

**Developing Productive Mimesis in the Age of  
Screened Oppression: Rhetorics of Flattening and  
Fragmentation in the Making of New Model Army**

**Linda Aloysius**

**2017**

**Goldsmiths College, University of London**

**PhD Art**

The work presented in this thesis is my own.

Signed.....

Linda Aloysius

## Abstract

The thesis responds to Hilary Robinson's (2006) claim that it is difficult for women to develop a syntax for mediating their subjectivities in symbolic terms. The thesis argues there is a need to account for the background conditions affecting women's production of such syntaxes, particularly women's experiences of patriarchy.

In addressing this need, the thesis follows currents in women's art since the 1960s in which the visual fragmentation and flattening of woman occurs. In accounting for these practices, the discussion addresses themes such as women's overcoming of patriarchy, women's screened oppression, women's unpaid reproductive and domestic labour, the contradictory position of the mother-worker-artist, the gaze and the politics of looking, geophilosophy, standpoint feminism, productive mimesis, hysterical art and developments to film theory.

Drawing from notions of geophilosophy the thesis examines works by EXPORT, Rosler, Wilke, Bourgeois, Wilkes, Banner, Beecroft and Lucas, arguing that, when geophilosophically mapped, these works form feminist standpoints, in which subversive knowledges of women's lived experiences of patriarchy are held and through which important affective relations are activated. A further argument is that the women artists' adaptation of patriarchal techniques of visual fragmentation and flattening is carried out in response to the commodification and subversion of women via their image.

These ideas are considered relative to early and recent film theories; the thesis draws on analyses by Friedberg, Wasson and others, to consider the

problems caused by early psychoanalytic film theories by Mulvey and Doane, arguing the latter retain notions of pure cinema and Freudian biologism, thus dis-servicing the possibility of new knowledges and approaches being generated regarding women's sculpture. The claim is that sculpture has a role to play in unravelling the notion of the discrete film object, to re-cast theoretical debates of film relative to (women's) urban and neo-liberalist living.

To develop this argument, the thesis examines Hilary Robinson's rationale for productive mimesis, including her morphological approach to the symbolic mediation of women's oppression, arguing that the term "between-ing" more appropriately describes how women's sculptural syntaxes actively engender affective relations by putting in place a morphological rather than anatomical approach to notions of language. This argument is refined relative to notions of hysteria, with a further claim being that hysterical art does have feminist merit, but, to be considered as such, requires an expansion of feminist parameters.

Within this context, my own sculptural practice is analysed. Claims emerging from this analysis are that, to account for my practice in theoretical terms, it becomes necessary to synthesise aspects of geophilosophy, standpoint feminism and productive mimesis and that, whilst the synthesis does not resolve differences between these theories, or fully align them with my practice, it does provide a new perspective on knowledges of women's art and of the contradictory position of the (single) mother-artist-worker.

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## Glossary

- **assemblages**: embodied subjects and material and symbolic entities, including art works.
- **affect / affective / affectivity**: the ability of assemblages to generate change.
- **affective relations**: relations between embodied subjects and embodied subjects and the symbolic, which have the ability to generate change.
- **becoming**: change incurred by affective relations. In this thesis, I use the term mainly to describe women's overcoming of the symbolic terms and limitations of their existence, as delimited by patriarchy.
- **between-ness**: affective relation(s) between two or more embodied subjects and/or between two or more embodied subjects and the symbolic, in and through which a morphological impetus is carried and fulfilled. In the thesis, I use this term mainly to refer to this kind of relation(s) between aspects of an art work and between artists, art works and viewers.
- **between-ing**: the artistic engendering of between-ness. In this thesis, I use the term to refer to between-ness engendered within and through art works, due to artistic structuring of fragmentation and flattening of an idea of woman's body / women's bodies.
- **between-subject relations**: relations between embodied subjects in which all subjects are positioned as equal, due to the between-ness of the relation.
- **body / bodies**: In the thesis, I use the term mainly to refer to human bodies, but also to (my) sculptures.
- **desire (women's)**: women's impulses and (sexual) appetite(s), not generated relative to their alleged lack, but in connection with their excess, and in connection with their symbolic mediation, in 'defiance' (from a patriarchal perspective) of patriarchal delimitation.
- **desiring machines**: assemblages engaged in / connected to their desire(s).

- **domestic labour:** derived from Federici (1975, 2010): labour carried out within the home and which is typically unpaid and, as such, is not officially recognised as labour.
- **economy:** the management, including through the division and valuation of labour, of a region in terms of its resources and the supply and circulation of money.
- **flattening:** techniques involving compression which decrease the three-dimensionality of an assemblage and / or which level the surface of an assemblage.
- **fragmentation:** techniques involving the breaking or partitioning an assemblage into smaller parts.
- **machines:** In this thesis, I use the term as an alternative to "assemblages".
- **machinic:** the (self) operation of a machine.
- **machinic relations:** relations between assemblages.
- **mother:** a woman who carries out primary, reproductive and/or domestic labour in connection with legal responsibility and care for a child / children and the related home and whose labour forms are economically structured as unwaged.
- **patriarchy:** derived from Millett (1969): the domination of younger men by older men (and, less often, the reverse) and the domination of women by men.
- **patriarchal capitalism:** derived from Beechey (1979), Eisenstein (1979) and Mitchell (1974): the collusion of patriarchal kinship structures with neo-liberalist, economical imperatives.
- **politics of looking:** derived from Coleman and Ringrose (2013): the imposition and negotiation of governance through the visual realm, including the activity of looking and being looked at.
- **reproductive labour:** derived from Federici (1975, 2010): the labour of childbirth carried out primarily by women and which is economically structured as unwaged.
- **screen:** following Simone (2012), Wasson (2007) and Friedberg (2003): a networked, material structure integral to the visual realm and the politics of looking.

- **screened oppression:** the patriarchal and capitalist oppression of women through screen(s) and screen-related images.
- **symbolic:** the register and/or order within and relative to which embodied subjects mediate their subjectivities and inter-subjective relations.

## Introduction

### 0:1 Beginning with Syntax

In this thesis, I respond to Hilary Robinson's claim that it is difficult for women to identify and use syntax for negotiating their subjective relation to the symbolic. She writes:

Women in our culture have no easy access to a syntax through which they can mediate their subjectivity. This syntax - still a cultural reserve yet to come - needs to be worked upon, developed: its gestures and practices need to be tested and explored. (Robinson, 2006, p. 93)

To respond to this problem, I have decided to position myself, in this thesis, as one of the women Robinson refers to. By this I mean I intend to speak to, complicate and build on her analysis by providing an account of my own artistic practice, especially my *New Model Army* series which, I claim, generates morphological syntaxes for the representation of my own and other women's experiences of overcoming patriarchal oppression, with the aim of enabling a shared overcoming.

Robinson goes on to suggest that art is implicated in this process of inventing and symbolically mediating women's subjectivities:

While women are in a state of immediacy and without the syntax to mediate their subjectivity, 'objects', (non)objects and gift-space/objects - need to be interposed to compensate for the lack of space of mediation. Artworks have a role here. In order that these do not perform a maintenance mimesis upon the subject-object practices prevalent in the art world, attention will need to be paid to the appropriate syntactical morphology and gestures. (ibid., p. 93)

Whilst the term *syntax* is most often used relative to the notion of semiotics, to describe the arrangement of words within language and also the rules for that arrangement, Robinson uses the term in an expanded sense. She does not suggest that art (only) has a role to play in changing the syntax of words, and her statement does not rule out the idea that art can alter the syntax of words. Instead, she suggests art is crucial for the invention of material and visual syntaxes - arrangements, rules and "morphology and gestures" (ibid., p. 93) - that testify to "the differences and specificities of art practice" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20) and which encourage "...reading...an artwork in a non-linear fashion" (ibid., p. 20).

The proposal Robinson puts forward is that, given "appropriate attention" (ibid., p. 93), art can avoid reproducing a "maintenance mimesis upon the subject-object practices prevalent in the art world" (ibid., p. 93). "Maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 93) is implied to be a process in which the

symbolic is repeated and re-duplicated, generating unequal, subject-object relations, which extend into art and the art world.

Within this same passage, Robinson refers to Irigaray's petition to women: "Don't restrict yourself to describing, reproducing, and repeating what exists, but know how to invent or imagine what hasn't yet taken place" (Irigaray, 1990 cited Robinson, 2006, p. 93). Robinson builds on Irigaray's idea that, given their difficulties in symbolically mediating their subjectivities, women must envision new syntaxes and adopt experimental approaches for establishing them.

Robinson's reference to "morphology" (Robinson, 2006, p. 93) is developed from Irigaray's interest in morphology as a means for subverting a phallicised - and, as such, patriarchally linearised - symbolic. Robinson argues that art - and artists - have a role to play in generating morphological syntaxes.

Robinson's analysis generates the potent question of what is actually entailed, at an experiential level, for women engaged in inventing and making the requisite syntax. How do their experiences of patriarchy affect the syntaxes produced and how might their experiences be accounted for, or mapped? Robinson's account does not extend to include such a mapping. This causes a problem, which I have chosen to address in this thesis.

The problem is that, without such a mapping of women artists' experiences of patriarchy, a patriarchal silence - and a silencing - remain in place regarding women's empirical knowledges and intelligences and how these inspire and shape different morphological syntaxes within art practice. This a priori delimits and flattens out the production of new knowledges regarding the range and details of morphological syntaxes that Robinson calls for. Moreover, the absence of such a mapping contributes to further silences surrounding women's lived experiences of patriarchal inequality and, relatedly, how women artists contend with and overcome inequalities in order to make art. These silences further delimit an appreciation of morphological syntaxes as they currently exist and how they might be developed in future, for the mediation of women's experiences. Whilst Robinson's analysis is concerned with subverting the patriarchal gaze, and with how theories of productive mimesis assist an understanding of processes of overcoming of patriarchal oppression, further examination is needed of how the lived experience of bearing the gaze affects different women differently, and how instances of different and lived responses are evident in the particularities of women artists' syntaxes, including my own.

## **0:2 The Screen, Screened Images and Screened Oppression**

The screen and its effects are crucial to my sculptural series *New Model Army* because women's lived responses and differences are today negotiated relative to screened oppression. Although the screen does not seem to be obviously involved in these sculptural works and does not seem to visibly appear in them, my argument - materialised in the *New Model Army* sculptures - is that the latent effects of the screen are crucial to neoliberalism's normalisation of women's embodied oppression. My work seeks to critique the covert way in which this embodiment is effectuated. I address the specific role sculpture has to play in materialising such critique and I demonstrate how my own work contributes to this, through the morphological syntaxes I produce.

Laura Mulvey's analysis (1975) of the effects, on women, of their screened images within cinematic experience has been a crucial starting point for my work, and I discuss this in detail later in this thesis. Borrowing from Robinson's approach to Gebauer and Wulf's (1995) work, which involves her relating their analysis to Irigaray's work in ways they did not intend, I relate Mulvey's earlier account (1973) of the male gaze in Allen Jones' sculptures, to more recent discussion (Friedberg 2003), (Wasson 2007) of the need for theories of the cinematic gaze to be updated and expanded. My argument is that formats such as television, fashion and

fashion imagery, advertising and billboard posters, were already maximising the distribution of the cinematic gaze beyond the architectural framework of cinema, thus complicating the notion of the "discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) which was, as expanded below, retained in psychoanalytic film theory along with an "ever-elusive idea about cinematic purity" (ibid., p. 75). These formats and, importantly, their distribution, were subsequently developed through media technologies involving a multiplicity of different screens - a move which suggests that patriarchal distribution of commodified images of women was never really confined to the traditional cinema but was already situated within "an expanded system of overlapping relations" (ibid., p. 75).

In engaging with this literature, both theoretically and in the studio, I illuminate a complex, neglected relationship between sculpture, women's image and cinema. Specifically, I become intrigued by Mulvey's idea that the use of the close-up, of women's images, "gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40). Drawing from Mary Ann Doane's analysis, the project pursues my idea that Mulvey's ideas surrounding "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "cut-out" (ibid., p. 40) must now be thought beyond a psychoanalytic framework. In this text, I develop the argument that female artists can use making as an empowering activity and tackle the fragmenting and flattening approaches used to form patriarchal images of women. The results may be either wholly or partly three-dimensional works which combat the flattening and fragmenting

approaches of patriarchy, symbolically re-dimensionalising women's bodies and empowering an idea of woman. In Chapter Three, I develop these ideas by arguing the necessity of analysing flattening and fragmenting approaches beyond the psychoanalytic framework Mulvey invokes; doing so allows a reading of fragmentation and flattening as approaches beyond the Freudian, anatomical biologism retained in such analyses, and instead relates these approaches to an idea of woman's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) as material and social, rather than only psychological. In Chapter Three, referencing Doane's analysis of the "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428), I demonstrate how my sculptures speak to and build on this idea and her implicit, but progressive, acknowledgement of the need to balance psychoanalytical enquiry with social, material and cultural analyses of power.

My *New Model Army* sculptures insist on a relationship with the screen in which the screen is invisible, but very actively referenced. Following Byerly's analysis (2014), I suggest sculpture has a crucial role to play in acknowledging neo-liberalist developments to the screen and how this has engendered a cultural transition from film objects to mediated objects, in which women's images have been downgraded to "utility" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347) status. In other words, sculpture has a specific role to play in contending with the seemingly limitless capitalist power of the mediated screen and mediated, screened oppression of women via their images. In what follows I hope to demonstrate how my *New Model Army* works take on this role, including by building on and materialising the

implications of Friedberg's use of the term "utility" (ibid., p. 347).

### 0:3 Introducing *New Model Army*

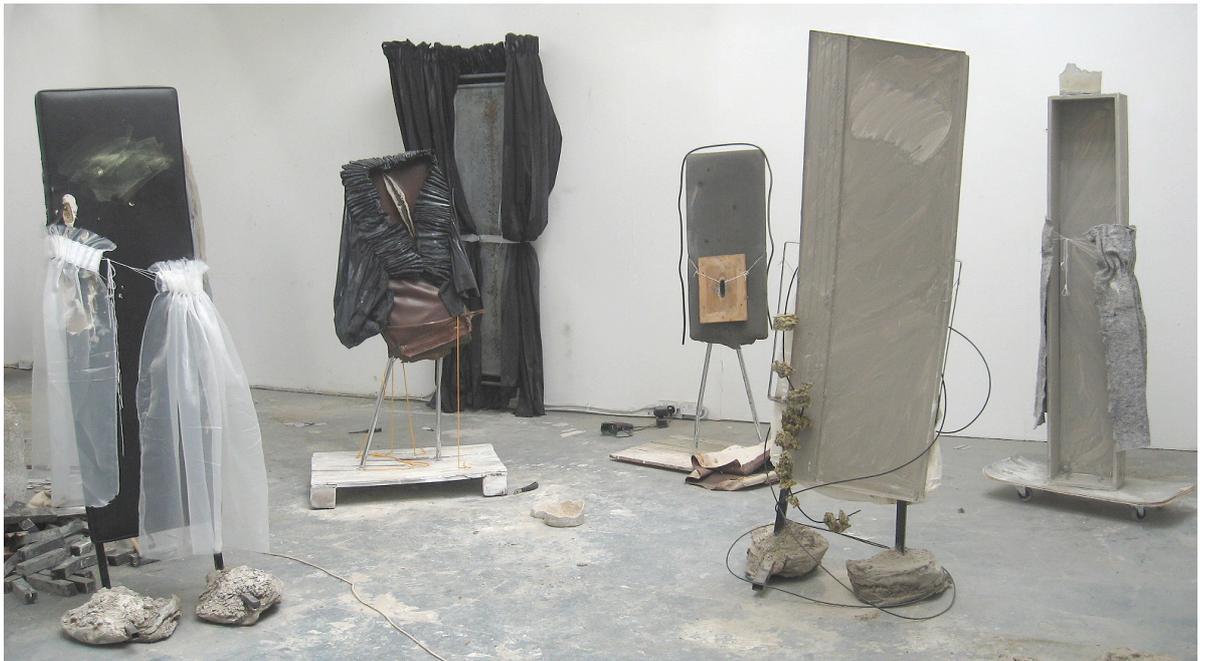


Fig. 1 Linda Aloysius Studio view of selected works in the series *New Model Army* (2011 - ongoing).

My thesis seeks to appreciate "the syntactical morphology and gestures" (Robinson, 2006, p. 93) invented by female artists, including myself. In so doing I pay attention to the artists' different responses to patriarchal, screened looking, how these responses are materially evident in their works, and how my own work sits in relation to existing work, and seeks to make a new contribution to it. Throughout the thesis, I relate my theoretical engagements to nuances - particularly those involving flattening and fragmentation - within my sculptural series *New Model Army*.

In the *New Model Army* series, I assemble materials and object fragments constituted by, and constitutive of, my experiences of overcoming patriarchal oppression as an artist and working, single mother of a (now adult) daughter, as exerted through the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013). I think of the series as a forceful structure in which an idea of women and their different experiences of screened oppression are newly modelled, and in which the sculptures - and, by extension, women - become powerfully networked through their different experiences of subjugation. Through this framing, I form and articulate my own desiring, bodily and combative gaze, intent on subverting the patriarchal politics embedded in looking and on progressing, instead, into futures of "unknown spaces of movement" (ibid., 2013. p. 130) beyond the fixed position that patriarchal looking intends for women.

In naming the series *New Model Army*, I draw attention to the idea that these structures are built for and engaged in a kind of war and I aim to provoke new discourse regarding the precise nature of that conflict.

In the early stages of my PhD research, I had become aware of Martha Rosler's work and was drawn to her photomontage series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967 - 72).



Fig. 2 Martha Rosler *Cleaning the Drapes*  
from the series: *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967 - 72)

Rosler's works such as *Cleaning the Drapes* became very important to the development of my project. In this work, a woman is depicted in the role of housewife carrying out cleaning tasks. The curtains are depicted as being pulled back to reveal not a window, as such, but imagery of the Vietnam War (1955-1975). The image of the woman is such that she looks oblivious and / or powerless to respond to the war. Rosler's critique, in works such as this, is three-fold. The first two critiques are relatively obviously loaded into the work. They are: a. The American government has structured the economy in ways that render women politically powerless in terms of military decisions and b. The American government has, instead, positioned women in the role of housewife. However, the third critique is rather latent -

and, also, doubled. It is articulated through the woman's relationship to the object that she carries on her shoulder. The vacuum cleaner that she carries is depicted in such a way that it bears visual resemblance to a military weapon, such as a machine gun. This structure, and the woman's bodily relation to it (in carrying it), suggests that women are - bodily and unwittingly and through carrying out domestic labour - implicated in the war, and in the idea of serving the country, just as much as the soldiers. The further (doubled) critique, the one that has become key to my project, is that, from that role and position, women can engage in a combat of their own choosing, and this can be a combat against their confinement within the very role that they engage in the combat from.

Most importantly, Rosler presents this work in such a way that the structure that would ordinarily be a domestic window instead strongly suggests a cinematic screen. Moreover, taken in its entirety, the whole photomontage reads as a larger, screened scene, in which the slightly smaller screen of the 'window' appears. Rosler's use of colour, in this work, is very important for generating a critique of this double - or divided (Friedberg, 2003) - screen. By using 'camouflage' tones to depict the interconnected structures of the woman, the vacuum cleaner, the drapes and the war scene, Rosler generates an odd, artificially unified situation, in which the screen is, at that time, camouflaged; the screen is already operating, particularly on women, in a covert manner, to engender an economic and political sense of unity which is actually false. Rosler's critique of the covert

nature of the screen and of women's screened oppression, has become vital to my project.

In Chapters Three, Four and Five, the project examines how the *New Model Army* is engaged in a war against the political silences - and silencing - connected to patriarchal oppression of women as exerted through looking. I have developed an approach which I name "between-ing", to materialise this combat. Techniques involving the transferring of "flatness" (Mulvey, 1974, p. 40) and the "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40), from the filmic to the sculptural register, are integral to this approach. My *New Model Army* series recruits them to materially evidence my own, long-standing experiences of this multi-faceted oppression<sup>1</sup>, especially in terms of how it affects my ability to assert my way of looking, and my desire as woman living within patriarchy. In being mediated through my work, these experiences contribute to existing material

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge there is a correspondence between this thought and intersectionality feminism. Feminists including Maria D'Agostino and Helisse Levine (D'Agostino and Levine, 2011) have argued that understanding intersectionality is key to gaining political and social equality. Broadly, Intersectionality feminism examines how intersecting aspects of individual identity, and of overlapping social identities, relate to systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination and how these can multiply and simultaneously interact to oppress women. My argument in this thesis, that it is necessary to synthesise aspects of geophilosophy and standpoint feminisms to account for women's - including the working single mother artist's - experiences of screened oppression, can be read as contributing to intersectionality debates. In this thesis, I do not pursue this, but I intend to develop this in future research. For example, I am interested in analysing how, in 2012, V. Spike Peterson picks up on Zillah Eisenstein's term *capitalist, racist, patriarchy* (Eisenstein, 1979) for describing global inequalities and how these constitute hierarchies of 'difference'. Peterson positions feminist theory to 'empower women' (Peterson 2012) and to develop analyses of intersecting structural forms of oppression. This involves critiquing patriarchy and its intersection with capitalism and racism, analysing devalued - 'feminized' (Peterson, 2012) - informal work and analysing how positivism, modernism and masculinism investment in (feminist) theories of informality complicate intersectional analyses and critiques of capitalist, racist patriarchy.

and knowledge practices generated by other women artists who, in deploying art to resist, escape and overcome oppression by inventing "syntactical morphology and gestures" (Robinson, 2006, p. 93) actively structure their gazes in ways that aim to respond to and subvert patriarchal oppression exerted upon women through looking. In Chapter Five, this argument is developed and nuanced relative to notions of "hysteria" (Robinson, 2006) and the usefulness of the hysterical mode in art. My contribution to new knowledge is not concerned with arguing the specific meaning of the term mimesis, productive or otherwise, or the absolutely specific meaning of the term "between-ing". Nor do I claim to resolve, in this thesis, the notion of woman. My contribution to new knowledge is in my practice and in the mapping of my artistic practice, the empirical knowledges carried in this and other women artists' syntaxes, the cluster of ideas surrounding these knowledges, and the merging together of reactions and responses to patriarchy, including desire and overcoming, found in this cluster. This does not mean rejecting the intellectual work of understanding the term *woman*, in connection with my work, but that the notion of woman cannot be and is not resolved in the text itself.

## 0:4 Personal Experience

My research and practice are influenced and complicated by my insistence on a life for my daughter and myself that challenges patriarchal oppression. My interest is not to relay personal details for the sake of revelation, but in drawing from the notion of experience as a feminist vantage point, rather than a dis-advantaged position within "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132). In so doing, I uphold the maxim that 'The Personal is Political' (Firestone and Koedt, 1970)<sup>23</sup>, and Heidi Hartman's related statement that:

Women's discontent, radical feminists argued, is not the neurotic lament of the maladjusted, but a response to a social structure in which women are systematically dominated, exploited, and oppressed. (Hartmann, 1997, p.100)

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<sup>2</sup> This is a maxim that became a political argument in the early 1960s, with the onset of Second-Wave Feminism.

