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CREATIVE ENDINGS FORUM

What Remains? Salvaging Meaning from “Dementia Friendly Communities” Using Cut-Ups and Collage

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This paper explores the possibilities of using alternative forms of analysis when thinking about “dementia friendly communities,” a recent if not by now historic phenomenon. Using ethnographic methods, I ask the question: what remains beyond, in excess of, and is never quite captured in discourses around such communities, if they exist? Dementia is an elusive concept, often appearing as personal disruption, and often threatening the ways that contemporary lives are ordered. I ask whether there is value in questioning the fragmentary remains of researching dementia friendly communities from a different angle, by approaching the disparate assemblage of materials, field-notes, photos, recordings of ordinary practices, of state practices, through more creative means? Taking inspiration from the avant-garde techniques of William S. Burroughs, in particular cut-ups and collage, the aim here has been to pay attention differently and move beyond what is already known. **Key Words: collage, creative methods, cut-ups, dementia friendly communities.**

A MAN IN BETHEL SQUARE – SETTING THE SCENE

A chance post-seminar conversation led me to an obscure picture of the writer William S. Burroughs—sometime Beat, *avant-garde* writer (Hawkins and Wermer-Colan 2019), godfather of punk and drug culture (Rae 2020), bio-semiotic guerrilla even (Patoine 2019)—taken on a sunny afternoon in Welsh market town of Brecon in 1960. It is a town where I had spent considerable time as a participant observer of how a “dementia friendly community” (DFC) might come into being. The picture is in black and white, with sharp shadows, a telegraph pole on the right, wires horizontally cutting the top third over signage and windows. Bottom centre, in front of a deep archway, is the writer, a slight but tallish figure in a heavy suit, one arm held in front, the other by his side, trilby and thick classes framing his skull. There is a chapel in the distance behind him, it’s signage above the entrance to the square containing the church in bold letters (“BETHEL C.M. CHURCH. WELSH & ENGLISH”). If old photos sometimes have the quality of haunting, of a type of death in

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life (Barthes 2000), then this photo, its deep archway reminiscent of a portal of some sort, feels like an invitation to another world (see The Function Rooms 2015 for history of this photo).

The urban topography of Brecon was familiar to me by this point in my research. The writer stands on a corner: to the left of the scene, you will still find the Guild Hall, traditional seat of power where I sat through meetings in which councillors, mayors, activists, representatives of local and national charities had pondered how to make the town "dementia friendly." By now, the church has moved on from dispensing salvation to dispensing drugs as a pharmacy, the signage perhaps more bilingual than in 1960. These grand husks of religion, this one tucked away in its own square, still play an important role of sorts in this part of the world, peppered throughout the towns and villages of Wales. Occasionally they are still religious, but now often act as civic, commercial, or even private buildings, spaces where, as I'd experienced in my research, types of governance or charity are acted out, become visible. Conduct is often still conducted there, including in matters arising around dementia.

Being alerted to this picture gave pause for thought. The slightly uncanny spectral presence of Burroughs seemed an invitation to "inspect the inside of reason and see how it too is haunted by what it excludes" (Buse and Stott 2005). It coincided with a sense of impasse as I trawled my fieldnotes, inspected photos, pondered meetings, interviews, collections of pamphlets, theatre programmes and other ephemera collected in my attempts to see what was emergent, occluded even, in the idea of "dementia friendly communities." How exactly to convey that sense of an assemblage, of the "in-here" and "out-there" of the research (Law 2004)? Once conventional means had been exhausted, what could be salvaged from these fragments of words, images and sounds that had come into being, not only in this town, but in my everyday life? In the daily dance with research materials and ideas, having attuned to the practices and claims made in the name of DFCs, what remained beyond or might be excluded, and was some other approach possible?

In this paper I outline how research drawn mainly from participant observation and photography can evolve and make use of different cultural forms to inspire more creative ways of analysis. My research into DFCs had tried to explore how this phenomenon works through various networks across Wales, through activism and community action, the myriad consultations, conferences, networking events that such ideas provoke. Three general elections, fiscal austerity and Brexit were all part of the background "hum" (Anderson and Harrison 2010), along with my own dynamic embeddedness in events, the shifting microperceptions involved in paying attention to what "dementia" "friendliness" or "community" might mean (Massumi 2015).

