ENTRETIEN AVEC SIMON MORRIS (JANVIER-MARS 2007)
www.informationasmaterial.com

Simon Morris, *The Royal Road to the Unconscious (the aleatory moment)*

Jérôme Dupeyrat : The project entitled *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* originates in the confrontation between two books (Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900, and Ed Ruscha's *Royal Road Test*, 1967) and you have also published in the frame of this project an artist's book with the same title. What is your relation with books and reading?

Simon Morris : This was written by the psychoanalyst Dr Howard Britton for Artist Book International 2005. It clearly details my relation to books and reading and so, I reproduce it here as it appears to succinctly answer your question :

□

Didier Mathieu invited the British artist Simon Morris to talk about artists' books for *Artist Book International 2005* in Paris. Morris' unusual artistic practice is constructed by others and in keeping with this methodology, the psychoanalyst Dr Howard Britton will speak on his behalf.

Simon Morris : Eating the book

> When in the Apocalypse we read this powerful image "eat the book"
> what does it mean? - if it is not that the book itself acquires the value of
> an incorporation, the incorporation of the signifier itself, the support of
> the properly apocalyptic creation (Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire VII: The
> Ethics of psychoanalysis*, p. 294)

Lets us just say that I have worked with Simon Morris for a while now and our collaboration has meant that, whether I wanted to or not, I have seen some of his working habits, some of his relations with materials. What I have found is that Morris' work, with its artistic thematic of collaboration and construction by others, is in some way or other, and despite appearances, almost entirety book based, both in original motivation and in terms of his own artistic output. That's to say his work as an artist starts with books and ends with books.

One way of writing about Morris' relation with the book, is to go and stand in front of his shelves – an approach he would no doubt approve of since Morris himself is fascinated by other peoples collections of books and the ways in which they can or can't be organised (a topic that also fascinated Walter Benjamin and Georges Perec). Although to me, there is no real order to his collection[1], it is possible to identify three distinct types of books : Firstly, there are artist books (including his own) for instance, Jonathan Monk, *Cover Version* ; Christian Bök, *Eunoia* ; Kenny Goldsmith, *The Weather* ; secondly, art theory books (including criticism) Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* ; Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text* ; Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* ; and finally, books on other stuff including : novels (Samuel Beckett, Dostoyevsky), philosophy (Machievelli, *The Prince* ; Plato, *The Symposium*) and psychoanalysis (Lacan's *Ecrits* ; *A Beginners Guide to Freud*).

These three collections of books are in approximate equal proportions, so that without much problem one could call it, an art biased collection. As I continue to look, I recognise some of those I know he has talked about, written about and quoted (for instance, Mark Dion, a lot – Morris has his phases, his favourites ; also, Victor Burgin, Christian Boltanski). It occurs to me, Morris is a very bookish person. However, this approach of looking at his collection of books, this phenomenological approach, is largely superficial, since I cannot tell why he has bought any of these books – I cannot tell how many he has read (my guess is not many from start to finish). I cannot really tell about their materiality in his practice. Predominately then, viewed in this way these are pretty dumb books.

So, another way of doing this and one that I prefer, and which in a way, complements the first approach, is to briefly mention the books I have seen him work with. That this is a fairly random collection of 7 or so projects should not matter much since the way Morris is attracted to a book, is also random.

1. If, as I have asserted elsewhere Morris' artist birth occurred when he sawed himself out of a large wooden box comprised of 54 planks of wood in a performance which lasted six hours, then this birth of the artist can be attributed to a randomly chosen book. It was only recently, that I found out that this work, *The Box With the Sound and Vision of Its Own Unmaking*, was based on a chance encounter with a book.

Morris told me that going to the library one day to try to find inspiration for his degree show, he decided to start by looking for artists with his own name, and came across a book by Robert Morris in which he described the piece, *The Box With the Sound of Its Own Making*. In relating this story Morris tells me nothing about the book apart from this particular title. I picture him, arm reaching up, about to take it off the shelf. This is the encounter, as if by chance, the tuché, which makes a connection with the unconscious. The Robert Morris book is not in Simon Morris' collection on his shelves, but despite this I want to claim it as the first artist's book to provoke a wish to work in Morris. Already it is a wish that operates at the level of a physical deconstruction of an idea.

2. One of the first of Morris' works that I contributed to was *bibliomania* (a term he

recently found had been used by Gustave Flaubert as the title of a short story written in 1836). Morris described the inspiration for this work – which invited artists and others to send him their book lists – as coming from seeing a photograph of books on the shelves of Sol LeWitt in his book *Autobiography*, and his curiosity to know what the books were. Morris made these lists into a large book which he wanted to resemble a directory – such as a telephone directory. In the *bibliomania* project he collected the books on people's lists and put them on the shelves in a bookshop.

3. Morris was hugely excited when he bought Klaus Scherübel's *Mallarmé, The Book* (2004). To all intents and purposes this is not a book but rather a dust jacket – that is to say a book without content.

4. Morris once lined up all 15 of the Pelican editions of Freud (taken from my shelves) which were published in the 1980's and claimed to want to make the covers into a book but did not know what to put on the cover of the book containing covers. He marvelled at the different colours, the different images – I remember he laughed in particular at the slightly maniacal photograph chosen for the collection of papers on Sexuality.

5. Morris' *Interpretation* project – which so far extends to two volumes – has a cover based on the early Routledge edition of Lacan's *Écrits*. The books themselves are beautiful, with different coloured pages for each section. The books deconstruct texts specifically commissioned by Morris, and many of the pages consist only of punctuation and footnotes, with the main text erased and from which new text were created.

6. Morris' book *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* in its original manifestations (the book project of an aleatory moment) and its later form as *Re-writing Freud* is based on Sigmund Freud's, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In the first project, the words are enlarged, physically cut up by seventy people over a four hour period, and thrown out of a car window travelling at speed. The cover of the Pelican edition of the book appears in the book he made – which is the same format as Ed Ruscha's *Royal Road Test*, including the spiral binding, and designed to look like some sort of manual for constructing ones own aleatory moment. It is important to realise that although Morris took a great interest in the cover, he did not choose the images or words in the book nor did he design it, leaving the task to Pavel Büchler. The second project is an interactive version, and uses a computer programme (designed by Christine Morris) which re-writes the entire book by randomly juxtaposing words. Morris is planning to bind the re-written texts in a facsimile of the original cover which he wants to reproduce down to the last marks and creases. He has also used the same font as used in the original version of the text for the print out from the computer of the deconstructed version. More interesting is his claim never to have read *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
This same book of Freud's (literally, the same copy) also features in Morris' video performance *psycho hour 24*. Here the meaning is distorted by the entire text being read backwards for 24 hours. Here all the audience sees is the cover of the book whist the backward reading hides the content from them. Often the cover, which has a large picture of Freud's head, obscures that of the reader, seeming to merge the book and the reader's skull.