<sup>3</sup> I acknowledge the associated maxim 'The Private is Political' (Firestone and Koedt, 1970). However, in writing this thesis I have struggled with the implications of this statement, having felt torn between wanting details of my own and my daughter's lives to remain private - particularly because it is precisely our privacy that has felt disrespected by patriarchal looking - and, conversely, often feeling drawn to reveal private details of our background and lives, in order to politically defend my decisions and actions as working, single mother artist and to address falsehoods surrounding single mother families - for example, the still persistent idea that all single mother families are given assisted housing. Ultimately, I have decided that, for me personally, the idea that the private is political must include the right to choose to keep details private. With that in mind, I have relayed some personal information, but only where I feel this is absolutely necessary for communicating how the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) affected me as a young woman, artist and single mother.

It is from this position that I examine the possibility of (what I term) the between-ing approach in art as a mode of 'defiance', of patriarchal politicisation of the act of looking. I have examined "standpoint theory" (see section 1:2) and, with this in mind, I argue that patriarchal looking fixes the bodies and the subjectivities of women, in current 'post-feminist' media contexts that celebrate objectification (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) and which, in so doing, ossify notions of heterosexuality whilst punishing non-normative heterosexual living.<sup>4</sup>

To support this argument, I draw on the conventions of personal testimony and claim that the politics of looking (c.f. *ibid.*, 2013) historically invested in the public gaze and brought to single mothers has been acutely invasive and negatively subjectivising, and, at worst, agonising to psychically and bodily bear.<sup>5</sup>

In 1995, the year in which my divorce proceedings against my husband finalised, I became a very young single mother, estranged from my

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<sup>4</sup> This thought reaches to queer theory. As Annamarie Jagose (1996) has claimed, the focus of queer theory is on non-correspondences between sex, gender and desire (Jagose, 1996). In this thesis, I do not formally pursue queer theory. However, I acknowledge that my argument for the desire of the working, single mother artist to be recognised as positively non-normative bears correspondence with this focus and this has given me much thought for future research. For example, I am interested in the question of whether the subjectivity of the working, single mother artist could be usefully and politically positioned as a model for expanding queer theory and intersectionality feminism.

<sup>5</sup> This has since been recognised as a problematic issue for young mothers and, in some cases, young fathers. Alison Hadley, OBE, a key figure dealing with young strategies aimed to support young parents recently reported that young parents, including those who are mistaken for teenagers, "...often feel like they are being looked at in a judgemental way and that's why it's important professionals understand that and make them feel comfortable" (Hadley, quoted BBC Newsbeat, 2014).

highly complex, working class family of origin, my husband having absented himself in the years prior to our divorce. I had no prior awareness of how my daughter and I might stand to be perceived in becoming a single parent family. I was subsequently deeply affected by the many negative judgements levied against single mothers, engendered by the political campaigns of the Conservative party and which had extreme, enduring psychological and material effects on perception of and behaviour towards single mothers and their children. Beverley Skeggs (1997) references this as:

...the cynical use of single mothers in the UK to represent a threat to social order to generate support for Conservative party policy on law and order (at the 1995 Party Conference). (Skeggs, 1997, p. 3)

Skeggs' reference has been crucial for my research project, providing a means for me to begin to draw correspondences between my personal experiences and memories of oppression and to begin to make theoretical sense of how the patriarchal capitalist policies underlying this have, ultimately, impacted on my work and career as an artist. However, other accounts of the actions of the Conservatives emphasise the extremities of the "cynical use of single mothers" (ibid., p. 3) and, for this reason, have greater resonance. For example, Jennifer Harding (1998) claims that "'The single mother' is one figure which has featured repeatedly as a version of 'motherhood gone wrong' in the 1990s." (Harding, 1998, p. 116). Harding claims that "the 'pathologised single mother' " has been "constructed in

contemporary political and moral discourses" (ibid., p. 116). She makes explicit how "Political discourse has identified single mothers as 'responsible for social problems in the wider society' " (ibid., p. 116) and how the Conservatives purposely connected the idea of mothers causing social disorder with the further idea that they and their children presented an unacceptable financial drain to society:

In 1993, in a House of Commons speech, Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, linked the 'enormity of the cost of state benefits to the demands of single mothers'. (Woodward cited Harding, 1998, p. 116)

It is helpful for my practice and research to consider Harding's claims relative to those of Neil Davenport. Davenport's claims have further resonance. He writes that the Conservative Party "declared open season on single mothers" and that this involved "blaming them for raising delinquent children and placing intolerable burdens on the welfare state" (Davenport, 2013). Importantly, Davenport refers to this as "war" (ibid.). He writes:

Far from encouraging individual freedom and autonomy, the war against single mothers outlined what the authorities deemed to be acceptable parenting. (ibid.)

Most importantly, Davenport caims: "There was a major panic, for

instance, about single mothers going to work and leaving their children home alone" (ibid.).

In a move that might appear shocking now, but which was *par for the course* for single mothers at the time, 1998, Margaret Thatcher stated that:

It is far better to put these children in the hands of a very good religious organisation<sup>6</sup>, and the mother as well, so that they will be brought up with family values. (Thatcher, cited BBC News, 1998)

When Thatcher said this, BBC News reported that:

She told an audience in the Commonwealth Convention Centre in Louisville the spread of illegitimacy "devalues our values, our community". (ibid.)

Following Davenport's and Harding's accounts, and Thatcher's statements, I claim that the underlying purpose of the Conservative action that Harding refers to - the key reason the Conservatives "constructed" (Harding, 1998, p.16) " 'the pathologised single mother' " (ibid., p.16) - was

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<sup>6</sup> I chose for my child and I not to be "put" (Thatcher, cited BBC News, 1998) in such an order. Instead - and if there is a comparison to be drawn between Higher Education institutions and the kind of institutions that Thatcher had in mind for single mothers and their children - I pursued postgraduate studies at Goldsmiths College, gaining a distinction for my MFA studies before embarking on PhD research. Similarly, my daughter did not attend such an order but, instead, pursued a BA (hons) in Philosophy and then an MLitt in Modern Literature (Glasgow University). Both of us worked in either part time or full time employment whilst doing so, to fund our studies.

to maintain patriarchal capitalism by marginalising single mothers. Thatcher's possessive and territorial claiming of an idea of community and "values" as "ours" (Thatcher, cited BBC News, 1998), and her claim that single mothers degrade them, are deliberate attempts to politically construct single mothers as a threat that must be subjected to suspicion and containment. This involved campaigning in ways that would distract from the possibility of the Conservatives being obliged to undertake the structural work, and the cost of underwriting this in legal terms, of reconciling single mothers' equal right to work with the reproductive and domestic labour they carry out themselves and / or including the financial cost of reproductive and domestic labour when a mother chooses to outsource this to another party.

It is worth pointing out, here, that the greater context for the Conservatives' attacks on single parents - and the idea I put forward above, that this was a distraction from the work needed, by the Conservatives, to generate equal conditions for single mothers - extended to / was integral to a greater, forceful oppression of the working class, which had begun at least a decade earlier. Laura Mulvey, whose work has been important for developing my project and is discussed in this thesis, has noted (2009) "the impact of Thatcherism" (Mulvey, 2009, p. x) on politics and on feminism and also on her own position. This impact includes the "aftermath of the miner's strike in 1984-85" (ibid., p. x). Mulvey writes:

The defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers by the Thatcher

government marked the end of industrialised labour as a political and economic force, and enabled the implementation of Thatcher's neo-liberal agenda. This was the moment of recognition: not only could the balancing force provided by the organised, industrial working class no longer act as a brake on neo-conservatism, but also, as its long history was at an end, the configuration of British politics changed forever. (ibid., p. x)

Mulvey acknowledges that "my status as left, feminist, intellectual, active in the cultural field would be definitely changed by these political and economic upheavals" (ibid., p. x) and she states that "I assimilate my own marginal sense of an end of an era with the epochal one" (ibid., p. x). Mulvey also states:

I attempted to use the avant-garde's distrust of narrative closure to keep open the narrative of politics and history in a gesture against impending failure...a feminist perspective should insist on change without closure. (ibid., p. x)

Significantly, Mulvey asserts that, at the time of the miners' strike and subsequent pit closures, the Conservative government were intent on "concealing the processes of history" (ibid., p. 167). Mulvey claims this concealment involved:

...closing down the pits to signal (politically, economically, historically) the 'end of an era', closing off the macro-story of the labour movement, the trade-union movement, even the industrial working class itself. (ibid., p. 167)<sup>7</sup>

Mulvey's claim, that the economic decisions made by the Conservatives involved "concealing" (ibid., p. 167) the effects of those decisions on working class subjects, is very interesting for my research. In this thesis, I examine the screen as a capitalist structure that has become increasingly politically instrumentalised, including by concealing its oppressive effects on gendered subjects. In Chapters One and Three of this thesis, with reference to socialist feminism, particularly Federici's (1975, 2010) analysis (see sections 1:1:5 and 3:9), and bearing in mind Mulvey's

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<sup>7</sup> Mulvey's references to the pit closures is of personal and political interest to me. Although I was born in Edinburgh to parents of Scottish ancestry, we moved to England when I was too young to remember doing so, to a Midlands mining town where I grew up. The town was, historically, majoratively working class, but retained a strong sense of class hierarchy, aspiration and 'small town' evaluations and judgements in keeping with the latter. Significantly, in the time that I grew up there, there was no railway station in the town and this contributed to what was, for working class families, a relatively insular mode of living, with many people remaining disconnected from the nearest cities and any prosperity and diversity they offered. This added to the impact of the miners' strike, which generated extremely high levels of unemployment and poverty in the town - not only for miners but for the industries and communities related to them. There was a sense of unease, fear and confusion about the future, and this contrasted, harshly, with the idea generally circulating in the UK and globally - and in my school - of the eighties being an economic 'boom' period in which vast wealth was attainable. At that time, as a working class, female adolescent, I absorbed what I now see as conflicting messages and values about the economic situation, and about what may and may not be possible in the (then) future. I did not know, then, that I was already implicated - including by virtue of geographical location - in what Mulvey subsequently refers to as "the macro-story of the labour movement" (Mulvey, 2009, p. 167) which, she alleges, the Conservatives concealed. Mulvey's descriptions of this strategy have helped me to understand the importance, in this thesis, of relating autobiographical detail as a way of contributing to the countering of this political agenda - that is, by de-concealing lived narratives resulting from the effects of political decisions which would otherwise be politically denied.

assertion regarding the feminist necessity of refusing historical closure, I develop my argument about the Conservatives' effectuating the structural denigration of (single) motherhood, in order to avoid the work and cost of generating equality.

Emerging as a single mother into what Lynne Segal has described as "largely a decade of gloom and mourning across a fragmented left and dwindling labour movement" (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, 2013, p. 91), I did not understand, at the time, why the Conservatives were behaving in this way towards single mothers and their children. It was through repeated exposure to subtle, but forceful, rejection by other people, and lack of recourse to any form of protection or defense against this, that I came to recognise patterns in people's behaviours.

What most struck me, at that time, was the change in the way that people - men and women - reacted when they learned I had a child. More than any other form of oppression, or perhaps as all forms of oppression merged into a single act, I found this looking, the involuntary point of turn within the eye of the one engaged in the act of looking, hurtful and at times excruciating<sup>8</sup>. It would seem that, within the space of a moment, initial,

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<sup>8</sup> The only more painful experience was becoming aware of my daughter's confusion regarding negative judgement levied against her, in relation to her being the daughter of a single mother.

positive impressions that people gathered of me<sup>9</sup> would change - sometimes subtly, but always forcefully.

The more this happened, the more I became sensitised to how this looking did not always occur through involuntary changes to the eye, but through bodily response - through the sudden, sharp increase in tension, like a silent, temporal and fleeting seizure, in the body of the other. Sometimes people would make a point of not meeting my eye<sup>10</sup> after discovering my status as single mother.

Over time and with repeated experiences of such looking I came to understand that, in these moments, I was, ultimately, being judged in regard to my sexuality. The more I tried to establish a life for my daughter and myself, after my graduation and our relocation to London, the less I could deny that we were being oppressed on that basis; because I had a child and we now lived as a domestic unit, my sexuality was no longer private but considered up for public scrutiny. Under that scrutiny, it was deemed representative of degenerate, socially unacceptable values. The looks were the end points of a systemic, structured oppression in which, for us and other

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<sup>9</sup> Logically, these were likely to have been initially based on associations made between my appearance and idealised ideas and images of young, childless women and, subsequently and when people learned that I was a single mother - of the negative associations (constructed by the Conservative Party), of single mothers, with social and economic disorder.

<sup>10</sup> On rare occasions, this seemed to be through selfless sensitivity to how their gaze might affect me but, in most cases, it was more to do with their embarrassment, a not-knowing what the appropriate response should be. On more than one occasion, the person involved very abruptly stopped whatever conversation we were having and indicated, through bodily gesture, that they did not wish to continue speaking with / to me.

single mother families, normal opportunities - to socialise, to form supportive communities and relationships, to gain employment, to rent or buy accommodation, to be included and to be given a fair chance in prospering - were effectively closed.

Having undertaken BA Fine Art studies whilst combining this with motherhood, and having worked to gain a First Class honours degree, I was under no illusion that trying to combine motherhood, paid employment and art practice in London would be very difficult on a practical level. In that respect, I was not at all naive and was fully prepared to take on the challenges involved. I was fit and healthy, a very hard worker and had an extremely positive outlook. I relished taking on challenges. But what I began to experience was different to anything I had come across before. It initially seemed so absurd, so wholly unjust, as to constitute "madness" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 110)<sup>11</sup>. However, it was happening and, in those moments of looking, felt inescapable.

I did not know, back then, how to describe these experiences, or their effects. I remember thinking things like: "Why does there have to be this

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<sup>11</sup> I have referenced Angela McRobbie's use of this term in connection with what she claims is the "institutionalised madness" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 110) of fashion imagery, in connection with the fashion industry, and its negative effects on young women. Whilst this is an appropriate reference, at the time that I experienced the oppressive looking I refer to as being constitutive of "madness" (ibid., p. 110), I had not yet formed the theoretical connections which encourage understanding of how the looking involved is connected, via patriarchal capitalism, to fashion and advertising imagery. In Chapter Five, I discuss McRobbie's analysis in more detail, elaborating the connections between patriarchal capitalism and fashion imagery "madness" (ibid., p. 110) in connection with my argument that Vanessa Beecroft's art work is hysterical.

judgement involved, when I love my child and I am willing to work and pay our way, when I want to bring up my child well and carve out time to make art?" And: "If this judgement does have to be involved, why is my ex husband not on the receiving end of anything similar? How is it that he can abandon us, and avoid any future responsibility to his child, without anything like this happening to him?".<sup>12</sup> Also, I thought: "this is what black people must feel like" and "this is what gay people must feel like".

At the same time, and since then, I felt that, whilst those other forms of racism and discrimination were being, and have been increasingly, recognised and brought into political and public debate with a view to eradicating them entirely, there seemed to be no similar degree of representation made to defend women associated with the category of single mother. As a white woman, I felt these discriminations were something like a combination of racism, sexism and homophobia. But they were extremely confusing to try to name and, therefore, to reconcile, and this lack of reconciliation negatively affected me; it was very disorientating. I knew I was not gay. So, how could my sexuality be being discriminated against if I was straight? I understood that sexism was - is - so rife as to affect all women, but this was different, more than that. But what? Also: how could I be being

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<sup>12</sup> In the UK, regardless of whether a marriage has taken place or not, regardless of why there was a marriage - for example if this was for what both partners believed to be genuine love, rather than due to pregnancy - and why that marriage 'failed', it was and is legally possible for men to completely avoid paying any child maintenance, for the entire duration of their child's lifetime. It is also completely possible for them to avoid work, regardless of their physical ability to work and the level of their education.

subjected to racism, by white people, if I was white?<sup>13</sup> It felt impossible to name what I was experiencing, or to even prove that it was happening. Despite this confusion, I increasingly realised the political idea in mind, the one being enforced through the act of looking, was that my daughter and I, and other women and children in our position, were to become, as Skeggs says: "massified" (ibid., p. 3)<sup>14</sup>; we were to accept and live within the confines of this "madness" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 110).

There was no doubt in my mind, and through my actions, that, however impossible it might seem, we would not comply with this political agenda. I became - quietly, invisibly - committed, at every cost, to protecting my daughter, and the innocence and joy of our relationship, from the political position intended for us. Even if it felt absolutely impossible - which it did - I had to establish ways for us to eventually overcome and live beyond what I experienced as oppression.

Central to this overcoming has been a commitment, in the face of seeming impossibility, and long periods of absolute invisibility as an artist, to continue the practicing of art whilst also working in (mainly full-time) paid employment; in other words, to embrace "capitalist patriarchy" (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 23) so as to combat it from within; within that structure, the

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<sup>13</sup> The term "intra-racism" (Coleman, 2007, p. 81) may be appropriate, here; as a white woman struggling to name these experiences, I felt I was subjected to white supremacy, as if I had betrayed the white race by being a single mother and, for that reason and although I was visibly white, I was not really white.

<sup>14</sup> Skeggs uses this term to allude to the idea that single mothers were to be rendered culturally and socially homogenous.

development, over many years, of a way of living and of looking that has felt forbidden, censored, outlawed; a way of meeting and subverting a bodily and ocular patriarchal gaze with mine. My approach is in tune with that of Coleman and Ringrose, who re-stage looking as:

...not simply a one-way gaze, as feminist work on the 'male gaze' might imply, but rather as an affective relation between bodies. Looking is understood in terms of the capacities of bodies to be affected. (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 129)

Coleman and Ringrose refuse the patriarchal imperatives and outcomes of the objectifying, determining gaze, but without denying them or their dangers. Instead, by insisting on the gaze as a relation in which bodies are thoroughly implicated, and through which all parties involved have equal potential to affect and influence one another, they challenge the very foundation for those imperatives, and subvert the negativising becoming that patriarchy engenders through the objectification of bodies. Their refusal of negative becoming echoes my insistence (through the development of artwork as a way of looking back at patriarchy) on desires and pleasures that we - my daughter and I and countless other women and their children - were not meant to have.

In this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three, I choose to address the issue of motherhood through discussion of women's care-work, which,

following Federici (1975, 2010), I refer to as reproductive and domestic labour. Drawing from Federici's analysis (1975, 2010), I discuss women's reproductive and domestic labour relative to the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) exerted by the screen and screened images of women. Neo-liberalism is predicated on women's unpaid reproductive and domestic labour, and the screen as a key, capitalist and patriarchal power structure operated to enforce women's oppression in order that patriarchal capitalism can flourish. The screen is integral to women's ongoing negotiation of their oppression and liberation; if women are oppressed under the patriarchal gaze, as enforced by screened images, then women can combat the patriarchal gaze through screened images - that is, women can look back at the screen and screened images in ways that reconstitute the patriarchal gaze and its power. I relate this discussion to my own practice and, in Chapters Two and Five, to other women artists' practices which respond to the screened oppression of women by producing syntaxes for the symbolic mediation of women's experiences of screened oppression.

## **0:5 Geophilosophy**

In writing this thesis, I construct / treat the acts of thinking and writing (theorising) across the differences between theories, lived experiences and art practices, as " 'meaning' " (O'Sullivan, 2013, p. 21) making processes, geared to generate new appreciation of women's different experiences of

screened oppression relative to the knowledge generated by the art.

Theorising these differences addresses the very notions of difference, meaning and knowledge. Therefore, it is important that the mapping involved in accounting for women's work does not reproduce patriarchal, hegemonic ordering systems but, instead, subverts them. Therefore, I draw on Ringrose and Coleman's methodological practice of geophilosophical mapping. They describe geophilosophy<sup>15</sup> as:

...a kind of cartography that takes place on a plane of immanence, as connections are made and re-made horizontally, immanently, rather than (only) as a result of vertical hierarchies. (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125)

From the above, we can see that, for Coleman and Ringrose, geophilosophy is a "cartography" (ibid., p.125) that prioritises "a plane of immanence" (ibid., p. 125), so allowing for connections to be "made and re-made" (ibid., p.125) in ways that do not wholly succumb to vertical hierarchization. They go onto say that geophilosophy allows us to "understand time, space and movement differently" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p.128) and also provides a methodology for charting relations between

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<sup>15</sup> In this text, Coleman and Ringrose draw from Bonta and Protevi's notion of geophilosophy. Bonta and Protevi write that the term refers to Deleuze and Guattari's re-orientation of philosophy "from a concentration on temporality and historicity to spatiality and geography" (Bonta and Protevi, 2004, p. 92). This re-orientation is necessary because " ' thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth' " (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, cited Bonta and Protevi, 2004, p. 92). For this reason, Deleuze and Guattari use geophilosophy to: "attempt to refound philosophy as materialist, earthly, and spatial" (Bonta and Protevi, 2004, p. 92).

embodied subjects, which they refer to as "desiring machines" (ibid., p.125); "a means of differently mapping the relations in desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125).

Importantly, rather than propose geophilosophy as a resolved 'one size fits all' methodology, they introduce this as open-ended, adaptive and adaptable and live, allowing them to:

...reflect on the methodological dilemma of how one might map machinic relations, and question the directionality flow and ethico-political workings of the machines under question. (ibid., p. 125)

In the above, Coleman and Ringrose suggest that geophilosophy is a "methodological dilemma" (ibid., p. 125) because, in prioritising immanence - or, in other words, that which has not yet come into being but which is inherent and operating within what exists - geophilosophy is, itself, subject to possible re-definition.

Coleman and Ringrose propose geophilosophy as a speculative mapping of connections between "desiring machines" (ibid., p.125); as such, it is "not only a task of investigating what there is, then, but is also concerned with unpacking what might be" (ibid., p. 125).

In Chapters Three and Four, I build on this speculative approach. I do this by relating their claim that geophilosophy is "also concerned with unpacking what might be" (ibid., p. 125) to Robinson's arguments in favour of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). The latter, when thought relative to morphological approaches within art, has similarities with the former. It is through thinking about their similarities that I develop and name as such my approach of "between-ing". Coleman and Ringrose mention mimesis in their analysis (Coleman and Ringrose 2013, p. 134) but leave unresolved the relationship between geophilosophy and "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). I do not suggest that the relation between the two terms can be resolved entirely, nor do I attempt this, but I do argue that a dialogue between the two terms may be made concrete in art and that this is what my *New Model Army* works do. I discuss this claim relative to my own and other women's practices.

Geophilosophy is, then, an evolving methodology that involves "differently" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) evaluating what exists and symbolically envisaging what symbolic relations could become, and enabling "becoming" (ibid., p. 126) through "looking differently" (ibid., p. 125) - that is, by investigating and exploring "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125) and their relations relative to an alternative politics of looking.

