

**A NEW MATERIALIST TURN TOWARD THE TEXTBOOK:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS
AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES**

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Curriculum Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

August 2019

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

A new materialist turn toward the textbook: an exploration of the relationship between history textbooks and historical narratives

submitted by Katherine Wallace in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

in Curriculum Studies

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Abstract

This study is concerned with history textbooks and historical narratives. Shifting attention away from the notion that the teacher uses the textbook as a mute classroom tool, this study follows Karen Barad's new materialist theories to conceptualise the textbook as a lively, vibrant object with animate and agentic capacities. This study focuses on how one history textbook, G.R. Elton's *England Under the Tudors*, shaped the historical narrative taught to history A-level students in the United Kingdom about the reign of Henry VIII. By offering three ekphrastic descriptions looking at first the textbook's material qualities, second, its conditions of arrival, and its conditions of use, as framed by the leadership team of the school and the school building, and lastly, the textbook's role as part of the (im)material assemblage of the history classroom, this study explores how these aspects of the textbook work together and contribute to the onto-epistemo-logical historical narrative. This study adopts an aesthetic orientation toward the object of study and methodological approach. The ekphrastic descriptions are accounts of the material experience of teaching history in a certain setting using the textbook as an object of focus.

This study highlights the benefits of considering textbook practices as material and bodily practices. It illustrates the unique nature of the relationship of any teacher and the textbook(s) they use to teach. It stresses the impact a school's architectural style, culture, chosen aesthetic, and ethos can have on the learning that takes place there. Finally, this study acknowledges the ontological dimension of history teaching, as well as the epistemological, and emphasises the importance of seeing the construction of historical narratives in classroom settings as something *experienced* and lived, rather than simply taught and then *known*.

Lay Summary

This study is an in-depth exploration of the researcher's relationship with a specific history textbook and how this affected how a certain historical narrative was taught. By adopting an aesthetic sensibility, the study hopes to illuminate the lively, vibrant nature of the textbooks by describing the material qualities of the textbook, as well as the history classroom and school where the historical narrative was taught, in creative and imaginative ways. This study hopes the reader is affected by the descriptions offered as part of it and does not presume to have come to a totalising conclusion, however, the study does point to the unique relationship between teacher and textbook, this study stresses how significant a school's culture and ethos is on shaping teaching, and finally, this study suggests that historical narratives that are taught in classrooms are not simply known, they are lived.

Preface

This dissertation is original, independent work by Katy Wallace.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Penney Clark for her unwavering support and guidance for the two years I have been studying for my MA. I would like to thank Dr. Dónal O'Donoghue for introducing me to aesthetics and showing me another way to think about history, teaching, and education. I would like to thank Dr. Lindsay Gibson for his robust and supportive reading of my thesis and subsequent conversations that furthered my thinking. I would like to thank all the teachers who taught me while I studied at UBC (Dr. Jillianne Code, Dr. Susan Gerofsky, Dr. Rita Irwin, Dr. Lisa Loutzenheiser, Dr. Anne Phelan, Dr. Kerry Renwick) I would like to thank my fellow MA students in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, especially Caitlin who sat next to me every day and shared my MA journey.

Dedication

For my A-level students.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Brief History of the Problem

Despite a wealth of research looking at history textbooks and historical narratives, Lisa Faden thinks, in general, “the interaction between history teachers and textbooks is largely unstudied” leaving a gap in the research.¹ According to Eckhardt Fuchs and Kathrin Henne, “there is increasing interest in the way in which textbooks are employed in the classroom.”² Jordan Reed would welcome this new interest as he thinks that “reception histories are essential to the future scholarship of the textbook.”³ These types of studies should, according to Reed, look into how the “content, narrative, and myth [of textbooks] was read, digested, and absorbed.”⁴

Peter Seixas says history education scholarship has, like textbook research, traditionally focused its attention on epistemological conceptualisations of narrative and concerned itself with how students “analyse, evaluate, and construct narratives about the past” (whereas textbook research has centred around epistemological narratives already constructed and presented *in* textbooks.)⁵ There is, however, an alternative, yet connected, body of work in history education, from scholars such as Jörn Rüsen, on historical consciousness. This looks at “the relationship

¹ Lisa Y. Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation: World War II Narratives in the United States and Canada,” in *(Re)Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, ed. J.H. Williams (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2014), 191.

² Eckhardt Fuchs and Kathrin Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annekatrin Bocks (London: Palgrave, 2018), 35.

³ Jordan M. Reed, “The History of the Textbook: The State of the Discipline,” *Book History* 21 (2018): 412.

⁴ Reed, “The History of the Textbook,” 412.

⁵ Seixas, Peter, “Teaching Rival Histories: In Search of Narrative Plausibility,” in *International Perspectives on Teaching Rival Histories: Pedagogical Responses to Contested Narratives and the History Wars*, ed. Henrik Astrom Elmersjo, Anna Clark, and Monika Vinterek (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 264.

between the knower and the known”⁶ which offers an ontological dimension to historical narratives in the history classroom where “the focus...is less on thinking and knowing, and more on experiencing and being.”⁷ Seixas thinks that the “ontological dimension of narrative competence is potentially a conceptualization for a more expansive and ambitious history education.”⁸ He makes no mention of whether this ontological dimension could spread to, or include, considerations of textbooks, but makes no claims that suggest it would not.

An additional prerequisite of much of the research looking at textbooks and narrative is that the textbook is usually defined in its conventional manner as “a tool designed for students to learn, be taught, or work from.”⁹ There is, however, a shift towards an interest in “*productivity* and *performativity*” of textbooks as “(im)material assemblages” that “attends less to the *content* of the textbook and more to the *mediality* of textbooks”¹⁰ (emphasis author’s own) representing a turn toward the material in textbook research.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study is to respond to the aforementioned shifts or gaps in research about history textbooks and historical narratives. It is an in-depth exploration of my own relationship with a specific history textbook, G.R. Elton’s *England Under the Tudors*, and the

⁶ Seixas, Peter, “A Model of Historical Thinking,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49(6), (2015): 596.

⁷ Seixas, “Teaching Rival Histories,” 263.

⁸ Seixas, “Teaching Rival Histories,” 264.

⁹ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 25.

¹⁰ Felicitas Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annekatrin Bocks (London: Palgrave, 2018), 169.

role this played on the historical narrative that was taught about the reign of Henry VIII to A-level students.¹¹

1.3 Purpose of Study

Manuel Köster, Holger Thünemann and Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting suggest that when lessons are recorded the observations tend to overlook the “complexity of the classroom.”¹² The purpose of this research is to adopt an orientation, theoretical framing, and methodology that will confront the complexity of my history classroom and seek to “untangle the myriad psychological and communicative” as well as material events that shaped the historical narrative constructed, taught, and learnt there.¹³ This study will do this by turning Faden’s assertion that “the teacher chooses how and to what extent [a] textbook is utilized by students” on its head and instead ask to what extent the teacher is utilized, or conditioned, by the textbook.¹⁴ The textbook will be considered as a “holistic material”¹⁵ and “complex pedagogical”¹⁶ artefact made up of “lively”¹⁷ and “vibrant”¹⁸ matter, rather than a mute “classroom tool.”¹⁹ Importantly, by shifting the gaze

¹¹ A-levels (Advanced Level General Certificate of Education (GCE)) are externally marked public examinations taken by Year 13 (18-year old) students. They are the higher of the two main standardized form of examination (the lower being General Certificate of Education (GCSE)) in England and Wales.

¹² Manuel Köster, Holger Thünemann, and Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting, "Introduction" in *Researching History Education*, ed. Manuel Köster, Holger Thünemann, and Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt: Wochenschau Verlag, 2019), 12.

¹³ Köster, Thünemann, and Zülsdorf-Kersting, "Introduction," 12.

¹⁴ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 197.

¹⁵ Reed, “The History of the Textbook,” 403

¹⁶ John Issit quoted in Reed, “The History of the Textbook,” 397.

¹⁷ See Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ See Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹⁹ Martin Lawn, “Designing Teaching: The Classroom as a Technology,” in *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom* eds. Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn and Kate Rousmaniere, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 65,

from the teacher to the textbook is not presumed to be “already there” but emergent “through specific practices.”²⁰

As well as shifting attention to the textbook this study responds to Peter Seixas’ query that perhaps “narrative has not only an epistemological but also an ontological dimension”²¹ in the history classroom and leans toward an understanding of myself, the teacher, and my students as “historical beings” who are “in history as we are *in* the world.”²² These arguably unconventional framings of both the history textbook and historical narrative (in classroom settings) are adopted to illuminate the unique relationship of the textbook, teacher, and historical narrative in any given history classroom through a close reflection on my own classroom and teaching practice.

1.4 Theoretical Foundations

Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker developed a model with five stages to study book culture and history.²³ This was part of an extended conversation amongst book historians and bibliographers that provides a useful framework for this research. This particular study sits in the fifth stage of the model: reception.²⁴ The specific focus is on the reception of the textbook in the classroom meaning the research can be classified as textbook research. Fuchs and Hennes state that “textbook research is a broad and multidisciplinary field” with “neither a distinct theory nor

²⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 157.

²¹ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 264.

²² David Carr quoted by Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 264.

²³ Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker, “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*, ed. Nicholas Barker, (London: British Library, 1993).

²⁴ The five stages were: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception, survival.

a specific arsenal of methods.”²⁵ Instead, it uses “approaches from the humanities and from cultural and social studies most appropriate to the issue in question.”²⁶ For this reason they believe a more appropriate term is “text-book orientated research,” rather than just textbook research.²⁷ My research is textbook-orientated and is concerned with the impact the textbook had on my teaching. It is therefore, according to Peter Weinbrenner, an “impact-oriented” textbook study.²⁸ The term orientation is important as how I am choosing to orientate toward the book underpins the methodological approach (to be discussed in the “methods” section of this chapter).

To provide a theoretical grounding that allows concerns regarding epistemology, ontology, and materiality to be thought about horizontally and concurrently, rather than hierarchically and linearly, this research moves with Karen Barad’s new materialist philosophy, agential realism. Barad, a seminal scholar in the field of new materialism who traverses theoretical physics and feminist theory, states that “the new philosophical framework that I propose [agential realism] entails a rethinking of fundamental concepts that support...binary thinking, including the notions of matter, discourse, causality, agency, power, identity, embodiment, objectivity, space and time.”²⁹ Agential realism is an “epistemological-ontological-ethical framework that provides an understanding of the role of the human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors.”³⁰ This grounding provides

²⁵ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 42.

²⁶ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 43.

²⁷ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 43.

²⁸ Peter Weinbrenner, “Methodologies of Textbook Analysis Used to Date,” in eds. H. Bourdillon *History and Social Studies – Methodologies of Textbook Analysis*, (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1992), 34.

²⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 26.

³⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 26.

a means to think about epistemological and ontological narratives together as well as provide nuanced theorisations about matter, agency, and performativity that underpin the idea of the textbook as a lively object.

1.5 Methodological Approach and Methods

The orientation of the researcher, methodological approach, and methods will be informed by art-led research and aesthetics. Art-led research has the “capacity to reveal and represent the world in ways that other forms of inquiry and knowledge do not”³¹ meaning there will be an “openness to the world”³² and a “willingness to engage in seeing, interpreting and representing the world in ways that move beyond conventional ways.”³³ Dónal O’Donoghue suggests that “to orientate oneself to the world aesthetically is to invite the world to show up in ways that it might not otherwise.”³⁴ This orientation complements the theoretical offerings of Barad’s agential realism by providing a means to explore emergent themes that present themselves in the writing organically and also provides an opportunity to engage with the complexity of the classroom in a different way to that which we are used to.

The text of this study, the written thesis, will be presented in aesthetic form. This is in keeping with art-led research “as a way of doing scholarly work through the study of aesthetics, art theory, and artist’s writing” and the “production of research-based visual material.”³⁵ The written thesis will be offered in place of visual material. Each of three main research chapters

³¹ Dónal O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools. Art-Led Understandings of Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 18.

³² O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 50.

³³ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 50.

³⁴ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 50.

³⁵ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 18.

(chapters four, five, and six, to be expanded upon in the “organisation of thesis” section of this chapter) will hinge around an ekphrastic description and then linger with emergent themes to see what they say about the textbook and the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative.

Ekphrastic writing is traditionally an “account in words of a visual experience” or a work of art.³⁶ The ekphrastic descriptions will be written accounts of material experiences drawing on Ludmilla Jordanova’s guidance about writing descriptions.³⁷ The intention of ekphrastic writing is to “provoke vivid emotions”³⁸ in the reader. Inspired by Peter de Bolla’s “poetics of wonderment”³⁹ and Elliot Eisner’s “aesthetic modes of knowing”⁴⁰ the writing has both an aesthetic orientation and form that, as Kathleen Stewart proposes, loosens formal narrative binds⁴¹ and aims, like Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot to “paint with words.”⁴²

1.6 Research Aims

Different aspects of the textbook need to be considered to provide a holistic understanding of the *England Under the Tudors* and the effect it had on the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative. First, the physical attributes of the textbook will be explored; its materiality and mediality. Building on this, the second attribute in some ways goes backward to

³⁶ Bill Brown, *Other Things* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 2.

³⁷ See Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁸ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 18.

³⁹ Peter de Bolla, *Art Matters*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 5.

⁴⁰ Elliot Eisner, “Aesthetic Modes of Knowing,” in *Learning and Teaching: The Ways of Knowing*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 23.

⁴¹ Kathleen Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 1962 (2011): 445.

⁴² Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, “Reflections on Portraiture: A Dialogue between Art and Science,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (2005): 6.

go forward and considers the context in which the textbook was used and its conditions of arrival in the classroom; what Jordanova refers to as the life history of the artefact.⁴³ Finally, the textbook's role in shaping the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative created in the classroom needs to be considered.

The specific research questions will therefore be:

1. What are the material qualities of *England Under the Tudors* as a textual artefact?
2. What were the conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, of *England Under the Tudors* in the classroom?
3. How did *England Under the Tudors* shape the historical narrative that was taught about Henry VIII?

1.7 Limitations

There are a number of what could be termed limitations to this study. Some of these are not necessarily limiting but are observations worthy of note that point to the type of study this is and what this means for the conclusions it comes to about textbooks and historical narratives as well as other aspects of schooling and education.

As this study uses an art-led methodology “it is important to...acknowledge that art...is inherently experimental, unpredictable, un-knowable, non-compliant and elusive”; meaning art rarely ever means “one thing or another once and for all.”⁴⁴ Aesthetic encounters are, according to de Bolla, “tied up with their *radical* singularity” (emphasis author's own) meaning this

⁴³ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 19.

⁴⁴ O'Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys' Schools*, 20.

description of an aesthetic response to Elton's *England Under the Tudors* is unique to the particular settings it was used in.⁴⁵ Moreover, because this thesis is written with aesthetic intentions the ekphrastic descriptions may (and hopefully will) provoke different responses in different readers. The emergent themes that are contemplated are just some of the emergent themes taken up by the researcher and do not represent all, or necessarily the most important, ideas, merely the ones that stood out to me, the teacher and researcher, as significant as I wrote about my experiences with *England Under the Tudors*.

Within the body of research that looks at textbooks this study is, as one particular experience from one teacher's perspective, something Tony Taylor and Stuart Macintyre might define as a "micro-study" which is "useful anecdotally" but not in other ways.⁴⁶ For Taylor and Macintyre this type of study "only offer[s], at best, vivid but isolated and often atypical findings."⁴⁷ The idea that a vivid study of an isolated classroom experience is atypical, and therefore less useful than other studies that are typical and offer insight on "a pattern of relationships"⁴⁸, is in conflict with both the radical singularity of aesthetics and Barad's agential realist philosophy which stresses how objects emerge through, and in, practice, meaning all experiences should, perhaps, be approached as isolated and unique rather than part of an overarching pattern. However, as the study's theoretical framing is that it is a textbook-oriented research it is worth noting that within the wider field of textbook research it may be considered in the way Taylor and Macintyre outline.

⁴⁵ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 130.

⁴⁶ Tony Taylor and Stuart Macintyre, "Cultural Wars and History Textbooks in Democratic Societies," in *Palgrave Handbook of Research in Historical Culture and Education*, ed. Mario Carretero, Stefan Berger, and Maria Grever, 1st ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2017), 617.

⁴⁷ Taylor and Macintyre, "Cultural Wars and History Textbooks in Democratic Societies," 617.

⁴⁸ Taylor and Macintyre, "Cultural Wars and History Textbooks in Democratic Societies," 617.

A major critique of new materialist work is that it neglects issues such as race and gender, therefore, “the challenge for textbooks studies is to attend to the material dimension without losing sight of the textbook as a socio-political product and politicum of its time.”⁴⁹ Rooting this study in Adams and Barker’s theoretical book publishing model means *England Under the Tudors* will be considered in terms of the socio-political context of the book as an object but also the socio-political context framing the teacher’s reception and use of the book. However, neither race nor gender, as well as other pertinent issues such as class, are specifically critiqued or analysed as part of the study. Any reference to race, gender, or class, or other issues such as these, will be in the context of how they emerge in and through the material textbook practice.

A final observation comes from Stewart’s ideas about what she calls “atmospheric attunements.”⁵⁰ Stewart suggests that her descriptions of the “charged atmosphere of everyday life” require the analyst to discover “her object of analysis by writing out of its inhabited elements in a space and time.” In this way Stewart thinks atmospheric attunements are a process similar to Heidegger’s worlding. Worlding is the process of dwelling with spaces that “bear, gesture, [and] gestate” with “qualities, rhythms, forces, relations, and movements.”⁵¹ The writing style of this thesis is in part influenced by Stewart and therefore the idea of atmospheric attunements and worlding is worth noting. This is not a limitation of the study but a point of observation regarding its style and theory.

⁴⁹ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 172.

⁵⁰ Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 445.

⁵¹ Martin Heidegger quoted by Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 445.

To bring to life the rhythms, gestures, and movements of the material experiences discussed in the ekphrastic descriptions the style of writing will depart from the formality expected of academic writing, in keeping with its aesthetic form, to try to capture the essence of what is being said both through the description and stylistically. In terms of the theory, Stewart, drawing on Nancy Rose, thinks this style of writing tries to “pull academic attunements into tricky alignment”⁵² as a way of becoming sentient to “ways of being in noise and light and space.”⁵³ It is the “tricky alignment” that is germane for this thesis as some of the theory and theorists used to further thought about the emergent themes of the ekphrastic description are in what could be described as tricky alignment with the new materialist foundations of the study. This is in large part owing to the humanist orientation of the majority of the theorists used. The intention is not to attempt to create a harmony that does not exist amongst different theorists. Instead, reference and use of theory is part of the organic thinking and writing process that ultimately seeks to convey the emergent themes of the ekphrastic description in a rich and considered nuanced manner.

1.8 Positionality of the Researcher

I approach this study as a white, upper-middle-class, English woman born in the UK who has only experienced schooling and teaching from an English perspective, with much of my own experience as a school student taking place in independent schools. My time studying in Canada has offered me some distance from the English education system, but as my research reflects on

⁵² Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 445.

⁵³ Nancy Rose quoted by Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 445.

a time before I had come to Canada, the teaching practice that I will reflect upon is firmly rooted in the English context. I taught for four years in an inner-city⁵⁴, state-funded, comprehensive school in west London comprised of students of mixed-ability, multiple ethnicities, wide-ranging first languages, and varying socio-economic backgrounds.

I also approach this study as a history teacher whose academic training prior to this MA in Curriculum Studies has been almost exclusively in history and history education. My MA studies have led to what David Turnbull refers to in his spatial thesis as a “decentering” which is the recognition “that there are other ways of knowing the world in addition to our own Eurocentric and egocentric ones.”⁵⁵ This shift in thinking regarding Western knowledge and knowledge in general was triggered by an introduction to, and exploration of, the clash in the Canadian history classroom between Indigenous historical consciousness and Western historical consciousness.⁵⁶ Although this clash of historical consciousness is not the focus of this study the

⁵⁴ The school can be classed as an inner-city owing first to its location in central London rather than outer London. Prior to the current head taking over the school it was known as troubled of “failing” school with poor exam results, a difficult student body with challenging behaviour, crime and drug issues, and a generally bad reputation in the local community and further afield. While I taught at the school the middle classes were aggressively recruited, but the catchment area of the school still included a variety of neighbourhoods that fell in line with the common usage of the term inner-city (low socio-economic areas, high crime rates, high levels of social housing etc).

⁵⁵ David Turnbull, “Reframing Science and Other Local Traditions,” in *Futures*, 29(6), (1997): 553. Turnbull’s spatial thesis indicates that for knowledge to be created there are some essential requirements: people, skills, local knowledge and equipment, social strategies and technical devices. Utilized together in a knowledge space these different elements create knowledge. The most important thing knowledge needs in order to be perceived as truth-like in a specific locality is trust: the community needs to trust the knowledge creators. This allows for the standardization and homogenization of knowledge in specific knowledge spaces leading to representational knowledge being The Truth. Knowledge is therefore always performative as a social activity or “performance” in a local space creating knowledge. Knowledge is also representational as it is represented in a local space as (objective) fact adhered to by a community because of their trust in the knowledge producers. When he talks of decentering, he is referring to “mainstream, orthodox historians and sociologists” of Western science but it is not something that is exclusive to field of science or history of science.

⁵⁶ See Michael Marker, “Teaching History from an Indigenous Perspective: Four Winding Paths up the Mountain,” in *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada*, ed. P. Clark

role it played as the catalyst for my personal process of “decentering” is significant because it was because of this process that I began to question the epistemological claims history makes and gravitate toward art-led research and theorists who allow me to orient toward and consider my teaching practice from a different perspective.

1.9 Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundations, Methodology and Methods

Chapter 4: Classroom Companion

Chapter 5: Sedimentation

Chapter 6: Portrait of a Classroom

Chapter 7: Epilogue

The second chapter, the literature review, is separated into two parts. The first part focuses on the theoretical framing of the study as textbook-orientated research that uses Adams and Barkers’ theoretical book publishing model. It looks at a range of literature starting with ideas from book history, bibliography, and literary theory regarding definitions of the book. It then considers various ways textbooks have been defined and different textbook cultures. It finishes by looking at textbook-oriented research about history textbooks and their impact in the

(Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2011) for a detailed exploration of Indigenous Historical Consciousness that elaborates on the importance of locality within Indigenous epistemologies and the issues in traditionally “Western” history classrooms.

classroom with a specific focus on the emerging literature in this particular field connected to textbooks' materiality and mediality. The second section explores literature related to three important theories that underpin the study: new materialism, narrative, and aesthetics.

The third chapter looks at the theoretical foundations, methodological approach, and methods in turn. The theoretical foundations are split into the theoretical framework, which focuses on how the study is situated in Adams and Barkers' model, and the theoretical grounding, which clarifies the study's new materialist intentions. The methodological approach is in two parts looking first at how the object, *England Under the Tudor*, is conceptualised and second the orientation of the research and the researcher. The last part of this chapter looking at the methods outlines how each of the research questions will be responded to in chapters four, five, and six and explains the theoretical background of each of the concepts (Classroom Companion; Sedimentation; Portrait of a Classroom) for each chapter and how the concepts will inform the ekphrastic description and subsequent discussion on emergent themes.

The fourth chapter attends to the first research question and considers the materiality of *England Under the Tudors*. The fifth chapter attends to the second research question and looks at the life history of the artefact and how this conditioned the object's arrival and use in the classroom. The sixth chapter examines the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative created in the classroom. All three of these chapters will start with an introduction that briefly summarises the concept for that chapter. There will then be the ekphrastic description followed by discussion of the emergent themes. Although aspects of the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative may be touched upon in chapters four and five this will be fully explored in chapter six. This final research chapter is therefore informed by the previous two. Consequently, the research and writing process is accumulative and this final chapter, in some ways, concludes or synthesises

the research and writing process. It is for this reason that the seventh and final chapter is titled “Epilogue” so as to avoid concluding the research in the same way twice. The seventh, and final chapter, will instead draw the study to a close by offering some final comments on history textbooks and historical narratives in a wider sense.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review first considers the textbook and how, as an object, it will be theoretically framed in this study. The textbook is a specific type of book with a specific style. Books show up to different audiences and different theorists in different ways. This literature review is going to touch upon a number of different definitions of the book to come to a conclusion about some qualities, or attributes, of the book that are pertinent to this study of a textbook, but will bear in mind that the book is what Leslie Howsam calls “a shape-shifter,” and therefore shifts between multiple definitions.⁵⁷

After spending some time considering how the book has been defined in various fields, a discussion leading to a similar fluid definition of the textbook will be made. This study hopes to illustrate that the textbook, like the book, is also a shape-shifter that is moulded by its conditions of use. Its position as a pedagogical tool means there are a number of rigid definitions that need to be discussed. The conditions of use of any textbook are linked to the textbook culture they exist in so there will be a concise overview of textbook cultures in order to situate *England Under the Tudors* accordingly.

The next section is a review of history textbook research focusing on studies related to how textbooks are used in the classroom. The last part of this section of the review will consider the emerging literature that looks at textbooks as material artefacts and considers their mediality and materiality.

⁵⁷ Leslie Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 3.

Having situated the research in relevant literature pertaining to books, textbooks, and history textbook research the final section of the review will consider bodies of literature related to three central concepts that inform the study. First, there will be focus on the new materialist theories from which this work draws, specifically the work of Karen Barad and her theories of agential realism, but also work that considers objects as lively matter. Next, there will be a review of literature from history, the philosophy of history, and history education that will consider the role of narrative in history and history education. This will look at both ontological and epistemological definitions and theories of narrative. At the end of this section epistemological and ontological ideas about narrative will be thought of alongside Barad's work to offer a working framework for how narrative is being explored in this new materialist study. The final section focuses on aesthetics, aesthetic orientation and aesthetic embodiment that informs the methodological approach of the research.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: The Book

Amaranth Borsuk rightly asserts: "the book would, at first glance, seem to be an object about which we all possess essential knowledge."⁵⁸ However, despite our familiarity with the book, it is "never simply a remarkable *object*"⁵⁹ (emphasis author's own). It is "the product of human agency"⁶⁰ and "simultaneously a written text, a material object, and a cultural transaction"⁶¹ meaning "the thing we picture when someone says "book" is an *idea* as much as

⁵⁸ Amaranth Borsuk, *The Book* (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 2018), ix.

⁵⁹ Borsuk, *The Book*, 42.

⁶⁰ Borsuk, *The Book*, 42.

⁶¹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, vii.

an *object*”⁶² (emphasis author’s own). It is worth clarifying, as Leslie Howsam does, that, generally speaking, this book, about which we possess knowledge, is “the western book, and, with a few exceptions, the modern printed book.”⁶³ Although “every book has a history of its own”⁶⁴ and each individual book is a distinct and individual object, Borsuk believes we “no longer sense the hand of the scribe or craftsman when we pick up a mass market paperback” and nor do we notice the book as an object unless there is a mistake, for example a missing page.⁶⁵ Given the illusive nature of the book, despite ostensibly being one of the most recognizable human-crafted objects, the book is not easily definable. This study of Elton’s *England Under the Tudors* will view the book as a written text, a material object, *and* a cultural transaction but it will elevate the definition of material object above the other two. Consideration of the book as written text and as cultural transaction will be done so alongside its materiality. The book, as Borsuk points out, is always going to be an idea and an object, but by lingering in a determined manner with the physicality of the object there are avenues of thought to explore that conceptualize the book as an idea from a materialist perspective.

2.2.1 Scholarly Approaches to Book Studies

Howsam outlines three scholarly approaches to studies looking at the history of the book and/or the history of print culture: literary studies, bibliography, and history, each of which defines the book differently.⁶⁶ The primary focus of cultural history is agency, power and

⁶² Borsuk, *The Book*, 110.

⁶³ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, viii.

⁶⁴ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, viii.

⁶⁵ Borsuk, *The Book*, 76.

⁶⁶ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, vii.

experience meaning the history of books, or book history, is concerned with the power and/or agency of a particular book, perhaps focusing on the author, and the experiences of those who read books.⁶⁷ Literary studies, or literature, is a process of “reading literary texts and learning the skills of criticism.”⁶⁸ Texts “in the abstract cannot be separated from the material forms in which they appear,” meaning the book as an object has a place in literary studies, but it is the book as a “work”, the text or written content of the book, that is key.⁶⁹ Bibliography is the discipline “whose concern is with the book as a material object” and it appreciates that “virtually every copy of every early printed book is unique.”⁷⁰ The book as a physical object or document is the primary focus and “the social context in which it emerges drops to the background.”⁷¹

These three fields of study do not operate in a hierarchy. Instead, if each field of study represents one of the three points of a triangle (as Howsam illustrates in a diagram) then the “triangle is susceptible to rotation; it is a matter of perception, not of primacy or superiority.”⁷² The three disciplines conceptualize and define the book differently, and as there is no hierarchy amongst them, there is no single clear definition of the book. It is not only their definitions of the book that are not the same, but also how they frame the book, meaning what it does is also different. Bibliographers orient toward a (material) object, literary studies theorists orient toward a (literary) text and historians consider a (cultural) transaction and orient toward the conditions for such a transaction.⁷³ The book, therefore, and as previously mentioned, is a

⁶⁷ Judith Walkowitch quoted in Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 12.

⁶⁸ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 11.

⁶⁹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 11.

⁷⁰ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 13.

⁷¹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 15.

⁷² Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 9.

⁷³ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 14.

“shape-shifter” with a “vast scope and blurred boundaries” that defies a one-size-fits-all definition.⁷⁴ Significantly for this study the physicality of the object does play a role in each field which the following discussion will now seek to uncover.

2.2.2 Robert Darnton: The Communication Circuit Model

Given these three differing conceptualizations of the book, and the range of perceptions when approaching any studies centering on the book, Robert Darnton attempted to create “some distance from interdisciplinarity run riot”⁷⁵ in his seminal essay, “What is the History of Books?”⁷⁶ where he proposed a “model of a circuit of communication in order to circumvent this clamour.”⁷⁷ Darnton did this in full knowledge that “books...refuse to be contained within the confines of a single discipline when treated as objects of study”⁷⁸ but thought it “might be useful to propose a general model for analysing the way books come into being and spread through society.”⁷⁹ Reflecting on his original essay Darnton says that “it seemed to me in 1982 that the history of books was suffering from fissiparousness” meaning different fields were “losing contact with one another.”⁸⁰ Interdisciplinarity run riot was, for Darnton, a problem as it led to “fragmentation and specialization” that isolated the different theories, and theorists, from each

⁷⁴ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, x.

⁷⁵ Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?,” in *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1990), 113.

⁷⁶ Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” 107-135.

⁷⁷ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 29.

⁷⁸ Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” 135.

⁷⁹ Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” 110.

⁸⁰ Robert Darnton, “‘What Is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (2007): 495.

other.⁸¹ Darnton's mission was to counter this fragmentation and show how "esoteric elements of book history" could connect "as a whole": Darnton's mission was a unifying one.⁸²

He considered his model of circuit communication "a general model for analysing the ways books come into being and spread through society."⁸³ This model was a "conceptual strategy for bringing specialized knowledge together and for envisioning the field as a whole."⁸⁴ His original strategy was intended to cover book publishing from 1500 to 1800 and had six stages: author; publisher; printers; shippers; bookseller; readers.⁸⁵ He was "primarily concerned with demonstrating how ideas, embodied in printed texts, circulate in a given society, from author to publisher and printer (and others in the book trades), to bookseller and other distributors, and on to the reader, whose influence on the author serves to 'complete the circuit.'"⁸⁶ Darnton's model is about communication and relationships; the relationships of the different people involved in the book trade. This means that for Darnton the book "is as much an abstraction standing for those mediated relationships as it is a physical artefact."⁸⁷

Darnton's attempt to provide coherence across a number of disciplines is significant largely because of its impact. "A great deal of work done in the last twenty years has been inspired by Darnton's thinking," but as the definition and conceptualization of the book in a way remained quite fluid, gravitating more toward an historical definition (being that Darnton is a cultural historian), much of the work that was inspired by Darnton "has taken the form of

⁸¹ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?' Revisited," 495.