7. In his book, *Spinning, De-entering the Self*, Morris takes 14 brief extracts ranging from a few lines to a few paragraphs from the following books to create a manual for erasing ones ego : Andy Warhol, *In His Own Words : Andy Warhol* ; Eugen Herrigel,

Zen in the Art of Archery ; Paul McCarthy, *Paul McCarthy* ; Jane Rendell, *Travelling the Distance/Encountering the Other* ; John Cage, *Silence : Lectures and Writings by John Cage* ; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* ; Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Oedipus Rex* ; Rebecca Horn, *Rebecca Horn : Diving Through Busters' Bedroom* ; Bruce Nauman, *Bruce Nauman*.

These seven projects reveal very precisely, that for Morris, it is hard to get away from the specific material properties of books : covers, colours, typeface, spines, bindings, the physicality of the words, cut up both manually and virtually, photographs, punctuation, paragraphs, lines.

Morris, in speaking of the relation between Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* and Ed Ruscha's *Royal Road Test*, testifies to this preoccupation with the physical nature of books, when he describes the latter as, "rubbing up against the former", of the Ruscha book "bruising" the Freud text, "rupturing it and re-presenting it for further analysis". The material of Morris' practice is the book as an object to be destroyed and re-created at the level of their physical and constituent elements. By tampering with these components of the book, Morris, turns his work with books into an extraction, an evacuation of meaning, an un-reading – such as we find in the title of his performed tribute to Gustav Metzger, *A Text That Destroys Itself in the Process of Its Own Reading*. It seems that Morris enjoys his books somewhere other than in their meaning, as something more than texts. His enjoyment is in eating the book.

> …Terry Atkinson Joseph Beuys Mel Bochner George Luis Borges William S. Burroughs Sophie Calle Douglas Crimp Jacques Derrida Craig Dworkin Michel Foucault Rodney Graham Brion Gysin Douglas Huebler Luce Irigaray Mary Kelly Joseph Kosuth Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger Karl Marx Georges Perec Yann Sérandour Tristan Tzara…

In the last resort, it is impossible to write about Morris' collection of books, as his real collection is the one in his head and which even he only encounters as a surprise. I am reminded of Italo Calvino's novel about fabulous invisible cities that Marco Polo claims to have visited and which he recounts to Kublai Khan – which are true but in an imaginary, subjective kind of way. And it is this mind-collection which insists that Morris works and which he adds to with a voracious appetite. As with Père Ubu who, in Alfred Jarry's signature drawing, has a spiral on his stomach to symbolise his ferocious and insatiable appetite, Morris too should bear this symbol of the coil, the gidouille, the oroboros, as representing an infinity of consumption which always seeks more. For Morris, the exhausting pleasure of the book is in the work involved in chewing-up its coagulated meaning. Or to put it another way, the book only begins for Morris in a place where meaning has not yet ossified, where meaning still vacillates – a situation he creates through attention to the material support the book brings to meaning. This is the materiality of the book that forms the basis of his work. To glimpse something of this collection it is necessary to work with him, to talk with him, to listen to him. It does not exist on his shelves but exists within the destructive flow of his work.[2]

□

My relation to reading may be best determined by my current work : *Reading as Art*, 2004 (ongoing). The work is supported by The Henry Moore Foundation. The project Reading as Art has three aspects :
1. Live performance of the artist reading 150 books.
2. A Virtual Library – an online repository of the filmed reading. Each individual

reading will be captured on video, durational film of the entire performance from the beginning to the end of the text. The website will allow visitors to navigate the documented readings and select which particular reading they wish to view.
3. *A manifesto for Reading as Art* which includes an essay by Thomas Campbell on reading as art, 150 still images of the artist reading 150 texts and a historical index of other projects that have directly engaged with the process of reading.

Imagine a website you can visit online which includes a library of books : Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, Georges Batailles' *Story of the Eye*, Maurice Blanchot's *The Space of Literature*, Samuel Beckett's *Complete Dramatic Works*, John Cage's *Silence*, Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference*, Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation*, Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Karl Marx's *Das Capital*, Georges Perec's *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. But when you work through the menu of titles, moving from one page to another, you are not presented with the informational content of the books, you are presented only with an image of a man silently reading each book, cover to cover.

Comprehensive research has been made into existing artists working with books and reading. In the sixties and seventies the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth presented his Information Rooms, installations that consisted of tables covered in books with the artist, head buried in the books, reading, cogitating. In 1967, at the Lannis Gallery in New York, Kosuth curated an exhibition in which fifteen artists chose their favourite book. In 1968, the English artist John Latham invited his students to chew the pages from Clement Greenberg's *Art and Culture* and spit them back into a flask. In 2001, Rainer Ganahl presented his book on pedagogical structures and the acquisition of knowledge, entitled *Reading Karl Marx*. Reading and discussion in seminars are used by Ganahl as a means to question artistic practice as a form of knowledge production. In 2002 Rémy Markowitsch presented *Bibliotherapy*, in which he explores the act of reading, the image generated by the interpreter in the process of reading, and the way in which listeners are emotionally affected beyond what is being said.
In 2005, the French artist Yann Sérandour presented *An Art of Readers* in Rennes, France, which included my recent work *Re-Writing Freud.* The exhibition was an opportunity to see how a range of artists used the book for inspiration, made tactical interventions into the space of knowledge and interrogated the scene of writing. The artists presented in this exhibition abandoned the traditional role of the artist as author/maker, and left a gap in their work, a space for the art of the reader. The participating artists draw their inspiration from extant material, work that others have produced. Their chosen material remains in flux, open to further contextualisation and re-reading.
In 2004, I presented *Reading as Art* for the very first time in a London exhibition and it was described as possibly the ideal work in a review for *Art Monthly*. In 2005, I were selected by Gustav Metzger to participate in *East International*. For the fifty days of exhibition, I read and digital documentation of his reading was uploaded on a daily basis.
My work differs from existing work in this field as it incorporates durational silent film of each reading. Inspired by the practice of Andy Warhol (*Sleep*), On Kawara (*Date Paintings*) and Kimsooja (*A Needle Woman – various locations*), each reading is a record of time spent cogitating on the words of others. Still images of artists reading are commonplace (see Joseph Kosuth et al.), film of people reading aloud has been widely documented (see Rémy Markowitsch and Gary Hill) but never before has documentation been made of a library of books being silently read.
In *Reading as Art*, the spectator is given nothing. Besides the visual image of a person reading and the cover of the book which tells you what they are reading, no

further information is transmitted. There is a shift between illusion and reality as at times the reader is clearly conscious of being filmed, where as at other times, they have lost themselves in the text. The art takes place in these moments of slippage, when the artist moves from one register to another. For the spectator, their own engagement with the concept of reading as art will create the work. In engaging with the work, the spectator will be writing their own commentary on the work in their head. The literary theorist, Roland Barthes wanted the reader to make the transition from a consumer to a producer of texts. In *Reading as Art* the productive act of reading is the art.