Coleman and Ringrose say:

The body is...a 'desiring machine', not bound up as a singular entity but always coming into being through relations with other bodies and things in various assemblages. (ibid., p. 132)

The alternative politics of looking that Coleman and Ringrose support refuses hegemonic orders and knowledges that would ordinarily de-prioritise embodied desire and its futurity, to fix bodies and subjectivities in place. Geophilosophical mapping does not so much presume machinic desires are anti-patriarchal, but works on the basis that, if patriarchy is intent on "fixing" (ibid., p. 134) embodied subjects within its systematicity and through specific and gendered social roles - mother, father, child, worker, student and so on - in order to exploit those embodied subjects, then the ways in which it does so include subjugating the bodily desires that would otherwise "un-fix" subjects from patriarchal schema, allowing for fluid, desiring subjects. By mapping how subjects act in connection with one another, in accord with desires that resist enforced, patriarchal becoming, the possibility of transformative, social "becoming" (ibid., p. 126) is illuminated. Significantly, geophilosophical mapping is not merely a retrospective charting - a "repetition and tracing patterns" (ibid., p. 129) of experiences, resulting in "simplistic" (ibid., p. 129) analysis of outcomes - or "effects" (ibid., p. 129). Geophilosophical mapping involves assessing situations primarily in terms of the "affective relations" (ibid., p. 126) within them - that is, how various "material systems and assemblages" (ibid., p. 129) and "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125) work on one another and how they affect and are affected by

being "experienced through each other" (ibid., p. 129). Significantly, by assessing the affective connectivity between things, particularly bodies and how "bodies affect and are affected by things" (ibid., p. 129), geophilosophical mapping illuminates the potential afforded by this connectivity. In the case of bodies, this is "bodies' potential for movement or fixity in space" (ibid., p. 129), for enabling transformative "becoming" (ibid., p. 126) at a social level. Geophilosophical mapping is, then, a methodology involving a non-typical assessment, with an emphasis on identifying the promise and potential futurity of machines, their relations and their affective capacities for enabling (an envisioning of) future becoming.

In the case of bodies, Coleman and Ringrose use geophilosophical mapping to illuminate how norms, particularly those relating to the body, can be "unfixed and disrupted" (ibid., p. 129) by embodied subjects. Indeed, Coleman and Ringrose use geophilosophy to prioritise bodies and bodily relations in ways that resist and overcome normative, hegemonic negation and fixation of bodies, illuminating them, instead, as desirous and fluid.

To give an example of their geophilosophical mapping and the emphasis this allows them to make on the transformative becoming of bodies in connection with one another, it is helpful to my project to refer to their interest in "how girls resist and fight back against the fixing of the body through looking" (ibid., 2013, p. 130). Commenting on Coleman's earlier, solo work (Coleman, 2009) for which she conducted focus groups, interviews and

image-making sessions with young white women aged thirteen and fourteen, they argue that bodies and images do not operate independently of one another but are enmeshed in an affective relation, facilitated by looking, and that girls gain a particular image of their body through exposure to images. Coleman's argument, within this, is that: "Images therefore do not reflect or represent bodies but produce the ways in which it is possible for bodies to become" (Coleman, 2009, p. 94). In this statement, Coleman does not only retrospectively map the effects of images on bodies, but emphasises that a geophilosophical mapping illuminates the affective relation between bodies and images and that this engenders new, alternative becoming (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126). In so doing, Coleman illuminates an important anti-patriarchal dynamic, which denies the 'one-way' dynamic of patriarchal looking and, instead, fosters inter-dependency and affectivity which offer hope of equal relations. They show how Ringrose, working with these groups of young women, draws attention to the ways in which they "discuss views from boys and girls operating differently" (ibid., p. 129) and how, when boys comment derogatorily on girls' bodies and appearances, even if the girls "know what to say back...it hits you harder than it hits them" (ibid., p. 130). Coleman points out how her approach to mapping the affectivity between girls and boys, words and ideas about appearance generated through images, constitutes "an approach that maps the connection between different elements in encounters or assemblages" (ibid., p. 130). In so doing, Coleman argues there are "unknown spaces for movement" (ibid., p. 130) within affective relations, and she goes on to identify how girls "resist and

fight back against the fixing of the body through looking" (ibid. p. 130). They say:

...in the extracts discussed above, looks...reduce girls' bodies to this specific aspect of the body; looks become the way in which that body is fixed. But girls also resist the force of looking by privileging 'personality' ...to disrupt the power of looking. (ibid., p. 131)

Coleman and Ringrose's (above) example of geophilosophical mapping is helpful to my research practice and theory, illuminating the ways in which young women can resist allowing their bodies to be reduced to what Mulvey refers to as "(passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 46) and to instead insist upon their fuller subjectivities - or " 'personality' " (ibid., p. 131) - in ways that effectuate a different, and positive relation between their bodies and looking. The message, in the above example, is not so much that 'looks don't matter' but that looking can and should be invested with a different, non-patriarchal politics which takes into account (young) women's non-commodified and non-idealised status and desires.

In my *New Model Army* sculptures, I build on these thoughts by taking Mulvey's idea of woman as "raw material"<sup>16</sup> (Mulvey, 1975, p. 46) to actual

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<sup>16</sup> In this way, I interpret Mulvey's term relative to my approach to the materials I use. I try to keep the materials "raw" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 46) in order to evoke women's vulnerability to patriarchal, capitalist looking. By this, I mean I spend a great deal of time looking at the

found materials which I then invest with the possibility of women's immanent, non-commodified and embodied subjectivities to suggest the possibility of women's alternative becoming.

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materials I have found, in order to know them; most of the work involved in making my sculptures involves this looking, studying of materials. As I relate later in this thesis, this often also involves cleaning them. As far as possible, I try to make minimal adjustment to the materials, for them to become sculptures. The aim is to allow the materials, as far as possible, to speak of their exposure and vulnerability to patriarchal capitalism, and, through the (for them new and I hope transformative) framework of sculpture, to suggest that they - and, by association, women - will benefit from being newly and differently perceived.



Fig. 3 Linda Aloysius *Angel* (2012)



Fig. 4 Linda Aloysius Angel (Detail) (2012)

For example, in making my work *Angel*, I dismantle a found object - a wooden stool - to form fragments, which I then re-arrange into a structure. I bolt this structure to a found section of floor, comprising supporting joists and floorboards which I have stained with diluted household paint and tea. I maintain the structure in an upright pose through a hand-made, adjustable 'system' involving curtain hooks and string. The string which helps to maintain the sculpture's upright pose is also tied around part of the structure and an additional piece of found insulation foam, which I have minimally adapted to evoke an idea of woman's genital area. This decision is intended to suggest the idea that the 'system' of string and curtain hooks - and so her upright stance - are connected to woman's sexuality, and that her stance can be negotiated and adjusted relative to this. The entire body of the sculpture is suggestive of a frame; the idea that I want to promote, through this work, is that new frameworks need to be put in place for women's desire and expressivity. This idea is further supported by my use of an existing structure - a wooden stool - being re-purposed as sculpture; the idea being suggested is not quite that the original object has undergone a finite transformation in being re-purposed as art, but that the idea of women's "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) is "held" (Kiaer, 2013, p.120) in the work.

To return to Coleman and Ringrose: Coleman's subsequent discussion is with one of the girls, Emily, regarding her sister Tasha, and the way that Emily prioritises personality over looks because

...no offence to my sister or anything but she isn't really that pretty but she's got a boyfriend...I don't think you should go for looks...she's got a really nice personality." (ibid., p. 131)

This reveals how Emily's perspective "does not reduce the body to looks" (ibid., p. 13). Coleman's argument is that "complex affective relationships of trust and honesty between girls can disrupt the fixing of girls' bodies in time and space" (ibid. p. 131). By geophilosophically mapping this situation, Coleman has illuminated the potential of affective relations between the two young women and between them and others, to produce hopeful, positive becoming for them, by un-fixing the immobilising effects of looking, upon embodied subjects.

Later in this thesis - for example, in section 3:8, with reference to Butler (2006) - I discuss how my works, when exhibited as a group, generate similar affective relationships between one another and between my own and other women's sculpture(s), artists and viewers, through my approach of "between-ing".

In the thesis, particularly Chapter Two, I adopt Coleman and Ringrose's approach and apply this to my reading of selected women artist's practices of the 60s and 70s, including VALIE EXPORT, Martha Rosler, Hannah Wilke and Louise Bourgeois, to geophilosophically map non-linear, "machinic relations" (ibid., p. 125) between art works, artists and audiences. A subversive, shared knowledge is illuminated by mapping the material presence, agency and connectivity of these art works made by women working in the late 60s and 70s. This mapping testifies to their experiences as women rather than any complicity with hegemonically asserted knowledge, and to how each woman's art differently responds to the systemic, patriarchally oppressive gaze through the invention of syntaxes for the representation of women's experiences. Having discussed how the morphological impetus underpinning "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) meets with and nuances geophilosophy in my practice, I focus my attention on the question of how "productive mimesis" relies on morphological approaches to bring about new spaces for "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) in and through women's art practices. I pay particular attention to how contemporary artists respond to patriarchy by using fragmental, morphological syntaxes to engender "affective relations" (ibid., p. 126) between woman's body and mediated images of bodies and I map the ways in which their work either encourages or prevents non-linear, off-grid, between-subject relations of transformative becoming (ibid., p. 126). I claim that their morphological syntaxes account for and promote the possibility of emancipated woman, in which the body is no longer de-

prioritised and unitised under hegemonic orders, but lives as a "desiring machine" (ibid., p. 132), inextricably connected to others.

## **0:6 A Note on Irigaray**

In earlier drafts of this thesis, I sought to understand, without openly acknowledging to myself or to others, my position as woman, single mother, worker and artist in ways that would encourage me to continue making *New Model Army* and which would help me to engage with it. In so doing, I prioritised Irigaray's practice of mimesis as articulated through her analysis and as integral to her practice as writer and analyst. I wanted to understand how Irigaray envisioned a post-patriarchal, emancipated, utopian woman and I had engaged with Robinson's idea that:

Irigaray's overall project aims to disentangle the intersection of the representation, 'woman' and being the subjects, women, in the lives and languages - the self-representations and self-articulations-of actual women. (Robinson, 2006, p. 57)

I tried to develop this aspect of Robinson's analysis, attempting to analyse Irigaray's aim to "disentangle...the construct 'woman'...and...women" (ibid., p. 57) relative to art practice, in order to argue that art can encourage women to resist patriarchal formulation as 'woman' (ibid., p. 57). I also

wanted to explore Irigaray's idea that women are patriarchally reduced to "nothing but a mother" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 83) and the possibility of women exceeding the utterly oppressed status denoted by Irigaray's words. I was, therefore, particularly interested in how Irigaray's style of writing generates "creative gaps" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20), with psychic spaces intended to implicate the reader within the writing process, so forming between-subject relations through and in which the reader is encouraged to negotiate their own relation to patriarchy.

I was also interested in Irigaray's approach as a post-structural, theoretical feminist with an astute awareness of patriarchy's investment into language and discourse and how this extends to become a form of socialist feminism and material feminism. Her writing, and the writing she encourages other women to undertake, illuminates how her own relation to patriarchy is not disconnected from other women's different experiences of patriarchy, but instead is connected to and inter-dependent with them. The possibility of such a connectivity suggests a non-unitised subjectivity - a social subjectivity. I found this idea exciting. Irigaray's work seemed to offer a new kind of inclusivity - of inclusion within a community where the very notion of community is highly expansive - that is, a community that accounts for women's different, empirical knowledges of patriarchy and the possibility of their connectivity with one another through difference, rather than their marginalisation from one another because of it.

As well as this, I became fascinated by the idea that Irigaray's approach as writer is also intended as a means for subverting the negating effects, on women's bodily desires and sensitivities, of an objectifying, patriarchal gaze intent on unitising and commodifying them for exchange.

Robinson has written:

Thinking differently about the relationship between the body and language is clearly complex: thinking through a morphological relationship disrupts the clear-cut binary relationships found so frequently within phallogomorphic thinking, even as one understands how they are produced. (Robinson, 2006, p. 99)

Robinson's idea that "thinking differently" (ibid., p. 99) about body / language relations involves rupturing binary relations, including between mind and body, is developed from Irigaray's writing approach, which encourages women to form a new bodily relationship with language and, in so doing, raises the possibility of women's new connectivity with their own and others' bodies and with an unbound notion of "I" in which "I" is a social and desiring, rather than singular, being. In Chapter Three, I examine Robinson's analysis relative to my practice, but it is worth mentioning how I became interested in it, through Irigaray's work.

## 0:7 Written Language in Art

The idea that non-binary relationships can be promoted through forging new connection between body and written language seemed - and is - particularly pertinent to *New Model Army*. Although writing seems absented from these works, the series has a deep, vested embedding in written language. Overall, I arrive at these works through writing and my interest in written and spoken words. Making these works has allowed me to connect to desire in a way that, ultimately, corresponds with what Irigaray wants for women, through bodily connection with writing. However, the connection that these works have with written language is constituted in a way that I have struggled to understand. It is through a form of withholding, rather than foregrounding, written language.

My sculptural practice has a much longer history of including written language and has and continues to operate relative to expanded notions of text art. Prior to and at MFA level and in the initial stages of this PhD, my research and practice explored relations between written text, sculpture and the heterosexual desire of women<sup>17</sup>. Early drafts of this thesis included research into text art from the 1960s up to the present day, and recent work has re-introduced a written and spoken element. The *New Model Army* operates within the context of this longer commitment to text art by responding to my embodiment of the political silences surrounding women's

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<sup>17</sup> However, I would not have been able to articulate this idea in the way I just have, at the time of making the works.

desires. In other words, *New Model Army* addresses the silence that exists beyond and in excess of oppressive patriarchal representations of women and the political silence, the lack of protest or challenge, surrounding that oppressive representation. My *New Model Army* sculptures became my way of confronting the extent of my unwitting, bodily complicity with the political silence and silencing of women's desires, and the possible extension of this into the institutional context.

## Chapter One

### Approaching Research

#### 1:0 Why Robinson?

Although my investigations began with the theoretical construct of woman and 'woman' as it appears in Irigaray's work, ultimately, using this same terminology is not as useful to me as an examination of expanded notions of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) as outlined by Hilary Robinson. Originally, I understood woman and " 'woman' " (ibid., p. 57), and the relation between them, in oppositional, binary terms. This framing did not provide an adequate account for my practice or my particular relationship to patriarchy. Therefore, rather than continue to lean too heavily on Irigaray's work, I now focus on Robinson's reframing of it, particularly Robinson's notion of "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26). The thesis now presents productive mimesis relative to analysis of my own practice, arguing (and naming as such) the term "between-ing" as more appropriate for describing certain approaches in art, which enable the symbolic mediation of woman. I take this argument to an analysis of other contemporary women artists' works - Sarah Lucas, Fiona Banner - and refine this relative to notions of hysteria. This includes considering how women's experiences of patriarchal oppression, including my own, are technically evoked and mediated through art practice,

and how standpoint feminism - including as articulated by feminist authors such as Beverley Skeggs (1997), Alison Wylie (2000), Donna Haraway (1991), Dorothy Smith (1997), Nancy Harstock (1997), Linda Alcoff (1991) - helps to account for the empirical basis and morphological impetus of such techniques. Ultimately, I do not offer a resolved idea of woman in words, but the synthesis of the ideas I refer to, here, has been made in my studio practice. The sculptures do not begin from, illustrate or resolve standpoint theory, but they do seek to evolve it by newly convening it with aspects of Deleuzian feminism and by building on Robinson's notion of "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26), to materialise new spaces of between-ness and between-ing, for transformative "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126).

To be absolutely clear at this stage: my interest is not in preserving Irigaray's work - or voice - but in how Robinson filters Irigaray's work through her reading of it, particularly Irigaray's interest in "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) and the implications of this for art. To explain this decision, I now refer to the way in which Robinson (2006) considers and builds on this original statement regarding mimesis:

In Plato, there are two mimeses. To simplify: there is mimesis as production, which would lie more in the realm of music, and there is the mimesis that would already be caught up in a process of imitation, secularization, adequation, and reproduction. It is the second form

that is privileged throughout the history of philosophy and whose effects/symptoms, such as latency, suffering, paralysis of desire, are encountered in hysteria. (Irigaray, 1985a cited Robinson, 2006, p. 26)

Building on this reference, Robinson differentiates "maintenance mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 27) from "mimesis as production", which she newly terms as "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26). Robinson writes that "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 27) is "a mimesis that perpetuates a state of stasis" (ibid., p. 27) and in which "social and cultural relations are maintained as normative within patriarchy through maintenance and policing of a non-productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 27). In other words, maintenance mimesis enables patriarchal structures and imperatives to establish social and cultural norms and sameness, and actively prohibits any change that might threaten patriarchal ordering and control.

Conversely, it is in "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) that, Robinson claims, "a subtle double movement" (ibid., p. 26) occurs "between" (ibid., p.26) what already exists and the mimesis - or interpretation through action - of this. This results in "new meanings" (ibid., p. 26). Productive mimesis, then, is proposed as a means for enabling change that exceeds patriarchal normativity.

Robinson's uptake of Irigaray's statement regarding "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26), and her evaluation of this and Irigaray's practice as

such, develops Irigaray's work, making it relevant to an analysis of art in ways that Irigaray herself is limited in engendering. Robinson's analysis of Irigaray's work has developed out of her own practice as an artist - specifically, as a painter. For that reason, I am not only interested in how she connects Irigaray's work to art - and in Robinson's case there is an emphasis on painting - but in the possibilities this generates for thinking Irigaray's work relative to sculpture. Irigaray is a three-dimensional thinker. Her visions, for example, of *speculum* (Irigaray, 1985b), are very much against two dimensional, flattening approaches. However, for me and even given her practice as a painter, rather than sculptor, it is Robinson, rather than Irigaray, who I trust as a guide in thinking about "productive mimesis" (Ibid., p. 26) relative to art.

Robinson's interest in Irigaray's work is longstanding, astute and leading. In 1994, she wrote *Irigaray's Imaginings* (Robinson, 1994) in response to a slightly earlier article by Margaret Whitford (1994), longstanding and respected theorist on Irigaray's work, on the conservatism of Irigaray's views on the woman artist. In her article, Robinson articulates a lucid, four-point disagreement with the way Irigaray's writing is "framed by Whitford's article" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20) and critiques Irigaray's own writing, to clarify what she believes to be the relevance of Irigaray's work, for art. In her fourth and final point, Robinson argues that both Whitford and Irigaray show "...the lack of recognition of process - the process of making an

artwork, and the process of reading it - and the processes by which it makes meaning" (ibid., p. 20). She concludes that:

Whitford is misplaced in her seeming desire for Irigaray to be a critic of sorts. Instead, Irigaray's main usefulness is at the point where practice and theory are intimately linked; where the experience of reading becomes an experience of theory in practice; where the visual as process and praxis is acknowledged and integrated into this experience. (ibid., p. 20)

Robinson's clarification, regarding Irigaray's particular strengths and weaknesses, and their use for addressing connections between practice and theory, illuminate Robinson's - and not Irigaray's or Whitford's - sensitivity to art practice. It is for this reason that I choose Robinson, rather than Irigaray, as key theorist for my thesis.

Additionally, prior to this, in point two of her argument, Robinson stresses that neither Whitford nor Irigaray:

...attempt to chart the differences and specificities of art practice. In particular, reading writing in a linear fashion and an art-work in a non-linear fashion are crucial to both, but ignored. Irigaray elides different forms of creativity and Whitford does not pick upon this. (ibid., p. 20)

Given that this thesis is interested in accounting for the particular contribution that my art practice makes to the existing work of other women artists, by drawing from my experiences of patriarchal oppression, I believe Robinson makes a crucial point in regard to both Irigaray's and Whitford's lack of sensitivity to the necessity of mapping / negotiating / charting the "differences and specificities of art practice" (ibid., p. 20).

Moreover, in point three of her argument, Robinson states: "...Irigaray leaves plenty of gaps in her writing - creative gaps, full of potential - but Whitford glosses over them or chooses not to recognise them" (ibid., p.20). This issue of "non-linear" (ibid., p. 20) readings of art and of "creative gaps, full of potential" (ibid., p. 20) - and Robinson's acute sensitivity to both - are intriguing. Robinson writes that "...the experience of reading becomes an experience of theory *in practice*" (ibid., p. 20) (my emphasis) rather than "theory *as practice*" (ibid., p. 20) (my emphasis); Robinson does not wholly align practice and theory, but allows for the idea that "creative gaps" (ibid., p. 20) and "non-linear" (ibid., p. 20) readings can be integrated into (art) practice as well as into writing (as a practice). Robinson does not seek to fully reconcile or assimilate or align or homogenise the processes of reading (and writing) writing and reading (and making) art; she is more interested in the interactivity generated across and between their differences. This is important for my *New Model Army* sculptures and my research because I do not seek to fully align, with theory, the "knowledges" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123) that I claim are "held" (ibid., 120) in my sculptures. Robinson, years later,

develops these aspects of her earlier argument, embedding her interest in the non-linear (ibid., p. 20) and "creative gaps" (ibid., p. 20) within this and her analysis of Ricoeur's (1981) work on hermeneutics. In Chapter Three of this thesis I show how this is particularly useful for my art practice, illuminating a way to think across / between practice, theory and empirical knowledges, and to integrate them without fully assimilating - or aligning or homogenising - them and the different kinds of "creative gaps" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20) and "non-linear" (ibid., p. 20) readings they encourage. This non-assimilability matters because the specificity of my PhD project does not lie in theory, or in fully reconciling my practice with theory, but in the due diligence given to my studio practice. Studio practice constitutes, for me - and, I hope - for audiences of my work, a space-time of overcoming, of possibility; a non-fixed position in the world that is one of escape from the "fixing" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134), negating position intended by patriarchy and its investment into looking. Consistent making, over decades, means that my ways of making have developed into an approach for making art works. However, in making my *New Model Army* works, I do not go to my studio with the primary intention of developing an artistic method, which can then be considered as an analysis, which becomes transferrable to other artworks. I go to my studio because I need to make sculptures in response to the patriarchal oppression exerted upon women, including myself as woman and mother. The related idea that this oppression extends into the art world and its institutions, and that I go to my studio and make work to escape from and respond to art world oppression might seem counter-intuitive, at least

when written by an artist currently engaged in PhD Research at Goldsmiths College and who has also taught Fine Art studies at various levels, and increasingly, for the last decade. But it helps me to know that Robinson, at least, would seem to understand and, as her statement implies, supports the written articulation of this idea. She says:

...we have the seemingly mutable languages of representation within the art markets (including the art schools, the journals, etc) of modernity. But as the slightest examination reveals, these structures, while feigning a liberating openness and multiplicity, are unforgivingly patriarchal at all levels. (Robinson, 2006, p. 60)

Robinson adds that:

The position of women attempting to make meaning - develop an appropriate syntax - comprehensible within these structures is compromised to an extent hard to underestimate. (ibid., p. 60)

Robinson's analysis supports my idea that I go to my studio to "make meaning" (ibid., p. 60), including social meaning, from my experiences, including of the art world and its institutions and structures. Her analysis encourages me to reconsider how I can have a positive relationship with it and them, in the face of near impossibility, given the patriarchal situation she describes and having entered into the London art scene at a time when there

was a distinct, painful absence of positive recognition and/or support for the particular contribution that single mothers might make to art<sup>18</sup>. Hence, in keeping with my response and Robinson's analysis, my sculptures positively do not seek to be, ultimately, wholly reconcilable with institutionalised theories, even including theories of "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26); "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) is a theoretical term, the theory of which helps me to understand how - and why - I make my work, in response to my own and other women's patriarchal oppression. This thesis discusses the necessity of practicing a "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) on the term itself, to arrive at the more appropriate term "between-ing".

