame it, that succeeded only to a degree but for me it still stands as a relatively lonely rebuke to its academic as well as literary creators for disinvesting in creativity as creative evolution, for bottling it in the face of forms ever new.

My cautionary tale of a wench in the works is, and is not about me and about how writing a book because it no longer existed can become a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. It is about risk and responsibility as well as change and opportunity. Like Victor Frankenstein, I'm not sure I was responsible enough for the creature I made, for the dangerous world it put people in or for scaring them with a voice that parodied and exaggerated our own, the one that habitually seeks to control, cleanse and classify objects and entities rather than relate and connect with them. The novel I'm working on now is less confrontational then, if no less critical.

A Day in the Life of Janet Smart is a work in progress and, like *The Optical Effects of Lightning* (Wild Wolf Publishing 2011) it too is a mode of making and doing feminist media and science and technology studies. This book will intersect in multiple ways, online and offline with a mid-length, digital, print on demand academic monograph (also in progress) entitled *iMedia. The Gendering of Objects, Environments and Smart Materials* (Palgrave, forthcoming).

My aim is to enliven and enact a feminist critique of smart media and technologies that make disingenuous claims to individual human-centredness, care and cleverness while expanding, ad absurdum, the time frames for productivity and, especially, female labour. Janet's day turns out to be quite a day. It bends, folds and extends into international time, differentiating her in and through her exhaustion.

Janet is generic and also very singular. She features in promotional videos for Microsoft, Google et al, peddling the new material of the day just as she did back in the 1950s when Monsanto placed her inside its home of the future – a 3D advert for plastic. Glass is the new plastic. Glass is in fact the new skin, protecting all data subjects by making everything clear, open and transparent. Glass cuts out the middleman, un-mediating the world of info-matter. Janet moves through this world but her data stream is a double agent, a mole inside the newly merged Moogle Earthtechnics. Moogle Earthtechnics (or ME) has exhausted the Earth's resources and plans to move on to Mars. Janet operates within this spectre of extinction, working to implode a global expansion, working toward a future life without ME.

The story starts as a parody, not of Philip K. Dick's *Minority Report* but of the way in which contemporary technology industries gender their realisations of it by, for example, putting Janet back in a smart kitchen while generic John dons his goggles and goes action adventuring. Since it is not just about smart glass technologies but the ecologies and economies they build, I had to adapt and expand Dick's work and like to think that he would be a tolerant host to this small act of parasitism, hijacking, or occupation. My stay is temporary but necessary – the fiction market, as I mentioned this morning, does not easily accommodate women writers of literary science fiction, let alone those with feminist tendencies. Janet travels a lot, through time frames and also genres. Rather than me, as the author fusing these experimentally, she as the central character invites and invitalises, guides us through them (like Virgil or rather Beatrice), so that we do not notice the journey that takes us from non-celebratory, comic sci-fi to the serious interior world of the literary to the sinister spy thriller at least until she emerges again, this time in comic book mode, as a superhero with her pants outside her trousers and Moogle's mythological head in her hand.

Janet personifies the problem with parody as a feminist writing strategy prone to incorporation, corporatization and commercialization. Google does well out of all the parodies of Project Glass on youtube and so Janet, who is already knackered and overworked, who already has a top job, a talking robot, a self-driving car called Colin, a home AI system that needs reprogramming and a willful seven year old who skives off school, must also work for Moogle albeit as our, feminist mole, a spy, double-agent and eventually superhero who is the ultimate wench in the works, who un-does everything from inside the belly of the beast. The significant part of this un-doing still has to do with writing, with Janet's particular response to the incorporation and erasure of writing in the ubiquitous, gestural, intuitive, immediate and apparently unmediated

environments of smart media and technologies and with her own persistent presence and absence across genres, including the academic, in which she does not traditionally belong.

[Reply](#)

2.  [Sarah Kember](#)

[August 26, 2014 at 2:11 pm](#)

ps, I stole the ‘wench in the works’ phrase from Sarah Franklin who gave a brilliant talk on academic sexism as a system of reproduction also at Goldsmiths in May. I’m not promising anything, but I think that was recorded too.

[Reply](#)

3.  [Petra Kuppers](#)

[August 27, 2014 at 2:45 pm](#)

Hello you all! I am sitting here in my favorite writing chair, looking out toward the Golden Gate Bridge, in California, T-5 days before I am back in my classroom in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I am thinking about what to send to you... and I am sending you an old link, a media archeology, a dinosaurial piece that can’t be played on some browsers, I believe. It was commissioned by Alaric Sumner, someone who passed much too young, a poet and digital artist who was affiliated with Dartington College in the UK. He ran this particular digital poetics thing, and on it, I left traces of a performance:

<http://www.heelstone.com/meridian/petra/index.html>

Those topics, these issues, were so central to me then. I am revisiting them now, wondering how I feel now about presence and absence, words and sounds.