After setting the scene, I will give examples of how creative techniques associated with avant-garde writing and visual practices—specifically, cut-ups and collage—were used to salvage meaning from the materials collected during the research process. Though my research is also indebted to the ficto-critical style of Stewart (2007) and others (Berlant and Stewart 2019), what lingered after that unexpected encounter with the old photo was a renewed interest in techniques used by those loosely termed as "Beat writers," often crafty appropriators of earlier avant-garde painting and literature. I will argue that such techniques can help us work with the fragmentary remains of research into phenomenon such as DFCs.

DEMENTIA, DFCS AND AUSTERITY

In recent years, "dementia" has become part of many discourses: social, economic, academic and cultural. It has become a critical political terrain—in the second of the three UK general elections during my research, it was claimed that a specific term, "dementia tax" had a significant effect on the result (Heath and Goodwin 2017). What was once associated with familial and inter-personal matters, has become part of the global public arena, often a signifier of anxieties around ageing populations. Whether governmental strategies, social movements, health care initiatives, interdisciplinary academic work, consumer products, and literary, filmic, dramatic and other cultural works, "there is literally a global investment in (making sense of) dementia" (Commisso 2015, 377).

There has been some critical work around developing a sociology of dementia in studies of health and illness (see Higgs and Gilleard 2017 on the "alzheimerization" of ageing studies). Latimer (2018) reconfigures dementia as a form of "repelling" the neo-liberal ordering of a world that privileges certain forms of cognition, a type of disruption that questions discourses of "successful ageing." The crisis often depicted around dementia suggests its liminality as an experience that "disrupts, questions and alters our personal bonds, our routine social practices and related institutional settings as well as the politics and expertise that come with it" (Schillmeier 2016, 44). Instead of narratives of deficit and decline, many people with dementia (PWD) I came across were very active in asking for more rights, and for those rights already in place to be respected: different "modes" of citizenship emerged or combined in the work, for example social (Bartlett and O'Connor 2010), biological (Rose and Novas 2007) or affective (Fortier 2016).

The notion of a "dementia friendly community" has been under-theorized, the literature largely focussing on evaluating its worth in terms of policy outcomes (see Buckner et al. 2019). No universally agreed definition of what a DFC might be exists beyond it being an approach to "normalizing" dementia in society. UK DFC initiatives can be traced back to the Cameron Coalition government (2010 – 15) and links with the Alzheimer's Society, which recognises and encourages communities to become "dementia-friendly" (Lin and Lewis 2015). The notion of becoming "dementia friends," one of the main public campaigns behind the policy drive towards DFCs, became popular during government moves that simultaneously reframed the debate about dementia into one of an imminent crisis in social care funding, and promoted the marketization of medical research and investment in global pharma and biotechnology as the answer (Burke 2015). My own research started with the observation that the policy drive to create DFCs ran in parallel with austerity measures implemented during the period of the Coalition Government, and the continuing rise of neuroliberal government (Whitehead et al. 2018). Even if there was an investment in the idea of nudging the public into being friendly towards PWD through DFCs, in the UK and globally, there was a deliberate *dis*-investment in the very services needed to make sure that many living with the condition were supported.

"We're all in this together" were the words used by Chancellor George Osborne to justify that period of austerity (ITN 2012), before drastically cutting government budgets, including to the devolved administrations across the UK. Even for people involved in trying to improve the lives of those with dementias, including PWD, that same phrase "we're all in this together" (reappearing yet again during the COVID pandemic) was a commonplace. Its contested significance during the past ten years, not least as a phrase which stands at the crossroads of several different austerity narratives with the quasi-religious connotations (see Danziger 2019; Forkert 2014; Raynor 2017), never far from ideas of citizen sacrifice (Brown 2016), gave me a sense

that its incantation was some sort of "contact zone where … circulations, events, conditions, technologies, and flows of power literally take place" (Stewart 2007, 3). It echoed through the spaces where I observed the work of DFCs being enacted: church vestries, vestries turned community centres, chapels turned into municipal buildings, then arts centres, some closing because of austerity budget cuts—but also university campuses, hotel conference centres. From a certain perspective, in "dementia friends" I found cruel optimism writ large (Berlant 2012): by focussing energies into awareness raising volunteerism, did it not divert from the scale and impact of austerity on those affected by dementia and their carers?