## **1:1 Patriarchy and the Contradictory Position Being Lived by Working (Single) Mother(s) Artist(s)**

In section 0:5 I have discussed geophilosophy, as an approach used within Deleuzian feminism, and the importance of this for my project, particularly in encouraging me to take a fluid approach to mapping relations and connections between women's art practices and my own, and which encourages overcoming of patriarchy. In the current section, I examine different accounts of feminism. Ultimately, this allows me to demonstrate why

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<sup>18</sup> This situation has since begun to be given some address through the formation of *Enemies of Good Art*, in 2009. The group does not focus on working, single mother artists and the challenges they face in combining art practice, motherhood and work but does examine how parents and their children might combine art practice. Details of the group's work are available at: <http://www.enemiesofgoodart.org/biographies/>.

it has become important for this thesis to synthesise aspects of standpoint and Deleuzian feminisms (geophilosophy) when considering my practice and what I assert is its aim to bring new representation to the effects of patriarchal oppression of (single) mothers, including and especially via the screen and unpaid, domestic labour, both of which are argued, in this thesis, to constitute systemic, interconnected forms of subjugation.

In so doing, I construct this examination not as a fixed or fixing position, either for myself or for the women to whose work I refer, but rather to engage with debates on temporality and feminist theory, and as a way to understand how my *New Model Army* works materially "intervene" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 21) into dominant, single narratives regarding feminist theory in order to contribute to the productive complication and multiplication of them. Moreover, later in this thesis (Chapter Three), when examining Laura Mulvey's approach to writing, I describe how I have come to appreciate, and be encouraged by, reading her writing and increasingly understanding this as being, for her, a fluid process with a fragility and precarity that is, at times, almost completely obscured, especially in her famous text "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), by her seemingly unflinching authorial stance. Drawing from this and Hemmings' concern not to reproduce "dominant narratives" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 17) of the historical development of feminist theories, but to instead query and challenge the very basis for them and "how certain strands of thought and subjects come to be understood as past or present" (ibid., p. 17), including

by conducting a mapping of "affect as a core part of political grammar" (ibid., p. 21) - that is, as key to the political structures and speech mechanisms available to subjects - I aim to examine different accounts of feminisms with a view to enabling a productive relationship between myself as working, single mother artist and feminist theories and which, in turn, encourages me in examining other women artists' works in further relation to both.

Unlike Hemmings' writing, however, this thesis does not take the history of feminist theory as its primary focus and research object. My analysis borrows from Hemmings' approach to reflect on what kind of "political grammar" (ibid., p.21) my project, including my art practice, might construct and / or contribute to regarding women's screened oppression and unpaid domestic labour.

With the above in mind, it is worth stating that, in this thesis, I contribute to a new valuation of the economic conditions of motherhood through my artistic practice, the nuances of which can be considered to constitute symbolic syntaxes. It is therefore appropriate to my project aims to acknowledge Gerda Lerner's early analysis (1986) in which she claims that, following Aristotle, man (implicitly the male) grants himself symbol-making ability and, in so doing, founds patriarchy. Through the historical evolution of this patriarchal belief system, men are considered superior to women and enjoy "male supremacy" (Lerner, 1986, p. 17). In Lerner's analysis, "symbol systems" (ibid., p. 219) arise from and enable men's oppression of women.

Lerner's idea, that women's oppression is structured through symbol systems, is generally important to my practice and research. Drawing from her analysis helps me to understand that, broadly, my thesis considers that art and art practice can be understood as a symbol (making) system through which women might resist patriarchy. In Chapters Three, Four and Five of this thesis I develop this thought through my analysis of Robinson's idea that new attention needs to be given to how women artists form symbolic syntaxes, including in response to patriarchy, and especially as women have been historically denied recourse to them. However, and more specifically, the symbolic syntaxes I invent are engendered through my experiences of living within a patriarchal system that should in theory, but has not in reality, become outmoded by a capitalist system (Beechey, 1979), (Mitchell, 1974), (Eisenstein, 1979). In this section, I investigate and reflect upon different forms of feminism, to help me to understand my position as working single mother and, consequently, how this position has impacted upon the decisions made in my artistic practice and the relation of my practice to that of other women artists.

As a researcher who now has access to feminist theories I was unaware of / did not access or have access to at earlier stages in my life, I have come to understand that I have lived within a contradictory position, the experiential detail of which is not accounted for in Robinson's analysis of women artists' formation of new syntaxes, but which must be brought into

feminist account, to contribute new understanding of the dynamics of patriarchy, and women's contribution to material and theoretical notions of transformative becoming (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126). I now understand that the possibility of contradictory positions, such as that which I have and continue to live within, is generally acknowledged by Beechey (1979), in response to Juliet Mitchell's work (1974) as resulting from the organisation of capitalist economies in connection with the prolonged existence of patriarchy.

In operating from the kind of contradictory position identified by Beechey (1979), Mitchell (1974), and Eisenstein (1979), I have done so without having prior, formal knowledge of feminisms or any formal means of feminist support in my roles as single mother, artist and worker. Now that I am a doctoral researcher I am positioned to formally examine different kinds of feminism. One might assume, then, that carrying out the latter will bring about the former; if, my daughter is now an independent adult and I, on a practical level, can therefore devote far more time to research, one might assume it logically follows that, in being positioned to effectively overview how feminism has historically operated, I am also positioned to newly discover forms of support existing today, which will provide insight as to how the working, single mother artist can, in the neo-liberal context, overcome the effects - on career, on relationships, on her sexuality and desires, on how she makes art - of combining these roles for the (roughly) two decades that it takes for a child to be considered independent and how she can, at the same

time, continue to combine those roles, albeit with far less responsibility to the adult that was a child. I suggest that this raises the question of how single motherhood, under patriarchy, shapes and continues to shape the sexuality and desires of the women / women involved, including after their child(ren) have become adults and why it is important for single mothers of adult children to envision and create ways - including through the formation of artistic synaxes - with and through which to assert their particular sexualities.

However, these ideas, to which I return below in my discussion of second wave feminism, are complicated by the experience of reading about different feminist values and historical accounts of feminist activities and the difficulties of finding complete alignment with one specific position.

With that said, and before proceeding, I want to point out that it has been - somewhat paradoxically - helpful to read Stephanie Gilmore's account of the "divides" (Gilmore, 2005, p. 98) between second and third wave<sup>19</sup> feminists (to which I return below). Drawing from Gilmore's analysis, I have come to understand that, in carrying out this examination, I have been, unwittingly, hoping to discover areas of feminist analysis and activity emerging (but previously unknown to me) within the second wave of

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<sup>19</sup> In the Foreward to "Different Wavelengths" (2005), Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor state that: "the wave metaphor - whether ocean waves or radio waves - may have more utility than we thought, as long as we understand that the lulls between the waves are still moving, that, from a transnational perspective, there may be choppy seas rather than even swells, and that waves do not rise and crash independently of one another" (Rupp and Taylor, 2005, p. 9). I take this description as being aligned with Gilmore's editorial input into the publication.

feminism - a movement which began before I was born, but which became active during my earlier life - that address single motherhood, if not the working, single mother artist, and which have also developed and continued into today's context of (so-called) 'third wave feminism' (Gilmore, 2005). I have hoped, then, that some feminist analysis exists regarding the position of heterosexual, working single mothers, and the further hope is that this includes analysis of the position of heterosexual, single mothers of now adult children. Drawing from Hemmings' analysis, I now understand I was perhaps unwittingly hoping to find a "progress narrative" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 35), within feminist theory - and a positive one, at that - which would allow me to feel (immediately) included. Later in her analysis, however, Hemmings points out that "[i]t is progress narratives that express lack of hope...and loss narratives that express appropriate anger at the "loss of the spirit of our earlier political action" (ibid., p. 68). Hemmings describes the appeal of loss narratives as that which effectively: "asks its reader to consider if they too may have felt 'stupid' in reading theory they did not feel included in and offers the possibility of reframing exclusion" (ibid., p. 68). In Hemmings' analysis, it would seem, then, that I may, in attempting to examine feminist theories, and in struggling to form a reciprocal relationship with feminist theories, have experienced a "loss narrative" (ibid., p. 68) through which I am "reframing exclusion" (ibid., p. 68). However, I am not quite convinced on this point, and I return to it anon, in my reflections of the making of my *New Model Army* sculptures whilst researching feminist theories, and then again, later in this section, when I discuss Hemmings' interest in "return narratives" (ibid., p. 98)

relative to the material practice involved in my making of this series.

Notably, if the position of the working single mother of an adult child is thought of at all, within or beyond feminist debates then I have found no specific evidence of it so far. However, drawing from experience, I assert that the 'absence' of a young child, in the life of the single mother - due to the fact that the child has now become an adult - does, from a patriarchal (and, it would seem, feminist) perspective, render her perceived status as mother either doubly void (motherhood having already been voided in its fullest sense, by patriarchy) or doubly invisible and, therefore, as doubly insignificant. Because the adult child is now independent, the role of mother is presumed 'over' or 'ended' and, most significantly, the long-term effects of single motherhood, in shaping the woman's life over decades - and, notably, due to what I assert are the highly restrictive and outdated ideas imposed by patriarchal capitalism on the notions of career and success, these are still considered to be the primary, 'career-shaping' decades - are, it would seem by their absence, presumed to be either negligible or unimportant to feminist debates.

My concern regarding the latter does not only have a selfish basis. I do not only speak only for myself when I say that I wish such analysis did (fully) exist and that attitudes towards (single) mothers and the family relations they produce were different. From a 'selfish' perspective, I assert, the working, single mother artist particularly - and extremely - embodies the

effects of marginalisation recognised by communities such as gay, black and transgender communities but, as I have pointed out in section (3:0) in my discussion of Evans and Gamman's (1995) analysis, has not, historically, benefitted - from a 'queering' of (perspectives of) heterosexual (single) motherhood. However, from a 'selfless' perspective, the 'benefit' I refer to - which currently stands as a potential, rather than realised, one - also includes, for me at least, contributing in ways that help others as well as one's self, with a view to even momentarily establishing a space time of equality and reciprocation. Whilst I do not claim to construct such a 'queering' in this thesis, writing this thesis has, at least, helped me to identify this as a potential and potent way forward, including with respect to my artistic practice. With this in mind I do, in this thesis (see section 3:0), assert that there is a longstanding need for a productive "intersection between" (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 38) the different experiences of heterosexual single mothers and gay and / or black cultures, including through artistic practice, for the benefit of all involved.

I wish to return, momentarily, to the issue of the apparent exclusion of working single mother artists from feminist debates and activities and to give examples of how this operates. Relatively contemporary texts such as those by Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright (2013) emphasise how the women's movement of the 1970s drew women together, both formally and informally, effectively paving the way for women to build supportive networks and develop (and continue to develop) even loosely

arranged communities. I am very glad that the women involved were able to carry out such activities. I mean this sincerely and respectfully. I am glad, for example, that Lynne Segal writes that "[w]e wanted our political activity to make room for those with children and also to include children" (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, 2013, p. 244) and that the campaigns she was involved in were "organised around housing. 'Decent homes for all' was the slogan we used" (ibid., p. 246). However, drawing from lived experience, and whilst I know that my particular experience may or may not resonate with that of other, different women, I am aware that these campaigns did not reach me, or my daughter, despite my very active engagement at university - a space where one would hope feminist activity would be abundant and inclusive - at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Also, without going into the private detail of our lives, the campaigns Segal refers to (2013) regarding housing were totally ineffective as far as my daughter and I were concerned and this ineffectiveness, which has amounted to a lack of secure housing and my longstanding attempts to overcome the effects of this, has had very significant and enduring effects on us as a family unit. Moreover, I find it problematic that, in such accounts, which address the history of feminism, rarely ever is any detail given over to how the women involved afforded to live - and make art - whilst engaging in political activity and how, if at all, they combined this with (single) motherhood. This kind of absence, I assert, contributes to the claim I make in the opening passages of this thesis (see Section 0:1), which is that there is a need to account for how women's experiences of patriarchy, including the background conditions affecting

women's lives, affect their responses to patriarchy; this includes their production of artistic syntaxes and the possibility that such syntaxes could be intended - and interpreted - as a form of political activity.

With that said, in examining forms of feminism I have found generally useful works such as (but not limited to) those by standpoint feminists Alison Wylie (2000) and Linda Alcoff (1991), Deleuzian feminists Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose (2013) - as discussed in chapter section 0:5 and as reiterated here and throughout the thesis - and, ultimately (and although this may seem to contradict what I have just stated about their work) the accounts of feminism drawn by Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright (2013), along with Clare Hemmings (2011), Jo Reger (2005), Jane Flax (1990) and Dale Spender (1985) (as discussed in the current chapter section). This is because, in reading these accounts, I at least experience a decrease in my sense of confusion and, in turn, a slight lessening of the isolation and marginalisation that living and researching as a working, single mother artist has brought, in the absence of a supportive, feminist network. To broadly explain: Alcoff's and Wylie's analyses, as I elaborate in this chapter section, have encouraged me to see women's lived experience, including my own, as a valid and potent form of knowledge to be drawn from, including bodily and when forming artistic syntaxes. Alcoff's work, which I discuss later in this chapter, has also helped me to reconsider the issue of inclusion within / exclusion from feminist debates, to understand that everyone is already included in a social, rather than individual, body

(1991, p.14) and that, rather than expect direct representation from others, it is more helpful to work towards creating conditions for equal dialogue (Alcoff, 1991); Coleman and Ringrose's approach, as I have argued in section 0:5, Chapter 2 and throughout the thesis, has encouraged me to establish connections between my own artistic practice and that of other women, and also between my experiences and the feminist theories put forward in this section. Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright's work, along with that of Hemmings and Reger, Flax and Spender, have at least helped me to understand how and why it was that the structures, networks, communities and theoretical approaches they refer to in their analyses were - as they have been for earlier feminists operating on the margins - effectively closed to me (and have effectively remained so), where this leaves me and my research now and what I want for - and can hope to offer to - women other than myself. In naming these women, I do not suggest that their accounts are any more important than any other woman's, nor do I want, in naming them, to construct the kind of hierarchal dominance found in patriarchal valuations of success based on what I think are very limited and limiting ideas of success. Rather, I am aware that the frameworks and politics surrounding the publication of these women's voices remain to be challenged in terms of what - and which other women's voices - they may prohibit and foreground. I return to this point anon, with respect to Clare Hemmings' analysis which, as she states, is written with awareness of and sensitivity to "the excluded outside" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 17).

So, this examination is helpful for my project because, as I elaborate in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five, I claim in this thesis that my *New Model Army* series aims to disrupt the current conditions of patriarchy, by contributing to the articulation of women's heterosexuality as it exists in excessive, desirous and pleasurable overcoming of patriarchal, screened oppression. I articulate my claim relative to the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013), screened oppression and my own experiences of this, and my desire to make art in ways that allow me to form a gaze capable of meeting and subverting patriarchal looking.

In developing this claim, it has been useful to my research and art practice to pursue the idea that, when thought in combination, standpoint and Deleuzian feminisms are, ultimately, the most helpful to my project, because their synthesis generates scope for accommodating the lived experiences of women who overcome patriarchal oppressions, especially through screened oppression. In allowing for the - to my mind inclusive - idea that women construct their own feminist knowledges through first-hand, lived experience (standpoint feminism) and for the idea of ongoing, transformative "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) (Deleuzian feminism) these feminisms, when thought and lived together, offer the kind of fluid, non-fixed, feminist position of continual and varied overcoming that my *New Model Army* works continue to occupy.

At this stage, I want to explain what I mean by this non-fixed position,

and how patriarchy is implicated in this. To do this, and drawing from Laura Mulvey's<sup>20</sup> and Dale Spender's approaches, which positively do not wholly align with chronology, I trace - not necessarily (quite) chronologically - different - not necessarily originally chronological<sup>21</sup> - taxonomies of feminism provided by Clare Hemmings (2011), Jo Reger (2005), Jane Flax (1990), Dale Spender (1985) and Veronica Beechey (1979), and, drawing from socialist and Marxist feminists such as Silvia Federici and Christine Delphy, I also research second wave feminist responses to patriarchy which have bearing on my project, mainly due to their emphasis on women's oppression - and commodification as patriarchal capitalist assets - through family structures and / or women's historical tethering, under patriarchal capitalism, to unpaid domestic labour. This leads me to discuss feminist standpoint theory, including my idea that it is necessary to expand notions of standpoint feminism to include art works as feminist standpoints, which have been delegated that role by the artists who have made them, during the process of making.

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<sup>20</sup> I have asserted my interest in the positive potential of Mulvey's non-linear approach to chronology in section 4:2, when discussing how she organises her different publications for inclusion in her books.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in discussing Robin Morgan's work, Dale Spender admits to not knowing whether her inclusion of her account of Morgan "is in strict chronological order, but, with her synthesis of the personal and the political, she provides, conceptually, the next step in the development of feminist theory" (Spender, 1985, p. 69). I find this response to chronology interesting in terms of its feminist refusal of linear history and this is materially articulated in my art practice.

## **1:1:1 Second Wave Feminism**

Stephanie Gilmore, describing a feminist conference that took place in Barnard college in May 2002, has written that:

Some young women in the audience answered challenges to whether or not third wave feminists are "feminist enough" by countering that the second wave generation is "so preoccupied with its achievements that it's become blind to the real efforts and strides being made by the third wave of feminist organisers". (Gilmore 2005, p. 98)

Gilmore's account illuminates generational divides and value clashes between second wave feminists and their younger, so-called "third wave" (ibid., p. 98) counterparts. This prompts her to observe that "[w]hilst we make 'waves' as a way to separate ourselves from one another, we can also build bridges in an effort to dispel myths and find common ground" (ibid., p. 98). Gilmore's account then examines some of the key activities engendered by "one of the first second wave feminist organizations...[which]...has survived into the era of third wave feminism" (ibid. p. 99), the National Organisation for Women (NOW) - founded in 1966 - "to document cooperation and continuities between the second and third waves" (ibid. p. 99). Gilmore admits that:

Although it cannot and does not represent the whole of second wave

feminism, NOW's history offers a way to rethink divisions among feminists. I do not propose to dismiss differences between the waves in favour of continuities; I propose, however, that second and third wave feminists have more in common than we all might think. (ibid. p. 99)

Gilmore's approach, here, is of interest to my project because, as I have stated in the early passages of this section, it allows me to see that I am, in hoping to find feminist analysis of the working class, working single mother artist, and that I am, in effect, aiming to straddle - or bridge - two 'waves' of feminism, scouring each for evidence of inclusion that I may not have been aware of, both then and now. But, as Gilmore has pointed out, and due to the different perceptions and different context of different generations of feminists, the task of bridging both 'waves' would not be straightforward in any case and, for the purposes of my thesis, carries particular difficulties.

To explain: I do not claim to carry out such a bridging activity in this thesis. However, drawing from Gilmore's account, I want to momentarily consider one aspect of her analysis of NOW's activities - the feminist attention given to the issue of what she refers to as "Reproductive Freedom" (ibid., p. 99), in the second wave - and to assert how this focus of attention has (I think negatively) impacted onto analysis of single motherhood, ultimately generating another example of their exclusion from feminist

representation. In encountering, as reader, the heading "'Reproductive Freedom" (ibid., p. 99), I experienced a momentary surge of hope that this might include accounts of single mothers who had chosen to reproduce in their own terms, rather than those dictated by patriarchy. This was not what I found. Instead, Gilmore proceeds to describe NOW's focus, since 1967, on bringing about a "complete repeal of abortion laws in the United States and unlimited access to birth control information and devices" (ibid., p. 101) and to argue that the work of NOW, since that time, has majorly contributed to what she describes as a situation in which "Third Wave Feminists continue to fight for reproductive freedoms, a struggle that second wave feminists embraced - and inherited - from many of their first<sup>22</sup> wave predecessors" (ibid., p. 102). In Gilmore's account, this activity includes fighting for abortion rights and sexual freedom, which extends to the rights of prostitutes to enjoy and benefit from their sexual choices (Gilmore, 2005).

Gilmore's focus on abortion rights includes some mention of pro-life activities, but does not evidence any extensive, historical discussion of the question of how women's present and envisaged living conditions affect women's decisions to have abortions, and does not extend to include evidence of debate of better living conditions for women, particularly single women, on the basis that this may affect their decision regarding whether to

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<sup>22</sup> It is not clear from Gilmore's account why she refers to first, rather than second wave feminists, in the context of her discussion of divides between second and third wave feminists and / or whether she in fact intended to refer to second, rather than first wave feminists. I will therefore assume that Gilmore herself intends to assert that an 'inheritance' has been passed down from first, to second and then to third wave feminists.

become mothers or not. Drawing from this, I suggest that, embedded in women's right to abortion, is the patriarchally outlawed question of what shape(s) motherhood - and, indeed, childhood - might (have) assume(d) if women did not carry, bodily and psychically, such extreme fear of the consequences of (single) motherhood under patriarchal capitalism and if they were, instead, fully supported and fearless in making either the choice of (single) motherhood or abortion. I assert that, historically, and without the latter (due to patriarchal capitalism) the choice regarding abortion has not been a true choice; there has not been equal opportunity to choose (single) motherhood without fear of extreme, negative consequences, without this involving the woman's extreme sacrifice and / or punishment under patriarchy; whilst the fear of punishment regarding abortion has, to a greater extent, been removed by the legalisation of abortion, it has remained in place, as a major prohibition, regarding unsupported, single motherhood. My assertion is, I think, oddly necessary because this may amount to a lack of numbers - a "next generation" (Springer, 2005, p. 38) of single mothers within Higher Education and working as artists; women have been too afraid, under patriarchy, to embrace single motherhood and working class single mothers face an almost impossible task if they attempt to work, pay for their education (especially to doctoral level) and practice art.

Kimberly Springer (2005) has called for more feminist attention to black women. She is right to state that "black feminist activism is one that

has been, traditionally, obscured in histories of the women's movement"

(ibid., p. 26) and that:

There is undoubtedly a next generation of young black women engaging with feminist politics as they intersect with the politics of racial liberation. However, it is clear that numerically there are not as many young black women joining feminist organizations or taking women's studies courses. Though these are not the only markers of feminist consciousness, they are amongst the most visible. (ibid., p. 38)

Springer's attention to a fall in numbers of black women taking up education and participating in networks and communities that may enable their equal rights is appropriate. But Springer's assertion intensifies the - for me, already haunting - question of why, in comparison, there is relatively little feminist attention to a lack of numbers of single mothers engaging in similar feminist activities, including Higher Education, and why this situation has been normalised to the extent that it is not queried in the way that Springer queries the situation for black women. Here I reiterate Hemmings' sensitivity to "how certain strands of thought and subjects come to be understood as past or present" (ibid., p. 17). Hemmings' words, I assert, add resonance to the question I ask, but my questions also affect her words; thought in relation to each other, they generate the further question of whether, if a future has never been allowed to be envisioned, and no-one is querying why or what

that future may have been, that future should then be considered already "past" (ibid., p. 17)? What happens to the meaning of the term "past" (ibid., p. 17), here, and the further term "present" (ibid., p. 17)? As a single mother, the above questions also impact, in a confusing way, but at a bodily level, onto my sense of the time that I live in; as a mother who has and will live through a future that, I assert, has effectively been denied to other women, with the act of denial being thoroughly obscured under patriarchy, my future, it would seem and in patriarchal terms, is other women's "past" (ibid., p. 17). How, then, do I proceed? The question, which I may not be able to clearly answer in written language, is embedded in my *New Model Army* practice; generally, there is a sense in which I insist on constructing a present and a future for materials, configured relative to an idea of woman / women considered to be 'past' their use in capitalist patriarchal terms. My insistence, here, is readable as a political defiance of this patriarchal evaluation as it is applied to women.

