

'Unstated and vital: ekphrasis, cognition, and a briefcase'

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English Research Seminar



Briefcase belonging to Patrick White

NLA

'Briefcase belonging to Patrick White [realia]', MS 10050, National Library of Australia. Exhibited in: "The Life of Patrick White", National Library of Australia, 13 April - 8 July 01, State Library of New South Wales, 0 August to 8 October 01.





WILLIAM YANG (B. 1943) PATRICK WHITE AND
MANOLY LASCARIS, MARTIN ROAD 1984
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA ITEM 86



PATRICK WHITE WRITING AT HIS DESK AT
'DOGWOODS' c. 1956
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA ITEM 58

'Patrick White's Briefcase'

MARCELLE FREIMAN, *MEANJIN*, VOL 76, 2: 23 (2017)

The wild mind wears a tie
workmanlike but formal, for writing

Hurtle Duffield's spliced mind,
life broken by its fire, painting wildly ...

a sheaf of papers, typed, in a leather case
with clasp of brass, initialed PW:

it's a strong place for stories
that fly off the pages – to carry them from this room:

what a constellation of love and order
and dogs and vegetables and wine on the table –

the wildness bloomed, a galaxy of stars,
Leather briefcase alongside, like a watcher.

Kirsch 'Comparing tangible and virtual exploration of archaeological objects' (2010)

... our projection or our capacity to imagine is anchored in the world as we perceive it, but we can augment it or partially alter it by making a few quasi-perceptual changes. I say quasi-perceptual because in perception we sometimes experience the world not just as it is at the moment but as it is *dispositionally*. (My emphasis).

David Kirsh, 2010 'Comparing tangible and virtual exploration of archaeological objects', in M. Forte (ed) *Cyber-Archaeology*, Oxford, Hadrian Books, pp 119-124

Varela, Thompson and Rosch cite philosopher Merleau-Ponty on the perceiving organism, which argues that the organism participates as much in perception as does the object of its sensorimotor input: ‘The properties of the object and the intentions of the subject ... are not only intermingled; they also constitute a new whole.’”

(Merleau-Ponty, 1963 *The Structure of Behavior* 13, in Varela et al 173-174).

Kim Sterelny (2017) argues that enactive cognition, by rejecting 'that the mind is a representation-forming, information-processing system', does not take sufficient account of the need for *practice and skills*:

'the emphasis on practice, know-how, and plasticity; the importance of external scaffolds; the importance of information pooling and the division of cognitive labor, all explain how we are able to assemble information, organize it ... and exploit it.'

'Artifacts, Symbols, Thoughts', *Biological Theory*, Dec 2017, Vol 12, 4, pp 236–247. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13752-017-0277-3#citeas>

Social anthropologist Tim Ingold (2017), challenges scientific ethnography's methodology, developing the idea of 'correspondence-thinking' – to 'capture the dynamic of lives going along with one another', which has its focus '*on ontogenesis – on the generation of being*'.

Imagining 'a world in which openness, rather than closure, is a fundamental condition of existence' (9).

'Whereas '*of-ness*' is intentional, '*with-ness*', I would argue, is attentional. And what it sets up are relations not of intersubjectivity but of correspondence.' (41)

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“Each time a stimulus is processed it gives rise to a slightly different memory trace – either because the item itself is different or because it occurs in a different context that conditions its representation – the traces are not kept separate.” (Sutton 2009: 219)

Footnote reference in an earlier essay by John Sutton on autobiographical memory:

“What may have been inchoate becomes sequential. What was fleeting takes on substance.” (Engel, S. 1999 *Context is Everything*, New York: W. H. Freeman, in Sutton 2002, 387)