To accompany this work and to publicise it, information as material are working on a *Manifesto for Reading as Art*. The manifesto will promote and publicise this large-scale ambitious work whilst functioning as a bookwork in its own right.
The manifesto is being written by the sociologist Thomas Campbell, who is currently the recipient of a three year grant from the ESRC supporting his PhD research into the history of the government of reading. *Reading as Art* will contain the essay and then 150 photographs of me while I am reading. In his series of 150 passions the Marquis de Sade exhausted every possible perversion. By taking 150 passions as a numerical marker, I intend to exhaust every possibility of reading. The manifesto will also contain an index of projects by other artists working with bibliographical material. Professor Roger Palmer, Chair of Fine Art at the University of Leeds said my project *Reading as Art* is : "A substantial project of extraordinary originality, ambition and contemporary relevance."

J.D. : *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* is above all a work in progress, who has developed itself through a series of performances and exhibitions, before the publication of the book which documents this process. I would like us to talk about some of the aspects and ways of visibility of the project.
The first stage was a cut-up collective performance made with a group of students. What is the sense of this action?

S.M. : It is important to me that all my activities, teaching and art, are seen as indissociable and continuous. T*he Royal Road to the Unconscious* afforded me the opportunity to eadicate the boundaries between my art and teaching.
Mason Williams had thrown a typewriter out of the window of the speeding car in 1967 – it seemed perfectly illogical that the words should follow. To destroy meaning, first the words would have to be disconnected from the "sentence" imposed on them by the logic of Freud's construction. As Pablo Picasso is so often quoted : "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction[3]". Cut-ups provided me with necessary methodology to deconstruct Freud's seminal work.
Obviously, by cutting up Sigmund Freud's book, I was also referencing directly a whole history of cut-ups from Tristran Tzara to Bryon Gysin and William Burroughs. Here are some of William Burroughs' own words about the magical potential of the cut-up technique :

> "Any narrative passage or any passage, say, of poetic images is subject
> to any number of variations, all of which may be interesting and valid in
> their own right. Cut-ups establish new connections between images, and
> one's range of vision consequently expands. At a surrealist rally in the
> 1920s Tristan Tzara, the man from nowhere, proposed to create a poem
> on the spot by pulling words out of a hat. A riot ensued which wrecked
> the theatre. André Breton expelled Tristan Tzara from the movement and
> grounded the cut-ups on the Freudian couch. In the summer of 1959

Brion Gysin, painter and writer, cut newspaper articles into sections and rearranged the sections at random. The cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years. The best writing seems to be done almost by accident.You cannot will spontaneity. But you can introduce the unpredictable spontaneous factor with a pair of scissors[4]."

J.D. : The second stage of the project also consists of a performance. During this performance, the words which compose the Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* have been dispersed through the window of a driving car, following Ed Ruscha who had thrown his typewriter out of the window of his Buick for his *Royal Road Test*. About this action, you refer to "a random act of madness" and an "aleatory moment". What about this notions?

S.M. : For me, a tension exists in an art work between the controlled and the uncontrolled. As the dada artists used to say : "the yes and the no, they belong together". By using Ed Ruscha's action as a readymade set of instructions, every aspect of the work was predetermined. The random act of utter madness or what I prefer to call "the aleatory moment" represents the other side of the coin, a moment beyond control.

J.D. : The first way of public visibility for this project was a touring exhibition. What was your role in the organisation of this event and what were the questions raised by the tour ? The exhibition context was every time very different according to what I understand…

S.M. : The first exhibition at the Telephone Repeater Station was curated by Dr Howard Britton and myself. Following this event, I felt that I hadn't effaced myself properly from all the curatorial decisions and informed the other contributors that I would make no curatorial decisions at the next stage of the exhibition tour : The Freud Museum in London. In reality, this didn't work out. Dr Britton attended all the meetings with the director of the Freud Museum, Michael Molnar, but I became increasingly anxious about how the work was going to be displayed as Dr Britton was talking about hanging the pictures from the ceiling in a spiral which I knew to be a practical impossibility in a listed building – you cannot make any changes to the architecture of a historic building. Some anxious phone calls followed (which led Dr Britton later to refer to the project as "curating anxiety") in which I suggested we use the modernist paradigm that every aspect of the work should refer back to itself and throw the pictures into the museum as the words had been thrown out of the window of the speeding car. Dr Britton then made the additional suggestion that we should add pools of words to each of the picture frames as if the images were bleeding. In reality, our working process was very much collaborative and it is practically impossible to say who did what… The product of our constructive dialogue was what Burroughs and Gysin would refer to as "The Third Mind". As Pavel Büchler and Nick Thurston pointed out about conversation in their piece *Word for Word* :

> "I have told you before that I believe in conversation as a fast, constantly refreshing forum capable of utilising the diverse knowledge and insights of those involved. It is a contributive thing. But what exactly is being contributed ? Two or more people are bringing 'something' into a situation, but everything that is brought into that situation is being constantly transformed. So there's a residual effect as much as a noticeable affect. The word 'residual' is interesting here. In conversation

> the space between conversants is the space in which your contribution changes with every subsequent response, with every new idea that is thrown in. As in cooking, it all boils down to something. The spoken, like the performed, and unlike the written, is 'bound by time'. So, pinning down the affects or effects of your contribution is quite difficult, in the same way that you can't be sure what the carrots have done to everything else in the pot. It's like a chemical reaction. One thought, one statement or any other 'ingredient' may become the catalyst for something that transforms the previous or subsequent statements. They're mutually affecting. They bounce off one another and they affect one another's relative position. They can do all kinds of things. They may 'bounce off' in the sense that they never 'meet again'. They can take off in their separate directions or they may merge together and find some new trajectory or whatever. But it's more than just an intertwining or formation of a texture. It's really like a meltdown in which the two voices, while still perhaps distinguishable via a subsequent reading (listening to the record of that conversation), do not necessarily suggest two individual passages[5]."

As you point out yourself, the project was very much a work in process that evolved as the work toured from one location to another. The third and final stage of the tour I curated myself at The University of Leeds.

J.D. : The temporality of your project is very particular. It's a work in progress, which even extends beyond the propositions gathered together through the title *The Royal Road to the Unconscious*, by generating other projects (*Re-Writing Freud*). It's difficult to identify finite objects and precise moments in such a work…

S.M. : Absolutely. I view *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* as the physical separation of language and the subsequent project *Re-writing Freud* as the virtual separation of language as the cut up is now processed electronically by an algorithm. One project led into another and I continue to work with material inspired by Freud with my latest piece, *The Pelican Freud Library*, a double sided print work, reproducing the front and back covers from all fifteen titles in The Pelican Freud Library, laid out in a LeWittian grid (see : www.informationasmaterial.com). So, I continue to draw inspiration from material associated with the work of Sigmund Freud, focusing on the materiality of his books, covers, spines, words, etc.

