Who am I? : a practice-led enquiry of documenting social selves using autoethnographic narratives and inventories

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‘Who Am I?': A Practice-Led Enquiry of Documenting social selves using Autoethnographic narratives and inventories.

by

Charlene April Clempson

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Philosophy of Loughborough University September 2015
Abstract

‘Who am I?’ I investigate this question, using graphic inventories and written narratives as autoethnographic method to document ‘social selves’. I utilise Ian Burkitt’s theoretical discussion of ‘social selves’, but draw on my own experiences of the home and the family to represent and display social individuality as autoethnography. I suggest that social and historical relationships are not separate from the self and I argue that the self is formed in daily social relations with others, which can be documented through drawing and writing. I use autoethnography to employ a practice that creates works through narrative and inventory. I use a practice-led methodology to frame my use of autoethnography as a method of creating art practice through narratives and inventories.

The body of the thesis is structured in three sections. Situating Practice (Chapters One-Three, which establish my theoretical parameters) and Inventories and Narratives (Chapters Four-Nine, which record my domestic spaces, such as cupboards, and narrate my family interactions and activities). My social relations are remembered as behaviours, which constitute self-knowledge and are accessed through material culture in objects. In positioning my relations with spaces and objects I refer to artists such as Mark Dion, Michael Landy and Rachel Whiteread. The Findings section of the thesis discusses the application of Burkitt’s social selves as a form of art practice. I conclude that written narratives and graphic inventories can change the display of social selves and the practise of creating them; by showing and telling is an attempt to answer the question ‘Who am I?’.
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Introduction

‘Who am I?’ I investigate this question, through using inventories and narratives in my art practice to create ‘social selves’, as knowledge of who I am. I use my own experience of home and family to represent and display social individuality. For the social individual, social and historical relationships are not separate from the self. I argue that the self is formed in social relations (social selves): the relations that we have with others. As a collection my inventories and narratives are multiple pieces of myself, I propose that knowledge of social selves constitutes a collection that creates social and historical relations.

My attempt to understand the self was from the perspective of my own personal experience and I wanted to demonstrate that inventories and narratives could be used to display social individuality. As I was interested in the search for self I used anthropological theories to connect my practice (inventories and narratives) to autoethnographic modes of writing about the self. Autoethnography (Ellis and Boucher 1994) produces research that blends the personal with the cultural and is used to create voices. I wanted to create a visual element that records daily life experiences similar to the work of autoethnography, blending the relationship between narrative and inventories themed around the home and the family. I hoped to blur the lines between practice and theory by embedding my practice of showing and telling (written and graphic narratives) into theoretical constructs.

In the thesis, I privilege the written narratives as they connect to inventories to reveal multiple perspectives of the self. The narratives are linked by the theme of space. Personal space is My Cupboard called Hell, My Kitchen Cupboard, My Wardrobe, My Bookshelf, My Kitchen Table, My Family Album (See the Section: Inventories and Narratives below). The search for social individuality cannot be contained purely within individuals, as human relations are manifold. As social selves ‘we would try to see humans inside their essential connections to other people – those with whom we live and from whom we learn’ (Burkitt 1991:2). As a consequence those I know frame my art practice: those I know are linked to spaces
that I live within.

I use graphic images and text as inventories (stored in a box) to ‘show and tell’ an autoethnographic experience that itemises space. The inventory itemises space by the construction of a graphic image with text that identifies what the image is (as ethnography). Patricia Leavy describes images as ‘created experiences’ (Leavy 2009:215). An experience cannot be embodied without a dialogue and, as a result, art then acts like anthropology. Joseph Kosuth (2008:182; first published 1975) suggests that the artist perpetuates culture in order to use it; in so doing, art acts as anthropology. The artist hopes to preserve something from extinction. Preservation requires a relationship with culture and a collection of what is being preserved through representation.

Inventories and narratives are not typically the method of displaying the self as this was thought to be displayed using the body as the vehicle (Giddens 1991; Gilroy 1993) or the literal site of embodiment. Scholars, such as Giddens and Gilroy, see the self as a singular entity that is reflexively created through biographical narrative but disconnected from those around. This is impractical in my experience as I could not think of myself without thinking of those around me. Moreover, a reflexive project can only be made real if you have the means and the help of others so to do. Giddens ‘trajectory of the self’ suggested that the short story written in the present functions purely for reconstruction purposes and not for understanding. I soon realised that the search for self was not easy as it had to incorporate a sense of reality through personal experience as a form of knowledge. It had to contain lived experience in order for it not to replicate Giddens’ and Gilroy’s theoretical underpinnings. Giddens conceived the body as a literal form of embodiment as the body for Giddens (1991: 56) is part of an action system. This perspective is related to the work of Foucault (2006; first published 1970) and Ian Burkitt (2008) who thought that the self was connected to everyday practices and was not the work of ideology.

My concern was that the self has to be constructed in a way that is both informal and references the work of others in its formation; it has to be ‘autoethnographic’ (Ellis and Boucher 1994: 737) so that social being and the individual are connected to
culture. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Boucher (1994) discuss the researcher as subject in autoethnography, and I (as researcher) had to enquire into theoretical history in order to understand the self that I wished to use and develop and display it as a form of art practice. However, both Ellis and Boucher (1994) and Reed – Danahay (1997) understand the autoethnographic practices as a theoretical practices. Whereas, Catherine Russell (1999) discuss autoethnography as a visual practice, highlighting the work of film making artists that create diary film and video. What Russell finds significant is that these practitioners use ‘everyday’ practises as a language to enable the viewer to embark on a journey that constructs memory rather than experience. Therefore an autoethnographic experience constructs memory. This display of the self creates a textual and visual narrative, although it references theories its practice is one of representation. As such, practical autoethnographic methods use theory by altering the narrative as memory.

The concept of social individuality had to have usefulness; I needed to use narratives to change the relationship to the theories. I started the enquiry by creating narratives and inventories whilst investigating artists who used their own relationships within their work to display their connection to site(s) (see Chapter Two and Three which investigate how other artists have used their art practice to display their social relationships). In displaying their connections to themselves they were confront wider social ideas.

The title of the thesis uses ‘social selves’, to indicate that the practice of creating narratives and inventories can enquire into and create a relationship between ‘I’ and society. My hypothesis is that narratives and inventories, as practice, can display social individuality. Theorists such as Daniel Miller (1997) and Sarah Pink (2007) use narratives as ethnography to display a ‘particular perspective’ (Miller 1997:16) and they also use it as practice in fieldwork to create a display of knowing groups. As a consequence, the textual account is not equal to the visual photographic/digital account, as text is seen as a singular perspective, not the creation of many voices. The display of the individual is framed by the national or ethnic group ‘often in unanticipated configuration’ (Miller 1995:8) and not in the home and the family. Although relations are important to both scholars, narrative is used to show how the
link between the microscopic and the macroscopic in society frames the individual rather than the social individual contributing to the creation of society.

Burkitt (2nd ed. 2008, first published 1991) proposed ‘the self’ as a social enquiry. He argues that western concepts of individuality commonly overlook the role of others’ input and engagement that enables the self to exist. However, his work was from a theoretical perspective that is not derived from using practice. On the premise that the use of practical knowledge is crucial for both knowledge production and also to access that knowledge, this study hopes to enrich the discussion and demonstration of personal experience and what this type of description does to demonstrate knowledge. Moreover, through the display of ‘Who am I?’, the narrative and inventory has the ability to display the relationships of home and the family, making the many voices a tool of learning.

Burkitt’s theory portrayed social selves as a history of theoretical underpinnings that explored why, to begin with, this question of self and society was of such importance. Burkitt assumed that understanding social selves is a practical endeavour. Social selves are used to understand how the self can be formed in social relations with others. It is through these relations that I answer the question of ‘Who am I?’ I use the concept of social selves to understand ‘Who am I?’ by using the practice of inventories and narratives to form and inform my social relations in my home and family.

To document social selves is to create a collection that is archival, in the way Foucault argues that a factor of the archive is that ‘archaeology describes discourses as practices’ (Foucault 2006, first published 1969: 30). The archive establishes differences and it questions things that have already been said. In so doing, discourses are created through relationships that are discontinuous. The problem Foucault had within his idea of an archive was that he was questioning the social sciences not the question of social selves. When social selves are considered, possession is integral as the memory of a possession is significant. However,

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1Burkitt (2008:27) argued that who we are is not just the work of thought. The concept can shape how and what we think, as embodied ideas.
Foucault ignored possession and to a certain degree so did Ian Burkitt. Foucault thought that ownership would undermine the ability to discuss what is ours. The idea that possession would inhibit a story disregarded the connections formed through experience. Moreover, documentation then creates a discourse that is never finished, never whole.

Society and the individual are not separate as ‘I’ participate in the knowledge that is ‘mine’. New knowledge is not created from observation without participation in that knowledge. I limit my exploration of this premise to a small group of characters familiar to me, who are part of the activities or incidents in which they feature. Each incident or occasion is marked by a specific group space, through which family is made present and homes are created.

My intention is to convey a multi-formatted and interdisciplinary approach to understanding ‘the self’ as social selves, through its record. This is a visual process, not solely a theoretical construct, as ‘social selves’ (Burkitt 2008); we are not self-contained atoms. As a consequence, ‘social selves’ is an understanding of ourselves and, by default, documentation is a form in which this understanding resides. However, I disagree with Burkitt’s discussion of self-containment. We may not feel contained but a practice of creating inventories and narratives contains space as it is linked to specific location. I argue that personal experience produces knowledge through acquisition and is contained but Burkitt argues that social selves are not self-contained. He suggests that, theoretically, social selves can operate without contradiction. However, in my own experience, this cannot occur. Multiplicity of social selves is dependent on others and social selves (in the format of inventories and narratives) constitute the formation of an informal collection. In my work, the self is related to and contained by the home and the family and they are documented and collected through narratives and inventories.

Burkitt did not seem to think that his method of ‘cherry picking’ theorists is good practice, as his method of social inquiry is firmly positioned in social studies. Moreover, his conclusion argues that choices are not made without constraint (personal and material).
Research Question

My main research question is ‘Who am I?’ I investigate Burkitt’s study of social individuality, using my own social relations to produce artefactual evidence that forms a collection of narratives and inventories. Consequently, answers to the question ‘Who am I?’ are not just theoretical; I place importance on art practice as everyday practice, and this creates a particular daily history of myself and my life, constituted by where I live and by my social interactions, especially with my family. My primary research question is ‘Who am I?’ and two secondary questions are:

How have other artists explored their own relation to social selves?

How does autoethnography (as a practice) create social selves?

Methodology

Practice -Led Research/ Research – Led Practice

My methodology is practice led and this definition of research incorporates both the work of art as a form of knowledge and that the creation of the work that generates insightful knowledge. Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean argue that by integrating practice with research, practice-led research leads to research insights (2010:5). Moreover they suggest that practice -led theory and research-led practice are not separate activities. In order for a theory to have an impact on a practice – it must have a use. As such I use narratives and inventories as a practical autoethnographic method to show and tell social selves. By using autoethnography as a method of creating my practice, I draw on aspects of anthropology and ethnography to explain my practice of creating graphic inventories of objects, which relate to my experience of material culture, and written and visual narratives, which describe everyday behaviours.

Tupeinen (2006) argued that practice-led research deals with experience; this experience is not usually considered the work itself. Narratives and inventories
formulate a documentary practice and as such the practice as a textual account has
the ability to merge diverging experiences. My written narratives, explore the
ethnography of my social (family) relationships. My observations and memories are
translated into descriptive written narratives. I observe the behaviour of my family
as a participant; I share in family activities. As a consequence, sometimes my
narratives do not have inventories (see Chapters Eight and Nine) as it is impossible to
participate and record at the same time. My plot is the journey of a self which delves
into the spaces around my home (my flat) in order to think about who I am as I
record my possessions and experiences through inventories and narratives.

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Boucher discuss autoethnography as an ‘autobiographical
genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness,
connecting the personal to the cultural’ (1994:739). An example of this
autoethnographic writing is David Hayano’s *Poker faces: the work of professional
card players* (1983). Hayano is an anthropologist who became a poker player in order
to write about the life experiences connected to professional playing. Hayano argues
that, in a game of poker, ‘man is on his own’ (Hayano 1983: 111). However, just like
any game, what is brought to the table is a multitude of people carefully disguised,
even to themselves. Hayano was not discussing or understanding himself as a social
individual. His anthropology was very dislocated from his community. He had all the
trinkets of belonging to the poker community but this was not his life. Once the
game was over he packed his cards away and continued with his ‘normal’ life.
Hayano’s autoethnography is the more legitimate kind of writing of the self. Hayano
was learning to be a ‘player’ of many games. However, he did not think the personal
and the social were connected because, to Hayano, playing poker was his work, not
his life. Autoethnography as a practice changes the kinds of theories that are
relevant.

**The relation between Practice and Theory**

I argue that narratives and inventories show and tell social selves. The
autoethnographic narrative provides the viewer with access to first-hand experience.
The theory is questioned within these constructed narratives. Holt (2003) argues
that in ethnography (as opposed to autoethnography), subjectivity is used as a resource rather than the research itself. Autoethnography also uses subjectivity as a resource but in a different way, as subjectivity is used in order to form relations. When autoethnography is practical, the narrative and inventory operates to appropriate a textual language in which the social selves re-frame what we think (of ourselves) with; the search for self has a different setting. In the *Handbook of Ethnography* (Atkinson 2001:4), Atkinson states that the common feature of all ethnography is, firstly, the importance of first-hand experience and secondly the exploration of a setting by observation. Documentation of ourselves blurs genres and creates multiple voices as autoethnography. Written narratives constitute part of my practice and they show how the home and the family connect to social selves and create autoethnographic experience.

In the essay ‘The Artist as Ethnographer’ (1995), Hal Foster is sceptical of the artist speaking from/for the community, and I would agree. Moreover, I am sceptical of anyone, regardless of their discipline, speaking from/for a community, imagined or otherwise. If we are by definition social individuals, the privilege that an autoethnographic method presupposes is self-understanding gained from our own material remains and they are of an individual, not a group. The experience of reality as documented is different from reality itself. My narratives and inventories can respond to the research question, ‘Who am I?’ Inventories, as objects, give the viewer evidence of something or someone. I concur with Biggs (2003:5) who claims that ‘if the aim of research is to communicate knowledge or understanding then reception cannot be an uncontrolled process’. Narratives and inventories offer a way of controlling viewer reception.

**Methods**

I use the term ‘inventories’ rather than lists, because an inventory is a list of ownership. A list in itself is a sequence of information and does not signify ownership. This is not to suggest that everything we think we own is truly ours;

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3 Holt’s argument concludes that ‘autoethnography can encourage empathy beyond the self of the author’ (2003:6). Social selves always relate to others because without others they would not exist in the way that they do – they would have no use.
possession is important in a concept of documenting social selves. Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley argue that an inventory presents the past as knowledge, ‘the past becomes a target for surveillance’ (1992:78; first published 1987), linking appropriation to what are, at best, fragmentary lists. Ownership generates what is known and is knowledge. Sherry Turkle, in the Introduction to *Evocative Objects*, argues that ‘we think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with’ (2007:5). Her discussion is about possessions but not all objects have the same reputation. Regardless of the information objects contain, they make connections and we acquire knowledge when a history of social relations is made available.

Documenting social selves by using inventories and narratives gives the origin of ownership. Through language we internalise what is impersonal but it is made personal through conversation and, in my practice, narration. To narrate is not always a textual experience; a narrative can be formed in diagrams. In mark-making there is literally a fine line between drawing and writing as they both function to narrate and stimulate experience or responses through simulation. I use a felt tipped pen or a marker to create inventories. This is a habit. Another habit is the use of loose sheets of paper that are later stapled together. Markers and loose sheets of paper are convenient and convenience is part of the ethos of my practice of creating inventories. Inventories are created rapidly and easily. The inventories are of a particular space at a particular time. I develop narratives because they give meaning to the order in which particular things are used. The use of an object signifies its history as story and creates social selves. I will now discuss the work that led to the inventories and narratives being created.

**Cataloguing my kitchen cupboard (2008)**

My practice began by making inventories, which list the things that can be seen at a particular time. The inventory signifies what is important so it needs to be formulated so that it can only say what is of importance. ‘An inventory is never a neutral idea; to catalogue is not merely to ascertain but also to appropriate’ (Barthes 1982:222 cited in Shanks 1992: 78). In the act of cataloguing, what is initially marginal may become the focus of importance. By looking in a cupboard and
creating an inventory an object goes from one system (a cupboard’s system built for storage and human access) into another as documentation of personal history (as sheets of paper bound together through interaction with objects).

The first inventory that I created for this project was a collection of catalogues that recorded items within my own kitchen cupboard (See the Appendix for a comprehensive inventory of all practice that has been useful to this project. This is numbered in Roman numerals). These earlier catalogues enabled me to refine the process of creating inventories but were not useful in conveying social selves and as such are discussed below:


Fig. 1 shows the image of *My Kitchen Cupboard Colouring Book*. A colouring book is how I learnt how to colour within a set remit. When we take on the task of colouring in an image the lines have to still be visible or else the image will be lost. More importantly the act of recording social selves in this way gives us new rules: a record changes what we hold in our hands. As I wanted to investigate other implications of creating inventories I initially thought the colouring book model might be inappropriate because social selves was not about colouring-in something predetermined.


The Family Album (Fig. 2) is an image of the items in my kitchen cupboard put together with reference to the notion of how things become familiar. Every item in the kitchen cupboard was collected, placed and collated just like a constructed family album, although this was not pictures of people but pictures of stored kitchen objects. In this case, it was the notion of the family album, which was mimicked because a family album acknowledges the closeness of a group. Their images are placed together only because the person holding the camera deemed them of importance, printed them and placed them together in a book. ‘It is not simply that the family album records an individual’s rites of passage; it does so in such a conventional way that all family albums are alike’ (Stewart 1998:49). The work (Fig. 2) functions to document; it records the relationship that a person can have with a particular object and how an initial object can represent many different associations. These associations are relative to the reality in which the individual situates himself or herself.

My interest in the family album made me keep on creating physical objects even though I could not see how it was important to social selves. I began exploring different ways of documenting things in small spaces⁴. The family album linked a group of people to its documentation and the family, as documentation, always needs a narrative that can be generated by inventories of its members.

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⁴ I became interested in Daniel Miller’s writing on Stuff (2010) and his introductory essay to Why Some Things Matter (1998), became important to my enquiry as I could theoretically join Ian Burkitt’s ideas of learning with Daniel Miller’s practice of making stories out of lives.


In *My Kitchen Cupboard: The Diary* (Fig.3) about what was in the cupboard. It is an inventory of consumption, a record of the past: a food diary. Some objects never attain the status of being part of the kitchen cupboard because they are consumed before being stored. A diary is an object that catalogues time by specific days. I associated these inventories with experiments that were trying to discover ways of presenting the self. Additionally, I was trying to figure out what was most important and I could not see how I could reproduce this in order to explore other spaces.
Other ways of documenting

While reading Ian Burkitt’s *Social Selves* for the first time, I documented what I was reading in the form of notes or maps or sometimes both. I tended to draw out the information I read to make sense of it. I create a map of ideas (Fig. 4) with speech bubbles and key points so, when I read a book, I can reference things easily. As a consequence this is my method of note making – I connect an idea (theory) to something that has happened in my daily life and a narrative of social selves is created. My theoretical reading made me realise that this visual form could be where my practice might lie but needed more thought about images such as *Maps* (Fig. 4), and *Black Notebook* (Fig.5). My references remained private in notebooks and on loose sheets, as they seemed inaccessible to others.

Fig 5. Charlene Clempson, *Black Note Book* (2009) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

*My Wardrobe* (2009)

I began documenting my wardrobe in January 2009 (Figs. 6–8). I became interested in a box of t-shirts that I thought could change the way knowledge of ‘ourselves’ (culture) was handed down through cotton apparel. As a consequence, I produced a narrative (*Self: Hand me Down Clothes*, Clempson 2009) that provided me with a
reason to join the narratives to elements of the inventories that I was producing. This began my interest in narratives or stories and the sequencing of information and led to a conference paper on clothes.


Fig 7. Charlene Clempson, *Self: Hand me Down Clothes (A4)* (2010) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Conference paper: Self: Hand me Down Clothes (2009)

This was both a conference paper and a conference presentation\(^5\), which investigated the way possessions can belong to one and signify knowledge in the form of memory. The paper and presentation discussed Jamaican t-shirts. What was revealed was firstly how souvenirs determine other things that are not of our own choosing and, secondly, the power of souvenirs in creating emotive connections with others. Thirdly, these second-hand experiences are made part of us. What became important was that culture is multifaceted; we are all multicultural by default and conflict is of our own construction and making. The conclusion was that things belong to us because we think about them and therefore believe them to be significant. The discussion was how drawing and sporadic excitement about a topic can convey a message in an academic setting and be deemed ‘research’ because we position and contextualise it as such.

*Self: Hand me Down Clothes* (Clempson 2009), questioned an object received from someone one knows. It played with two notions, firstly of how family comes to be ‘familiar’ and secondly how one’s belongings ‘belong’. This illustrated the way I ascribe a supposed natural order in the everyday. My natural order, when discussed,

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\(^5\) In a conference titled, ‘Multiculturalism, Conflict and Belonging’ (2009) at Oxford University.
may not feel so natural any more as it changes state from what I do as discourse, to what I say I do as practice. What is handed to us may not be authentic but it is deemed legitimate through what the gift signifies to the giver. This can create a whole system of understanding based on one emotionally charged incident; in this case my family ritual of giving and receiving Jamaican t-shirts.

My conference presentation took the form of everyone in the audience being given a business card which illustrated a Jamaican t-shirt with the caption ‘All I got was a Jamaican t-shirt’ and on the other side ‘Question what you are receiving?’ Both presentation and conference paper aimed at producing knowledge through action and participation. The audience was given something from which they could learn about the identity of the conference paper. What emerged was the way in which objects were received, not only through my paper but in the discussion of generalised characters such as Grandma, Granddad and Aunty, who enabled memories to be possessed. Narrative enabled my documented reality to have particular historical relations constructed within it. The conference paper explored how my experiences related to particular theories using a method that all conference delegates could understand, regardless of their discipline. The second-hand experience of another person can become of first-hand significance when an object is involved. So I decided that my work had to be placed in a context so that it was controlled. Narrative enabled the situation to have boundaries and the conference papers that I have presented since have been formed by narratives and with my aim of trying to merge the inventories with the narratives.