⁸² Darnton, "What is the History of Books?' Revisited," 495.

⁸³ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?," 110.

⁸⁴ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?' Revisited," 495.

⁸⁵ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?' Revisited," 503.

⁸⁶ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?," 113.

⁸⁷ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 31.

resistance to the idea of the book as a circuit of communication.”⁸⁸ Darnton’s attempt at synthesis was significant in that it inspired works that shared his desire for coherence but also strident disapproval from theorists who were more than happy with the riot of interdisciplinarity and the nuances this afforded.

2.2.3 Criticisms of Darnton’s Communication Circuit Model

Revising his work in a subsequent essay written in 2007 “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited”, Darnton maintains that there are three main questions to ask which underpinned his original essay: How do books come into being? How do they reach readers? What do readers make of them?⁸⁹ Christoph Bläsi states that Darnton’s model addressing these three queries has gone “essentially unchallenged” as the notion of book publishing being “universal in its essentials, over time and across cultures” has remained.⁹⁰ However, this is clearly not the case as Darnton himself considered it necessary to revise his own work and respond to criticism levelled at his model. Criticism comes from all three scholarly approaches.

Peter D. McDonald offers a critique from a literary studies perspective. McDonald considers Darnton’s model to be “simple and idealized” and fundamentally “a way of re-thinking and re-writing non-book history.”⁹¹ Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural theory, McDonald suggests that Darnton’s model “itself describes only part of another, larger whole.”⁹² For

⁸⁸ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 31.

⁸⁹ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 495.

⁹⁰ Christoph Bläsi, “Educational Publishers and Educational Publishing”, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies* eds. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annetrin Bocks, (London, Palgrave: 2018), 74, <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53142-1>.

⁹¹ Peter D. McDonald, “Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions: Pierre Bourdieu and the History of the Book,” *The Library* XIX, no. 2, 108.

⁹² McDonald, “Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions”, 110.

Bourdieu, the literary field is “a social ‘microcosm that has its own ‘structure’ and its own ‘laws’”⁹³ These laws mean that there is a complexity to a literary culture that Darnton’s model does not account for. Bourdieu considers the complexity of literary culture to be connected to the literary field. For him, the literary field is “a field of forces” but also “a field of struggles” that tend to “transform or conserve the field of forces.”⁹⁴ If the literary field is one of struggle and power relations this means the individuals operating within the field exist in a hierarchy or power dynamic. Darnton’s conceptualization of the author and publisher is “of individualized, atomized” persons, however, McDonald, drawing on Bourdieu’s ideas regarding the literary field as one of struggle, suggests there are two competing groups or types of author and publisher in his particular area of research (the Victorian literary text), the “purists” and the “profiteers.”⁹⁵ This is an important distinction because the “literary culture of a particular society compromises a complex ranking of structurally interrelated communications circuits.”⁹⁶ Darnton’s model confines the book to the “narrow book world”⁹⁷ but McDonald’s research illustrates that Victorian “writers and publishers of *belles lettres* and of other works for the discerning education reader (of literary art for art’s sake) disdained the work coming from commercially orientated individuals,” meaning the purists derided the profiteers because of their commercial intentions and their (presumed) lack of intellectual interest.⁹⁸ Factors from outside the narrow book world had an effect. Each literary field is defined by differing conditions meaning Darnton’s circuit of

⁹³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 181-2 quoted by Peter. D. McDonald, “A Critique from Literary Studies (1997)” in *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880-1914*, 83.

⁹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed,” *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (1983): 312.

⁹⁵ McDonald quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 39.

⁹⁶ McDonald, “Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions”, 110.

⁹⁷ McDonald, “Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions”, 110.

⁹⁸ McDonald quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 39.

communication model is not fit for purpose in that it presumes a universality of conditions and experiences in the literary field that does not exist.

James A. Secord offers a critique as an historian in *The Histories of the Book and of Science*.⁹⁹ For Secord, the idea that reading is a “profoundly private experience” is misleading as it is better understood “as comprehending all the diverse ways that books and other forms of printed worlds are appropriated and used.”¹⁰⁰ If reading is understood in this way, then there should be more focus on “how books work outside the book trade in which they are made.”¹⁰¹ If the role of the book and how it works outside the book trade is considered then book history, as the study of authorship, reading, and publishing is disrupted. “By declining to give primacy to any of the three elements of the communication circuit Secord’s analysis transcends them all” meaning “it is contextual in the fullest sense of the word.”¹⁰²

When revisiting his original model in 2007, Darnton chose to structure his defense around the critique offered by Thomas R. Adams & Nicolas Barker in “A New Model for the Study of the Book” published in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*.¹⁰³ As bibliographers, Adams and Barker want to protect or enhance the status of bibliography. They draw attention to a “Statement on the History of the Book” drafted at an international conference in 1980 which refers to “all aspects of the history of production, publication and distribution, from the stage of

⁹⁹ See James. A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of ‘Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.’* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ James A. Secord quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 42.

¹⁰¹ James A. Secord quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 43.

¹⁰² James A. Secord quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 45.

¹⁰³ Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker, “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*, ed. Nicholas Barker, (London: British Library, 1993).

authorship on through to the impact of books on readers and, ultimately, on society.”¹⁰⁴ The word “ultimately” is problematic for Adams and Barker as it suggests that “bibliography again becomes ancillary to social history...a ‘handmaiden’ to another discipline.”¹⁰⁵ This mirrors another bibliographer’s concerns, G. Thomas Tanselle, who criticised Darnton for distinguishing between bibliography and history as “bibliography is a fully-fledged branch of history itself.”¹⁰⁶

Adams and Barker’s model reduced the number of stages to five: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception, survival.¹⁰⁷ Darnton comments on the differences between the two models, noting there is a shift from the people who made the books (this would include the author) to the book itself. Darnton concludes that “they [Adams and Barker] see my emphasis on people as a symptom of my general approach, one that derives from social history rather than bibliography” but defends this position as he considers studying the activities of book people to be “essential in order to understand the history of books” because, in the end, a book is a physical object whose creation is determined by decisions made by people.¹⁰⁸

According to Howsam, whereas Darnton’s model is a metaphor of an electrical circuit which is closed, Adams and Barker regard their model as a map. This is significant because despite a circuit being more dynamic than a map, which is static, Adams and Barker uncover a “serious weakness of Darnton’s model”: in Darnton’s model “the book self-destructs when it has served its purpose of communicating between reader and author.”¹⁰⁹ The issue of why and how books survive is not taken into consideration as the impetus is why people create and make

¹⁰⁴ Adams and Barker, “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” 7.

¹⁰⁵ Adams and Barker, “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” 10.

¹⁰⁶ G. Thomas Tanselle quoted by Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 32.

¹⁰⁷ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

¹⁰⁸ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

¹⁰⁹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 37.

books, not preserve them. All book purchasers are considered equal in Darnton's model, but a collector who wants to preserve is not really the same as the average purchaser who will consume the book and then, perhaps, discard it. This in itself presumes an average purchaser cannot transition to become a collector during the process of reading, or using, the book. It also, to an extent, presumes consumers are the only ones who read books and readers are the only people affected by books, which is not necessarily true. Books linger, materially as objects and immaterially in the minds and lives of readers and/or receivers, in many ways. Susan Houston states that "the forces influencing the survival of printed material are crucial in determining a later generation's perceptions"¹¹⁰ which highlights the benefits of the bibliographer's model as it "allows for the tenacity of books."¹¹¹

2.2.4 A Status Object

Despite Darnton's best efforts to escape the interdisciplinarity issues they remain ever present; the book is still shape-shifting. However, critique of Darnton's circuit from different scholarly fields does offer an important area of overlap that is significant for this study. Howsam thinks Adams and Barker expect too much of historians as they "put objects at the centre of inquiry", in other words, the book as a material object not literary text or cultural transaction is the focus.¹¹² Emphasizing the object gives the object a certain status of importance. It is the book as a material artefact that has this status. McDonald's critique also exposes the status of the material artefact in a different way. As publishers can be either "purists" or "profiteers" they

¹¹⁰ Susan Houston quoted in Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 37.

¹¹¹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 37.

¹¹² Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 35.

themselves have different statuses within the book trade circuit. Darnton's model only conceives of their horizontal position within the circuit but McDonald considers their vertical status in an "intricately structured field."¹¹³ This means the publishers "not only issue books, they invest them with prestige."¹¹⁴ Publishers invest the physical artefacts with a certain prestige, a certain status. There is no reason that this idea of people investing books with prestige should be limited to just publishers. Authors, readers, booksellers, and even people who merely look at a book and never read it all judge books and invest them with prestige. The world is constantly judging books, by their covers *and* their contents, despite being warned against it.

Secord approaches this issue of status from a different direction. As his analysis of the communication circuit affords no hierarchy to author, publisher, or reader he is concerned with how books work as objects, "how they exercise their power."¹¹⁵ The book's status from this perspective is connected to how it exerts its power from a socio-cultural perspective but its power is not attributed to any one human or group of humans. This is significant, considering it comes from an historian, as "human agency is central to historians' characterization of the book as a force in history."¹¹⁶

Returning once again to the book as a material object, written text, and cultural transmission the elevation of the material object comes slightly more into focus after exploring these different ways that books come into being in different disciplines. This study is interested in the status and prestige afforded to the material object *as a result* of the written text and

¹¹³ McDonald, "Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions", 109.

¹¹⁴ McDonald, "Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions", 111.

¹¹⁵ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 45.

¹¹⁶ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 52.

cultural transaction. Having accepted the possibility of material status and prestige this study is also concerned with how this allowed the material object to have agency and exercise its power.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: The Textbook

Discussing the definitions of the textbook after discussing definitions or attributes of the book suggests, implicitly, that perhaps this research views the textbook as just a subset of the book, meaning its “bookishness” is more important than its “textbookishness”. This is not the case. Bourdieu points out that within the specific genre of the novel there are sub-categories eg. “the “society novel;” the “popular novel,” and each of these sub-categories is “defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions.”¹¹⁷ The textbook is a subset, or genre, of the book and the history textbook is a sub-category of this genre. As Bourdieu explains (albeit not referencing textbooks explicitly), the very fact that genres have sub-categories, that the history textbook (in this specific case) is a sub-category of the textbook, has an effect on the “structure of the field i.e. the space of positions”¹¹⁸ and is important to recognize. It is therefore important to explore definitions of the textbook as separate, yet equal, to discussions and definitions of the book that have already taken place.

Chris Stray describes textbooks as books “designed to provide an authoritative pedagogic version of an area of knowledge.”¹¹⁹ The word textbook does not actually appear until the nineteenth century; Stray says the earliest example he found was *Textbook for Young Letter-*

¹¹⁷ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 312.

¹¹⁸ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 312.

¹¹⁹ Chris Stray, “Paradigms Regained: Towards a Historical Sociology of the Textbook,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 26, no. 1 (1994): 2.

writers in 1830.¹²⁰ Textbooks did exist before this, but were *text books*, and usually denoted the text that was used for instruction (predominantly Latin or Greek).¹²¹ The concept of the textbook shifted from *text book* to *textbook* over the course of the nineteenth century and went from “describing a book used in schools (among other places) to an educational medium produced explicitly for school education.”¹²² Fuchs and Hennes describe the textbook as “conventionally a tool designed for students or pupils to learn, to be taught, or work from.”¹²³ Textbooks combine “teaching, learning and workbooks¹²⁴” as they contain “a range of tasks and assignments” that structure learning towards “competence development.”¹²⁵ The textbook can actually comprise “a mix of media” meaning a textbook does not necessarily have to be a material object, however, for the purposes of this study the term textbook will be considering physical artefacts that students can see, touch, and smell (and even taste, although this is unlikely) but most importantly hold.

Richard J. Paxton is highly critical of history textbooks, stating they “have regularly been called “dull,” “erroneous,” “difficult to understand,” and “overly broad.”¹²⁶ This criticism is reserved for the “typical” history textbook which is “written by groups of authors” and therefore, according to Paxton, becomes a “lifeless prose” with “errors of commission” and “errors of

¹²⁰ Chris Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 2

¹²¹ Chris Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 2.

¹²² Steffen Sammler, “History of the School Textbook,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annetkatrin Bocks (Palgrave, 2018), 16.

¹²³ Fuchs and Hennes, “History of Textbook Research,” 25.

¹²⁴ A workbook is a book where students complete (individual) work. A workbook could be a blank exercise book “in which a record is kept [of] work [that is] completed or planned” or a book “designed to guide the work of a student by inclusion of questions, exercises” (<http://dictionary.com>)

¹²⁵ Fuchs and Hennes, “History of Textbook Research,” 25.

¹²⁶ Richard J Paxton, “A Deafening Silence : History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them,” *Review of Educational Research* 69, no. 3 (1999): 323-324.

omission” frequently occurring.¹²⁷ This criticism does not only come from Paxton. John Issit suggests that “negativity surrounding textbooks in terms of use and status as both literary objects and vehicles for pedagogy is profound.”¹²⁸ Academics deride textbooks, considering them to have little “creative import” and the “last thing leading-edge intellectuals engaged in research ought to be doing.”¹²⁹ By “doing” Issit is referring to writing textbooks. This “sense of literary elitism” among academics means textbooks have a “low status as a literary genre.”¹³⁰ The textbook’s status is therefore complex.

Steffan Sammler rightly points out that the “authority of the printed text in book form provides a counterweight to the teacher’s lecture,” meaning the textbook, could be said to be an extension of the teacher.¹³¹ Or, to put it another way, a gathering place where ideas, intentions, hopes, theories, and ideologues congregate. But, academic scorn of textbooks means there is a “contrast between intellectual and pedagogic authority” so although textbooks have a distinct pedagogic status, they do not necessarily carry much intellectual prestige.¹³²

To further complicate the matter, whilst retaining this, at times, contradictory mix of status and prestige, textbooks can exert power for different reasons entirely. Sammler states that the “textbook has been reformed as a product representing the “Western society of knowledge” meaning “the process of colonization” displaced “alternative forms or traditions of conveying school knowledge.”¹³³ As a “composite cultural commodity” the textbook is an “authoritative

¹²⁷ Paxton, “A Deafening Silence,” 323.

¹²⁸ John Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” *History of Education* 33, no. 6 (2004): 683.

¹²⁹ Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” 683.

¹³⁰ Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” 683.

¹³¹ Sammler, “History of the School Textbook,” 2.

¹³² Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 5.

¹³³ Sammler, “History of the School Textbook,” 20.

pedagogic version of received knowledge”¹³⁴ and many criticisms leveled at textbooks, history textbooks specifically, have been to do with their “Eurocentric, male-dominated account of the past.”¹³⁵ Stray suggests, all textbooks “transmit messages but at a low level” because the “mundane channels” through which the work takes place means the “process of transmission leads to routinized mindsets.”¹³⁶ Despite Stray’s casual reference to what would appear to be all teaching as “mundane” his comments retain some relevance regarding how textbooks exert power submissively in classroom settings. All these assessments of the textbook combined serve to identify the specificities regarding the textbook’s place as a status object. It holds authoritative status, lacks intellectual prestige but has pedagogic prestige in the classroom, and exerts power through cultural transmission, meaning just as books can be tenacious, so can textbooks.

2.3.1 Textbook Cultures

Penney Clark and Katie Gemmell state that Adams and Barker’s model is “a useful way to frame the process by which textbooks are produced” because Adams and Barker privilege publishing over authorship.¹³⁷ The publisher is particularly significant within the specific realm of textbook publishing because “the textbook publisher takes a more prominent and diverse role than is assumed in the production of trade books.”¹³⁸ Reasons for this are the publisher typically seeks out the author rather than the other way around and the textbook publisher maintains

¹³⁴ Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 4.

¹³⁵ Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” 683.

¹³⁶ Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 6.

¹³⁷ Penney Clark and Katie Gemmell, “Free Textbook Provision in Nova Scotia,” *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region*, 46, no. 2 (2019): 61.

¹³⁸ Clark and Gemmell, “Free Textbook Provision in Nova Scotia,” 61.

control over content, often citing curriculum guidelines or content outlines that need to be followed by the author.¹³⁹

Clark and Gemmell's understanding of the role of the textbook publisher is firmly based in the Canadian context as they are discussing the distribution of free textbooks in the province of Nova Scotia. Textbook publishing is not, however, a one-size-fits-all profession and there are distinct differences in different settings. Taylor and Macintyre suggest there are at least three types of textbook culture in developed nations: 1) an endorsed system; 2) an adopted textbook system; 3) a pluralist textbook system. An endorsed system is when the government of a country offers an imprimatur (or denies one) to certain large publishers to publish state-approved textbooks. The textbook culture of both the Russian Federation and Japan could both be described as an endorsed textbook system.¹⁴⁰ In this type of textbook culture the government has direct control over the production, and content, of textbooks. The system in place in Nova Scotia, discussed by Clark and Gemmell, is an adopted system. Within an adopted system, a textbook is adopted by an education system and then used in schools in that education system. For this reason, publishers tend to take particular notice of curricular guidelines, as claimed by Clark and Gemmell, so the textbook aligns with the requirements of the curriculum.

The English textbook culture is different; it is a pluralist system. A pluralist system is where a "significant number of rival publishers, some large and some small, compete within an education system to gain a profitable share of an entire market or market sector."¹⁴¹ David Cannadine et al. state that although "the influence of Westminster and Whitehall on the

¹³⁹ Clark and Gemmell, "Free Textbook Provision in Nova Scotia," 61.

¹⁴⁰ Taylor and Macintyre, "Culture Wars and History Textbooks," 621.

¹⁴¹ Taylor and Macintyre, "Culture Wars and History Textbooks," 621.

organization, administration and funding of English schools (and on the history taught in them) is undeniable” usually day-to-day decisions regarding education have been left in the hands of local authorities, heads and teachers.¹⁴² This has led to an “astonishing diversity of educational experience across the length and breadth of England” that “constantly defies easy generalization.”¹⁴³ This creates the grounds for a pluralist textbook culture as the people making the decisions about which textbooks to buy have always been, for various reasons, individual heads and teachers in individual schools. Terry Haydn echoes this sentiment. He suggests the UK is probably “atypical in terms of textbook use” as there is an “open market” where “schools are free to choose.”¹⁴⁴ Unlike other countries “there has never been any requirement for official authorisation of textbooks in the UK.”¹⁴⁵

Clark and Gemmell are discussing a situation where the textbook defined the curriculum, and not vice versa, as they are talking about the introduction of an authorised free text that would then shape exactly what was taught to students (they are also not exclusively talking about history textbooks). The English textbook culture, in general and at the time this study is focused, is one where the textbook is one source among several and therefore is a different setting. The difference is one of degree not kind, meaning Adams and Barker’s model is still relevant and applicable as a theoretical framework.

¹⁴² David Cannadine, Jenny Keating, and Nicola Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History: Teaching the Past in Twentieth-Century England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 61.

¹⁴³ Cannadine et al, *The Right Kind of History*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Terry Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks in the History Classroom in the 21st Century: A View from the UK,” *Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics / Jahrbuch Der Internationalen Gesellschaft Für Geschichtsdidaktik*, (2011): 83.

¹⁴⁵ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 83.

2.4 History Textbook Research: How Textbooks are used in Classroom Settings

Annekatin Bock “does not wish to engage in the potentially never-ending undertaking of listing topics and issues of research from the “broad landscape of textbook research” in her chapter in *Theories and Methods of Textbook Studies*.¹⁴⁶ Following this line of thought, this review will avoid a “never-ending” list of different textbook research studies and instead focus specifically on research that could be categorised as reception based according to Adams and Barker’s five stage model. This will include a brief overview of the field as it stands, an exploration of the different types of classification and categorisation used, and finish with a closer look at two specific studies talking about how teachers use textbooks to explore common themes. The two studies are Lisa Faden’s study looking at national narratives and textbooks in Canadian and American history classrooms, and Terry Hadyn’s study looking at UK teachers’ views and perspectives regarding the use of history textbooks.

2.4.1 A Brief Overview

Taylor and Macintyre state that “research into the use of textbooks as a crucial element (or not) in history classrooms was until the 1990s a low-yield activity that was methodologically varied and geographically scattered.”¹⁴⁷ Whilst they offer no definition for their term “low-yield” they do suggest there is a “paucity of attention” toward the textbook in comparison to “sustained inquiry into pedagogical methods,... educational theory and policy” suggesting low-yield simply

¹⁴⁶ Annekatrin Bock, “Theories and Methods of Textbook Studies,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annekatrin Bocks (Palgrave, 2018), 57, <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53142-1>.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 616.

means academia was not seeing many research projects that focused on textbooks before the 1990s. Fuchs and Henne suggest that while “social studies approaches to research the impact and reception of textbooks are...currently gaining significance,”¹⁴⁸ the field is “still in its infancy.”¹⁴⁹ Taylor and Macintyre are dismissive of individual studies which they term “micro-studies”¹⁵⁰ (referenced in Chapter One). Their dismissal is perhaps unwarranted, but their comments do provide one perspective as to why, other than the work of the Georg Eckert Institute, there are a limited number of studies looking at the use of textbooks in classrooms.¹⁵¹

2.4.2 Categorisation and Classification

Peter Weinbrener classes textbook research into three types: *product-orientated*; *process-orientated* and; *effect-oriented*.¹⁵² Reception based textbook studies fall in the *effect-oriented* class or “*impact-oriented textbook research*.”¹⁵³ Fuchs and Henne describe Weinbrener’s impact-orientated genre as research that studies the role of the textbook “as [a] socialising factor in the classroom” and the subsequent effects this has on teachers and pupils as they use the textbook.¹⁵⁴ This class of textbook research therefore covers how teachers and students receive books in the classroom and the ways they are conditioned to receive textbooks in the manner that they do.

Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon suggest a change in focus is occurring in history textbook research from the textbook as a product to the textbook as something that is used

¹⁴⁸ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 35.

¹⁴⁹ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 35.

¹⁵⁰ Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 617.

¹⁵¹ Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 616.

¹⁵² Weinbrener, “Methodologies of Textbook Analysis Used to Date,” 34.

¹⁵³ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 29.

¹⁵⁴ Fuchs and Henne, “History of Textbook Research,” 9.

and perceived. The researchers are more interested in “practices involving the textbook in classrooms and the teachers’ and students’ reception of the textbook” rather than the “messages included in the content or goals of the producers as related to the state, the authors, and the market.”¹⁵⁵ Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon use the term uphill studies for what they would deem the more traditional history textbook research looking at content and production, and downhill studies for the emerging style of studies which looks at use and perception.¹⁵⁶ They think a newer trend is emerging as a result of this “slow change” where researchers question “the correlation between the uphill (content, production) and the downhill (use, perception).”¹⁵⁷ Weinbrener’s impact-oriented and Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon’s downhill category would both fall under the umbrella of Adam and Barker’s reception stage. These different categorisations show that within the field of textbook research considerable thought and attention has been given to the textbook as something that is both part of a significant system of production, yet also an object used in a subjective and singular manner by individual teachers.

2.4.3 A Closer Look: Lisa Faden and Terry Haydn

Faden’s study, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation: World War II Studies in the United States and Canada”, and Haydn’s study, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks in the History Classroom”, could be classed as impact-oriented and downhill focused studies. Faden’s chapter focuses on “the teacher’s role in “enacting” or teaching the narrative content of

¹⁵⁵ Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon, “New Trends in History Textbook Research: Issues and Methodologies toward a School Historiography,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 155

¹⁵⁶ Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon quoted in Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 621.

¹⁵⁷ Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon, “New Trends in History Textbook Research,” 155.

textbooks.”¹⁵⁸ Faden looks at how “teachers determine how texts will be used to tell the story” and how the textbook is utilized in the classroom.¹⁵⁹ This study therefore combines theory regarding construction of narratives in the classroom, drawing heavily on James V. Wertsch, and the use of textbooks. Wertsch suggests that narratives are formed by “grasping together”¹⁶⁰ different “actors and events into a plot, or a series of events that are linked together.”¹⁶¹ For Faden, this idea is pertinent to her study because “the placement of particular figures, institutions, or movements in the central role of a heroic narrative is one way in which narratives are inscribed with value judgements.”¹⁶² Faden was interested in what teachers placed at the centre of their heroic narrative about World War Two and to what extent this was informed by, or contradicted with, the narrative of the textbook. Faden’s research was a multiple case study where she interviewed thirteen teachers from the state of Maryland in the United States and from the province of Ontario in Canada. As well as interviewing all the teachers Faden observed five of the teachers teaching the unit of study covering World War Two.

This study is useful as it investigates how the narrative offered by the textbook may not be the narrative the teacher wishes to teach and considers this clash of narratives and how it plays out in the classroom. Faden is commenting on American and Canadian national narratives, and specifically those associated with World War II, but the idea of the textbook informing aspects of the narrative taught in the classroom, but not all of it, is significant. Faden exposes a “contradiction between the teachers’ stated beliefs and their practices” which offers an

¹⁵⁸ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 191.

¹⁵⁹ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 197.

¹⁶⁰ James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57.

¹⁶¹ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 197.

¹⁶² Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 197.

“important theoretical contribution to our understanding of how the history curriculum is enacted.”¹⁶³ It is not the case that teachers teach the textbook narrative verbatim, but nor is it the case that teachers “simply enact their beliefs.”¹⁶⁴ Instead, the “relationship between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ practices is complicated.”¹⁶⁵ This is true of all teachers’ practices but in this specific case teachers’ textbooks practices are the focus. Ultimately, Faden’s study is about how teachers negotiate the context they teach in, including their use of the textbook.¹⁶⁶

Haydn’s study looks at how teachers use textbooks in UK classrooms. Haydn interviewed 39 history teachers (including 13 heads of department) and 27 student history teachers in the course of the study.¹⁶⁷ Haydn’s study, in part, contributes to a running theme evident in the literature which is an underlying assumption (of fear in some cases) that the role of textbooks is in decline owing to an increasing use of technology in the classroom. Bock states that “the increasing digitalisation and media saturation our societies are currently experiencing is changing textbooks”¹⁶⁸ and Taylor and Macintyre think the “primacy of the textbook as a resource may soon be at the end.”¹⁶⁹ Haydn’s research asks the overall question (of UK classrooms): “given the arrival in many classrooms of the DVD players, the data projector, access to the internet and presentation software such as PowerPoint, has the textbook maintained its dominant position as a mode of instruction in the history classroom?”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 211.

¹⁶⁴ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 211.

¹⁶⁵ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 211.

¹⁶⁶ Faden, “History Teachers Imagining the Nation,” 191.

¹⁶⁷ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 69.

¹⁶⁸ Bock, “Theories and Methods of Textbook Studies,” 57.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 620.

¹⁷⁰ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 68.

The response to this question is varied. A limited number of teachers had positive things to say about textbooks, specifically citing improvement in A-level textbooks and a way of encouraging teachers to be less dependent on PowerPoint (all of these teachers were experienced teachers). In general, however, there was not a lot of support for textbooks. PowerPoint and the interactive whiteboard (IWB) were preferred over textbook lessons owing to the ability to use active learning approaches and resources from the internet. Textbooks were used for cover lessons (when the usual teacher is absent), homework and, in some cases, as a threat for bad behaviour.¹⁷¹ Student teachers especially tended to prefer the IWB to the textbook, with some commenting they were overdependent on it. There was some indication of the use of textbooks being seen as bad or pedagogically unsound “in terms of good pedagogical practice, or in terms of department culture.”¹⁷² Notably, no teachers said they did not use textbooks at all, but the prevailing trend was one toward using digital resources, especially PowerPoint and the IWB, in the classroom.

These two studies draw on some central themes that are particularly relevant for this study. First and foremost, they both point to the unique relationship between a teacher and the textbook; no one teacher uses a textbook in the same way. Individual teachers are making decisions regarding how they use textbooks in their classrooms and, even if textbooks are not visibly present in the lesson, they may have influenced the way the lesson is taught. Haydn directly states that student teachers claimed to use textbooks to plan their lessons.¹⁷³ Second, Faden’s project is about the “way narratives speak to each other in the history classroom” and

¹⁷¹ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 73-75.

¹⁷² Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 80.

¹⁷³ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 79.

makes an important connection between textbook narratives and the narrative a teacher chooses to create and teach. (This will be taken up further in the Part Two of this literature review.)

Third, Haydn's study brings to the fore other classroom tools that are used in the classroom in conjunction with, or in some cases instead of, textbooks and makes the important distinction that in the UK there is a "'new orthodoxy' in history classrooms, where all or most lessons are built around the use of PowerPoint presentations."¹⁷⁴ Finally, both allude to how outside influences affect the arrival of the textbook in the classroom. In Faden's study "the primary textbook is often selected for the teacher by a curricular authority,"¹⁷⁵ (Taylor and McIntyre's "adopted textbook system") and while Haydn goes to lengths to not overstate the influence of department culture,¹⁷⁶ the role of the department is visible in teacher interview responses. Both of these studies touch upon specific conditions that contribute to different history teachers' experiences. These elements, the unique relationship between the teacher and the textbook, the role of narrative in connection to the textbooks, the use of other classroom tools, and effects of outside influence are all things to consider when looking back at how *England Under the Tudors* was used in the classroom

2.4.4 Textbooks as Textual Artefacts

Eleftherios Klerides conducted a comparative study that compared Cypriot and UK textbooks.¹⁷⁷ Taylor and McIntyre describe Klerides' approach as a postmodernist one that is

¹⁷⁴ Haydn, "The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks," 82.

¹⁷⁵ Faden, "History Teachers Imagining the Nation," 197.

¹⁷⁶ Haydn, "The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks," 80.

¹⁷⁷ Eleftherios Klerides quote in Taylor and Macintyre, "Culture Wars and History Textbooks," 621.

arguing for a “dual imagining of ...textbook[s]”¹⁷⁸ where they “are investigated as artefacts in themselves that are open to discourse analysis and gentrification.”¹⁷⁹ Klerides states that the “history textbook – as a discourse – is defined as a particular way of writing about the past” and as a genre can be split into two types: traditional and new.¹⁸⁰ These two types of history textbook are “associated with a different context in the historical trajectory of education and is legitimized by a different paradigm of history teaching, a different pedagogic model, and a different philosophy and epistemology of education.”¹⁸¹

Taylor and Macintyre believe Klerides’ claims to be bold and “based on decontextualized conceptual speculation that overlooks, among other matter, the uphill and downhill aspects of textbook production and the deterministic nature of the curriculum.”¹⁸² This claim could itself be seen as a bold claim as why a postmodernist approach focusing on discourse and genre would fail to account for the uphill / downhill approach is not made clear. In fact, Klerides division of the genre of history textbooks into traditional and new, citing the “social transformations of the 1960s and 1970s” as the catalysts for change in history textbook production clearly indicates she is aware of aspects related to the uphill nature of textbook publishing while focusing her research on the downhill.¹⁸³ Additionally, although Taylor and McIntyre criticise Klerides for overlooking the deterministic nature of the curriculum, (which again, arguably she does not as she admits to a change in educational philosophy resulting in the “new” genre of history

¹⁷⁸ Eleftherios Klerides, “Imagining the Textbook : Textbooks as Discourse and Genre,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 31.

¹⁷⁹ Klerides quoted in Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 621.

¹⁸⁰ Klerides, “Imagining the Textbook,” 32.

¹⁸¹ Klerides, “Imagining the Textbook,” 41

¹⁸² Taylor and Macintyre, “Culture Wars and History Textbooks,” 621.

¹⁸³ Klerides, “Imagining the Textbook,” 44.

textbooks) they themselves overlook the fact that “textbooks are not mere collections of content but are textual artefacts.”¹⁸⁴

Klerides’ study is an example of textbook research concentrating on content analysis but there is a shift taking place that considers the textbook with a specific emphasis on text; the textbook becomes the *textbook*. Magilchrist categorises Klerides’ work as focusing on the “linguistic dimension” of the mediality of the textbook.¹⁸⁵ The linguistic dimension draws “on discourse theories, and constructionist or post-structuralist theories” and “assume[s] that language does not merely describe or represent the world, but that language constructs and produces the world.”¹⁸⁶ Continuing on the path that Klerides has forged by adopting a post-structuralist / constructionist stance the next step is to transition from considering the textbook as *textbook*, with a focus on the linguistic, to *textbook*, with a focus on the physicality of the material artefact.