I also heard the indignation of a growing dementia activist movement, their core demands for a more inclusive type of citizenship for PWD (Ann-Charlotte, Bartlett, and Clarke 2019). Hearing anger and frustration in spaces such as churches, which a hundred years earlier echoed to non-conformism that similarly wanted to escape from compulsory (bio)medicalisation being imposed by the state (Foucault 2002) made me feel that "things refuse to march in step [that the present isn't] answerable to a single logic, but as a pluralized entanglement of many times" (Walters 2012), a creeping sense of the non-linearity of the phenomenon in question. Often, those I met were caught between conflicting modes of citizenship, unsure of any support they might need or expect. Undoubtedly, a "fourth moment" (Bartlett and O'Connor 2010) promising more active engagement and voice for PWD in dementia matters has become ever more visible, encouraged by the state through "stakeholder consultation" type technologies and volunteerism. However, because of fiscal austerity, the stories heard were of vital services being cut, or essential welfare being withheld because PWD were, at times, deemed *too* active, their impairments too *in*visible. This "bundling together of agency and blame" (Brown 2015) played itself out in my interviews with activists and others, or more poignantly in testimonies given at such consultation events.

TRYING SOMETHING NEW

My progressive interdisciplinary entanglement in a field where entanglement itself is so emblematic of aging brains (Lock 2013) started to bring together the seemingly distant and disconnected. Dementia, as it is often portrayed, seemed to me to not to be a unitary condition at all, but one that operates in a rhizomatic manner, by "variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoot" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 22), a phenomenon "most secretly incoherent, in that it eludes the clutches of … forms of classification" (Foucault 2009, 262). Within it, the idea of metamorphosis is clear: a process which begins and ends with two different entities (Bynum 2001), is both a destructive event but also creative: "A form of life appears that bids farewell to all the subject's old modes of being" (Malabou 2012, 213).

Methodologically, there are anomalies in how qualitative researchers can approach this metamorphosis. Encouraged through training and experience "to make the familiar strange," what is common for those with the condition is that the familiar *has become* involuntarily strange, through cognitive changes. Many of my interviewees stressed: if you meet a person with dementia, you meet that one person with dementia—everyone will have different experiences. An over-reliance on the conventional methods of recording and analysis, with their emphasis on pattern recognition and "repetition" would perhaps invite the danger of capturing what was somehow already known. Because dementia seemed such a slippery and contingent term, then maybe another approach to exploring DFCs would be paying more attention to "the ephemeral, the

fleeting, the not-quite-graspable" (Vannini 2015, 6), finding creative ways of exploring the fragmented beginnings and endings in such research.

Insofar as there often seems to be a duty to keep on "telling about society," and to think about what that telling entails (Back and Puwar 2012), the need for more bricolage-type approach in critical gerontology, for example (Bernard and Scharf 2007), has also long been recognised. To date, more non-representational approaches, which might focus on the "background experiences" (Anderson and Harrison 2010) or the more-than-human, multi-sensual affective world (Lorimer 2005) aren't so common in ageing studies, though there is growing interest in such interdisciplinary work (see Andrews and Grenier 2018; Barron 2021). I was drawn to the call for researchers in the social sciences "not to play it safe" (Gane and Back 2012), to think through the possibilities of using other cultural forms and alternative forms of knowledge to re-imagine practice, ideas and forms of communication, to vary the ways of "telling." Beer (2014) uses the example of a "punk sociology" for instance, emphasizing boldness, inventiveness and a do-it-yourself ethic. Echoes of this can be found in the cultural geography's creative turn (Veal and Hawkins 2020), in a renewed interest in punk-inspired methods such as Zines (Bagelman and Bagelman 2016), punk geographies (Gelbard 2017; Woods 2021) and punk pedagogies (Smith, Dines, and Parkinson 2018). Trying not to "fret … about the risks of experimenting" (Dewsbury 2010) and inspired by Burroughs passing through Brecon, I began to imagine how elements taken from Beat and avant-garde writing could be used to get past my own analytical impasse.

BEAT METHOD: "NOTHING IS TRUE, EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED"

If "inventiveness does not … equate to the new" (Lury and Wakeford 2014, 6) then that impromptu, sunny photoshoot in Brecon in 1960 provided clues on how to proceed. One of the moodier photos of Burroughs in the shadows of the entrance to Bethel Square subsequently made it around the world as the cover of his first spoken word album, Call Me Burroughs (The Function Rooms 2015). French liner notes by Jean Jacques-Lebel, artist and activist, provided a trail connecting the Beat generation to the French avant-garde (Heil, Fleck, and Mahon 2014), and a generation of post-structuralist thinkers (Demers 2018). "Beat" writers were a loosely associated American cultural and literary movement from the 50 s and 60 s, including poets such as Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and novelists such as Jack Kerouac and Burroughs. The transatlantic criss-crossing of ideas, support and influence during that era has seen renewed interest (see Demers 2018; Lane 2017), though Kerouac, and Burroughs in particular, are referred to in various texts contemporary to that period (Deleuze 1995; Deleuze and Guattari 2013), the latter cited also in a key essay on Control Societies: "Burroughs was the first to address this" (Deleuze 1995,174). Burroughs' fiction, including the cut-up novels, were influential in thinking creatively around how "control was no longer exerted directly, through confinement and disciplines, but through more subtle mechanisms involving word and image, binarism and digital language" (Lotringer 2001, 16). His ghost also rattles through writings about affect and capitalism (see Berlant 2017; Massumi 2017), innovative anthropology (Taussig 2004) and psychogeography (Sinclair 2013).