South Africa

In 2010 I had an internship in South Africa\(^\text{6}\) where I engaged with the concept of celebration, using the kitchen cupboard\(^\text{7}\) as the location of celebration. Through group discussion with other members of the Caversham residency, chicken was the meat of choice for a celebration. *Chicken Recipe* (Fig. 9) refers to a linocut print of a chicken in a house. My interest was in the fact that the chicken was dislocated from

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\(^6\) The internship was at the *Caversham Centre for Artists and Writers* in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

\(^7\) I also created an inventory of my kitchen cupboard whilst in South Africa: *My Kitchen Cupboard No 4* (Appendix X).
its home and then was involved in many preparatory procedures before it came to be part of a recipe, part of a celebration and given a home. A recipe is a system for dealing with a chicken and rules are adhered to in order to make the chicken edible in a particular way. So I created a chicken outside of its house that looked at you and was printed on paper as a recipe. However, there are no instructions, just an image of a chicken outside its house. This was an image prior to a celebration. Chicken is memorable once it is rendered fit for consumption but for this to occur it needs to travel and change its state for it to have a use.

Part of my internship was the production of an artist’s book and I produced *Self: Hand me Down Clothes (artist book version)* (Fig.10), which was based on the conference paper version of *Self: Hand me Down Clothes* collection of books.

Fig 9. Charlene Clempson, *Chicken Recipe* (2010) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Conference paper: Are we still homeless? Am ‘I’ still part of that ‘we’? (Clempson 2010)

For my paper delivered at the 2010 conference on diaspora, I used the family album as a metaphor to examine how home can be constructed when it is located in different geographical spaces and within different cultures. A home must suggest the method used to overcome physical boundaries, namely narratives. Through the album I am investigating memories of my Grandparents’ home (and commonalities between that and homeland), and unpacking them to reveal how non-written information can be constructed and imparted to the next generation (or not). The Diasporas conference investigated current research into culture when linked to a particular place, especially when people have moved from their homeland. However, these labels do not include the way in which the discourse of diaspora can be one-sided in reality, excluding the many changes that are experienced by the individuals who make up diaspora.

My intention was to explain the way we all have connections to displacement as we move around and use everyday systems, to which we are connected but have not

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8 The conference was entitled ‘The 3rd Global Conference: Diasporas’ (2010), Mansfield College, Oxford.
constructed. We cannot help but feel ‘out of place’ from time to time. In effect, we are all homeless as we try to negotiate systems that are ever-changing. Home is not something that is as concrete as we believe. My interest in diaspora is an argument about the way groups are formed. Groups are often defined in writing by race and gender but to understand oneself those terms have to be enforced. If there is no enforcement mechanism then we have to find another format in which we can see ourselves. Burkitt understood social selves to be constructed through mechanisms of class, gender and race and these ideas categorise the approach he used to classify each topic about which he was writing. I maintain that the question – ‘Who am I?’ can be answered by categorising mundane domestic spaces. I cannot classify people in the way that Burkitt did as it would make no sense to me. Social selves by default need to be understood through personal relations, even if those relations do not make sense to other social individuals.

My Kitchen Cupboard

In 2010 I went back to the kitchen cupboard (see Appendix, Figs. VII – XII), creating inventories in a manner that was to be the format for all future inventories – a quick drawing followed by a note of what it was (Fig. 11 and 12). The note was because a lot of things look the same but they may have a different flavour (in a kitchen cupboard), or they may just have a different name. This was a practice held over from earlier experimental inventory models when possessions were categorised alphabetically, by size or date. Afterwards, I was able to document other spaces within the home in this manner: My Cupboard called Hell (see Appendix, Figs. I–VI), My Wardrobe (see Appendix, Figs. XIII–XVIII), My Bookshelf (see Appendix, Figs. XIX–XIV). Although there were lots of inventories, particular pages could be used at different times as part of the autoethnographic narrative.
Conference Paper: *Soup Tale from Routes to Routine* (Clempson 2012)

In 2012 I used the migratory journey of my grandparents as a tool for another conference paper⁹. The boundaries of possession become a territorial experience.

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⁹ The conference was entitled The 5th Global Conference: Diasporas (2012), Mansfield College, Oxford.
when narrated. Using narrative, I reshaped theory for a particular use and, in this case, a visit to see a granddad reveals how certain preferences can change the shape and order of what is theorised as diasporic people. My paper discussed how making a West Indian soup can be diasporic; the role of a granddad forms an experience as he enacts the soup-making. The concept of soup uses my practice of narrative to change the understanding of diaspora from routes and dispersion of people to the dispersed ingredients that come together in a routinely made pot of soup. I used an element of my practice of making a narrative in this paper to demonstrate how personal history can be made, owned and remembered.

Soup is a practice of memory that everyone can attain. This offers the individual a series of references, which are both personal and cultural and in this case create an end result – soup. The aim of this paper was to discuss how changes in social identification not only change the concept of diaspora but how I remember who I am, through what I remember. Changes in identity formation are learnt through soup. Furthermore soup-making cannot be connected to an essential subject as granddad changes his recipe and subsequently the soup that we consume is not essentially the same each time but it is a routine that is linked to the soup concept and granddad’s activity. Moreover group making is not the production of ethnicity but the workings of material culture.

Literature Review

In discussing ‘social selves’ several texts have been particularly significant in helping me to develop a theoretical structure to support, endorse and question my practice of creating inventories and narratives. I discuss these texts under headings as they enabled me to contextualize the first section of my thesis: Social Selves, Home, and Family.

Social Selves

The key text for my research is Ian Burkitt’s Social Selves (2008), He proposed ‘the self’ as a form of social enquiry and argues that western concepts of individuality
commonly overlook the role of others’ input and engagement, which enables the self to exist socially as selves. He argues that we understand ourselves in relation to others and that, as social selves, we are multiple. I argue that multiple selves can be documented and constituted as collections.

Burkitt’s theory portrays social selves as a history of theoretical underpinnings that explore why this question of self and society is important. Burkitt assumes that understanding social selves is a practical endeavour\(^{10}\). Social selves are used to understand how the self can be formed in social relations with others. It is through these relations that I answer the question of ‘Who am I?’ I use the concept of social selves to develop my practice of inventories and narratives to form and inform my social relations in my home and family.

The search for social individuality cannot be contained purely with individuals, as human relationships are multiple. As social selves ‘we would try to see humans inside their essential connections to other people – those with whom we live and from whom we learn’ (Burkitt 1991:2). Burkitt’s idea of social selves changes the ways in which closeness is articulated if it is taken literally. If the question ‘Who am I?’ is a more significant question than ‘What shall I become?’ (Burkitt 2008: 4), then home and the family do not have the same meanings when collections of information about the family are created and maintained differently by different family members.

In asking ‘Who am I?’ I place emphasis on how a collection is created using narratives and inventories. In the essay ‘Unpacking my Library’ (Benjamin 1999; first published 1931) Walter Benjamin observes that the collector is both speaking ‘to you, and also on close scrutiny he proves to be speaking about himself’ (1999:61). Moreover Benjamin’s discussion of the collection enables a dialogue to occur that can be possessed by others. Hurdley (2006) concurs with this idea by describing the display of collections (in the home) and concludes that display should be both visual and storied. She suggests that it is the process of collecting that enables particular histories to be made convincing, not the idea that they should be convincing because

\(^{10}\) Burkitt argued that who we are is not just the work of thought. The concept can shape who and what we think with, as embodied ideas.
of their classification. In relation to the concept of social selves, things connect to the individual’s life. They can be listed as inventory and a narrative can describe itemisation.

Giddens article ‘The Trajectory of the Self’, (2000) discusses the proposition that the self is more or less a coherent narrative. His argument is that by documenting the self through narrative, the narrative is overt and all is revealed through the narrative practice. Narrative is then made explicit by what is retained and understood. A consequence of this is that all narratives must make sense or else they are just a sequence of information. However, not all narratives do make sense and neither are they singular. For Giddens, change occurs in between the macro and the micro forces, and I agree but to assume that change can only occur through the relation of the macro and the micro is to assume that narratives are coherent and the self is always explicit, and that is problematic. More importantly Giddens ignores the fact that narrative is a vehicle for transportation and can shape and reshape customs and it does not have to be coherent. The past is not something that is wiped from memory; it resides in places that are not easily accessed, as Lawler (2008) argues, identity (Who am I?) which can be made up the documentation of lives is not the way life is. Giddens, Hurdley, Lawler and Burkitt use narratives/ethnography (or any record) to suggest the way life is all the time. I draw on their arguments but contend that narratives need to be evocative and not constrained by categories.

As the self is a record, anthropology investigates the self-recorded and Whittaker argues in ‘The Birth of the Anthropological Self and its Career’ (1992) that the anthropological self is a produced self. He suggests that the self in anthropology should be seen as representing and recording daily experiences through the work of writing. Whittaker’s anthropological self was located as occidental and he put emphasis on geographical borders. His boundaries are based around maps which represent specific locations and take no account of experiences of crossing boundaries and borders.

I argue that the self is social and is constituted through daily experiences in the home around the family as ‘social selves’ which can be collected and then used in
inventories and narratives. In *The Cultures of Collecting*, Elsner and Cardinal (1997) discusses the collector as a saver/saviour of all things precious. However, in his discussion of Kurt Schwitters, Roger Cardinal later argues that to collect is ‘to launch individual desire across the intertext of environment and history’ (1997:68). Through his investigation of Kurt Schwitters’ work he connects collage to collection and, in both instances, the final product has to be displayed. More importantly, using the practice of Schwitters, Cardinal’s discussion focuses upon the changing role of the collector. Schwitters used found objects/rubbish to create his collages and he undermines the idea of collecting as related to preciousness.

Rachel Whiteread’s drawings enforce a similar identity. Whiteread associates her drawing with the practice of keeping a diary (Whiteread and Pesanti 2010:9) as a diary saves mundane experiences as a reminder of something that could easily be forgotten. If Whiteread’s drawings operate as inventories for her sculpture then Kurt Schwitters was documenting a culture of the found object. What is precious is only valuable (in display) once it is displayed as integral to the display. ‘Value’ is not deduced at first glance, unlike the display of antiques, where value is predetermined. However, I document the lives of ordinary objects that have been chosen, gifted and received. These objects possess relationships to others. I am looking for a value, which has been incurred through ownership and is inherent in its use. To collect/document can create a record of diasporic selves that is a journey of accumulations.

Narratives and inventories can connect related or unrelated events. In *Everything is illuminated* (2003) by Jonathan Safron Foer, the character called Alex is both author/character and personality within the book, which explores multiple authorships. This is a story of the author’s search for personal diasporic history, only for half of the history to be interpreted by an Ukrainian translator (Alex) who sometimes muddles the use of his words. This ensures that the document is neither consistent nor legitimate, further ensuring that the search for history and culture is rarely accurate. Safron Foer produced a collection of narratives that mix up writing styles in order to convey a first person and observational method in the final outcome. As a consequence, this record of social selves goes against theoretical
discussion of diasporic selves, as the diasporic journey is made more legitimate then the experiences that we have to hand. This text suggested ways in which I could construct my narratives with their references to diasporic experiences and a mixture of writing styles.

In Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993), the record of diaspora from a theoretical perspective, being closely linked to a grouped idea of ‘homelessness’ or ‘routes and roots’, does not allow any form of personal history to be handed down or collected. There is a presumption within this idea of diaspora that his concept of historical relations was more important than the social relations of the present. Stuart Hall continues this argument in terms of a ‘black subject’ (Hall 2000:233) as an alternative to cultural identity. The ‘black subject’ creates an identity that is in production and never complete whilst referencing a diasporic history with its narratives of displacement. This displacement that Hall discusses has individuals joined together, whether they really connect or not, but they are placed side by side because of a shared diasporic heritage.

In my practice, through stories I argue differently. I agree with Hall that diasporic identities are ‘producing and reproducing themselves anew’ (2000:244). As a consequence the direction that these identities take does not always relate to legislated identity. In ‘Diaspora, Diaspora Space and Polish Women’, (1999) Boguisa Temple argues that it is the way the concept of diaspora is used which is of importance. Furthermore there is an emotional value created by place, which supersedes geographical borders. I use life history to prove that routine can change social connections and the record of selves that construct what is deemed to be ‘culture’. More importantly, social selves are created from the experiences that are physical and embodied and are not exclusively experiences that are theoretically significant.

*Home*

A home is a place in which relationships are made and unmade. Considering Daniel Miller’s discussion (1995) of consumption (in anthropology) in connection to home, his ethnographic method of collecting people remained connected to the abstract
categories of anthropology as opposed to the complexity of human experience. However, as Bachelard demonstrates (1994; first published 1964) in his enquiry into intimate spaces, narrative can be a process of discovery. His work on the poetics of intimate spaces makes home unpredictable but its meaning enduring. His work on nests and all inhabited spaces breeds ‘the notion of home’ (Bachelard 1994:5). The soul was posited as the interior of the house and, in Bachelard’s home, objects create experiences and renew memories. His ideas were fundamentally connected to the house as an object. The architecture is more important than the possessions that we keep. Through architecture Bachelard could discuss the soul. The soul was then divided from the body in a way similar to the interior division of the house. That was Bachelard’s process and method of discovery and this created a ‘bodily sense of self’ (Burkitt 2008).

Rachel Whiteread’s sculpture House (1993), a cast of a house at Grove Road, London, is a physical manifestation of Bachelard’s work. We cannot imagine ourselves in her house, as there is no way of getting inside; the house is not a home because of its closed nature and there is no access. House creates a record of self that is not social. In contrast to Whiteread, Michael Landy actively engages with the trials and tribulations of ownership. While Whiteread’s work embraces the art object as a form of documentation, Landy’s preoccupation with the destruction of his own possessions in Break down (2001) positions documentation as art. Connecting the art object to ownership through Landy’s work enabled me to justify making inventories whilst Bachelard’s poetic of space justified the making of narrative.

Michael Landy created inventories to document the destruction of his own possessions. The inventory was a record of death not a record of life. For Landy, life and death had to be opposing forces rather than connected. His possessions could not remain memorable when destroyed and they had to be inventoried in writing. This is similar to the inventories of Georges Perec. However, Perec’s inventories were descriptions of life and place-making. In Species of Spaces and Other Places, (2008; first published 1974) Perec made an inventory of food stuff, entitled ‘Attempt at an inventory of the liquid and solid foodstuffs by me in the course of the year nineteen hundred and seventy-four’. It was a textual list that attempted to itemise a
totality. I argue that itemising, as a practice, contains incompleteness, as by itemising the record it could belong to anyone because the record invested and divested meaning when viewed.

The memory of an object is important to Jean-Sabastien Marcoux. In his essay, *The Casser Maison Ritual: Constructing the Self by Emptying the Home* (2001) the object was divested of meaning and gifted, as a ritual, to those close to him. The relationship between the giver and the receiver was a receipt of social and historical interaction. The object became a memorial to the giver. The role of memory in my work is to use objects as receipts of human interaction. The receipt is not final but it is an acknowledgement that something happened and a reference was produced.

**Family**

Photography, as a documentary art practice, makes ideas about family explicit in a family album. Carrie Mae Weems did not always photograph the people that she knew; she was interested in a wider sense of community. Weems uses the first person in her narratives and in *The Kitchen Table Series* (1990) she uses her images of her own family to assert and to unpack her relationship with the past. She is not only discussing her family; she sees her family as a model of other families. This goes against the idea that families have resemblances but are not the same.

I use Weems’ method of creating intimacy to a certain extent. However, the type of family I describe is different to Weems’s American family. She uses folklore ‘to establish an alternative, grass-roots history’ (Kirsch 1994: 11), but I think that history is more than life stories. Rather than using traditional stories, I both record and create narratives of relations. Weems uses the family as politics and the documentary as a device to persuade the viewer to believe ‘the real’. Weems links every photograph to wider anthropological categories by using photographs of her family and photographs of her community as evidence to define that community. As a viewer you may think she knows the community but she is an outsider; she is discussing subjects as she is the anthropologist. Groups do not stay together because of ideas of the nuclear family, as Carrie Mae Weems’s documentary photography suggests. People stay together because they are ‘related’ in complicated ways. These
complicated ways of relatedness have been explored through Diane Arbus’ work on the family album.

Diane Arbus’ work, *Family Albums* (2003), is a collection of photographs styled as a family album in the 2003 exhibition of the same name. These images are about family pictures; they are not pictures of Arbus’s family. This is an entirely different documentary practice from Carrie Mae Weems. Arbus was exploring a form of documentation and suggesting that you may or may not know all the members of your family but you can be documented together. Her interest was in group formation and she was creating a world of differences. Relatedness is played out just like a game. Arbus’ work is relevant to my family album construct as it suggests the idea that classification does not precede a collection and, as a document legitimate or otherwise, it furnishes evidence.

Mark Dion creates collections that question both life and history. His work has a fieldwork element and is a display that enables the process of collecting to be seen at different points. He argues that ‘When the collection is complete, when I’ve run out of space or raw material or time, the work is finished’ (Corrin 1997:25). As a consequence, individual habits become part of the fieldwork process and choosing forms the collection. In my practice, possessions are chosen because of individual habits connected to spaces. The records of these choices become the accumulation of many spatial habits. This is the work of memory, creating possession that, when displayed, can demonstrate that families (groups/possession) create memory because they are together. Attachment is created when things are side-by-side and therefore it is not construed by theory but by a practical endeavour, which is sleight of hand. The practice of collecting records is habitual and turns it into both memory and possession.

Mark Dion argued in his handwritten manifesto that ‘we construct and are constructed by nature’ (2000:66). He goes on to discuss that our ‘relation to the past is historical, not mythical’ (2000:67), but our relations in the hands of another are no longer possessed by the person who created them. Kim (2006) argues and demonstrates that empathy with the characters is integral to the understanding of
arts-based and autoethnographic texts (Ellis and Boucher 1994). Narrative construction is about its credibility/usefulness with regard to creating worlds. Kim uses narrative to show many voices that contain different perspectives at a particular place and concludes by suggesting that this can be used to ‘interrogate dominant stories’ (2006:11) – theories. However, the voices within her essay are framed by the character’s role; this differs from the textual account of Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Boucher (1994) as they discuss a topic rather than the record of an informal interview in their autoethnographic discussion on autoethnography. Additionally, they are not constructing a statement; they are creating reality in order to use it for personal influence.

**Thesis structure**

The body of the thesis is composed of three sections. Situating Practice is constituted of Chapters One–Three and the second section, Inventories and Narratives, contains Chapters Four–Nine and the Findings contains Chapter Ten.

Chapter One: Social Selves, connects the home and the family as social relations because it is only in these relationships that groupings can have a connection to ‘Who am I?’ These social relations are remembered as behavioural practices where systems of connections constitute inventories and narrative and they are localities in the format of intimate spaces, which are thought and owned. The Home as a narrative and The Family as possession are never continuous but they reside in places such as My Cupboard called Hell, My Kitchen Cupboard, My Wardrobe, My Bookshelf, My Kitchen Table and My Family Album.

Chapter Two: In The Home I investigate Bachelard’s nest concept and consider how, when connected to objects, the meaning of home can change. I look at the home as a space where the objects inside are used and possessed. When I document social selves, inventories and narratives generated by the home gain a new existence.

Chapter Three: The Family considers Wittgenstein’s ideas on family resemblances and possessions created through games. A game is a competitive activity with rules;
all players – by being players – understand the rules of the game. Art practice is also, to some extent, a game, which organises information. Carrie Mae Weems’s practice documented her family around the kitchen table in the hope that they could be the image of all families. Her concept of family derives from ideas around gender roles and blackness. Weems’s use of photography is sleight of hand; in my practice the narrative contains characters whose roles depend on what people do. My interest in Weems’ work is in the idea that we can all own narratives but not everyone can own my family because everyone forms their own groups, which are important.

The second section of the thesis, Inventories and Narratives, is the collection of research practice uses narrative and inventories to display social selves. Some of the text is written in italics as it enables an autoethographic experience to occur. Through narratives and inventories I explore my own home and family. The focus of this section is on how possession creates history, which argue for a particular perspective which concentrates on how the home and the family connect to social selves.

Chapter Four: My Cupboard called Hell discusses some of the objects contained within a cupboard that is organised. Hell is an unwanted necessity, its existence allows for other objects/places to exist in the manner that they do. Furthermore, because of Hell and its lack of consistent categorisation, it is a space that is revered. It provides an alternative to the domestic space that is habitual and may seem unkempt at first glance but keeps its order in disarray through routine.

Chapter Five: My Kitchen Cupboard argues that the inventory of the cupboard’s contents is not sufficient as information because the practice of making food is never equal to the listing of items in an inventory. Each item in the cupboard references multiple practices that are only used together when making a meal. The display of the inventory in this instance is the visibility of a collection of objects placed together for easy access and subsequent use.

Chapter Six: My Wardrobe discusses an inventory that is a partial and provisional record. The wardrobe’s contents can only be a partial record, as clothing is constantly in use. There are other places in which clothes may reside as they are
continually being used. An outfit is the display of particular clothes in a collection and a collection of t-shirts can have similarities created by a history of relations that is t-shirt based. The history of relations found in t-shirts becomes the ritual handing down of information through cotton apparel.

Chapter Seven: *My Bookshelf* discusses the inventory that contains objects which can fit onto a bookshelf. As space, the bookshelf is used to accommodate what fits the space. It is a space of convenience. Therefore a bookshelf is a shelf with books by name only and this inventory of a bookshelf explores the multifaceted nature of use. This use may have similarities to *My Cupboard called Hell* but the meaning is very different.