Georg Kolbeck and Tobias Röhl suggest that textbooks “are in practical use in the classroom” and that “textbook use is a bodily activity.”¹⁸⁷ Seeing the textbook in this way facilitates a shift where studies recognise the “performative sentiment” of a teacher’s role as a mediator between the text (‘intended curriculum’) and its use in the classroom (‘enacted curriculum’).¹⁸⁸ Textbooks themselves are “cultural tool[s]” that are “both shaped by their use and shape how they are used.”¹⁸⁹ Seen as not just textual artefacts but physical artefacts with

¹⁸⁴ Georg Kolbeck and Tobias Röhl, “Textbook Practices : Reading Texts , Touching Books,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annekatriin Bocks (Palgrave, 2018), 399.

¹⁸⁵ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 170.

¹⁸⁶ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 170.

¹⁸⁷ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 399.

¹⁸⁸ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 400.

¹⁸⁹ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 404.

“material qualities that affect their users” the material dimensions of the textbook comes into view.¹⁹⁰

Macgilchrist frames this materiality as one of three dimensions of a textbook’s mediality (the other two are linguistic, as already mentioned, and multimodal).¹⁹¹ Influenced by debates in cultural studies and the social sciences, that draw on ideas from new materialism and posthumanism, this approach sees the textbook as a “material artefact embedded in a heterogenous network of human and non-human entities.”¹⁹² Considering the textbook as part of a network with students and teachers means the classroom is a site of performative “practices of knowing”¹⁹³ which “collaboratively enact[s] ‘ways of knowing’ in conventional and/or surprising ways.”¹⁹⁴ Materiality, as N. Katherine Hayles states, “is not merely an inert collection of physical properties but a dynamic quality that emerges from the interplay between the text as a physical artefact, its conceptual content and the interpretative activities of readers and writers.”¹⁹⁵ A turn to the textuality of the textbook “draws attention to aspects of the textbook medium that have been hitherto neglected.”¹⁹⁶ Magilchrist explains that this is a vibrant yet still emerging field. She references works that look at the interplay of the material and political dimensions of textbooks, materiality of thought in mathematics classrooms, and considerations of “how the materiality of the textbook constitutes reality, social order, and relationships” meaning this field of research is varied in how it applies new materialist ideas to the textbook

¹⁹⁰ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 403.

¹⁹¹ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 170.

¹⁹² Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 172.

¹⁹³ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 404.

¹⁹⁴ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 169.

¹⁹⁵ N. Katherine Hayles quoted by Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 172.

¹⁹⁶ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 172.

and the classroom.¹⁹⁷ For this reason it is worth mining new materialist theory for the concepts that are most relevant to this study (which will be done in the next section).

2.5 New Materialism

Barad's new philosophy, agential realism, is far-reaching and ambitious in its scope. For the purposes of this literature review Barad's conceptualisation of matter, and in turn the effect this altered concept of matter has on our understanding of human, agency, and performativity is going to be explored in detail.

For Barad "language has been granted too much power"¹⁹⁸ while at the same time culture and nature have been thought of as a binary when they should be thought of together "in illuminating ways."¹⁹⁹ By lessening the power of language (or discourses) and shifting our understanding of nature/culture, performativity takes on a new meaning that "allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becomings."²⁰⁰ Matter is not "immutable or passive"²⁰¹ but "agentic"²⁰² and with "inexhaustible, exuberant and prolific" dynamism.²⁰³ If, following what Barad is suggesting, what has previously been considered as inanimate matter is in fact agentic, what does this mean about more traditional, humanist definitions and ideas about agency? A re-thinking on agency and its connections to "the human" is required. Barad explains that "agency is not something that humans and non-humans have to varying degrees."²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ Macgilchrist, "Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks," 172-3.

¹⁹⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 132.

¹⁹⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 135.

²⁰⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136.

²⁰¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 151.

²⁰² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 137.

²⁰³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 170.

²⁰⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 172.

The agential realist conceptualisation of the posthuman “does not presume that man is the measure of all things.”²⁰⁵ Agency expands beyond humans without reducing humans to a place that is lesser than non-human matter.

From this position we can come to understand “the world as a dynamic process of intra-activity and materialization.”²⁰⁶ The idea of an “intra-action” marks a significant “conceptual shift” that contrasts interaction. Interaction “presumes prior existence of independent entities or relata” whereas “the notion of intra-action constitutes a radical reworking of the traditional notion of causality.” The boundaries and properties of “the components of the phenomena,” in other words human and non-human entities, “become determinate” or emerge “through specific intra-actions.”²⁰⁷ Thus, a “lively new ontology emerges”²⁰⁸ that is “ongoing, open-ended” and an “entangled practice.”²⁰⁹ Matter in this new ontology “is a substance in its intra-active becoming – not a thing but a doing”.²¹⁰

Following this new materialist understanding of matter and agency, what have previously been considered “banal and mundane aspects” are now considered part of a textbook’s performativity, meaning researchers are looking at how these things “do’ something to the contents, the politics, and the practices of the textbook.”²¹¹ The textbook has been transformed into a lively object rather than a mute tool. As Magilchrist highlights, this is an emerging approach in textbook research. There is, however, “a growing body of new materialist

²⁰⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136.

²⁰⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

²⁰⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

²⁰⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 33.

²⁰⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 168.

²¹⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 183.

²¹¹ Macgilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 174.

work...shifting thinking about school spaces and educational research” in different educational research fields.²¹² Alyssa D. Niccolini and Maya Pindyck observe that most educational research focuses on human bodies and human intentions meaning classroom matter is only ever a “means to an end” and existent only for human forms of agency.”²¹³ In their research looking at new materialism and haptic encounters in urban settings, they seek to “move ‘horizontally’ with the materialities of the classroom.”²¹⁴ By moving horizontally with matter in the classroom they consider themselves as part of Barad’s “entangled agencies”, intra-acting with the objects and “mutually constituting each other.”²¹⁵ This allows them to move away from the common assumptions about classroom spaces as “inert spaces made meaningful by humans.”²¹⁶

It is not only Niccolini and Pindyck, who are themselves thinking with Barad, who find ways to think of the world horizontally rather than vertically. Barad herself draws ideas from the physicist Niels Bohr. Bohr thought that “at the heart of quantum physics” is the idea that we are “part of [the] nature that we seek to understand” meaning we²¹⁷ “don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world” (emphasis author’s own).²¹⁸ Bohr’s idea indicates a horizontal rather than vertical approach as he is drawing humans down into nature rather than elevating them above nature to view it from above. Jane Bennett, who considers herself a vital materialist and approaches these issues from the field of political philosophy, also has a horizontal perspective. Bennett, quoting De Landa, considers humans to

²¹² Alyssa D. Niccolini and Maya Pindyck, “Classroom Acts: New Materialisms and Haptic Encounters in an Urban Classroom,” *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* 6, no. 2 (2015): 6.

²¹³ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 6.

²¹⁴ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 7.

²¹⁵ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 7.

²¹⁶ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 7.

²¹⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 25.

²¹⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

be made up of matter - “we are walking, talking minerals.”²¹⁹ Drawing on Kafka, De Landa and Vernadsky, who she identifies as vital materialists like herself because they all note that “human individuals are themselves composed of vital materials”²²⁰ Bennett argues that because humans are made up of matter, just like all other non-human objects, there is “no necessity to describe these differences in a way that places humans at the ontological center or hierarchical apex.”²²¹

A new materialist turn to the textbook moves towards a more horizontal understanding of the classroom space as well as human and non-human roles within it. The textbook is the central focus of the study, not the human(s) who used it, however, as the textbook emerged as a vital and/or lively object through human use and human interaction, humans *will* be a part of the discussion. A horizontal understanding of the classroom is important in order to try to maintain a new materialist approach and refrain from automatically placing humans at the centre of the study through force of habit.

2.6 Narrative

Writing about narrative plausibility in 2017, Peter Seixas suggests he started thinking about the matter in 2000 when he wrote an article, “Schweigen! die Kinder! Or Does Postmodern History Have a Place in the Schools?”²²² that touched on the subject. In both 2000 and 2017 he references Hayden White’s ideas about historical narratives. Seixas suggests White’s “influential

²¹⁹ De Landa quoted by Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 11.

²²⁰ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 11.

²²¹ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 11.

²²² Peter Seixas, “Schweigen! Die Kinder! Or Does Postmodern History Have a Place in the Schools?,” in *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History: National and Intellectual Perspectives*, ed. Peter Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Samuel S. Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 19-37.

argument that historians impose narratives on the inchoate past as a literary trick akin to the work of novelists” produced a period of “intense hand wringing among historians.”²²³

In his seminal text *Metahistory*, White, influenced by the literary critic Northrop Frye and following his methods, sought to deconstruct historical texts as literary texts.²²⁴ In his own words, White treats historical work as “a verbal structure in the form of narrative prose discourse.”²²⁵ His deconstruction of eight key texts by historians and philosophers of history revealed the following (amongst other things):

- 1) All historians engage in *explanation by emplotment* – White identifies four types of emplotment – Romance, Comedy, Tragedy and Satire.
- 2) As all historical accounts are explanation by emplotment, history is a poetic act rather than a *scientific* act.
- 3) The best grounds for choosing one perspective of history over another are ultimately *aesthetic* or *moral* rather than epistemological.
- 4) Historical consciousness can be viewed as a *specifically Western prejudice* by which the presumed superiority of modern, industrial society can be retroactively substantiated.²²⁶

These claims question the discipline of history’s epistemological credentials by framing all historical accounts as literary narratives. Willie Thompson notes that, “historiography from its

²²³ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²²⁴ Willie Thompson, *Postmodernism and History*, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 58-59.

²²⁵ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination of the Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, ix.

²²⁶ White, *Metahistory*, 1-42.

earliest beginnings, whether in the Western tradition or elsewhere, assumed a basically narrative form – events succeeded one another.”²²⁷ A key reason for this, Alex Callinicos asserts, is that the aim of historical writing is explanation, an objective that can be traced back to the *Histories of Herodotus*.²²⁸ This is part of the discipline of history’s retort against White’s claims. For historians, just because explanation takes on narrative form does not mean the narrative is necessarily the *objective* of the history. Callinicos thinks that “to equate historical writing with story-telling misconstrues the specific character of modern historical discourse.”²²⁹ It is not the purpose of this study to delve into this thorny issue but this very brief foray into what amounts to a very small, but significant, part of the conversation is to illustrate how the term “narrative” is a contentious one in history.

2.6.1 Bedfellows: Narrative, Account, Interpretation

The terms “narrative”, “account”, and “interpretation” are all used in history education. The fact that all three terms are used does not provide a solution to historians’ hand wringing but, perhaps, can be seen in the context of historians on-going deliberations about the discipline of history’s foundations and epistemological claims and how this has influenced and affected history educators and history classrooms. Seixas suggests that the three terms (“narrative,” “interpretation,” “account”) are “over-lapping” ideas that are bound together by the fact that they can all be preceded by “historical,” making them all histories.²³⁰ An *account* is “accounting

²²⁷ Thompson, *Postmodernism and History*, 56.

²²⁸ Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives, Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 55-56. For Herodotus the objective was to explain the reasons for the wars between the Persian Great King and the Greek city-states.

²²⁹ Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, 9.

²³⁰ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 254-6.

for X,” meaning the aim is to “coherently explain how or why something happened.”²³¹ The coherence of accounts is largely “a consequence of the causative links amongst events.”²³² One thing logically leads to another thing. “Account” is a legacy of British education literature and has “generated an important body of work of empirical research on children’s ideas.”²³³

Narrative goes further than accounts as it “suggests a story” with “a beginning and an end” as well as “moral valences” distributed amongst various (human) historical actors.²³⁴ “Narrative”, in the context of history education, comes from narrative theory which questions how, and why, historical (and other) narratives are constructed whilst critiquing their epistemological credentials.²³⁵ An *interpretation* “introduces the active stance of the interpreter (or narrator, or historian) in the creation of her construct” meaning there is a “concomitant element of subjectivity.”²³⁶ This term arose from “discussions on hermeneutics” and is “crucial for conceptualizing how we deal in the present with texts and remnants from the past.”²³⁷

Seixas goes on to say that for the purposes of his article he will be using the terms “interpretation” and “narrative” to “help recall the overlapping traditions, questions, and dilemmas that lie between them.”²³⁸ The same could be said of this study, however, as the term account is highlighted as being part of British education literature it deserves a little attention before we move away from it. Stéphane Lévesque and Penney Clark state that “the concept of

²³¹ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³² Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³³ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³⁴ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³⁵ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³⁶ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³⁷ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

²³⁸ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 257.

accounts (or narratives) has been a central concept in the work of English researchers.”²³⁹

Accounts was added as a key concept in 2000 by Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby to an already established list of what became known as second-order concepts: cause and consequence, continuity and change, evidence and significance.²⁴⁰ This has not been the case in Canada where Seixas suggests accounts/narrative was not included as “these, we summarised, were related to all six of the concepts that we did include and were thus operating in a somewhat different way.”²⁴¹ The term account therefore has a distinctly British background which has led to a focus on accounts in English research.

Lis Cercadillo et al state that although “significant progress has been made” when it comes to researching British second-order concepts “the same cannot be said about students’ understanding of historical accounts.”²⁴² They go on to give a detailed review of research in this area. Their focus is on “students’ understanding of historical narratives and representations” because they believe “the importance of accounts in history is paramount because histories only exist in the present in the form of accounts of the past in written and other media.”²⁴³ Cercadillo et al. exemplify how history educators are, in general, interested in the epistemological branch of narrative and how students might access this through analysis, evaluation, and construction of narratives.²⁴⁴ This is an important aspect of this study as these ideas about narrative informed

²³⁹ Stéphane Lévesque and Penney Clark, “Historical Thinking: Definitions and Educational Applications,” in *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning*, ed. Scott Alan Metzgar and Lauren McArthur Harris, 1st ed. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2018), 123.

²⁴⁰ Peter Seixas, “A Model of Historical Thinking,” 595.

²⁴¹ Seixas, “Teaching Rival Histories,” 254.

²⁴² Lis Cercadillo et al., “Organizing the Past: Historical Accounts, Significance and Unknown Ontologies,” in *Palgrave Handbook of Research In Historical Culture and Education*, ed. Mario Carretero, Stefan Berger, and Maria Grever (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2017), 529.

²⁴³ Cercadillo et al., “Organizing the Past,” 529.

²⁴⁴ Seixas, “Teaching Rival Histories” 263.

those being taught in the history classroom, but it is not the framework or definition of narrative that informs the orientation and focus of the study as a whole. This is more ontological than epistemological.

2.6.2 Epistemology to Ontology

Seixas leans on David Carr to shift from “epistemological to ontological considerations of narrative in history education.”²⁴⁵ In *Time, Narrative, and History*, Carr touches upon the epistemological debates surrounding narrative suggesting that in all these debates the narrative as a text is central.²⁴⁶ White, and others, have been “roundly criticised” for focusing on the narrative text and “missing the essence of history” which is about “discovery, explanation, [and] evaluation of sources” not “literary presentation.”²⁴⁷ Whilst offering some level of agreement with these criticisms Carr also moves away from them as he wants to look beyond the historian’s scientific process (historical enquiry) and creative act (writing a narrative text). Carr is interested in what lies behind both of these things; he is interested in how narrative “pervades our very experience of time and social existence.”²⁴⁸ Drawing on Wilhelm Dilthey who considered humans to be “historical beings” who are “in history as we are *in* the world” Carr suggests that “human experience, is, itself, already in narrative form.”²⁴⁹ Humans are “influenced by the past...act in the present...[and have] expectations and intentions of the future” which means “the stories we tell about ourselves shape the way we act in the world.”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 255.

²⁴⁶ David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indianan University Press, 1986), 9.

²⁴⁷ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 9.

²⁴⁸ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 9.

²⁴⁹ Carr quoted by Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 264.

²⁵⁰ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 263-4.

Seixas asks the question: “what if narrative has not only an epistemological but also an ontological dimension” in the history classroom? While discussing a framework for narrative plausibility Seixas cites the work of Jörn Rüsen, suggesting that he “provide[s] us with a sense of ourselves in a present that has a temporal – and moral – relationship with the past and future.”²⁵¹ Ulrik Holmberg, when discussing these ideas, quotes Rüsen as saying “the most radical experience of time is death. History is a response to this challenge.”²⁵² Narrative is an attempt to see a “meaningful pattern in the course of time, a pattern responding to human hopes and intentions” and therefore confronting the “threatening experience of time” and its radical finality.²⁵³ Rüsen’s theories of historical consciousness are therefore about “the relationship between the knower and the known”²⁵⁴ as well as being a specific orientational mode.”²⁵⁵ This offers an ontological dimension to historical narratives in the history classroom where “the focus...is less on thinking and knowing, and more on experiencing and being.”²⁵⁶ In other words, historical narratives are *experienced* through learning and *being in* the classroom, meaning narratives are not simply *known*, they are *lived*.

Whilst the orientation of this study leans toward ontological it needs to account for epistemological considerations as, it could be said, that the epistemological and ontological historical narratives existed at the same time. This speaks to Barad’s agential realist ontology as

²⁵¹ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 263.

²⁵² Jörn Rüsen quoted by Ulrik Holmberg, “‘I was born in the reign...’: Historical orientation in Ugandan students’ national narratives,” *London Review of Education* 15. No. 2, (2017): 229.

²⁵³ Rüsen quoted by Holmberg, “I was born in the reign,” 229.

²⁵⁴ Seixas, “A Model of Historical Thinking,” 596.

²⁵⁵ Jörn Rüsen, “Historical Consciousness: Narrative Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic Development,” in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 63.

²⁵⁶ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 263.

it “does not take separateness to be an inherent feature of how the world is.”²⁵⁷ Instead Barad thinks “practices of knowing and being are not isolable, they are mutually implicated” because “we are part of the world in its differential becoming.”²⁵⁸ The separation of epistemology from ontology is a “reverberation of metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse.”²⁵⁹ What Barad thinks would be more suitable is an “onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being.”²⁶⁰ It is the idea of practices of knowing that will inform discussions about narratives that were constructed and formulated in the classroom.

2.7 Aesthetics

Arnold Berleant notes that “it is common to think of aesthetics as a theory that accounts for the beauty or the pleasing quality of things.”²⁶¹ He goes on to say that the scholarly discipline does not stray too far from this idea as philosophers, when they speak of aesthetics, are associating it with a philosophy of art and the “special value that the arts and nature possess.”²⁶² Over the past century the “application of aesthetic values” has spread and the field of aesthetics has expanded.²⁶³ Environmental aesthetics “has emerged as an important part of the enlarged scope of aesthetics” and more recently applications of aesthetics have been made to “other domains of experiences” such as food and community.²⁶⁴ Much of the literature from the field of

²⁵⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136.

²⁵⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

²⁵⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

²⁶⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

²⁶¹ Arnold Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” *Ambiances*, (2015), 1.

²⁶² Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 1.

²⁶³ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 1.

²⁶⁴ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 1.

aesthetics discusses what John Dewey would call “art-centered aesthetic experiences;” however, he believed that “all experience has an aesthetic component” and that as well as art-centered experiences there were also “naturally occurring aesthetic experiences.”²⁶⁵ Berleant’s examples of environmental aesthetics, food, and community are part of this second classification. The “expanding scope of aesthetics raises challenging questions about the experience of appreciation.”²⁶⁶ If aesthetic experiences can be art-based and naturally occurring meaning they incorporate the “full range of life experience” then where is the common ground (if it exists) within the different domains of experience?²⁶⁷ The below discussions of aesthetic encounters, aesthetics orientation and aesthetic embodiment draws on literature that by and large is talking about art-centered experiences, but not exclusively. Thinking with aesthetic values about the history classroom, and more specifically the history textbook, is not an application associated with the traditional philosophy of aesthetics (and therefore with works of art), but the expansion of the field means there is a place for an aesthetic application of this kind and there are concepts and practices to be drawn from a range of approaches to aesthetic sensibility.

2.7.1 Aesthetic Encounters

Peter de Bolla suggests that sometimes it is difficult to know or recognise “intense moments of aesthetic experience” as they belong in the “orbit of knowing, as if something has been barely whispered yet somehow heard.”²⁶⁸ An aesthetic encounter is “a state of ‘in-between-

²⁶⁵ Philip Jackson, “Chapter 1: Experience and the Arts,” in *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 35.

²⁶⁶ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 2.

²⁶⁷ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 2.

²⁶⁸ Bolla, *Art Matters*, 12.

ness,' as it were, part physical and part mental, in the orbit of the emotive,"²⁶⁹ a "state of mind" rather than "an item of knowledge,"²⁷⁰ a "non-cognitive"²⁷¹ judgement that is akin to the state of wonder. de Bolla claims that "it is certainly the case that I may learn from these experiences"²⁷² and akin to "being in love," an aesthetic experience, "colors all that we know we know."²⁷³ Maxine Greene suggests that "if we are present as living, perceiving beings, there is always more."²⁷⁴ This "more", achieved through aesthetic encounters, allows us to "confront the mystery of our subjectivity grasping another,"²⁷⁵ to understand that there are multiple possibilities when it comes to inhabiting the world and, through human effort, come to have a "greater coherence in the world."²⁷⁶ We "go beyond" our own little lives and in "circles of quietness"²⁷⁷ learn to appreciate the complexity of human experience through aesthetic encounters. Aesthetic encounters can perhaps be classified as a non-cognitive state of wonder with the ability to allow us to see or know something we did not know before.

To have an aesthetic encounter one needs to encounter something; this something is, traditionally, a work of art. On encountering a work of art, the experience of that work is not always going to be an aesthetic one. de Bolla says aesthetic encounters "do not necessarily come easily; they may not be available on demand. We have to work toward them...and through

²⁶⁹ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 3.

²⁷⁰ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 135.

²⁷¹ Berleant, "Aesthetic Sensibility," 2.

²⁷² de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 12.

²⁷³ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 143.

²⁷⁴ Maxine Greene, "Notes on Aesthetic Education (1980)," in *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education*, (Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University: New York and London, 2001), 16.

²⁷⁵ Greene, "Notes on Aesthetic Education," 22.

²⁷⁶ Greene, "Notes on Aesthetic Education," 7.

²⁷⁷ Greene, "Notes on Aesthetic Education," 21.

them.”²⁷⁸ O’Donoghue builds on de Bolla’s claim by stating that “seeing and experiencing a work is never a straight forward act” and the aesthetic experience associated with the work “can only ever be secured if the one who encounters a work of art reflects on what that encounter is doing.”²⁷⁹ To provide the conditions for aesthetic encounters to occur one therefore needs to nurture an aesthetic sensibility or orientation.

2.7.2 Aesthetic Orientation

Alexander Baumgarten’s definition of aesthetics is a “science of sensory knowledge directed toward beauty”²⁸⁰ which, when considering the etymology of the word, is close to the original Greek *aistheis* meaning “perception by senses.”²⁸¹ Berleant builds on Baumgarten’s ideas to develop and explore the contributing dimensions to what he calls an aesthetic sensibility for all “domains of experience.”²⁸² Aesthetics for Berleant is “at its base, a theory of sensibility.”²⁸³ This sensibility is a “perceptual awareness” or an “educated sensation”²⁸⁴ It is a deliberate mode of knowing rather than an accidental occurrence. Although the aesthetic qualities of an object exist as part of the object, they can only be called forward by attending or orienting to that object in a certain way: aesthetically. An “intentional aesthetic orientation” therefore “requires sensitivity, curiosity and a commitment to see things beyond how they might first appear.”²⁸⁵ By orienting toward an object in this way you are moving beyond “conventional

²⁷⁸ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 12.

²⁷⁹ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 54.

²⁸⁰ Alexander Baumgarten quoted by Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 2.

²⁸¹ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 2.

²⁸² Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 1.

²⁸³ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 4.

²⁸⁴ Berleant, “Aesthetic Sensibility,” 4.

²⁸⁵ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 50.

ways of making sense of it” and enlarging “one’s perception and understanding of the world already deemed familiar.”²⁸⁶ In this way, an aesthetic orientation is a “mode of meaning making”²⁸⁷ with “creative and agential capacity” as it “can contribute to the creation of another situation.”²⁸⁸ To facilitate an aesthetic encounter one needs to cultivate an aesthetic sensibility so as to orient toward the object of study with aesthetic values. This process is “an attempt to articulate the nature of the world in which we live” and it is deliberate rather than random or spontaneous (although spontaneous aesthetic encounters are not impossible). Additionally, whilst a specific aesthetic encounter of a specific object, event or idea is an experience similar to wonder (as previously discussed), an aesthetic orientation or sensibility is not developed solely to wonder in awe at something and be left mute. An aesthetic orientation instead “is a way of seeing, thinking, feeling and talking about and understanding...objects” meaning an aesthetic orientation is not an end in and of itself, it is a means of access to the familiar world so it might show up in different and illuminating ways.²⁸⁹

An aesthetic orientation, sensibility or appreciation “has typically been described as an act of consciousness” but Berleant suggests this “dualistic framing of the human presence in aesthetic occasions is inherently misleading” as “there is no consciousness without body, no disembodied consciousness.”²⁹⁰ The materiality of the aesthetic object has a similarly complex role as the human body within the domain of aesthetic experience. Drawing on Roland Barthes idea of the punctum O’Donoghue suggests an “artwork’s capacity *to do* can also be understood

²⁸⁶ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 50.

²⁸⁷ Greene quoted in O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 51.

²⁸⁸ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 56.

²⁸⁹ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 51.

²⁹⁰ Arnold Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment,” in *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts*. (London: Routledge, 2004), 83.

as the artwork's materiality (emphasis author's own)."²⁹¹ Looking at these two ideas together, the agentic forces at work within any given aesthetic experience are multi-faceted and complex. The non-dualistic understanding of the role of the human body and the active, dynamic materiality of an aesthetic object, and the effects these things have on agency, are ideas worth exploring in more detail given that a strictly dualist aesthetic orientation, that separates object and subject, is not going to serve the purpose for this study, inspired as it is by new materialist ideas.

2.7.3 Aesthetic Embodiment

Berleant says that aesthetic embodiment “conveys the active presence of the human body in appreciative experience.”²⁹² Inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas of the body as “a *charged field*” (emphasis author's own)²⁹³ Berleant explains the “body is a concentration of forces that [are] part of a field.” This means the body is not so much ‘a body’ as ‘a self’, “‘I’ [is] a charged field,” and “embodiment meanings are experienced rather than cognized.”²⁹⁴ Greene's process of meaning making therefore becomes a bodily experience with our bodies “literally incorporating [meaning] so they become part of our flesh.”²⁹⁵ If aesthetic experiences are embodied they can no longer be only “contemplative”(if we take contemplative experiences to be cerebral rather than bodily), “objectifying,” or an “act of consciousness.”²⁹⁶ Instead we must

²⁹¹ O'Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys' Schools*, 54.

²⁹² Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 86.

²⁹³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty quoted by Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment,” 86.

²⁹⁴ Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 86.

²⁹⁵ Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 86.

²⁹⁶ Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 88.

think of the “aesthetic body, as a receiver and generator or sense experience” that has its “own dynamic force, even when inactive.”²⁹⁷

O’Donoghue suggests that an “object’s materiality, history and conditions of display, as well as one’s prior knowledge of the object or similar objects along with one’s desire for the object to function in certain ways all play a part in how the object appears.”²⁹⁸ The ability of the object “to do” something during an aesthetic experience is because the “aesthetic capability of an object lies somewhere between the object and the one who apprehends it.”²⁹⁹ Returning to Berleant’s ideas of the charged self as a force field, the aesthetic capabilities of an aesthetic object exist partly in this charged self because the aesthetic capability is not something solely situated in the object, but instead an active part of the aesthetic encounter. This echoes Barad’s ideas about matter being an intra-active becoming, a doing not a thing, meaning the aesthetic capabilities of any given aesthetic experience are an intra-active becoming where matter is dynamic and agency is spread between the human and non-human participants of the experience. This means that all encounters “rely to some extent on our personal histories, and our ways of noticing” so “knowing something about the context of conditions that lead to the production of the work can enhance one’s experience of it.”³⁰⁰ de Bolla calls aesthetic encounters “radically singular”³⁰¹ and Berleant says “individual embodiment is ultimately particular” as it reflects the history of individual experiences mediated by...cultural factors”; what we know about the aesthetic object and who we are affects the aesthetic experience, and consequently will affect the

²⁹⁷ Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 88.

²⁹⁸ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 60.

²⁹⁹ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 59.

³⁰⁰ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 54-55.

³⁰¹ de Bolla, *Art Matters*,” 130.

meaning making process.³⁰² The aesthetic body is “culturally shaped, entwined, and embedded in a complex network of relations, each of which has a distinctive character and dynamic.”³⁰³

The notion of aesthetic embodiment, therefore, allows for the specificities of the researcher/teacher’s experiences of *England Under the Tudors* based on her own positionality and prior knowledge of the book to be part of the aesthetic orientation toward the object. This accommodates and compliments the new materialist theories being used to define the object (and matter in general) being used in this study.

³⁰² Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 87.

³⁰³ Berleant, “Aesthetic Embodiment, 88.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundations, Methodological Approach and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the theoretical foundations, methodological approach, and methods used for the study. The theoretical foundations of the study come from two different areas and therefore will be separated and discussed in turn looking first at how the study is framed in a wider body of reception-based book history with specific links to impact-oriented history textbook research. The theoretical grounding comes from new materialism. This section of the chapter will explain ideas from new materialism, most notably Barad's agential realism, will be the theoretical axis that the study hinges around.

The methodological approach is in two sections looking first at how the object, *England Under the Tudor*, is conceptualised and second the orientation of the research and the researcher. The first section offers a basic conceptualisation of the object before explaining how ideas about aesthetic sensibility will inform the orientation of the research.

The final section explores the methods. This will first consider general methods, based around Jordanova's ideas about description and drawing influence from a number of theorists whose writing styles aim to produce affects in the reader. Having discussed a more general approach there will be a return to the object to consider how it will be specifically conceptualised and discussed in each of the research chapters (chapters four, five, and six).

3.2 Theoretical Framework: A Reception-Based Study

This study can be situated in Adams and Barker's publishing model in the reception stage as it is to do with how a teacher received *England Under the Tudors* in the classroom as a teaching companion. Two further things are worthy of note at this point. First, Darnton says that

“the last box in the Adams-Barker diagram, “survival”, represents a significant improvement over mine.”³⁰⁴ This survival stage is important for this study. *England Under the Tudors* was first published in 1955 but has survived as a textbook (it has never been out of print) and was being used in a history A-level classroom in 2016/2017. Second, whereas Darnton, as an historian, specifically wants to focus on the people who made the book, distributed it and read it, Adams and Barker, as bibliographers, want to focus on the book itself.³⁰⁵

Additionally, as this study is a sustained encounter with the book as a physical object itself, Adams and Barker’s model is more fitting as it centres around the book as an object. However, the people who read the book, namely the teacher, are also a key focus of the study. The author, as an eminent historian, also has a crucial role. Implicitly, a number of other people played a part in bringing the book to the classroom. These people, together, are part of “a set of relations determined by lines of force and regulated according to the rules of the game accepted by the players.”³⁰⁶ The lines of forces at work affecting different people to create the specific set of relations could be bracketed or categorised in many ways but the notion of “intellectual influences,” used by Adams and Barker as factors to consider when looking at both the survival and publication stages, fits nicely. What intellectual influences were at work as lines of forces creating this set of relations? Or, to put it another way, what intellectual influences affected the different people who created the conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, for Elton’s text to be used as primary text 62 years after it was originally published? Therefore, if we stretch Adams and Barker’s model so intellectual influences are taken into consideration when looking

³⁰⁴ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

³⁰⁵ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

³⁰⁶ Darnton, “‘What is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

at the reception of the book, we are left with a framework that serves the purpose of this study. The study sits in the reception stage of Adams and Barker's model but, as the reception being discussed is not the initial reception after publication, but instead a secondary reception after the book has survived for 62 years, elements of the survival stage, notably the intellectual influences that allow for its survival, need to be taken into account. Additionally, this study would come under the following categories of textbook study: impact-oriented and a downhill focus as the object of attention is the textbook in the classroom.