Kerouac's work has been similarly influential, his novel On the Road seen as a rhizomatic narrative treatment of travelling across America (Abel 2002). Along with others, non-representational approaches—ones which pay heed to background perceptions or "engage in more creative or performative practices" (Vannini 2015, 319)—encouraged me to experiment with a "spontaneous

prose" approach, inspired by Kerouac's uninhibited prose style (Honeybun-Arnolda 2019). My fieldnote writing, for example, was freed of too many full stops or commas, and "crafting" the sentence avoided, to "write outwards, swimming in the sea of language" (Kerouac 1992, 58).

CUT-UPS

The recent steady stream of academic interest in Burroughs' work and in cut-ups (see Feireiss 2019; Gontarski 2020; Hawkins and Wermer-Colan 2019), further persuaded me that it was worth experimenting with the materials gathered in my own research.

Cut-ups are an attempt to "undo control." By juxtaposing and cutting up familiar material randomly, letting go of or challenging the established control in linear texts and syntax, we might find a new way of experiencing that material: "the folding of one text onto another, which constitutes multiple and even adventitious roots (like a cutting) implies a supplementary dimension to that of the texts under consideration" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 4). Taken from avant-garde montage painting techniques and the Dadaist movement, Burroughs and some of his contemporaries were by no means the only writers or artists of note to use the technique. However, he popularized its use from the 60 s onwards, regarding writing as a technology "left behind" by painting or photography. The technique was his attempt to develop a way of "foreground[ing] the matter of language—especially its affective character—whilst at the same time introducing an element of chance, something outside of conscious control" (Burrows and O'Sullivan 2019, 36). If language transmits order, is a type of politics to be obeyed (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 88) then the work of Burroughs and others seek to undercut some of the norms and ordering which are expected. This makes their work profoundly political. By attempting to disrupt some of the linearity and tone, it becomes a deliberate "stuttering" or "fictioning practice" (Burrows and O"Sullivan 2019). In his own era, Burroughs did this as a means of "deconstructing contemporary hegemonic discourse" (Hawkins and Wermer-Colan 2019, 5). It seemed to me that a similar way of approaching the contemporary discourses found in materials around DFCs—as an entity in its own right, rather than its component parts—might unsettle some of the unacknowledged biopolitics and governance contained in the phenomenon, and salvage more intimate or critical registers in the texts.

Cut-ups mean cutting, folding, or splicing a single text or two texts together to produce a new narrative, then carefully selected and edited. The resulting text isn't entirely random, but some surprising connections or juxtapositions might appear that make us experience something new about the subject matter in hand. Letting go of conscious control, the fixed nature of authorship and authority is unsettled. It is an intertextual move "in which assertions of objectivity, scientific rigour, methodological stability and other highly rationalistic-sounding terms are replaced by an emphasis on uncertainty, indeterminacy, incommunicability, subjectivity, desire, pleasure and play" (Allen 2000, 3). Though rare, such use of cut-ups in research is not entirely unprecedented. Biley (2004), for example, used it in therapeutic work and in a ground-breaking essay, explains that the goal is to *experience* an emerging text, rather than understand it.

In experimenting with my own material—fieldnotes, pamphlets, brochures, newspaper headlines—my intention was not a therapeutic one *per se*, because this work wasn't co-produced with either PWD or others (professional or volunteers) involved in the field, a future avenue to explore hopefully. Rather, the goal was to experience some of the other emergent meanings in this assemblage of collected research materials, in a spirit of re-presentation as a form of

transformation (Doel 2010). The method entailed printing out or photocopying the text or texts that I thought interesting, physically cutting them into individual lines, putting in them in a container, then randomly choose lines from the container and “re-assemble” a text. This was done multiple times, with different results. I also utilised online cut-up programs, randomizing any text input, such as the Burroughs-inspired Word Is A Virus cut-up machine (Vajra 2019). The results often worked best presented as prose-poetry.