I find it encouraging for my project - which, drawing from Hemmings' analysis, can read, at least partly, as a political narrative of the working, single mother artist and the (im)possibility of a single mother artist community - that Hemmings writes that she has:

...a great deal of respect for projects that seek to tell alternative stories that highlight what has been left out and endeavour to reinsert those omissions into the historical record. (Hemmings, 2011, p. 13)

To exemplify what she means by this, Hemmings gives the example of Becky Thompson's assertion that "retelling the history of Western feminism from a multiracial perspective" (ibid. p. 13) would illuminate the 1970s as a:

...lowpoint of feminism - a time when many women who were committed to an antiracist analysis had to put their feminism on the back burner in order to work with women and men of color and against racism. (Thompson cited Hemmings, 2011, p. 13)

It would seem that a similar evaluation of Western feminism could be brought to the situation of working single mother artists. I find it encouraging, therefore, that Hemmings' concern for "what has been left out" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 13) of feminist narratives, and her reference to Thompson's assertion that different storytelling approaches may illuminate radically different outcomes which undermine the ethical validity of achievements that otherwise appear to authorise feminist activities. As I have already noted in this chapter section, Gilmore has pointed out that young, third wave feminists have claimed that the second wave generation is "preoccupied with its achievements" (Gilmore 2005, p. 98). Moreover, later in this chapter I have noted Virginia Woolf's (1938) very early concern regarding the competitiveness, hierarchies and dominance prevalent within educational institutions and have asserted that this remains highly relevant today, with publishing being recruited as a means for climbing institutional hierarchies.

Indeed, Hemmings draws attention to "Signs" (2000) which states:

Feminist scholars, perhaps not surprisingly, have been absorbed into the vanity-envy culture of higher education - the pursuit of careers, competitive individualism, star systems and hierarchies of privilege. On balance, some of us have to wonder, How much have feminists changed the academy, and how much has it changed us? ("Signs", cited Hemmings, 2011, p. 82)

Drawing from these analyses, I suggest that there is a possibility that feminist attention to achievement, including within Higher Education institutions, has, (too) closely aligned with - and possibly reduplicated - patriarchal structures in which externally endorsed achievement is key to obtaining dominant career status (or, these days, any career status at all). In such a situation, dominant narratives will continue to prevail, engendering the de-prioritisation of multiple issues where the plural representation of minority groups is at stake, with the consequence that this situation stands to be re-addressed. In making this suggestion, however, I want to make clear that I do not take an accusatory stance; as my research into Laura Mulvey has demonstrated, I am aware that the conditions surrounding women's publishing are complex and, when publications are connected to Higher Education (and employment within this) there can be dominant, external factors influencing what is ultimately published and what is not.

With that said, for this reason, and drawing from Hemmings' analysis, I assert that the different sculptures in my *New Model Amy* series, which I discuss in detail in this thesis, can be read as a form of "multiplicity" (ibid., p. 16) of feminist theories in the sense that, by practicing as an artist whilst researching theories which do not currently extend to include multiple accounts of single motherhood / the working, single mother artist, I have responded to this as artist by constructing multiple, different, materially embodied and articulated accounts of that which is absent and/or lacking in theory and as suggested to me through my relationship with the materials that form the basis for my sculptures.

Drawing from Hemmings' further analysis, however, I note her concerns regarding taking a "corrective approach" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 14) to feminist storytelling (ibid., p. 14) and that "feminist historiographers' insistence that which story one tells is always motivated by the position one occupies or wishes to occupy in the present" (ibid, p. 14). This is of interest to my project not merely because of the concerns I have just raised, regarding feminist mobilisation of narratives for purposes of achievement that perhaps too closely align with patriarchal structures - and the questions this engenders regarding my own motives - but also because of the insight brought to this thesis during my discussion with my examiners for my doctoral viva voce examination, regarding my use of footnotes. Without rehearsing that discussion, which I wish to remain private at this point but which I have found valuable for envisioning the future of my research, I want

to open out, albeit slightly, the issue of an author's approach to footnoting, to illuminate what I understand as one key significance of this. I do so by referring to Hemmings' analysis of similar observations made by critics of her work. Hemmings states that she had written an article in which there was:

...a rather out of place footnote in which I provide a list of black feminist writers from the 1960s and 1970s as a way of making clear that the stories I am critiquing are not only politically injurious but also inaccurate. (ibid., p. 14)

Hemmings then observes the response of one critic of this article, stating:

As one critic of this piece points out, the footnote both authenticates the desire to critique the existing ways of telling stories and reveals a more corrective approach than I claim to endorse (Torr 2007: 61). The stranded footnote remains uncontextualised and proposes an alternative history without fully delineating it, or being accountable for it. It hints at a multiplicity but cannot find a way to represent it. (Hemmings, 2011, p. 14)

Hemmings opens out the issue of multiplicity, mentioned above, when she goes on to write:

The realisation of feminist theory's multiplicity, then, leads me to want to analyze not so much what other truer history we might write, but the politics that produce and sustain one version of history as more true than another, despite that we know that history is more complicated than the stories we tell about it. (ibid., p. 16)

In the passages quoted above, Hemmings draws attention to the importance of multiple theoretical accounts being drawn at any one time, especially within feminist theory, and to the seeming difficulty that feminism has, historically, encountered, in ensuring that the politics of history - and I take Hemmings' analysis to mean patriarchal politics - do not prevent this. Regarding her critic's input into Hemmings' own, initially tentative, foray into these politics, through her approach to footnotes: I assert that my own approach to footnotes, in this thesis, bears strong correspondence with Hemmings' in that, in footnoting material that similarly, almost unconsciously, strays into these politics, I demonstrate a comparable tentativeness. In my case this is to do with the fact that I write from what I now understand to be a marginalised position, constructed in the absence of multiple theoretical accounts of (single) motherhood. My examiners' sensitivity to my approach to footnotes has, however, encouraged me in thinking the greater significance and future of this and what I want from this. Whilst I choose not to specifically state, in this thesis, what I envisage that future to be, I have decided to leave my footnotes as they were during my examination, for the reader to consider in their own terms what this suggests about my political

position at the time of writing.

Notably, Hemmings has written that "the move from practice to theory...is a sign of contemporary myopia, and the move from activist to professional concerns marks a reduction rather than an expansion of feminist possibilities in the present" (ibid., p. 64); I assert, here, that my approach regarding my practice reads as the reverse of the situation(s), within feminist theory, that Hemmings describes and, in so being, as a productive opposition to them. However, in making this assertion, I admit that this has involved me gaining increased confidence during my research and my footnoting practices perhaps leave traces of this ongoing development.

Returning to my earlier acknowledgement of Hemmings' account of the "loss narrative" (ibid., p. 68), drawing from Hemmings' analysis, it is possible that my approach to making my *New Model Army* sculptures can be read as the insistence on the formation of a "progress narrative" (ibid., p. 35) in order to displace or overcome a "loss narrative" (ibid., p. 68) regarding the working (single) mother artist. However, following on from Hemmings' further analysis, such a reading is complicated by the relation between queer and feminist theory:

Queer theory is pitted against feminism in both progress and loss narratives, as delineated here, through a series of oppositions...the staging of oppositions between queer and feminist theory and the

tying of these oppositions between postmodern or poststructuralist and materialist approaches, has broader implications for how sexuality is conceived of as an area of academic enquiry. (ibid., p. 90)

Without opening out an argument, here, regarding the relationship between queer and feminist theory, and how my sculptural practice may or may not play into and (potentially) resolve or bridge areas of opposition between them, I do suggest that my *New Model Army* sculptures can be read as integral to and materially evocative of the intertextual relation that Hemmings describes. With that said, Hemmings has also signaled awareness of a "return narrative" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 98) relating to "renewed interest in materialism" (ibid., p. 97); this is of interest to my project, particularly because of the material qualities of my sculptures, which I discuss in detail throughout this thesis, and I discuss Hemmings' idea of a "return narrative" (ibid., p. 97) in relation to my practice, anon.

For now, and even if the presence of my sculptural practice appears to contradict the need for a further examination of feminist theories and accounts of them, I will, nevertheless, continue my examination of second wave feminism for evidence of attention to women's oppression through family structures and through unpaid, domestic labour. My idea, here, is that this will, at least, provide some insight into how analysis of the position of and theoretical context for the working, single mother artist might be constructed now and in future and into the political role of my art practice and

research in future. With that said, I reiterate that this is not to fix in place either the women whose writing I refer to, or my own position; significantly, to borrow from Hemmings' term, I proceed with the intention to engender a "critical displacement" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 36) of the texts, from their central narratives and to also reflect, through what I think is a necessarily "partial and perverse" (Wylie, 2000, p. 157) (more of which anon) attention to aspects of theories, the idea that women's experience, in being drawn from as a form of knowledge, is not and cannot be presumed to be anything other than positively (from a feminist perspective) "instable" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 36).

With the above in mind, I want to mention Simone de Beauvoir, author of *The Second Sex* (1949) and a key, second wave feminist. Her statements regarding the nuclear family, and the patriarchal legitimation of this structure as injurious to women, have been generally helpful to my research, encouraging my understanding of structural and political oppression experienced by women who defy this model of the family and live as single mothers. De Beauvoir states: "Here we see the emergence of the patriarchal family founded upon private property. In this type of family woman is subjugated" (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 85), De Beauvoir acknowledges material problems inherent in patriarchal notions of (gender) difference and situates the nuclear family as integral to patriarchy and its oppression of women within the family home: De Beauvoir describes the ways in which woman is perceived, in the patriarchate, as "other" (ibid., p. 109), second to man, who

is socially and politically positioned and treated as the first or universal sex:

Thus the triumph of the patriarchy...From humanity's beginnings, their biological advantage has enabled the males to affirm their status as sole and sovereign subjects; they have never abdicated this position. (ibid., p. 109)

It is also helpful to my project that, in this text, De Beauvoir favourably reviews Lévi-Strauss' analysis of kinship systems, in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Lévi-Strauss, 1949). Lévi-Strauss' argument is that exchange relations (of women by men) substructure human societies (Beechey, 1979). Freud's account of the universality of the incest taboo (Freud, 1952) underlies Lévi-Strauss' analysis as the reason why women, not men, become objects of exchange (Beechey, 1979). De Beauvoir's analysis of this issue usefully connects to Luce Irigaray's text, *Women on The Market* (Irigaray, 1985a). Luce Irigaray is a second wave feminist and part of the *écriture féminine*<sup>23</sup> writers' movement along with *Hélène Cixous*, Monique Wittig, Chantal Chawaf, Catherine Clement, Julia Kristeva and Bracha Ettinger. Irigaray argues women are commodified for exchange under patriarchy through the roles/subject positions of either mother, prostitute or virgin (ibid). Irigaray has also written texts, referred to in more detail later in this thesis, such as *The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine* (Irigaray, 1985a) and *Speculum of the Other*

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<sup>23</sup> Translated as "feminine writing" or "women's writing", *écriture féminine* is a form of feminist literary theory that began in France in the 1970s.

*Woman* (Irigaray, 1985b), in which she argues that patriarchy has phallogically mechanised language and discourse to oppress women's sexuality and expressivity. As this thesis explains, in sections 0:6, 1:0 and Chapter Four, I have chosen in this thesis to examine how Hilary Robinson frames Irigaray's work. As I elaborate in these sections, this is because it is Robinson's framing - rather than Irigaray's work, as such - that encourages me to address my concerns regarding the silences imposed upon women, and particularly single mother artists, by considering how "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006) operates in Irigaray's work and how this practice can be considered to operate in women's art practices, including my own, and which involve flattening and fragmentation of an idea of woman.

For now, it is worth stating that, less obvious in Irigaray's writings is that she aims to de-prioritise patriarchal sight, because this commodifies women. This (as I argue in Chapter Four of my thesis) connects Irigaray's work to that of feminist film theorists including Laura Mulvey, whose work - discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis - draws from Freud and Lacan to position patriarchy as sadistic fetishism, operated primarily through men, via patriarchal structuration of sight / gaze within cinematic experience.

De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* (De Beauvoir, 1949) influenced Betty Friedan, who, in the 1960s, gained prominence as a second wave feminist when she wrote *The Feminine Mystique*, (Friedan, 1963), which was

based on "women's experience" (Spender, 1985, p. 8). Following de Beauvoir's objections to the nuclear family, Friedan critiques the idealisation of the nuclear family through advertising and capitalism, arguing this oppresses women. She also claims women's right to education was (wrongly) identified as the cause for their unhappiness in the role of housewife (Friedan, 1963, p. 20). Dale Spender (1985) critiques Friedan's work, pointing out its limitations, including regarding Friedan's examination of male dominance since the 1950s. Spender asserts Friedan "did *not* push her questions towards the origin of this strange state of affairs where it was acceptable for men to pass as the experts on women" (Spender, 1985, p. 11) and that "[s]he assumed the validity of the way the world worked - including the premise that the only existence for a woman was with a man" (ibid., p. 18). Nevertheless, Spender acknowledges the merits of Friedan's work, and that Friedan

...*did* open the door on women's experience, she *did* focus on some of the most galling features of some women's lives which had previously gone unnoted. (ibid., p. 11)

In proceeding to discuss how "Many women took over from where Betty Friedan left off" (ibid., p. 19), and in acknowledging that the 1970s saw the publication of several key, feminist texts, Spender notes the fragmented and disjointed nature of feminism prior to those publications and the marginalisation and relative isolation of the female, feminist authors who

were to become well known:

Before the publication of all those books in 1970 there was only an embryonic network, and the probability of Kate Millett, Germaine Greer, Shulamith Firestone, Eva Figes and Robin Morgan each knowing what the other was doing or thinking was remote indeed. In 1984 we can examine the multiplicity of feminist explanations and derive benefit from their rich diversity; but in the late 1960s the women who were developing these explanations were, in one sense, very much on their own. (ibid., p. 26)

Spender's analysis, here, is helpful to my project; it encourages me to understand marginalisation as a significant factor that prohibited the early production and dissemination of feminist knowledges, including via publication, and to appreciate the strength of those feminist women who insisted on giving voice to their concerns. It also helps me to understand the marginalisation I have experienced, as a working single mother artist, as both a negative consequence of patriarchal fragmentation of (potential) feminist communities - and of women's subjectivities - but also, more positively, as a position of potency and possibility. Moreover, I find helpful Spender's awareness of the problems caused to feminist ethics when women adopt approaches (including publishing approaches) and positions that, ultimately, uncritically rehearse the structures of dominance and subordination (and the inter-subjective exploitation this depends upon)

founding and running through patriarchal hierarchies:

...in this book, where a lot of space is devoted to the way women are defined out of existence and classified as non-data in men's terms, it is as well to have reservations about a feminist framework which defines some women out of existence. Just as men are dominant, and therefore in a position to promote their dominance at the expense of women, so too can the 'dominant' writers within the women's movement have their dominance used to reinforce their position at the expense of those who are subordinate and who continue not to count. (Spender, 1985, p. 3)

Relatedly, Janet Bergstrom and Mary-Ann Doane have acknowledged "[t]he self-perpetuating careerism that inevitably invades any academic (publish-or-perish) discipline" (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989, p. 16) and connect this to the way in which the research of areas of interest - in this case "feminist film and media theory" (ibid., p. 16) - within educational institutions, can mean that the area being researched becomes "cut off from its original sense of bold innovation and political purpose" (ibid., p. 16).

Relatedly, I find interesting Spender's reference, later in her text, to Virginia Woolf's refusal of "formal education and its trappings of prestige" (Spender, 1985, p. 181) and to Woolf's claim (Woolf, 1938) "that education, as it was then constructed, was based on competition and its inevitable

outcome was hierarchies, dominance and war" (ibid., p. 181). Spender points out that Woolf "urged women to be outsiders, to remain outside the halls of learning and to forge their own knowledge from their own frame of reference" (ibid., p. 181) and adds that "[h]ers is the supreme rationale for independent women's studies courses" (ibid., p. 181). Drawing from Spender's account, I suggest that Woolf's argument presents as problematic, not least in that she speaks from a position of financial security / relative wealth, has access to intellectual stimulus via family connections and upbringing, and does not appear to address the question of how working class women are to achieve financial independence (from men) - or, vitally, intellectual stimulus - without an education or the kind of financial resources Woolf had recourse to. With that said, whilst I do not investigate Woolf's work in this thesis, I love her writing; I am in awe of her ability and achievements, and feel absolutely indebted to a woman strong enough to battle, as Woolf did, with aspects of her subjectivity and the greater structures informing this, in order to write. So, I assert that the competitiveness, hierarchies and dominance she argues were prevalent within educational institutions at the time of her writing remain very much alive today. Moreover, whilst the position of "outsider" (ibid, p. 181) described by Woolf may not be (ethically or practically) possible or desirable, drawing from my lived experiences I would assert that retaining - and insisting upon - one's own, independent recourse to knowledge formation - including through practices involving the making of art that includes approaches derived from original, working class experiences of innovative making - can mean that one develops / assumes a feminist,

critical position *on the margins* of educational institutions. This necessarily involves a degree of institutional critique, including of institutional relations that reproduce dominance. For me this has been a critique lived bodily, including through art practice, rather than only being theorised. Spender's reference to Woolf's perspective on education encourages me in understanding that such a - necessarily precarious - position can and does have feminist merit. As Bergstrom and Doane have pointed out:

...it would be a mistake to presume that the term "institutionalization" automatically implies that which is politically and ideologically reprehensible. We all inhabit institutions of one sort or another (the family, the press, legal, educational, governmental institutions) and persistently work within, *on the border* and outside of these institutions. (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989, p. 16) (my emphasis)

However, it is also worth noting that bell hooks (hooks, 1989) has asserted that women's studies, in entering educational institutions, emulates the institutionalised patriarchal approaches which it contests. More recently, hooks (hooks, 2004) has spoken of women's patriarchal capacities. She argues that, before the general use of the word 'patriarchy', the words 'male chauvinism' and 'sexism' were used by feminists; hooks argues that the terms 'male chauvinism' and 'sexism' suggest that it is only men who oppress women, whereas the term 'patriarchy' refers to an ideology in which men are considered to be altogether better than women and, therefore, will always be

dominant over them and that this thought can be endorsed by either gender (hooks, 2004).

With these analyses in mind I assert that it is the (hierarchical) relations of dominance and exploitation, described above by Spender (including with reference to Woolf), that my *New Model Army* sculptures seek to challenge - even momentarily - through activating what I refer to in this thesis (see section 3:8 in particular) as 'between-ing' relations - that is, relations of equality and difference between artist, art work and audience. This thought also positively connects with Hemmings' comments on "[t]he renewed interest in materialism...[which]...is consistently represented as a knowing return, full of futurity rather than nostalgia" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 97) and which is "...primarily concerned with...everyday lived experience and to material or embodied realities instead of remaining mired in a conceptual realm" (ibid., p. 97). As I have asserted earlier in this chapter, my *New Model Army* sculptures can be read as materially articulating multiple theoretical accounts that feminist theory has struggled to (simultaneously) accommodate. Hemmings' further reflections on the "return" (ibid., p. 97) to materialism - as forward looking rather than nostalgic (Hemmings, 2011) - encourage me in making this assertion. Moreover, I find encouraging that Hemmings adds:

...if we do not combine analysis and experience, deconstruction and material attention, if we do not return to something that we can really

grasp, then we remain powerless to alter the pernicious power relations our poststructuralist tactics can cleverly identify but spectacularly fail to transform. (ibid., p. 97-98)

Later in this chapter, in section 1:2 which examines standpoint feminism, I say more about (what I agree is) the need, which Hemmings identifies and which I assert can be accommodated through making (art), to "combine analysis and experience" (ibid., p, 97) with a view to enabling women's transformative becoming. Hemmings also brings to attention Myra Hird's (2004) definition of materialism, in connection with Deleuzian affect, and, as I elaborate in section 1:2, I find this most helpful when thought in relation to my *New Model Army* sculptures.

As I discuss in the thesis, my art practice offers a new approach to women's oppression under patriarchy - that is, it tackles:

...what is left out of any explanation - including those of women...It is the *absence* of the acknowledgement of the full humanity of others that is the source of so much bias and prejudice, be it based on dimensions of race, class, sex, age or sexuality. (Spender, 1985, p. 26)

Spender (1985) emphasises the importance of different women's experiences being recognised and valued - including "*women's experience of*

*the world which includes the experience of patriarchy*" (ibid., p. 26) (at least) to counter hierarchical dominance - "one of the greatest indignities was that women's experience did not count" (ibid., p. 26).<sup>24</sup> This encourages me in contributing, to this thesis, some reference to my own lived experience. I have found it helpful to connect Spender's emphasis on women's experience to the subsequent work of Gloria Steinem a writer and activist most associated with second wave feminism who, in 1992, published *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*. I suggest Steinem's work on the issue of self esteem indirectly speaks to the need to develop standpoint feminism, in order to account for women's lived experiences of patriarchy and their internalisation of patriarchal conditioning and structures, and the need to envision and put into practice ways for women to differently respond to patriarchy in order to develop fluid, anti-patriarchal standpoints in future.

## **1:1:2 Radical Feminism**

Early radical feminists such as Robin Morgan and Kate Millett, who became active in second-wave feminism (in the 1960s), perceived patriarchy as a "transhistorical phenomenon" (Willis 1992, p. 122). For radical feminist Willis, "...women's oppression is not only the oldest and most universal form of

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<sup>24</sup> Drawing from experience, I would assert that another such indignity - or series of indignities - is entailed in having to insist - because no one else previously has and there is no guarantee that anyone else ever will - that marginalising experiences begin to be discussed within institutions where they are not already being debated, in order to generate change; the indignity involved relates to, at times, having no other option but to draw from and expose personal experience in order to 'prove', because nothing else can, that the experiences relate to issues that stand to be re-investigated and renewed. With that said, this process of 'exposure' possibly becomes easier, with experience.

domination, but the primary form" (Willis, 1984 cited Tosh, 2016, p. 132). Examples of radical feminist analysis include analyses of lesbianism, which has been extended by Adrienne Rich (Rich, 1980) to suggest that "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1980, p. 632) is an "institution...and beachhead of male dominance" (ibid., p. 633) and, as such, a mechanism of patriarchy. Judith Butler subsequently adopts the same term - compulsory heterosexuality - in works such as *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1999), to tackle notions of gender performativity and the patriarchal constraints imposed on and through this.

It has been generally helpful to consider these analyses given my experiences as a working, heterosexual single mother artist and, relatedly, of patriarchal oppression, and this includes the implications of the term 'compulsory heterosexuality'; in the thesis (see section 0:4) I describe my confusion regarding being subjected to patriarchal oppression, which included confusion about how / why I could be discriminated against, on grounds of my sexuality, if I identified as heterosexual. Taking Butler's and Rich's analysis into account has helped me to understand that 'compulsory heterosexuality' - that is, limited notions of heterosexuality as enforced through patriarchal structures - does not merely cause problems for subjects who identify as gay, but can also negatively impact upon straight women's lives when they opt to live as single mothers. This includes because single motherhood, in seeming to position the mother's heterosexual desire as disruptive of / threatening to the nuclear family structure, and man's position

is 'head' of the family, is punishable under patriarchy.