3.3 Theoretical Grounding

Barad states that “matter and meaning are not separate” and this is a crucial idea for this study.³⁰⁷ Following Niccolini and Pindyck who, inspired by Barad, moved “‘horizontally’ with the materialities of the classroom”³⁰⁸ the aim of this study is to flatten the traditional, humanist understanding of the relationship of teacher and textbook (which places the teacher in charge of the textbook) and instead understand the textbook as a lively object that is part an entangled classroom. This entanglement includes the teacher and textbook, as well as other objects (human and nonhuman) in the room. This allows the classroom to be seen as something more than “inert spaces made meaningful by humans.”³⁰⁹

If matter and meaning are not separate this means matter *makes* meaning and meaning *makes* matter. *England Under the Tudors* makes meaning in the classroom. This means that the object at the focus of the study has agency. At the same time, meaning, which could mean

³⁰⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 3.

³⁰⁸ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 7.

³⁰⁹ Niccolini and Pindyck, “Classroom Acts,” 7.

cultural or social forces (what this study is referring to as intellectual influences) *makes* matter. This means these intellectual influences change how *England Under the Tudors* came into being in the classroom. This is all part of a “ongoing, open-ended” and an “entangled practice”³¹⁰ where matter is “not a thing but a doing.” Matter is active not static and dynamic not neutral.

The focus on the object is a focus on the “intra-activity of becoming” but this study is also interested in the “ontology of knowing.”³¹¹ It will use the new materialist ideas as its axis in order to thinking about the onto-epistem-ological narratives being taught in the classroom. This element of the study is also grounded by new materialism because epistemology and ontology are being thought of together as entangled agencies rather than separately.

3.4 Methodological Approach

3.4.1 The Object

The methodological approach centres around how the focus of the study, G.R. Elton’s textbook *England Under the Tudors*, is defined as an object on a conceptual, and material, level. Drawing from a range of disciplines and theories, as outlined in the literature review, the book is viewed as a lively object made of vibrant matter with aesthetic capabilities. At the same time, the book is a status object with prestige placed upon it that exerts power. This power is specific because the book is a textbook and therefore has pedagogic authority. Central to the new materialist conception of matter is that humans and non-humans are part of an intra-active

³¹⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 168.

³¹¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136.

becoming where humans are part of the nature they seek to know about. The conceptualisation of the object in this study is central to Macgilchrist's thoughts on textbooks as "performative and productive (im)material assemblages."³¹² The textbook is one object amongst many in the (im)material assemblage of the history classroom in question, through which to explore the productivity and performativity of the assemblage as a whole. There are further ideas connected to the conceptualization of the object of study that will shape the research and writing process. These are the definition of textbook being a lively classroom companion, the notion of sedimentation (in relation to the object) and the metaphor of the classroom's (im)material narrative assemblage as a portrait. Before exploring how these ideas will inform the study it makes sense to discuss the aesthetic orientation the researcher will adopt and the writing methods in order to understand the "how" and "why" of the study before delving further into the "what."

3.4.2 Orientation

The methodological approach this study will take will draw heavily on the approach taken by O'Donoghue in *Learning to live in Boys' Schools. Art-led Understandings of Masculinity*. O'Donoghue states that methodologically he approached his study from an art-led perspective. He goes on to define this perspective as

an approach to doing scholarly work that is committed to seeking ways of accessing and understanding educational and social phenomena through the study of aesthetics, art theory, artist's writing and the production of research-based visual,

³¹² Macgilchrist, "Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks," 169.

material, and conceptual forms that are most typically found in the visual arts, or associated with it.³¹³

The idea of accessing educational and social phenomena through the study of aesthetics applies to this study. Art-led research “employs and understands the term research as a form of creative work that is receptive to thought and cultivates and nurtures thought.”³¹⁴ An aesthetic orientation toward the textbooks is an attempt to cultivate and nurture thought about the textbook and its role in the classroom.

This definition of art-led research clearly identifies the production of research-based visual material as part of the research process. O’Donoghue says that when “bringing concepts from somewhere else into fields in which they do not have a history” that we “ought to hold them lightly and not grip on them”³¹⁵ but instead make space for these concepts “to operate differently, as they occupy new ground and... take new roots.”³¹⁶ O’Donoghue draws on Mieke Bal’s ideas regarding travelling concepts. Bal suggests that “concepts are not fixed” and instead can “travel between different disciplines, scholars and academic communities.”³¹⁷ Bal’s central message is that these many “forms of travel render concepts flexible” and this “travelling nature is an asset rather than a liability.”³¹⁸ Adopting the principle of a travelling concept, this study will grip lightly the idea of art-led research so that it informs how the research accesses the

³¹³ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 18.

³¹⁴ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 18.

³¹⁵ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 11.

³¹⁶ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 13.

³¹⁷ Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 24.

³¹⁸ Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 25.

object of the study in the belief that “arts make educational worlds visible in ways that social science inquiry does not” but will not produce any research-based visual material to accompany the written thesis.³¹⁹ Instead the written thesis itself will act as the vehicle to articulate the findings of the research as well as serving as a creatively produced piece of writing inspired by aesthetics. de Bolla’s book *Art Matters* is a useful example of an aesthetically enthused style of writing I hope to imitate in my thesis.

The book attends to the notion of an aesthetic sensibility as he states that “the reasons for writing this book are deeply embedded in my desire to understand more about the practice of wondering”³²⁰ Writing the book was an attempt at creating a lexicon for the “poetics of wonderment.”³²¹ The second chapter reflects on de Bolla’s experience of Barnett Newman’s *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*. With this specific artwork de Bolla feels that the “calm, composed tranquil space”³²² he enters when his gaze is on the artwork is one of serenity and this is “the material of my [de Bolla’s] affective response.”³²³ The precision of the language, sentence construction, and all the other elements that contribute to the ebb and flow of this particular chapter are de Bolla’s attempt at illuminating the sense of serenity that he experiences. Each beautifully crafted phrase takes on a deeper meaning when considered not merely as description but an effort to connect with the mystical, metaphysical and transcendent aspects of affective experience. For de Bolla, Newman’s work has “majestic frequencies”³²⁴ and “the time of color.”³²⁵ Time with the painting

³¹⁹ O’Donoghue, *Learning to Live in Boys’ Schools*, 21.

³²⁰ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 3.

³²¹ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 5.

³²² de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 53.

³²³ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 53.

³²⁴ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 34.

³²⁵ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 43.

allows for “visibility of a commonly constructed presence” and knowledge of the “hushed sublimity of a shared world.”³²⁶

Barbara Tuchman believes the medium of expression to be an essential part of any creative process; for a writer the medium of expression is language. “When it comes to language, nothing is more satisfying than to write a good sentence.”³²⁷ Clarity, interest and “aesthetic pleasure” are the aims of good writing which requires hard work and a good ear.³²⁸ Elliot Eisner when discussing Tuchman’s writing (the opening passage in *The Guns of August*) suggests “good writing”, such as Tuchman’s helps us to understand “what the phrase “aesthetic modes of knowing” alludes to.”³²⁹ Eisner uses Tuchman’s writing as an example to illustrate that “the form of the work informs us as the “aesthetic capacities of language influence our experience.”³³⁰ This thesis will itself be an attempt to create a lexicon for discussing the material and immaterial qualities of the history classroom and historical narratives, focusing on the textbook’s place in this (im)material narrative assemblage, by adopting an aesthetic sensibility. Taking a lead from both de Bolla and Tuchman, the form of writing as well as the content of the writing, will seek to illuminate the textbook from an aesthetic perspective. O’Donoghue’s study adopted an aesthetic sensibility and turned “toward the world of schooling.”³³¹ This research is doing the same thing with a specific focus on the textbook. An aesthetic sensibility in this context “requires one to open oneself to aspects of the world of schooling in ways that would put

³²⁶ de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 40.

³²⁷ Barbara Tuchman, “The Historian as an Artist,” in *Practicing History: Selected Essays*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 48.

³²⁸ Tuchman, “The Historian as an Artist,” 48.

³²⁹ Eisner, “Aesthetic Modes of Knowing,” 23.

³³⁰ Eisner, “Aesthetic Modes of Knowing,” 23.

³³¹ O’Donoghue, *Art Matters*, 52.

one in contact with qualities of that world that often go unnoticed or rarely noticed.”³³² This is the hope with this study, that qualities of the textbook that may have gone undetected, unnoticed, or at the very least not discussed and therefore not visible, may come into view and reveal things about textbooks, history classrooms and historical narratives that may not have been known before.

3.5 Methods

Ludmilla Jordanova’s book *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in History Practice* explores different ways that visual and material evidence, physical objects of the past, can be used as historical evidence. The type of evidence that Jordanova considers includes (but is not limited to); paintings, sculpture, and architecture. Jordanova wants to encourage historians to turn to objects of the past as she believes “artefacts mediate past ideas and experiences making them ripe for historical analysis”³³³ as “every made item results from human attention” meaning they are “capable of embodying people and attributes.”³³⁴ Jordanova provides a number of ways to utilise historical objects as historical evidence, one of them being description. Although Jordanova is considering objects in an historical setting the ideas she sets out about how to describe objects is useful for this study.

Jordanova opens her chapter on description by discussing the Greek term *ekphrasis* which is a rhetorical device in which a work of art is evoked in another medium. She focuses in on descriptions of Achilles’ Shield as the figures engraved on the shield have often been

³³² O’Donoghue, *Art Matters*, 52.

³³³ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 1.

³³⁴ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 5.

described in narrative or poetic forms of writing; a story comes to life through the description of inanimate figures on a physical object. Bill Brown goes as far as to say that Achilles' Shield is the "archetypal instance of ekphrastic poetry."³³⁵ Ekphrastic writing is therefore "an account in words of the visual experience prompted by a striking piece of art"³³⁶ and "such descriptions are designed to provoke vivid emotions in the reader, perhaps to deepen their understanding of objects, characters, plots, themes and of themselves."³³⁷ Jordanova's understanding of ekphrastic writing has similarities to de Bolla's attempts to create a lexicon of "the poetics of wonderment" and Eisner's ideas about "aesthetic modes of knowing." These ideas on description, rooted in ekphrastic writing, will inform the style of writing used in this study

A description is produced when writers pay close attention to the object. Attention is defined as "sustained careful looking, mental focus, concentrated reflection and consideration, and thoughtful, self-aware writing."³³⁸ For this study attention takes on the additional quality of being informed by aesthetics and what it means to have an aesthetic orientation toward the world. Jordanova suggests that, ideally, a description will contain:

1. *Physical properties* (size, shape, colours, materials, subject matter, genre, date, maker)
2. *Life history of an artefact* (who, what, when, where, why, cost, give to who, bought, sold, used, displayed, (re)interpretation)
3. *Consideration of provenance* (record of ownership – role of gifts, forms of association)³³⁹

³³⁵ Brown, *Other Things*, 2.

³³⁶ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 18.

³³⁷ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 18.

³³⁸ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 20.

³³⁹ Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 19.

Chapters four, five and six will seek to cover these different aspects of a description as suggested by Jordanova. Each of these chapters will attend to one of the three research questions:

1. What are the material qualities of *England Under the Tudors* as a textual artefact?
2. What were the conditions of arrival and conditions of use of *England Under the Tudors* in the classroom?
3. How was *England Under the Tudors* used as textbook by the teacher to inform the historical narrative that was taught about Henry VIII?

The style of ekphrastic description, and the general writing style of these three chapters, as well as the epilogue, will seek to be affective for the reader. There is an intentional commitment to writing in poetic and narrative ways that are in alignment with de Bolla's lexicon for the poetics of wonderment and Eisner's aesthetic modes of knowing. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, commenting on one of her articles, *The Good High School*, published in 1983, said she wanted to "develop a document, a text that comes as close as possible to painting with words."³⁴⁰ This led to her "inventing a new methodology" that was a "blend of aesthetic sensibilities and empirical rigor" that used both "humanistic and literary metaphors."³⁴¹ This she eventually called "portraiture." Lawrence-Lightfoot's idea of "painting with words" is important for this study. She sought to develop this new methodology as a way of writing about schools that traced "the connections between individual personality and organization culture" while also "seeking to capture the texture and nuance of human experience."³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Lawrence-Lightfoot, "Reflections on Portraiture," 6.

³⁴¹ Lawrence-Lightfoot, "Reflections on Portraiture," 6.

³⁴² Lawrence-Lightfoot, "Reflections on Portraiture," 6.

This style of writing has similarities with the style and approach taken by Kathleen Stewart who sees herself “not as a trusted guide carefully laying out the links between theoretical categories and the real world, but a point of impact, curiosity, and encounter.”³⁴³ This means there is a loosening of “formal narrative binds” as well as “descriptive detours” that “write[s] theory through story” and “pull[s] academic attunements into tricky alignment.”³⁴⁴ The process of writing and theorizing is intended to create a text that “itself resonate[s] or tweak[s] the force of material-sensory somethings forming up.”³⁴⁵ The writing intentionally creates the conditions for affects in the read that illuminate the theory that informs it. This is the style of writing this study will seek to emulate.

The teacher’s own copy of G.R. Elton’s *England Under the Tudors* will inform the study, however, an important aspect of its conditions of arrival in the classroom is that each of the 21 students in the A-level history class was gifted a copy of textbook by the leadership team. The teacher was encouraged to use *England Under the Tudors* by the leadership team. The students (and the teacher) had a copy of another textbook, *AQA A-level History: The Tudors: England 1485-1603*, published by Hodder and approved by the examination board AQA. The teacher had a personal copy of a further AQA approved textbook, *Oxford QA History for A level: The Tudors: England 1485 – 1603*, published by Oxford University Press that she often used to plan lessons and provided certain pages as extra reading. The reign of Henry VIII was taught as the second unit of study (the first was the reign of Henry VII) in the first year of A-level study. The

³⁴³ Kathleen Stewart and e-Duke Books Scholarly Collection Backlist, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 5.

³⁴⁴ Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 445.

³⁴⁵ Stewart, “Atmospheric Attunements,” 452.

students took an AS examination at the end of this year of study. The grade achieved did not count toward their final A-level (A2) grade.

An important part of Elton's interpretation of Henry VIII, discussed in *England Under the Tudors*, but first developed in his PhD dissertation, and later in *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (published in 1953), is that Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief advisor in the 1530s oversaw a "revolution in government."³⁴⁶ Within Tudor historiography this is known as the "Elton thesis" and although Elton did modify his original views on this matter he insisted to the end on their "essential correctness."³⁴⁷ The "Elton thesis" is a distinct interpretation of Henry VIII's reign that carries a lot of weight and is referenced in AQA examination specification guidelines. Adherence to the Elton thesis shapes the perception of the periods before and after Cromwell's time as Henry VIII's key minister. Henry VIII's reign, therefore, felt the most appropriate of the four units outlined in AQA's A-level specification to focus on in this study as, of the four, it has the most obvious and direct link to Elton's interpretation of the Tudors.³⁴⁸

3.5.1 The Object Revisited

The basic conceptualization of the object of the study, the orientation of the researcher and the methods for the writing process have now been established. There are three distinct concepts, or metaphors, that will loosely inform the structure of the three chapters looking at the research questions that can now be explored in more detail. These metaphors will be explained in

³⁴⁶ Patrick Collinson, "Geoffrey Rudolph Elton 1921 - 1994," *The British Academy* 94 (1997): 436.

³⁴⁷ Collinson, "Geoffrey Rudolph Elton," 439.

³⁴⁸ The A-level was split into two parts. Part one: consolidation of Tudor England had two sections, the reign of Henry VII, 1485-1509 and the reign of Henry VIII, 1509 – 1547. Part two (A-level only): turmoil and triumph had sections, instability and consolidation: 'the Mid-Tudor crisis', 1547 -1563 and the triumph of Elizabeth I, 1563-1603.

turn but should be viewed as a collective rather than discrete concepts: they are all travelling concepts that travel between the chapters. However, before these detailed explanations happen a word needs to be said about my own understanding of what a book was and what a textbook was at the time of teaching.

3.5.2 Book or Textbook?

When I was teaching with *England Under the Tudors*, I did not consider it in the same vein as the other textbooks being used to teach the reign of Henry VIII, or any other textbook I was using. Fundamentally I saw it as a book rather than a textbook. A historical book and a classroom tool. But a book rather than a textbook. Owing to this, the ekphrastic descriptions, and emergent themes that emerge from them, swing between thinking about *England Under the Tudors* as a book and/or a textbook. This is most apparent in chapter four where the ekphrastic description is split into two sections, one looking at bookish qualities and one looking at “textbookish” qualities but is a running theme through the three research chapters. This following explanation provides some context and clarification as to why I did classify *England Under the Tudors* as a textbook.

As touched upon in chapter two, Terry Haydn explains that the UK’s textbook culture is somewhat “atypical” because there is a free market approach where schools are able to choose the textbooks they use.³⁴⁹ The free market approach has meant textbooks have changed to reflect the changing curriculum over the years because publishers have wanted to capture the market by aligning the textbooks they publish with the needs of schools (and the public examinations

³⁴⁹ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 83.

requirements.) This has led to “radical changes to both the form and purpose of history textbooks in the UK.”³⁵⁰ A significant catalyst for these changes was the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1991. There was a “change in the balance between progression being measured in terms of augmentation of pupils’ knowledge of the substantive past, and pupils’ understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge.” This “inevitably had an impact on the format of...textbooks.”³⁵¹ Prior to the 1980s history textbooks “generally told one story about the past” but the “increasing influence of what was termed ‘New History’” meant there was a shift toward history didactics in schools and “more emphasis on source evaluation.”³⁵² This had a very specific effect on what textbooks looked like.

There were “more images, maps, cartoons and colour.”³⁵³ The narrative or text about the “substantive past” was “‘squeezed’ in alongside sources, graphics, and source work exercises.”³⁵⁴ This style became known as the “dreaded two page spread” where “every topic [was] reduced to two facing pages within the textbook which included very simplistic basic factual information, some sources, some diagrams (or similar), and some questions.”³⁵⁵ Although lessons were learnt from the first textbooks produced like this, which were really “random stuff plonked together”, the shift in style for UK history textbook was permanent.³⁵⁶ The purpose of history textbooks was no longer “to simply inform students of the one, authoritative or definitive

³⁵⁰ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 73.

³⁵¹ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

³⁵² Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

³⁵³ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

³⁵⁴ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

³⁵⁵ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

³⁵⁶ Haydn, “The Changing Form and Use of Textbooks,” 71.

account of what happened in the past” and this had a very real and tangible impact on what history textbooks looked like.

England Under the Tudors does not fit this form or purpose of history textbooks as described above. It was, and is, unrecognizable as a textbook at first glance to a student educated from the 1980s onwards in the UK. This includes both myself and my students. However, *England Under the Tudors* is a textbook, or was written with the intention of being a textbook. It was not written by a group of authors, it was written by one author, G.R. Elton, who, as an historian, is both “someone who is an authority on the subject” but also what Stray terms (and critiques) as an author with the “special gifts of the creative mind;” a romantic notion of the author as a creative agent.³⁵⁷ It follows the form and purpose of history textbooks as they were prior to the 1980s and before the introduction of the national curriculum. It tells just one story of the past, Elton’s version. Therefore, despite it actually *being* a textbook, I did not think of it that way when I was teaching. This has had a considerable effect on how I have thought and written about *England Under the Tudors* when I have returned to it as a researcher.

3.5.3 The Classroom Companion (A Concept for Chapter Four)

Martin Lawn is “interested in the special tools of classrooms” with books and textbooks falling under this umbrella term of classroom tool.³⁵⁸ Lawn’s interest is to do with how these “physical objects [are] used by human agency in the classroom as a means of educating and

³⁵⁷ Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 7. Stray offers a critique of this romantic ideology of creativity as a product of the shift from patronage to a capitalist market which negatively affected many artists. The romanticism of the author gave authority to the individual authors but created conditions where authors who were able to create without subscribing to consumer demands were in some way more creative.

³⁵⁸ Lawn, “Designing Teaching,” 65.

controlling.”³⁵⁹ He suggests there is a “gap in our knowledge about why these objects were constructed and consumed.”³⁶⁰ The idea of the textbook as a classroom tool fits well with some definitions of textbooks, and books in general, that have previously discussed. The textbook as a tool clearly implies its pedagogic authority as the textbook is used by the teacher as a tool in the classroom and therefore represents “the imposition of adult authority” over students.³⁶¹ In addition to this, textbooks are typically, Stray suggests, “books whose users are not the buyers. In many cases, books are not just imposed on pupils by teachers, but imposed first on teachers by their employers or by the state.”³⁶² The textbook is a tool used *by* teachers and, to a certain extent, *over* teachers (or on teachers). This is especially true in the case of *England Under the Tudors* as the book was chosen by the leadership team and bought for the teacher and students. The textbook therefore operated as a tool in a number of ways by exerting its power over different people in different ways.

One significant problem arises if *England Under the Tudors* is viewed as a classroom tool: a classroom tool is mute matter. Conceptualizing the textbook as a tool downplays its animate and agentive qualities. A tool is designed and given/bought for a specific purpose; how then can a classroom tool be vibrant matter if it is preconceived as a fixed entity with a fixed purpose? Although the different definitions of books, textbooks, and schoolbooks go some way to animating the object owing to the multiple preconceived notions of its tool-like qualities operating at any given time, there is still more to say on the lively nature of a classroom tool.

³⁵⁹ Lawn, “Designing Teaching,” 69.

³⁶⁰ Lawn, “Designing Teaching,” 69.

³⁶¹ Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 6.

³⁶² Stray, “Paradigms Regained,” 4.

Barad takes the time to consider bodily boundaries and offers the view that “objects are not already there; they emerge through specific practices.”³⁶³ Richard Feynmann, when discussing outlines, says they are “not something definite. It is not, believe it or not, that every object has a line around it! There is no such line.” Feynmann is articulating the “mistaken belief in the givenness of bodily boundaries” which Barad puts down to “human psychology.”³⁶⁴ Having established that boundaries are blurred the preconceived notion of a classroom tool also blurs. Maurice Merleau Ponty suggests that “the successful performance of everyday bodily tasks depends on the mutual incorporation of the instruments used to perform a task into the body and the dilation of our “being-in-the-world” into the instrument.”³⁶⁵ He uses the example of a blind man’s stick stating that the stick “ceases to be an object for him.” The stick ceases to be a tool and is instead part of the blind man’s body; the body and tool dilate. It is habit that “expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments.”³⁶⁶ The textbook as a classroom tool retains its lively features by dilating with the teacher. The repetitive nature of textbook use, across a series of lessons, means habits are formed with, and by, the textbook allowing the teacher to appropriate the textbook as an instrument. The textbook is not simply a tool that the teacher uses it is her companion in the classroom. It is part of her being-in-the-classroom. The blurred boundaries between physical object and human, between book and teacher, means the tool-like qualities of *England Under the Tudors*: its status; its prestige; its literary power; its pedagogic authority; its materiality and so on

³⁶³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 157.

³⁶⁴ Richard Feynmann quoted by Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 156.

³⁶⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty quoted by Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 157

³⁶⁶ Merleau-Ponty quoted by Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 157.

are part of the lively intra-active becoming of the teaching process. In keeping with the new materialist direction of this study the textbook will be considered as a classroom companion, not a classroom tool, to distance this chapter, and the conceptualisation of the textbook in general, from the restrictions of the term “tool.” This does not mean that *England Under the Tudors* tool like attributes will be ignored or put aside. Instead they will be approached from a slightly different angle to foster a sense of curiosity about the boundaries between the textbook and the teacher.

3.5.4 Sedimentation (A Concept for Chapter Five)

According to Barad “matter is the sedimenting historality of practices/agencies *and* an agentive force in the world’s differential becoming (emphasis author’s own).”³⁶⁷ Consideration of the book as a classroom companion is focusing on the object’s agentive force in the classroom’s differential becoming but in order to understand this force properly the object’s sedimented historality needs to be taken into account. Returning briefly to Darnton’s publishing communication circuit, it is here that the set of relations specific to *England Under the Tudors* and Adams and Barkers’ intellectual influences can be discussed. The inherent status, prestige, power, pedagogical authority, and so forth of the book are embedded in the object’s dynamic matter through sedimentation.

Barad uses the metaphor of tree rings to describe sedimentation saying “the rings of trees mark the sedimented history of their intra-actions within and as part of the world, so matter carries within itself the sedimented historialities of the practices through which it is produced as

³⁶⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

part of its ongoing becoming – it is ingrained and enriched in its becoming.”³⁶⁸ The idea of carrying its sedimented histories with it, and not on it, is important. Sara Ahmed also talks about sedimentation suggesting “what passes through history is not only the work done by generations but the ‘sedimentation’ of that work as the condition of arrival for future generations.”³⁶⁹ These conditions of arrival are not “something that is given in its sensuous certainty.”³⁷⁰ The sedimentation of an object is not merely “on the surface of the object” and nor is it the “property of the object.”³⁷¹ Instead, as Barad states, “time has a history,” and the “making/marking of time is a lively material process of enfolding.”³⁷² Ahmed explores the Marxian critique of Idealism which “takes the object as a given” despite matter only being given form and value by being changed through labour.³⁷³ For Idealists, such as Hegel, the labour is forgotten when the object is perceived as given: “It becomes value only in its congealed state, when embodied in the form of some object.”³⁷⁴ For Marx, the solution to this was to consider “commodities [as] made up of two elements ‘matter and labor.’”³⁷⁵ By drawing labour into focus the process of change where matter becomes form comes into view and therefore the conditions of arrival of the object are made visible. Ahmed illustrates some flaws with this theory as the Marxian definition of “making form” is “located in the transformation of nature into use value” meaning “nature...is simply ‘there’ waiting to be formed.”³⁷⁶ However, if the Marxian approach were extended to

³⁶⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

³⁶⁹ Sara Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, Durham and (Duke University Press, 2010), 241.

³⁷⁰ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

³⁷¹ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter” 241.

³⁷² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 181.

³⁷³ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

³⁷⁴ Karl Marx quoted by Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

³⁷⁵ Karl Marx quoted by Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

³⁷⁶ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 242.

consider the “very matter of wood” as well as “the form of the table” then “a dynamic history of things being moved around” is possible.³⁷⁷ Both Ahmed and Barad are using the metaphor of sedimentation to illustrate that “matter isn’t situated in the world; matter is worlding in its materiality.”³⁷⁸ This means that sedimenting is an “ongoing process of differential mattering” where “the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all.”³⁷⁹ The conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, of an object become part of the object through a process of sedimentation. They exist within the object not on its surface. As previously discussed, the boundaries separating the book and the teacher (and indeed the book and the students) are blurred, meaning the sedimented conditions of arrival for *England Under the Tudors* are part of the lively intra-active becoming of the teaching process. The metaphor of sedimentation informs the metaphor of the textbook as a companion but the multiple preconceived ideas about the textbook being a pedagogic tool contribute to the sedimentation. The metaphors are therefore intertwined, or circular, rather than accumulative and linear.

3.5.5 Portraits (A Concept for Chapter Six)

3.5.5.1 The Classroom as an (Im)material Assemblage

Stephanie Springgay and Nikki Rotas consider the art classroom from a new materialist perspective. They define “a new materialist ontology” as one that “recognizes the

³⁷⁷ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 243.

³⁷⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 181.

³⁷⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 181.

interconnections of all phenomena (human and non-human).³⁸⁰ Springgay and Rotas think Barad would argue that in the “‘classroom as work of art’ students, classroom, and art are not distinct from one another but ‘mutually interactive agents.’”³⁸¹ This, they believe, echoes Bennett’s ideas of non-humans performing actions, producing effects and altering situations.³⁸² The art classroom is not the same as the history classroom, but Springgay and Rota’s conceptualization of a classroom space from a new materialist lens serves as a useful starting point to discuss the history classroom.

Drawing on Bennett’s theories, as they did, ideas about how inanimate matter perform and act in a group, an assemblage, is important. Bennett offers some thoughts on an assemblage of objects she saw in Baltimore in a storm drain; “glove, pollen, rat, cat, stick.”³⁸³ This group of objects rendered Bennett temporarily immobilized on the spring morning she came across them as “in this assemblage, objects appeared as things, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them.”³⁸⁴ The grouping, or collection, of the objects was significant. Bennett goes on to explain that even though assemblages are “ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts” they are “living, throbbing confederations” that, as a group, have agency.³⁸⁵ Considering the history classroom as an assemblage in this way is helpful as it allows discussion of *England Under the Tudors* to take place amongst an assemblage of other objects, human and non-human. These ideas also mirror,

³⁸⁰ Stephanie Springgay and Nikki Rotas, “How Do You Make a Classroom Operate like a Work of Art? Deleuzegouattarian Methodologies of Research-Creation,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 28, no. 5 (2015): 553.

³⁸¹ Springgay and Rotas, “How Do You Make a Classroom Operate like a Work of Art?,” 554.

³⁸² Springgay and Rotas, “How Do You Make a Classroom Operate like a Work of Art?,” 554.

³⁸³ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 4.

³⁸⁴ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 6.

³⁸⁵ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 24.

or compliment, Magilchrist's ideas about the history textbook as an (im)material assemblage with performative and productive capacities. G.R. Elton's *England Under the Tudors* both informed this assemblage *and* was part of it, implicitly and explicitly. The immaterial aspects of the historical interpretations and the material objects of the history classroom space (human and non-human) all form the (im)material narrative assemblage in its entirety.

3.5.5.2 A Portrait of a Classroom

The style of writing, and the metaphor used to describe the (im)material narrative assemblage, is especially important for this chapter. Barad says of her metaphor of the tree rings that it is limited in a number of ways, but she still includes it in her writing as it is “meant to be evocative” of the sedimenting process she is discussing. The same could be said of this metaphor, there are limits to its efficacy in describing what it intends to but if it is considered as a means to evoke thought, it works quite well.

The idea of a portrait of a room, and the objects and people within it, comes from Daniel Miller's *The Comfort of Things*.³⁸⁶ For Miller, every object in a room is “a form by which they [the people he writes about] have chosen to express themselves.” The way a person moves about these objects in the space is a ritual but also “an aesthetic.”³⁸⁷ The aesthetic is created as people exploit “different potentials” that they perceive “in properties of each material medium” which creates “an overall cosmology.”³⁸⁸ The portraits he paints through his writing locates these

³⁸⁶ Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

³⁸⁷ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 1.

³⁸⁸ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 1.

aesthetic forms and amounts to a “configuration of human values, feelings and experiences.”³⁸⁹

The portraits he paints are incredibly moving. The first chapter looking at George, a desperately lonely man in his seventies living alone for the first time after spending most of his life in adult hostels, is painfully acute in its depiction of the loneliness of old age through the emptiness of the space. Miller says he “can barely ever remember encountering... a habitation entirely devoid of any form of decoration. There is a violence to such emptiness.”³⁹⁰ Just as Miller captures George’s loneliness through the lack of object, he also captures Elia’s vibrancy and colour depicting her as “a storyteller” and a “conjurer” through her objects.³⁹¹

Painting, or writing, a portrait of the history classroom as an assemblage using *England Under the Tudors* as a lens through which to do this means the protagonist will not be so clear-cut as in Miller’s writing because the textbook is the central figure of discussion meaning there is no human protagonist. But, as the boundaries between the textbook and the teacher are blurred the teacher is still very present. Considering the classroom assemblage as a portrait allows the other parts of the assemblage, the students, furniture, technology, other textbooks, exam papers, stationery, etc., to come into view.

Philip Jackson suggests that teachers “in an effort to make their classrooms more homelike...spend considerable time fussing with the room’s decorations.”³⁹² He reduces this “fussing” to resembling “the work of the inspired housewife” who rearranges and changes colour to make things more interesting.³⁹³ Despite what could be regarded as a rather derogatory (and

³⁸⁹ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 296.