COLLAGING

Allied to the cut-up as a practice is collaging. Both can be traced back to the early twentieth century, the wordplay of Dada (Hawkins and Wermer-Colan 2019), and the “collage hermeneutics” of the Cubist movement, where “knowledge no longer answers uncertainty with certainty, rather with more uncertainty” (Brockelman 2001, 186). Burroughs, a keen photographer and collagist, used photocollages with juxtaposed found objects from the early sixties onwards (Allmer and Sears 2014). As an art-informed method of inquiry, collaging has a more conventional status than cut-ups, often used in therapeutic settings for example, but still tests boundaries of representation through the non-linear juxtaposition of fragments, encouraging ambiguity and multiple interpretations (Butler-Kisber 2010). Photomontage, collage using mainly photos, can also disrupt linearity, and can be profoundly political (Ingram 2019).

For me, this was another way of salvaging and making use of the odds and ends collected during research. Having some 500+ photos of varying subjects, and a plethora of pamphlets and newspaper cuttings, it helped to recall memories of events and spaces, to think through various issues creatively. Most of my research contains relatively straightforward accounts of how DFCs emerge (or don’t) through observation, talking to people, being alongside PWD. Like cut-ups, collages helped to disrupt the more linear thinking and pay attention differently. During the first few months of the COVID pandemic, overstretched by work and other responsibilities, they were also another way of maintaining the “writing up” of my research, when I found it difficult to write.

Early photocollages were juxtaposed sets of photos taken during research. As my knowledge and confidence increased, I learned how to mount collections of photos, cuttings, pamphlets on prepared A2 boards, adding layers through taking photos of the boards on an I-pad. The results are messy, sometimes repetitive, and are the “workings” of trying to move beyond what I’d experienced in my research. Unlike cut-ups, randomness does not feature so highly. Contemporary images were ripped from magazines or newspapers and added, together with fragments of pamphlets or postcards picked up events around DFCs. Revisiting them has sometimes enabled me to ask different questions of what was going on across different times and spaces.

CUT-UP 1: NEWSPAPER CUT-UP/“SPECTACULAR FISH CONTROL ELDERLY”

During research, I habitually collected the headlines in British newspapers that referred to dementia. Compiled over three years, my collection indicated a background “hum” to dementia and ageing, with multiple discourses commonly found: those of crisis, national or otherwise, of war, a “master illness […] used to propose new critical standards of individual health, and to express a sense of dissatisfaction with society as such” (Sontag 2005, 74), one that inspires dread (Zeilig 2014).

Biomedicalization, responsibilization, consumerism, as well as hope, tentative political action, and increasingly, celebrity, are to be found in these headlines (Peel 2014). Despite the decline of print media, headlines often raise awareness of a range of health issues. For all the talk of dementia friendly *communities*, many headlines focus on individual responsibility, or the magic bullets of science, regardless of environmental, societal or structural factors which contribute to the prevalence of the condition. Most were from the right-wing press, particularly strident in UK during this period, and often revolving around three core themes: Brexit, dementia, immigration. I noted directive and commanding language when it came to dementia ("Eat/drink this")—but when it came to other subjects, notably Brexit, a shift to the first-person plural ("You Can't Bully us Mr Barnier" or "Do or Die, We Will Quit the EU by October 31st"). Here are the headlines used:

Eat curry to beat dementia
Drink coffee to fight dementia
Dementia crisis as deaths soar
Dementia risk from diabetes
Dementia crisis out of control
Snoring raises dementia risk
Stay married to halt dementia
Sugar speeds up dementia
New dementia breakthrough
Drink tea to fight dementia
Dame Babs' plea to end dementia agony
Favourite songs will help you beat dementia
Arthritis drug will fight off dementia
Millions snub check to spot dementia
Busy roads can cause dementia
Dementia care delays causing elderly £15 billion
Eat mushrooms to fight dementia
Study proves you can fight off dementia
Dementia cure hit by lack of funds
Oily fish can beat dementia
New drugs to beat dementia
Dementia cure within a decade
Spectacular Alzheimer's breakthrough
Six rules to fight dementia
Stay off booze to fight dementia
Keep fit to beat dementia
Eat salads to beat dementia
We must act now to beat dementia
Dementia runs in the family
Statins fight Alzheimer's
Alzheimer's cure hope

By using the online cut-up machine, then editing—but not too much—this is the result:

Spectacular Fish Control Elderly!