Chapter Eight: *My Kitchen Table* discusses an experience without an inventory. Instead the narrative describes how resemblances can occur around my kitchen table. *My Kitchen Table* explains how a family group can be connected with a table through a game of dominoes. The table, as an object, changes both the narrative and the memory of the characters playing dominoes. An inventory of the kitchen table cannot be created as this would mean that the game of dominoes would not be played.

Chapter Nine: *My Family Album* discusses photographs displayed on a mantelpiece. This piece of furniture contains photographs and paraphernalia owned by grandparents for the display of family history in the home. The use of the mantelpiece to house family photographs is put into question when not all of the photographs are of family but are thought of as such.

Chapter Ten: *Findings* chapter discusses what has resulted from conducting an exploration of this kind.

The *Appendix* contains a copy of the inventories that have been useful to this project.
Situating Practice

Chapter 1: Social Selves

In this chapter I investigate how the record of the home and family produces social selves using written narratives and graphic inventories as autoethnography. Autoethnography connects the personal to the social to communicate a form of lived experience. Narratives and inventories blur the genres of the textual and the graphic to produce an informal record of lives as they form a collection of information. This chapter shows how social selves connect to the home and the family by narratives and inventories operating to make the process of collecting personal. Moreover, as the home and the family connect to social selves, possession(s) show how memories create history.

Walter Benjamin (1999 first published 1931), Elsner (1997) and Cardinal (1997) have discussed personal collecting and how it connects to both possession and history. That is to say that collections were previously discussed in terms of objects having value not that the object is a dialogue between the past and the present. Baudrillard’s seminal essay, ‘The System of Collecting’ (1997), discussed collectors as dislocating themselves from the social world rather than the collection having the ability to link the social with the cultural. Walter Benjamin discusses the enchantment for the collector as ‘the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed as the final thrill, the thrill of acquisition’ (Benjamin 1999: 62). What remains (the collection) becomes an example that connects the record (in this instance narrative and inventories) to what is being recorded (the home and the family). This differs from the social selves which Ian Burkitt discussed; social selves collected theory and did not collect practices, blurring the practical with the theoretical.

Ian Burkitt (2008) discussed social selves as self-formed in history where culture, and ‘Who am I?’ is answered by ‘how the self is formed through social relations’ (Burkitt 2008: 1). However, Burkitt used work by Hegel and Marx to discuss ‘historical materialism’ (Burkitt 2008:17) and this connected the individual to others through
social classes not inventories and narratives. As a consequence, the record of social individuality for Burkitt is formed in generalised historical and cultural relations not specific personalised relationships. Whittaker’s anthropological self was an historical look at the importance of selves/identities in the human sciences, investigating how an exchange of information across subjects has occurred. It provides a critique of the importance of the record of one’s image in the human sciences. However, he returns to the idea that the anthropological record can only be used as a tool in the West. Additionally, a human record then has to connect to ideas that are framed by geographical connections of race, not human connections to others which are formed from collections.

Whittaker (1992) and Russel (1999) argue that the self is a process and the search for it strives for the representation of others, but is this the case? As a form of art practice, can the anthropological self remain within anthropology when knowledge is temporally and spatially created and is personal? Rather, documentation as a collection showcases the multiplicity of selves and the connection of inventories to narratives creates the social. An example of art practice acting as a record is the drawing of Rachel Whiteread. This creates a personal and social record of Rachel Whiteread but, in so doing it, creates an evocative tactile memory.

Rachel Whiteread uses drawing as a form of record keeping and Jonathan Safron Foer (2003) uses unconventional documentation to record historical connections that are changed by the character who records diasporic identities. In the exhibition catalogue Rachel Whiteread’s Drawing (Pessanti 2010) Whiteread discusses the use of drawing in her practice. She uses drawing as a record of her experiences; these experiences are her own personal record. She also uses drawing as a method of capturing memories and as a consequence they are made tactile. Her drawing forms a tactile record of her recurring interest in this as a ‘diary’ of work. Susan Stewart discussed the diary as the creation of a voice that is both partial and immediate and the first person narrative voice ‘is in the present looking back’ (2003:87). Although Whiteread describes her practice as diary, the voice of inventory supposes not only that this drawing is a record of a particular time but that the object is the location of the knowledge of what happened as material culture. More importantly, what is
produced connects literature to what we have to hand.

Diasporic identities have commonly been theorised for Hall (2003 and 2000) and Gilroy (1991) as dealing with ‘roots and routes’ (rather than what is to hand), that is to say that history still connected the individual to prior geographical location/ ‘geographical mobility’ (Blunt 2007) and social individuals could not make their own history as a ‘black subject’. However, Hall agrees with Foucault about a ‘theory of discursive practices’ (Hall 2000: 6) and chooses identification11 as a determining factor of identity that positions the ‘ethnicised body’. In addition, this suggested that these histories were still ‘good to think with’ and that current experiences were irrelevant. Narrative enables information to be collated together; when information sits side-by-side relationships are created. Moreover, Fortier discusses diaspora as connected to memory rather than territory as ‘territory is de-centered and exploded into multiple settings’ (Fortier 2005:184). Boguisa Temple concurs that the concept of diaspora ‘revalues the emotional aspects of identity’ (1999:23) and this concept enables possession(s) and history to be sutured together, rather than separated. Material objects can ‘acquire meaning through embodied practices’ (Hallam and Hockley 2001:1), which automatically transform memories when acting upon them.

Roger Cardinal (1997) in discussing the work of Kurt Schwitters connects the collage maker to the collector which changes the direction of the discussion of collecting from a collector of the sacred to the profane. In so doing, he creates the artist as collector who acts as such in order to produce art that records everyday experiences. Kurt Schwitters practice was not about the way life used collections, he showed that to collect transformed objects acted as a record of life12. The artist creates value through possession rather than the object already having value. Boltanski’s work ‘Research and Presentation of all that Remains of my childhood (1994–1950)’ (1969) discussed that collecting was a work towards survival for others. An individual can

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11 In choosing identification Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy create another colonised subject that disregards current methods of place-making. The ‘New Ethnicities’ (1996) argued for by Hall were colonised by a culture that was already predetermined.

12 In the chapter ‘Identity Parade’ John Windsor describes the world of the collector as one defined by objects and he argues that perception is then fragmented ‘because diversity rather than unity appears to dominate’ (Windsor 1997:49). As a consequence, a record of life is diverse and fragmented and collecting becomes the method of creating culture and therefore displaying society – a smaller version of which is defined by the use of objects.
collect anything and, by collecting, what is collected connects the process of collecting to how value has been inferred for social selves.

Mark Dion enabled the physical experience of art as a collection to be a site of learning. Moreover, the learning constructed through excavating a site is then displayed for others as a collection. In ‘Selections from the Endangered Species List’ (1989), the installation displayed selected images (as a collection) of extinct animals and a desk with books on extinct wildlife. In so doing what is collected is more complex than the displayed installation; the installation is not equal to his experience: it’s a dialogue between discovery and disappearance of both endangered animals and experience. Mark Dion’s objects are the objects connected to sites that he has found; he has collected and itemised them to tell and ethnographically document his experience. For Dion, his work creates a contradiction between classification and collection, not the fact that they are understood when viewed together.

John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (1997) discuss how Adam ‘had classified the creatures that God had made’ and the myth of Noah as the first collector (1997:1). Subsequently, classification precedes collection and therefore the organisation of a group comes before the group itself, which is arguable. My interest in documenting social selves stemmed from detailing the inside of domestic spaces as they connected the person to their past connections. The collection precedes classification; therefore as the collection changes so does its classification. Going back to Elsner and Cardinal, the information that was given by Adam to Noah was handed down information, and when information is handed over to another it creates narrative.

In the essay ‘Narrating the Self’ (1996) Elinar Ochs and Lisa Capps discuss that a narrative can be told by integrating two or more communicative modes. Susan Finley (2008) furthers this discussion of ‘narrative art forms’ (2008:97) which can blur the lines not only between narratives and inventories but the researched and the researcher. As a consequence, narrative can be created and this operates beyond traditional dissemination of information because a narrative is experienced and
embodied. In opposition to this, Giddens (2000) argues that the self is a coherent narrative as he discusses self-help manuals and the ability for the individual to plan time and to construct themselves. Although Giddens argues for coherent narrative his discussion of relationships is problematic as they relate to theories of ‘pure relationship’ that are not experienced but stereotyped. Modernity may shape the theories of Giddens (2000), Gilroy (2003) and Hall (1996) (to a certain extent) but what it does is to use stereotypes to augment particular histories that are connected to and possessed by a group.

I use both the inventory and narratives to shift perspectives. If social selves by their very nature are multiple then these voices relay a journey. This journey connects what is to hand as an external experience and the internal experience of connecting what is to hand to memory. An example of connecting the internal with the external is Jonathan Safron Foer’s novel Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2005). Safron Foer uses lists and diaries to portray characters that connect the tactile with a haptic experience to enable the intimacy of a character who hopes to sense life through material. This journey is collected and documented but, to experience it, it needs to be unpacked as the places that are investigated are different from the world outside the book.

Graphic and written narrative and inventories blend the self with the social but change its display as it is possessed. Autoethnography is created when personal identity is understood ‘to be implicated in larger social formations and historical processes’ (Russel 1999:276). First person experience is owned and a relationship is created and through experience the reader is connected. Whittaker argued that the selves are created in the ‘telling and the hearing’ (Whittaker 1992:208), as the work of first-person experience is to construct selves and modify behavior because of its interference. What is told and heard is a collection of musings around the idea of home and family. The definition of home and family is changed as the information collected creates a different display.

Whittaker’s analysis disregarded anthropology’s history of documenting others to understand who we are, whereas Whiteread’s drawing enables a personal voice that
functions in a similar manner to a mundane object (diary) to display not only her work but herself. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner discuss personal stories as evocative narratives that are sometimes structured as a novel as this ‘rejects the orthodox view of the reader as a passive receiver of knowledge’ (1994:744). The practitioner is not a passive constructor of knowledge; when knowledge is received intimacy is created.

Michel Foucault argued that ‘a document has always been treated as the expression of a voice now silenced – its echo faint but fortunately still audible’ (1970:178). Is it really fortuitous that the document exists? Surely the document needs to be accessed so that it can gain some positive regard. This positive regard and, more importantly, the descriptions that the document contains are governed by current knowledge and access to this. A collection benefits from multiplicity as recollection can occur and this happens in the present using reconstruction with many linkages. As a consequence, the record of social selves is multiple but created in retrospect.

Narratives are not necessarily made scientifically; they can be constructed by connecting related or unrelated events, as is apparent in Safron Foer (2003) work, *Everything is Illuminated*. In this novel, a search for personal history, Safran Foer alternates narratives as he journeys to Ukraine in search of the person who saved his Jewish grandfather during the Nazi liquidation of Trachimbrod. A second narrative is by his translator, and soon to be friend, Alex. The relationship that develops shapes the novel as a narrative of how history can be learnt and understood in many ways. The question ‘Who am I?’ could connect to a changing idea of home and family. I use characters called grandma and granddad to discuss how we are connected but also disconnected. Knowledge of others is possessed using narrative and where they are formed is a site of a collection.

To conclude, if the home and the family form social selves, relationships are formed through their material and physical use. Safron Foer used material relationships to create characters that changed how history is handed down to characters within the novel. The space of the novel is a world of human experiences.

The concept of social selves is not a model of experience; it is an experience in itself.
Therefore it is not the way life is but it is the way life can be. What is convincing is the process of collecting as what has been collected is the product of accident and lack of permanence. As a consequence, social selves as a practice-based enquiry operates by using personal experience and also by linking the tactile to the haptic which can create/embody a relationship. The act of collecting, by its nature, is as convincing as anything that can be collected but when what is collected forms a relation, narratives and linkages change.

Narratives embrace a collection, a collection that is bound together only in certain instances. In narrating, a reality does not have to be consistent. It can only describe; it gives no illumination of the future. This is the collation of the past in a format that hopes to be received. Reception of information is the process by which information is further organised. A narrative can connect the teller to the receiver, creating a sense of self.

In both cases the visual and material experiences change the way in which history is told, recreated and learnt. The relationship between what we see and what is felt is not always connected. A record can document the disparaging relationship between the two whilst still creating an autoethnographic voice. This voice is the result of a journey, a search for social selves that can create characters within the narrative that are less than orthodox. Safron Foer creates a relationship between himself and the characters that he creates; this is a spatial connection to the visual and material experience. As a process this is different from what Whittaker’s ‘anthropological self’ intended but the meaning is similar. Anthropology as a discourse is different from artistic perspectives as the process/discourse is of how we can be created and connected to discourse that acts as a practice.

Berger argued that ‘the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled’ (1972:7). However in certain circumstances knowledge enables seeing to be justified. What we know is then what we see. All spaces do not create both inventory and narratives; sometimes there is only a narrative left behind (see Chapters 8 and 9). As a home is formed, new categories of objects are shaped and new experiences of living with them are recorded. In a house a group can exist but in a home a group
can be formed and possessed. The house is the place as a container, whereas the home contains memories, which keep groups together. Home is not to be found in bricks and mortar but the relationships that we have to places where possessions are situated.

In the next chapter, the home is investigated through other practitioners that have investigated place-making.
Chapter 2: The Home

In this chapter I investigate the home and show how documentation affects social selves. I combine Bachelard’s (1994; first published in 1964) concept of nests with Jean-Sebastien Marcoux (2001), who offers an argument of how easily one’s objects can be divested of meaning. This is important as the nest could change meaning and create a new narrative that could be manipulated when used, forming a new memory. If narratives and inventories are the method of inquiry then this relation to objects is through the home acting as a containing possessor. Placing emphasis on the work of Michael Landy and Rachel Whiteread, I also investigate the artists’ interest in the home and how that has changed the documentation of our social selves. Landy expressed the importance of documentation in the creation of his inventories and the connection that they have to the objects that are documented. Rachel Whiteread’s House, where she placed the emphasis on the house as the object that contained the people within it, documents a system of containment, a place in which difference does not occur but a house in which sameness occurs.

Bachelard’s discussion of nests connected physical spaces and corners to primal images, ‘images that bring out the primitiveness in us’ (Bachelard 1994:91). The nest has to be ordered and its viability is not always long-lasting if it is viable at all. A viable format can be a purely personalised experience, a narrative. This ‘primitiveness’ for Bachelard, is discussed as childhood, something that we cannot go back to but we are reminded of its existence, synonymous to an image created in opposition to cold hard facts as value, and ‘value alters facts’ (Bachelard 1994:101). Bachelard used metaphor to narrate his idea of home and nest. This nest was locked in metaphor that organised a moment into descriptions. Boundaries were the force that bound childhood to adulthood, a force that is valued as it is experienced once and we can never return to it. What bound childhood to adulthood was an identification that placed preference over what is lost, where childhood acts as a metaphor.
Bachelard’s house, as an object that contains our imagination, is easily relegated to a box of stuff and the process of reception of information will differ for all because the process of packing boxes can change the access point whereby the physical object is connected to the material imagination. Value, located in boundaries, could only be narrated as a memory that has an ability to alter facts. If that is the case, why did the nest have to be the material house? Possessions can be reclassified and objects within the house are reclassified when I create narrative and inventories. Bachelard used the house as object to create a story but I use the home as an archive of possessions. It’s through the record of an object’s use that narratives and inventories are created.

Bachelard’s narrative focuses on the house as an object that contains our imagination. However, not all houses are used in the same way. Heidi de Mare (1999) reconfigures the way domesticity has been connected to the home by investigating how the house became important in seventeenth-century Holland. De Mare investigated Dutch paintings and their depictions of the home as a household. She considered Dutch households because it was thought that it was there domesticity originated, although in her essay de Mare engages with that argument. What she thought was interesting was the concept of domesticity (a nineteenth-century creation also discussed in Bryden 1999) as a place of warm coziness, which is seemingly hard to define, control or dispute.

I investigate social selves as the means to display domestic space seen through ‘bodily practices’ (Connerton 1998: 72). These preserved versions of the past are descriptions of habits that enable a small space to be created. Bodily practices change the domestic space. Spaces are contained by a spatial and temporal history of their own, and the consumption of these spaces is susceptible to change. This domestic space is habitually used and an inventory can be made.

13 In opposition to Bachelard’s house, Michael Landy’s work ‘Semi-detached’ (2004), is a sculpture/model of a family home that is so detailed in its modeling that it lacks the lustre of life. Landy tirelessly replicated the aesthetic detail of the house, destroying personal narrative and memory. The focus of the work is on the impressive nature of realism: the copy.
14 Bachelard’s aim was to study ‘chimerical or crude types of intimacy’ (1994:136).
In 2001 Michael Landy, destroyed all 7,226 of his possessions on Oxford Street in London. ‘In total, 7,226 items had been reduced to sacks destined for landfill. Now the event exists only in inventory, ensuring that Landy may know everything about what he had, but can never get anything back’ (Cumming 2002). Landy had problems readjusting to normal life after the spectacle was showcased. It revealed that the moment of getting rid of one’s possessions is fine but the aftermath is like mourning for a life. An inventory lists items but tells nothing of the life that Landy had before. My practice is the antithesis to Landy’s, although using similar methods. For me life is more important than the idea of living. Landy could burn his father’s jacket for art sake; however I could not, as the life of the object does not remain. He learnt that some meanings could be divested and invested however this practice is not universal. In other words some things truly matter. The creation of an inventory is not a dispassionate record; it’s an enforcement of its significance as memory-record. When art and life is mixed there is no way of predicting how value will be incurred.

Landy’s interest in documenting death is not a new practice in art. Christian Boltanski documented his possessions in Research presentation of all that remains of my childhood 1944–1950 as an artist’s book. Boltanski’s archive investigated death differently as he wanted to fight against it. In archiving his possessions Boltanski wanted them to be his childhood. By individually saving a part of our lives he wanted death to be halted, whilst Landy wanted the archive to be death’s exaltation. An example of life and death being part of the same network is apparent in Marcoux’s Casser Maison (2001).

The ‘Casser Maison’ Ritual: Constructing the Self by Emptying the Home was the move from a home to a care home. Elderly persons divest themselves of their objects by giving these objects to another. If an object retains the memory of another it cannot be accepted within one’s own discourse, ‘imposing one’s objects is like imposing oneself’ (Marcoux 2001: 228). The idea is that we have to be physically near to an object for it to constitute a self. However, there is a suggestion that possession is multifaceted as meanings can be attached to objects through physical loss, but an element of property in the form of another still remains, as narrative. Casser Maison uses loss to create an ancestry and this was a means of constituting
the self. This was self, created through the object divested, acting as familiar. The object could be a background or origin that could be hand-held and, as this object had status, it could be an important source/viable format of someone close. An object could be another’s life history, a form of the person gifted as a mnemonic device for another.

*Casser Maison* can be a daily occurrence and we may, in turn, place our investment in different places to safeguard a return. In moving house an object can be physically moved from one place to another in order for an investment to occur and so can its narrative. The act of moving many times allows some objects to gain greater viability value as they have been preserved for longer. Furthermore, what has been categorised as hard fact is easily changed, as values are rearranged and preservation of memories can be arbitrary.

Marcoux’s exploration of moving home revealed the assumptions that are often connected to moving in general and how easily one’s objects can be divested of meaning when needed. His investigation into the relationship of people and their objects produced social selves that could be gifted to those close creating a referent of attachment. This was not the end of the memory as it was for Landy but evidence of how an object could form a new life. Marcoux did not create an inventory but all objects that were to be transferred had significance to the giver. Therefore an inventory was metaphorical, possession had a history of importance as narrative, connecting the receiver to the giver through possessions. These possessions for Marcoux acted as a record of loss and gain, and possessions created a different home for all that had a connection by way of ‘the nest’.

The difference between the process of *Casser Maison* and Michael Landy’s possessions is that the personal divested meaning of their possessions used packing as the process. Furthermore, Landy did not link the act of possession to the process of divesting. Loss was located to one public spectacle and the spectacle was not enough. The spectacle itself gave no hope for the future. Home is about transportable relations that are not solely the work of sight.
This place we call home can form an intricate record that acts as lived experience and, from Landy’s work, I learn that the inventory on its own gives no sense of home. The inventory needs a narrative to create a place. This influences what we remember of that place. Place-making makes our interests seem smaller as the spectacle is not enough. Or we may have too many places, investing meaning into those places temporarily to be recollected at a later date as an ‘art of memory’ (Yates 1994: 356; first published 1966). To make something worthy of being recollected it needs to be connected to a procedure. An art of memory is a mnemonic device; a device that aids memory through learning. As an act, it hopes that particular forms of information are more easily remembered than arbitrary tasks.

Yates’s study of seventeenth-century memory techniques revealed memory practices before printing processes were used. These were learnt and governed through individual habits that changed the view not only of memory techniques of the seventeenth-century but also the understanding of the past. This act of memory has a material connector and this can change the direction of how we see ourselves. A narrative can change how we see ourselves. Yates’s understanding of memory techniques shaped how memories are classified. Memory techniques became the making of the people of a time. Consequently, the memory technique was used in poetry and art, not in arbitrary tasks, as they were not classified of any importance. For Yates, the art of memory created a grand narrative of how a method can easily change to assist in time. Furthermore because the art of memory was individual, the concept of time was individual. If place-making gives our interest a container then the meaning of home is changeable. The house as object has had a connection to the home in art practice but the metaphor is lost in sculptures of house structures.

I will now discuss the use of home and its connection to the house as a physical object. The narrative is nothing without the inventory and the inventory is nothing without the narrative.