³⁹⁰ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 8.

³⁹¹ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 32.

³⁹² Philip Jackson, *Life in Classrooms*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 7.

³⁹³ Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* 7.

gendered) depiction of teachers working with the objects in their classrooms he raises the important point that teachers want to personalise their classrooms and “all of these signs and smells become ...familiar.”³⁹⁴ They are all part of the classroom assemblage. The immaterial aspects of the historical narrative are also present in this portrait. Perhaps the historical actors are visible in image form in textbooks, workbooks, or on the IWB. Perhaps the key historical events can be seen in written form in the text of Elton’s book, or other documents being read, or in the words of student essays.

Miller says that “the study of material culture is ultimately a study of value and of values.”³⁹⁵ Writing about the classroom in this way has value because it allows for what feels like a softer, aesthetic gaze on a rigid environment that allows peculiarities to come to the surface. Lawrence-Lightfoot says of her portraiture methodology that it is “probing, layered, and interpretive” in order that it might “capture the complexity and aesthetic of human experience.” This is true of this portrait of the classroom, but it seeks to capture the complexity and aesthetic of human *and* non-human experience. It is also about values, the values of the teacher and the values of the school, but significantly the values embedded in *England Under the Tudors* and the effect these values had on the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative of the classroom and the lived experience of those that experienced it.

³⁹⁴ Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* 7.

³⁹⁵ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 296.

Chapter 4: Classroom Companion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider *England Under the Tudors* as a physical object and attend to the first research question: What are the material qualities of *England Under the Tudors* as a textual artefact? It will do this by offering an ekphrastic description of the object of study, the teacher's personal copy of the *England Under the Tudors*. Jordanova's framework for writing descriptions informs what specific physical attributes of the object are discussed. Following discussions in Chapter 3 about how, at the time of teaching, I did not consider *England Under the Tudors* as a textbook and instead thought of it as a history book (despite it being written specifically as a textbook) the ekphrastic description will be split into two parts. First, the focus will be on the bookish qualities of the book, and second, the focus will be on the "textbookish" qualities.

Kolbeck and Röhl state that "the material qualities of the book itself, that is, its size, its weight, its binding, the thickness of its pages, and so forth...play a key role in shaping its use."³⁹⁶ Following the new materialist grounding of this study the object will be considered as a lively, dynamic object and these material qualities, such as the book's weight and thickness of page, will be thought of in this manner. Jerome McGann is another theorist who recognizes the importance of the material features of books. McGann thinks that "the reader interprets not a text, but a material object" including the "particularities" of the book.³⁹⁷ These "particularities of

³⁹⁶ Kolbeck and Röhl, "Textbook Practices," 405.

³⁹⁷ Jerome McGann quoted by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 2012), 117.

the physical book also influence and constrain the range of possible meanings.”³⁹⁸ Hayles thinks that the materiality of a book should be understood as “existing in complex dynamic interplay with content” meaning “texts are embodied entities” with “emergent properties” that shift into focus and “fade into the background depending on what performance the work enacts.”³⁹⁹ The “crucial move” for Hayles “is to reconceptualize materiality as the interplay between a text’s physical characteristics and its signifying strategies “which this chapter seeks to do by bringing into focus *England Under the Tudors*’s lively materiality through the ekphrastic description.”⁴⁰⁰

To offer some of the emergent themes room to develop certain aspects will be expanded on. To an extent, this is a continuation of the ekphrastic description, and is most definitely still approached aesthetically. This section of the chapter will also seek to make links with key concepts, ideas and theorists discussed in both the literature review and the methodology to consider the object’s animate and agentic qualities.

4.2 Ekphrastic Description

4.2.1 Bookishness

The third edition of *England Under the Tudors*, published in 1991, weighs 688 grams. It is 25cm by 14cm with a 3cm depth. The cover, made from a thickish cardboard material, is covered with a thin, protective plastic finish. The image on the cover of the book, which takes

³⁹⁸ Jerome McGann quoted by Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 11.

³⁹⁹ Hayles, “Print is Flat, Code is Deep,” 67-71.

⁴⁰⁰ Hayles, “Print is Flat, Code is Deep,” 71.

up the bottom half of the page is “a general description of England and Ireland,” a map in dusty browns and soft, burnt orange hues. England and Ireland are shaded white with thin brown outlines. A brown band separates Ireland and England. It cuts through western Scotland, the Irish Sea, the most westerly tip of south Wales and neatly separates Cornwall from the rest of England. It is not an intentional line as others on the map are. It is wider, and faded, and serves no clear cartographical purpose. Perhaps it is the remnants of a well-worn fold in the original map? Or a water stain?

The counties are written out in red ink, towns in brown, all illegible. What would appear to be forests are marked by green splotches and an unknown geographical point of reference appears in yellow smudges. Two ships sail in the North Sea off the coast of East Anglia while France peeks out of the bottom right-hand corner, a murky yellow base colour with noticeably fewer geographical markings. In the corner of this corner of France, in the same bottom-right-hand corner of the cover-page, is a small man surveying the scene; arms folded, he gazes toward the Devon. What he is doing, where is he from, and why he is there is not made clear, but, nevertheless, there he is.

The top half of the cover page is black with the title, “ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS”, in a pale orange that compliments the tones of the map and the author’s name, “G.R. ELTON”, in a clean, clear, no-nonsense white. “England” and “Tudors” are in a larger font size than “under the” making it immediately obvious to even the casual observer, who glances only quizzically and briefly, that this book is about England and it is about the Tudors. The words “THIRD EDITION” appear at the bottom of the cover page, over the top of the map, neatly plastered across Devon and Dorset before hugging the remaining southern coastline.

A black border runs along the very bottom of the page underneath the map and another border runs along the top of the map. This top border is not a solid black line like the bottom border. Instead it is two thinner black lines that sandwich a thicker band of colour which changes from the same pale orange colour of the title text to a murky dark grey or the black of the top half of the page. So perhaps the top half is not black after all. The top half is a faded black, an aging and mottled black, with hazy grey borders of its own and, on closer inspection, some markings that are faintly visible behind the text. What could be a coat of arms rests just above the capital “E” of “England” and something else is nestled above “D.” Another coat of arms? The sheen of the plastic covering means that in some lights it is certain there is a coat of arms and in others maybe it is a scuff, or a stain, or simply a trick of the light.

The copy of *England Under the Tudors* that I am looking at, my copy, is well-worn. The plastic covering has lost its stick along the right-hand side, the page-turning side of the book. Running your finger over the area of separation is in equal parts satisfying and irritating. This malfunction, or flaw, reveals that the design of the front of the book is printed on the plastic not the cardboard. If you pinch the edge of the plastic in your forefingers and pull gently upwards while at the same time lowering your face to the same level as the book you can peer through this tiny section of plastic and observe part of the cover page from an entirely different perspective. Without the solid, white firmness of the front cover’s cardboard materiality this sliver of an image is far less sturdy and far less certain. The temptation to pull at the plastic and separate the plastic and the cardboard completely is almost overwhelming. But I don’t. But I wonder why I don’t.

Something similar happens along the edges of the back-cover page. The plastic not only frays at the left-hand edge but is also scuffed along the top and bottom edges as though the cover

is shrinking at the edges or melting. The back-cover page is all black and is separated by the same orange-gold and grey border as the front cover. The black of the top half is the same black; grey black, soft black. Is there some faint, illegible writing underneath the same would-be coat of arms in the top left corner? Are there the foggy outlines of a flower in the centre, a Tudor rose perhaps? Or is it just the bright, spring light of the English countryside hitting the scruffy plastic at a particular angle? The bottom black is darker, denser, emptier. The plastic covering still creates the illusion of a pattern skimming the surface, but nothing shimmers below in the depths of this blackness. The fraying edges are all the more discombobulating because of this as the assured blackness is reduced to a cracked and crinkled blackish film with the remnants of its former glory lingering on the white cardboard underneath.

The text on the back cover is in the same muted orange and white. Obligatory snippets of complementary reviews appear in orange near the top and a brief overview in smaller, sharper white takes up the centre section of the back-cover page. We learn from the back page that the map “is the first ‘modern’ map of Britain © The British Library Board, 1984” and that this book is officially classed as “History.” The very bottom of the back-cover page is reserved for the business of books, or perhaps more accurately the business of publishing books. A barcode, an ISBN number, a logo, an address, a website, a statement: “an informa business.” These jarring and enforced requirements are all printed neatly in white and disrupt the literary pomp and ceremony of the other elements of the cover.

And what of the spine? Quite often forgotten, I would say, when the book is in use but arguably the most important section of the outer covering of a book as it is the most visible. Presuming, that is, that a book of this size and this nature would live in a bookshelf or in a pile with its spine acting as its label, its name. The spine includes the most important pieces of

information: the title (“England” and “Tudors”) written vertically; “THIRD EDITION” written horizontally; the author’s name (vertically); and the publisher’s logo. Name; number; creator; provider. All in muted orange other than the publisher’s logo in white.

The pages are crisp, white paper similar to that you would use in a printer. Unlike the typical novel, the paper is completely smooth to touch with not even a hint of textured roughness. The pages of a typical novel, and by typical novel I mean any book published with the purpose of reading for leisure for a mass market, are not usually this same bright, smooth white. The colours vary, but there is always a hint of yellowness in varying degrees; an off white with a hint of buttery eggshell, a cream-ish beige, a soft straw-like colour. The white is less clinical, the texture less determined, the pages slightly thinner, the ambience less formal than *England Under the Tudors*.

I have long had an aversion to printed pages. Specifically, newspaper print, which I cannot abide at any time, but books have also been troublesome especially if my hands are dry, or the book is in any way damp, or stained, or overly dishevelled. A completely sodden book, accidentally dropped in the sea, or the swimming-pool, or the sink, its pages returned to what seems like their original pulped state, that disintegrate under pressure and cleave themselves to your skin and each other, makes me physically wretch. The smoothness of the white pages of *England Under the Tudors* appeals to me as I can imagine water droplets running *off* this slick surface rather than *into* it. This is not what would happen. *England Under the Tudors* is not protected against accidental submergence in water any more than any other book, but my aversion to wet paper means the smooth, clinical whiteness of *England Under the Tudors* five hundred and twenty-two plus pages soothes me.

There is a downside; *England Under the Tudors* has no detectable bookish “smell.” Even the smell of a book is somewhat complicated for me, as I am aware that what I’m really smelling is paper, and I don’t like paper, but I still like the smell. Maybe because it reminds me of reading, something I love, or bookshops, which are sanctuaries, or maybe simply because everybody is drawn to the smell of books and therefore it is an acceptable smell that one likes, like flowers, or babies’ heads. *England Under the Tudors* does not have this smell of anticipation and nostalgia all rolled into one that is assigned to books. *England Under the Tudors* is without a noticeable scent; aromatically silent.

The typeface used in *England Under the Tudors* is institutional. I recognise the typeface from certain types of historical sources: government papers, formal letters, memos. Whatever the font is, for I do not know its name, it is “traditional” rather than “modern”. The g’s have the looped bottom of a less-modern type face. The M’s have the noticeable difference in gradient on the left and right vertical legs and the two v’s of the W overlap rather than sit side-by-side. It is a typeface that attempts to replicate some of the niceties of cursive handwriting. The letters, and words, feel plump. The colour is black; black text on white paper. The text is single spaced, new paragraphs are not indented but are justified.

There are, as mentioned, five hundred and twenty-two numbered pages of content in *England Under the Tudors*. Eleven preliminary pages at the beginning, numbered with roman numerals, including the title page, publishing information, the prefaces to all three editions of *England Under the Tudors*, and the contents pages. There are nine remaining blank pages; one at the beginning of the book and the remaining eight at the end. There are seventeen chapters all with up-to five subchapters (other than the first chapter: *The Tudor Problem*). There is an

extensive bibliography at the end (fifteen pages) and an index (seventeen pages). There are four “maps and diagrams” in the entirety of the book.

4.2.2 Textbookishness

Turning to the *England Under the Tudors* now, the things that stand out to me that suggest it is a textbook are the physical alterations and amendments that I have made to the object; I have transformed what I thought was a book into what I considered a textbook. I altered its materiality to fit with a pre-conceived idea of what a textbook is and what a textbook does.

While most of these changes take place inside the book it is clear by looking at the book as it lies closed on the table that this is a book that has been used for a purpose because of the assortment of thin, colourful plastic tips protruding from its pages. Mini post-it notes in purple, pink, green, blue, and yellow stick out from the side of the book. There is no order to the colours or obvious pattern. Although not completely level the plastic tips are roughly the same size, not quite a square, more of a squashed rectangle. As I look down at them, I am tempted to re-stick the ones that stick out too far or not enough, but I worry the stickiness will be lost and I don't have any spare.

The first page of the book indicates this book belongs to the teacher part of my identity because “Miss Wallace” is written in the top right-hand corner and underlined twice. This first page only has “ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS” printed on it; other than that, it is blank. But I have added a key: purple is for characters; green for government; pink, foreign policy; yellow, socio-economic; and blue, religious ideas, humanism, Church. This page indicates how the textbook works. The different colours represent different themes related to the A-level

scheme of work. If I wanted to flick through the parts of the book that were related to government, all I need to do is open the book where a green tab emerges.

Annotations do not appear on every page of the book and annotations are not the same on every page of the book that they do appear. Sometimes the notes are detailed. There are explanations and comments in the margins, indications of what paragraphs are talking about, highlighted words or sentences as well as underlining, circling and arrows. These pages feel cluttered but important. Pages with no markings are reduced to blankness. Despite being filled with the same carefully constructed printed prose the black ink on white paper appears lacking without a colourful adornment.

There is no colour scheme when it comes to annotations. Sometimes the pen is green, sometimes black, sometimes blue, sometimes pencil. Highlights are in yellow, orange, messy black and hurried green. Sometimes quotations or key ideas are underlined, sometimes highlighted, sometimes both. Underlines are single, double, squiggly. Some pages contain important extra analysis, definitions of words, full sentences summarising the gist of an argument or explanation. Some are all but blank other than a hurried scrawl or a careless highlight.

There are higher concentrations of annotations in various parts of the book. Henry VII, the first monarch, is fairly well covered. Attention paid to Henry VIII is in some areas incredibly detailed, the pages on the “King’s Great Matter” are covered with ink, but some sections (important sections for the purposes of the A-level) are completely bare other than the occasional tab indicating what type of information is there. Cardinal Wolsey’s foreign policy is entirely without comment. The Mid-Tudor crisis is the most annotated section. Elizabeth’s early reign and the Religious settlement enjoy a lot of attention but as the book progresses fewer and fewer

comments appear. The last page with any markings is page 410. How did I decide which pages to read? I've left no comments to myself about why I read and annotated certain pages. I know I wanted to read the whole book, but I could never find the time. Annotations take on a temporal dimension: they are an indication of time spent reading. This gift of time to the page through markings and highlighting suggests it has something worthwhile to say. The annotations therefore draw meaning from the text written by Elton but also tell another well-known story of the teacher with too little time and too much to do.

4.3 The Uncanniness of *England Under the Tudors*

Brown says that a presence-at-hand encounter with an object, as described by Martin Heidegger, brings the “uncanniness of the ordinary” into view.⁴⁰¹ What is the uncanniness of the ordinary? Brown, who is interested in “how objects grasp you” would perhaps describe the uncanniness of the ordinary as aspects of an object that “elicit your attention, interrupt your concentration, assault your sensorium.”⁴⁰² He is specifically drawing on Heidegger’s ideas about objects as equipment when he talks about grasping objects.

Heidegger thought there were two ways that an object, that is also a piece of equipment, calls your attention. The first mode of encountering is to do with “the task rather than the tools” meaning the “essential characteristics” of the object, the “equipmental being,” “instrumentality,” and “‘ready-to-handness’ remain inconspicuous.”⁴⁰³ The second type of encounter, if we “stop

⁴⁰¹ Brown, *Other Things*, 26.

⁴⁰² Brown, *Other Things*, 23-24.

⁴⁰³ Martin Heidegger quoted by Brown, *Other Things*, 26.

and observe them” is one where the object’s “‘presence-at-hand’ becomes apparent.”⁴⁰⁴ This requires what Heidegger thought of as a “vigilant passivity” that enabled “the other thing, the thingness of things, to dislocate itself.”⁴⁰⁵

The uncanniness of the ordinary is when the “essential characteristics” of an object that are just part of what makes it work as it should, Heidegger uses the example of a door latch, irrupt as something quite different when you decidedly turn your attention toward them. In the case of *England Under the Tudors* it is when some of the essential characteristics, Kolbeck and Röhl’s “material qualities”, reveal themselves as something quite different

The ekphrastic description of *England Under the Tudors* brings forth its uncanniness. The inconspicuous weight, size, and paper become conspicuous; these ordinary qualities of the book become uncanny, strange, mysterious and perhaps unsettling. Bennett says that vital materialists “will linger in those moments during which they find themselves fascinated by objects, taking them as clues to the material vitality that they share with them”⁴⁰⁶ which is what I will now do to to explore further the uncanny ordinariness of *England Under the Tudors*.

4.3.1 The Cover

Finkelstein and McCleery define paratext as the “liminal devices [of a book] that control how a reader perceives the text, such as front and back cover, jacket blurbs, indexes, footnotes, tables of contents, forewords, and prefaces.”⁴⁰⁷ While paratext has been of interest to many

⁴⁰⁴ Brown, *Other Things*, 26.

⁴⁰⁵ Brown, *Other Things*, 32.

⁴⁰⁶ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 17.

⁴⁰⁷ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 141.

bibliographers it was Gerald Genette who looked at these elements of the book as more than hiding places for secret clues about production techniques. Instead, Genette was interested in how “these paratexts become zones of transaction.”⁴⁰⁸ Having previously been dismissed as a less engaging or less relevant part of the written text they have been re-noticed as essential parts of the text that are also part of the materiality of the book.

Finklestein and McCleery offer an interesting story to highlight how paratexts can shape attitudes (and sales) of books. J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series was re-promoted and re-released after the films were made and the publishers maximised cross-over sales between adult and children’s markets by providing separate jackets or covers to the book.⁴⁰⁹ This must, in part, be because people do in fact *judge* a book by its cover, and perhaps more importantly, fear being judged *because of* the cover of the books they read; would a power suit-wearing city slicker wish to be seen with a children’s novel on the morning commute? Genette considers paratexts, book covers included, to be “a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy of an influence on the publis.”⁴¹⁰ Material qualities of books have certain privileges that influence how people perceive the books. Genette thinks this “is at the service of a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading” which perhaps is true, although this does presume there is a “better” and “worse” reception of a text.⁴¹¹ What Genette’s ideas, and the example of J.K. Rowling’s novels, shows is that paratexts can, and are (and have been), “utilized to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose.”⁴¹² Issue could be taken with the idea that the author’s

⁴⁰⁸ Finkelstein and McClerry, *An Introduction to Book History*, 14.

⁴⁰⁹ Finkelstein and McClerry, *An Introduction to Book History*, 127-128.

⁴¹⁰ Gerard Genette quoted by Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 14.

⁴¹¹ Genette quoted by Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 14.

⁴¹² Genette quoted by Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 14.

intended purpose of a written text is the only thing affecting its destiny, but the more imperative matter at hand is that texts, and by extension books, can have a destiny, and perhaps more significantly a desired destiny.

What was the desired destiny for this copy of *England Under the Tudors*? And who envisioned it? Elton? Publishers at Routledge? Was the book's destiny decided before it arrived in my classroom? The notion of destiny clashes with Barad's agential realism. If an object's destiny is decided during its, or because of its, production then the agential cut separating object and subject follows the Cartesian tradition which "takes the distinction for granted" and "presumes...a prior existence of independent entities or relata."⁴¹³ The author or publisher (subjects) are separate entities from the book (object) which can therefore have predetermined boundaries and properties, such as a destiny, assigned to it. Barad rejects this as "relata do not pre-exist relations" and instead "relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions."⁴¹⁴ The object emerged through the process of authorship, publishing, reception, survival and, in the specific case of *England Under the Tudors*, a second and third round of publishing.

But more than that, this specific material object is unique to my classroom and therefore emerged as an object *in* that classroom. Barad says, "it is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful."⁴¹⁵ These intra-actions "enact *agential separability* – the condition of *exteriority-within-phenomena*"

⁴¹³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

⁴¹⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

⁴¹⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

meaning the agential cut is not Cartesian, instead agency must be seen as an “ongoing flow” that gives objects their exteriority, or boundaries, in the phenomena.⁴¹⁶ Boundaries, therefore, are not permanent, agency is ongoing, objects are changeable, destiny is not fixed: it changes.

The paratexts of *England Under the Tudors*, especially the cover, act as reminders that the materiality of this object contributed to its intra-active becoming and changing destiny. The cover has been chosen for this third edition of the book for a specific reason with aesthetic and literary ideals in mind.⁴¹⁷ As well as being assigned to the book for these immaterial reasons, the book was also physically assigned its cover; a plastic covering was stuck to the outer cardboard cover of the book. My copy of *England Under the Tudors* reminds us of this because the plastic covering is coming away from the cardboard acting as a physical reminder of the impermanence of that which we consider solid and permanent. If I were to tug gently at the plastic covering so that it became nothing more than a crinkled mess gathered at the spine of the book, leaving in its wake only a limp cardboard layer robbed of its former historical glory, would the book lose its sedimented values? The book is still *England Under the Tudors*, the written text remains present and its ability to culturally transmit is not lost, but it is weakened, because the cover of the book meant the object had certain power and status without ever being read, without even having to be opened. Part of the book’s prestige is its cover; its materiality.

The same can be said of its chapter formations, its lengthy bibliography, its detailed footnotes, its blank pages. All a physical reminder of the book’s entitled status, it can afford pages of nothing, nine of them in fact. Although the author’s or publisher’s beliefs about the

⁴¹⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

⁴¹⁷ There were different covers for the first and second editions of the book.

book's destiny play a part in how the book unfolded in the classroom, these are sedimented values assigned *in* the materiality of the object rather than merely properties assigned *to* the book; they are part of its intra-active destiny, not its pre-determined destiny. Significantly these beliefs are part of the object's materiality; the power of *England Under the Tudors* does not reside solely in its written text or cultural transmission. The fraying edges of *England Under the Tudors* are a physical indication of the object's ability to mutate. Wear and tear have meant that the physical boundaries of the book are changing. The cover reminds us that book's materiality is part of the book's power, but power is not permanent, it can be peeled away. So, do judge a book by its cover, because it says a lot more about the book than simply what it looks like at first glance.

4.3.2 Pages

4.3.2.1 The Teacher-Reader

John Issitt thinks “the general sentiment, in Britain at least, seems to be that the knowledge in textbooks is in some way second-rate knowledge and that the teachers, the writers and the learners who engage with them in their different ways are somehow doing something second-rate.”⁴¹⁸ Much of this, according to Terry Haydn, is to do with what textbooks look like (as discussed in detail in Chapter 3). These are textbooks that are “intertextual field[s]” with “complex spatial order of textual elements” that includes textboxes, headers, footers in differing font sizes,

⁴¹⁸ Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” 687.

typeface and colour.⁴¹⁹ These different elements are placed strategically on a page with graphics and visuals. There is a “hierararchical system of juxtapositions” meaning the text is organised in a non-linear manner that guides the reader to read in a certain order.⁴²⁰ This has the effect of making “some things big, and some things small, while others drop out of the picture altogether.”⁴²¹ Textbooks are designed so readers use the visual clues to “orient themselves and find their own way through the text.”⁴²² The reading of this type of textbook is a guided practice: the reader is guided by the spatial organisation of the page.

England Under the Tudors does not fit into this definition of a textbook despite being a primer⁴²³ for A-level. The experience of reading is therefore not guided and instead reading “is an interpretation that admits ambiguity and difference.”⁴²⁴ Meaning “is the creation of the reader from the text rather than solely framed by the text itself.”⁴²⁵ There is a certain romanticism to this idea of reading. Finkelstein and McCleery suggest that “the extremist wing of the reader-as-interpreter perspective would argue that the reader can create anything he or she likes from a text without boundaries or restriction” although they themselves adopt a more moderate view stating simply that “reading is not passive.”⁴²⁶ This type of reading does feel more active, more interesting, more lively than the version of reading associated with textbooks. What I would like

⁴¹⁹ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴²⁰ John Law quoted by Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴²¹ Law quoted by Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 404-405.

⁴²² Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 404.

⁴²³ A primer is a type of textbook. It is often referring to a first textbook, a primary resource, but in can refer to any book that offers the basic elements of any subject. *England Under the Tudors* was a primer as it offered the basic elements of Tudor history, according to Elton, for A-level students being introduced to this period of history.

⁴²⁴ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 109.

⁴²⁵ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 109.

⁴²⁶ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 117.

to ponder is how the teacher-reader, reading for the purpose of understanding, but also seeking ways to make other people (students) understand and, in this case, bring an historical narrative to life, reads in a way that sits in the liminal space between these somewhat binary conceptualizations of the reader as active or passive.

The physical alterations I made were largely written meaning that as a teacher-reader I was both a reader and a writer.⁴²⁷ Barad says that “meaning is not a property of individual words or groups or words but an ongoing performance of the world.”⁴²⁸ The teacher-reader who is a writer brings this sharply into focus. My appropriation of *England Under the Tudors* could be seen as an exercise in “‘finding places in the text’ or, in other ways, locating oneself relative to the text and its “phrases, argumentative steps, narrative parts and functions.”⁴²⁹ The highlighting, underlining, commentary in the margins, circles, arrows, post-it notes, etc.... altered the spatial arrangement of the page. The materiality of the paper meant markings were clear and despite there being no specific order to how I annotated the text, the chaos as a whole created a sense of order that changed the book so it operated as a textbook for me. I oriented myself in the text through my own comments taking meaning from the text but this meaning was not “solely framed by the text itself” because my commentary was part of the meaning-making process. The first time I read a page, I actively read, but subsequent reading may have been more passive as I let my own spatial arrangements dictate my reading experience; a guided experience rather than a searching one.

⁴²⁷ General wear and tear of the book through use and the application of post-it notes can not be included here but are still physical alterations that I made.

⁴²⁸ Barad, “Agential Realism,” 149.

⁴²⁹ W. Sharrock and N. Ikeya quoted by Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 404.

4.3.2.2 Paper

Writing has been considered the “physical manifestation of truth” owing to its “permanency that outlasted oral presentation” and its power that “exerted itself through its presence in material form.”⁴³⁰ The annotations I made to *England Under the Tudors* were a form of writing and could be seen as my physical manifestaion of truth in relation to the historical narrative I sought to create from the narrative presented to me as text by Elton. The materiality of the paper made a difference to how this manifestation of truth emerged.

From a new materialist perspective the idea of a human hand touching paper, and the subsequent reaction to the texture and feel of the paper, is complicated because the human hand is privileged over the paper if the hand is the only thing doing the touching. Following Barad’s observation that “we are not outside observers of the world” we are also not the only objects or bodies that touch.⁴³¹ We are, as Bohr reminds us, part of the nature we seek to understand meaning we touch nature but nature also touches us. This is echoed by Sam Mickey who says “it is not just a human who touches. Even a stone touches. Sense makes sense for everything, not just for humans.”⁴³² Following this line of thought, when I touch the paper of *England Under the Tudors* it also touches me.

Jacques Derrida, when criticising Maurice Merleau-Ponty amongst other theorists, referred to this privileging of human touch in philosophy as “humanualism.”⁴³³ The roots of humanulaism are deep and “the privileging of the hand” can be seen as “hand in hand with other

⁴³⁰ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 38-39.

⁴³¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 184.

⁴³² Sam Mickey, “Touching Without Touching: Objects of Post-Deconstructive Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology,” *Open Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2018): 294.

⁴³³ Jacques Derrida quoted by Sam Mickey, “Touching Without Touching,” 292.

hierarchies that emerged in the philosophies of ancient religious traditions, such as the subordination of the material to the spiritual, or darkness to light, and of women to men.”⁴³⁴

Recognising that non-human objects touch objects, including humans, including myself, shifts my perception of my reaction to paper. Perhaps this is less of a reaction *to paper* and instead is something paper is *doing to me* by touching me. This shift away from humanulism provides a different way of revealing the animate qualities of the book.

The material of the paper affected (and affects) me; the pages of *England Under the Tudors* have what could be called texturised agency. They are smooth and soothing to me. This causes an effect in my behaviour because I am happy and willing to touch them, and turn them, and write on them. My appropriation of the book to create, what to me, is a textbook is driven by the materiality of the paper: matter making meaning. This meaning is an historical narrative (of the epistmeological kind). It is informed by what textbooks usually do for me and my role as an active reader of Elton’s text. Comments that indicate my personal take on what Elton is saying illustrate the entangled nature of materiality, reading, and and writing as a “manifestation of truth” in narrative form.

4.3.3 Weight

Having spent quite some time lingering with *England Under the Tudors*’s cover and pages I am keen to consider an aspect of the object that it shares with all physical objects, not just books, its weight. I am particulary struck by the weight of *England Under the Tudors*. A bag of sugar weighs 1kg or 1000 grams. *England Under the Tudors* weighs almost 7/10ths of

⁴³⁴ Mickey, “Touching Without Touching,” 292.

one bag of sugar – approaching three-quarters of a bag of sugar. Is this surprising? As I hold the book in one hand and a bag of sugar in the other the difference in weight feels hardly recognizable. But it is quite heavy for a book that is used every day.

Kolbeck and Röhl suggest that textbooks are “designed in a way that meets certain anticipated demands of working with them that distinguishes them from other books” with one of them being that “their weight is limited due to ergonomic concerns.”⁴³⁵ I cannot be certain that ergonomic concerns were high on Elton’s agenda when he wrote his manuscript nor when Methuen & Co (who first published the book) published it. But, other textbooks that my students used more regularly were more likely produced with this specific design criteria and therefore *England Under the Tudors* may have always been uncanny to my students in terms of its weight.

Rezart says “in order to use a book, one has to know how to manipulate it, how to hold it correctly, how to turn pages.”⁴³⁶ While I am not suggesting my students did not know how to read or hold books at all there is evidence that suggests they found holding and reading this book troublesome. There were many occasions when the students would “forget” to bring their copies of *England Under the Tudors* to school. As time progressed, and we got to know each other better, it emerged that this was because it was too heavy.

Heidegger, when talking of the interaction of objects and bodies, considered that “doing things “at” the table is what makes the table what it is and not some other thing.”⁴³⁷ Ahmed talks of her own experience as a writer and how huddling over her desk means her “body feels a

⁴³⁵ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴³⁶ Rezard quoted by Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴³⁷ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 245.

certain way.”⁴³⁸ Both are alluding to how objects shape bodies. The majority of students did not like how their bodies felt when they had to carry Elton’s book which meant they tended to leave their books at home; they did not like how the object shaped their bodies in particular ways.

Reading, as Engert and Kray state, “is a bodily practice with [a] textual artefact” and for my students the practice of reading included the transporation of the book to and from the classroom.⁴³⁹ The more the students “forgot” their copy of the book the less I used it in class as a textbook that we all read at the same time: the “material qualities [were] (made) relvant in and for practical use.”⁴⁴⁰ The weight of the book, an aspect that many may consider to be “banal and mundane”⁴⁴¹ reveals itself to be an essential element of the book’s liveliness contributing to the intra-active becoming of the object as one of status and prestige in the classroom space. For although I had the same copy of the *England Under the Tudors* as the students, my copy was present in the classroom in a different way and its pedagogical authority, whilst being embedded in it from the outset, emerged in, and through, its visibility as well as my use and appropriation of the book, partly because I was willing (or compelled) to allow the object to shape my body in a certain way.

Barad discusses an experiment where one of the scientists, a man, smoked cigars. The scientist’s sulfuric breath turned “faint, nearly invisible, silver traces to jet black silver sulfide traces” meaning the results of the experiment being conducted were seen.⁴⁴² If it had not been for the scientist’s sulfuric breath then the nearly invisible lines would have remained invisible.