Dementia songs care for Alzheimer's
Stay to drugs, dementia

married out roads

spot dementia, you
dementia cure
Oily coffee study
dementia
Alzheimer's raises fight

of check off,
beat lack risk
dementia to cure off
delays prove boost within beat,

Drink up by plea
fit soar family
dementia hit
drink,
" … eat dementia funds,
Alzheimer's will … ."

Dementia -
spectacular fish control elderly,
snub now, rules favourite
can a salad cure, beat?
As we,
new of the cause,
will dementia
causing millions fight

Dementia, dementia
beat beat
beat deaths, you speed,
I
Eat, act,
halt.

Dementia, dementia -
crisis statins must run
to fight off curry, tea
Eat to beat
Stay cure booze,
dementia crisis mushrooms:
to fight dementia
can fight dementia breakthrough?

Dementia, dementia -
Snoring diabetes,
a busy fight

Dementia, dementia, dementia -
end dementia!
Arthritis fight, decade hope

keep new billion,
help sugar breakthrough.

This piece has a “stuttering” (Deleuze 1997) quality, it has “a friction, foreignness, a murmur of other possibilities, extends routine and thought in a new direction” (Gunaratnam 2015, 129), a different tone from strident headlines. For some, cut-ups act as a “fictioning against fiction or spectacle machines,” (Burrows and O’Sullivan 2019, 42) spectacle machines being newspapers in this instance. In Deleuzian terms, they argue, the cut-up becomes a “war machine,” undermining the “fantasies of realism” (Lyotard 1997, 74) conjured up by syntax and the sequencing of images. In this piece, cutting up disrupts the directive nature of the original headlines and reclaims the language as mysterious, pithy fragments. It has the quality of a lamentation: the repetition of “dementia, dementia,” and then the homophonic soundplay of lines like “fit soar family” as “dementia .... fit SORE family,” plead with the reader, reveals something of a truth—the soreness, the jangled nerves, crying and often lack of sleep that can affect carers living through the metamorphosis. It has a performative quality if read out loud. The snatched collection of newspaper fragments—snapped on a phone, noted in a grocery store during research—surreally subverted: “Spectacular Fish Control Elderly!”

CUT-UP 2: “HAVE COMMUNITY SHAKING”/“FAST FEET APPLE”

In “*Have Community Shaking,”* I used fieldnotes taken from a visit to Brecon to a space (another chapel vestry) where I would regularly meet up with PWD and their carers, on this occasion for a “tea-dance.” I folded this into a government advice leaflet (Change4Life 2015) on how to reduce the risks of dementia. In keeping with the tone of responsibilization in the previous headlines, the focus of this leaflet is on the individual’s responsibility to do this. There is a sense of movement in this piece (it was a joyous occasion, more “disco” than “tea-dance”), the original fieldnote written using the spontaneous prose method, which aims to be “undisturbed flow from the mind” (Charters 1992, 57). It was another sunny day in Brecon and one of people with dementia in the group, who had great difficulty with verbal communication, got up to dance. I joined in with him, and it felt like a moment of connection:

> what kit sun streaming on two apple laptops—enormous screen half shaded behind dj pushing glasses to forehead, student L going for it as does T who dances regular on a Monday night but not with her husband who has two left feet and as marc bolan stops stomping I notice gleaming eyes, more sweat in the air and roughly twelve of us up and over the hump of looking with those lit up eyes, physical, no more staring at feet and as I look over at W a Saturday night fever jolt—back in the room with everyone—so strange dancing in this daylight—W is swaying arms up looking intently whether you’re a brother or whether you’re a mother I roll my arms one way, he copies then the other- he copies!—you’re stayin alive, stayin alive and we smile and do it again this must be community surely watchful R beaming at the side shaking leg a leg—proud -drinking it in. (Fieldnote, 22.5.18)

The leaflet was as follows:

> Be physically active. The number one thing you can do to reduce your risk of dementia is to be physically active. There are lots of ways to be active: walking, running, riding your bike or even

mowing the lawn counts. Search online for Change4Life Wales for lots of ideas to help get you moving! It's recommended that you should do 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week. This might sound like a lot but can be achieved in blocks as short as ten minutes at a time. Walking fast counts towards this, so you may already be doing more than you think. Little changes, such as going for a walk or a ride on your bike at lunchtime, may be all you need to do. There are lots of other ways to build physical activity into your daily life, for example replacing short journeys in the car with walking, or using the stairs instead of lifts. Time your walks to the shop or to work and also check out how many steps you are already doing. You can use a pedometer to do this; most smart phones have them already built-in.