J.D. : *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* has been made in collaboration with lots of people : students, a psychoanalyst, a photographer, a video maker, etc. In fact, you delegate to others most of the essential actions for the realisation of your projects. Why, and how do you definite your role in this process of creation which seems to try to escape authority ?

S.M. : I am the organising artist, in the sense of an editor or curator who sets the parameters for a project. Each contributing artist uses the structure I have created and makes it his or her own by the way he or she fills it with content.
My projects intentionally set out to blur the distinction between artist and curator and adopt an innovative model of making through collaborative practice. In order to create this space of collaboration, it is necessary for me to erase the concept of self and create a space of possibility that others feel comfortable working within. I concur with the English conceptual artist Terry Atkinson that the problems in art are best examined through a collective enquiry. By relinquishing individual authority you allow

the work to be made through you, rather than by you.

> "I mean, you should just tell me the words and I can just repeat them
> because I can't, uh…I'm so empty today. I can't think of anything. Why
> don't you just tell me the words and they'll just come out of my mouth[6]."
> – Andy Warhol.

J.D. : This work implies a kind of tribute to Ed Ruscha. The book *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* is dedicated to him. But I suppose homage is not the main aspect of the work. What is your relation with citation and borrowing?

S.M. :

> "The students were demanding original thought ; they were forgetting
> that to quote is to continue a conversation from the past in order to
> contextualise the present ; to quote is to make use of the Library of
> Babel ; to quote is to reflect on what has been said before, and unless
> we do that, we speak in a vacuum where no human voice can make a
> sound[7]."

My work is often inspired by the work of others. My engagement with the work of others is poetic rather than logical. It may involve a purposeful misreading of the source material or even re-writing. The methodologies I utilise include destruction, rupture, erasure, nonsense, concealment and the irrational which allow me to create a fluid space of non-meaning. By working with non-meaning, the spectator is put to work in the construction of meaning. I am not interested in the traditional role of the artist as author/maker and intentionally leave a gap in my work, a space for the art of the reader. This body of work acknowledges that the spectator has the major stake in the determination of an art work's meaning.
One must have a dialogue with the past in order to have a voice in the present. As Thomas Crow notes :

> "Almost every work of serious contemporary art recapitulates, on some
> implicit or explicit level, the historical sequence of objects to which it
> belongs. Consciousness of precedent has become very nearly the
> condition & definition of major artistic ambition."

J.D. : What is the role of psychoanalytic theories and the one of your psychoanalyst, Dr Howard Britton, in your projects?

S.M. : The work of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan provides me with material to work with. In 2001, Dr. Howard Britton and I began an exchange of information on our respective disciplines : psychoanalysis and art. These were referred to as the domestic lectures. Alternating on a weekly basis, one would visit the other and deliver a lecture on a subject from their own discipline. The lectures were filmed with both the "teacher" and the "student" being recorded. The lectures took place in their domestic spaces and were intermittently interrupted by cats, dogs, small children, telephone calls and aeroplanes passing overhead. I was interested in psychoanalysis and Dr Britton was interested in art and we exchanged information on our respective disciplines in a series of lectures.
My engagement with Dr Britton has enriched my practice. As I said in the acknowledgements to my PhD in Fine Art Practice :

> "I would particularly like to acknowledge Howard Britton for the generous

engagement he has made with my practice. His constant
encouragement and willingness to playfully participate in many of my
projects has been an inspiration."

J.D. : More generally, what place do you give to theory in your artistic practice ? You
often refer to philosophy, psychoanalyse, aesthetic or literature, but you consider
yourself as "philosophically irresponsible"…

S.M. : The artist works to explode contradictions. He or she has a different relation to
theory from that of the academic or the scientist. The artist is not trying to establish
some law or rule based on reason.
Quite the opposite, he or she explores the potential of the irrational…they celebrate
the nonsensical. As the Mark Dion pointed out in interview :

> "Artists are not interested in illustrating theories as much as they may be
> in testing them. This is why artists may choose to ignore contradictions
> in a text or choose to explode those contradictions. The art work may be
> the lab experiment which attempts equally as hard to disprove as prove
> a point[8]".

In a recent article for the *Revue d'esthétique* in France, Dr Howard Britton referred to
me as "philosophically irresponsible[9]". This made sense to me as artists work
outside reason, and this could be supported by looking at the first five of Sol LeWitt's
sentences on conceptual art :

> "1.Conceptual Artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to
> conclusions that logic cannot reach.
> 2. Rational judgments repeat rational judgments.
> 3. Illogical judgments lead to new experiences.
> 4. Formal art is essentially rational.
> 5. Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically[10]."

LeWitt's comments about how the artist celebrates the irrational resonate strongly for
me, particularly sentence 5 which invokes the artist to follow irrational thoughts
logically.

J.D. : And what about the sense and the non-sense in your work ?

S.M. : By working with nonsense it puts the spectator to work in the construction of
meaning.

J.D. : As I have already said it, *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* is also an artist's
book. What is the place of edition in your artistic practice : when do you use it ? Is it
for you a tool for diffusion or a real support for creation ?

S.M. : Although my work has involved exhibitions, installations, printed matter in the
form of posters, print works and associated ephemera, lectures, etc., the main focus
of my work seems to revolve around the form of the book. The presence of books in
my practice wasn't intentional because I never set out to make artists' books and I
wasn't networked into the artists' book scene. One way or another, though, this
ubiquitous form has become a constant in my work[11]. Dr Britton also remarked on
the central importance of books to my practice in his text, "Sentences on Simon
Morris[12]" :

"1. Morris's work as an artist starts with books and ends with books (also as lists of books, collections of books), which is to say, the materiality of books – covers, colours, typeface, spines, bindings, the physicality of the words, cut up both manually and virtually, photographs, punctuation, paragraphs, lines – but not the meaning-content of the book. "

J.D. : How did you choose the photographic documents which compose the book? In this choice and in their layout, very faithful to the one of Ruscha's *Royal Road Test*, are there elements which refer to the content of the work in itself ?

S.M. : I invited the psychoanalyst Dr Howard Britton to direct the photographers to any interesting moments (slippages or eruptions of the real) in the reconfigured text. Then, I invited Dr Howard Britton to determine the layout in the bookwork. I worked closely with Dr Howard Britton, making him aware of Ruscha's project and the formal decisions made in that work.

J.D. : Is it possible to differentiate strictly informative documents about your artworks/actions and documents about these same artworks/actions, but which would have an artistic value by the way you use them ?