⁴³⁸ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 247.

⁴³⁹ K. Engbert and B. Kray quoted by Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴⁴⁰ Kolbeck and Röhl, “Textbook Practices,” 405.

⁴⁴¹ Magilchrist, “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” 174

⁴⁴² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 165.

Barad uses this example to highlight how “material practices that contributed to the production of gendered individuals also contributed to the materialization of this particular scientific result”⁴⁴³ or, in other words, “the gendered and classed performance of masculinity mattered.”⁴⁴⁴ In regards to the experiment Barad is talking about how the gender and class of the scientist both mattered and emerged as material, bodily practices that *affected* the meaning of the experiment. Matter and meaning were intertwined.

As discovered by lingering with the pages of *England Under the Tudors* my personal take on Elton’s historical interpretation emerged as part of the bodily practice of reading and writing the book. Finkelstein and McCleery recognise reading as “both a social phenomenon... and an individual experience” that is “itself creative, forming meaning from the interaction of reader and text.”⁴⁴⁵ The performance the work enacts on the reader is individual and influenced by the reader’s “values, experiences and cultural references”⁴⁴⁶ but also as a social act, “part of the history of reception” meaning individual readers tend to be part of what Stanley Fish calls “interpretive communities” who interpret texts in similar ways.⁴⁴⁷

My values, experiences and cultural references include my class and gender and would have had an effect on how I negotiated the historical narrative offered by Elton and what guidance I provided for myself for future readings when appropriating the text. My copy of *England Under the Tudors* emerges in the classroom as a specific object with certain qualities that are a result of bodily, material practices on behalf of both the teacher and students that

⁴⁴³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 165.

⁴⁴⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 167.

⁴⁴⁵ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 102.

⁴⁴⁶ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 117.

⁴⁴⁷ Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 102.

results in a certain narrative, a certain take on Elton's text, my take, becoming sacrosanct in the classroom rather than the entirety of the text Elton wrote. The weightiness of *England Under the Tudors* serves, in the end, to perhaps elevate my voice rather than Elton's. I teach about Elton's interpretation by using aspects of argument and quotations from his text but to what extent is it Elton's interpretation and to what extent is it mine? The students' dislike of the way *England Under the Tudors* shaped their bodies meant nine times out of ten it was my copy of the object that was referenced and referred which meant our voices, mine and Elton's, emerged together rather than separately.

4.4 Concluding Thoughts

The ekphrastic description, written as it is in its aesthetic form, cannot really be concluded. It is a product of the researcher's aesthetic orientation toward the object, and vigilant passivity whilst observing and writing about it, but, as Bal makes clear, the intention of an artist "over time gives way to abandon" and "abandon is the opposite of intention."⁴⁴⁸ My intentions give way to abandon as soon as the ekphrastic description is read. I could choose to select the salient points but I choose not to as that would undermine the aesthetic purpose and form of the description as a whole so I will leave it as it stands.

The emergent themes discussed in this chapter do warrant a brief conclusion. Lingering with some different material aspects of *England Under the Tudors* and exploring their animate and lively qualities revealed a number of things. Lingering with the cover illustrated that the boundaries of a book, material and immaterial, change and mutate meaning a book can never

⁴⁴⁸ Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 257.

have a pre-determined destiny. From a new materialist perspective destiny is on-going and flowing, a condition of being rather than a finite destination. This revelation disrupted and questioned the book's status, prestige, and power revealing these things to be material yet also impermanent.

Lingering with the pages revealed firstly that the appropriation of the text by the teacher was guided largely by an active experience of reading that created a subsequent passive one. It was a process of transformation where the book become a textbook for the teacher. This process was itself guided, or affected, by the texture, and textual qualities, of the paper. All this meant matter was the driving force behind the creation of meaning which was the teacher's annotated historical narrative.

Finally, lingering with the weight of the book revealed how collective bodily practice on behalf of both my students and I resulted in my copy of *England Under the Tudors* emerging in a particular way. An on-going consequence of this was, perhaps, that the boundaries separating my narrative from Elton's was blurred in the classroom.

These three emergent themes illustrate that how *England Under the Tudors* was part of a complex interplay of text, materiality, and teacher, connection meant the object's status, prestige, and power materialised in the classroom in very specific ways unique to this particular relationship. The object is more a companion than a tool as the boundaries separating the teacher and the object are blurred giving both agency and animate capacities. *England Under the Tudors* was a material facet of the teacher's being-in-the-classroom which had specific and tangible effects on the historical narrative that came to life in the classroom.

Chapter 5: Sedimentation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attends to the second research question: What were the conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, of *England Under the Tudors* in the classroom? The metaphor of sedimentation will be employed to explore these ideas. “Sedimentation is generally considered by geologists in terms of textures, structures, and fossil content of the deposits laid down in different geographic and geomorphic environments.”⁴⁴⁹ It is the “settling of solid particles from fluids.”⁴⁵⁰ In regards to *England Under the Tudors* the terms “deposits”, “settling”, “textures”, and “structures” are helpful metaphors to think with for the ekphrastic description. Ekphrastic descriptions, traditionally, are descriptions of visual experiences of works of art, but the works of art are always material objects, such as Achilles Shield or Keats’ *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The metaphors of texture and structure used to provide clarity for the writing by providing something material to describe. Going back to Barad, to her use of metaphors, she says that metaphors are “not to be taken literally as representation; rather, it is offered as an evocation and provocation to think with.”⁴⁵¹ Approaching these themes in this way is an attempt to bring them to life through aesthetic capabilities of language to allow for Eisner’s “aesthetic modes of knowing.”⁴⁵²

The second part of this chapter lingers with the ekphrastic description and Darnton’s definition of Bourdieu’s literary field: “a set of relations determined by lines of force and regulated according to the rules of the game by accepted players”⁴⁵³ It is a helpful definition as it

⁴⁴⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/science/sedimentation-geology>

⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/science/sedimentation-geology>

⁴⁵¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 181.

⁴⁵² Eisner, “Aesthetic Modes of Knowing,” 23.

⁴⁵³ Darnton, “‘What Is the History of Books?’ Revisited,” 504.

provides a foundation, or jumping off point, to think about the school's culture, chosen aesthetic and ethos, as described in the ekphrastic description. By lingering with this ekphrastic description and Darnton's definition some of the "lines of force", or sedimented values, can be explored.

5.2 Ekphrastic Description

The two structures that will be discussed are:

- a) The Leadership Team (as a body of people) who presented the object to the teacher
- b) The School (both as architectural building and its chosen aesthetic style) as the space the object was used in

As we are discussing how *England Under the Tudors* was used as a lively classroom companion the metaphorical structures being discussed are linked to the educational environment the object was used in, looking specifically at school cultures and how they are created. The ekphrastic descriptions of the leadership team and the school building not only provide something material to describe they are also descriptions of the school's culture, the chosen school aesthetic, and the ethos of the school.

5.2.1 The Leadership Team

The leadership team wore black suits. Armani black suits to be precise. Or so the head always used to tell us. It always seemed like an odd topic to boast about but uniformity, smartness, style, and a whiff of wealth were important to him, so he told us all the time. The leadership team wore black suits with white shirts and a coloured tie but a respectable coloured tie: navy blue, burgundy, maybe a very deep, ecclesiastical purple. Any patterns were subtle,

understated. Minimal white dots, a barely visible pinstripe. Female members of the leadership team, of course, did not have to wear ties but it did throw the uniformity off. Luckily this was rarely a problem.

The leadership team stalked the corridors. Sometimes they came into your classroom unannounced, sometimes they loitered in the corridors, sometimes they travelled in menacing packs. In the children's film *The Never-Ending Story* there is a mystical force called "The Nothing." In the film, "The Nothing" is depicted as a black storm that sweeps through the land leaving nothing in its wake. As a child I was terrified by this nothingness, a mute, deadened blackness that descended on the world to extinguish life and light. "The Nothing" was a cause and an effect; the leadership team operated in the same way. Their presence was both a cause and an effect. As a whole, the bodies of the leadership team were a black shadow moving about the school. They were feared, just as "The Nothing" was, and their presence stifled the liveness of the space they were in. Voices were muffled, eyes lowered, bodies tensed. There was a frantic stillness to this atmosphere which was submissive but expectant of release. And release generally came, when the shadow moved on, and life seeped back into the classroom and everybody breathed a sigh of relief.

The leadership team were oppressive. The leadership team were sleek. There was an oiliness to their being-in-the-world. Not in a sleazy or dirty way, but instead in a smooth and gliding way. Their presence was never abrupt and rarely noisy. Sometimes they were shrieking, loud – yelling with ear-splitting screams in the faces of children. But it was a calculated roar and separate to their present-ness in a room. They approached quietly, and carefully, their oiliness spreading into a space, coating the surfaces with a shimmering, grey sheen. As they left, the

oiliness departed, but it left a residue of oppressive softness in its wake, clinging to the surfaces and slowly dissipating.

The leadership team had sharp lines. The sharp lines of their suits, their cuffs, their polished shoes. The sharp lines of their postcards they used to communicate. Left as notes on your desk, rather than an email: a sharp-edged instruction on a stiff, white cardboard. A calling-card of uniformity. The leadership team drew sharp lines when they crossed out children's writing in their workbooks or made students line up in the corridor. The leadership team stood in sharp lines when they stood at the gate welcoming children to school. The leadership team sat in straight lines in front of the staff during staff meetings. The leadership team were all right-angles and paper-cut edges. There was no softness to their form.

5.2.2 The School Building

The school building felt as though it was more space than building. The classrooms hugged the edges leaving the heart of the structure as space and light. This was a celebrated building where the clean, light, transparent atmosphere was billed as the perfect environment for rigour (a favourite word used by the head) study, and scholarship. The building was innovative, modern, a glittering symbol of devotion in glass and steel to the gods of order and calm. The building was extraordinary, not ordinary. The building represented the aspirations of the school's staff and students. For something better, lighter, brighter, something crystallised and translucence. An ethereal objective; the embodiment of moving out of the dark into the light. The building *was* the students' (supposed) journey to a better life.

The classrooms reflected the order of the building in its entirety in neat, individual units. One side of the building was for specialised classrooms: science labs, the design and technology

studio, art classrooms, and IT rooms with suites of computers. The other side was for standard classrooms. These classrooms were all exactly the same and spread over four floors. Tables were in a horseshoe formation with four further tables (to seat eight) in two neat lines in the centre of the horseshoe. The tables and chairs were bespoke. Made by the furniture design company Ercol the chairs were ergonomic excellence in sleek and sculptured elm. Pleasing to the eye and smooth to touch, the furniture was perfectly suited to a hardly used dining room of an absent family. For constant use in a busy school they were less than ideal. They broke (because children swing on chairs). Routine checks meant chairs in the danger zone were marked with tiny red stickers. Red dots of potential disorder.

The front of the classroom was all cupboard doors with an interactive white board in the centre. Behind the cupboards were cubby holes and cupboards as well as a desk space for the teacher to work. Textbooks and exercise books, exam scripts and revision guides sat in these spaces. The teacher space was everything the teacher needed. A marking space, a planning space, a place to print (all classrooms had a printer), a place to store personal belongings (all classrooms had a lockable teacher cupboard). This space could also be the staff room, the dining room, a changing room. Why leave your classroom at all if everything is provided for you there?

The building was clean. Sparkling clean. The carpets were always hoovered, the bins always empty, the walls always painted, the windows always washed. The building was tidy. Surfaces were always cleared, cupboards always closed, papers always stacked. The building was ordered. Chairs were tucked in, tables were straight, books were piled. No loose papers fluttered in the wind. No equipment languished on the floor. Objects had a place, and a purpose. And into this space came the chaos of children but they were subservient to the power of the building. They too had a place, and a purpose. Their uniform was tidy (otherwise they went

home), their books were neat (otherwise they were thrown away) and their pencil cases had the right type of pen (otherwise they were no good).

Applied to this canvas of order and calm was an aesthetic of scholarship. The corridor and classroom displays were chosen by the leadership team. Large, square images and text in black and white. Margaret Thatcher, the Queen, and Winston Churchill adorned the walls. The poetry of T.S. Elliot and Philip Larkin nestled amongst the spires of Oxford. Alan Bennett was present in every classroom. Shakespeare littered the corridors. But none of his frivolity. *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night* had no place here. This scholarship was serious. And male. *King Lear* was present. And *Hamlet*. And *Henry II*. The Romans were invited. And the Tudors. Queen Elizabeth had pride of place. The Americans were there – JFK and perhaps Martin Luther King. But other than that, the walls were mainly British or the unknown wilderness – the desert, the rainforest, the tundra. Around this corner you found Durham Cathedral. Around that one was the Yorkshire Moors. Collectively the images did not create a narrative, nor provide anything specific. This was a representation of scholarship that sat on the walls as decoration. Scholarship was an idea, an attitude, an atmosphere.

5.3 Lingering with Cultural Capital and Neoliberalism

This discussion about the “lines of force” that the ekphrastic description of the leadership team and school building allude to is focused on two specific emergent themes that are entangled in English school settings: cultural capital and neoliberalism. Each line of force is considered separately, with some consideration given to the theory behind it and how this presents itself in the English education system and English schools.

5.3.1 Cultural Capital

A literary field, as conceptualised by Bourdieu, including an educational field, is a field of struggles (as touched upon in chapter two) because it is where the “culture of the dominant class is transmitted.”⁴⁵⁴ Cultural capital is the most valuable form of capital in the educational field where “teachers have the most cultural capital” and “value it.”⁴⁵⁵ Cultural capital is therefore, according to Bourdieu, a power resource.⁴⁵⁶ Bourdieu clarifies that cultural capital is made up of objectified cultural capital⁴⁵⁷, institutionalized cultural capital,⁴⁵⁸ and embodied cultural capital.⁴⁵⁹ These three forms of cultural capital are in a relationship together because “institutionalized cultural capital develops as a result of one’s having embodied cultural capital and successfully connecting it via the education system.”⁴⁶⁰

Dominic Pollard and Patrick Alexander offer some interesting insight into how the term “cultural capital” has, in their view, been “co-opted” by the political mainstream meaning it is used as “an unproblematic language for calculating the cumulative ingredients required for social mobility.”⁴⁶¹ In reference to the English schooling, speaking specifically about one school in

⁴⁵⁴ Susan A. Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success: The Role of Habitus,” *Sociology of Education* 75, no. 1 (2006): 44.

⁴⁵⁵ Bourdieu (1973), Bourdieu (1984) and DiMaggio and Useem (1978) quoted by Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46.

⁴⁵⁶ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46.

⁴⁵⁷ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46. Objectified cultural capital are objects that require cultural capital to understand them e.g. works of art.

⁴⁵⁸ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46. Institutionalized cultural capital are educational credentials and credentializing system.

⁴⁵⁹ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46. Embodied cultural capital is a “disposition to appreciate and understand cultural goods.”

⁴⁶⁰ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 46.

⁴⁶¹ Dominic Pollard and Patrick Alexander, “‘An Attempt to Tip the Scales’: Music and Embodied Capital in an English Secondary School,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 40, no. 3 (2019): 311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1540293>.

north London (Regent's Park Academy)⁴⁶², Pollard and Alexander assert that a privileging of "certain kinds of dominant cultural practice" takes place "within an unproblematic framing of social mobility."⁴⁶³ The issue with this practice is that Bourdieu frames "the school" as somewhere that "validates the cultural capital already disproportionately held"⁴⁶⁴ amongst its students. He states that the necessary "linguistic and cultural competence" needed for a "relationship of familiarity with culture" can "only be produced by family upbringing"⁴⁶⁵ and not by schools. It is because "the education system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give" that it upholds the status quo.⁴⁶⁶ Pollard and Alexander state that he goes as far as to warn against the "illusory nature" of cultural capital "as [a] direct means of changing one's position in society."⁴⁶⁷ Pollard and Alexander are looking specifically at Regent's Park Academy's musical instrument programme⁴⁶⁸ and the tensions that exist between its "emancipatory aims" and its "sanctioning and championing of certain types of dominant culture."⁴⁶⁹ They conclude by stating that "even the most laudable attempts to 'tip the scales' of social justice in schools can become ensnared in neoliberal discourse about social mobility and aspiration" which ultimately uphold "the markers of difference they set out to topple."⁴⁷⁰ Their

⁴⁶² Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 309-313. Regent's Park Academy is located in an "under privileged, ethnically diverse area of North London." It is a "non-selective, non-denominational, mixed-gender, combined primary and secondary school." The school opened in 2007. The majority of students are "children from Arabic backgrounds, and of Muslim faith."

⁴⁶³ Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 310

⁴⁶⁴ Bourdieu, 1986, 49 quoted by Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 310.

⁴⁶⁵ Bourdieu quoted by Dumais, "Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success," 44.

⁴⁶⁶ Bourdieu quoted by Dumais, "Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success," 44.

⁴⁶⁷ Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 311.

⁴⁶⁸ Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 314. Every year 7 student is given a string instrument (violin, viola, or cello) for three years. If they take music at GCSE, they can keep the instrument for a further two years. Pupils attend music lessons every day. The entire project is free.

⁴⁶⁹ Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 309.

⁴⁷⁰ Pollard and Alexander, "An Attempt to Tip the Scales," 310.

research suggests that on the whole cultural capital is a confused and problematic concept that has a very distinct place in English schools and the curriculum that is conceived and enacted in these schools.

5.3.2 Cultural Markers

The ekphrastic description of the leadership team and the school building take on new qualities if they are considered alongside the ideas about cultural capital in English schools put forward by Pollard and Alexander. The leadership team's dress code, their postcards which resembled the stationery of the Victorian elite, the expensive, bespoke classroom furniture in chic elm rather than tacky plastic all promote a very specific culture. You could go as far as saying that the wall displays were objectified cultural capital that required embodied cultural capital in order to understand them. These textures and structures of the leadership team and school building that are caught up in an overly simplified conceptualisation of cultural capital could be said to be the cultural markers of the school.

The idea of cultural markers comes from Tom Bennett. In 2017 Bennett, the UK's Department for Education's "behaviour czar"⁴⁷¹, wrote a report "Creating a Culture: How School Leaders Can Optimise Behaviour" commenting on English schools.⁴⁷² Bennett's focus was/is behaviour but his comments about how a school creates a culture are pertinent to this study.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ <https://researched.org.uk/sessions/tom-bennett/>. Tom Bennett became the UK government's school 'Behaviour Czar' in 2015. He advises the government on behaviour policy.

⁴⁷² Tom Bennett, "Creating a Culture: How School Leaders Can Optimise Behaviour," *UK Department for Education*, no. March (2017), 1-76.

⁴⁷³ Bennett was appointed by the Minister of Education in an advisory manner to conduct this report and has been appointed a further role to respond to a problem in some English schools with behaviour. With the help of a £10 million government initiative Bennett will oversee a crackdown on bad behaviour

Bennet thinks that “good school leaders are the conscious architects of their school cultures.”⁴⁷⁴

As conscious architects they are also role models because “school leaders possess the widest and most influential levers to influence the school culture. What they do or not do – is crucial.”⁴⁷⁵

When speaking to headteachers, Bennet says they often “spoke of the need for them to constantly display the values and habits they wanted to see in their staff by setting a good example” and “they also agreed that senior staff were key role models for the staff body, as well as students.”⁴⁷⁶

A school’s culture “can be publicly conveyed” through “cultural markers or levers” which are “visible reminders that the school has a shared identity with shared values.”⁴⁷⁷

Cultural markers and levers can include things such as uniform, stationery and equipment, and wall displays but also include the values, habits and examples set by the head, their leadership and the staff as a whole.⁴⁷⁸ This is all part of the school’s chosen aesthetic and ethos.⁴⁷⁹

Class and cultural capital are intrinsically linked because family upbringing, which determines cultural capital, is “dependent on social class.”⁴⁸⁰ An off the cuff comment from Mr. Samson, the Assistant Head of Music at Regent’s Park Academy, captures how class and cultural capital are constantly and consistently intertwined in English schools. He believes that the school’s musical instrument programme will open up “valued forms of cultural participation”

helping roughly 500 struggling schools. This is a response to a real crisis in English schools and Bennett’s conversation about behaviour is restricted to behaviour and school cultures.

⁴⁷⁴ Bennett, “Creating a Culture,” 30.

⁴⁷⁵ Bennett, “Creating a Culture,” 12.

⁴⁷⁶ Bennett, “Creating a Culture,” 51.

⁴⁷⁷ Bennett, “Creating a Culture,” 48.

⁴⁷⁸ Bennett, “Creating a Culture,” 48-51.

⁴⁷⁹ The term aesthetic here is used interchangeably with both look and style. This is different to the definition of aesthetic that informs the orientation of the study.

⁴⁸⁰ Dumais, “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success,” 44.

such as The Proms⁴⁸¹ to his students as they will believe it is “something they could go to, not just some posh person’s thing.”⁴⁸² The “intention to redress this “presumed perspective on the behalf of his students is, Pollard and Alexander think, “admirable,” but laced with implicit assumptions about both his students and The Proms. His students are not posh, The Proms is posh. Attending and appreciating The Proms is a “legitimate cultural practice” and therefore by helping his students to achieve this goal he is helping them by legitimising them.⁴⁸³ The entire set of relations here, the teacher’s assumptions and intentions, the musical instrument programme, The Proms as a goal all serve to invalidate cultural practices from students’ own upbringing and “frame social mobility as an ideal attainable through the accrual of certain capacities and bodies of knowledge.”⁴⁸⁴

The same could be said of the textures and structures of the leadership team and the school building. So many of the cultural markers of the leadership team and school building are connected to British nuances of class. The types of image and types of text used such as Shakespeare, the Tudors, Thatcher, Oxford’s spires, are saturated in and by class. Even the way the leadership moved about the building, presented themselves, used their voices, even wrote – in cursive handwriting on stiff cardboard not printed text on floppy paper or a blinking screen. All these gestures, movements, tones were to an extent about class and classed.

⁴⁸¹ The Proms, short for “Promenade Concerts” are orchestral, and mainly classical, music concerts organised by the BBC. They take place every year in London from mid-July to September in a variety of venues including the Royal Albert Hall and outdoor locations. They were started more than 100 years ago.

⁴⁸² Pollard and Alexander, “An Attempt to Tip the Scales,” 316.

⁴⁸³ Bourdieu (1984) quoted by Pollard and Alexander, “An Attempt to Tip the Scales,” 310.

⁴⁸⁴ Pollard and Alexander, “An Attempt to Tip the Scales,” 316.

The intentions behind this are potentially laudable, to an extent. Pollard and Alexander state that “Bourdieu provides a powerful point of departure for framing how, at the subtle level of embodied cultural capital, ideas about culture and its values are installed through everyday movements and everyday sounds.” He points out that this embodied cultural capital is still illusory and will have not real effect on your social standing, but nonetheless he does point to the possibility of acquiring a diminished version of cultural capital.

This was the leadership team’s intention: to model for students a way to be in the world that the head and the leadership team considered appropriate and successful. Their version of embodied capital drew what could be called more obvious objects of cultural capital with links to class but was also about a way of being that was reserved, refined, considered, appreciative, contemplative, hushed, and ultimately classed. A way of being that they thought would allow the students to succeed. However laudable intentions, there is no escaping the fact that the leadership team’s actions and intentions fed into a wider movement in English schools that uses the language of aspiration and social mobility to mask a “less benevolent” agenda that “underpin the practice[s] in terms of reinforcing asymmetries of power.”⁴⁸⁵ This brings us to our next line of force: neoliberalism.

5.3.3 Neoliberalism

Pollard and Alexander bring to the conversation the tension of cultural capital as a mechanism used in schools to bring about social justice and social mobility whilst simultaneously contributing and facilitating a neoliberal agenda. They allude to neoliberal

⁴⁸⁵ Pollard and Alexander, “An Attempt to Tip the Scales,” 310.

values and ideals without offering an in-depth definition of what that means. Gert Biesta deconstructs the neoliberal educational experience in the following way which is a helpful addition to this conversation. The “learner is the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain needs” which positions the learner as an empty vessel who needs to be filled up.⁴⁸⁶ The teacher or the educational institution “is seen as the provider...who is there to meet the needs of the learner” meaning “education itself becomes a commodity – a ‘thing’ – to be provided or delivered by the teacher or educational institution.”⁴⁸⁷ Thus “learning equates to consumption.”⁴⁸⁸

The learner as a consumer is caught up in what Zipin et al call “doxic” aspirations.⁴⁸⁹ The term “raising aspirations” has become a widespread policy prescription, Zipin et al argue, without consideration that aspirations are “subjective and intersubjective” and can be theorized in a number of ways.⁴⁹⁰ Neoliberal discourse has shifted the conversation regarding aspiration from being a societal responsibility to an individual one: “individuals must take responsibility, as lifelong learners and entrepreneurs of the self, to navigate their own achievement of well-being, or have themselves to blame for becoming ‘wasted lives.’”⁴⁹¹ “Doxic” aspirations are those based on what Bourdieu calls doxa logic, or “common sense” assumptions and beliefs, that “circulate[s] powerfully across diverse settings of everyday life: constituting underlying logics

⁴⁸⁶ Gert J.J. Biesta quoted by Tyson E. Lewis, “Rethinking the Learning Society: Giorgio Agamben on Studying, Stupidity, and Impotence,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 30, no. 6 (2011): 586.

⁴⁸⁷ Biesta quoted by Lewis, “Rethinking the Learning Society,” 586.

⁴⁸⁸ Lewis, “Rethinking the Learning Society,” 586.

⁴⁸⁹ Lew Zipin et al., “Educating for Futures in Marginalized Regions: A Sociological Framework for Rethinking and Researching Aspirations,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2015): 227.

⁴⁹⁰ Zipin et al., “Education for Futures in Marginalized Regions,” 228.

⁴⁹¹ Zipin et al., “Education for Futures in Marginalized Regions,” 229.

that seem more-or-less unquestionable for many.”⁴⁹² The meritocratic principle that “if you work hard enough you can attain your dream” whatever it is becomes logically, “common sense.” Working hard, at the cost of other aspects of life, say socialising, is a “necessary sacrifice” for those intent on pursuing “upwardly mobile life chances.”⁴⁹³ However, should students fail to achieve their dream doxic logic suggests this is a deficit on the student’s behalf for wasting their “talent, hard work and focus” when they were offered the chance to capitalise on them when in school. A consumer-student with aspirations to “improve” their life wants a school that “markets” itself as a place where this can be achieved, where they will capitalise on their talent and will be able to work hard and focus.

When market values are applied to schools, the way a school looks is important because the school is constantly marketing itself. Its unique pattern of order or culture become part of the brand of the school which is advertised to prospective students (and their parents). The ekphrastic description of the school leadership team and the school building illustrates how this specific school chose to market itself and which particular cultural markers they chose to adopt. The clinical nature of the school’s chosen aesthetic, the enforced order, uniformity and contrived sense of calm are caught up in the school adherence to doxic aspirations. The sharp lines of the leadership team, the efficiency of the classrooms, the compartmentalisation of bodies and books, even the materiality of the building: glass, metal, wood all contribute to a brand that is corporate and business like. There are no distractions here. No scrappy student work on the walls. No

⁴⁹² Zipin et al., “Education for Futures in Marginalized Regions,” 231.

⁴⁹³ Zipin et al., “Education for Futures in Marginalized Regions,” 232.

notices about cancelled football matches. There are hardly any signs of children. Why would there be? Is this even really about children?

5.4 A Return to the Object

This brief survey of cultural capital and neoliberalism reveals how powerful these lines of force are on the set of relations for both the English education system in general and each individual school that is part of it. In a way it forces us to question to what extent the leadership team could have been “conscious architects” of the school culture and perhaps posit them as unconscious architects adapting to the lines of force that regulate the rules of the game. Whatever their role, conscious or unconscious, it is in this context that *England Under the Tudors* was gifted to myself and my class. This next section will consider how the lines of force affected the conditions of arrival and conditions of use of *England Under the Tudors* by returning to the object. As part of the intra-active becoming of the school space the sedimented historicity of the leadership team and the school building are also the sedimented historicity of *England Under the Tudors*. This all had an effect on how the object’s lively nature and how it was used as a classroom companion.

5.4.1 On Brand

The object was part of the school’s aesthetic; it was chosen as a cultural marker. It shows up as an object of cultural capital that sits amongst these other objects of class and, thinking specifically of the book’s bookishness, of its status and prestige, these two qualities can be seen as very distinctly classed. *England Under the Tudors* fitted with the tone of aspiration and elevation the leadership team wanted to emulate. If my classroom was visited by prospective

parents or important guests (which it routinely was although less so the more I chose to orient myself differently to that of the leadership team) then it would look “good” if the students had a copy of the book on their desks. Having walked along the corridors past T.S. Elliot’s verses, St Paul’s Cathedral, and a windswept beach in north Norfolk, *England Under the Tudors* neatly fitted in with the scholastic setting and the conversation about seeing student potential, aspiration, and academic success. Peter McDonald talks about publishers “investing books with prestige”⁴⁹⁴ but in this case it was the leadership team and the school building itself that invested in *England Under the Tudors*.

Preferably the book would not even be open; the cover gives the book much of its status. First there is the name: Elton. Elton personifies these ideas about class and cultural capital. Elton was born Gottfried Rudolph Otto Ehrenberg on 1921 in Tübingen, Germany. The family lived in Prague until 1939 when Elton’s mother fortuitously arranged their passage to England. In his last years Elton would say “that England was the country he should have been born into.”⁴⁹⁵ His brother believed that “it was the army which turned his brother into an Englishman, even a ‘super-Englishman.’”⁴⁹⁶ Either way, Elton went on to not be just any Englishman but instead a Cambridge don (he was a fellow at Clare College, University of Cambridge), a “colossus” of the University’s Faculty of History working there for 45 years and occupying the seat of Regius Professor of Modern History for his last five years.

His father before him had been awarded the Litt. D *Honorius causa* at the University of Cambridge, the first refugee scholar to be offered this award. This only adds to Elton’s status as

⁴⁹⁴ McDonald, “Implicit Structures and Explicit Interactions,” 111.

⁴⁹⁵ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton 1921 - 1994,” 433.

⁴⁹⁶ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton 1921 - 1994,” 434.

this makes him part of Britain's "intellectual aristocracy."⁴⁹⁷ Being a member of this group is important as it is a signal that your cultural capital is embodied, inherited, and generational rather than learnt or acquired. How many visitors would know about G.R. Elton a heavyweight Tudor historian who died in the early 1990s?⁴⁹⁸ It is impossible to say, however, even the style of the book (a book not a textbook), the prominence of place of his name, the size of the book, its weight (as perceived by somebody looking at it on a table), and the font all gave the book its status as a scholarly book. A book that is difficult to understand. A book that suggests hard work but also an ability in the reader of the book. *England Under the Tudors* was both an object of cultural capital and representative of the students' embodied cultural capital as they were reading it.

5.4.2 Obligation

Owing to the importance place on *England Under the Tudors* because of its class status and associations with needed and wanted cultural capital I felt obliged to use it. To be obliged is

⁴⁹⁷ Cannadine, Keating, and Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History*, 104.