The cut-up reads:

Have community shaking/Fast feet apple
Up to no stayin time
Little feet steps
whether your stairs
but stayin
be shaded
using
walks

Walking copies achieved physically
then smile as
everyone
gets gleaming
or going, this Saturday;

the recommended:
you're a number,
regular,
active.

The lot shop, over riding
eyes this:
arms active, walking
can phone
but
like each, blocks Wales,
lifts,
sweat, do
lunchtime

Do many
have community shaking?
Might counts,
check moderate
what pushing in'

exercise
short twelve
ways to them

and mowing
your strange walk
looking, moving -
husband use
built changes
So instead, you
reduce all minutes.

Who?
Streaming of a two dances mother!
lots lit roughly,
leg active

You're in short
fast feet apple
can we be
time, enormous need

marc behind, does lots …

Build brother daylight!
Leg laptops those dj replacing again

This Change4Life, alive
and the life arms at sound
most and
roll on night
a journey.
Her intently thing,
Monday dancing,
kit smart with risk.

You jolt!
There—the lawn surely a sun bike
your physical fever
even this doing, staring
with T
as to activity
running for car, my
ten stops, one look
must help the half pedometer daily.

Other ideas:

stomping, hump
and forehead back, your
dementia example
bolan glasses up may
night is more looking minutes
student out
doing do it

room notice and work
Be drinking towards beaming do:
more counts, also swaying

For online eyes, screen watchful;
how already at
whether you think
are alive

This piece has a surreal, rhythmic quality ("doing do it"), which evokes some of the strangeness I felt on the day, as we all gradually lost inhibitions and danced in the daylight. The fragmented and mangled syntax contains pithy, intriguing phrases which feel just beyond intelligibility: "Monday dancing, kit smart with risk," "Streaming of a two dances mother!," but that very non-linear, stuttering strangeness connects me to that afternoon, more than the fieldnote can on its own. As a bilingual Welsh/English speaker, crossing linguistic boundaries seems natural to me, and this piece again challenges the machinic discourse of responsibilization, the directive language of the leaflet. It breathes life into the remains of language—in notes, on pamphlets—by only retaining "the skeleton of sense" (Deleuze and Guattari 2016, 21), but it could equally be divorced entirely from its origins, could stand as a piece of saturated poetry which nods to Kerouac and has "eliminate(d) all that is resemblance and analogy" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 327). It disorients and makes strange.

COLLAGE 1: ODDS AND ENDS

Burroughs passed through this space illustrated in Figure 1, a corner of Brecon between Bethel Square and the Guild Hall which I'd grown to know well, and photographed repeatedly, over two years. His image in that space had inspired the original line of flight that led me into thinking about how we create knowledge about phenomena such as dementia, and that knowledge is often elusive, but sometimes may be found in the odds and ends of the research process. The poet Anne Carson, in a lecture about coming to terms with her own father's dementia, notes how it is in corners we can find a locus for understanding: "Corners are what make a grid different from a line, a plaid shirt different to a striped one … corners make personality out of persons, maps out of surveillance" (The Graduate Centre 2018).

My interaction with the picture of Burroughs, and immersion in research around DFCs—a kind of surveillance of meetings, events, spaces—creates a map of diverse objects: newspaper headlines, postcards used in DFC meetings which say "I want to speak please," noticeboards as readymade fragments of voluntary civic action, or moving through the surrounding landscape of the Brecon Beacons. Each element has a story of repetition, difference, disorientation at times: we can all feel these states. Perhaps this corner of Brecon, this portal to a square is an invitation into thinking about different ways of being with dementia, of living with change in physical and mental spaces over time, as community ebbs and flows through us.

FIGURE 1. Odds and ends.

FIGURE 2. Robots! Protest!/all in, We're nothing.

COLLAGE 2: ROBOTS! PROTEST!