Relatedly, Beechey has written that radical feminism emerges from within second wave feminism and "...introduced the concept of patriarchy into contemporary feminist discourse" (Beechey, 1979, p. 68 - 69) by asserting this as male domination of women through power relationships and via women's reproductive capacities (Beechey, 1979). Other examples of radical feminist thought include the analyses of Phyllis Chesler in *Women and Madness* (1972), Jill Johnston in *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* (1973), Monique Wittig in *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (1992), Mary Daly and Joanna Russ in *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Daly, M. and Russ, J., 1979), each of which have called for a recognition of the autonomous power of women. Dale Spender's (1985) overview of Robin Morgan's analysis of the family, including *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist* (Morgan, 1977) has also been helpful to consider, not merely in relation to the effects of patriarchal economies on women, but also because, as Spender points out, "she blends the personal and the political" (ibid., p. 81); this has proved helpful for my project when reflecting on negative responses to single mother families and, in turn, my own responses as 'head' of a single parent household; as I have just mentioned, in such a family, the woman is, from a patriarchal perspective, 'governing' the family unit and, in so doing, appears to constitute a threat to patriarchy. The assertion I make, here, connects with Spender's account of Kate Millett's work. Whilst neither Millett or Spender refer exclusively to single

motherhood, Spender, in her account of Millett's work - which Spender likens to Robin Morgan's in that "she places sexual oppression at the centre of her analysis of oppression (ibid. p. 81) - discusses why "rulers have found it necessary to construct their centrality in women's lives" (Spender, 1985, p. 45) and asks: "Could it be that they are frightened of being superfluous if women are autonomous?" (ibid, p. 45). Drawing from this analysis, I suggest the fear Spender refers to is strongly connected to the governmental attacks on single mothers - discussed in this thesis in section 0:4 - and that the fear involved is that single mothers could potentially become autonomous if they can gain independence from the state, leaving men disposable. This is a fear that, logically, is deeply rooted in neo-liberal preoccupation with profit; arguably, because patriarchal capitalism aims to relentlessly monetise and profit from every aspect of life, it makes sense that, for men subjected to patriarchy, great fear will be attached to the possibility of their becoming impotent in terms of generating profit (for themselves in the first instance) - and, therefore, becoming dispensable, from a patriarchal perspective; providing women are retained as disposable, this fear is assuaged.

Following these thoughts, it is helpful to note differences in Beechey's and Spender's analyses of Kate Millett's work. But before doing so, I want to point out that, whilst Beechey's analysis was written in 1979, I still find it generally useful and relevant. This is because Beechey has written that the concept of patriarchy has a long history within feminist thought, having been used by the women's movement to identify and understand the principles

and structures responsible for women's systematic oppression and that feminists have used the concept of patriarchy to account for women's subjugation (Beechey, 1979). As such, patriarchy has been theorised:

- a. In terms of its particular and varied forms.
- b. To correlate the particular experiences and manifestations of women's oppression relative to theories.
- c. To positively realise political practices and theories with which women (and men) might overcome subordination.

Beechey's thoughts, articulated above, whilst perhaps obvious, have been generally useful in helping me to reflect on the aims of my project and in encouraging me to develop them; Beechey's analysis helps me in understanding that my project aims to relate lived experiences and theories of oppression, to understand my own experiences and their differences and similarities to those of other women (and men), and to establish an art practice which encourages women's overcoming of subordination. It has also helped me to understand that, within feminist writing, drawing on Beechey's account, the concept and meaning of patriarchy is not monolithic but complex, varied and evolving, inclining to correspond with different political tendencies within feminist politics, and formed in response to different experiences of subordination (Beechey, 1979). Whilst Beechey admits that

(then) existing literatures do not sufficiently conceptualise patriarchy, she nevertheless asserts that, until we develop an alternative analysis for thinking through real political and theoretical problems, the question of the usefulness of the concept of patriarchy for feminist politics and theory remains open (Beechey, 1979).

Although Beechey states the above some thirty-eight years ago, in 1979, it is still helpful and encouraging for me to read. This is because Beechey's writing encourages me to see feminist discourse regarding patriarchy as open and, therefore, as an ongoing and potentially inclusive practice. Possibly because I have emerged from a working class background, and possibly because I had not been exposed to feminist theory prior to my doctoral studies, feminist theory had previously inclined to seem exclusive, and, in this chapter, I have discussed the ways in which Hemmings (2011), Reger (2005) and Spender (1985) each articulate their disapproval of the excluding tendencies of feminist theory. Beechey's approach, together with the more recent analyses just mentioned, encourage me in thinking that I - and, potentially any other subject - can contribute to feminist thought surrounding patriarchy. This leads me to argue that, today, there is still scope - which I explore in this thesis and in my practice - for re-thinking patriarchy, how feminists can use this concept to account for women's different experiences, and how artists respond to it.

Meanwhile, to return to the differences between Beechey's and

Spender's analyses of Millett's work: Beechey (1979) writes that Max Weber used the term patriarchy in the sense of "Herrschaft - that is, a relationship of domination and subordination" (Beechey, 1979., p. 68) and that radical feminist Kate Millett takes this up in *Sexual Politics* (Millett, 1969), by addressing the "specific nature of women's oppression" (Beechey, 1979, p.68).

Beechey writes:

For Millett, patriarchy refers to a society which is organised according to two sets of principles: (i) that males dominate females; and (ii) that older males dominate younger males. (ibid., p. 68)

Beechey describes how Millett "focuses on...the domination of women by men" (ibid., p. 68) and how, relatedly in her analysis, Millett positions the nuclear family as the "most fundamental unit of patriarchy" (ibid., p. 68) and as key to oppressing women and conditioning children via their emergent sexualities (Beechey, 1979).

Beechey's descriptions of Millett's analysis of the nuclear family are interesting to my project because, as this thesis relates, there is a strong sense in which patriarchal family structures, and the consequences of this for my daughter and myself in living as a single parent family, have impacted onto my artistic practice and onto the development of this thesis. It is also

helpful, in accounting for my experiences as a working single mother artist, to note Spender's account of Millett's work. Spender asserts that, on Millett's account "women are permitted to be mothers only on men's terms" (Spender, 1985, p. 44). In this thesis (see particularly section 0:4) I refer to the Conservative campaigns against single mothers but, notably, this includes reference to a woman, Margaret Thatcher; notwithstanding that Spender conflates a notion of man and patriarch, on Spender's analysis, Thatcher's terms for motherhood are patriarchal.<sup>25</sup>

Beechey has noted that Shulamith Firestone (1971) has discussed problems in Millett's *Sexual Politics*, arguing that patriarchal oppression of women has its basis in men's consistent, historical control of women's reproductive capacities (Beechey, 1979).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Segal (1987) has noted that Millett equates patriarchal power with phallic power and has also written that:

The identification of sexuality as 'the primary social sphere of male power' was to have far-reaching, and disastrous effects...encouraged 'all women' to identify themselves as the victims of 'all men'. (Segal,

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<sup>25</sup> Notably, in Lynne Segal's account, Thatcher was: "exceptionally belligerent" with an "almost literal worship of the market" (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, 2013, p. 90).

<sup>26</sup> On Spender's (1985) account of Firestone's work, Firestone is concerned about the family and what she sees as its oppressive effects on women and children. Again, I find this generally helpful, but, whilst I appreciate that Firestone's ideas may resonate with some mothers, drawing from my own experience as a mother, I do not personally concur with her (I think) universalising assertion that "The special tie women have with children is recognised by everyone. I submit however that this bond is no more than shared oppression" (Firestone cited Spender, 1985, p. 91).

1987, p. 70)

The problem Segal identifies arises out of what Beechey describes as the:

...radical and revolutionary feminist...attempt to analyse the autonomous basis of the oppression of women in all forms of society and to provide a theoretical justification for the autonomy of feminist politics. (Beechey, 1979, p. 67)

A further difference in Beechey's and Spender's analyses has become helpful to my research and practice in that, in considering this, I have come to understand my *New Model Army* sculptures as offering material testament to the longstanding need for a 'new model' for women's living. I explain this thought in the following passages.

Beechey (1979) has claimed that, despite arguing patriarchy is rooted in men's ability to dominate women by controlling their reproductive capacities, radical feminism is flawed. Beechey argues (1979) that Millet rejects biology as an explanation for this consistent impulse (of men) to dominate, but that she offers no explanation for the origins of patriarchy, of male domination and female subordination (Beechey, 1979).

However, I find interesting Spender's subsequent argument that:

...we do not need definitive evidence of the first cause to know that men have power, that they have had it for a very long time, that they seem to have it in every known human society, and that they now use it to keep their power. The status quo argument holds that because men have power now, this is the way it should be. This is probably the weakest argument of all to justify patriarchy, but, as Kate Millett points out, it is probably the most difficult to overcome." (Spender, 1985, p. 42)

I find problematic Spender's conflation of the term 'men' with 'patriarchy' - which occurs in the quotation above but is also consistent throughout her entire text (Spender, 1985). However, I am holding this in suspension, here, whilst I focus on Spender's important assertion that, for Millett, it is a mistake for women to feel any obligation to firstly establish an original cause of patriarchy in order to then feel justified and/ or equipped to overcome patriarchy. Indeed, according to Spender, on Millett's analysis, the "universality and longevity" (Millett cited Spender, 1985, p. 42) of patriarchy is "Perhaps the greatest psychological weapon" (ibid., p. 42). Moreover, according to Flax (1990):

The very search for a cause or "root" of gender relations or, more narrowly, male domination may partially reflect a mode of thinking that is itself grounded in particular forms of gender or other relations in

which domination is present. (Flax, 1990, p. 28)

Drawing from these analyses, I suggest, then, that the longer the feminist process of establishing a cause of patriarchy is (allowed to) continue, the greater the risk of patriarchal, psychological damage to women; the point, it would seem, is not to overly entertain what (I argue) is actually a patriarchal obligation for women to explain patriarchy (including and especially to patriarchs), but to assert different behaviours and modes of living. This thought has become valuable in encouraging me to live and work as a single mother artist and to form the *New Model Army* series which, in light of Hemmings', (2011), Flax's (1990), Spender's (1985) and Beechey's (1979) analyses, can be read as a material assertion of the need for different modes of living - a 'new model' - to be made available to women. This is important to assert because, as Spender has pointed out, alternatives modes of living are hard to come by: "If women are oppressed by the structure of the family, then one solution is for the family to go...But where are women to go?" (Spender, 1985, p. 42). In a move that I find interesting for my project, Spender points out that Judith Stacey

...sees much of the contemporary backlash against feminism as a response to this failure to provide an alternative so that while the family has its faults, many women will settle for it. (Spender, 1985, p. 42).

This thought is helpful for me in understanding the aims of my project; drawing from this analysis, I understand that living as a single parent family, though far from easy, and definitely imperfect, can be viewed as a (ongoing) construction integral to a feminist need that Spender argues has not been sufficiently met and which, I assert, is still ongoing<sup>27</sup> - that is, the need to form viable alternatives to patriarchal, nuclear family structures; understanding the greater feminist context for this has helped me to see my artistic practice and this thesis as contributing to that need and context.

### **1:1:3 Marxist and Materialist Feminism**

In 1977, and prior to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's claim (Gilman, 1898) that women's oppression is due to women being tied to domesticity, Christine Delphy, a leading Materialist feminist connected to revolutionary and Marxist feminism, published *The Main Enemy* (Delphy, 1977). Whilst Beechey has written that Marxist feminist thought differs from that of radical and revolutionary feminism, in that it seeks to examine how patriarchy and capitalist modes of production are related as well as the construction of women's patriarchal subordination within this relation (Beechey, 1979), for Delphy, the main enemy of women is patriarchy and, in *The Main Enemy*, she develops her analysis to tackle material inequalities. Delphy's new

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<sup>27</sup> This thought formed the basis for a symposium, funded by Goldsmiths College, which I instigated and opened out for co-convening in September 2016, held at Goldsmiths College and entitled "Reproductive Labour | Parenting Beyond Patriarchy".

approach to thinking women's situation led to statements such as:

...the family is itself the site of economic exploitation: that of women...women have a specific relationship to production which is comparable to serfdom. (Delphy, 1977, p. 3)

It is from such assertions that Delphy developed a new analysis of women's situation. Beechey notes that Delphy "calls this analysis *materialist feminism*" (Beechey, 1979, p. 70), in which she accounts for the material and gendered inequalities between men and women. Beechey says that, for Delphy, a society organised and run according to capitalist imperatives:

...has two modes of production: (i) the industrial mode of production, which is in the arena of capitalist exploitation; and (ii) the family mode of production, in which the woman provides domestic services in which childrearing occurs. (ibid., p.71)

Beechey writes that, for Delphy, men control "the family mode of production" (ibid., p.71), but that Barbara Taylor, in her 1975 text *Our Labour and Our Power* (Taylor, 1975) argues "women's labour takes different forms within the capitalist labour process and in the family" (Beechey, 1979, p. 71).

Beechey has therefore noted that Delphy's argument, that patriarchy

only resides within the family, offers no analysis of women's oppression through labour and the family structure (Beechey, 1979). Beechey's analysis of the lack of reconciliation of different kinds of women's labour, and their ensuing oppressions, is important to my practice and research; drawing from my lived experience and Beechey's analysis, I assert that this lack remains in place today, and I articulate my project's interest in this relative to notions of what I refer to as 'screened oppression'. With that said, Delphy's interest in the material and gendered inequalities between men and women are of interest to my project. Drawing from this, I proceed, later in this chapter (see section 1:2), to discuss Myra Hird's (2004) distinction between (what she describes as) two different notions of materialism and, building on this, I make a claim regarding how my *New Model Army* sculptures can be read as particularly operating in relation to these two notions. Importantly, one of the notions Hird describes (2004) appears to reiterate Delphy's account of materialism and, given this, I argue my *New Model Army* sculptures can be said to read as a material - and politically playful - extension of Delphy's early analysis. I elaborate this thought in section 1:2.

#### **1:1:4 Socialist Feminism**

Selma James' and Mariarosa Dalla Costa's publication (1972) *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, has argued that capitalism is built on women's unpaid domestic and reproductive labour and that this

gendered arrangement of living conditions allows capitalism to enforce and preserve gendered inequalities in wealth and the distribution of wealth through combined structures of class and gender. For this reason, Heidi Hartmann (1997) and Silvia Federici (1975, 2010) have contributed to debates on women's living conditions and their exploitation through domestic and reproductive labour. Federici's writings (1975, 2010) frame women's "unpaid domestic work" (Federici, 2010, p. 40) as that which capitalist economies are "structurally dependent on" (ibid., p. 40). Federici's analysis has become important to my research and I discuss this in more detail later in Chapter Three of this thesis, arguing that screened oppression works in tandem with women's unpaid, domestic labour, to systemically oppress women.

Hartmann's and Federici's work is in keeping with socialist feminism, which does not agree with the radical feminist argument that patriarchy is the "primary" (Willis, 1984 cited Tosh, 2016, p. 132) form of women's oppression, but instead argues that women cannot enjoy freedom because they remain financially dependent on men, who continue to enjoy the effects of an unequal, historical division of wealth (Revolvy, n.d.).

Socialist feminists contest and ultimately oppose Marx's view that oppression based on gender would disappear when oppression based on class was ended, because (in his view) gender oppression results directly from class. Instead of rehearsing Marx's idea that it is only class that defines

history and only class that determines how the economy develops, socialist feminists have aimed to understand how, in combination, class and gender generate different forms of oppression. They do this by analysing how each historical period has systematically divided labour according to gender, by analysing the sexism that engenders and results from this, and by analysing how this is conditioned by capitalism and by patriarchy (Revolv, n.d.).

At this stage, I want to mention that, prior to Hartmann's (1977) and Federici's (1975, 2010) analyses, Juliet Mitchell argued (1974) against biology as the cause of patriarchy, instead defining patriarchy as the symbolic assumption of power by the father, when human culture began (Beechey, 1979). Beechey notes that, for Mitchell, "fathers and their 'representatives' (and *not* men)" (Beechey, 1979, p. 72) dominate women living in patriarchal culture, and do so through "the exchange of women" (ibid., p. 72). Beechey notes that Mitchell grounds patriarchy relative to Lévi-Strauss' work on "kinship systems in which men exchange women and...the symbolic power which fathers have within these systems" (ibid., p. 66) arguing that this results in the "inferiorized . . . psychology of women" (Mitchell, 1974 cited Beechey, 1979, p. 66) and that, by understanding how the unconscious works, it might then become possible to understand how patriarchal culture operates (Beechey, 1979).

Beechey (1979) asserts that Mitchell tries to connect her analysis to Marxist modes of production but that, in so doing, Mitchell suggests that

whilst the conditions have developed, in capitalist society, which should have made kinship structures "redundant" (Beechey, 1979, p. 73), they have remained. Thus, according to Beechey, in Mitchell's analysis, the retention of kinship structures within capitalist society means that there is a "contradiction" (ibid., p. 75) between how the capitalist economy is structured and the continuation of patriarchy (Beechey, 1979). This analysis is helpful for my project in that it encourages me to understand the contradictory position I have occupied as working single mother artist. Most significantly for my research and practice, Beechey adds that, for Mitchell "(w)omen in their role as reproducers stand at the crux of this contradiction. Women remain defined by kinship structures" (Beechey, 1979, p. 73). This is in contrast to men, who, "enter into the class-dominated structures of history" (ibid. p. 73). In Chapter Three I elaborate how this "contradiction" (ibid. p. 73) has influenced my practice and research. For now, I want to draw attention to what I think are important aspects of Spender's (1985) account of Mitchell's work.

With her typical, active disregard for chronology, Spender writes: "if strict chronological order were to be observed, Juliet Mitchell would have appeared directly after Betty Friedan - and would have been worlds removed" (Spender, 1985, p. 121). The reason Spender gives for this extreme gulf between Friedan's and Mitchell's analysis is that Mitchell's

...main focus for her analysis was women in the workplace. Her

concern was to explain the exploitation of women in the workforce and she linked their position with women's role in the family. Thus, the women whose world Juliet Mitchell began with were precisely the women who, in Betty Friedan's description, did not exist. (ibid., p. 122)

Spender's acknowledgement of the difference between Friedan's and Mitchell's work is important to my project. Mitchell explores uncharted territory and brings into representation the lives of women who were considered not to exist and which, as such, are effectively deemed impossible. Mitchell's work begins to make (increasingly) possible, through representation, the lives of working mothers; there is a strong correspondence between Mitchell's project and my art practice and research, which aims to bring new representation to mothers and, within this, to the working single mother artist - the latter being a subjectivity which, if representations are taken as reliable index, would appear not to exist at all. Moreover, as Spender points out, Mitchell, "did not dismiss the insights of radical feminism" (Spender, 1985, p. 123) but, ultimately, did not accept radical feminism's approach, due to the way in which radical feminists - such as Millett and Firestone - position women as "*the problem*" (Mitchell cited Spender, 1985, p. 123) but with no strategies for implementing change (Spender, 1985, p. 123). Spender asserts that Mitchell's approach involved

...the arduous and dual assignment of extending the framework of analysis of radical feminism so that it could readily lend itself to more

of a cause and effect rationale. At the same time she attempted to extend the methodology of historical materialism so that it could account for the position of women. (ibid., p. 123 - 124)

This thought is significant to my artistic practice and research in that, following Hemmings' analysis (which I have discussed earlier in this chapter) it encourages me to understand the women artists' works included in this thesis, and my *New Model Army* series, as material (rather than theoretical or only conceptual) examples of the kind of extension that, according to Spender, Mitchell attempted at a much earlier time. This is not to suggest that I have consciously built on Mitchell's analysis, but that, in examining correspondences between Mitchell's work and my own, and in considering this relative to Hemmings' analysis of the "return" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 98) to materialism, I understand my art practice can be read as one such extension and, consequently, I feel less negatively marginalised in so doing.

Spender also acknowledges that, unlike radical feminists, Mitchell holds 'the system' responsible for structuring the tyranny of men and the subordination of women" (ibid., p. 130) rather than men themselves. However, for Mitchell, the distinction makes no difference to the outcome, which is:

...a man who takes up a position either consciously or instinctively, of domination (and egotism) over and against women, by virtue of his

status as a man. (Mitchell cited Spender, 1985, p. 130)

For Mitchell, the way forward "lies in changing the capitalist system which is predicated on exploitation, hierarchies and competition" (Spender, 1985, p. 130). Whilst socialism "has to be drastically reformed...if it is to take account of women...it does constitute a different system...not based on economic exploitation" (ibid. p. 130). So, "if women are not being exploited in the area of production, they are in a better position to achieve liberation" (ibid. p. 130). However, for Mitchell, socialism as it (then) exists is not a watertight solution; women's situation remains problematic as long as society allocates women no "living wage" (ibid. p. 131); this means that "woman's role within the family, and the very meaning of sex differences themselves, that lie at the root of the allocation of woman's place in society" (ibid. p. 131) constitute a source of ongoing oppression.

Mitchell's ideas are interesting to my project *as ideas* - as (political) proposals. I say this because there is a productive sense in which her work encourages working women to reflect on their own experiences of tackling the world of employment, including in combination with motherhood, and to compare what they find with what Mitchell's analysis suggests may be possible. In this thesis, the practice of reflecting on my personal experiences, relative to feminist theories and practices has encouraged me in taking confidence in asserting single motherhood as a different and possible mode of living, and to see that the difficulties involved are, at this stage in history,

inevitable but not impossible to overcome. Reflecting in this way, and taking into account Hemmings' (2011) analysis (as discussed earlier in this chapter) has helped me to understand my *New Model Army* series as materially testifying to the possibility of a different way for women to live, to hope that this will become easier for women in future and to feel encouraged in aiming to contribute to that possibility through my research and practice. Notably, Spender acknowledges that Mitchell herself did not, ultimately, come up with a plausible way forward: "while registering the need for a transformation in reproduction she fails to outline any practicable means by which this could be achieved" (ibid., p. 127). However, Spender defends this: "No one, to my knowledge, has been able to come up with any solution" (ibid. p. 127).

Rather than being discouraging, this lack of solution is interesting to my project. This is not because I see art as *the* solution to women's inequality, but because the lack of solution generates the question of the role that art can play in contributing to feminist politics. I find it helpful, at this juncture, to therefore note that, according to Beechey, Sheila Jeffreys argues (1977):

...that there exist two systems of social classes: (i) the economic class system which is based on the relations of production and (ii) the sex class system which is based on relations of reproduction (Beechey, 1979, p.69).

Beechey recounts Jeffreys' argument that "the sex class system" (ibid., p. 69) operates as a form of patriarchy to subordinate women, adding that, in 1977, Jeffreys, along with Jainer Hanmer, Kathy Lunn and Sandra MacNeill argues:

The precise forms of control change, in Sheila Jeffreys' view, according to the cultural and historical period and according to developments in the economic class system (Beechey, 1979, p.70).

In Chapter Three of this thesis (section 3:9), my project develops on from this idea that control mechanisms differ depending on their historical and economic context, by claiming that the unprecedented mediatization of the screen and screened images - their multiplication, digitisation and networking as discussed by Heidi Wasson (2007, p. 75) and Anne Friedberg (2003, p. 347 - 348) - must be taken into account for how the mediatized screen and screened images of women have been historically adapted and are now used in this current cultural and historical period to precisely and patriarchally control women, including by regulating women's desires.