S.M. : I hope it is not possible to differentiate the informative documents from the works. I intend to blur the boundaries between interpretation and the object. For example, the poster work *Sentences on Simon Morris* by Dr Howard Britton : the text is used very much as an image and it makes little difference to me whether people read the sentences or not.
I'm very interested in interpretations being considered as creative works in their own right. I was firstly interested in how Jacques Derrida blurred these distinctions in Ulysees Gramophone[13].
Derrida established a new form of literary criticism in which the critic utilises the methodologies of the work under analysis to construct his or her creative response. So the criticism is both inside and outside of the text simultaneously which has the effect of unsettling the normal relations between the work and the criticism.
I'm interested in blurring the boundaries between artist and curator, interpretation and work. In some examples of other artists work, I have found creative interpretations by others more interesting than the work.

J.D. : Some times ago, in an email, we spoke about ready-made. You use the Ruscha's *Royal Road Test* as a ready-made set of instructions for your own work. In the same way, can we say that you use the documents generated by your works as ready-made materials for the creation of other works? Does the fact these documents are already produced in an artistic context not contradict the reference to ready-made?

S.M. : I don't see there being a contradiction. As far as I understand it, the artist selects something that already exists and is therefore already made, and by selecting it and re-framing it suggests further meanings/possible readings. So, I don't see any problem with using Ed Ruscha's action as a readymade set of instructions and then the work generated from this project, using parts of it again as ready-mades to generate further work/s. Robert Rauschenberg famously used a flag painting by Jasper Johns in one of his own assemblages/combines. I like the idea of recycling everything around you.
Warhol himself left behind the evidence of his practice of stealing the words others wrote about him. In his 1975 book, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he explained :

"I constantly think of new ways to present the same things to
interviewers, which is [a] reason I now read the reviews – I go through
them and see if anybody says anything to us or about us we can
use[14]."

J.D. : This raise questions about the way you use artistic materials in a more general way ? On this point, you speak about "undesigning" and refer to Douglas Huebler and his famous statement : "The World is full of objects, more or less interesting, I do not wish to add anymore". "Information as Material", the name of your publishing house, seems to refer to the same problem ? Can you tell me more about that ?

S.M. : Undesigning : I do not wish to add any layers of presentation to the work of others, as presentation can easily become a form in itself. As the conceptual artist Ian Burn pointed out :

"Presentation is a problem because it can easily become a form in itself,
and this can be misleading. I would always opt for the most neutral
format, one that doesn't interfere with or distort the information[15]."

I establish the parameters of a project that others wish to work within and then present the materials exactly as they are given to me.
Information as Material was established in 2002 to publish work by artists who use extant material — selecting it and reframing it to generate new meanings — and who, in doing so, disrupt the existing order of things.

J.D. : Few examples to be more precise : *This Man is Philosophically Irresponsible*. It's a great size booklet, a sheet of paper fold in two parts, with two pictures from the *Royal Road* project (your portrait and a photo of the "aleatory moment") and a text about your practice by Dr Howard Britton, your psychoanalyst. *Sentences on Simon Morris* is a great poster with the photo of the "aleatory moment" on a side, and this same photo with series of sentences by Dr Howard Britton on the other side. Do you consider these editions are artworks and in what extent as they only show a sketchy part of the project ("the aleatory moment"), confronted with critical texts about your artistic practice ? Unless you consider this texts as artistic contribution to the project ?

S.M. : I would view both posters as artworks that contain information about my practice. *This Man Is Philosophically Irresponsible* was first of all commissioned as a text for the *Revue d'Esthetique : Les Artistes Contemporains et la Philosophie*, by Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, in Paris.
With art, I consider it's important to present your work to the widest possible audience which is why I favour touring projects (e.g. *The Royal Road to the Unconscious & Re-Writing Freud*). In order to increase circulation, I will show my work in as many different contexts as possible. Currently, your own theoretical engagement with the work is another potential context for its presentation.
Having one exhibition in one venue will have a relatively low impact. If you want to raise the profile of your work, it is necessary to present it in as many contexts as possible. Commissioned by Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, the text by Dr Howard Britton on my practice was originally in French and I wanted it to have the widest possible audience. I was invited to participate in *Slimvolume*, organised by the English curator Andy Hunt. Contributors were asked to make an A3 poster. I recycled the text from the French article and submitted it in French and English. Because of my fascination with books, I was interested in how the text on the spines runs different ways in

French and English, so I had the text, "This Man is Philosophically Irresponsible" running down the side of the image, one way in the English version and the other way in the French. Please note sentence n°1 from "Sentences on Simon Morris" by Dr. Howard Britton :

> "1. Morris's work as an artist starts with books and ends with books (also as lists of books, collections of books), which is to say, the materiality of books – covers, colours, typeface, spines, bindings, the physicality of the words, cut up both manually and virtually, photographs, punctuation, paragraphs, lines – but not the meaning-content of the book."

I used that image because it was taken while I was cutting up words for the project *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* and this project was one of the reasons Dr Britton had referred to me as philosophically irresponsible. I don't see there is any problem with recycling or cannibalising your own practice in order to create further contexts for your work.

I used the colours red, white and black because these are the colours of the constructivist revolution and associated with political protest. The colours literally SHOUT at the reader. These colours first came to my attention when I was invited to participate in a conference organised by the auto-destructive artist, Gustav Metzger in 2003. In a collaboration with Howard Britton and Daniel Jackson we presented the work, *A Text That Destroys Itself in The Process of its Own Construction.*

When Metzger first destroyed his nylon canvases on the Southbank in London in 1961, there were three colours : white, red and black. In this A3 work, I am also consciously drawing on Marcel Duchamp's infamous wanted poster.

I liked the idea that the phrase "philosophically irresponsible" was in some way a slur on my character with a sense of "tongue in cheek".

The second poster was made for the exhibition *East International 2005*, selected by Gustav Metzger. Each of the contributing artists was given four pages in the catalogue to present their practice. I was less interested in just providing the reader with information about my practice than using the opportunity to create a work. The text, "Sentences on Simon Morris" are presented as an image. We were less concerned over whether people could read them or not. In a lot of my work, I'm very interested in stripping words of their meaning value and presenting them as objects.

You see, in the catalogue the sentences literally collapse into the spine of the book which further disrupts the possibility of a conventional reading. At the time we were designing the poster (myself, Dr Howard Britton & Christine Morris) I thought of the text like strips of barbed wire running across the image. Its also a cheeky reference to Sol Le Witt's "Sentences on Conceptual Art".

Inspiration came from the exhibition in Rennes, I had been impressed by Nico Dockx's free poster[16]. I liked the gift economy of the piece. Thinking about his work and the work of Felix Gonzales-Torres (give-away stacks of paper) I decided to make a poster that directly referenced the piece in the catalogue but was presented as a gift for the viewer.

Both posters were made in large editions which made it possible to distribute them in multiple venues.