15 Yates’ conclusion was that the art of memory was a process of discovering new knowledge as it became used in science. It had changed from a method of memorising to an aid to exploring man and his imagination, the memory being equal to man. The art of memory, then, is the change in memory practices.
The house has been commonly argued as the home. This has been physical in the sculptures of Rachel Whiteread’s *House* sculptures. Bachelard’s example of the nest is through the use of the house. His idea of the poetics of space stems from the idea of a ‘material imagination’ (Bachelard 1994: 102), and in so doing it puts emphasis on the structure of the house and how it has been built as place of refuge, or a particular container of refuge. Surely refuge can be found in other places? Moreover the house as an object functions as a place of refuge but, from my perspective, it is not used in that way. Bachelard’s nest was a space to be trusted without question and remembered, not as the thing itself, but for the memory. However Bachelard’s ‘primitiveness’ is not necessarily to be found in the house; primitiveness is related to preservation, preservation of primal images through memories. When preservation occurs so does segregation. Segregation implies physicality, however physical separation is not the only manner in which separation can occur. What is segregated means it has significance for it to be split, like the inside and the outside. This segregation may have nothing to do with use as it implies that ideas have been given priority. Segregation is connected to order. Ordering is for memory not necessarily for the thing, itself, although this can be confusing as ordering gains significance. What enables separation to occur also gains significance and an example of this is the house.

In Rachel Whiteread’s *House* (1993) the sculpture is of the inside of a house that is not a home, either visually or materially. It could never equal the memory of my own home. I do not use a whole house at the same time. The house is the backdrop to whatever is going on. Whiteread gives the house sculpture a history that is unknown to the viewer. Whiteread’s sculptures make visible the outside structure of a house, but makes it impossible for the viewer to get inside, emphasising the fact that a house has to be possessed before we can gain entrance. The house as a sculptural structure is unchangeable but my home changes regardless of how much I wish for it.

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16 Mary Douglas argued that a certain segregation was attributable to a sense of purity. Her investigation of dirt was a concern for how order is kept; she argued that for order to be imposed, rejection goes through two stages. Firstly rejection is recognised as the out of place (losing an identity) and secondly, it becomes classified as undifferentiated (Douglas 2009:198; first published 1966). What we learn from *Purity and Danger* (Douglas 2009) is that re-classification makes our concerns seem smaller.
to stay the same. Whiteread’s practice expanded on how art could create an intimate space, and a sculptural object could be a record of intimacy. Moreover, art objects did not just use objects as tools. An art object could document something that was both conceptual and also mundane. Whiteread’s sculptures were a physical manifestation that ordering relates to memory, not the thing itself. As a consequence, when you look at a sculpture of her home you view a house.

Burkitt argues that social selves are not contained. His argument is that documentation is found questionable as it lacks the ability to describe experiences. He agrees with Foucault that modern power is not from authoritative discourse ‘but a more internal persuasive discourse’ (Burkitt 2008: 106). His discussion of documentation uses the novel as a persuasive discourse, which documents lives. However, his argument is with words not with art objects. Rachel Whiteread’s casting of spaces located familiarity by documenting what was there, and domestic space became persuasive. The gallery is a space that dislocates all objects that enter; she creates monuments that are separate from the gallery as they are fossils of a recent history, her history. She used the gallery to frame the mundane experience. If we are experiencing social selves in smaller categories within domesticated spaces then these spaces do not remain small whilst they are experienced.

Burkitt’s motives for using the novel as informal documentation are that it seems consistent to argue with words. However, mundane experiences are inconsistent. His wider argument is that class relations are central to the way in which we inhabit worlds. Rachel Whiteread’s objects form an argument against class relations forming social selves. We all experience objects differently as material culture. Burkitt, as a social scientist, needed to keep one idea consistent so that social theory could write who we are and suggest that society is created in reference to social theory.

When Rachel Whiteread’s house is viewed, I cannot imagine possession, as I have no experience of being near that particular house. It is the opposite of Landy’s destruction. Whiteread creates an object with no memory and Landy destroys all physical memory as knowledge. However Landy created an inventory of his loss, forming and creating a new physical memory.
Home is what is continually in the making. At any point both home and heart can be broken and reproduced to form a legacy worthy of renewal. As each idea creates home it is difficult to remember what created its beginning and neither is this always important. The meaning of home changes over time, as each new spatial relation is both material and metaphorical. The metaphor with its connection to a physical relation is made more real than a singular object with no historical connection. If spatial separation is both material and metaphorical, and so are objects, then metaphor is what enables the materiality of home. The metaphor can create a memory and the object is the metaphor’s evidence. This can dislocate both object and memory from the original location if they are not of great importance, or a new origin can be created. Contradiction is easily created and then maintained.

Bachelard put emphasis on the house as a home because it was a space that seems consistent in writing. Whiteread’s sculpture becomes a consistent space in which an object can stand for possession but it could never be physically entered as access was prohibited to a solid object. Landy created a new object in the form of inventory; his home was made out of itemising what had gone before and this is an act of a memory becoming something else. When a memory is transferred to something else the memory becomes broken, or in his case physical. It is separated from its initial format in order for renewal to occur. The process of renewal is not always positive: sometimes it is repetitive. Home is not something that can be easily fixed once broken. Each breakage reveals a part that was valuable. Breakage forms a new direction or priority, it is not always positive to create a breakage.

To conclude, the home is about the journey, not purely the end product, but the concept can be attached to an accumulation of many homes or even houses, which can easily contradict each other. Home-making is a daily occurrence as possessions are divested and invested with meaning. In a concept of home we are asking how things are attached to one another as a journey from A to B. The process cannot be disconnected from how it came into being. This is also the reason home can be mixed with homeland because each act of remembering negotiates the place in which it hopes to be situated. This is also the reason why my home could never be a homeland, because its location on a map is irrelevant to my life.
Bachelard’s nest is what we wish to return to but, on returning, it cannot retain its lustre as it has changed, but I may not care whether this change has occurred. Home is not something that can be plotted on a map but it has a lot to do with how place is recorded and located, and this is a personal journey. A personal journey may have home marked out in ways and places that diverge from others. This justification creates social relations that can organise and retain a particular space, showing how it can be used in the future. Structures can be retained by memories of objects. By renewing/re-appropriating home, the structure of the textual account gives evidence of a landscape which acts to form a space of intimacy. Literary and theoretical texts are then tied to place, because they become aspirations, something achieved because the reader, as a source of origin, has retained them. Although origin is fleeting, this knowledge gives text a sense of history. This becomes localised knowledge as spaces of intimacy acquire people.

In narrative, the home becomes an external myth, which bears no resemblance to the home that we create and how we live our lives. However, resemblances form positions and possession in ways that have a logic of their own. Home is both multiple and managed by the narrative that sutures the material space to its object reference. Narrative is able to oversee and shape how material or metaphorical spaces and objects as metaphorical material evidence can remain in a format that works to suture diverging entities. To create home in this format is to experience management of language that is one of development, which creates another kind of object. This object references an experience, which is conditioned by how we remember home (in its widest sense), how we have lived to remember and what we have learnt to document, and this format is what all can possess.

In graphic and written narrative and inventory, the home becomes external but not mythical; it gains a reality and forms a relationship that is new but it is the model of an old relationship. It bears no resemblance to how we live our lives but it brings proof of a way a life can be lived. Practice as research is not the record of an object’s destruction but it is the document that records possession and creates a relationship. The maker and the receiver are tied to a metaphorical space, and it’s a showcase of continual management.
In the next chapter, the family is investigated through other practitioners who have investigated group making.
Situating Practice

Chapter 3: The Family

In this chapter I investigate the family and how documentation of the family has shaped social selves. Using Wittgenstein’s (1994; first published 1953) explorations of families creating a category and Cox’s (2006) understanding of the extended family network, I create an understanding of family that fits a particular purpose and which enables an enquiry of social selves. I investigate family as a form of documented possession and, through this, I investigate the artists interested in the family and how documentation changes how we can view ourselves.

I place an emphasis on the work of Carrie Mae Weems and Diane Arbus as their practice has been in photographic documentary practices. These practices have commonly been used to document experiences ethnographically (Pink 2007 and Sontag 1979; first published 1977). Bourdieu, in ‘The Social Definition of Photography’ (1999: 162; first published 1965) confirms a photograph’s realism and objectivity, noting that it is a practice that naturally produces a collection of inventoried images.

Wittgenstein discusses language as a game. Wittgenstein’s analogy enables the family to change as it is likened to a game. If narratives and inventories are the method of enquiry, the family produced is not the nuclear family; relationships are complicated. As it is not the nuclear family then by default it is an extended family, an extended form of relationship making. In Wittgenstein’s game, this game requires players, and each player presumes by default that they are part of the game through subscription. How the game itself began is of little interest to game playing. Concentration is placed on the game in hand. Therefore, games becomes a category, ‘and as a result of this examination we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail’ (Wittgenstein 1994:32). He calls this ‘family resemblances’ (Wittgenstein 1994:32) and he thought that games form family resemblances. As a consequence, communication allows family resemblances to form. However, not all communication results in reception of resemblances.
Whilst a game is in progress thinking creates specific resemblances. These resemblances can connect people to their things in arbitrary ways but these connections can also seem sacred. One relationship can affect an existing cohort through shared activities. Games are usually played out with other participants but, alongside this, the thinking within the game relies on those others as opponents. A network or grouping can be formed without cohesion and many games can be played at once not just the one that is acted out.

Wittgenstein’s game focused on the analogy between language and a game\textsuperscript{17}. I am using his analogy to understand family through its documentation as art. Wittgenstein’s game did not have to be clearly defined for it to be evocative. In other words, a family can be formed without completely understanding the individuals who are a part of the group. Family documentation, once taken out of the family network, loses its meaning. In opposition to this, Daniel Miller’s (1998) discussion of ethnicities (group-making) is themed around a dominant group, against which another group is defined. Daniel Miller’s ethnicity is, then, another type of group acquisition, but what is acquired? It is a history that may not have the individual in mind. Blood relations do not seem like a family game, as although particular roles are established for social individuals, the actions that we connect to individuals are not.

Carrie Mae Weems used her own family imagery in her art practice and Diane Arbus formed a prior connection with those she photographed through visiting and befriending them. Family imagery then is the documentation of social selves as it informs the understanding of who we are. The family in this instance is a group of people made present through documentation, not through race and gender. Roland Barthes argues that photographic practice ‘mechanically repeats what can never be repeated’ (Barthes 2000:4 first published 1980) and rightly so, however he concludes that photography can only be ‘reality’ or ‘illusion’ and this may not always be so. In certain places it can be both, although for Barthes an object could only be one thing at one time so that it could emulate the objective textual account.

The work of Carrie Mae Weems documents ethnicity, her aim being to question the role of documentary photography as a political tool. She mixed images with text to create multiple

\textsuperscript{17} I discuss an experience of a family game in greater detail in Chapter 8: My Kitchen Table.
voices. The politics of this was not to understand the question of ‘Who am I?’. Her work functioned to change the meaning of documentary photography with her family and wider community as the face of broader social issues. In Weems’ work, The Kitchen Table Series (1990), the kitchen table may be the focus but there seem to be many empty seats. In this series, Weems’s fundamental interest is in family practices, using her own family relationships as a referencing point to discuss race, gender and memory. As her family is staged around a table they live out a drama that may lead a viewer to believe that the members live their lives around a kitchen table, the kitchen table being the locus of life and culture, but this would be incorrect. The photograph rules how we view her documentation of her family. These images are not the kind found in a family album. What is marginalised in Carrie Mae Weems practice is that not all family practices are universal. Serendipitous to this is that another family can represent all families. Acquisition of culture requires cognition and storage, and not all signifiers are locatable and understood as such. Game playing has its own rules created in playing. Group making is dynamic as memories formed by past efforts gain importance. However, when documented, this becomes complex.

Extended family networks have been researched by Donald Cox (2006) as being most important in poorer countries (Cox 2006: 1), but he also argues that they are important everywhere. This places more importance on extended family networks and how relationships change the economics of a developing country where some things can be shared amongst households. Cox’s understanding of economies was by and large contained by the logic of ‘crowding out’\(^\text{18}\). Crowding out may not seem important to an understanding of a game or a family but to Cox crowding out created the link between the macro and micro forces that form relationships. This logic was informed by the methods of documentation that featured risk factors/risk sharing networks and productivity.

Donald Cox focused on keeping his discussion of risk-sharing in groups categorised by geographical locations. What he highlights is that economics places importance on value but not on ‘cognitive limitations’ (2006:80). However, he sinks into ideas of evolutionary classifications of primordial actions as his documentation is not from first-hand experiences.

\(^{18}\) Crowding out (Cox 2006) occurs when increased government borrowing ‘crowds out’ private investing. A concept of crowding out is important as it supposes that individuality acts in the same way in similar situations. It supposes a consistent logic to what we receive and to how we act and legitimises traditional concepts of self.
and his discussion is based around money as evidence. Focusing on money enabled Cox to create a model that concentrated on the extended family, but not the individuals who were making these decisions with the group in mind. As I live through others, cultural information is developed as an economy. Economies are connected to the value of people and place. Value enables survival in places that may not have the tools to continue. The relation itself aims for links to survive against all odds. The categories that are created are valued. Economies create categories. Not all categories are the same and neither are all families.

Donald Cox’s study presumes that all groups behave in the same way and are held together by ties of blood. However, the investigation of family (Family Albums) that Diane Arbus conducted was more from the perspective of ‘living arrangements’ (Goulbourne 2010:23). Arbus used the camera as a method of organising particular family resemblances as documentation in the family album. She photographed images of people but what should not be forgotten is that family albums are not usually for public use. If they are for public use they are not generally for personal use. Diane Arbus documented groups to discuss a shared collectivity, which is ‘a matter of becoming’ (Hall 2003:236). As she collected who we are as humans she could transform the memory of who we are to who we become.

Diane Arbus: Family Album (2003) is a tool that conveys a particular social interest that investigates commonplace activities by grouping many images of groups together. Her practice was as a collector of families’ images. Anthony W Lee argues that Diane Arbus’s work was a practice similar to Noah’s ark:

...gathering pictures for the album bore resemblances to herding and counting animals for Noah’s ark and preserving before some unknown catastrophe. A record of all human things, at least the ones worth saving (Lee 2003:21).

Diane Arbus’ collection of photographs constructed the past through objects. By collecting images of groups they have a place, which allows their image to sit side-by-side creating spatial and temporal relations through documentation. Her practice gathered the images

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19 Goulbourne suggests that we should redefine our assumptions of family as ‘living arrangements’ (Goulborne 2010:23), so that we can gain a broader category of family moving away from the nuclear family to something with which we can live. However, we will always live with a history of family experiences alongside the experience itself.

20 This book was published after Diana Arbus’ death; her images were collated together to form the book Diane Arbus: The Family Album (2003).
that she had created but the ordering through which these images were experienced depended on an exhibition curator. In the work ‘Mae West’ (1965), Mae West smiles happily in her room whilst in the next image ‘Brenda Diana Duff Faizier, 1938 Debutante of the Year, at home’ (1966), is a shadow of her former self. Images are connected to each other by time and in space in Diane Arbus: Family Album (2003). In a collection the individual is inextricably linked from the group. Arbus’s methods are commonly used domestically and the past can be controlled through its documentation. The game of resemblances creates linkages that can be manipulated, as we feel close to people we have never really known. Moreover, it begs the question if we ever knew those we felt close to in the first place as we are part of the human race.

In terms of the problems of documenting groups, Stuart Hall (1996) indicates that there are complexities within representation, noting that ‘selves are not fixed’ (1996:444). Therefore the policies of representation are not of stationary objects but the movement of many parts. Sarah Pink concurs, noting that photographs (as inventories) should concentrate on how the ‘content of visual image is the result of specific context of their reproduction’ (2007:114), but so is the textual account. Representation (of any kind) ‘implies a process of identification and otherness which is more complex than we hitherto imagined’ (Hall 1996:445). If selves are not fixed then what is documented? It can be imagined that documentation creates stationary life that is controlled as real life passes by. However documentation is subject to policies of identification just like group making/game playing as identification is not equal to the sum of its parts. The game of acquisition is not equal to the family that we may feel part of, as each member experiences things differently. Documentation of social selves is only a small limited perspective of how we relate to those we feel close to at a particular time. As it is possible to imagine a community by default it is possible to imagine ourselves.

To conclude, Wittgenstein’s family of resemblances was one of selection and obligation. Economies are created through selection, however obligation is created through ideas that are not always seen but lived through. This puts constraints on who is part of the family/group and what that group can be said to mean. Inheritance forms family resemblances that seem like still life but a documentary object can look like a shared connection to a group. This bypasses the nuclear family and all its social constraints.
Although we feel we own a family we cannot completely own anything as it is impossible for a single person to own a group totally. In documenting groups, a complex relationship is formed because, as a memory becomes a bodily practice, it becomes part of society, not just what we write.

The difference between Diane Arbus’ and Carrie Mae Weeems’ investigation, is that they were playing different games. They were forming/using family resemblances in a different manner. Weems was interested in creating a personal story and connecting this story to a wider sense of history as ethnicity (African American). This saw a group documented in situations that anyone could be in. By mixing narratives and documentary photography (inventories) she could tell a history that was under Weems’ jurisdiction. She wanted her history to be your history. Meanwhile Diane Arbus’ documentary practice was that of a collector of people on the margins of society. Whilst Weems wanted to strengthen more traditional anthropological ideas of blood, race and gender as a form of relation, Arbus’ is intrigued with social selves.

This section has offered some theoretical perspectives to contextualise my practice and its relationship to my central research question, ‘Who am I?’ The next section, *Inventories and Narratives*, discusses my practice and the ways in which it, as research, responds to and tests my research question.
Inventories and Narratives

Chapter 4: My Cupboard called Hell

How does possession create history in *My Cupboard called Hell*? Possession and possessions are multiple in a cupboard and, as the pages are turned within an autoethnographical narrative, history is storied and possession is brought to our fingertips. Marcoux’s (2001) discussion of objects infers that they are transferred from one person to another and Miller’s (2010) discussion of stuff to enable possession and memory, suggests that possessions are created by chance. ‘Hell’ describes boundaries in space but in so doing the many possessions becomes temporal space in the narrative of Hell’s making.

*For instance I have a cupboard, which I named Hell. It’s the kind of cupboard that when an object within the cupboard is needed, the cupboard door is opened slowly just in case objects jump out and attack. The retriever is then fully prepared for the mayhem that lurks within the confines of the cupboard. If an object is sent to Hell the door is opened and closed quickly, the object tossed in with a sigh of relief, as the door is rammed shut. Is Hell cozy? I think not. Hell is a cupboard in which the door is always closed quickly and that is what Hell preserves. This is a particular domestic space; it contains a lot of what is unwanted in order for other places to be revered.*

*In my cupboard called Hell a category is being created that allows place-making to be temporal but possessive. Boundary-making is not continuously significant and, once an object is locked in the confines of the cupboard, its identity is under Hell’s jurisdiction. Once taken out of Hell’s subjugation, Hell’s control has been relinquished for the time being. The domestic space is not always like this, but this is one of the spaces that is considered a place not to be ventured into, or to be part of, too often. Whether one is seeking Hell’s confines, or sending an object to its*
sentence, Hell is a requirement of this house. Without Hell there would be no personal order. Or maybe every space would contain a little place for what is unwanted, a corner that is isolated from the rest. Hell contains my version of ‘home’. Some of the boxes and containers by default may spend some time in Hell, waiting to be unpacked.

Can Hell make a history? Of course it can. Hell’s contents have a use; they encourage empathy ‘beyond the self of the author’ (Holt 2003: 6). History is defined by an unwanted collection that only has a use at particular times. Hence, the question of ‘Who am I?’, connects through possession(s) acting as history whether intentional or accidental. Hayano (1983) discussed in his autoethnography of a poker player that poker operates by combining skill and chance; Hell acts in a similar manner. Hell is created to inhibit the inconvenience of life’s objects taking over a place of living. As a consequence, history is then created by chance and a touch of skill. Of course skill is linked to completely avoiding Hell. This place (Hell) enables a particular kind of consistency to be retained within each space, without a little bit of Hell there would be no comfort. This kind of comfort is full of constraints. These constraints are a possession of a present past locked in Hell’s confines.

Once I accidently overfilled Hell. As always when placing things in a space, I was over zealous, and I thought that an extra box would fit snuggly. I was wrong. I was subjected to a barrage of boxes that toppled in my direction. I went fleeing to another room in great haste, in fear of an accumulation of objects that was more than could be contained in Hell. Even Hell needs to be kept in check. Afterwards I began the task of putting Hell back together again whilst trying to place a few objects around the house thus making Hell’s load a little lighter.

Hell is located near the bathroom and the bedroom and it is positioned far away from the front door. However this is not what enables its meaning to be filled with contempt. It is the way that this particular space is used, that enhances the materiality of this domestic space. As I
put Hell back together I realised that this space of Hell was similar to my grandma’s love of hoarding things, just in case. She might have had three irons at any one time. To her, maybe there is no Hell as every object has a use at some time or another. I could not understand why you needed three irons as I have rarely used even one! Every corner has an object that has a connection to someone. The cups have an owner, the gift is still connected to the giver and all objects have their uses. All uses are important to grandma.

The experience of Hell is always changeable because its contents change, however as autoethnography it is limited to what has been ‘remembered to have happened’ (Ellis and Bouchner 1994: 753). Hell’s continual transformation creates disdain and is impossible to record, so the many possessions within Hell become cumbersome. Also, the experiences of Hell are connected to habits that lead to disarray, which give importance to material life. Consider that to engage with a space called Hell, something from within Hell is needed. Hell has a prerequisite — something has to be needed in order for interaction with Hell’s contents to occur. In this space material life is sometimes not used; lack of use makes this space conveniently useful. Miller’s discussion of Stuff (2010) wants material culture to be more or less part of our existence in the world but he ignores the fact that by writing about material culture he produces it. In addition, particular perspectives of material culture are always inconsistent they are breaks of understanding into which we delve to understand the narratives of others to create a personalised anthropology. Anthropology has always been personal but to retain its scientific validity the anthropologist has to suggest that memories are the results of scientific processes not the collections of a particular collector.

As I open the door, I have many things hidden just in case. Hell can never be itemised fully. It contains too much. So I can only show you a few examples (Fig. 13–34). Why would I want to itemise this place totally? (I did try! See the Appendix and Box for more). Itemising Hell fully would create a torture of the page. It must be disappointing, viewing a few boxes here and there and all they contain are objects that are of no use
at the moment. As a viewer of this, you would be bombarded with pages and pages of my useless objects. These objects would make you a voyeur of something that could not be attained fully. In page format it might not be detestable, so I can only iterate the narrative of experiencing this space. Hell is not something that is bound by sight. Hell is not made in writing. Hell is made by the use of objects. This is a Hell of my making, and you know it.