I claim that, through the screen and screened oppression, patriarchy continually reforms and re-duplicates oppressive images of women relative to the extent to which, in light of their own desires, women are determined to invent, assert and materialise choices in connection with overcoming different forms of patriarchy. For this idea to be appropriately articulated, it is

necessary to draw from standpoint feminist theory, which allows for the idea of women's different experiences of oppression. I propose that women's art practices can be regarded as standpoints which carry "knowledges" (Kiaer, 2013, p.123) of women's lived experiences of screened oppression and that, to appreciate how the works adopt this role, it is necessary to synthesise aspects of Deleuzian and standpoint feminisms. I elaborate this claim in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Zillah Eisenstein (1979) argues the contradictory position that women live in, due to the "mutual dependence of patriarchy and capitalism" (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 27), needs further formulation, in order to account for the lived experiences of working mothers (ibid., p. 5-55). It is helpful to my project to consider that I have lived within what is, for women, the uneasy marriage of patriarchy and capitalism and that this conditions my art practice; Eisenstein (1979) describes the collusion of patriarchy as "capitalist patriarchy" (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 23) resulting in "sexual hierarchy" (ibid., p. 33) structured upon woman's role within and beyond the family. She argues it is necessary to develop an "exploratory feminist class analysis" (ibid., p. 32) through which to "alter the way we think about workers" (ibid., p.31) and "to understand our like-nesses and differences" (ibid, p. 32). Eisenstein argues women and their relations with one another should be considered through new analyses of women's work (or non-work) "within the economy as a whole...race and marital status....and [in terms of] their reproduction, childrearing, sexuality, consumption, maintenance of home" (ibid., p. 32 -

33). Beechey helpfully describes this as the need to re-formulate an idea of "woman as both mother and worker, reproducer and producer" (Beechey, 1979, p. 77).

Beechey writes that, from Eisenstein's perspective, "relations of reproduction are not specifically capitalist relations, but are cultural relations...carried over from one historical period to another" (ibid., p.77), which generate conditions for patriarchy to flourish. As I have acknowledged, Eisenstein has argued (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 32) that, for such a formulation to be drawn, women's differences from one another and, importantly, the conditions surrounding those differences, must be accounted for. I claim that Eisenstein's call for new analysis of women as "workers" (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 31) can and must include woman as artist and woman and as mother and, where applicable, as single mother - because the difference between at least these two positions, and the discriminations encountered by women in these positions, are vast and varied. Moreover, the conditions of motherhood must be taken into account for how they differ - sometimes vastly - between different women; in other words, new consideration must be given to the conditions of (at least) background, family context, community, sexuality and race experienced by mothers. In Chapter Three (section 3:9) and Chapter Four (section 4:3), I claim that my practice contributes to such a formulation by operating as a feminist standpoint, through which I articulate my experiences of patriarchal oppression as working, single mother artist and

researcher and my awareness of other women's struggles within similar roles.

## **1:2 What Kind of Standpoint Do I Need to Take to Avoid Reproducing Patriarchy?**

Given that the relation between patriarchy and workers employed within capitalist systems is deliberately opaque, how do I ensure I do not behave patriarchally? To put this in other ways: given the unclear relation between patriarchy and capitalism, and my experiential connection to both, is it not arrogant to assume that my experiences, and the art practice and research that evolve from this, might make even a small difference to the lives of presumably oppressed others? Is it patriarchal to assume that I do not impose my needs on others when I make and show art? And patriarchal to assume, also, that my thesis can avoid merely self-serving the normatively bound subjectivity understood as 'me'?

The questions I raise about the ethics of representation (speaking to or for) relate to the experiential (empirical) context from which standpoint feminism emerged, from Marxist feminism. They index other key questions, needs and observations raised by standpoint feminists, including the need to question hegemonically bound notions of subjectivity and the patriarchal relations emitting from patriarchally embodied subjects.

Dorothy Smith, inspired by Marx, is credited (Macdonis and Gerber, 2011) with founding feminist standpoint theory by looking into the lives of her female colleagues and how, as women, they build their lives. Relatedly, Jane Flax (1990) has pointed out that formal knowledges produced by (abstract) thought can have negative consequences: "Thinking, as both feminists and psychoanalysts insist, is not the only or an innocent source of knowledge" (Flax, 1990. p. 10). Flax asserts that there can be a "temptation inherent in more abstract forms of thinking: to confuse the word and the deed" (ibid., p. 10) and, in a move that appears to pre-empt Hemmings' later assertion of the need to "combine analysis and experience, deconstruction and material attention" (Hemmings, 2001, p. 97-98), Flax also states that

...feminist theories themselves are not exempt from the obscuring effects of gender on our thinking about the self, knowledge, social relations, and gender systems. To understand the premise and limitations of feminist theories as well as their particular object - gender - we must locate feminist theories within the wider experiential and philosophical contexts of which they are both a part and a critique. (ibid., p. 26-27)

In other words, formal knowledge can effectively curtail action and change; in being intellectually realised, such knowledge may appear - at least to those responsible for realising them - to gain a social and political traction that either does not actually exist, or which may fail when put into

practice or may prove extremely limited, in practice, because the knowledge has not been generated from lived experience of and exposure to greater social and political contexts to which it is then applied. Notably, Flax also asserts that feminist standpoints will also be limited: "Any feminist standpoint will necessarily be partial and will to some extent merely reflect our embeddedness in preexisting gender relations" (ibid., p. 27).

However, it is interesting to my project that Wylie argues the importance of standpoint feminist theories of embodied experience as knowledge, and the ways in which feminist standpoint theory, being rooted in Marxist feminism, prioritises social and political contexts of inquiry to argue that, due to their experiences of patriarchal subordination, women are: "in a particularly good position to understand the inequitable social relations that constitute patriarchal social systems" (Wylie, 2000., p. 175). I have stated earlier in this chapter that Hemmings' interest in "return narratives" (Hemmings, 2001, p. 98) can be applied to my *New Model Army* sculptures in that they insist - through different material evocations of an idea of woman (when presented singly) and in also being readable (when presented as a group) as a material evocation of an idea of women - on a "return" (ibid., p. 98) to material - and multiple - articulation of accounts of (single) motherhood not accommodated in / by feminist theory. In addition to this, I assert, here, that this "return" (ibid., p. 98) also involves working with materials to delegate to them the role of standpoint(s) for my own and other women's embodied experiences. Whilst Flax's view is (potentially) negative regarding the

limitations of standpoint feminism - and, if applied to my sculptures, appears to suggest my sculptures are a priori limited - I find most fascinating Wylie's comments that:

The central insight here is that, as 'embodied' social-natural beings, our understandings of the world and, more broadly, our capacities for epistemic engagement are to varying degrees partial and 'perverse'; depending on the material conditions of our lives, and these conditions are, in part, a function of sex/gender systems.

(ibid., p. 175)

The idea that, due to our condition as embodied subjects - or "social-natural beings" (ibid., p. 175) - we have a "partial and 'perverse'" (ibid., p. 175) ability to experience, make sense of and articulate our world(s) is stunningly alterior to patriarchy. Not only does this allow for the idea that what would normatively and hegemonically be construed as our fallibilities, imperfections and weaknesses are, through standpoint feminism, to be valued as integral to our knowledge production and how we give voice to what we know, but it also suggests that the knowledges produced are and can only be fragmental, ultimately uncontrollable and 'disobedient' according to patriarchal regimes - with these descriptors, here, being positive and feminist attributes pitched against notions of mastery.

Drawing from this idea, I assert that my *New Model Army* series, in being formed of object fragments, particularly and materially evokes the idea that women have a "partial and 'perverse' " (ibid, p. 175) ability to experience the symbolic world. Moreover, this idea encourages me to understand that my artistic practice does not operate in isolation of other women's artistic practices, but is connected to them - particularly those I have discussed in this thesis - through women's comparable use of fragmented objects when forming artistic syntaxes. It makes sense, then, that a geophilosophical mapping of these works is needed in order to account for several ideas embedded in and suggested by their presence: the connection and subversiveness of and between women artists' works (including my own), the idea that fragmental knowledges stand as positive alternative to patriarchal hegemonies, yet intertwined within them, that, in being generated through exposure to social and political contexts not fully accounted for - including within higher education institutions - such works can contribute to changing those contexts, and that these ideas are materially and intellectually articulated in my *New Model Army* sculptures.

It is helpful, at this juncture, to reflect on Hemmings' further analysis of "return narratives" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 106). She writes:

The framing of the subject of the Western feminist return narratives as suffused with positivity is stronger still in the set of approaches where materialism is understood as emphasising 'living and non-living matter, rather than the perhaps more familiar definition of materialism

as the social and economic relations between women and men' (Hird, 2004, 231). In these, what we might call biomaterial perspectives, materialism and representation are similarly understood as inimical. As with return narratives that prioritize social materiality, biomaterialist approaches insist that *matter* has been actively sidelined as a result of recent cultural theoretical preoccupations and it is this that needs reintegrating into feminist theory in order to move forward. (ibid., p. 106)

I find it interesting that Hemmings appears to accept Hird's oppositional distinction - articulated above through the phrase "rather than" (ibid., p. 106), between two different definitions of materialism and in order to emphasise the potential of biomaterialist approaches. Rather than accept this distinction - or, rather, the oppositional relation that, in Hemmings' analysis, it invokes, I would assert, here, that my *New Model Army* sculptures operate an affective relationship between an idea of materiality as "living and non-living matter" (ibid., p. 106) and "the social and economic relations between women and men" (ibid., p. 106). By this I mean that my *New Model Army* sculptures playfully foreground their material construct and, very importantly, its inanimate, "non-living" (ibid., p. 106) status, within an idea of woman as evoked through the sculptures' figurative presence, to generate provocative questions about whether women, in enduring unequal "relations between women and men" (ibid., p. 106) under patriarchy, are (or are not) "living" (ibid., p. 106) in the full sense of that word. In this sense, what Hemmings refers to as "biomaterialism" (ibid., p. 106) is deliberately

played with and against "social and economic relations" (ibid., p. 106), allowing materiality to dynamically intervene into theoretical analysis to form multiple accounts / articulations. I argue this includes intervention into what Hemmings describes as:

...shared interest in Gilles Deleuze that links new materialists to theorists of affect, who explore meaning as it is lived at the bodily level, and in terms of the alternative model of circuits of investment and desire thus revealed. (ibid., p. 107)

In other words, drawing from Hemmings account, my *New Model Army* works materially articulate embodied, feminist meaning (knowledge) and do so by assuming the role of standpoint for my own and other women's lived experiences under patriarchal, screened oppression.

Building on this thought, I note that Beverley Skeggs writes that: "The key to standpoint theory is that the experience of oppression engenders particular knowledges...being = knowing (ontology = epistemology)" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 26). Building on Skeggs' analysis I claim that, if "experience of oppression engenders particular knowledges" (ibid., p.26), then these knowledges can be "held" (Kiaer, 2013, p.120) in art works and that, in making works which do this, I expand the term "standpoint" to include my *New Model Army* sculptures. In other words, through making, I have constructed and delegated my feminist standpoint, which has resulted from my lived experiences (ibid., 1997, p. 26) - and my lived experience includes my awareness of other women's suffering, the standpoint(s) for which is / are

materially evoked through my sculptures and which I elaborate further in Chapter Four.

Also of interest to my project is the idea that, whilst Wylie's comments (2000) might seem to index a problem in the relativism (in being a theory based on experience) of standpoint feminism. Donna Haraway (1988), (1991) has argued that standpoint theory challenges hegemonic patriarchal realities, and that the notion of situation / situatedness is key to this (Haraway, 1988, p. 581-584). I address the notion of situation/situatedness and "location" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 11) relative to Deleuzian feminism, arguing that standpoint feminism suggests a fixed (and potentially territorialising) position in the world that is not helpful for the idea of women's shared "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) when overcoming patriarchal oppression, and that it is therefore beneficial to consider how Deleuzian notions of geophilosophy (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) and affective relations (ibid., p. 126) might bring fluidity to standpoints. In other words, Alcoff (1991) argues that the significance of *situation*, for knowledges, is that this allows for the possibility of non-hegemonic intelligences, and that to speak from a subjective position - or 'location' - does not necessarily mean to attempt to assert mastery, or to determine meaning: "To say that location bears on meaning and truth is not the same as saying that location determines meaning and truth" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 11). I claim that "location" (ibid., p. 11) must be thought as fluid and non-fixed. To demonstrate the importance of this, in Chapter Two I show how Mulvey's

(1975) exclusion of woman as possessor of a gaze, with only males being invested with an active way of looking, demonstrates the problem of conceiving of a fixed standpoint and the need to theorise standpoints as fluid.

Alcoff (1991) suggests the dangers of patriarchal representation can be mitigated by re-framing one's intended representation as a priori integral to a social, rather than individual, body (1991, p.14). Alcoff argues it is unrealistic, and unethical, to believe that one can - or should - only speak for oneself because: "We are collectively caught in an intricate, delicate web" (ibid., p. 14) of action and discourse, and the idea that we can separate from this is illusory.

Drawing from Alcoff's (1991) text, I assert that a strong implication of her argument that one cannot and should not speak for others, is that, doing otherwise (speaking for others) can be misleading and counter-productive, in that this obscures the possibility that the oppressed are not able to transparently represent their concerns, when the mechanisms for doing so cannot, logically, be in place in societies where oppression exists. With that said, the authorial imposition of a self-abnegating<sup>28</sup> stance is, for Alcoff, a way of maintaining hierarchical distance from different others and concealing a desire for superiority over those others who cannot, logically, construct transparent forms of representation because the immediate experience of

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<sup>28</sup> By this, I mean a stance which is assumed by an individual for the purpose of renouncing any personal responsibility to a situation or to others.

their oppressive situation denies this possibility. The self-abnegating approach, then, does not so much flatten out differences between subjects, but obliterates the very possibility, and political potential, of difference, positioning difference as something of a contaminant to be avoided at all costs. Notably, Alcoff has pointed out that one of the influential postmodernists, Gilles Deleuze, in a conversation with Michel Foucault, has characterized as " 'absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others.' " (Foucault, 1977 cited Alcoff, 1991, p. 6). With this in mind, Coleman and Ringrose's Deleuzian approach becomes interesting for my project when they purposely take Deleuze's notion of geophilosophy as a methodology for non-linearly mapping differences which they illuminate within and across "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125).

Alcoff also reminds us that the fear of speaking patriarchally may really be a fear of loss of control and that speaking for others involves not only the possibility of such loss but the possibility of generating erroneous arguments. Alcoff appears to position erroneous arguments as productive, and generative of non-hierarchical relations: "...errors are unavoidable in theoretical inquiry as well as political struggle, and they usually make contributions...desire for mastery and immunity must be resisted" (ibid., p. 15). In concluding, Alcoff writes: "... we should strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others" (ibid., p. 16). Her emphasis, here, is on speaking *with* and *to*, rather than *for*, others.

This point returns me to the issue of "my experience" from which my *New Model Army* work is derived. An important issue arises, here, which is that the particular "my experience" I refer to is not one in which I have thought, or acted, or spoken only of or for myself. Some mothers (and, I hope, fathers) will know what it is to consistently think and act "between two" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 79), rather than only for one - that is, for one's self. This doesn't mean having, or occupying, two subjectivities. But it can mean that the 'one' that is presumed to be 'one's' subjectivity, is different - has experienced a different becoming - to those who think in terms of one. The question that arises for me is this: Does the significance of the position of the single mother who thinks, speaks and acts between roles lie in the possibility of that between-ness? And how might this between-ness impact on patriarchal hegemonies that would, otherwise: a. render subjects mute and immobile b. generate only relations of one-ness that comply with an "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132).<sup>29</sup> The poignant question is: what does it take for this between-ness to politically impact on patriarchy? The proposed response, addressed in this thesis, is: desire. When materialised as making art, the desire to realise and live a non-normative heterosexuality prohibited by patriarchies subverts patriarchy. As I elaborate in this thesis, particularly in my discussion of my *New Model Army* sculptures in Chapter Four, this assertion is materially articulated through my *New Model Army* sculptures.

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<sup>29</sup> Irigaray uses this phrase to describe patriarchal economies in which there is no possibility of relationships in which women's own desires and values are equal to men's and in which women have equal agency.

### 1:3 Reading Bodies as a Sculptor

The formal training undertaken<sup>30</sup>, when learning sculpting methods over extended periods, necessarily sensitise the body in the way that Coleman and Ringrose describe as integral to "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125)<sup>31</sup>; developing sensitivity to other bodies and the space between them is integral to this training. But leaving the art college which has encouraged precisely this sensitivity, and which, one might say, deliberately intensifies experiences of bodily making, can be traumatising for that same body when it subsequently enters into workplaces that confine it. In the majority of office spaces, for example, the body is unitised and negated, to an extreme degree, when such spaces enable the "putting to work of one body by another" (Bonta and Protevi, 2004, p. 10). In such spaces, the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) which generally visually fix bodies according to criteria exerted through patriarchal objectification, extend to physically fix the body into (capitalist and patriarchal) position, through an intensification of the forceful negation of the

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<sup>30</sup> I was particularly, to my mind positively, affected by learning traditional sculpting skills during my undergraduate Fine Art studies; it was at this same time that I had begun divorce proceedings and, by the time my undergraduate studies ended, I emerged as a single mother.

<sup>31</sup> For me, making sculptures involves whole body action. Both bodily and ocular approaches inevitably come to the fore, in order that sculptures can be made. As an undergraduate Fine Art student (the period during which I began divorce proceedings), I worked in the sculpture workshops on a daily basis, carrying out intense physical labour and - as irresponsible as it might now seem - being urged, along with my peers, not to 'intellectualise' what we were doing. As a sculptor, I know now that reading - or listening to - the bodily tensions of others not only becomes as normal as listening to the non-sonic sounds / vibrations of various materials and spaces, but is also unavoidable and can cause problems.

body's sensibilities and desires. Bonta and Protevi (2004) usefully describe this fixing of the body in space as "the domination of putting to work of one body by another in a fixed hierarchy" (Bonta and Protevi, 2004, p. 10).

And yet, all told, it is the body that, having embodied patriarchal politics, tells the mind that one must escape, for example by expressing symptoms of illness. The issue of bodily illness as an expression of "embodied oppression" (Ahmed, 2016) is significant to my study because it may be the case that I have not been immune to this and that my sculptures carry knowledge of this. But what I want to draw attention to, in this thesis, is how the inter-bodily affect of "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) which, for me, is particularly connected to sculptural making, benefits from being differently valued, and whether this can happen through art and through art being mapped in the way that Coleman and Ringrose propose. They are particularly interested in: "how looking comes to constitute affective relations between bodies" (ibid., p. 126) and how Deleuzian geophilosophy might assist the formation of a methodological practice enabling: "...new ways to see and transform the social" (ibid., p. 127).

They say:

...we treat the capacity of affecting and being affected as a series of relations that we can map according to the ways in which the capacity of becoming is extended. (ibid., p. 126)

Several other questions emerge, here: does my 'doubled' listening indicate the possibility that, under the gaze(s) of others, the desires of working, single mothers are particularly subjectivised and oppressed, bodily as much as psychically, by the "coercive practices" (ibid., p. 126) of patriarchy? If patriarchy has an affective capacity so forceful that it: "extends or fixes the way in which bodies become" (ibid., p. 126), in what ways is the body able to direct alternative, non-fixed, "becoming" (ibid., p. 126)? The sculptures in my *New Model Army* series are examples of how the body is involved in sculpture. My claim is that my *New Model Army* sculptures act as machinic, desiring assemblages, intent on materialising a between-ing approach through which to resist and overcome the normative embodiment of patriarchal politics as structured into the act of looking.

I read Ringrose and Coleman's geophilosophy as a form of intellectual bricolage which, in my case, constitutes and is constituted by the material bricolage of fragments in my *New Model Army* sculptures. My bricolage-ing approach has developed out of a much longer history of making artworks with found objects and materials. For example, prior to working on the *New Model Army* sculptures, I was making a series, *Wilderness Works (Clearings)* (2009-10), in which I brought together found objects and materials and written text and began to visually fragment an idea of woman's body - including images of woman's body - whilst articulating notions of women's desire in connection with urban living.

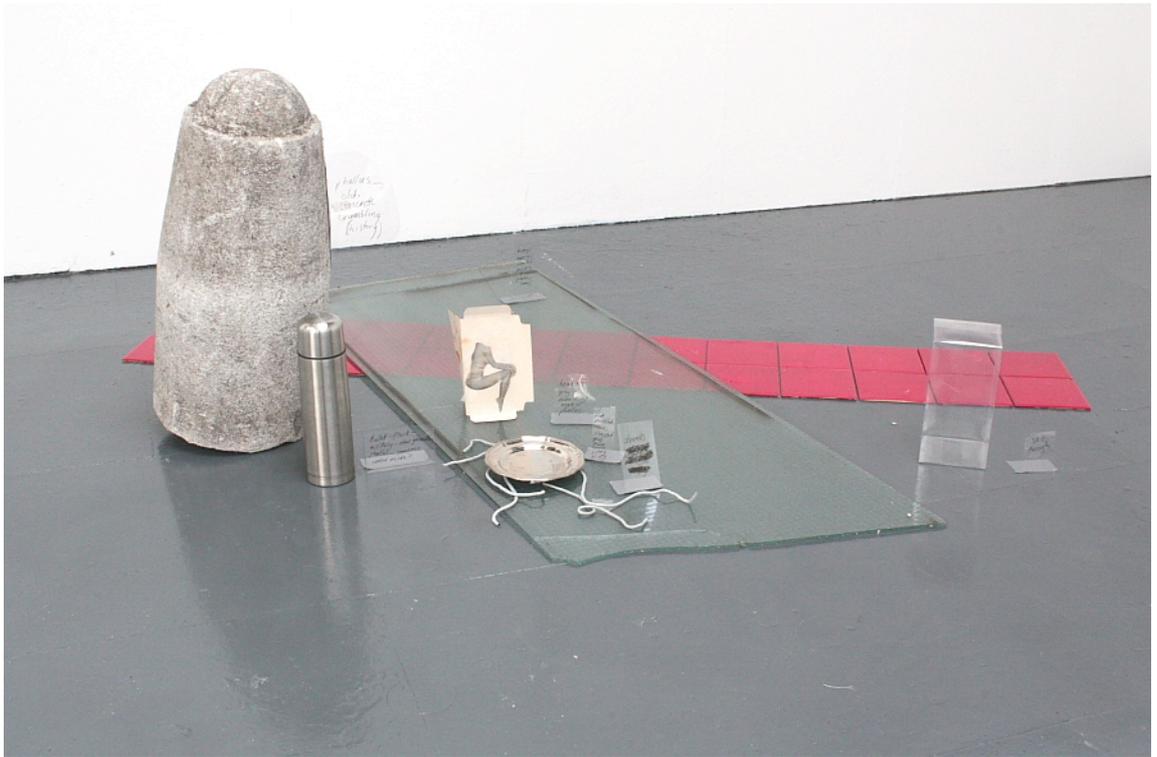


Fig. 5 Linda Aloysius *Landscape with Phalli* (2010)  
From the series *Wilderness Works (Clearings)*  
(2009 - 10)



Fig. 6 Linda Aloysius *Landscape with Phalli* (detail) (2010)

I also made the *Berlin Prostitutes* (2009-10) series, using similar approaches. These works bear similarity to the *Wilderness Work (Clearings)* series, in that they constitute my early configuring of an idea of woman's *upright* - rather than recumbent and, as such, implicitly passive - body, in connection with notions of women's desire and the degradation of this within patriarchal economies. This upright posture, as I elaborate later in this thesis, was to become fundamental to *my New Model Army* works, for evoking women's defiant, and active, response to patriarchy.