J.D. : As you say it yourself (in your thesis), "the danger of documentation is that it can transform an action into a symbolic representation of the action, which does not have the same resonance at all". How do you face this problem, especially in the book or when you present sketchy or lacunary elements from the project, as the photo already mentioned, which seems to be important for the representation of the

project since she is reproduced both in the book and the two other editions (*This Man is Philosophically Irresponsible* and *Sentences on Simon Morris*) ? Besides, is there not a risk to make this photo an aesthetic icon ?

S.M. : We realised we were doing this as we toured the work from *The Royal Road to the Unconscious* around different venues. We were aestheticising the action and placing it firmly in the symbolic, the photographs were too beautiful, thus destroying the work's ability to rupture peoples' thinking, disturb and become anxiety provoking. We solved this in the last exhibition by covering the art work over and inviting the spectator to recreate the aleatory moment for themselves by tearing away the veil and allowing the severed language to flood the space of presentation. So, I think the only way you can stop your work from becoming too much about aesthetics is by refuting your own control, erasing one's ego and allowing the spectator to directly intervene in the reception and presentation of the work. Using Brechtian distanciation as a device. By allowing a space of possibility where the work can determine itself.

J.D. : In the same perspective, what is the status of the document in relation to the documented work, particularly when this one is ephemeral, without object or without public ? Could the document substitute for the work ? Does it become an artwork by force of circumstances in the absence of the original artwork, or does this one exist without being necessarily seen ?

S.M. : I view the photographs as conceptual photodocuments. They operate as noematic triggers – mental imaging devices that trigger an idea of the work which is the work itself. The idea is that Freud's words have been subjected to aleatory procedures.

J.D. : Your project is also documented on Internet, on your own website, and also on the online art magazine www.art-omma.org. From the book to the web, are the documents the same and do their conditions of use change ? According to you, what are the specificities and the respective powers of this two media (printed matter and Internet) ? Why did you publish a book better than only document the project through a website ?

S.M. : There are of course differences in reception between a book and an online work. The web allows a greater number of people access to the work. But both documents allow you access to the idea.
This is a very interesting moment at present in the relationship between the printed word and electronic text. I talk about the importance of these current changes in technology at the end of my doctoral thesis. I will quote the section from that which best captures my own reflections on the relation between the two at present :

☐

One of the questions my work interrogates is how we position ourselves in relation to language.
Emergent technologies are allowing us to glimpse new possibilities for our relationship to language. Charles Bernstein wrote an interesting text entitled "The Art of Immemorability[17]" in which he detailed the development of language in the West and the impact of nascent technologies. In the following section, I have completed a close reading of Bernstein's text in order to present the context from which my practice emerges.
Prior to the Greek alphabet and its introduction of vowels, language was more visual

as in the case of Egyptian hieroglyphs. He notes how the introduction of the Greek alphabet allowed writing to more accurately capture speech :

> "The genius of the Greek alphabet was the invention of subsyllabic units that broke sound down into atomic elements that could be combined to represent any linguistic noise[18]."

At this time texts were mostly created as an aide-mémoire to an oral performance and there was not the sense of the fixed text that we have today. Punctuation, grammar and spelling were determined on a much more individual basis. In the West, the technological revolution of the printing press in 1451 created an exclusive stage for writing to perform on, in the form of the book. The development of the printing press saw the emergence of tighter rules around the presentation of language and led to a period of language stabilisation, known in linguistics as standardisation. We are now witnessing another massive shift in our relationship to the spoken and written word with the rapid development of photographic and electronic reproduction. In the information age of the internet, we are living in a culture where the oral, the alphabetic and the photo/electronic co-exist, a condition known in language as multimodal literacy.[19]

Walter Benjamin is often cited for his important essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction[20]" (1936), which posits the idea that everyone can now be a writer. From a time where there were few writers and many readers, the development of writing technologies and publishing opportunities in the late nineteenth century has allowed everyone to make his or her mark in language. Benjamin uses the letters pages of newspapers as an example of everyone's authorship potential. The continued emergence of these technologies throughout the twentieth century means that everyone can now become a publisher. The end result of everyone's being able to participate in language production and dissemination is vast quantities of text being shifted at speed through digital technologies. Mountains of text are continually in flux on the world wide web, travelling from one container to another. Bernstein claims that we are now entering a postliterate age. The development of radio and then television has seen new methods for the transmission and storage of information. Bernstein states :

> "Postliteracy brings us back to preliteracy. In particular, the emergence of the world wide web in the 1990s has awakened a sharper appreciation for the medium of writing and the visual and acoustic elements of language."

Prior to the introduction of vowels by the Greeks, language was more image-based, and we are now in our postliterate age seeing vowels once again being removed in text/online gaming/messaging and instant messaging, all to increase the speed of communication. Writing is essentially a storage medium and a medium cannot be anything in itself. A medium is essentially a means of conveying something from one place to another. It is determined by the way in which it is used. Language does not mean by itself, it is the context that shapes language and gives it meaning. Bernstein makes an important point that "sometimes one discovers the use of a medium by relying on the resistance of the materials that constitute it." He acknowledges the importance of Clement Greenberg's formalist criticism which called for "the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself – not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence[21]." Greenberg called for a self-reflexive approach which he saw as the defining feature of

modernism :

> "What had to be exhibited was not only that which was unique and irreducible in art in general, but also that which was unique and irreducible in each particular art. Each art had to determine, through its own operations and works, the effects exclusive to itself. By doing so it would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of that area all the more certain[22]."

This, in my opinion, presents a justification for testing the boundaries of language in order to take possession, more certainly, of language itself. Alphabetic writing freed poetry from its epic function and prose was now able to take care of history and tradition. Poetry, released from its obligation to memorise history, now focused more on the individual voice, the lyric function of poetry. In the current information age, the digital postliterate age, the function of poetry is no longer one of collective memory or the projection of the individual voice (the emphasis now is on "shareware"), but can now, instead, focus on the malleability of language: its temporality ; its ephemeral nature ; its physicality ; its dynamism ; its fluidity ; and its structures. In the digital age, poetry's function is to examine the means of transmission, exposing the frame of language, the container that creates meaning – how language is stored, viewed and moved from one context to another. In considering this, the digital age sees a renewed engagement between speech and writing.

Gertrude Stein's investigations in language in the early part of the twentieth century are an important example of practice that draws our attention to how the language was being made to resonate and its dependence on the structures that fix it to the page. An example of this can be seen in her piece entitled "Gertrude Stein on Punctuation" :

> "There are some punctuations that are interesting and there are some punctuations that are not. Let us begin with the punctuations that are not. Of these the one but the first and the most the completely most uninteresting is the question mark. The question mark is alright when it is all alone when it is used as a brand on cattle or when it could be used in decoration but connected with writing it is completely entirely completely uninteresting. It is evident that is you ask a question you ask a question but anybody who can read at all knows when a question is a question as it is written in writing[23]."