If Hell’s memory is of no use it’s because its use is not overt. I have a Hell to store for seasonal usage and my Hell is the space of the ‘just in case’. Hell is the place where the decorations for celebrations are stored. Objects make my Hell, these objects contain many signals, and culture and its society is then boxed. History in Hell is created if the object is taken out of the box (Hell). That’s the weird thing about this place. I cannot remember Hell’s contents but as soon as a box is taken out of Hell I suddenly remember some of the contents of the box. How is it that I only remember the contents once they have migrated? Do I dislike Hell that much? No, it is not dislike that aids forgetting, an accumulation creates a category. As a consequence, the individual items lose their meaning temporarily; this enables the item to inherit meaning at a later date.

Hell is segregated by moments forming images and texts of Hell’s contents, which are recorded, edited and selected as evidence. This presents the tricky nature of history or memory. This space renders itself easily forgotten; there must be parts of our social selves that refuse to attain the ideal of a record never recalled. Once placed in the box to be moved to Hell’s confines, an object moves from a singular identity to a collection that is characterised by its grouping. The contents of a box have an ability to retain that connection to a memory that sutures the imagination to the object as a form of classification. Classification enables belonging to occur. Classification enables us to preserve a certain number of objects as memories of ever more distant relationships. Furthermore, I reshuffle Hell’s contents so that meaning is a matter of life and death. However this not a finality. Hallam and Hockley (2001) have argued that memories placed in objects ‘shift’, they are
transportable. In using Hell or any container around the home as a place of order or boundary making, it is in a process of constant formation as memories are transportable.

**Box Number 1 Baubles**

The baubles (Fig. 13–20) are sometimes put away carefully. After the fifth bauble I get fed up with packing them away. Then they are placed in the box hoping that they will not break: fingers crossed. Baubles make a Christmas. This box is not the total number of baubles; some are stored somewhere else. If this were the total amount of baubles the tree would look very bare. An empty tree does not feel like Christmas.

This box of baubles can be part of a celebration but the marking of the end of the celebration is their return to Hell. As the baubles are taken off the tree this marks their change in identity; the season of good will is over. They become labour once off the tree. This work is not regarded as enjoyable. At the bottom of the box are some Christmas beads (Fig. 21) and they are thrown in because they have no space anywhere else.

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Fig 13. Charlene Clempson, *Other Silver Bauble* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 15. Charlene Clempson, *Silver Bauble* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 17. Charlene Clempson, *Star* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 20. Charlene Clempson, *Silver Bauble* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Box Number 2 Lights

The Christmas lights (Fig. 22) are never neatly put away. They end up knotted together like spaghetti until Christmas comes round again and then they are found, carefully untangled and the lights and the baubles become the display of the festive season, that need not be work if only they had been put away properly. Each object has the ability to store another kind of memory, a bodily practice that enables baubles and lights to be Christmassy but in Hell they are unruly.

Classification is physical in this box of Christmas lights, as boundary making is continually asserted. The same object contains a connection to a plethora of understandings. This could create a ‘collective consciousness’ as a family of ideas, in object form. Collective consciousness serves to educate and is not continually imperative, as Burkitt (2008:19) has suggested. This is useful, as contradiction is temporal in a box and so is learning something that has been considered important and can later be disregarded in a box of lights. A box of lights can contain the ideas and beliefs that create the idea of Christmas.

Moving Christmas lights (Fig. 22) from a cupboard to out of the cupboard the connections are changing as the migratory process confers a different identity. By entangling them each year replication of the act of entanglement changes how the lights are understood. This cult called domesticity is not always affirming. A cult creates groups whether the collection created is wanted or not.
Christmas Tree

Some objects in Hell have their own container. They don’t need other objects hemming them in. For example, the bright blue Christmas tree (Fig. 23). The first time I gave in to a plastic tree, rather than buying a living one, I remember thinking that if you are going to buy a fake tree make it completely unreal. So unreal that when the lights are turned on, the baubles are on the tree and the tinsel is draped, it looks like a brilliant green Christmas tree. Yes my ideas sometimes work against me in their physical form. This can only be seen during Christmas time. For those 12 days a year the decoration is in action. All the other 350 days they are buried in Hell, the two remaining days are spent in boxes awaiting their return to Hell. This is their migration journey. Mine is a bit more time consuming as I pick up the courage to put things into boxes, huffing as each box breeds more frustration. By the way, these boxes are easier to access because they are taken out yearly. There are boxes in Hell that have unknown contents. I have no idea why they are there and why I have bothered to save them. Welcome to my Hell.

Think of the use of Christmas lights or baubles – this routine of Hell’s use is a living arrangement that enables Hell to always exist. The routine
becomes the instigator of Hell’s crowdedness. The repeated task of moving possessions creates the experience that is both needed and disliked. These possessions migrate as and when needed, and this connects to social selves through experience. Using material that had been left behind allows the past to have another meaning in another context.

In Hell whether it is memories or history, Hell is ideological. A belief in Hell is both physical and a system of ideas. Hell operates because the contents within Hell are always needed. Hell is the archive that is rarely used and it is an archive that functions to reorder. Objects migrate to and from Hell’s confines. Migration is not confusing; an object confined to Hell still has a place. Not all cupboards are called Hell, just this one. Cupboards are containers that I believe function to contain and structure, but the user changes the structure in order to use it. Sherry Turkle discussed that objects ‘function to bring society within the self’ (Turkle 2007:310), society is then made familiar, easy to handle in a similar way to the objects that create it.

Fig 23. Charlene Clempson, Sft Artificial Tree (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Boxes of Stuff

My grandparents had a cupboard. It was not called Hell. It was a cupboard that contained coats and small grandchildren. I used to hide in the cupboard under the coats because it was cozy and it was a childhood routine, but coziness became a routine and coziness was not for the moment. It lasted until the cupboard became uncomfortable to get into and slowly that cupboard ceased to store coats. I stopped opening the cupboard to look inside. Recording the inside of this cupboard was done in secret, without paper. I sat where I used to sit when I was younger and to my dismay all that the cupboard contained was coats and old shoes. Coats and shoes that I had not laid eyes on for years. This cupboard had changed. It smelt of mothballs.

The other day I peeked a look inside the cupboard and grandma had started using it again as she has been trying to clear a few things away. She has been looking for a key for a trunk and whilst looking for this key she ended up tidying a few other spaces. The cupboard of coats has now been quite ordered. When will my cupboard called Hell go through this transition?

Sometimes an object has no specific place at a particular time. It could be contained in Hell or it could be placed elsewhere. The odd screwdriver that will not fit in the tool box or the special note that cannot fit in the special note drawer suddenly creates a box of odds and ends. This box is then shoved into Hell. This is Hell on a small size but it is not a Hell. My granddad uses a table to store his odds and ends. It displays a few sweets and a lighter and a few pens to mark a special horse race of the day. What makes some messes bearable whilst others seem exalted?


Fig 27. Charlene Clempson, *Glass Plates* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Fig 28. Charlene Clempson, *A Note* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 29. Charlene Clempson, *Scraper* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Fig 30. Charlene Clempson, *Tool Box* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 31. Charlene Clempson, *Bracelet* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Fig 32. Charlene Clempson, *Pencil* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Fig 33. Charlene Clempson, *Piece of Wood* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Temporalities create a collection of fragmentary histories that both Hell and the person who unpacks possess. Temporary elements of ourselves enable memories to exist and activate participation. These fragmentary histories are a game of resemblances that feels completely out of control but are controlled by habits. I do not fully own Hell as the objects accumulated become forgotten. Forgetting is what creates disdain and halts possession.

Fig 34. Charlene Clempson, Another Piece of Wood (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Chapter 5: My Kitchen Cupboard

How does possession create history in *My Kitchen Cupboard*? The cupboard is a discussion between how the content of the cupboard (see Appendix Fig VII–XII for inventories of *My Kitchen Cupboard*) differs from making a soup. Possession and possessions are dependent on the act of making. In making something space is an invention. Perec notes that there are ‘few events which don’t leave a written trace at least’ (2008:12; first published 1974), however in soup making the trace does not connect to the event. *My Kitchen Cupboard* describes the memory as different forms of companionship, a space of transformations in which social and historical relations are continually learned. In addition, the inventories and narratives form a more ordered kind of companionship.

I have a kitchen cupboard. It’s a cupboard that stores dried food. I have lots of dried food. This is not used all at the same time. It would be pointless, as I could never make anything that was edible. In the kitchen cupboard we have a space that has been created from a shopping list/inventory. The list is always renewed to revamp or add to the kitchen cupboard’s contents. In soup making, only a few ingredients are used to make a soup. But without a kitchen cupboard this soup could not be prepared. That’s the problem with this kitchen cupboard – it always requires a little of something else. At the heart of this cupboard is preparation. Preparation makes an object fit for use. This domestic space is a cult that enforces preparation, preparation in its many guises.

I always overfill my kitchen cupboard. Nothing happens. I just have a full cupboard. Each cupboard has three shelves. Then I decide to make more space in the cupboard by making sure that there are no gaps in between objects, creating a little more room. My kitchen cupboard does not need
to be kept in check so much, although every year I have a clear out. This is to make sure that nothing goes out of date. If it goes out of date the object is thrown away. However if it is nearly going out of date or the best before date is irrelevant I place a Post-it note on it. This has nothing to do with soup but everything to do with a kitchen cupboard. Storage is different from the process of preparation.

Many objects make soup, but as an idea it embodies a tradition that is not bound purely by its appearance; it is also site-specific with many practices. There are many practices and identities formed through soup, both as object and concept. Soup brings objects together for them to fuse as an entity. Without soup, certain objects in the cupboard would have no use. Soup creates a situation whereby objects migrate out of the cupboard to create an experience, a meal. In soup-making memory is physically similar in nature to Marcoux (2001) reconstructing the self, and the cupboard is used in order to move possessions to create history. Possession creates history through transition; transition, although upsetting on a big scale (moving house), in small spaces and on a small scale (cupboard) is a prerequisite of life.

Unpacking in my kitchen cupboard is a selective procedure. House moving was the subject of discussion in Marcoux (2001) and unpacking and book collecting was the subject of discussion in Benjamin’s (1999, first published 1970) seminal essay ‘Unpacking my Library’. As a consequence all objects are chosen because of prior knowledge, which shapes decision of choice. Similarly all objects chosen (in my cupboard) are selected because of prior knowledge, which creates a dialogue between the storage and making, rather than a process of memorialisation. Prior knowledge makes preparation workable for a collection objects taken out of the cupboard. Soup connects food to heritage and personal history, but this history creates fragmentary relations. All relations are fragmentary but when cooked together they become a unit.

My kitchen cupboard is located in the kitchen, near the sink, close to the front door. This is not what makes the soup or connects a kitchen
The cupboard’s meaning to preparation. This space is used to hold ingredients that need to be prepared. This domestic space is not cozy. Versions of the past are connected to each object in the kitchen cupboard and how they are used. Their uses are multiple. These versions of the past are not solely connected to my own practices as habits reference another person’s practices as well as my own. By using the cupboard, my possessions have a spatial and temporal history that is edible. Consumption of this cupboard’s contents is routinely changing as it connects my cupboard to the cupboards of another.

My grandma’s kitchen is located next to the living room and it is the second room that is entered on arrival at Grandma’s house. My grandma has many kitchen cupboards and most of them are full of dried food. She has a rice cupboard that contains around five kilos of rice. She has a drinks cupboard that contains an assortment of herbal teas. Cordials are never placed in the cupboard and seasoning has its own cupboard. She has a cupboard for plates, one for cups and mugs, which are never placed on the same shelf as glasses. Each category has its own space. For the things that fall outside of these categories: kitchen objects without use are placed on top of the cupboards, out of reach. Granddad uses particular cupboards but avoids others as they are of no interest to soup making.

A meal can be made because of another history, which seems unrelated to the cupboard but the history is of memories that have gained potency because of routine. This potency creates a history of practices, which have been made by someone else as a gift. Turkle (2007) discussed that objects are ‘companions’, this friendliness seems more like familiarity, and they make you think in a selective manner. Memory in the form of practices is selective and, in certain instances, are ‘good to live with’, as all memories can be. However memories seem owned and individual so that no two people are thinking the same thing at the same time. A meal as ritual can make individuals think in a similar ways, it can be a point of connection.
Soup varies with what this particular household contains, but if cooked by grandparents it contains a consistent pattern that cannot be overthrown. If so, it would result in a coup. The notion of survival and the system through which we negotiate survival is the kitchen cupboard, which is a family of ideas. These ideas have been renegotiated to belong in the system in which they are presented and situated in personal history. Soup has its own singularity by those who endorse a soup pot. These sets of practices connect at best to a boiling pot, which becomes a narrative. Each happening always claims its importance in getting to the desired end. This showcases how a particular collection is revered at a particular time.

My granddad makes a West Indian Soup on a Friday because when he was growing up in Jamaica soup was always made on a Friday, by whoever was responsible for soup making. When food was scarce the routine of Friday Soup and the obligatory meat on a Sunday was always kept, to aid survival. These rituals have a history when linked to physical survival and can invest belief in a system whether needed or not. I make soup whenever I feel like it. It is not the same as granddad’s soup but I would never want it to be the same, just a little similar.

I have a kitchen cupboard and then each object is connected to me via a granddad who makes soup. When I make a soup I am recreating those practices. They will of course be different because I am a little lazy. Can this kitchen cupboard make history? It makes history through a soup (Clempson 2012). Soups can be thick; they contain ingredients that change once cooked. History is then thick and fragmented and the contents change. An understanding of the kitchen cupboard through soup creates many stories going on at once. The ingredients form companionship, which enable an idea to stay and have many uses, however the narrative is inconsistent. Burkitt (2008:180) questioned how we could create a narrative that dealt with changes? By going back to the theme (in this case social selves) many episodes can occur and the social individual creates a dialogue with many others to formulate what is ours. As tastes change, another story becomes available which cannot be
recorded by inventory because the contents in that sequence do not exist. A life can be narrated and inventories made but to think that the record (of life) is an exact copy of lived experience is strange. To handle information does not mean that the information transposed is equal to all.

I open my kitchen cupboard and soup is not there. This soup is not a can of convenience. My Kitchen Cupboard (Fig. 34–38) can be itemised fully in an inventory but in itemising this cupboard, soup is not created. By itemising a complete kitchen cupboard, the contents are of no value to soup making. Specific objects are needed that form a relation to soup; many objects or ingredients do not necessarily make a soup. These soup objects are just a collection of condiments and they have no relevance in a bulging cupboard and sometimes are insignificant when you require something else to eat. This cupboard is yours and therefore the placing of ingredients in the cupboard is of no importance; every item inside is known and locatable even when out of sight. This is not Hell but it is a bit messy.

Back to the memory of soup making – it always begins with a phone call the night before. Grandma picks up the phone and then granddad makes the soup. Sometimes granddad falls asleep and grandma begins the soup, but granddad has to complete the dish. By completing this dish granddad inaugurates the meal. This gives granddad’s soup its justification and propriety even though grandma was the instigator. The ingredients are brought together through the investigation of all storage spots that span from the bottom of the garden to the depths of the freezer. In knowing that these are the basic procedures of soup making they seem prescribed with no noticeable change, even though changes occur.

Asda Thyme
Everything starts the night before. All work is directed towards the family meal, made by my grandparents and this becomes the definition of a proper meal on this particular day. My grandparents grow their own thyme. They do not need to buy it from a supermarket unless there has
been an adventurous thief in the middle of the night, a thief who is partial to herbs. Thyme (Fig. 35) is in every soup that they make and in most soups that I make.

![Image of Thyme](image.png)

**Fig 35. Charlene Clempson, Asda Thyme (2011) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.**

**Vegetable Oil**

"All good things must be fried, just a little bit. All things become good once fried. It is as if to be submerged in something so unadulterated as oil, can only breed an added goodness. Even if the world outside screams about health, a soup should stick to your soul. Well that is what I have been led to believe. What does that suggest about the soul? That it needs soup to be attached to it for it to exist...The oil (Fig. 36) is locked away in a cupboard this time, but usually it is left on the side as if longing to be used. Some of the objects in my cupboard are not always good for you, but comfort rarely is, as I live in the muddle of things.

In grandma’s house the living room is the true host of soup. We perch on our seats whilst we eat. But before we eat we wait for particular movements. People stir at particular times. Soup as object is easily
displayed but its most essential feature is not always on display: its process. Soup does not display the image of browning meat the night before, neither does it show the intense labour required to produce this meal at first glance. Also, the cupboard is rarely fully seen because, in eating, we associate food with taste, not storage. In tasting we have rules, which we abide by, that may act as laws; however the kitchen itself needs human interaction for order to be made. These laws are set in bodily practices. To understand the process of making soup I travel from the kitchen cupboard to the kitchen and into the living room in order to investigate soup as a resource.

Fig 36. Charlene Clempson, Vegetable Oil (2011) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

**Own Seasoning**

Granddad does not stay in the kitchen for too long as he makes soup; other things are on his mind. He enjoys watching television till late so he wakes up a little late. Grandma begins making soup the night before. She goes to bed earlier, in order for granddad to complete the meal in the afternoon. Consequently granddad’s soup is not fully his, it is a partnership, sometimes it’s not even made by granddad but made by
grandma and granddad simply serves it out but it is always granddad’s soup. Soup becomes knowledge that has to be discovered. It can preserve an unheard testimony, as each connection made to soup is created in the image of the maker or even its fake maker. This is because of the seasoning (Fig. 37), because this is the same seasoning that all my family members (and some of my friends) use, just like granddad’s soup. Everyone and no one owns it.

So we were watching ‘Miss Marple’ or ‘Colombo’ or one of those programmes in which, as you enter their house, you go ‘ah is that on, again’. The kind of dramas that have been rerun since the day you were born. In fact their history was your history, this only works when you are watching TV. These stories that go alongside an event are in the background of soup making. In my cupboard the experience is different from the experience of Friday as possession entices multiply experiences.

Fig 37. Charlene Clempson, Own Seasoning (2011) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Soup in a can?

In other kitchens this soup definition may not be workable. A microwave could make a meal. Even if this is the case it can become what a person defines as a proper meal. The notion of a proper meal does not stay the same. Soup in a can (Fig. 38) is not part of granddad’s soup. However it is in my kitchen cupboard at the back, festering.

Back to granddad’s soup – as we all wait for the soup to cook, all eyes are on the square box in the corner, the television. As Granddad cooks, his time keeping device is the television and a variety of clocks, especially that annoying cuckoo clock. The advertising breaks allow for ‘pot-checks’, whilst the clocks give us notice on the hour. The strange number of clocks is another story of Grandma’s reluctance to throw objects away. Instead they are collected and hoarded, just in case. Storage provides us with a great escape, because when things sit next to each other, without reason they breed connections.

In my kitchen cupboard things sit next to each other but they are not always used together. Just as in Benjamin’s book collection (1931 essay), the books collected were not related together because they sat side-by-side, his collection was built on material remains acting as knowledge. The kitchen cupboard connects time to soup making and a large number of clocks to the collection of gifts from those who have not been invited to the process of soup. The process of soup becomes the procedure of how this cupboard can seem to be owned. Through ownership changes of practice occur. The conception of soup changes through his ownership of cooking and granddad’s passion for eating. Time can be saved in many ways. Convenience can have many meanings. It would depend on what device is important enough to save as time; efficiency can have many meanings in a kitchen cupboard.

My Granddad would agree with ‘time saving devices’. However it is not efficiency that he finds most compelling or cooking, but the act of eating. Food is cooked whilst doing other things, watching racing, smoking a cigarette, having a beer, eating crisps and investigating the bottom of the garden in his slippers and teasing his grandchildren. Food is central to this
day but other things are on his mind, which are not always contained in the pot. With food intake there seems to be no rules and with granddad he has managed to shun most laws whilst being a law-abiding citizen. Furthermore, there is no specific television programme that is constantly watched in order for a meal to be cooked. Neither does this granddad act in the same way whilst making each meal.

This granddad has changed the idea of domesticity, as it is now part of relaxation. A narrated granddad changes the way a world of domesticity is both recorded and the meanings created in this world. An inventory does not make granddad’s soup but it shows there are limitations that are physical and organizational in a kitchen cupboard. Perec writes that space begins with ‘signs traced on a page’ (2008:13; first published 1974) and leads onto to suggest that this breeds a sense of reassurance. Reassurance produces comfort but so does the space of the page, as it is something that has variables and has a particular function. Even though, the creation of an inventory to a certain extent is an excuse to roam around the home to investigate its contents. A journey changes the order in which packing and unpacking occurs.

On a completely separate occasion from a soup occasion, granddad decided that he felt like eating something different. My grandma had gone on a long trip to Jamaica and he was put in charge of feeding his visitors. He had two choices in his mind and they were not what my grandma would have cooked. Whilst he was trying to decide he had many phone calls, the last phone call was my grandma asking him what he was going to cook. She had decided what he should cook and he said goodbye. She said that she would phone back later as granddad is not so talkative on the phone. As I entered grandma’s house granddad said he was cooking chicken. I was exceptionally happy with whatever his decision was concerning lunch. Then the phone rang and it was grandma. She was inquisitive and I realised (very quickly) it had something to with what I was having for lunch. Quicker still my grandma realised that my granddad was cooking chicken and not fish or an expensive piece of meat.
A journey may change the order that packing and unpacking occurs. However some parts of that excursion are more important to others than to the person physically experiencing it. The page differs from the experience of soup as the contents of a cupboard differ from a pot of soup. Different experiences are framed using different perspectives but, as Miller has suggested, ‘material objects are a setting’ (Miller 2010:50), and a setting creates an experience; one experience differs from another as it has to. A setting can frame my experience in a way that differs from other characters in a narrative, whilst the synopsis of their understanding frame my own, there are constant contradictions within. My interest is in soup and the choices made as routine but to this grandma there are specific things that need to form nourishment whilst granddad is just glad that I am sustained.