⁴⁹⁸ It is very difficult to gauge this, but more people do know about Elton because his interpretation of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister during the Reformation, has been used and upheld by Hilary Mantel in her historical novels about this period (*Wolf Hall* and *Bringing Up the Bodies*). Mantel's novels focus on Cromwell and although they may not follow Elton's interpretation to the letter the fact that she chose to write an entire trilogy (we are still waiting on the third book) about Cromwell is partly due to Elton discovering him in the archives in the first place. Both of Mantel's books were made into a very successful BBC 6-part series, *Wolf Hall*, starring Mark Rylance as Thomas Cromwell that aired in January 2015 in the UK. I have no way of proving this, but I think my head wanted me to teach the Tudors because of this miniseries. I did not start teaching the Tudors until September 2016 but the decision to teach the Tudors came way before that and it came from the head. He was a huge fan of the miniseries and brought copies for my students to share (I think he bought eight copies in total for them to share in groups of three). He also showed clips in assembly all the time. As a marketing ploy, teaching the Tudors and having *England Under the Tudors* on the desks of his A level history classes was both on trend (people really did talk about that miniseries for a long time afterwards) and provided him with something to talk to visitors about as soon as he came into the classroom.

to be legally or morally bound to do something.⁴⁹⁹ I felt obliged to use *England Under the Tudors* as a textbook in my classroom because it was purchased for me and my students by the leadership team. My obligation to use the book was tied up with how I oriented toward it as an object. “To be oriented in a certain way is how certain things come to be significant, come to be objects *for me* (emphasis author’s own).”⁵⁰⁰ By this Ahmed means that objects appear and function in specific and individual ways. The leadership team’s obsession with uniformity and order meant I oriented toward *England Under the Tudors* in a certain way. The object acquired its shape through my orientation toward it as a symbol of control; an extension of the leadership team that was in my teaching space, an intruder. In some ways you could say I was afraid of *England Under the Tudors*. I was scared of the consequences if I did not use it.

As well as being a feared object it was also a tainted object. It stained my teaching practice with the oily residue of the leadership team. The object was reduced to neither a book nor a textbook and was merely a tool of oppression, a spy in the classroom, a dull, grey symbol of order and uniformity that had been thrust upon me. But I still used it as a classroom tool and a textbook. I used it a lot. I read it, and questioned it, and paraphrased it, and discussed it. It was an ever-present part of the historical narrative I taught.

And despite it being an infiltrator it was also welcomed and cherished; the spy who came in from the cold. I did not allow the object to fully control me and my students and I believe that was also to do with my obligation but this time to my students. Melanie Janzen and Anne Phelan

⁴⁹⁹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/oblige>

⁵⁰⁰ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 235.

“conceptualize the teacher’s need to respond to students as obligation.”⁵⁰¹ This sense of obligation is a “visceral sense”⁵⁰² to respond to the “tugging at our sleeves” by children.⁵⁰³ It is “what gives teaching its moral integrity, while at the same time, takes an enormous emotional toll on teachers.”⁵⁰⁴ I felt obliged to use *England Under the Tudors* because I felt it enhanced the learning experiences of my students. No matter how tainted it became it was still Elton’s interpretation of the Tudors and still a relevant epistemological narrative that the students should know.

5.4.3 Appropriation

The appropriation of the text and changes to the physical appearance of the object are tied up with this sense of obligation. In order to oblige the needs of my students I had to manipulate the object so that it conformed to what I perceived those needs to be. Much of this is to do with the type of historical narrative I was teaching (to be discussed further in chapter six). As previously discussed in Chapter Four my actions as a teacher-reader meant I was transforming the book through writing in it and this appropriation was affected by the lively nature of the physicality of the object: its weight and its texture among other things. What I want to consider now is how the appropriation of the text was in part an act of defiance. Janzen and Phelan talk about “acts of disengagement from the profession” being “necessary [acts of] disobedience.”⁵⁰⁵ These acts of disobedience are necessary for the student but also for the teacher. Disobedience

⁵⁰¹ Melanie D. Janzen and Anne M. Phelan, “‘Tugging at Our Sleeves’: Understanding Experiences of Obligation in Teaching,” *Teaching Education* 30, no. 1 (2018): 17.

⁵⁰² Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 17.

⁵⁰³ John D. Caputo quoted by Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 17.

⁵⁰⁴ Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 17.

⁵⁰⁵ Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 17, 24.

are “practices of resistance” that “struggle against/with the practices of performativity.”⁵⁰⁶

Disobedience becomes a daily experience and a practice of freedom for individual teachers.⁵⁰⁷

In a structure that imposes uniformity and instructs its staff to exhibit a sense of order in performative ways disobedience is a release, an escape, an expression of individuality, and a witnessing of the self.

How did I witness myself and express my individuality when I wrote in *England Under the Tudors*? Feminist scholars, Ahmed states, have pointed out the masculinity of philosophy through the “disappearance of the subject under the sign of the universal.”⁵⁰⁸ This means that some objects, and some bodies, are associated with the masculine because the universal has been synonymous with the masculine. Ahmed uses the example of writing and male philosophers writing at the table. “Gender becomes naturalized as a property of bodies, objects, and spaces” meaning the table *is* masculine.⁵⁰⁹ Women have historically claimed spaces that do not traditionally belong to them by “doing things” with objects in those spaces. For the female writer then, “the table is not simply what she faces but it is the ‘site’ upon which she makes her feminist point.”⁵¹⁰ Her feminist point is material and immaterial; the point is both the tip of her pen marking the paper she writes on and the point she wishes to convey in her text. In a school labouring under the sign of universal in order to create desired sense of order any teacher choosing to make a point that disrupts the pattern is making a feminist point; a rebellion against

⁵⁰⁶ Stephen Ball and Antonio Olmedo quoted by Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 25.

⁵⁰⁷ Ball and Olmedo quoted by Janzen and Phelan, “Tugging at Our Sleeves,” 25.

⁵⁰⁸ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 249.

⁵⁰⁹ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 250.

⁵¹⁰ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 252.

the masculine disguised as the universal. Every line, every comment, every arrow, every ink stain in *England Under the Tudors* then becomes part of this feminist rebellion.

5.5 Concluding Thoughts

The process of writing the ekphrastic description and lingering with the ideas of cultural capital and neoliberalism has provided me, the researcher and (former teacher), with a very important lexicon about English schooling at this present moment in time. Much of the discussion about neoliberal shifts, complications regarding cultural capital, and aspiration are things I *felt* as I worked as a teacher but did not necessarily have the language to articulate. The writing process of this particular chapter has therefore been a cathartic experience. For that reason, and for the same reasons I gave in the conclusion to Chapter Four, I will choose not to offer any concluding comments on the ekphrastic description itself nor on the considerations of cultural capital and neoliberalism and instead leave them as they stand. But I will draw together the comments made about how the lines of force affected the conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, of *England Under the Tudors* by returning to Barad.

A central tenant of Barad's agential realism (previously mentioned) is that "relata do not pre-exist relations."⁵¹¹ Lingering with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capitalism and the connected impact of neoliberalism in English schools brings this idea sharply into focus. The ideas here are part of the sedimented historicity of the object. These historicities come from the "practices through which [the object] is produced."⁵¹² *England Under the Tudors* emerged a

⁵¹¹ Barad, "*Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

⁵¹² Barad, "*Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

specific cultural marker of class because of these specific sedimented values. The subsequent conditions of arrival which in turn created the conditions of use are a result of these lines of force.

My obligation to use the text, my fear of it combined with my reverence were affected by different lines of force that were part of the set of relations of the school. These aspects of the object (the relata) did not pre-exist the relations. If I used the book in another school would I have felt the need to witness myself and make a feminist point? Would the conditions of arrival of the book have had the same pomp and splendour as it received in this school? How might the object emerge in an untidy school, or failing school, or an independent school, or a school outside of London? This links back to emergent themes from chapter four about books and their destinies and how these are ever-changing.

This ekphrastic description of the leadership team and the school building has shown how *England Under the Tudors* was “enriched” and “ingrained”⁵¹³ by the “work done by generations.”⁵¹⁴ It illustrates how the culture and ethos of a school not only affects humans but non-humans and become part of the “property of the object.”⁵¹⁵ Ultimately this means that the “past is never left behind, never finished once and for all.”⁵¹⁶ The work of generations, in connection to class, politics, education and schooling, never finishes. Changes in policy or attitude do not signal the end of something. Instead these ideas reverberate through subsequent generations through their sedimentation only to emerge in diverse ways in different settings.

⁵¹³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

⁵¹⁴ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

⁵¹⁵ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

⁵¹⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 76.

England Under the Tudors can therefore be seen as not only a lively and vibrant object but also an on-going product of its conditions of arrival and conditions of use.

Chapter 6: Portraits of a Classroom

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider how *England Under the Tudors* was used by the teacher to inform the historical narrative that was taught about Henry VIII by offering an ekphrastic description of the material objects and immaterial aspects in the teaching space in which *England Under the Tudors* was used. The ekphrastic description attempts to paint a portrait of Barad's idea of an *onto-epistem-ological* historical narrative that seeks to move away from dualist notions of object and subject, human and non-human, material and immaterial, epistemological and ontological, and past, present and future. It does so in light of the previous two chapters looking at *England Under the Tudors* materiality as well as the lines of force affecting its conditions of arrival and conditions of use and draws upon some of the emergent themes from these two chapters. The portrait is, despite its heavy theoretical conceptualisation, is simply of an ordinary history classroom looking closely at one particular textbook.

Returning to Jane Bennett's ideas, she suggests that the grouping of different items is significant. For her the assortment of random objects she encounters (glove, pollen, rat, cat, stick⁵¹⁷), presented themselves as "live, throbbing confederations"⁵¹⁸ that are vibrant because they are a collection, not individual items. To attempt to capture the throbbing vibrancy of the history classroom the ekphrastic description will focus on the collective presence of objects rather than magnify in detail the individual qualities of each as chapter four did with *England Under the Tudors*.

⁵¹⁷ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 4.

⁵¹⁸ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 6.

Having painted a picture, or written a portrait, of the history classroom and its objects, certain aspects of the narrative of Henry VIII that form the assemblage of the classroom will be lingered with: these will be Elton's depiction of Thomas Cromwell, Cardinal Wolsey and his embodiment of the Catholic Church, and the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Ultimately, this chapter is thinking about how I taught the narrative of Henry VIII, how I *lived* it in the classroom, and it speculates on how my students *may* have lived the narrative in order to *know* it. It is about painting a portrait of our being-in-the classroom to try to capture the experience of history and the effects this had on the different epistemological narratives that were part of this experience. How was this experience particular to the conditions and situation that gave rise to it? How did we formulate or co-construct a narrative as we worked with narratives of others? What was *England Under the Tudors*' role in this?

6.2 Ekphrastic Description

The teacher's desk is an ordered explosion of colour. A secretive rainbow of stationery and history hidden behind a blue sliding door. Concealed every evening, and discovered each morning, this left-hand corner of the classroom belongs to the teacher. Nestled amongst the objects provided by the school (black and red Uni-ball pens in Cath Kidston mugs, HB pencils, and a wicker basket for correspondence) is a ramshackle collection of things. Material objects and immaterial ideas essential for teaching.

A collection of autobiographies and biographies to assist with teaching modern British history. In the red corner Harold Wilson sits next to Tony Blair (perhaps he would be pink rather than red.) And in the blue corner are Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Gandhi's autobiography sits alongside the *Oxford Book of Quotations* and John Keats' anthology of poetry, a remnant of

the teacher's own A-level studies. When Henry VIII, or Thomas Cromwell, or Cardinal Wolsey appear on the interactive whiteboard (in word or image form) they do so always next to these tomes. These books are the Tudor historical characters classroom confidantes.

Various historical books and textbooks (A-level and GCSE) on Britain, the Tudors, the French Revolution and more take up the right-hand side of both the top and bottom shelves of the desk (there are only two). There are also some rouge Geography GCSE textbooks and RE workbooks to assist with teaching topics far removed from the teacher's comfort zone to younger students. The books on the French Revolution remind students, and the teacher, what is yet to come (the French Revolution is the next period of history to be studied for history) and the books on modern Britain remind them what could have been, as if they were just a year older (the students only this time), they would never have been introduced to Cromwell and instead Clement Attlee, Roy Jenkins, and Edward Heath would have been their academic escorts because the year above follow a different curriculum.

On the top shelf a poster with a wise owl saying, "Our lives are not full of problems, they are full of learning opportunities" rests against the wall, flanked by a 10-minute sand timer and some candles. What is really a fake gold jewellery stand, but resembles, rather helpfully, a golden cross, is joined by a tiny fake crown, purchased on a school trip to the Tower of London, and a blue Buddha head. The jewellery stand is part of the classroom version of the Catholic and Protestant church because the crucifix remained central to both. When the jewellery stand is part of the Catholic church it is joined by the candles, by a large silver jewellery box, by the teacher's crystals (amethyst for creative thinking, clear quartz for clarity, black for tourmaline) to represent riches and wealth. When the jewellery stand is part of the Protestant church it stands alone with only the Bible to keep it company. A small, white copy. A christening present given

to the teacher that has only ever found purpose in this classroom setting. The crown is at times Henry VIII's, but previously it has been Henry VII's and as the classroom is shared with other students learning other things sometimes the crown is William the Conqueror's. Sometimes it is King Harold's and it falls from his head when he is shot through the eye.

The left-hand corner of the bottom shelf is for stationery. Writing instruments that rebel against conformity: spare gold and white pencils, spare pens that are not Uni-ball; broken pens, blue pens, biros. Colouring pencils, felt-tips, contraband highlighters, spare rulers collected from forgetful students, multi-coloured bull-dog clips, abandoned pencils cases, maths equipment, and broken rubbers. Classroom essentials not deemed necessary hide in boxes: Blu Tack, Sellotape, stickers and jazzy coloured labels; but only when the classroom rests and teaching does not take place. During lessons all these items escape their enforced static state and burst to life in the hands of children. They mark books, make mistakes, fall on the floor, blot, spill and very occasionally fly through the air.

It is these material objects that materialise the immaterial narrative. Enhance certain aspects. Stress particular plot lines and story arcs. Highlighters codify students' work to exemplify what fact fits what theme. Pink is for political. The National Survey (1522), The Supplication of the Ordinaries (1532), and the Fall of the Cromwell (1540) are all fuchsia facts. Some facts are two-toned. The publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) is orange and blue: socio-economic and religious. The Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries (1536) is a veritable rainbow: pink, orange and blue. Blue Tac attaches these concepts, printed on A4 paper, to walls and cupboards and desks or the students, depending on the lesson format. Maybe somebody is going to be Anne of Cleves today. Or Mary Queen of Scots. Bull-dog clips group similar ideas together: a bundle of Henry VIII's wives perhaps, a collection of key acts of Parliament, a pile of

vital battles, lost and won. Rulers underline for emphasis, stickers mark important passages, Sellotape mends broken words.

The main desk is meant to be clear for important work but during the course of a lesson it becomes littered with the debris of the day. Confiscated mobile phones, disposable coffee mugs, water bottles, random exercise books, piles of work, piles of paper. The far-left corner is reserved for important books and notes: the teacher-set of A-level notes, exercise books full of model essays, the textbooks that inform everyday lessons. This is the essential information of the teaching day; the oil that ensures the engine runs smoothly. If the oil runs dry, if the teacher forgets, these items need to be close at hand to stop the machine from completely grinding to a halt. By the end of the day some of these items lie open, some have pages folded over, some have additional notes added, some remain closed and in the corner. It all depends on what oil is needed that day.

There are some ideas that are always needed, the most fundamental element of oil: the carbon. Cardinal Wolsey became chancellor in 1515 and fell from grace 24 years later. Cromwell reigned (almost, or so Elton would have us think) supreme until 1540. Cromwell was a “new man” and Wolsey was church man. Henry VIII had six wives: divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived (but we’ll only really discuss the first two).

The right-hand side of the classroom, the other side of the interactive white board (if you are facing the front) is all cubby-holes for exercise books (which must be marked), for piles of textbooks to be handed out to students. For piles of old copies of the magazine *History Today* donated by an elderly neighbour of the school. For accumulated further textbooks, and articles, and books, and DVDs. All stored in neat piles, a semblance of order to save them from the bin.

Fancy dress items live in the larger cupboard behind the door. A full-length purple, velvet coat – ideal for both Catholic priests and kings. A silky kaftan – large enough to be put on over any child’s full uniform, including the jacket. A number of police hats, a bowler hat, a top hat (my grandfather’s), a bonnet. Some toy swords. Some items that are too awkward to store. The blocks for students’ scissors. Spare Pritt Sticks. Posters, and model villages, and other student-made items that are not needed anymore but hold so much hard-work, determination, pride, and joy they are too special to discard. And instead will clutter the cupboards until the end of the year when tiredness will decide their fate.

A paucity of space, resources, time, and money creates a needs-must in the history classroom. Tudor ladies did not wear kaftans, but the kaftan symbolises the feminine in this history classroom because that is all there is available. So, should there be a part of the lesson with acting, it is not uncommon for Jane Seymour or Anne of Cleves to be in a kaftan. There were no police hats in the sixteenth century. There were no police. At least not in the same way that they are police today. But things were policed. And so, when the King’s men, on Cromwell’s orders, arrived at the monasteries to assess their wealth and remove their riches they did so in this history classroom wearing a black and white police hat to represent law and order, and with a plastic sword to represent the threat of violence.

To a certain extent, as the teacher, I control how these objects move about the room. Or at least I have a plan for them. And I know them all. I know the good Pritt Sticks are hidden right at the back of the cupboard. I know I have lent the top hat to another teacher. I know there is spare paper under the printer. I know that the resources for that day are laid out on the window sill. I know where my coffee is. I know students should understand the consequences of the Ten Articles of Faith (1536) by the end of the lesson. I know that it doesn’t matter if they

don't remember the exact date Catherine Parr married Henry VIII, only that she was last and after Catherine Howard.

The first year A-level students who enter the room, who are being taught the narrative, cannot really be planned for in the same way. They are good students and it is a strict school, so they behave. They listen. They are interested (for the most part). They want to do well in their exam. With each lesson we all get to know each other a little more. We get to know the rhythm of learning that takes place and how it works best for us. But we cannot know everything about each other. Instead we come into being in the classroom together. Each student comes into being in a particular manner in the teaching space bringing their own sedimented histories with them; their stories, their possessions, their thoughts, and their questions. The same can be said of every object that comes into the space. Each object materialises through practice to emerge as a product with a past, a future, an intention, a value, a use that are all part of their materiality in this particular set of relations.

The students are different to the objects of the room because they are visitors. They will leave when the bell goes for the next lesson or the end of school. Again, the same thing could be said of all the objects in the room. Time is always fleeting, and they will not stay forever. But I am reminded of something a student said to me in my first term of teaching. "You live near me, Miss! I can't really imagine you leaving this classroom. I always think of you here, in your classroom." The students enter Miss Wallace's history classroom with Miss Wallace's things. The things, and the space, and the learning, and the ideas are all part of the experience of Miss Wallace's teaching.

The students connect to the material objects and immaterial aspects in different ways. Some need to borrow equipment. Some need new books. Some have forgotten their books and

need paper. Some want to alter the lesson resources. They want to cut them down to size, fold them, tear them, doodle on the back. Some could not care less and slot them into a pile of papers at the end of the lesson, to be lost forever. Some come prepared with their own notes-- homework tasks begrudgingly completed. Some don't bother.

Sometimes an essay is due to be marked. This is different. Its absence is noted and questioned. It belongs in a different exercise book. It should be a certain type of length. It should be legible. It should exist. In these notes and essay, snippets of the narrative are pressed together to varying degrees of success. Luther's 95 thesis (1517) was a catalyst for change across Europe (yes, tick) and influenced Henry VIII greatly (debatable, what about the *Fidei Defensor* in 1521?) Wolsey only called two parliaments during his time as chief minister in 1515 and 1521 (yes and no, the second was 1523 – but the dates don't matter, yet). Elton considers the Tudor revolution to begin when Cromwell was promoted to the inner ring of the council in 1531 (very good!) The “rough wooing” did not work but war with France started in 1544 (yes, but how do these things connect to each other?)

And where, in the assemblage, is *England Under the Tudors*? Everywhere. And sometimes nowhere at all. *England Under the Tudors* is an essential text in the left-hand corner of the teacher's desk. It is idolised by students for its signs of use, so worn, so many post-it notes, so many annotations. It is a physical representation of time spent on learning, something they admire, even crave, but do not necessarily want to commit to. Further copies may or may not be on students' desks, or in their bags, or in their hands, but it is the teacher's copy that is always present and guides the lessons.

Elton's words are written on the interactive whiteboard, paraphrased by the teacher, quoted by students. Elton is derided for revering Thomas Cromwell so keenly and so deeply.

Elton is himself revered for the impact he made on Tudor historiography. Elton is compared to other historians such as David Starkey, John Guy, and J.J. Scarisbrick, all of whom are contemporaries to Elton, some of whom were his students. *England Under the Tudors* is used as a reference on some occasions. *England Under the Tudors* is used as a prop; a physical representation of an historical interpretation. Passages from *England Under the Tudors* are set as homework. Passages are read aloud during lessons. Passages are critiqued in order to assess whether it provides a “convincing interpretation”⁵¹⁹ in comparison to another historian’s views; a prerequisite for the exam. *England Under the Tudors* is one object amongst many others, just another book on the shelf. But its conditions of arrival, and conditions of use, bring it forth in unique and interesting ways.

6.3 Stories in the Story

The ekphrastic description offers a portrait of the classroom that attempts to describe the lived experience of the onto-epistemo-logical historical narrative by picturing the classroom as an (im)material assemblage. This next section magnifies some of the stories within the story; some of the different interpretations nestling within narrative in its totality. Using *England Under the Tudors* as the starting point and returning to some of the emergent themes from chapters 4 and 5, the aim of the final part of this chapter is to consider how the materiality of the book, with its sedimented values, had an effect on the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative.

⁵¹⁹ AQA, “AS History Tudors: England, 1485-1693 7041/1C Consolidation of the Tudor Dynasty: England, 1485-1547” (AQA, 2016), 3.

Before launching into the different aspects of the onto-epistem-ological historical narrative I want to note my choice of language when it comes to the “bedfellows” discussed in Chapter Two: “narrative” “account” and “interpretation.” When I studied for my Post-Graduate Certificate of Education at the Institute of Education, I was taught that interpretations, not accounts, was one of the second-order concepts.⁵²⁰ As a teacher I have therefore always approached this broader idea of histories from the angle that there are different interpretations of the past. This means the interpreter, the historian, has always been very central to my teaching practice. For this reason, I stray away from the term account in this chapter. This was what I understood interpretations to mean while I was teaching, and, to an extent, how I understood historical narratives in the broader sense from an epistemological perspective. While I did not employ the term narrative very much at the time of teaching, if I had used it, it would have been interchangeably with interpretations as, at the time, I saw no drastic differences in these two terms.

6.3.1 Thomas Cromwell: An Obligation

In the preface to the first edition of *England Under the Tudors* (written in July 1954) Elton says: “I have come to some conclusions, especially about the place of Thomas Cromwell, the importance of the 1530s, and the nature of the Tudor polity, which – though by no means necessarily original – go counter to some accepted notions.”⁵²¹ After spending two years in the Public Records Office, Elton finished his PhD thesis “in record time” which went on to inform

⁵²⁰ This is not to say that the term account was not used but it was not the one we used day-to-day despite it seemingly being so important in Britain.

⁵²¹ G.R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors* (Routledge: London and New York, 1991), vii

his first published book *The Tudor Revolution in Government*.⁵²² The main thrust of his argument in this work was that “the 1530s constituted a great age of reform in the institutions and process of English governance, a veritable revolution.”⁵²³ According to Elton, in the space of one decade the English state “attained full sovereignty” and replaced personal government and financial management of the king’s household with “Westminster bureaucracy which had at its heart the progenitor of modern cabinet government.”⁵²⁴ He repeats the views he put forward in *The Tudor Revolution in Government* in *England Under the Tudors* saying that Cromwell “founded the modern constitutional monarchy in England and organised the sovereign national state.”⁵²⁵ He signals Cromwell’s entry into the narrative as the moment when “the Tudor revolution was about to begin.”⁵²⁶ Despite heavy attack on this interpretation from the outset⁵²⁷ Cromwell “insisted to the end on [its] essential correctness” stating in the preface to the second edition of *England Under the Tudors*: “I continued to stand by the view of the sixteenth century which I expressed here from the first” which he does not deter from in the preface to the third edition.⁵²⁸

Patrick Collinson thinks that “it became fashionable to say that Elton, the effective, tough but principled go-getter, formed Thomas Cromwell in his own image.”⁵²⁹ At the very least

⁵²² Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton,” 439. Elton’s thesis was titled “Thomas Cromwell: Aspects of his Administrative Work.” He began his research in September 1946 and had finished by 1948.

⁵²³ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton,” 439.

⁵²⁴ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton,” 439.

⁵²⁵ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 128.

⁵²⁶ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 126.

⁵²⁷ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 439. Professor R.B. Wernham challenged Elton’s thesis when it was first published in *English Historical Review*, however, it did, for a time, become the “new orthodoxy” It came under attack in the 1980s “by some of Elton’s own pupils. This knocked it from its top-spot as the go to text and orthodox interpretation.

⁵²⁸ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, v.

⁵²⁹ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 440.

Cromwell was “an incarnation of Elton’s philosophy of history” which was that “the past had really happened, and the truth could be told.”⁵³⁰ Despite vociferously rejecting the idea that the historian is part of the history he writes,⁵³¹ Elton’s Cromwell is somewhat synonymous with him: the historian and history are mixed up together.

Elton deemed Cromwell to have a “naturally powerful intellect” yet also be “virtually devoid of passion” making him “the most remarkable revolutionary in English history – a man who knew precisely where he was going and who nearly always achieved the end he had in view.”⁵³² This vision of Cromwell was of that of an efficient bureaucrat-come-revolutionary. Cromwell was “cold”, “killed for purpose only” (rather than in a fit of passion like Henry VIII), and “showed no weakness – attractive or otherwise.”⁵³³ Elton rejects a widely held assumption that Cromwell was Machiavellian and instead presents him as a man who was “ruthless in affairs, but lacked cruelty” while also seeing “little purpose in mercy.”⁵³⁴ He was a man of determination and resolve who had a plan that he wanted to see come to fruition. He was a man with aspirations. Elton dismisses criticism of Cromwell, putting it down largely to “the sentimental eighteenth century [that] went maudlin over the ruins of the monasteries” and a need to “exculpate Henry VIII” and find a scapegoat.⁵³⁵ There is, however, a sense, although perhaps not Machiavellian, Cromwell was a stubborn and inflexible man with tunnel-vision toward an ultimate worthy goal.

⁵³⁰ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 440.

⁵³¹ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 441. Collinson describes Elton as an uncompromising positivist.

⁵³² Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 127.

⁵³³ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 128.

⁵³⁴ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 128.

⁵³⁵ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 128.

It would be unsurprising if Elton saw these attributes as positives rather than negatives. Perhaps because he himself, by all accounts, was so unwavering in his views about Cromwell but also the discipline of history in general.⁵³⁶ Collinson considers Elton's "brief for history epistemologically shaky" because it refuses to consider how the historian does in some sense invent her history through the questions she asks.⁵³⁷ He thinks Elton's views are "most applicable to the history of government and political institutions, least helpful to the study of ideas, or, as it might be, art, or religion."⁵³⁸ Collinson considers his views to be "rooted in a passion for liberty and order" but this does not take away from the fact that there is a stubbornness and narrow-mindedness to Elton's "passion and order" exemplified in both his philosophy and practice of history.

Thinking back to some of the ideas introduced in chapter 4 from McGann and Hayles about how readers interpret books as material objects, not just the texts, I want to consider how the materiality of *England Under the Tudors* contributed to its "emergent properties" that informed the historical narrative and shaped this specific story within a story about the role of Thomas Cromwell.⁵³⁹ From a new materialist perspective, it is not only the author and text that

⁵³⁶ Collinson, "Geoffrey Rudolph Elton," 441-442. Elton's philosophy of history (a term he considered pejorative) is best exemplified in his book *The Practice of History*. Published in 1967 this is usually read as a response to E.H. Carr's *What is History?* (published in 1964). It extolled the virtues of mastering "the relevant evidence in its totality." The purpose of studying and writing history was "on its own terms and even for its own stakes." Collinson suggests these views are no longer fashionable.

⁵³⁷ Collinson, "Geoffrey Rudolph Elton," 441-442. Collinson thinks that Elton believed in the "autonomy of history" and pushed against offerings from other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. Doug Munro, "Michael Turnbull, G. R. Elton, and the Making of the Practice of History," *Historical Journal* 58, no. 3 (2015): 816. Doug Munro furthers this by saying that Elton was "insistent on the 'independent reality' of the past and proclaimed that 'The historian [is] the servant of his evidence.'"

⁵³⁸ Collinson, "Geoffrey Rudolph Elton," 441-442.

⁵³⁹ Hayes, "Print is Flat, Code is Deep," 71.

exist together but also content and materiality, which exist in a “complex dynamic interplay.”⁵⁴⁰ Cromwell and/or Elton become “embodied entities” that come into being in the classroom *with* the book’s material and sedimented qualities, and vice versa.⁵⁴¹ The physicality of the book: its weight, its size, its very bookishness – the cover, the institutional typeface, the chapter headings, the endless identical pages of black ink on white paper are all part of the experience of the author and of Cromwell.

When Thomas Cromwell sets about getting Henry VIII a divorce from Catherine of Aragon the acts he passes, which are part of the Tudor revolution in government, are not only read in the book, they *are* the book. The Act Against Annates (January 1532)⁵⁴², the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533)⁵⁴³, and the Act of Supremacy (1534)⁵⁴⁴ come into being in the classroom with the formality of *England Under the Tudors*. The ideas hang heavy with the status the book affords them as they are all part of the “Elton Thesis.” Elton’s meticulous description of each act, each change, each criticism, and each consequence need to be liberated

⁵⁴⁰ Hayes, “Print is Flat, Code is Deep,” 71.

⁵⁴¹ Hayes, “Print is Flat, Code is Deep,” 71.

⁵⁴² Michael Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors: England 1485-1603*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015), 78. The Act of Annates (formally known as the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates) was passed in 1532. It was “designed to increase pressure on the papacy by withholding conditionally the first year’s income from the office of bishop which the papacy had traditionally enjoyed.” Or, in other words, this act stopped one of the flows of money from the church in England to Rome.

⁵⁴³ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106. The Act in Restraint of Appeals restricted anybody from appealing to Rome regarding Church court decisions on matters to do with matrimony. It meant Catherine of Aragon could not appeal to Rome when her marriage was annulled by Church courts in England. The preamble to this act is particularly important, and highlighted by Elton, as it declares the monarch possessed imperial jurisdiction meaning no foreign power (i.e. the Pope) could interfere. It was drafted by Cromwell and is a central part of both the break with Rome and the “Elton thesis.” Elton says of the Act in Restraint of Appeals “it stated as accepted facts that the king was supreme head and the realm a sovereign state free from all foreign authority.” Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 133.

⁵⁴⁴ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106. The Act of Supremacy “gave legislative force to the royal supremacy” set out in the preamble to the Act in Restraint of appeals. It was this act that “effectively accomplished the break from Rome.”

from the prison of black ink on white page formality and turned about in the classroom in order to understand them. The teaching activities that accommodate this tend to mirror the methodological approach of both historian and historical character. Lessons looking at Cromwell and the Tudor revolution are ones with comparisons, lists, datelines, comprehension questions and bullet points. These lessons included Pritt Stick⁵⁴⁵, needed to stick in various tables, definitions, and exemplar paragraphs. These lessons include highlighter colour codes, dictionaries, quizzical looks, fuzzy heads and a dominant teacher voice. The learning is logical, linear, and often limp. This is a story in a straight line, a clear account where one thing led to another clearly and coherently with little outside interference. This was Cromwell's mission retold by Elton caught in *England Under the Tudor's* bookishness and released into the classroom

Cromwell's material presence in the classroom brings with it the sense of order and obligation that are part of *England Under the Tudor's* sedimented values (as discussed in chapter 5). There are similarities to be made between Cromwell (and indeed Elton) and the leadership team as conscious architects of the school with a specific mission. Just as Cromwell had a goal, so did the school, and the goal, for both, was aspirational. Was Cromwell's goal a doxic aspiration? Was Elton following the mantra of "if you work hard you can attain your dream" by burying himself in the archives? Were the leadership team ruthless and lacking in mercy but because they felt their mission was justified? The dynamic interplay of text and materiality, materiality and sedimented values, sedimented values and narrative are seemingly circular rather

⁵⁴⁵ Pritt Stick is a British brand of glue stick.

than linear. One does not lead to the other, all of them lead to each other and emerge in the classroom together.