Enjoy having a look around, and, depending on what happened with browsers, you might hear an echo of my voice, too. Entanglement of art, media, affect, as I am surfing over it now.

[Reply](#)

4.  [Joanna Zylinska](#)

[August 28, 2014 at 12:02 pm](#)

Yes, the idea of ‘the cut’ has been important to myself and Sarah Kember as a description of working with and across theory and practice – both also as an ethical imperative that prompts us to interrogate what it means to ‘cut well’. I’m pasting below a link to a video project I did several years ago where this concept of the cut also makes an appearance – together with a wider interrogation of what we might call ‘digital entanglement’:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMUoQtmeSo8>

The project, titled ‘If It Reads, It Bleeds’ (2009), is an attempt to experience and visualise the materiality of technology in the practices and artefacts of blogging and web surfing. By creating composite images out of screenshots of selected blog pages, I aim to see ‘under the skin’ of the web in order to trace the pulsating connections between images, text and code. Blogs are not being examined here for their content, but rather looked at through the lens of Michel Foucault’s suggestion that ‘writing transforms the thing seen or heard into tissue and blood’. Playfully referencing the closed system of blood circulation in an organism, the video interweaves blogs dealing with blood donation, health advice, neo-Gothic TV programmes, Christian iconography and kinship networks into a multi-layer visual tissue.

Joanna

[Reply](#)

5.  [T.L. Cowan](#)

[August 28, 2014 at 1:38 pm](#)

After my first week of teaching

/Cut To/

“Race, Gender, Cultural Politics: Reading bell hooks” — a First Year Seminar teaching Teaching to Transgress, Writing Beyond Race and other hooks’ articles as well as some contemporary culture maker/theorists, Marci Blackman’s novel, Tradition, and Janet Mock’s memoir, Redefining Realness, and Shola Lynch’s film “Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners” – three of hooks’ interlocutors at a recent public discussion at Eugene Lang College (The New School) where I teach (see the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJk0hNROvzs>). #context

/Cut To/

“Transgender Cultural Studies” an upper-year seminar that also fulfills the requirement for “Intro to Feminist Theory” in our always precarious Gender Studies Minor. There are students who have already done so much thinking about this topic and others who are just beginning & I worry about the knowledge gap – how does a teacher make sure that everyone is learning?

/Cut To/

I am a white cisgender lady (I like ‘lady’ better than ‘woman’ these days) teaching these courses that so far exceed my experiential knowledges, but I’m teaching them because I believe in curriculum transformation and that it is possible to teach and learn across difference. But I am nervous that I am going to fuck it up.

/Cut To/

After my first week of teaching I am trying to finish a book chapter today for an anthology that I hope will be published. I am experimenting with a theory of ‘embodification’ – trans-temporal, vulgar, feminist, queer dialectical mimetic embodiment. A cabaret theory to go with all my other cabaret theories that are half-complete in conference papers waiting polish. Playing out the material effects of the mythological; the split mimetic tableau of the feminist killjoy –

showing the thing ('oh, this old thing?) and its critique, dialectically staged on the body. Thinking about #killjoycomedy – the familiar chortle of killing joy. The slippage between referentiality and reflexivity, between representation and dialectical mimesis.

I am surrounded by the books of thinkers I love and the performances of artists I adore; I am only them today – a conduit – a conversational diviner – a Lady Oracle. Elin Diamond on mimesis; Dianne Chisholm on the dialectical image; Rey Chow on staging reflexivity; Elizabeth Freeman on eroto-historiography; Sarah Ahmed's the feminist killjoy and willfulness; La Chica Boom's 'La Virgensota Jota'; Alexandra Tighchelaar (Operation Snatch)'s 'Les Demimonds'; Cesar Enriquez's 'Disertaciones de la Chingada'; Dayna McLeod's 'Cougar This.'

I am infinitely entangled through similarity and difference, through desire and fear: writing this essay that I hope gets published, that people will read, that won't make people roll their eyes. Who does she think she is? No one. Everyone.

/Cut To/

This weekend is my birthday and I want to finish this essay and not think about teaching for 3 full days. The pleasure of thinking in all of this with these makers and thinkers and the air conditioner that rages against the diesel trucks on the thoroughfare outside my window and the office chair that doesn't quite support the way it once did; of the hungry cats (oh, must order cat food) and then writing about it to this #eventanglment project. The misery, doubt and self-pity will kick in soon. But for now, content.

#Cut

[Reply](#)

6.  alexandra_juhasz@pitzer.edu

[August 28, 2014 at 2:14 pm](#)

TL: Thanks so much for your flow of words which for me are so temporal and yet cinematic (or also?), cuts from picture to picture of you, and your experiences of and hopes re time. I want to share with you that [Allana Thain](#) your fellow Canadian, gave a beautiful lecture this morning, here in Utrecht, quite committed to thinking about time, through the “[heterotemporality](#)” of the body (or this page of words): “we are collages of multiple temporalities.” She looks at dance in film to find “moments of waiting, breaks in the unfolding of the action that allow us to see what else happens ... a playfulness that sparks from that opportunity to move in new and unexpected ways.”