Going back to soup, the tea acts as an excuse for me to investigate the bubbling pot in the kitchen and to estimate the time of arrival of the food. Memory connected to food is still needed in cooking because it needs to be practised and tasted. Tasting food sometimes has very little connection to a written recipe; we may not think the recipe was authentic once it is tasted. Senses rule as a collection of historical taste buds. But how historical are our taste buds? Food was not always connected to social meanings. Historically there was not enough to go round. Now we have the pleasure and pain of a variety of choices, whilst still keeping with the tradition of certain occasions. Through consumption we can breathe new meaning into the age-old hearth.

Uncle does not seem that infatuated with soup. Whenever it is a soup day he has usually already eaten. He does not get to see the process, neither is the process of any importance to him. Regardless, my grandma always asks him if he has eaten, that is the greeting she bestows after hello – ‘want some tea?’ That is the greeting she also bestows on me, but this greeting is not universal, sometimes she shouts and hugs me at the same time.
In other homes I have heard them discuss soup as being a Saturday affair. I cannot eat a traditional soup on a Saturday without reminiscing about Friday and the memory of my own granddad. It is not just the taste that is controlling, it is the action and refusal of anything else, it is close to religion and its value is valid. My Great Aunty makes soup on a Saturday and, in all honesty, it cannot compare with my Granddad’s soup. It must be the aftermath of granddad’s soup; comfort turns to slumber. This is soup’s ending, there is comfort to a collection that can be inherited in such a way that it might not even seem like heritage. It just seems like the natural order of things.

There are days that I cannot get to visit granddad or I find that Friday is a work day. So I visit on a Wednesday. Grandma has decided that she wants fish, so she cooks fish. On these days soup does not seem important but it is on my mind. I ask when I will have soup again. Granddad will say that he will get my grandma to phone me next time, so that some will be saved for my return.

On the days when grandma cooks fish she and I spend the whole time in the kitchen. This is an accumulation of practices shrouded with secrets.
The cupboard and the hearth are out of bounds for mere mortals. Furthermore when the food arrives it feels like alchemy, as the process of cooking is never viewed. As she cooks without an audience I look at my grandma’s back to see if I can ‘sneak a peek’. This process is never served on a Friday, for me. The television cannot be heard and granddad hovers in the background laughing. He is trying to figure out what we are talking about.

Grandma has special ingredients that I cannot emulate in my cupboard. These spices are not found in shops locally. She has set practices and everything is made quickly using the cupboard, the garden and the freezer. She talks about how each object got to be here. Sometimes there was a deal at the fishmonger’s and sometimes it is the journey of the pepper in the cupboard. We talk about what we have been eating and she always saves the Jamaican newspaper for me so we can discuss the news in great detail. She is always trying to make us interested in the things that she cares about. This is a meal that cannot be physically recreated without loss. Taste is then multiplied as each sensation creates not only the object but also its classification, similar to granddad’s soup that is created by the mix of both food and character. This connects the human with the non-human. To separate each part into a recipe of ingredients, my cupboard would be empty. All containers have to reference something else, as their reasoning is not always locked within.

Granddad has colonised soup and with it the interpretation of how I categorise the cupboard. An arrangement arises from the gathering of information, which is negotiated. This negotiation seems pre-given.

A narrative is a device for information to be handed down. In narrative, information can be gifted without propriety because the act of unpacking breeds ownership. In soup, regardless of the many objects that it contains and is attached to, it still remains as something related to one point of origin (granddad), and its connections to a pot. As it seems harmless we may not notice the burden that it carries. Diaspora
is the negotiation of objects that connect to practices. These then become ‘owned’ by the user to whom they have been given. Miller in The Comfort of Things (2008) describes the many contradictions in his ethnography ‘Home and Homeland’, but he connects these contradictions to a nation-specific diaspora, not to objects that are constantly negotiated in order for memories to be possessed.

There is always a smell, I think curative, and it hits you as you enter the kitchen or maybe come through the doorway. It clears your thoughts. Smell, with its similarities to taste, is either liked or not. Tasting is a common practice in daily life; it puts precedence over the individual’s specific choice as a regulatory device. Taste is prominent in all daily life and in our fashions, or what can be found in a kitchen cupboard.

Soup seems consistent when cooked by grandparents, even though the self is both social and multiple. This is the power of preparation in soup-making, as soup seems a natural act that brings objects together as a unit, which happens before the final object (soup) is consumed. Soup then becomes a memory practice as a routine, so that it can be distributed. Soup’s circulation is an important part of access to this kind of heritage, as it is locked in the bubbling pot. As grandchildren we are joined together by the pot.

As I travel from routes to the enforcement of a routine, the character called granddad is created. History in my kitchen cupboard is created with its characters in mind. Its ingredients are then in the background as access to the character creates knowledge. Access to the past enables my stories to change.
Inventories and Narratives

Chapter 6: My Wardrobe

How does possession create history in My Wardrobe? The wardrobe is a discussion of how a collection of t-shirts has been created. In this instance, possession and possessions are dependent on the gifted material object that has created a fabricated history. Diaspora assumes particular meaning when I delve into a wardrobe (see Appendix, Figs. XII–XVIII for inventories of My Wardrobe) and select t-shirts. Gilroy (2003) and Hall (2003) placed emphasis on an ‘essential’ black subject but Boguisa Temple (1999) argues that racial sentiment is of little significance in group-making. In the wardrobe, narratives and inventories create memory because my possessions acquire new meanings as gifted objects.

As I delve into my wardrobe a collection of t-shirts (Fig. 39–42) are folded together as a pile of fabricated history. These t-shirts have their own space and because they have their own space they are easily found and worn; dirtied and then cleaned. This is a vicious cycle. There are also t-shirts that have no connection to this collection and they are rarely worn. My wardrobe situates knowledge of myself through segregation. Other wardrobes segregate the objects within due to function. My wardrobes focuses on a collection of objects connected and segregated by narrative, another type of function.

Let us be honest, my wardrobe is full. I ran out of hangers ages ago. So I decided a few boxes on the bottom of the wardrobe would make a little more room. The boxes at the bottom of the wardrobe act like drawers to enable access to the collection. Now I have piles of clean clothes. Some with jumpers, some with jeans and this box with a few t-shirts. The t-shirts overspill into the next box sometimes. The wardrobe door is rarely closed, as t-shirts are frequently worn.
My wardrobe is located in the bedroom. The bedroom contains more than one wardrobe but that is used to store things other than apparel, and therefore there is only one wardrobe that is used as a place for clothing. My wardrobe stores both histories and clothing. Histories are then bodily practices connected to clothing, as collection. Collecting is a process of cultivating and bringing together, and selves are fabricated. Social selves are then worn with the wearer knowing an object’s history of possession and onlookers forming their own understanding.

My grandma’s wardrobes are amazing. The clothes are piled high. The moth balls are everywhere (you can smell them), and some of her wardrobes have keys but the keys have been misplaced. When a key is lost, you kiss the wardrobe and its contents goodbye. This is a temporary farewell. Who knows when a set of keys may be located once again. My granddad’s wardrobe is very similar. Mountains of clothes. More shirts and suits than you can dream of. He has no key to any of his wardrobes. We have one thing in common, we wear only a few items, the rest lie dormant as if they are waiting to be used. Some things wait longer than others.

Can a couple of t-shirts make a history? Can a few t-shirts make a wardrobe? My wardrobe is neither tidy nor perfect. As it can make an outfit, which at best is about putting things together, it is very similar to history. These t-shirts are not confined to their past; they are draped around the past. Sometimes in their drapery they become the past itself. In this way they change how the past can be worn. Hall discusses the past in terms of cultural identity as a ‘shared culture, a sort of collective’ (2003:234). In so doing, the individual’s experiences is, I suggest, located in group history at the expense of personal history. There is a hidden history gifted by social individuals to social individuals.

In my wardrobe is a collection of the souvenirs brought back from visits to Jamaica between 1962–2008; this is a history of gifting t-shirts. Giving becomes part of a set of rules, to which my family adheres. Imagine having one solitary gift and nothing
relating to it. It sounds unthinkable; it is like having no friends or memories. This is not new idea; Mauss (1954) in his discussion of the ‘gifted object’ and Hoskins (1998) in her discussion of the ‘biographical object’ suggest that objects have an ability to share our lives with each other. However, Hoskins forgets that the object has an ability to share lives as she concludes that identities are forged dualistically through gender and objects as a form of segregation. A collection embodies memories because it is linked to the owner and their history. If an object has no current or previous owners, it would be impossible for it to exist meaningfully outside of itself.

In each case of handing on from Aunty to niece, only the primary giver has a valid connection to the souvenirs. Aunty wore the old Jamaican t-shirt as a form of identification in a foreign country (being Britain), with confidence; her identity could not be disputed. However, when passed to British-born counterparts with only souvenirs and popular culture and mis-remembered old stories and songs to understand the Jamaican past, which is not their own by birth, then their understanding of ‘Jamaican’ identity is open to re-interpretation. After exploring my Jamaican t-shirts I revealed to my aunty, who began the collection, their significance. She thought it was strange that a t-shirt could warrant such importance especially when, on the same day, she had also gifted ‘a beautiful night dress’, something that, for me, had been so easy to forget. A souvenir is desire itself, and not all desires are easily owned.

As an inventory is created, the fullness of each item is never received and that is what makes my wardrobe so cunning. These t-shirts are just souvenirs and the inventories and narratives in this particular arrangement are souvenirs of souvenirs. Stewart discussed that we should differentiate between souvenirs that are representational (exterior sights) and souvenirs of individual experiences, but when souvenirs are recorded the line between the representational souvenir and the souvenir, which holds individual experience is merged in a discussion of t-shirts. What was of little value – cotton apparel – in inventory and narrative holds/withholds personal experience and memories of others. The memories seem random but they are specific as they connect person to object and create a locality.
For instance there are times when visitors randomly turn up. There is a brief panic. My wardrobe is then a place of refuge. It has the ability to hide objects successfully, unlike Hell. Suddenly the bedroom is tidy and the bed and the wardrobe have another function. They hide my misgivings. At any moment they can hide a plethora of objects.

Old Jamaican T-shirt?
Great Aunty returned to Jamaica (via America). She was unable to take all her possessions ‘back home’ and she gifted to her special niece a Jamaican t-shirt (Fig. 39). This special niece became my aunty. My aunty gifted to me the same t-shirt she was gifted because she knew I liked t-shirts. This t-shirt is worn all the time although it has no specific thing it can be worn with. Its Jamaican logo has faded but its use has not.

The t-shirt was gifted without ceremony. There were no trumpets or horns blown. It was a case of: I have a t-shirt, you like t-shirts, would you like this t-shirt? The answer was yes. This particular t-shirt has a loose connection to its supposed country of origin (Jamaica), enforcing its desirability because it can be described as a sought after antique. However this could be said of any object that was handed down from aunty to niece in this family. As it is a Jamaican commodity the importance of nostalgia is important. This is not nostalgia for a country but the importance of nostalgia itself when an object connects to a person.

Nostalgia creates homesickness for a person; the object then represents the person not the country. Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy believed that this nostalgia was diaspora and an ‘ethnohistorical perspective’ (2003:53) was then personal history. History would then have no place for my inventories and narratives of my t-shirts. In addition, nostalgia is the memorialisation of someone possessing and using that possession for his or her own desires, similar to the narrative of an old Jamaican t-shirt.
Tacky T-shirt?

My t-shirts are never neatly put away. This one ends up draped on a chair in the living room hoping that one day it may see the light of day. Unfortunately this t-shirt (Fig.40) remains hidden, as it is worn whilst sleeping or underneath something else. Its display is rarely seen but it is part of this collection of t-shirts. Why is it still here? Grandma brought this one back, not aunty. In this next t-shirt, we are left to wonder: are the words on the souvenir to be trusted? Did grandma actually go to Hard Rock café? And why is this t-shirt tacky? Even though it is owned by me it is not felt to belong to me because of its aesthetic qualities. Rejection goes through indifference, but this t-shirt cannot be thrown away so it is worn regardless and identified as tacky. Its ‘tackiness’ allows for the other t-shirts in the collection to have pride of place whilst this one is classified as having little value.

Grandma continued to visit Jamaica yearly to see those relatives that she had left behind. On her return she gifted close relatives: Jamaican t-shirts for the children and a bottle of rum or bush tea for the adults. May I add that bush tea tastes vile, it feels as if you have drunk your own illness:
bitter. Grandma believes it can heal all ailments, from chickenpox to a
broken back; this belief cannot be discussed or questioned. Clothing
serves as a marker of how we are grouped together but also how certain
objects can segregate us one from another.

These t-shirts then act as a receipt of being close to grandma. It is a receipt of
grandma’s journey in both instances, a residue of interactions. Paul Gilroy’s work,
The Black Atlantic (1993), would suggest the receipt of a relationship (via a t-shirt)
has little significance in ‘routes and roots’ (1993: 190), as this significance was
connected to bodily dislocation, and not to dislocation as part of life. In addition, the
feeling of individual homelessness is then made geographical, and located as if
cartography was the physical manifestation of emotional boundaries. In inventories
and narratives the character of grandma reclassifies how information is delivered
and its location of interest. Clothing may be archived in a wardrobe but the outfit, as
showcase, is an incomplete image. A tacky t-shirt becomes natural, as it is
reclassified as part of the collection within my wardrobe.

Fig 40. Charlene Clempson, Tacky T-shirt
(2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.
Vests?

Somewhere in the middle of this box of t-shirts there lie a few vests (Fig. 41). Grandma stopped buying t-shirts. She bought a few vests instead; this may be slightly disappointing to the collector of t-shirts. This is of no great importance as this is another gift from grandma, a t-shirt without arms. T-shirts without arms reflect the changing identity of grandma’s gift giving. She said that she did not like the particular t-shirts that were about at the time. Grandma had her own method and beliefs concerning gift giving, which she sticks to.

Grandma is the value enhancer of the souvenir that is a vest. Regardless of it being a vest, it is part of the collection. The collection has been recontextualised. The context needs to change in order for the vest to have a place in the box. There is a need for mis-communication; there is a need for neglect, for things to be overlooked. If grandma had been overly conscious and meticulous about the way these t-shirts are made, then the Jamaican t-shirts might never have been purchased. If the notion of family is considered of a greater importance than origin, then family overrides the notion of heritage for the receiver of the souvenir. Integration works because communication strategies do not work predictably. This vest has sparkly bits on that tend to catch on other clothes. That is a strategy of the vest that does not work predictably; it always reminds you that you are wearing a vest brought by grandma.
Changing Taste – Random T-shirt?
My lovely uncle went on holiday (stag do) to Spain. He brought back a t-shirt (Fig. 42). It was really nice that he thought of me on his trip away. This t-shirt is worn more frequently. It is also worn to bed or when digging grandma’s garden for potatoes. In my wardrobe this t-shirt is placed at the bottom but that does not relate to its consumption. Whilst getting changed, clothing can be moved around the house. A random t-shirt may have greater potency then others, when used.

One day I was hunting for potatoes for lunch. Granddad had advised me that there were some left in the garden on the right hand side. Grandma, having just returned from the shop, reprimanded me for three things: for being barefoot, for dirtying my clothes and for digging, digging for potatoes. It was grandma’s opinion that grandchildren should not be part of this particular cooking process at this particular time regardless of whether my house clothes were worn or not. Clearly granddad was neglecting his role of home and hearth and grandma had the evidence to incriminate him. Travelling home with dirty clothes is highly offensive.
Moreover this t-shirt had acquired the status of house clothes, the collection of clothes worn indoors and not fit for outdoor consumption.

Moving on swiftly, after I had put some shoes on I continued to dig for potatoes. Walking around with no shoes on was clearly the main offender to grandma. Significance is personalised, creating a relationship that we are experiencing directly. This does not mean that all relationships are fit for consumption and all objects are fit for material practice. It constructs value and asserts consistency in memory in a way that benefits our situation.

Fig 42. Charlene Clempson, Uncles’ T-shirt (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

My wardrobe’s possession depends on the wearer. History is made through the outfit and through access to the item of clothing. If clothing is seen as the wardrobe, the archive system is always working at a loss. Clothes do not speak, and what they refer to is an incomplete archive. We hope to find the truth in the wardrobe and what we find is a system of objects that are in a cycle of being worn. This acts as a science of what we know about our own consumption.
Appearances are complex. If knowledge of a fabricated self is volatile, and knowledge formed is informed by sight, then there is an argument that it may not be seen all the time and therefore is rendered of little value. Burkitt discusses the issue that ‘consciousness is material’ (Burkitt 2008: 48), and how we understand each other is a social and material endeavour. Personal adornment is part of all societies. It may act as a language that needs decoding to others, but can also be considered as a complex system of unpacking, which differs in arrangement for all. In addition, there are particular rules that we stick to, about when and what items we wear which signify a displayed consciousness. Considering that to wear clothes (outside) is built into the grain of our daily routine, to go against this norm we would feel unprotected or be taking part in an illegal act as if we were naked. The t-shirts discussed are not all the t-shirts that are in my wardrobe. These are the t-shirts that were in the box at a particular time. The rest are in the wash.

The act of wearing clothes differs from the way in which they are stored. Sometimes there are other characters that link these two entities together making the storage inside the wardrobe, and the storage on the body, complex. These histories are human constructs (see Clempson 2009). Clothing as a souvenir changes the way we keep and look at ourselves. This knowledge becomes a complicated relationship, connecting people to things. From this perspective it puts emphasis on particular values that a person could uphold. This enforces the position that ideas attached to things we own create a body of ownership.
Inventories and Narratives

Chapter 7: My Bookshelf

How does possession create history in My Bookshelf? The bookshelf contains books. However, as objects, books are physical containers of the works of others. Books on a shelf are not resigned to the story within as they still connect to the people I know. Possession creates history accidentally as individual books are unpacked. As I literally unpack my bookshelf (see Appendix Figs. XIX–XIV for inventories of My Bookshelf) to record it, it becomes a discussion as memories are recorded. Benjamin (1999: first published 1931) and Perec (2008: first published 1974) discussed their book collections but what they noted is that all collected works conserve and organise simultaneously. The bookshelf conserves but organises books in an unconventional manner, as book works are transportable objects. The memories of these possessions are also unconventional because of the portability.

I have four bookcases. I used to have six. They contain books, which are piled high. On some shelves there are other objects. My bookcase contains objects that fit in or on the bookshelf (Figs. 43 and 44). Sometimes an object accidentally gets placed on the bookshelf and there it remains until the bookshelf is unpacked. Let us talk about books. I have favourite books. I have the ones that are pointless: they contain a single recipe that has never been used. Regardless of that, I need to know where it is, just in case. Some books never reach the shelf and instead they find a place on the floor at the foot of the bed, waiting to be read. This book container is nothing like the others. It has an identity that feels ordered even though each object’s placing is accidental. This bookcase always looks tidy; it is Hell’s opposite. Once an object has been taken off the bookcase, a mini Hell is created.
New books are always connected to the bookshelf, as they will hopefully find a space on one of its shelves. It is the process of collecting that allows a narrative of history to be convincing. This narrative is connected to routines and mishaps that enable a bookshelf to function as it does.

Once I accidentally overfilled my bookcase. Each shelf systematically broke apart. This happened slowly at first. Over a few months you could slowly watch it falling apart. First, the shelf bowed and suddenly each shelf was destroyed. I knew it was going to happen but I did not stop it or even try to. It is hope that enabled me to watch its destruction; I presumed that it would never happen to me. So the bookcase fell apart. A bookcase is a difficult object to put back together. All the other bookcases became a little bit more filled up. Each shelf started to bow a little. A bookshelf load is never made lighter. My grandparents keep books locked away. My auntie places her books in an effective Hell because she has too many for a standard bookcase.

Then what does a bookshelf preserve? The habits of place-making, this is the process of acquisition. Imagine if there was no specified place for books. What would happen? Without a bookshelf all books could be placed in boxes or they could be scattered on a table or on the floor waiting to be used. Or, maybe, they would be hidden in bags or in a car waiting to be used. They would be placed on the floor or under the bed but they would not survive as well as they have done. So I am led to believe it is correct to place them upright. My carpet would become tatters of old books – a graveyard of book pages with no order, impossible to read. This would be a habit of life without a shelf, I suppose.

Books are circulated informally and new ownership is easily made available. The experiences of the bookshelf differ from the experience of reading a book. The stories are multiple even to a particular book. As each book is physically taken from the shelf and unpacked the memories that each book creates acknowledges the responsibility of a person’s property. Perec comments that ‘stable classifications’
(2008:153) are what the individual continues to respect. However the only classification that is stable in this household is that there are books. Moreover as he suggests that books are ‘joggers of memory’ (2008:155), as they are so informal and methods of recalling history are muddled with these possessions.

Let us be honest, sometimes books stay on the floor. I have not the time to tidy up/I do not make time to tidy up. Whichever is the case, there are books on the floor, sometimes on a table and maybe hidden down the back of a bed. However, when the un-cluttering begins a world is opened and another one is shut. You think, why is that there? Oh yes I remember... I should have taken that back to the library and where is the fifth book in the collection? Sometimes I get side-tracked. I forget to tidy and I start reading a book. All things owned create an intimate relationship. Intimate relationships can lead you astray.

How can a bookshelf be interpreted? As a storage space for when things matter; sometimes. Tastes are changeable in this space of storage. Sometimes I eliminate a few books; they go to a charity shop. Or I decide to leave a book at a friend’s house intentionally without wanting it back. One has to be ruthless and sneaky or another Hell is easily created, it creeps up on you. Those objects creep up on you until the space becomes unbearable. Living becomes unbearable when there are too many objects in space. Sometimes these objects hide behind others so they cannot be distinguished and maybe you have forgotten they are there. Some books have other hidden traits: maybe they have been stolen or they are the first book that was read to you as a child. They have no significance at the moment but they cannot be thrown away.

Open shelves are objects of display. Things are still hidden; a stolen book here, a childhood book there. Still there are too many. By itemising a bookshelf fully I could never discuss some of the individual books that have a story not always connected to what is written inside the book. Display hopes that knowledge is found in sight as Berger (1972) argued, and in so doing the collection is then enough to understand.
the person who owns them. However, sight is never enough. Are books displayed to understand the owner, or so that the owner can gain access to their books? How does a shelf create history? By gaining access to the shelf a history is created.

