



Open  
College  
of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Normally to be written by the student, and endorsed by the tutor with **additions/amendments in red**.

### Key points

- Look at key concepts contained within essay such structuralism and/or post structuralism, montage, death of authorship in greater depth
- Explore why structuralism and/or post structuralism have become so important to photography/film
- Explore montage/bricolage in relation to Modernism

### Summary of tutorial discussion

This is an edited version of notes on my blog (see Tutor Feedback in menu system under relevant Assignment section for more detail.).

#### *Written feedback*

Really useful point by point questions which will help reach a more succinct and clearer draft. All discussed at length (for which I am grateful). Much discussed in the talk below.

#### *Tutorial learning points*

I was pleased to receive precise and specific feedback from Matt, as we picked through paragraphs for as long as was possible. I explained that since submitting the draft I had done further reading where I really tried to understand how the word *performative* was being used by writers and artists, and that I had noticed the meaning seems quite broad. i.e. Karen Barad's writing on new materialism, influenced by quantum theories - in connection to 'phenomena' – where matter, both human and non-human, *relate* – she applies her ideas to the smallest levels of interaction between electrons, photons and particles and then scales that up to describe an assembly of relations which amount to identity; or else the word might be used in more general conversations about the way in which modern culture sees many of us performing on social media (I think these two examples are deeply

related – but the latter is more straightforward and accessible – and I am not familiar enough yet with dreadfully difficult concepts unhelped by Barad’s technical writing to make the link in my own writing.) However, I am not interested in writing an essay about selfie culture - although I may well include some thoughts in relation. We discussed whether my extended essay might focus on *performativity*, trying to figure out what it means (Barad links it to her quantum informed arguments). I was asked to explain the inclusion of a reference to quantum physics in the introduction and my answer seemed far clearer while explaining it in person. Something like: - the lack of certainty and fixedness which scientists tell us exists at the quantum level seems to have made its way up through reality so that nowadays, the classical world of objects feels uncertain and fluid too (arguably due to the fact we are all using technology and internalising its behaviour. What seems important is that the tech often originates within quantum research, then underpins war related tech (see Paul Virilio link between war/technology and my DI&C A2)) before being subsumed into everyday use. So the tech is related to war, power, and destruction but is also informing a more relaxed approach to gender, sexuality, class (even as certain forces become entrenched as they strive to prevent that happening).

I said I should stop arguing against Michael Fried, and so reduce that section (others have done it far better than me already) but that the terms theatricality and anti-theatricality which he uses to describe his binary (good/bad) thesis on art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were useful to explore. I have also noticed how theatrical/acting metaphors are used frequently in a book about new materialism. Matt suggested **Erving Goffman**, a sociologist who uses theatre as a backdrop for describing how humans interact (since found him mentioned in further reading). I said, I had written about theatre and film as a laboratory for life/reality (i.e. it’s not an exercise in faking it but rather one about creating a universe). He also suggested looking at schema theory, which I might think about in terms of deconstructing film (I think); and Mark Lewis (similar work to Michael Snow’s deconstruction of film techniques/narrative construction).

Overall - the A2 currently has too much info, slim down, focus, move away from list structure and write it like I would an essay. Plan A3 roughly then return to A2 before returning to A3 to help clarify thoughts.

## Reading suggestions

Hito Steyerl (writer and artist)

Mark Lewis (artist)

Irving Gotham - **Goffman not Gotham!** (Since writing this up I came across him mentioned in a paper on performativity by Moya Lloyd, 2015 -

<https://sjflevel3.photo.blog/2019/11/07/cs-bow-notes-more-re-performativity/>)

Schema Theory - Arbib, M.A. & Hesse, M.B., The Construction of Reality, Cambridge University Press, 1986. I seem to remember that the authors refer to the scientists Head and Holmes

### **Summary of Research Proposal** (amended in the light of the tutorial)

#### Performativity

Strengths	Areas for development
Wide spread of interesting references	Topic too broad, focus on an aspect
Relevant topics	Deeper research (still)
Ambitious	Clarify own thoughts and therefore writing

#### **Any other notes**

Tutor name	Matt White
Next assignment due	6/1/2020