[Reply](#)

7.  **KJ**

[August 29, 2014 at 3:52 pm](#)

This reminds me of Bill Shannon’s creative dance movement at the nexus of art & disability; my 6 year-old son also has the same pediatric hip disease (Legg-Calve-Perthes) and we have been relearning what it means to move freely in the world, always subject to limitations of the body.

[Reply](#)

8.  **[T.L. Cowan](#)**

[September 1, 2014 at 9:47 pm](#)

Alanna is one of my dearest dears! How lovely that you two are in the same place!

[Reply](#)

9.  [Petra Koppers](#)

[August 30, 2014 at 2:46 pm](#)

Another cut from the archive, just another flicker across the screen as I am composing syllabi ideas for Space/Site engagements:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/talks-and-lectures/turner-and-digital-writing-performance-installation>

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10. [Pato Hebert](#)

[August 27, 2014 at 6:47 am](#)

Thanks for #Cutting/Pasting+Bleeding open a space with and for so many of us Alex. I'm wondering how our incisionsutures relate to to revisiting as a way to reassemble anew. I'm thinking about what it meant to post on FB from the International AIDS Conference last month, trying to hold the spin of real bodies in mobilizing motion in relationship to the stasis of health bureaucracies, the connective tissue of fellowship and the en-couragment of folks far in body but close in struggle and heart. Cleaving, clotting, accompanying

https://www.facebook.com/pato.hebert/media_set?set=a.1439918602960409.1073741854.100008268480364&type=

11.  **domi olivieri**
[August 27, 2014 at 7:59 am](#)

Right now I hear and see you talking of cutting, editing, pasting, and while getting distracted, this comes to mind: in “Cinema Interval” Trinh Minh-ha writes, “I would say that creating rhythm is a way of working with intervals – silences, pauses, pacing – and working with intervals means working with relationships in the wider sense of the term” (Trinh 1999a, 38).

12.  **noortje**
[August 27, 2014 at 8:44 am](#)

Digital distracted fragmentation/
watermelon nostalgia/
cutting pasting bleeding/
Abjects/
drowning in liquidity/
littering the archive of the world/
screaming to be reused/
stitching, curating ourselves/
Again/
It's never to late to be what you have been/

When I was thinking about what to “paste” here, I wanted to contribute something in a way we all can. And I thought of a article written about the artist Carol Rossetti: <http://m.mic.com/articles/92651/18-empowering-illustrations-to-remind-everyone-who-s-really-in-charge-of-women-s-bodies> She makes empowering drawings for all kind of women, I really enjoyed them and felt empowered by some of them!

13.  **Sabine**
[August 27, 2014 at 8:15 am](#)

Mostly confusion here. #em-body?

[Reply](#)

14.  Sabine

[August 27, 2014 at 8:17 am](#)

<http://virginiahealthandlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/13564580-who-what-why-when-where-signpost-shows-confusion-brainstorming-and-research.jpg>
http://cdn.pieria.co.uk/new_live/dr/section_main/520.jpg
http://www.lol-tshirts.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PS_0825W_ELEMENT_CONFUSION.jpg

15.  KJ

[August 27, 2014 at 8:19 pm](#)

I have recently made a rather large cut
to myself
or rather a surgeon made it for me
out of great necessity

(It was a kind of a “do or die” situation)

This edit to my physical body invites interpretations,
many times by strangers
People whom I don’t know
and who don’t know me.

I don’t mean to be mysterious
but
it’s complicated.

Online I am a composite of many identities
gendered this way or that
and strangely
I find myself entangled in fragments of former selves
which are constantly colliding
shattering the illusion of the seamless narratives
about gender identity
about cancer
often required for the comfort of others.
#eventanglement

[Reply](#)

16.  alexandra_juhasz@pitzer.edu

[August 28, 2014 at 1:57 pm](#)

KJ: Thanks so much for the poem! I've been talking to students here in Utrecht about what creative means might be open to express their affect as well their ideas about the ideas raised in the project. I also mentioned in the room how generous I had found several of the photos that participants in Utrecht had shared of themselves that now pepper the site. I speak of love as one affect that might be available in some acts of cutting and pasting especially as I recognize vulnerability. Such generosity, danger and creativity were theorized eloquently today here at the seminar in Utrecht by [Patricia MacCormack](#), "Affective Aesthetics: Ethics, Ecstasy and Ecosophy," when she argued "as soon as art makes you recognizable to yourself, art has lost its ecstatic capacity" by which she means, I think, a marvelous, rare, and radical state of freedom and creativity where the I is lost in a state of becoming "undifferentiated from the world and our own unknowability." She explained that pain, like art, can sometimes provide one escape route to that place of radical openness. I see much of this in your poem.

Some Instagram images pulled onto ev-ent-anglement.com