Books contain stories and their impression is storied. Sometimes these stories link together in personal history, sometimes they do not and they are forgotten, for now. Perec (2008) discussed how books are placed and arranged whilst Walter Benjamin (1999) discussed the collector, but I have to discuss both as this is a social and material endeavour; book collecting. The collector cannot be discussed without a link to the collection.

**A Cruel Bird Came to the Nest and Looked in**

_I always take a book on holiday, sometimes it is one from the bookshelf and sometimes it is a book from another place: library, stolen. There are books that I have not read for a long time. In this instance I threw caution to the wind and borrowed a book from my aunty (Fig. 43), (with the intention of returning the book when finished) six months previous (yes six months) and decided this is the holiday book. This was not planned; this is an idea of the moment. I have an awful habit of stealing/borrowing books and pens, giving them back only if I remember. Taking this book on holiday was to signal the handover of the book, back to my aunty. I did not finish the book whilst on holiday, so I still have the book in my possession. Possession is tricky, the past is tricky and so are social selves. Classification makes some things manageable but in so doing it leaves something out._

By acknowledging the connection that a book can hold, it is classified in a personal and particular manner. Acknowledgment is a narrative of possession, which is a type of possession in itself. Even if the object is stolen, the narrative creates a new owner in a place in which ownership is not supposed to exist. Appadurai (1986) discusses the histories of objects looking for an ‘anthropology of things’. but in so doing possessions are so over generalised that his seminal essay ‘tells’ rather than shows the importance of possessions. What Perec and Benjamin do is that they show the
importance of possessions within their lives, rather than the history of theories that have an effect on our understanding of things.

Fig 43. Charlene Clempson, *A Cruel Bird Came to the Nest and Looked in* (2009) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

**The Forbidden Game**

*Did I say I also steal pens and pencils? When I was younger all pencils had to have a name on them. All new pens, pencils and books went through the naming process. Each item would have the owner’s name scratched into them. This was a strange practice, on receiving a new writing implement, scratching the life out of it, in order to name it. This naming process was not ceremonial and it seemed tedious to the point of using the life out of the old writing implement so you were writing with charcoal and splinters. I digress… More importantly there was a secret black market of stolen implements that were already named. Who cared what name the object had on it, as long as it had a name. This black market relied on the swapping of one brand new/newly named tool for one whose name had been worn away with overuse. Re-classification can be so helpful.*
Once that practice of naming pens and pencil stopped, I became a thief. It is not my fault. These items are easily transportable. Granddad’s soup could be transported but he is not a thief. The difference is that I knew those pens were not mine, but imagined possession is a must. Imagined possession is just a cloak that can be taken on and off when needed. Transportation is a convenient tool in imagined possession as the object provides a connection to a made-up reality. Therefore imagined stolen goods are owned. This is an extension of the purchasing cycle, making stealing or gaining without ownership – legitimate. Legitimacies create a hierarchy because classification seems to benefit the one who is classifying.

My little cousins decided to share a book with me (Fig. 44). I am trying to give it back, honestly. This is a forbidden game, only a game, because stealing is prohibited in certain circles, especially if done on purpose.

Fig 44. Charlene Clempson, *The Forbidden Game* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.

Once I was looking for some towels. I went to the airing cupboard and there I was presented with hundreds of love stories in brown boxes,
similar to the box that you opened. They all have the same ending – people fall in love and they live happily ever after. The characters differ, the place is different, but in the end they live happily ever after. I could not believe it. I read every single one hoping that one would end with a meltdown or a mini-catastrophe but nothing happened. I hoped that Jane decided that she hated John, threw him out and told him that’s it, but this never happened. This is grandma’s taste, some things can only be stored and not transferred, and relationships can be a bit of a grey area. Grandma also likes true stories where something bad happens but the main character ‘does good’ in the end, and they live happily ever after. Isn’t that a way of tidying loose ends? The end of a story being finality in life that is impossible. I am in the process of going through some of the books that are not mine in an attempt to give them back. Hopefully.

Most of my books are not stolen. My auntie, in a bid to get her books back (yes there is more than one), commented that I rarely give books back. I asked her if she wanted to read a recent book that I bought, to dissuade her from misgivings. She remembered that she had six books at the side of the sofa, they had been read, but they were in hiding. Some things are easily placed out of sight. Sight is not that accurate when things are out of sight.

What do I possess in this bookshelf? I possess relationships and ways of doing that need to be accessed for them to be a habit. Memories are associated with objects as long as they can be accessed. Access itself can create new memories through an object’s reclassification. Unpacking any space places significance on the space unpacked through fragmentary moments acting as knowledge.
Inventories and Narratives

Chapter 8: My Kitchen Table

How does possession create history in *My Kitchen Table*? The kitchen table is a place in which a game of dominoes is played and a graphic inventory cannot record an account of what is going on. Hayno (1983) recorded his game-playing antics as a professional card game player; however, in a kitchen table game, playing is not professional. In addition, possession is of the game not the literal table, but possessions are not owned yet ownership still occurs. Ian Burkitt (2008) was against individuals being products of society but had to ignore possession as he thought it would interfere with his idea that humans are social individuals. Around a kitchen table social relations are owned, stolen, borrowed/related in many ways, creating narrated history.

My kitchen table is a site where a game of dominoes becomes social and cultural knowledge that can be inherited. The inheritance references the family members who are playing the game. Knowledge is then what can be transported and turned into a commodity through familiarity. If familiarity is knowledge of something that we own then it works to instigate ownership. Ownership is arranged around a table and recorded in reference to my kitchen table, which of course is my auntie’s table.

This table has more than one function, and for each function to be operative the table must be cleared in order for the next operation to commence. Does your family play dominoes? Do they use a table to play games on? Maybe they do not or maybe they do, but regardless they are still family. Maybe there is another activity that is important to your grouping, it could be drinking tea or watching a particular television series. Either way we still call a grandma, grandma and a granddad is a granddad by default. The individual roles are connected to what they do.
as personalities. These roles are not followed with a job description so there are no rules in these positions.

Let me introduce you to my family. The members are aunties, uncles and cousins and grandparents. Its members are not always present at the same time but this is an instance whereby they are all present: they are playing a familiar game of dominoes. Each member has been introduced to playing dominoes from a very young age, which has created a type of social membership. It is within this membership that ‘possible selves’ can be shaped through response to behavioural practices that are inextricably linked to this game of dominoes and another space of intimacy.

When playing dominoes do we look alike? No. Resemblances are not so consistent or constant around my kitchen table. Burkitt (2008) argues that we are born into relations that are not of our own making, but as social individuals we collect and possess relations. Whilst Hayano’s (1983) narratives were not only his observed connections they were of the history and ideas of poker playing not just what was to hand; he collected information. Hayano had to play the game of poker meticulously in order to record it. Connections are formed through remembering tiny nuances of those thought of as close. The act of playing or even participation around my auntie’s kitchen table creates a closeness that is now familiar. However not all actions are important to the game of dominoes.

I arrange my five dominoes on one hand, two dominoes in waiting. The ones in-waiting are the ones that are laid face down on the table whilst the other hand covers the more important dominoes in hand. The dominoes (in-waiting) need to be disposed of quickly. If left too long it will be to my demise, winning that is, and it will destroy my winning streak. This has been my strategy for a while so everyone knows my actions but not all actions are important to them. We all hope that we can glimpse another person’s hand so a strategy can evolve and have a greater accuracy.
How is a family made? In this example it is through dominoes. The game is what is transportable. However the table could be anyone’s and anywhere but the players own it whilst the game is in action. What is stored is know-how of the game. What is seen is a narrative that is entwined with my kitchen table, thought owned. Personal kinship is then an archive of dominoe games; blood relations are not necessary as this type of storage is not recordable in game playing. Is ‘Who am I?’ in a game of dominoes? This is complicated. The game is important and all details are bounded by the rules of the game and so is the understanding of the game.

We play ‘Triominoes’, sometimes. It has the same rules yet more pieces and therefore pieces are triangular. Consequently we can squash even more members around a table, crammed with snacks and drinks and we play until it is dark. If we were a ‘nuclear family’ could we play a game of dominoes? Would we have enough people present, all crammed into my auntie’s house? Aunties do not seem that important in nuclear families. This time we play with two sets of dominoes because there are six players. It may be a game of dominoes today, however tomorrow it could be another game played around a dining table in which the players all care about each other. By default, winning is caring.

When I was younger, I remember being brought up by my grandparents (and many others). At school all my friends had a mixture of relatives who looked after them. Some parents had to work, others had only one parent and some had no parents but they had guardians. I had many relatives, friends and family friends all willing to look out for or look after me. This network can be classified as an extended family but to me that was and is my family. We are not extended: this is a proper number around a table. Oh well.

Game playing around a table has its own historical movements. Winning any game is part skill, part chance, the more you play the better you become. Dominance is gathered together at the end of the table. Daniel Miller’s (1998) discussion of ethnicities (group-making) is themed around a dominant group, against which
another group is defined; this is not workable around a table. Control through game-playing is never believable, of course not. I could pretend that I was winning all the way through the game and still remain confident of my own brilliance even at the bitter end when another person has placed the last domino on the table in triumph. Then I, with my wholesome collection of unwanted dominoes pieces, look on with disappointment. Dominance is equivocal.

My family members come from many places. The older members of my family originate from the West Indies and the younger ones are British, all members living in Britain, in the West Midlands. But is this our origin around a dining table? No, my grandparents live one mile from my auntie’s house and so do my other relatives and I live in the next city. No, that is not their origin. Origin begins when the game begins but when the game ends, who cares how it began. The members might seem to have diasporic connections, but who cares where they have come from when this game becomes about winning. Diaspora is not experienced around the table because dominoes are more important than historical movements of family members around my kitchen table.

What is important? We are sat around my auntie’s table, there are eight of us in all: two grandparents, two great aunties, small auntie, little cousin, granddad’s friend and me. However only six people actually have a hand because the game is not just played by the person with a hand, all who are around the table play it. So, we are all sat around the dining table with thirty centimetres between each player but in a game of dominoes this is not important. You have to win the game to create a history of winning. Only the winner will have a record of origin, the losers can only speak of their loss, loss containing no relevant value in this present game. The memory of winning is rarely remembered after the fact. I choose to live in this way with a routine of game playing that is not regularly played, but it allows my family to be arranged around the table. This is a game in which we are social, but we do not relate to each other in the same way.
As soon as the dominoes are shared out I look at every player with distrust. Distrust is not something that can be seen, so to all players there is a brief amount of silence just before we can begin. Granddad and grandma do not have a hand, but maybe they are linked to a hand elsewhere, as they usually are, from my experience.

I fidget a little as I sit on my chair. I have to be comfortable as there is another player who relies on your stillness to create his comfort. This secret player lurks under the table, unaware of the disturbance above: he is the dog. He does not seem to care who wins or loses as long as a titbit is slipped his way. The dog has not realised he is part of another game of his own creation – distracting each player without them caring to notice.

Dominance in game playing can be anyone’s even if there are many games played at once.

In a game of dominoes, relationships, extended families and a kitchen table as a site of culture survive and aid my family in time of need. The household is not a solid container of family life. Households are easily shared, as what we bring is the knowledge of many, entwined as one. Value is in this makeshift group that forms relations as memories. A society made of a few narratives connecting the narrator to the narrative.

We would all cheat if we could get away with it. As a group playing dominoes, cheating is legal as long as no one gets caught. If you get caught out, you are verbally reprimanded through jokes that will continue to that particular game’s end. However legal cheating is different, and it is legal because it does not go against the rules of the game, but is cheating because it is against another order: a moral one. But I can only connect cheating to granddad. So knowledge of granddad is produced by means of an unfortunate event. I am reminded that dominoes are nothing without cheating. Cheating is nothing without family and this makes this game exciting for me – any rule can be bent.
This system of attaching a memory of granddad to the concept of cheating interprets this granddad as someone who is dishonest, but dishonesty is not necessarily bad. Hayano describes honesty as ‘easily corruptible’ (1983:14) in these particular social circles, but this is normal. Competition and dishonesty maybe site-specific but are important learning tools in a play setting. Dishonesty and granddad are not always locked together but it can be in the background, as if his sleight of hand is waiting to happen.

Granddad’s possible selves is then family knowledge connected to cheating; poor fellow. Imagine if granddad did not cheat and this game was filled with all things stereotypically good. We may then speak to each other politely and formally. The dog would then sleep in a corner, only eating two meals a day and no titbits. Asking of each other’s day as we smiled at each other hoping and wishing that personal gains never occurred. Familiar love stretching so far as it was strong enough to empower a game, so that the game itself was negligible. Doesn’t that sound boring! Granddad’s behaviour is an incentive to memory. If all systems of memory occur because some are inbuilt, then cheating proves worthy of remembering.

Granddad’s weapon of choice is distraction. If distraction works, it works to construct guilt using examples of the connections informed both by literal family closeness and informed by general social stereotypes. If one person controls distraction, then distraction is a social individual from whom we learn. Burkitt does not discuss granddads who cheat and narratives that are not to be trusted but they are social relations – they exist. For instance, one should always allow a close younger cousin the chance of winning. These are the marks of a particular definition of kinship, which could classify and locate an origin. An origin, for this granddad, is framed through manipulation. A skill learnt in game playing is manipulation.

I am a secret cheater. I count dominoes. I will even block every move and I slyly look at every hand that is not mine as intently as if it was my own. I am known as an evil player but rarely a cheater. I have learnt quickly that
only granddad can be a known cheater. Therefore my past efforts remain hidden contrary to popular belief. In my family, the roles are not performed as succinctly as they are written of in other families, however all roles are changeable as they are interpreted by those with a vested interest, even if this interest is legitimate or not it is possessed.

Granddad’s favourite words are ‘pick up’ and he says this repeatedly until focus has been lost in his opponent, resulting in the opponent or grandchild literally picking up a dominos piece that they have failed to notice that they can play. As a player you are being manipulated by words acting as sirens. A known resolution is to counter attack his siren with a sharp ‘no’, and strangely enough an ability to see one’s hand coherently returns. Your opponent, granddad, grins at you as he knows he has ruffled your feathers; this is one of the joys of being arranged around this table.

His futile experiments were not listened to, but they afforded him moments in which one’s concentration may flit to the ties of blood relation rather than the game in hand. Or more importantly one can look into one’s opponent’s eyes without the desire to win, if only for a moment.

Kinship is not only a marker of characteristics and origins; it is a system that places particular value on certain characteristics and particular origins that are seen as true. Kinship is generally investigated by studying developing countries. What is problematic is that anthropologists had to follow ‘the notion of paternity and maternity and blood connection’ (Schneider 2008: 259), even if this was not relevant. This was done through the separation of the biological from the social, not through a system that could be manipulated by a granddad or any other person. It was thought that through the kinship system, history and the origins of a particular group could be deciphered and known. Narratives are internalised through material and social relations and possessed materially and socially, not through blood relations necessarily.
As you look into your cousins’ eyes you can remember fragments of your relationship to them, images of a particular history. This history is too idyllic. Granddad uses these normative systems to his advantage, because we are playing a game after all. But this game, like my granddad, does not breed ties because of biology. If granddad uses anything in this game of dominoes, he uses it for his own advantage and with it comes the demise of kinship.

If you were to meet my grandparents, they would probably let the guest win the first game. No one would dare cheat; it would be a civil game of dominoes. At the end of the game you would be congratulated on your accomplishment. The second game however would differ greatly and the third and fourth game would signal the end of the honeymoon period. You are now part of the family, tread carefully. I will cheat.

My great aunties and small aunty are also playing this game; they have their own tactical arrangement. It has becomes ‘a game of wills’, as we are highly competitive individuals (as anyone would be in a game.) The overt operation is to play the game and to win. The covert operation is the secretive partnerships or packs, which promise a greater advantage of winning. This allows the covert and the overt operation a conceptual linkage, which is only disclosed at the end of the game. The notice of the winner is the revelation of the secret tactical partnerships, which could result in more than one winner. My family changes the way I interpret not only closeness, but also it implicates the way I situate myself.

As my granddad honours and respects a particular great aunty he will never distract her from her game. However granddad’s friend will. He will talk of the past, when they were younger, any idyllic conversation that allows a person to hark back to their youth, a youth in which they also played dominoes and many other games.
Dominoes as a source of indoctrination have a history in this family; the idea of youth is granddads weakness. Dominoes gave all immunity against most board games. The kitchen table is the material and social setting in which social relations are accessed and games are played, and knowledge is ‘sleight of hand’. Hayano’s game differs from my own and so does the narrative, but all narratives are different or else it would be repetition. Narratives internalise information using skill and chance like any game you need to have played/read both the lines and in-between the lines in order to access and also use the information gained in a particular manner. Moreover, manipulation, competition and contradiction are part of social selves and without them selection and obligation would not be worthwhile.

Granddad’s best friend has the status of uncle; all close friends become ‘like-family’ which may mean that friendship, just like family, is selective and also obligated, and so forms a type of kinship. Friendship does not seem formalised. In this family it has its own formality, because of one person. If we classify the family not only as an experience but a rule, to go against the rules within a rule would seem unthinkable and because of this we have additions to families that cannot follow a normative family model, although this is how I remember it.

Playing dominoes always makes me feel a little hungry. But do not think that a snack is a break from the game. A snack can be a device to cheat. Imagine the snacks are placed in the middle of the table just to the side. You pick up a little chicken here or a crisp there, making sure your eyes are on the hands of others. Your eyes cannot let you down. Every moment is a weakness. Be on your guard.

As we play this game of dominoes we realise that the game is coming to an end. We have used all the tricks possible to win this game. I come to the understanding that my little cousin has won the game and my winning streak has been cut short. Even when you win the game there is no prize, prizes stipulate finality and there is no finality as all have been induced into playing a game. The end of this game reveals that great-
aunty was not cheating, she was bluffing. Grandma was counting dominoes; she had an idea of who had what, so she was advising an aunty, according to that order that was changing as each domino was laid down. It was the young cousin who won the game, but she knew that once a game ended, another one would begin. Meanwhile granddad and adopted uncle played a partnership, which enabled them to share a win, and of course to share the burden of loss.

My kitchen table is a place where I can share the burden of loss: as possession.
Chapter 9: My Family Album

How does possession create history in *My Family Album*? It is not simply that the family album records an individual’s rites of passage; it does so in such a conventionalised way that Stewart claims all family albums are alike' (Stewart 2003: 49). But are all family albums alike? Not so. Differences in family albums are learnt through social selves. The images on the sideboard may seem the same, but the collection and deception it creates is different for all as Hurdley has suggested (2006:718). In addition, this contingency is based on the social individual ‘consuming and producing meaning’ (Hurdley 2006:718) through narrative. This narrative, with no images, is a record of grandma’s sideboard and it explains how we all possess the same images differently through narratives acting evocatively.

I visit my grandparent’s house when I can. My family album is not an object in my own house. My family ‘album’ is the photographs that grandma displays on her sideboard. This sideboard is the first thing seen on entering the living room. This sideboard is not something that can be delved into. The images seem to jump out because they are connected to you. There is no inventory of this family album, as I do not visit grandma’s house in order to make inventory pictures. Instead the narrative itself is an inventory that seeks to record.

Are all family albums alike? I think not. If you visit a friend’s house and sit with their family album in your lap it is not the same object that your very own grandma has in her house; the display differs. But imagine if it was so. You entered your friend’s house, partook in the usual routine of

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21 The common approach is to look at the albums of others to contextualise one’s biography or to look into the family albums of museums to discuss a particular time (Hall 1991), or to create a general definition of a family album (Langford 2001) or the photograph (Kuhn 2008). The family album as object reshapes cultural identity especially if it is believed to be a shared collective, which is ‘a matter of becoming’ (Hall 2003:236). Albums are transforming as each family member’s images change.
greeting and suddenly and coincidentally you looked to the sideboard and there strangely enough there were a few photographs of your own family. Your own grandma and her mother photographed together, your friend implying that this was of course his own grandma. You may be amused to begin with; you might just think that people look alike. But the story attached to the object is the same, and then you might be worried or maybe you think it is a strange and dramatic twist of fate. Regardless of all the ways of legitimising such an experience it is strange! Although we use the same name (grandma) the evidence is different. It differs because our memories are different.

Grandma’s sideboard is a space of change. This a collection of all the relatives’ grandma holds dear. Hurdley’s (2007) ethnography of sideboards is informed by theoretical properties of gift relations. Mauss (1969) thought that ‘the obligation to a gift itself is not inert’ (Mauss 1969: 9) but this would be dependent on how the obligation is learnt and classified. On grandma’s sideboard, information and classification are similar, but Hurdley suggests that the narrative of a sideboard is an analogy of the display on a sideboard. Therefore a collection is similar to the discussion of the collection but it is not the same collection despite displaying similarities.

As the physical photograph album became overcrowded the sideboard became the focus of the family’s photographs. As the family members increased the sideboard moved around the house and the other objects that used to be on the sideboard were displaced in place of photographs of the individuals which were deemed of greater importance.

The sideboard displays recall. In entering grandma’s house the sideboard evokes your attention and I am possessed by another’s personal value: a mixed bag of past, present and individual/ group possession. As this is the case, even within a family the paraphernalia in the domestic space creates different memories. These memories feel owned even though this is grandma’s sideboard, in grandma’s house. Do we understand the kind of effort grandma has to exert for memories to be conveyed?
No. Not everything that grandma finds important is shared.

As the house became fuller and we aged, so did the idea of the whole family travelling to Jamaica. I remember when I was much younger seeing a huge drum in a cupboard. I asked what was inside? It contained all the things needed to go back home. It was a huge drum of grandma’s preparation to move a family. You would never notice it was there, locked away in a cupboard, with its contents further encased in a drum. The story goes: the idea of going ‘back home’ fizzled out because as a family it was only home for grandma and granddad in this immediate household, at that time. The drum is hidden, as an unseen memorial to what did not/could not happen.