The desire for order and calm, the desire for uniformity, for method, for process and procedure that the leadership team imposed on the school reverberates anew through Cromwell's Tudor revolution in government and Elton's strident and uncompromising assessment of him. The same feelings of fear, obligation, and defiance that were part of *England Under the Tudor's* being-in-the-classroom as a material object are part of the story of Thomas Cromwell. This particular interpretation of Henry VIII's reign, this specific way of knowing and understanding the past, becomes one that I was *obliged* to tell but is not necessarily the story I *wanted* to tell. This does not detract from the fact that it is an important part of the experience of the historical narrative as a whole. It is a convincing and significant interpretation that had an impact on other stories. Students do need to know these things; their exam requires they do so. It is the dominant story. It is the school-approved story. But is it the *right* story? And is it the story I would *choose* to tell?

6.3.2 Cardinal Wolsey: An (Im)material Assemblage

I would now like to look at one strand of (im)material assemblage that contributed to Wolsey's story in the classroom considering *England Under the Tudors'* role within this as one classed object amongst many. Elton recognised Cardinal Wolsey as a man with "zeal", "ability in administration", "outstanding powers of work", and "assertive self-confidence."⁵⁴⁶ He also believed him, as Henry VIII's chief minister, to be the man who ran the country between 1515 to

⁵⁴⁶ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 74.

1529 in addition to being a cardinal of the Catholic Church and papal legate.⁵⁴⁷ However, in terms of Wolsey's domestic policy (the area where Cromwell shone), Elton thought Wolsey "proved a singularly ill-advised minister who ruined the finances, exasperated those people whose support was essential to the monarchy, and could not translate his boundless energy into anything profitable to the commonwealth."⁵⁴⁸ In short, Elton holds Wolsey in much lower esteem than his successor, Cromwell. This meant the lines of force connecting Elton to this particular historical character, and his story within the historical narrative of Henry VIII's reign, were not so direct and tightly secured as that of Elton's to Cromwell. Consequently, Wolsey's material manifestation is not so forcefully wound-up with *England Under the Tudor's* formality and sedimented values of order, control and aspiration. Instead, Wolsey presented himself as somewhat of a classed immaterial object, an object seeped in cultural capital owing to his connection to the Catholic Church.

Arguably the most significant part of the narrative of Henry VIII, from whichever angle you look at it, is that during his reign England broke with the Catholic Church, thus creating the Church of England. Elton's focus is always on the political manoeuvres that led to the king being both "Supreme Head of the Church of England" as well a monarch of a "sovereign state free from all foreign authority."⁵⁴⁹ But Elton was not much interested in religion. He had a "distaste for religions as something which only contributed positively to civilisation in its most

⁵⁴⁷ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 75. Wolsey obtained his cardinalate from Pope Leo X in 1515, the same year he became chancellor for Henry VIII. He was granted papal legate *a latere* in 1518 meaning he could exercise specific papal powers without needing to seek permission from Rome. He was granted papal legate for life in 1524. This meant that Wolsey, until his fall in 1529, was the "ecclesiastical rule of the two provinces of the Church" and the permanent "resident of rule of the Church in England" in general. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 85.

⁵⁴⁸ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 81.

⁵⁴⁹ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 133-135.

moderated and compromised forms” and “could hardly forgive Thomas Cromwell for having “‘got religion,’ and would have preferred to have him as a secular proto-modernist.”⁵⁵⁰ David Knowles made a quip when discussing a specific monastery, and its dissolution, that it was “without visible religion (like Geoffrey Elton’s Reformation).”⁵⁵¹ Religion is not centre stage for Elton, even in a story about the rupture of western Christianity.

Although religion does not dominate the direction of Elton’s narrative it is ever present in the background. His text is full of the language of the Catholic Church and Christianity. Elton speaks of an English *clergy* are *anti-clerical*; their abuses are *nepotism*, *absenteeism*, and *simony*. For him the *monks* and *friars* of the *monasteries* are complicit in this anti-clerical abuse, not just the *priests*, but *bishops* and *archbishops*. The Catholic Church involves the *seven sacraments* including *baptism*, *confirmation* and the *Eucharist*. Heaven and hell are separated by *purgatory* where those who die are destined to wait unless they (or their relatives) buy *indulgences* from the church, documents signed by the *Pope* that alleviate *sins* and quicken the journey to heaven. Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus are notable Catholic clergyman, but also *humanists*. They are aggrieved at the abuses of the church, but would never convert to the *Protestant* cause, for that would be *heresy*. Each and every one of these words: heresy, indulgences, archbishop, nepotism etc. are terms that needed to be explained and explored. The class that was encountering these words through Elton, as well as through other texts, on the whole had no real understanding of them. Wolsey’s place in the story served as a vehicle through which to introduce (and re-introduce in some cases) the Catholic Church and its rich terminology.

⁵⁵⁰ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 445.

⁵⁵¹ David Knowles quoted by Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 445.

In contrast to the story of Thomas Cromwell this part of the story about Thomas Wolsey needed to be felt rather than understood. There were parts of Wolsey's narrative that needed the same tables, and lists, and definitions but because his placement in the narrative came at a time when the students needed to absorb centuries worth of philosophy and debate about Catholicism there was a sense of the experience driving the knowledge; ontology shaping the epistemology. The part of the Catholic Church in the overall narrative does not begin and end with Wolsey he just provided a useful conduit through which to explore some of the need to know beliefs and institutions. For that reason, Wolsey came to embody all that was beautiful and sacred about the church, but also all that was wrong with it.

A portrait by an unknown artist of Cardinal Wolsey, painted sometime between 1585 to 1595 (based on a previous work produced circa 1520 when he was still alive) hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London and is the most well-known painting of the cardinal.⁵⁵² It adorns many a history textbook and I used it often in lessons on the interactive whiteboard to cement who exactly it was we were discussing that day. In this painting Wolsey wears the cassock of a Catholic cardinal in deep, vivid red: cardinal red. The painting is oil on panel and the artist, whomever they may have been, has managed to emphasise the luxurious and ornate texture of the cassock by using white to suggest the garment shimmered with sleekness and textual depth. The other physical objects in the classroom that were part of the assemblage of Wolsey and the Catholic Church embody similar notes of ostentation: the gold jewellery stand that serves as a cross; the large silver jewellery box with engravings and a plush, mauve, velvet lining; the purple velvet frock coat with silk cuffs and collar; the crystals in pink, black, and

⁵⁵² <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw06903/Thomas-Wolsey>

green that catch in the light. The very words themselves that are associated with the Catholic Church, the immaterial aspects of the assemblage, have a certain richness to them: pluralism, transubstantiation, excommunicate.

Within this context *England Under the Tudors* is representative of a certain way of being-in-the-world that is at ease with these terms and ideas. It is its status as a classed object, an embodiment of cultural capital, and a representation of scholarship come into view in this particular story. The burnt orange hues of the cover sat well alongside Wolsey's cardinal red cassock and the velvet luxury of the teacher's props. Whereas with Cromwell it was perhaps an occasion where the book, as a classroom companion, was controlling the teacher, with Wolsey it was the other way around. To fully realise the detail of Elton's interpretation of Wolsey I needed to bring his words to life as an experience in the classroom so students could *feel* some of the aspects of the Catholic Church and Catholicism that were so central to the Henry VIII's court, the English Reformation and subsequent historical debate on the matter.

6.3.3 The Pilgrimage of Grace: A Personal Rebellion

On the subject of the Pilgrimage of Grace⁵⁵³, a rebellion during Henry VIII's reign, the Oxford AQA History textbook for A Level and AS states that the "difficulty in analysing the rebels' motivation is reflected in the work of historians, who have asserted a multiplicity of motives."⁵⁵⁴ The causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace are not clear cut. Religious motives are

⁵⁵³ The Pilgrimage of Grace was a rebellion against Henry VIII. It was the largest single rebellion in the history of Tudor England and also, geographically, the most widely spread. It started in October 1536 and had religious and secular motives. It was largely unsuccessful at realising any of its aims.

⁵⁵⁴ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106.

generally thought to have played a part because the dissolution of the monasteries started in the same year (1536). At this stage it was only the smaller monasteries that were being dissolved⁵⁵⁵ There were a number of adverse effects that could be classified as religious issues including the actual loss of the monasteries, which performed charitable and educational functions in many places, the loss of parish churches that were monastic properties, and a general fear in the north of England that monastic lands would be taken by southerners.⁵⁵⁶ My teacher's notes for this particular event suggest that the historian Christopher Haigh argued that the Pilgrimage of Grace was a product of religious centred grievances whereas C.S.L Davies claimed the main motivation was a fear of absentee landlords.⁵⁵⁷ John Guy argues that a distinctive aspect of the rebellion was that it was a "popular rising by northerners in general" that combined "nobles, gentry, clergy and people."⁵⁵⁸ According to Richard Hoyle the driving forces were "fears for religion in parish churches" and "agrarian discontents."⁵⁵⁹ Elton has a different take. In 1980 Elton wrote: "The whole course of the rebellion – its start, its spread, its open and secret purposes, and its end – becomes clearer when it is recognised that it was at the heart the work of political faction."⁵⁶⁰ It was his belief that the rebellions were "primarily a courtly conspiracy prompted by councillors

⁵⁵⁵ The dissolution of the greater monasteries started in 1539.

⁵⁵⁶ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 105.

⁵⁵⁷ These historian summaries are from my annotated teacher notes used to plan the lessons. Most likely I found these historians' ideas in textbooks. It does not reference where these ideas specifically come from but because they are part of my teacher's notes, I know they would have informed what I taught to students.

⁵⁵⁸ John Guy, *Tudor England*, 1988 quoted in Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106-7.

⁵⁵⁹ Richard Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s*, 2001 quoted in Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 107.

⁵⁶⁰ Geoffrey R. Elton, "Politics and the Pilgrimage of Grace' in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J.H Hexter*, 1980 quoted in Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106.

who had been supporters of Catherine of Aragon.”⁵⁶¹ Although he does not specifically put forward this idea in *England Under the Tudors* he dismisses the role of monasteries, thus diminishing some of the central causes of the rebellion. Elton suggests “monasticism was...in such decline that its end might have come spontaneously.”⁵⁶² He felt the “laity had no respect left for monasticism” and the monasteries did not “play a useful part in the community.”⁵⁶³ The attack on the monasteries “does not really merit the central position commonly allocated to it” when discussing the Pilgrimage of Grace and “in some ways it was almost the least revolutionary part of the revolution.”⁵⁶⁴ Doug Munro thinks social history “was beyond the pale” for Elton.⁵⁶⁵ Collinson’s assertion that Elton’s philosophy of history was best suited for politics and government, and specifically not religions, goes some way to explaining why Elton may have come to this conclusion about the Pilgrimage of Grace. As previously mentioned, Elton was not interested in religion other than how it played out in the political sphere. Another factor could be that Elton was not particularly interested in the common man in history. Collinson says of Elton’s historiography in general that “people...were often noticeable by their absence” coupled

⁵⁶¹ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 105. Catherine of Aragon was Henry VIII’s first wife, a staunch defender of the Catholic faith with connections to Catholic monarchs on the continent. She was also the mother of the future Catholic queen of England, Mary I. Elton believed the main motive of the conspirators was to restore Princess Mary as heir (she was written out of the succession after Henry’s divorce and second marriage to Anne Bolyen). Lord Darcy and Lord Hussey were said to be key members of the court who orchestrated the rebellion and there is evidence to suggest that they were involved, made especially relevant owing to the fact that when a smaller contingent of rebels renewed the revolt in 1537 in Cumberland Darcy and Hussey were brought to London, tried and executed.

⁵⁶² Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 141.

⁵⁶³ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 141.

⁵⁶⁴ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 140-141

⁵⁶⁵ Munro, “Michael Turnbull, G. R. Elton, and the Making of the Practice of History,” 816.

with “an almost total lack in his work of...sense of place.”⁵⁶⁶ Whatever Elton’s reasons, the main thrust of his theories was that the rebellion was “planned and organised from above” or what I termed a top-down rebellion.⁵⁶⁷

The way I taught the Pilgrimage of Grace, this particular story within the historical narrative experience, was that it was not a top-down rebellion, it was a bottom-up rebellion. I introduced the Pilgrimage of Grace to students by first exploring some key themes and ideas that usually accompany any rebellion: long-term causes, trigger causes, leaders. To explain, I referenced a number of other rebellions ranging from the London Riots in 2011 to Gandhi and the Indian nationalist movement. I drew upon examples from Margaret Thatcher’s premiership including the Battle of Orgreave and the Hillsborough disaster to explain some of the widespread distrust of the police in England at the time of the London riots as well as more contentious current policies such as Stop and Search. When discussing Gandhi, I talked about his role as a leader, the often-forgotten role of additional leaders and the actions of the Indian people who were part of the wider Indian nationalist movement. These were examples that were very specific to me and what I was interested in. My personality and my preferences emerged in this teaching episode. This was reflected by the material presence of books about British politics, Gandhi, Indian nationalism and revolutions that sat on my shelves as I was teaching. I used these examples to explain the central role of collective will and shared grievances and/or aims in any rebellion.

⁵⁶⁶ Collinson, “Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, 436. Collinson is specifically referring to Elton’s last publication *The English* (1992), however he uses this particular book, which is more, he says a book about rulers and the state than the English people, to make an overall comment about Elton’s style of history.

⁵⁶⁷ Tillbrook, *Oxford AQA History: The Tudors*, 106.

England Under the Tudors, for these lessons, came to represent a view that was contradictory to the one that I was putting forward as it symbolised a top-down approach. Considering the book as a spy in the classroom; a symbol of the leadership team in the room, the rejection of Elton's interpretation of the Pilgrimage of Grace was also a rejection of knowledge being handed down from above. My appropriation of the book so that it operated like a textbook *for me* was more visible, and more significant, because it gave weight to my rejection of Elton's ideas as I knew them in order to rebel against them. *England Under the Tudors* materialised as an old book with outdated views in this particular story within the story. The historians who counter Elton's views were often part of the next generation of Tudor historians: revisionists. John Guy in particular became an important part of the immaterial assemblage here because he had been Elton's student at the University of Cambridge. The dispute between teacher and student, a clear, understandable and relatable example of a power imbalance, helped define the Pilgrimage of Grace's role in the historical narrative as a moment to rebel against the accepted order. This all meant that for me, the teacher at the front of the room, teaching the Pilgrimage of Grace was a liberating experience. It was a part of the historical narrative experience as a whole where I felt my own views and philosophy of history came into being in the classroom. I would go as far as to say that, for me, this historical event was reflected in the objects I considered rebellious that I had brought into my classroom. The highlighters, the coloured pencils, the paintings, the crystals, the candles, the props. All of these things symbolised a certain streak of rebellion against the imposed order. It was not drastic, I kept all these things tidy, or hidden away. But just as these possessions were how I made my mark on my teaching space, the way I taught the Pilgrimage of Grace was how I made my mark on the narrative of Henry VIII.

6.4 Concluding Thoughts

England Under the Tudor's material qualities and sedimented values come into being in many different ways in a classroom where the historical narrative is lived rather than just known. It informed and shaped both the epistemological interpretations and the ontological experience of Henry VIII's reign. After painting a portrait seeking to capture how the narrative came into being with the other objects in the room with and through *England Under the Tudors*, which, as with the previous two chapters, I will not offer a conclusion to, this chapter then focused on three specific interpretations. Choosing to select a key character (Cromwell and Wolsey) or event (the Pilgrimage of Grace) in order to linger with the materiality of each interpretation and consider what role *England Under the Tudors* had in each, as well as how it was part of a "throbbing confederation" of material objects and immaterial aspects, this chapter has been an attempt to amalgamate new materialist ideas with historians' (and history educators') views on historical narratives. The amalgamation is not intended as a fusing of the different ideas, or even a blending together, but instead the amalgamation is more of a mingling, where different ideas have sat with each other to potentially unearth new truths about *England Under the Tudors*, the history classroom and the experience of the historical narrative.

Barad says: "there is an important sense in which practices of knowing cannot be fully claimed as human practices."⁵⁶⁸ This has emerged as a central theme of this study in general but particularly in this chapter. The practices of knowing that went on in the classroom were not solely human practices. They were material practices of knowing. Miller thinks "people exist

⁵⁶⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

for us in and through their material presence.”⁵⁶⁹ Miller’s ideas exist in a similar space to Barad’s new materialist agential realism because both swerve away from a purely humanist approach and turn their attention toward objects, however, Barad would disagree that people exist solely “in and through” their material presence and instead, I believe, would argue that people exist in, through, and *with* their material presence, which is a doing, not a thing – a being-in-the world. This means human and non-human are existing and being-in-the world together; this is a horizontal conceptualisation of the word which disrupts Miller’s idea of people and possessions. Human and non-human objects, Miller’s people and possessions, are what Stephanie Springgay and Nikki Rotas call “mutually interactive agents”⁵⁷⁰ involved in an intra-active becoming. Material practices of knowing are horizontal practices where human, object and knowledge itself are on a level playing field. Objects and knowledge are more than just commodities or abstract things for humans to understand, and therefore conquer, they are part of the entangled practice of mattering. Returning once again to Bohr’s ideas: we are *part* of the world we seek to understand, not raised above it. Following on from this, the historical narrative taught in a history classroom becomes something that is materially and cognitively experienced rather than simply taught and then learnt. Narratives are not simply known, they are lived; they are ontological experiences that encompass the epistemological, what Barad called *onto-epistemology*.

This somewhat turns on its head the research question that guides this chapter: how was *England Under the Tudors* used by the teacher to inform the historical narrative that was taught

⁵⁶⁹ Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 298.

⁵⁷⁰ Springgay and Rotas, “How Do You Make a Classroom Operate like a Work of Art?,” 554.

about Henry VIII? Sometimes the teacher used the textbook but at other times the textbook used her, or perhaps a better way of thinking about it would be that sometimes the textbook informed the historical narrative and shaped the experience of learning, and sometimes it was the teacher. And sometimes it was the teacher *and* the textbook. But, as mutually interactive agents operating together in the classroom both were present all of the time. Significantly, an exploration of *England Under the Tudors* with a new materialist lens suggests that while *England Under the Tudors* did inform the epistemological narrative it did much more than that. It contributed to, and was part of, the historical narrative as an on-going, intra-active becoming. Its materiality and sedimented values were important not only in terms of how the teacher (and students) experienced the textbook as a material object, a written text and a cultural transmission, the materiality and the sedimented values of *England Under the Tudors* materialised in the classroom with the immaterial experience of the historical narrative. The bookishness of *England Under the Tudors* cannot be separated from Thomas Cromwell. Nor can Cromwell's aspirations be separated from the school's or Elton's. Its status as a classed object sits alongside Cardinal Wolsey. Its role as a symbol of control and order, and the way it was appropriated for use by the teacher, are reflected in how the Pilgrimage of Grace was experienced in the classroom. We are reminded that books, textbooks included, are shape-shifters⁵⁷¹, and this remains so from a new materialist perspective. *England Under the Tudors* shifts shape depending on what aspect of the historical narrative is being taught and the other objects that form part of the (im)material assemblage. It has a different material, epistemological and/or conceptual presence in different historical interpretations. It is dynamic. It is agentive. It is

⁵⁷¹ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, x.

lively. It is anything but a “lifeless prose”⁵⁷² and, within the context of the lived historical narrative, it is very much alive.

⁵⁷² Paxton, “A Deafening Silence,” 323.

Chapter 7: Epilogue

Chapter six, in some ways, brought together a number of the emergent themes and central tenants that underpin this study by considering how *England Under the Tudors* shaped the onto-epistmo-logical historical narrative of the reign of Henry VIII. As mentioned in the introduction this final chapter will not rehash what has just been said but instead serves as an epilogue, a closure to the proceedings rather than a summarising conclusion. Because this study was about history textbooks and historical narratives this epilogue will close by reflecting on what the research has revealed about these two things.

7.1 History textbooks

Chapter two spent some considerable time discussing books and textbooks. The study started with an understanding that the book was a material object, written text, and cultural transmission but that this study would elevate the materiality of books. This study was interested in the status and prestige afforded to the material object *as a result* of the written text and cultural transaction as well as how the material object had agency and exercised power. This conceptualisation of the book informed ideas about the textbook which was considered as an object with an authoritative status, that lacked intellectual prestige, but had pedagogic prestige in the classroom, and exerted power through cultural transmission, meaning just as books were tenacious, so were textbooks. This notion of the book was grounded by Barad's new materialist take on matter which positioned the book as lively, not lifeless and vibrant, not mute. What has this understanding of the history textbook shown us?

To explore this question let's return to Darnton's original questions he asked of books in his original 1982 essay "What is the History of Books?": How do books come into being? How

do they reach readers? What do readers make of them? This study goes some way to answering these questions. This study reflected on *England Under the Tudors* materiality, its sedimented historicity, its conditions of arrival, its conditions of use, and the relationship of teacher and textbook to think about its role in the classroom. But, perhaps an equally significant consequence of this study is that it disrupts Darnton's questions by framing them from a new materialist perspective. Darnton is concerned with how books *come into being* whereas this study was more interested in how books *continue to be*. Darnton wanted to know how books *reached* readers and by this he meant how the book was created and physically moved around so readers could access it: this is in large part a question about distribution. This study was more interested in how books *reach toward* readers. How did their materiality, in a complex interplay with their content, affect and move readers? This is not about how a book ends up on a person's desk or in their hands, it is about how the book affects the reader once it is already there. It is about practices of use as well the transmission of ideas. Finally, Darnton asked what do readers make of them (books) whereas this study is really asking what do books *make of readers*. How do books shape and change the people who read them through both material and immaterial practice?

This study has been about exploring the lively and animate nature of *England Under the Tudors* and, through this exploration, makes a comment about *all* textbooks (and indeed all books). Textbooks are not mute classroom tools nor lifeless prose. *England Under the Tudors* has revealed itself as a shape-shifter, shifting from object of cultural capital, to revered historian's interpretation, to an object of fear and trepidation, and back to an essential teacher companion, or aid, all in the space of one lesson. *England Under the Tudors* boundaries shifted. It is an object that is on-going, it has not come into being to then stop, it continues to be. It

changes both materially and immaterially. Its physical form is not set, and neither is its written text or abilities to culturally transmit. It was afforded certain privileges, a certain status, a certain prestige *because* of its conditions of arrival and conditions of use. It is an object “enriched” and “ingrained”⁵⁷³ by the “work of generations”⁵⁷⁴ yet not defined by it. Instead these qualities emerged through practice because “relata do not pre-exist relations.”⁵⁷⁵ All of this has shown that textbooks are, just as books are, tenacious, they are persisting in their material and immaterial existence, and this matters because it means that “matter and meaning are not separate elements” when it comes to textbooks.⁵⁷⁶

7.2 Historical Narratives

Chapter two, as well as reviewing literature connected to book and textbook research, also spent some time exploring the idea of historical narratives. This exploration looked into both epistemological and ontological ideas about historical narrative and concluded that, for the purposes of this study, historical narratives were going to be thought of as something *experienced* through *being in* the classroom, meaning narratives are not simply taught and then *known*, they are *lived*. In order to intentionally move away from binary thinking, epistemological and ontological ideas of narrative needed to be thought of at the same time. Barad’s notion of “onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being”⁵⁷⁷ provided a framework through which to do this. *England Under the Tudors* provided a lens through which to consider this particular

⁵⁷³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

⁵⁷⁴ Ahmed, “Orientations Matter,” 241.

⁵⁷⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

⁵⁷⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

⁵⁷⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 185.

conceptualisation of narrative and look at how one textbook can shape an onto-epistmo-logical historical narrative.

To offer some insight into what this study has shown about historical narratives in the classroom by adopting this specific orientation I would like to turn to Sam Wineburg. In *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, Wineburg states that “history holds the potential, only partly realized, of humanizing us in ways offered by few other areas in the school curriculum.”⁵⁷⁸ He thinks there are two poles when it comes to the past; the pole of familiarity and the pole of distance.⁵⁷⁹ It is “the pole of familiarity [that] pulls most strongly” but veering too far in this direction means the past is viewed as “usable” and then becomes “yet another commodity for instant consumption.”⁵⁸⁰ The danger here is that the “past becomes clay in our hands.” The other side of the tension is the unfamiliar, the “strangeness of the past” which can offer “surprise and amazement.”⁵⁸¹ The trouble here is that if the past is too distant, too “detached from the needs of the present” it becomes “esoteric exoticism” that is only interesting to a “small coterie of professionals.”⁵⁸² The task at hand, to achieve “mature historical thinking,” is to “navigate the uneven landscape of history, to traverse the rugged terrain that lies between the poles of familiarity and distance from the past.”⁵⁸³

This idea of “traversing the rugged terrain” was (and is) important to me as a history teacher and framed much of my teaching practice. I always presumed that this traversal between the familiar and unfamiliar past was something I was leading. I facilitated certain conditions for

⁵⁷⁸ Sam Wineburg, “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts,” *Phi Delta Kappan* 92, no. 4 (2010): 5

⁵⁷⁹ Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 5.

⁵⁸⁰ Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 6.

⁵⁸¹ Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 6.

⁵⁸² Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 6

⁵⁸³ Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 5.

students to learn a certain way of thinking: mature historical thinking. But perhaps the terrain between the poles of familiarity and distance is not an entirely epistemological terrain, perhaps it is ontological as well. Perhaps the experience of the historical narrative in the classroom is part of the familiarity of the past. This experience is a material *and* immaterial experience and not something I had ultimate control of. The material familiarity of textbook and the classroom space were part of the ontological experience of the narrative of reign Henry VIII. The epistemological interpretation(s) full of facts, dates, strange words, and unfamiliar ideas was the distant past. Looking again at the emergent themes from chapter six the familiarity of the story of Thomas Cromwell is embodied in *England Under the Tudors*. The book is a constant and familiar object. The pages, the cover, the typeface, the weight, are all familiar and hold in them the distant past full of Acts and Orders and Dissolutions. Similarly, the collective material assemblage of the objects that represented Catholicism in the room are familiar, they are the teacher's possessions and props, but the immaterial concepts: heresy, indulgences, nepotism, are part of a distant past.

Wineburg thinks finding the perfect place to encounter the distant past is essential as by encountering "people, places, and times" we are "spur[red]...to reconsider how we conceptualize ourselves as human beings."⁵⁸⁴ This is all part of the "sustained encounter with the less-familiar past" that "teaches us the limitations of our brief sojourn on the planet and allows us to take membership in the entire human race."⁵⁸⁵ For Wineburg, "the relevance of the past may lie precisely in what strikes us as its initial irrelevance"⁵⁸⁶ which leaves us in "awe of the face of the

⁵⁸⁴ Wineburg, "Historical Thinking," 7.

⁵⁸⁵ Wineburg, "Historical Thinking," 7.

⁵⁸⁶ Wineburg, "Historical Thinking," 7.

expanse of human histories.”⁵⁸⁷ Thinking about the history classroom as a site of historical experience that connects the familiar and distant past reimagines the act, or process, of teaching history in school settings. Teaching history *is* a sustained encounter with the past because the onto-epistemo-logical historical narrative is an experience of history in order that it might be known. Thinking back to what Carr says, inspired by Dilthey, as people we are “in history as we are in the world.”⁵⁸⁸ Perhaps as history teachers and history students we are in history as we are in the classroom. Experiences of learning history allow us to make “meaningful patterns” that helps us understand “threatening experience of time” by materially connecting the knower and the known⁵⁸⁹. This means that each and every classroom experience of learning history, with different textbooks, and different teachers, and different objects, and different students, in specific teaching spaces, in specific schools, shapes how we “take membership in the entire human race.” The idea that each history classroom experience is different to the next is hardly a new idea, but the idea that the human *and* non-human objects facilitate and shape history classroom experiences, which in turn have an effect not only on the distant epistemological historical narratives that are taught but also the ontological historical narratives that are lived perhaps is something new.

7.3 Thinking Further

What do these ideas about textbooks and historical narratives say about current and future research in these areas. First and foremost, in regard to textbooks, and counter to Taylor and

⁵⁸⁷ Wineburg, “Historical Thinking,” 24.

⁵⁸⁸ David Carr quoted by Seixas, “Teaching Rival Histories,” 264.

⁵⁸⁹ Rösen quoted by Holmberg, “I was born in the reign,” 229.

Macintyre's comments about the usefulness of micro-studies, this study suggests finding out that classroom experiences and use of textbooks are "atypical" and "isolated" is important in itself. What Taylor and Macintyre would dismiss as "anecdotal" and insignificant is significant in that it shows how radically different each experience is. Vibrant findings of micro studies are helpful to both researchers and history teachers because they assert the individuality of teaching and learning experiences.

In terms of historical narratives, Seixas suggested that perhaps an "ontological dimension of narrative competence" may lead to a "more expansive and ambitious history education" so let's explore this idea.⁵⁹⁰ Thinking about the ontological dimension of narrative is a way of seeing the history classroom in a different way. It provides an opportunity to shine a light on history teaching and learning with a different focus and see what is happening. This study used one specific object to re-live the teaching experience, but this is only one way of thinking about the classroom. You could look at assemblages of objects. You look at the use of a specific object, for example a textbook, in different spaces. You could look at space itself.

Chapter five, supported by Pollard and Alexander's findings, illustrated how impactful school sites can be on learning experiences. This provides a connection with bodies of work that consider 'where things happen' to be "critical to knowing *how* and *why* they happen" (emphasis author's own)⁵⁹¹ because space, in Edward Soja's words, is a "vital existential force."⁵⁹² In the field of education research, Ian Grosvenor et al. think that "to some extent, the [school] building

⁵⁹⁰ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 264.

⁵⁹¹ Barney Warf and Santa Arias, "Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities," in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias, 1st ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2009), 3.

⁵⁹² Edward W. Soja, "Taking Space Personally," in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias, 1st ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2008), 11.

itself” can “shape the life inside of it.”⁵⁹³ Martin Lawn thinks modernism, “as a movement in school building” focuses our attention on the “aims and intentions”, or what you could call the aspirations of a school, but “now the future seems to have broken again” owing to the state’s vision of the future being reduced to “acts of individual progress”⁵⁹⁴ it is imperative that researchers look back at the history of school buildings because “the future looks to be behind us now.”⁵⁹⁵ This is just one example of how thinking about what shapes the experience of learning history, and how this might affect the onto-epistmo-logical historical narrative that are taught, may be “expansive” for history education.

Seixas did caveat this claim about expansion and ambition by saying that these ideas were at such an “abstract level that it has little use, practically.”⁵⁹⁶ It seems foolish to reject this last comment completely out of hand because thinking about the history classroom in this way *is* abstract, however, that is not to say that it is not of any use at all. Presuming that by practical use Seixas is thinking about practical use for classroom practitioners, there are a number of ways that this study, and other studies of its like, may provide practical guidance for history teachers. Studies such as this help history teachers to engage with their own practice as unique and individualised. It requires teachers to reflect on the way they are in the classroom and how this may shape the teaching that takes place there. It also compels teachers, and schools, to think about how a school’s culture and ethos may not simply be having an effect on the experience of

⁵⁹³ Grosvenor, Ian, Lawn, Martin and Rousmaniere, Kate, “Introduction,” in *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom*, (pp. 1-10) Edited by Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn and Kate Rousmaniere, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 6.

⁵⁹⁴ Martin Lawn, “Building Ruins: Abandoned Ideas of the School,” in *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith and Julie Willis, 1st ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 19.

⁵⁹⁵ Lawn, “Building Ruins,” 24.

⁵⁹⁶ Seixas, "Teaching Rival Histories," 264.

staff and students but also on what students are learning. In an education system governed by market forces and especially one where, as in the English education system, examinations play such a central role, a teacher who is reflective of her practice for the sake of reflection and growth is not necessarily desirable. The end is more important than the means in this type of school system. But perhaps that is another reason why this study, and those like it, are all the more needed, important, helpful, and practical for teachers who are seeking to be reflective.

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