The collage shown in Figure 2 was partly inspired by an intervention at an academic conference. An activist with dementia challenged all to think about advancing robot care of those with dementia, and what this means in terms of human autonomy (she would rather choke than be resuscitated by a robot). I juxtapose some of the general atmospheric unease which has been present over the last few years: Brexit, the unravelling of the welfare system, long-term socio-economic injustice resulting in catastrophic, housing policy; the hidden horizon of death behind social and health policies that produce inequality (Fassin 2009). I also cut-up three phrases common to the research: "we're all in this together," "nothing about us without us" and "making the familiar strange" and have arranged them as three discreet "cut-up poems," giving interesting aphoristic results. As in other collages I've made for this research, there is the solidity of the Brecon Beacons mountains in the background. The Zulu shields are from the famous battle of Rorke's Drift, and form part of the Brecon's regimental museum, which I visited with PWD; as well as being a market town, it is a barrack town, with military presence going back to Roman times. The Himal Spices are used mainly by the large Nepali presence there, with the Ghurka regiment stationed close by. Throughout this rural market town, there are layers of history entwined with colonisation, with empire. Weaving bunting with the same group of PWD, there were reminiscences of the twentieth century wars, never too far away—shared stories of relatives who had died or had lucky escapes. There's also an object I picked up around the same time—a chocolate egg wrapped in a flannel which was being sold to raise money for a dementia charity in mid-Wales, familiar objects made strange.

WHAT REMAINS? FAILING BETTER…

In this article, I have considered alternative and creative modes in a research process exploring "dementia friendly communities." This process has been one of evolving interdisciplinarity, bringing together social policy, critical gerontology and cultural geography perspectives, with the possibilities of creative practice. Despite the disillusion and indignation I found in some accounts in my research, the cruel optimism I felt was inherent in some of the endeavours, there were instances when "dementia" did create types of community and joy, and activists of all sorts were making a difference. The photo of Burroughs was a catalyst, producing an unexpected line of flight (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). It helped me to rethink/escape certain forms of analysis, evolving a more interdisciplinary and creative approach to the fragmentary odds and ends of research.

Reflexively, it is valuable to ask "*how* we document creativity and *how* we document creatively, but also *how* and *why* these methodologies are valuable" (Veal and Hawkins 2020, 359) and the implications then for knowledge creation. My aim has been to give a view of what being *beside* dementia friendly communities has meant for the last few years, heeding Sedgwick's call to develop a form of critical thinking that does something other than seek to get *behind* or *beneath* a topic (Sedgwick 2003, 8). An emergent and dynamic form of knowledge comes into view by using such techniques to salvage work from the kinds of impasse that can happen in research. Fundamentally, they help us to move away from an idea that knowledge creation is about the tidy re-presentation of one medium in another: this photo proves this or those words prove that (about DFCs, for example). Re-

presentation really is transformation (Doel 2010). Such salvage practices were used by Burroughs also, a “physical means of excavating and laying bare submerged meanings” (Hawkins and Wermer-Colan 2019).

Cut-ups are above all a narrative practice, in a world where narratives—and the control of narratives around words such as austerity, community or even dementia—matters. By deliberately “making the familiar strange,” we embrace a type of disorientation, even incoherence, within language. The world can become a strange and sometimes frightening place for people with dementia, and though this technique mimics a sense of disorientation within language, liberating us momentarily from what’s known in the text, I make no special claims connecting the method and the heterogenous experience of dementia. The textual artefacts, including my own—fragments created in the name of dementia friendly communities—would seem like a good place to salvage more experience. Something new emerges from brash newspaper headlines. We can find poetry or an unexpected viewpoint in a pamphlet or a fieldnote. To claim that one has dispensed with a certain authorial voice in the “finished” process would be disingenuous, but the point may be that both cut-ups and collage are what result at the borders of practice—gerontological, geographical, sociological even—but above all, between what can be loosely termed social science practices and artistic practices. Barad (2007) and others have encouraged social scientists to acknowledge a “need to be responsible for the ‘cuts’ that are made in the practice of boundary-making”(Coleman and Ringrose 2013, 6) when we make our knowledge claims. Though cut-ups might loosen these boundaries, it is inevitable that I am still making new boundaries at some level; but they are also potentially “boundary objects” (Bowker and Star 2008, 292), as they bring together different registers, materials, viewpoints, even communities of practice.

This is not without its dangers, but maybe the biggest difference between social science and artistic practice lies in approaches to knowledge production: the tendency in social science practice is to overinterpret, whereas artistic practice leaves interpretation to others, is seemingly more open. The practices here try to go beyond my initial thoughts around DFCs as ciphers for austerity politics or type of governmentality, into a kind of “geography of what happens” (Thrift 2008), by trying to give a sense of movement, unfolding, often in everyday places or situations. Using cut-ups and collaging to approach our research materials, by salvaging and re-cycling what has often been collected painstakingly over many years, potentially means there is no real ending to what can be created, and might help us to think in new, open directions.

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