The materiality or concreteness of language is exposed when the focus shifts away from its informational content. Kenneth Goldsmith's current work is an important example of writing that has addressed the malleability of digitised text in the age of the internet. Practising "uncreativity as a creative practice" in the thirty-ninth year of his life, Kenneth Goldsmith retyped an entire edition of the New York Times. The resulting text, *Day*[24], an 836-page book, reproduced the entire text from the paper in one standardised font and point size. This art work makes us acutely aware of the vast quantities of text we are asked to negotiate on a daily basis. By pouring the text from one context into another and stripping it of its formal presentation, Goldsmith makes us aware of the fascistic way in which text is presented to us on a daily basis. The headlines, the "shouters", the combination of image and text, the graphic design, the range of type are all removed but it is only in their absence that we are made fully aware of their presence. As a trained sculptor, Goldsmith describes the physicality of language and the malleability of digitised text in relation to *Day* :

> "Far from being boring, it was the most fascinating writing process I've ever experienced. It was surprisingly sensual. I was trained as a sculptor and moving the text from one place to another became as physical, and as sexy as, say, carving stone. It became this wild sort of obsession to peel the text off the page of the newspaper and force it into the fluid medium of the digital. I felt like I was taking the newspaper, giving it a good shake, and watching as the letters tumbled off the page into a big pile, transforming the static language that was glued to the page into moveable type[25]."

In Bernstein's opinion, the opportunity for poetry now is exactly that – to investigate the material properties of language : its malleability ; its fluidity ; and its structures. I would widen this to include anyone from any discipline who is investigating language. This debate is not exclusive to the poetry community, as language is the one technology that is common to us all. The potential exists to discover completely new relationships to language.

This type of practice takes place in a broader field which is coming to be defined as "conceptual writing[26]". As well as Gertrude Stein and Kenneth Goldsmith, other proponents of this type of work include : Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, Derek Beaulieu, Samuel Beckett, Hanne Darboven, Douglas Huebler, Luce Irigaray, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Smithson, Lawrence Weiner and Darren Werschler-Henry[27].
Currently, Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith are working on their book on conceptual writing : *Against Expression : An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (Los Angeles, Make Now Press, 2007). Their book will include the *Re-Writing Freud* project which Dworkin describes as "a major, keystone part of the anthology[28]". Conceptual writing involves both writers and artists that are investigating the material properties of language, writing that is characteristically defined by its non-expressive qualities and writing that adopts an equivalent structure: the idea is the writing and the writing is the idea.
Jacques Derrida has commented on how the university as an institution could not bear anyone interfering on the edge of language, on the rim of meaning :

> "What this institution cannot bear, is for anyone to tamper with language…It can bear more readily the most apparently revolutionary ideological sorts of 'content,' if only that content does not touch the borders of language and all the juridico-political contracts that it guarantees[29]."

This is exactly the territory my work investigates. Jacques Lacan in his construction of the three registers, the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real makes it clear that we are alienated from ourselves and from language. Language is Other and one of Lacan's key points is that we all need to find our own particular relation to it. We are born into a world filled with language, a textual maelstrom, and the speed at which we negotiate our relation to it, and acquire language, is truly incredible. The speed of language acquisition was detailed on an information board at the Millennium dome :

> "Our brains all contain the same language circuits at birth. Although new born babies quickly tune their hearing to the speech around them, their own speech, their babble, is the same whatever language.

It takes a year before babble begins to sound like their mother tongue. From the age of one, children learn ten new words every day, and by two they can put words

together to form sentences. At this age, it's already Babel : English and Chinese children are talking quite different languages. By six, children have a full command of grammar, and at ten years they are likely to have a vocabulary of 30,000 words. From our common genetic heritage, a myriad languages grew[30]."

That short text effectively details the rate of language acquisition and how we all start at the same point. But how we negotiate our own particular relation to language is the central theme of my enquiry. As Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger says in her text "Matrix and Metramorphosis" :

> "Even if we believe that language is really only phallic, we still have a lot of room for shaping different relationships towards it, 'different' discourses. We might try to change it from within, to destroy it here and there, to damage its signifiers, to discover and explore empty spaces, holes in the discourse. We might discover a language of margins, or a marginal language – is that not what poetry and art are about ?[31]"

In my practice I consciously work in the margins, on the borders of language, erasing text and subjecting texts to aleatory procedures. This is entirely deliberate, as what I intend is to create structures that allow people to encounter the ineffable. A structure is created that others are invited to contribute to and make their own. I place myself both inside and outside of the work and erase myself through the process of collaborative making. My work examines new relations to language: readers select books that reflect their practice (*Bibliomania*) ; two writers imaginatively interpret one another's references (*Interpretation*) ; a conversation is broken in half, leaving a space for the reader to suture him- or herself into the missing text (*Extreme Reading*) ; two academic texts collide and their delivery is ruptured by the oral overlay of randomly extracted words (*A Text That Destroys Itself in the Process of Its Own Reading*) ; the instructions from one work are used as a readymade structure to interpolate another work (*The Royal Road to the Unconscious*) ; the text of one conversant is erased, leaving a physical space on the page for the reader to place him – or herself in the missing dialogue (*Sucking on Words*) ; and, finally, a text is continually re-written by a machine programmed to reconfigure the text at random (*Re-Writing Freud*).

Language is constantly shifting and we need to renegotiate our relation to it. How can we position ourselves in relation to language and what new models of reading can be developed ? can we read bibliographies as if they were conventional texts? can we imagine a person's work through his or her references ? can we create additional spaces for the reader through erasure ? can we purposefully disrupt academic papers in order to make more space for the reader in the construction of meaning ? can we read one book through another ? and can we read a book by examining the materiality of its words as opposed to their meaning-content ? I hope my practice can be seen as a site for the investigation of these questions.[32]

□

So the succinct answer to your question is I don't think it's a choice between one medium (electronic) and another (paper) but the space of possibility opened up by the play between the two and how we choose to position ourselves in relation to language.

J.D. : To finish, I would like it if we spoke about the publishing house you have founded to publish your own works : Information as Material. What is its editorial

project ?

S.M. : As the publishing imprint, Information as Material has developed, its philosophy has emmerged which embraces Douglas Huebler's famous comment : "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more[33]." The idea is there is already enough material in the world and simply by re-framing extant material, the artist is able to generate new meaning and change the existing order of things. So, we're only really interested in working with people that are re-framing extant material, not involved in traditional forms of creative writing.

J.D. : Why did you found this publishing house and is Information as Material also operate the distribution of the books you publish ? What are advantages and disadvantages in relation to the collaboration with a traditional publisher or an artistic institution ?