My grandma feels very strongly about her Jamaican identity even though this idea is not shared. If communities arise from localised personal networks a sideboard can challenge how communities are imagined. Each image of a family member can link to different ideas depending on the member. The stories that family members tell are strategies that follow the ‘lines of kinship’ (Feuchtwang 2007:170), only if told to a kin member. These strategies do not create continuity, lest we forget this is grandma’s sideboard, and she is the owner of the images and the organiser of with what is good to think.

Back to the sideboard... This sideboard is the place which visitors get to see, not only to say that ‘this is my family’. But your placing is marked by performance on the sideboard. All family members enact this performance; each person tells a part, just in case an idea or a memory has been forgotten. There is no ‘truth’ in this past, just a record without a written inventory. The image produces a believable fantasy that is both fact and fiction. We all have a reference to the object as fact but the fiction is what meanings have been conjured up. These meanings obscure other meanings from being revealed, as each image has its own story on the sideboard.
Granddad still recounts what made him stay in Britain, this is nostalgia; he defined this experience as all too harsh. Granddad was given enough money to leave Britain if it was not to his taste. He did not have to stay in the West Midlands. As soon as he arrived in Britain he wanted ‘to go home’. However on buying a pack of cigarettes in a corner shop he accidently misplaced his envelope with enough money for a return ticket to Jamaica. It went into the hands of a very greedy shopkeeper. Granddad had to be escorted out of the building, and he was rather unhappy, at having his money taken from him. On leaving the shop displeased he met my grandmother (whom he had known in Jamaica) who immediately enquired why he was in England and she tried to get his money back, but it was gone. This was the reason he ended up staying, and because of this he has been living in England for nearly fifty years.

On the sideboard, granddad’s ‘homelessness’ is not recorded, but it is there. Homelessness was part of Gilroy’s double consciousness (Gilroy 2003:50) and this was performative but not all doubling can be seen, so does it exist? If homelessness is when one loses a country as a form of past, then granddad’s record of home could be the photograph of his money for his ticket home. However this would not sit on the sideboard so well, as it would disrupt the smiling portraits on grandma’s sideboard. An image of lost money would pose immediate questions that would deviate from the family members. The objects that we invest with meaning cannot retain all the meanings that can be created. In this instance, homelessness is then personal loss and my family album is personal gain.

A sideboard as a record of my family was not created to acknowledge diaspora. But does any informal record acknowledge a written discourse? I think not. My family album is a record and system built on the off chance that a group have taken photos and had the time to print and display them on a piece of furniture: sideboard.

Grandma spent years contacting Jamaica through the sending and receiving of photographs. Photographs were labelled on the back and
then discussed via telephone conversation. The description on the back of the photograph would include the age and the name of who was in the image. Granddad never posted a photograph; other members of the family did this. Some of these members of the family did not live in the same house, but ‘sharing is caring’ in photographic imagery exchange.

As the sideboard records the family unofficially, it allows stories without images to be classified as part of the sideboard. Hurdley (2007) suggests that narratives and objects connect the personal with the social, but she still thinks (wrongly I contend) that it is ruled by gender not by social relations. The stories, although random, have a network of relations in this old sideboard. Without the sideboard the stories would be different, the emotions would change shape. In unfortunate times the sideboard as object could not record everything. What the photographic image records, I can recall, as I am programmed to form connections to all who reside on the sideboard.

*I am programmed to connect to their image regardless of whether bonds are experienced. Consider the bonds that are experienced and they may not be as amicable as you would have hoped. For example, a certain member of the family who fills you with disdain could create a referencing system that highlights your contempt for them. This programming is the work of memory acting as history.*

Hurdley concludes her discussion of object relations with the connection that women have to the home by ignoring the issue that tradition is social and material. Cultural material is tangible and home and hearth very particular. Connections are surreptitious. Collections enable us to be ourselves through cultural material creating connections. Photographs on a sideboard create another kind of ‘packaging’. This packaging is creating by narrative and the image seeming to be one even though continuity is not experienced; continuity is man-made, thus constructed. A grandma is gift maker, and collection and collector displays linkages. Furthermore, linkages automatically connect the personal to the social and the material.

*When I sit next to grandma, there is very little space inbetween her and*
me. As grandma speaks our conversation flits to other things and the
discussion goes off on a tangent. Once we were discussing the news and
suddenly I became interested in what she was cooking. This conversation
was initially a discussion of a photograph but then became the interest of
what was lurking in the kitchen. Conversations can be like that. Linkages
are rarely logical as a theme is easily changed.

Grandma in turn acts as an orator filling in the missing gaps of the
memory of how she came to know the people within the photographs on
the sideboard. Her method is to remember a particular experience of
them from her childhood that embraced the character she was
constructing. Once she discussed a day when her mother had specifically
told her that she should not leave the house as the rain was too heavy
outside. Due to lack of a proper pavement it was easy for the ground to
turn into a swamp, the mud then burying small children alive, for them
never to be seen again. However my grandma’s grandmother started to
make coconut milk, fresh coconut milk, which she served with coffee.
Grandma says the thing about fresh coconut milk is the smell permeates
through the rain. Regardless of how dangerous the circumstances might
be, my grandma’s favourite drink was fresh coconut milk. So grandma
thought she could ‘wing it’. Wing it she did. Grandma later awakened at
her grandmother’s house with the smell of not so fresh coconut. She was
nearly buried alive because of fresh coconut. As she said ‘nearly’, it was
clearly worth sneaking out of the house for something you love.

When I get inside my family album memories narrate a history, as if I was
made up of stories. The images of me are all over grandma’s house but
the one that stands out is placed in the middle. I am six years old. I am
wearing a brand new pink and white dress and I have polished my shoes.
This is a school photograph. Next to this photograph, is one of a couple
that was not supposed to be there. It was an image brought from a shop.
Grandma liked the frame, and thought it would set the display off: the
display of the family.
If something is placed on the space of value (in this case the sideboard) and it does not follow the rule, can this become part of the family representation? Grandma placed a photo-frame on the sideboard. This was not questioned, and why should it be? It’s normal to have photographs on the sideboard; there was even a bouquet of flowers. The system changed when an unknown person’s photograph entered the made up system of the sideboard. What I thought was set in stone was the result of insufficient space in a family album as book, and accidental positioning on the sideboard. As strange as it sounds I believed that the sideboard was a place that contained only what was sacred (family photographs) and the profane (random photographs) were stored elsewhere. I was a little disappointed.

History is made accidentally. People become the individuals we think we know and own through social selves. These social selves are created by the ‘off chance’ which displays my system of collection
In the Findings chapter I will focus on what has been learnt from doing a project of this kind. In this research project the textual accounts is used to show how the social individual contributes to the creation of society. This is produced through narratives and inventories, which enable autoethnographic voices to act as evidence of specific locations. Burkitt’s theory portrayed social selves as a history of theoretical underpinning when history is more aligned to behavioural practices, embodied ideas are experienced through inventories and narratives. In using a practice led methodology, autoethnography contextualises the work through broader theoretical references that connect to home and family. Outi Tupeinen argued that one of the key issues in practice-led research is ‘experiential knowledge’ (2006:116), experiential knowledge is therefore informed by theory. Moreover when experiential learning is displayed as narrative and inventories, practice is using narrative to both display social selves and appropriate them. A practice is created through the document of a practise. The supposed dialogue between practice and theory in practice-led research is a collaboration/ creation of voices, in this instance.

In exploring the self as social selves practice (narrative and inventories) presents itself as autoethnography and uses experiential knowledge to create memory. In so doing, art is acting as autoethnography and as such documentation of ourselves is multi- formatted in order for personal experience to produce knowledge through acquisition. Narratives and inventories incur the same weighting when sat side by side. Russel (1999) discusses that autoethnographic visual practice become an archival practice as ‘memory is fragmented into a nonlinear collage’ (Russel 1999: 313). Russel discusses the work of practitioners who are not usually deemed as autoethnographers but their practice functions to produce a ‘subjective space that combines anthropologist, informant, subject and object of the, under the sign of one identity’ (1999:313). Non- linear collage might seem to produce a truthful account against theoretical underpinnings however what they offer is another perspective as they function to change display. In Chapter 4: My Cupboard called Hell there are many forms and formats of discomfort –in a place entitled Hell. This resides on the page and
within the discussion of the objects around the house. As they are plentiful the inventoried images are also many as the space of the page is bounded. It is bounded by space imagined and space that is thought to be acquired through acquisition of objects. As one is reading of the experience a memory is created. To recall the past through use of theory and domestic object both the past and the present are created in the realm of domestic fiction and the imagery presents itself as a record of acquisition.

In Chapter 9: My Family Album there are no images of actual family members and there is a suggestion that doubling of identities can only occur when seen. If the doubling of any entity is left out or unclear then it is not recorded. One is obligated to identity and if there are no other alternative referents then showing and telling operates under a different guise and the work of text is collaged in a non-linear manner. This differs from Hurdley’s ethnography that based its research finding on empirical research, which used interviews, as these were first and foremost the narratives of another. Hurdley’s account rendered all narratives to the work of well-constructed language. The researcher and themes emerge ‘from close analysis of narrative’ (2006:725), rather than the narratives themselves. In Hurdley’s narrative her subjectivity is carefully edited in order for the individual to be still framed by the link between the microscopic and the macroscopic to still remain.

Inventories act as the are the re-creation of a spatial past. In Species of Spaces and Other Places (2008), Georges Perec suggests that location begins with an origin; ‘this is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page’ (2008:13; first published 1974). I do not agree with Perec’s idea that space begins with words only but his methods enabled me to create my own perspective and to change the way I viewed inventories and narratives as documentation. The recording of spaces enabled possessions to acquire significance and be understood as noteworthy. Perec argues that ‘each room has a particular function’ (Perec 2008:28) and my practice of creating inventories and narratives hopes to show that individual can contribute to the creation of society. Social selves are created when social and historical relations are documented, when this occurs the display of social selves changes. The use of a more practical autoethnography enables narratives ad inventories to act as autoethnography as they display social selves.

As social selves we are born into social relations that have been conferred by others, such as
Aunty, Uncle, Grandma and Granddad. These social relations operate differently in differing places, which contain objects as evidence of social relationships, such as a wardrobe, or a kitchen cupboard. Burkitt’s conclusion on social relations is that ‘even though we can work to change these, nevertheless we can work only with the materials and tools we have at hand’ (2008:187). In using Burkitt’s understanding of social selves, art practice is acting as autoethnography and this mimicry displays art as a theory.

Art acting as autoethnography bares resemblances to work of Mark Dion’s archaeology. Even though he was acting as an archaeologist or re-enacting some of the methods that an archaeologist might use he was still an artist. Colin RenfREW (1999) argued that Mark Dions’ practice of selective display is only art because it is displayed in the Tate. What should be asked is can the Tate be the only place in which art can be displayed? By Dion using the methods of another discipline he reveals another perspective of an academic discipline that can seem insignificant – the use of display. Further to this, he continues this discussion by suggesting that this is not archaeology because Dion has not been professionally trained and his investigative role is one of conductor in which the viewer participates in the work in order to explore particular spaces by beachcombing. In mimicking the method of an archaeologist he displays archaeology through showing and telling a collection through the act of classification. I have revealed that narratives and inventories as a practice can record social historical relations as practice. Nevertheless, social individuals are resilient and they have the ability to create and recreate the society which they are part of. Narratives and inventories are embodied and can generate social knowledge. An inventory that is hand-drawn is a document and so is a narrative as they create voices – a record of a past made present and made human.
Conclusion

This research project has been a focused enquiry into the question of ‘Who am I?’ Informed by specific social theories, I used my own experiences of the home and the family to represent and display social individuality and employ narratives and inventories as my art practice to explore and create ‘social selves’. Social selves then function to ‘show and tell’ the experiences of the home and the family which are contained in a box of knowledge of ‘who I am’. I situated my art practice of creating inventories and narratives through investigating other practitioners who use their own experiences (autoethnographically) as elaborated in Chapters One–Three. The practice of creating narratives and inventories functions to create voices and blur divisions between practice/theory, and researcher/researched in Chapters Four–Nine. In recording autoethnographic experience in the form of narratives and inventories, a collection is formed. It suggests that social selves are a history of particular relations that are in continual in use and in a state of flux because, as social selves, we are not self-contained.

The intention of this research was to put Ian Burkitt’s theory of social selves into art practice. In order to do this, the practice had to record/document experiences as Burkitt’s history of theory is limited if it has no use. Burkitt argues that we are not ‘individuals who are the proprietors of our own inherent capacities, owing nothing to society or others for them’ (2008:187). The implications of this are that we learn to become social selves through many situations. Burkitt discussed the search for social individuality solely within a context of human relationships, disregarding the process by which human relationships are accrued. I wondered if I could devise an enquiry that enables the viewer to be sympathetic to different circumstances that may change the way such theory is therefore understood. In order to address this, and as a result of my practice-led research (see Chapters 4–9), two secondary research questions were formulated and these motivated the structure of the thesis.

The two secondary research questions: How have other artists explored their own relations to social selves? how does autoethnography (as a practice) create social selves ? enables me to discuss the first question in Situating Practice (the first question is addressed in Chapters
One–Three and the second question is discussed in *Inventories and Narratives*, Chapters Four–Nine).

I searched for a method of practice that I could replicate, as I wanted this project to have a life after the thesis. I had tried out a range of practice strategies relating to narrative as well as directly relating to some of the theoretical concerns with which I started out. Burkitt discussed the constitution of the self in terms of seminal theories, which have determined from whom and what we learn, largely disregarding the fact that the structures in which we learn are constructed through social connections. As a consequence, knowledge of ourselves is constructed through theoretical relations. However, a social and historical relationship is not always led by theoretical underpinnings completely (Chapter Four–Nine). I have listed and narrated the things that I own as possession constructs a history of uses. A life documented is the construction of a reality and not reality itself.

**Original Contribution to Knowledge**

My contribution to knowledge is in the application of Burkitt’s ideas relating to ‘social selves’ and the development of a particular relationship between art practice-based methodologies, which work with theoretical concepts from a range of academic disciplines. My contribution to knowledge is the method of ‘voicing’ social selves as it uses personal narrative throughout sections of the writing to articulate aspects of those relations. In particular, I have used Burkitt’s social selves to show that a history of theoretical relationships can be understood differently if they are applied and not just theorised. This application of a theory creates a practice. Sherry Turkle’s seminal collection of essays on *Evocative Objects* (2007) enabled mundane objects to be discussed in terms of their relations to memories, and memory – collective and personal – assumed prominence in my argument. I used my personal life and my family life to explore memories embodied in personal possessions and activities undertaken by my family and gave them importance by recording them in words and drawings. In this way ‘life’ becomes ‘art’.

**Application of the Knowledge Produced**

I will continue to produce inventories and narratives of space. In documenting social selves through art practice, knowledge of ourselves is revealed. When we attempt to blur the lines between the researcher and subject the lines between practice and theory are also
distorted. These methods of research are useful and applicable when working in more traditional arenas in order to use art practice not only to tell of the knowledge that has been understood but also to show. I argue that, through narrative and inventories, we can develop some answers to the question, ‘Who am I?’, but we can also include what and with whom we feel close to and this can be achieved through art practice; art is acting as autoethnography and can display social selves.
Bibliography

Books


Journals


**Websites**


**Image/Objects**


Conference Posters

Appendix

The Appendix contains the inventories created that are useful to this project and it is numbered in Roman numerals.


V. Charlene Clempson, *My Cupboard Called Hell: Number 5* (2012) 170 x 250 mm., felt tip pen on paper.


My Cupboard called Hell

No 1
OTHER SILVER BAUBLES
PARTY POPPER
Silver Baubles
WHITE BAUBLES
PARTY POPPER
Red + White Baubles
RED BAUBLE (GLITTER)
Silver Bauble
My cupboard called Hell

No. 2
CHRISTMAS BEADS
My Cupboard

Called

Hell

No. 3
Boxed Christmas Lights
My CUPBOARD
CALLED
HELL

N° 4
Sêt Artificial Tree
My cupboard called Hell

N°5
Brown Plastic Wall Plug
Solid Walls
Glas Plates
SCRAPER
Quality Tools

Tool Box
Piece of wood
Another piece of wood
My Cupboard
Called Hell

Someday After Christmas

N°6
BEADS
SILVER BAUBLE
PARTY POPPER
My Kitchen Cupboard
ASDA THYME
Own seasoning
HEINZ Oxtail Soup
My kitchen

Cupboard

Nº2
ASOA THYME.
Asda Coconut Mushrooms
WEST INDIAN PEPPER
SAUCE (EXTRA HOT)
WANG BUCKWHEAT NOODLES
TETLEY TEA BAGS
OAT CAKES
Tesco Rhubarbin
Light syrup.
NEW
TESCO
Casarecce

Tesco Premium Italian
Casarecce
Small green container
ASDA MIGHTY CHILLI
BEEF SOUP

Mighty y
Soup
Chilli Beef.
VEGETABLE OIL
BICARBONATE OF SODA
AUTHENTIC ITALIAN
LINGUINE
DADDIES TOMATO KETCHUP
GREEN CHILLIES POPPADOMS
My Kitchen
Cupboard
No 3
HEINZ OXTAIL SOUP
HEIN3 TOMATO KETCHUP
Ladybird Cattlefish
OWN BASMATI RICE
Own Cumin Seeds
OWN BLACK LENTILS
Own Cumin Seeds
Own Icing Sugar
Own Popping Corn
Own Seasoning
Pepper Mint Tea
(Old Container)
RICE CAKES
Sesame Oil
Oval Curry Powder
Own PAPRIKA AND CHILLI MIX.
My
(KIND OF)
Kitchen
Cupboard
(WHILST AWAY)

No. 4
Nestle Peppermint Crisp
ROCKET AND WALNUT PESTO
CORIANDER, CHILLI AND SESAME PESTO
LAYS: THAI SWEET CHILLI
Simply cereal
Honey and almonds
MED - LEMON

For colds

+ Flu

MED - LEMON
ALPRO SOYA: NATURAL
ROSES: LIME
CHIPS: A HOY

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES
Cookies: Golden Crunchies
BLUE DRAGON
SOY SAUCE
Pure Honey
My Kitchen
Cupboard

N°5
Own Rice
OWN CHICK PEAS
OWN BLACK LENTILS
INSTANT MISO SOUP

INSTANT MISO SOUP
OWN BARLEY
ALL PURPOSE SEASONING

BEST BEFORE 5/1/10 2013

ALL PURPOSE SEASONING
Gravy Granules
Silver (o.w.n.) salt
Own Chilli Pepper Flakes
Onn Chilli Powder
OWN CURRY POWDER
Dunn's River Chicken Seasoning
DUNN'S RIVER HOT SAUCE
(JAMAICAN STYLE)
HEINZ TOMATO KETCHUP
HIGHLAND OAT CAKES
My

Kitchen

Cupboard (the other)

One

No 9
Yorkshire Tea
Jasmine Tea
COFFEE MATE
DOUNE EGBERTS
GROUND COFFEE
La Soy Milk Free
My

WARDROBE

(A Box)

No.1
OLD JAMAICAN T-SHIRT
No Problem

T-shirts
Hard Rock Cafe

Tacky T-shirt
UNCLE'S T-SHIRT.
Jamaican T-Shirt.
My NARROBE

No. 2
Shorts
PYJAMAS
PYJAMAS
FLORAL T-SHIRT
BLACK T-SHIRT
My Wardrobe

Floor

N° 3
ANOTHER ODD SOCK
BRIGHT PINK ODD SOCK
LIGHT BLUE ODD SOCK
Dark Blue Odin Sock
My WARDROBE

Floor

N O 4
GREEN SKIRT
Jumper (crumpled)
RED SKIRT
My WARDROBE

N.5
MY WARDROBE

N.6
skirt
Jumper
MY BOOKSHELF

SHELF - 3
BOOKCASE 1

BOOKCASE

SHELF
A cruel bird came to the nest and looked in.

A cruel bird came to the nest and looked in.
THE FORBIDDEN GAME

L. J. Smith

THE FORBIDDEN GAME
MY BOOK SHELF

SHELF 2
BOOKCASE 1

BOOKCASE

SHELF

N°2
WOMEN'S HEALTH

WOMEN'S HEALTH
BRECHT
THREE PLAYS

THREE PLAYS
VEGETARIAN FIESTA
ANIMALS TO
MAKE

ANIMALS TO MAKE
Country Crafts

COUNTRY CRAFTS
REVISION GUIDE FOR
G.C.S.E. MATHEMATICS
SIMPLY YOGA

SIMPLY YOGA
MANUAL OF NUTRITION
My Bookshelf

Shelf - 1
Bookcase - 1

No3
THREE TO SEE THE KING
The Archaeology of Knowledge
CHOCOLAT

Joanne Harris

CHOCOLAT
Cake Icing and Decoration

Cake Icing and
Decoration
MEAT FOR YOUR FREEZER

MEAT FOR YOUR FREEZER
Czech Cookery
MAORI CULTURE

MAORI CULTURE
MY BOOKSHELF

(ON THE FLOOR)

FLOOR

№4
HOW THE DEAD LIVE
My Bookshelf

Shelf 2
Bookcase 2

No. 5
THE PUSHMAN AND OTHER STORIES
NEIL GAIMAN
NEVERWHERE
NEVERWHERE
Japanese Meals on the Go

Bento Boxes

Bento Boxes
The Higher Taste

The Higher Taste
The Cultures of Vegetable and Flowers
MY BOOKSHELF

SHELF 1

BOOKCASE 3

Nº6
BIRMINGHAM STREET ATLAS
BEST OF BRUSSELS, BRUGES, ANTWERP AND GHENT.
MACBETH
(old + fragile)
A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS: A BAD BEGINNING
Strange Deaths
Porn
UK\line\new\line
Porn
HAYATE THE COMBAT

BUTLER: 1
CHICKEN

CHICKEN
Red Seas Under Red Skies
THE LIGHT
AGES
The High Lord
KEN
FOLLET

THE PILLARS
OF THE
EARTH

THE PILLARS OF THE
EARTH
How the Dead Live