S.M. : I like Professor Anne Moeglin-Delcroix's writing on this in which she suggests there are three reasons why one would set up an independent publishing imprint. She says in "Little Books & Other Little Publications" :

> "1. Since the sixties, the book work offers a new form of expression, a
> mutation of the visual arts,
> 2. Alternative space of presentation for ideas to exhibition or gallery
> space,
> 3. Independence it offers the artist – not subject to external criteria[34]."

I have been offered the opportunity to be published by others, but in the end have decided I would rather do it myself.
Self-publishing is a central philosophy of artists who make book works. Having my own publishing imprint means I can produce whatever I like and it means my work is not subject to other people's editorial concerns. Distribution is taken care of directly through our website, through book fairs that we participate in, through a number of established venues that we have developed relations with such as Printed Matter Inc., New York or the bookartbookshop in London and internationally all of our work is distributed by Cornerhouse publications in Manchester.
Cornerhouse is Greater Manchester's international centre for contemporary visual arts and film. Located in the heart of Manchester, UK, the centre has 3 floors of contemporary art galleries, 3 cinema screens, a bar, café and bookshop. Cornerhouse also operates an international publications service distributing visual arts books and catalogues. Open since 1985, Cornerhouse has built an international reputation for excellence and innovation.

J.D. : And you also publish books by other artists…

S.M. : There are many other artists whose work we admire and are working on a similar trajectory to our own. We try to support their work by raising funding for their publications, helping with distribution and publicity. We work with established artists and emerging artists and make no distinction between the two. Currently we are working on a new bookwork by Canadian artist Derek Beaulieu, a DVD of the contemporary American artist/poet Kenneth Goldsmith, a sound work by American artist Jarrod Fowler and a bookwork by Joseph Kosuth. We are currently expanding our current catalogue to include film and sound works.

[1] Well, there is a shelf right at the top of his bookcase where he keeps his most treasured books – Morris adds, in the space reserved for God in Mark Dion and Robert Williams' scala construction, *Theatrum Mundi* (Armarium).

[2] Dr Howard Britton, "Eating the Book", in *Artist Book International 2005*, Paris, ABI, 2005.

[3] http://www.quotedb.com/categories/art/

[4] William S. Burroughs, Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind*, New York, Viking Press, 1978.

[5] Nick Thurston, Pavel Büchler, "Word for Word", *Performance Research : On the Page*, vol. 9, n°2, June 2004, pp. 56-58.

[6] Lane Slate, "USA Artists : Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein" (1966), in Kenneth Goldsmith (ed.), *I'll be Your Mirror : The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews*, New York, Carrol & Graf, 2004, p. 53.

[7] Alberto Manguel, "The Library of Robinson Crusoe", in Rémy Markowitsch (ed.), *Bibliotherapy*, Luzern, Edizioni Periferia, 2002, p. 29.

[8] Mark Dion, "Field Work and the Natural History Museum", in Alex Coles (ed.), *The Optic of Walter Benjamin*, London, Black Dog, 1999, p. 39.

[9] Howard Britton, "Simon Morris : Philosophiquement irresponsable" (trans. Dominique Férault), *Revue d'esthétique*, n°44, 2004, pp. 136-141.

[10] Sol LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (1969), in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (ed.), *Art in Theory, 1900-1990 : An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, p. 837.

[11] Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, *Little Books & Other Little Publications*, Clonmel, Coracle Press, 2001. Professor Anne Moeglin-Delcroix presents the artist's book as a ubiquitous form because it offers the following model of working: a new type of practice, mutated from the visual arts, an alternative space of presentation and one that guarantees freedom of expression and independence to the artist. See also Kate Linker, "The Artist's Book as an Alternative Space", *Studio International*, vol. CXCV, n° 990, 1990, pp. 75-79.

[12] Howard Britton, "Sentences on Simon Morris", *East International 2005* (exhibition catalogue), Norwich, Norwich School of Art & Design, 2005), pp.100-103.

[13] Jacques Derrida, *Ulysses Gramophone*, Paris, éditions Galilée, 1987. Translated in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, London, Routlegde, 1992, pp. 253-309.

[14] Reva Wolf, "Introduction – Through the Looking-Glass", in Kenneth Goldsmith (ed.), *I'll be Your Mirror : The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews*, op. cit.

[15] Quoted in Lucy Lippard, *Six Years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973), Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1997, p. 37.

[16] Nico Dockx, *Untitled*, double side poster, 72 x 102 cm, 800 ex., produced for the exhibition *Un art de lecteur* (curator : Yann Sérandour), galerie Art & Essai, Université Rennes 2 Haute Bretagne, France, 2005.

[17] Charles Bernstein, "The Art of Immemorability", in Jerome Rothenberg and Steven Clay (ed.), *A Book of the Book : Some Works & Projections About the Book and Writing*, New York, Granary Books, 2000, pp. 504-517.

[18] Ibid., p. 504.

[19] Gunther Kress, *Communication Now and in the Future* : www.qca.org.uk/downloads/12292_commun_now_and_in_the_future.pdf

[20] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Illuminations* (ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn), London, Fontana Press, 1992, pp. 211-244.

[21] Quoted in Thierry de Duve, "Echoes of the Readymade : Critique of Pure Modernism", *October*, n°70, Fall 1994, pp. 61-97.

[22] Quoted in Jeff Wall, "Marks of Indifference, Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art", in Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer (ed.), *Reconsidering the Object*

of Art : 1965-1975, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, pp. 247-267.

[23] Gertrude Stein, *Lectures In America* (1935), Boston, Beacon Press, 1985, pp. 214-222.

[24] Kenneth Goldsmith, *Day*, Great Barrington, The Figures, 2003.

[25] Kenneth Goldsmith, "Being Boring" : http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors /goldsmith/ goldsmith_boring.html

[26] For an introduction to conceptual writing, see : Ubuweb Anthology of Conceptual Writing, introduced and edited by Craig Dworkin : http://www.ubu.com/concept/

[27] For a fuller list of artists and writers working in this field, see : http://www.ubu.com/concept/

[28] Craig Dworkin in a letter to the author on the 26th May, 2006.

[29] Quoted in Craig Dworkin, "Notes to the Introduction", *Reading the Illegible*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2003, p. 157.

[30] Unaccredited source, information board at the Millennium Dome, 2000. For a fuller discussion of language acquisition, see Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct : How the Mind Creates Language*, New York, Harper Perennial Modern, 2000.

[31] Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis" in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Trouble in the Archives, special issue of Differences : A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, n°3, 1992, p. 194.

[32] Simon Morris, *Bibliomania and Related Fine Art Practice*, PhD Fine (Griselda Pollock and Stephen Bury, dir.), University of Leeds, 2006, pp. 224-230.

[33] Quoted in Lucy Lippard, *Six Years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, op. cit., p. 74.

[34] Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, "Little Books & Other Little Publications", *Little Critic*, n°15, Ballybeg, Coracle Press, 2001.