Fig. 7 Linda Aloysius *Berlin Prostitute (No.1)* (2009)  
From the series *Berlin Prostitutes* (2009)

If desire comprises "assemblages" and has "life-affirming potentialities" (ibid., p. 129) my sculptures, made in an attempt to overcome my experiences of patriarchy - especially the screened gaze - are constituted by and constitutive of desire, as woman, formed in response to specific ocularity brought to the category of single mother. My sculptures can be read as materialised cartographies of desirous women, in which different, fragmented objects and materials, and their ensuing, symbolic associations, are brought together as an assemblage, through and across which

intellectual and somatic connections can be made in regard to the nature of heterosexual woman in excess of heteropatriarchy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In this thesis, I do not focus on men or men's embodied experience. However, it is vital to this thesis that, for women's liberation to be effectuated, men's liberation must be taken into account. The emphasis on somatic experience as intertwined with intellectual experience, which I describe in this thesis as important for women's liberation, is, according to the logic of this thesis, equally important for men. As Flax has stated: "Such a focus would also enable us to render problematic men's as well as women's bodies. Men's bodies too are a psycho-somatic unit with changing and changeable qualities" (Flax, 1990, p. 150). This focus on soma and psycho-soma should not be confused, however, with any suggestion that there should be a return to the kind of sexual revolution of the 1960s hippies which, as Dale Spender has noted (Spender, 1985), ultimately led to women's increased sexual exploitation rather than their liberation.

## **Chapter Two**

### **A Geophilosophical Mapping of Female Artists'**

#### **Fragmentation of Woman in the 1960s and 70s**

##### **2:0 Introduction to Chapter Two**

In this chapter I explore the proposition that patriarchy has an affective capacity so forceful that it: "extends or fixes the way in which bodies become" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126), and that the body is able to respond by establishing alternative, non-fixed becoming. This is crucial to *New Model Army* because, through this work, I assert that bodily made art is one structure through which anti-patriarchal becoming is encouraged and enabled, for artist and for viewers. Drawing from Coleman and Ringrose, I apply a geophilosophical mapping to the work of VALIE EXPORT, Louise Bourgeois, Martha Rosler and Hannah Wilke to interrogate the idea that women artists appropriate the fragmenting approaches used to form patriarchal images of women, thus harnessing making artwork as an empowering activity. In so doing, the artists make artworks which counter the flattening and fragmenting approaches of patriarchy, and re-dimensionalise an idea of women and their bodies. I will claim that mapping the material presence, agency and connectivity of art works made by women working in the late 60s and 70s illuminates their experiential knowledge of patriarchy. In other words, the women's art works testify to their lived experiences of

patriarchy rather than to any complicity, on their part, with hegemonically asserted knowledge, and to how each woman's art differently responds to the systemic, patriarchally oppressive gaze through the invention of syntaxes for the symbolic mediation of women's experiences. As such, each woman's work materialises a feminist standpoint. When mapped in relation to one another, these standpoints form dynamic, machinic relations between each woman's work and between artist and audience.

Here I map how the works of artists VALIE EXPORT, Hannah Wilke, Louise Bourgeois and Martha Rosler respond to patriarchy. Patriarchy is understood as involving a "fixing" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) gaze structured into commercially produced images of woman's body and distributed through cinematic experience. I will show how each artist forms a combative gaze, which she visually articulates by deploying an artistic approach involving the visual and material fragmentation of woman's body, through processes to which I refer using the terms delineation, segmentation and partitioning. This idea is developed in Chapter Three of this thesis, when I claim that developments to the screen have complicated how female artists respond to patriarchal looking, and in Chapter Four, when I discuss how contemporary women artists - Fiona Banner, Vanessa Beecroft, Sarah Lucas - form syntaxes in response to the contemporary screen, as complicated by complex developments generated by neoliberalist inroads.

In the current chapter, in the case of each artist - except for Hannah Wilke, whose work I felt needed slightly more examination and minimal clarification about her responses to the categorisation of her and others as Jewish - I take only one example of their work and I do not rely on any literatures written about the artist or their work. These decisions allow me to see the works and to focus on their final detail, without interference. By this I mean that, in writing from within the confines of the embodied silence that I refer to in this thesis, and yet being surrounded by the 'noise' of institutionalised theories (in the context of my PhD research), I felt a need to create a peaceful clearing, to reach across and through time, and allow my gaze, my way of looking as a woman, to meet with the syntaxes produced by other women in a period - the late 60s and early 70s - when, as I assert in the thesis, the effects of screened oppression are particularly evident in (women's) artistic practice. In this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three, I refer to psychoanalytical literatures of this period (the late 60s and early 70s), especially analysis by Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane. I do so in order to construct my argument that early psychoanalytic attention to the cinema / the cinematic gaze, whilst generating important debate at that time, did not extend to include analysis of how that gaze affected women's production of sculpture and, in turn, what the women's sculptural syntaxes indicate regarding women's overcoming of patriarchal looking. For now, and before developing my claims, I want to demonstrate how the greater effects of the cinematic gaze, on women's production of sculpture in the 60s and 70s, was evoked through the detail of their artistic syntaxes. In so doing, my intention

is not to historically group women artists' works for the sake of (re-) historicising them. However, in investigating these works relative to examples of contemporary women artists' works, it has become evident to me that two different screenic moments - roughly the late 60s / early 70s and the late 90s/noughties - appear in history and are differently evidenced (as oppressive) through the syntaxes of women's sculpture. I do not claim to identify a 'before' and 'after' response, amongst women artists, to early and more recent screen technologies. But I do claim, in this thesis, that women's particular artistic syntaxes are generated in response to their experiences of the screen, which has changed and become relatively complex, in line with neoliberalist inroads. With that said, I do not propose a pre-critical response to the artists' works. Instead, I have chosen to corral areas of theory in order to clear a space in and through which to experience, as a practising artist, the art works involved. I have wanted little or no other materials to depend upon for this examination; in other words, I have insisted on an intimate meeting, "a peace about approaching a work without knowing what it is" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123).

I acknowledge that these decisions generate a seemingly paradoxical situation for the reader, in which I appear to impose conflicting demands: on the one hand, I ask - or insist that - the reader comply with my decision to overlook (or hold in suspension) a certain level of theoretical commentary about these works. On the other hand, and at the same time, my thesis - which is, quite obviously, proposed as reading material for the reader - might

reasonably be considered to contribute to precisely the same, theoretical 'noise' that I wish, at least momentarily, to suspend.

However, I would point out, here, that I write this thesis as a practice-based research project and that I do so, first and foremost, as an artist who has insisted on making art, in her studio, in the context of a programme that I would argue is, even for practice-based research projects heavily theoretically weighted; I do not write as an art-theorist or aspiring art-theorist. I write as an artist with an active interest in theory. Somewhat paradoxically, this can involve actively de-prioritising theory, if momentarily, to allow art practices to speak in their own terms. The difference this makes in regard to reflecting on and mapping the works of women artists whose works began to emerge in the 1960s and 70s - the period in which, I argue, the screen and its effects of women (as a capitalist patriarchal technology of oppression) began to become evident (though not theorised) in the practices of women artists - is that it allows me to focus on how each woman approaches making and it allows me to consider how each woman's making appears influenced by patriarchal, screened oppression. That is, it allows me, as artist, to prioritise each woman's formation of syntaxes through which, I argue, their experiences of screened oppression are articulated and, therefore, through which empirical knowledges of screened oppression become evident. I do not suggest, here, that I - or the artists - lay claim to a naive, or innocent, even pre-social / pre-cultural, interpretative approach. This is not my intention and, given the context of my writing - from within an institution

renowned for prioritising theory - this would be impossible. My intention is to - admittedly capriciously<sup>33</sup> - put to one side a familiar, art historical methodology involving the balancing of different, competing theoretical and art historical viewpoints, with the aim of capitalising on them<sup>34</sup>. This is because I want to - at least momentarily - give license to an approach in which practices of inventive making, and of looking at instances of such making, are prioritised and evaluated in a (necessarily) somewhat ahistorical moment of meeting, before returning my findings to the contemporary context related in this thesis.

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<sup>33</sup> This caprice, I assert, is in keeping with the playfulness that, as I argue in Chapter Four of this thesis, informs the morphological impetus for productive mimesis and what I term as 'between-ing'. In this sense, in examining the works in this way, I prioritise a playful approach involving "discerning patterns of relationships between forms" (Robinson, 2006, p. 97).

<sup>34</sup> I may, in future, wish to carry out such an examination, but this is not my intention for this project.

**2:1 Commercial Flattening and Fragmentation of Woman's Image in the 60s and 70s**



Fig. 8 Advertisement for Weyenberg Massagic





Fig. 10 Advertisement image for Barbarella (1968)

**You mean a woman can open it?**

Easy... without a knife blade, a bottle opener, or even a husband! All it takes is a dash, grace, an eye, two-finger pinch... and the ketchup is ready to pour.

We seal this safe-sealing bottle cap the Alice Hy-Top. It is made of pure, food-saving Alice Aluminum. It spins off--and locks in again--without messy pumpers, breakers, or excessive Alice pressure which is in each bottle's threads.

After a year on the bottle, the cap comes sealing both top and sides, the Hy-Top gives your ketchup a double guard.

You'll recognize the attractive, magnetic Hy-Top when you see it on your grocery shelf. It's long, it's white, it's grooved--and it's on the most famous and successful brands. Put the bottle that wears it in your basket... and Sambo's, Sontag and Singer at opening time with the most cooperative cap in the world--the Alice Hy-Top Closure.

Fig. 11 Advertisement for ketchup

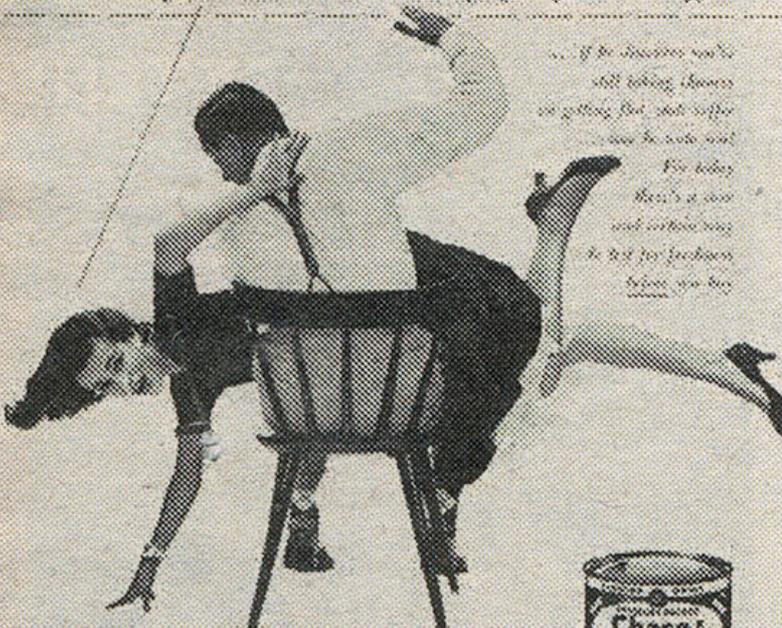


Fig. 12 Advertisement for Tipalet

# If your husband ever finds out you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...

*...if he discovers you're still taking chances in getting that "store" coffee ... you'll wish you'd*

*For today there's a sure and certain way to test for freshness before you buy*



**Here's how easy it is to be sure of fresher coffee**



**Just do this:**

Look for the "fresh" logo on the top of the can. It means the coffee is fresher than any other coffee you can buy.

**No other can lets you test!**

There's no way to know for sure if your coffee is fresh. The only way to be sure is to test it.

**Here's the payoff!**

For the first time you can test for freshness before you buy. The "fresh" logo on the top of the can means the coffee is fresher than any other coffee you can buy.



**"PRESSURE PACKED"**

## Chase & Sanborn

Fig. 13 Advertisement for Chase & Sanborn

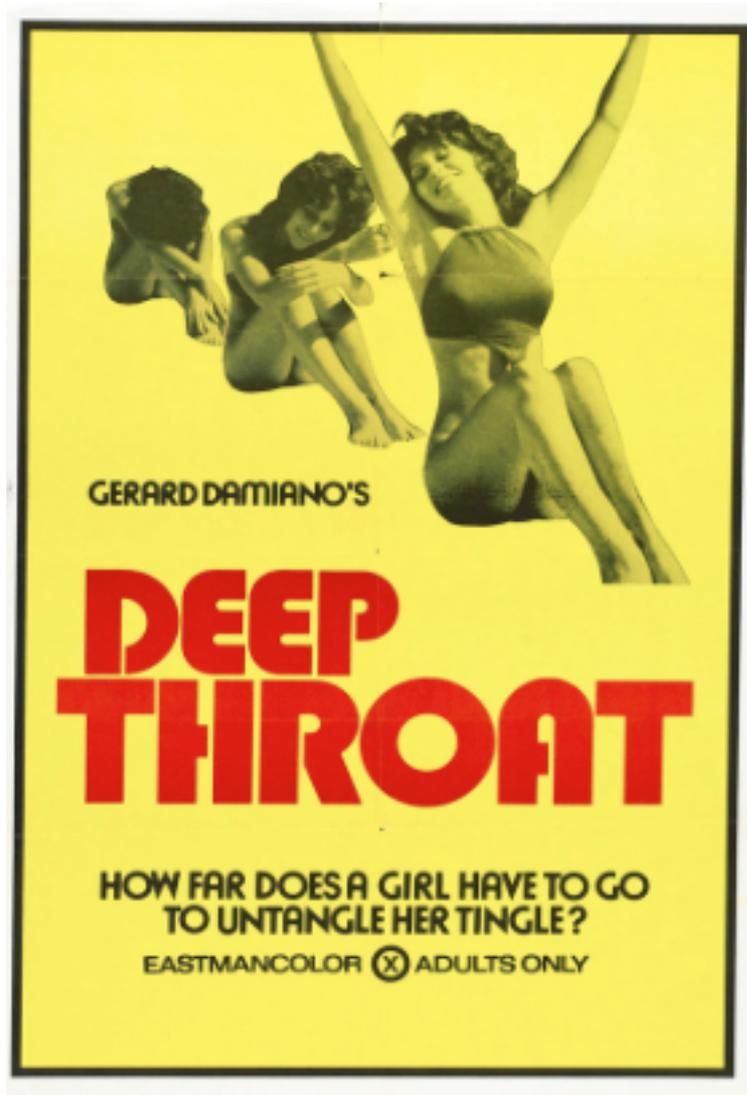


Fig. 14 Film poster for Deep Throat (1972)

The 60s and 70s brought increased commodification and dissemination of images of women. As the above images demonstrate, commercial image production methods often involved dressing women in clothing designed to visually partition and segment their bodies and post-production, cropping methods which visually fragmented images of women's bodies, often visually cutting off women's hands and feet, or other body 'parts', to promote an idea

of their disempowered status (Friedan, 1963). The above images demonstrate how these techniques were often used in conjunction with sexist language, to objectify and further degrade women and to encourage very narrowed ideas of men's heterosexual pleasure in objectifying and disrespecting women. Importantly, images such as these disempowered women in ways that were not always obvious. Betty Friedan (1963) was key in newly addressing, for example, how women were subjugated by mainstream media; images of women were circulated through newspapers, magazines and cinema posters in which misogynist messages were cloaked in language intended to invoke humour and with images that appeared to evidence women's joy and happiness. These techniques worked to subjugate women at an unconscious level, whilst seeming to empower them. This included oppressing women in their capacity as unpaid workers within the nuclear family and domestic home, through adverts that simultaneously promoted an idea of women's power as housewives, whilst also encouraging competitiveness amongst them and demeaning them and their equal right to their own desires and pleasures. In this thesis, I do not enter into the etymology of advertising. However, the thesis does have a synchrony with wider culture in which advertising appears and which dates back to at least the time when Second Wave Feminism<sup>35</sup> encouraged women to fight for equal rights, with the contraceptive pill being introduced (1961) and key legal

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<sup>35</sup> Second Wave Feminism is often considered to have emerged in the United States in the early 1960s (lasting there until the early 1980s) to subsequently spread throughout the Western world. However, this is a much contested history and, to accommodate this and to provide a UK perspective, I refer in this thesis to analysis by Dale Spender (1985) and Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright (2013) along with Laura Mulvey's analysis of the effects of Thatcherism on the UK working class and the greater implications of this.

rights being introduced through the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This also included protesting against the sexist representation of women and the oppressions they suffered in connection with this. During this time,<sup>36</sup> women artists responded to and challenged the oppressive effects of these images. In this chapter, I examine how this involved taking into their own hands the fragmenting and flattening techniques used in commercial imagery.

## **2:2 Mapping the Fragmenting Syntaxes in the Works of Louise Bourgeois, VALIE EXPORT, Martha Rosler, Hannah Wilke**

To further investigate my claims, I have selected some of the women's works for examination. These particular works have been selected for how they visually and materially flatten and fragment an idea of woman and her body and because they each appear to respond to a different format / outlet for the patriarchal gaze (such as cinema, television, iconic film imagery and billboard posters, and the fashion industry). These include VALIE EXPORT's *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968), Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of The Kitchen* (1975), Hannah Wilke's *Santo Antonio Rose* (1966) and *Starification Object*

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<sup>36</sup> The works of these artists are not restricted to the time of 2nd Wave Feminism, but I choose to examine these early works for this thesis because this is the period during which the women artists began making and, in so doing, created innovative responses to screened oppression.

*Series* (1974), Louise Bourgeois' latex costume for her performance *A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts* (1978) and her fabric sculpture *Untitled* (1998). I argue these works developed from the artists' lived experiences of patriarchal oppression via the gaze and therefore constitute response to patriarchy. Moreover, when mapped in terms of the machinic relations (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) running through and between these works, they encourage an "unfixing" (ibid., p. 142) of the body, offering "hope and possibility for something different in the social" (ibid., p. 142). In so doing, the works produce alternative ways of knowing, in which women artists symbolically mediate women's experiences, oppressions and desires. In this thesis, such a mapping involves examining how the artists variously adapt filmic techniques of flattening and fragmenting, of an idea of women's bodies, to generate subversive knowledges that bring "hope and possibility" (ibid., p. 142) for the futurity of women's symbolic mediation and overcoming of patriarchy.

**2:1:1 VALIE EXPORT: Tap and Touch Cinema (1968)**



Fig. 15 VALIE EXPORT, *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968)

As I have explained at the beginning of this chapter, I do not directly draw from art historical or theoretical accounts when mapping this artist's work (or the other women artists' works in the following sections. In making this decision, and as I have stated, I do not propose a pre-critical response to the works but have bracketed off areas of theory to allow me to read the works and their particular syntaxes as a practising, female artist.

VALIE EXPORT's *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968) most obviously addresses the problem of cinematic commodification of woman's image by playing upon a traditional or "pure" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) notion of cinema.

Performed in major cities across Europe, the work involves EXPORT wearing a crudely made box-like structure, resembling a cinema, around her torso and partially covering this with a cardigan. This combination of 'normal' cardigan and hand-built structure expands notions of clothing, visually segmenting her body to isolate and conceal her torso, particularly her breasts, and effectively isolating them as a part - or parts - of a no-longer-whole body, whilst also withholding it/them from sight.

EXPORT actively walks the streets and invites passers-by in the streets to place their hands between the curtains pinned to the front of this structure and to feel her bare breasts without seeing them, so foregrounding their sense of touch whilst re-directing their sense of sight. Most significant to my argument and the *New Model Army* work, during this act, EXPORT confronts each participant's gaze with her own, thus asserting an inter-active looking between two people - herself and the participant.

By encouraging participants to engage with their sense of touch in response to her body and the structure that she wears, and by directing her own gaze in connection with that structure, EXPORT structures a new "politics of looking" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) into the materiality of her work, directing the force of her own gaze and of her moving body to combat the possibility of the participant's objectification of her body via sight and, in turn, relieving them of their patriarchal conditioning.

In these ways EXPORT's body, in combination with the material structure, and the movement of her own and the participant's gaze and body within this, are re-formed as intelligent, agentic "assemblages" (ibid., p. 129), as "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125). Through these "assemblages" (ibid., p. 129), EXPORT actively asserts her desires regarding how women and their bodies might be looked at and valued. In so doing, EXPORT generates dynamic, "affective relations" (ibid., p. 126) with the participant, challenging them to distinguish their own gaze from patriarchal conditioning incurred through exposure to commodified images of women.

EXPORT's own experiences of patriarchal looking are embedded into this work, forming a feminist standpoint and basis for these affective relations and expanding the contexts for standpoint feminism to include the artistic, whilst also physically and conceptually synthesising standpoint and Deleuzian feminisms.

EXPORT's desires are mobilised through the hand-built, confining and partitioning but - significantly - *roughly hewn* structure. This *rough* - or crude - or imprecise - approach is fascinating; it testifies to an excess of spontaneously delivered, bodily energy which, when channelled into making, supports the visual prioritisation of bodily response and affectivity between artist, art work and audience, reinforcing the affective relations between them and materially insisting upon the idea of women's alternative, transformative becoming (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013). The visual outcome is refined in

terms of its anti-patriarchal sensibility. The 'crude' quality of EXPORT's gestures demonstrates her fine-tuned connectivity to her own desire for anti-patriarchal relations as affected through "looking differently" (ibid., p. 125), thus overturning hegemonic knowledges surrounding skill, precision and mastery; seemingly inconsequential details such as this contribute to a somatically engendered politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) - a looking through the body, as an intelligent structure - which engenders machinic relations (ibid., p. 125) between the "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125) of artist and audience.

Through this assemblage, EXPORT evidences women's experiences of the effects of cinematic commodification of woman's image, especially the ways in which patriarchy has insensitively built on women's bodies to sexualise and commodify them as parts, rather than valuing women as whole, equal subjects. EXPORT quite literally exposes herself to the dangers involved for women when they are subjected to the commodifying gaze, and her activity - the performance - testifies to her conviction in regard to her experiences of the negative effects, on women, of patriarchal image-making. In constructing my *New Model Army* work, I adopt a similar, but differently articulated approach to confronting the dangers of the commodifying gaze. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, I stopped using written language in my art work. This move meant that, through the work, I effectively stepped into and embodied the potentially deadening effects of patriarchal silence, surrounding women's screened oppression.

In mapping this work, I am most struck by two things. Firstly, the movement running through it, in connection with its fragmented assemblage of body / bodies, gaze/gazes and different materials. Secondly, how clothing and expanded notions of what can be worn are central to this assemblage, the fragmentation involved and for conducting bodily movement, as I now explain.

The affectivity of this work hinges around EXPORT's symbolic fragmentation of her body via expanded notions of clothing and, importantly, how she channels various bodily movements occurring in connection with this: Export's own bodily movements as she performs, the movements of participants' hands to touch her, and the movement and interconnection of artist's and participant's gazes. This generates an anti-patriarchal, fluid excess<sup>37</sup> through which excessive notions of woman are symbolically mediated.

Through this excessive and fluid approach, EXPORT expresses her desire for participants, particularly male participants, to de-prioritise patriarchal looking by re-engaging their sense of touch and, in so doing, to

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<sup>37</sup> The notion of excess I use in this thesis relates to Cixous' early ideas of woman's "jouissance" - this term translates from the French to mean "enjoyment", but has become conceptually developed by Cixous and other authors in their writings on *Écriture féminine*, who effectively position jouissance as the opposite of the "lack" (Doane, 1982, p. 424) that Freud and Lacan ascribe to women. In her work *Portrait of Dora* (Cixous, 1976) Cixous transforms the Freudian / Lacanian model and instead celebrates the idea of woman in excess of patriarchy. To do this, she uses the model of Dora, the hysteric, as an example of a woman connected to her bodily desires and who, in so being, constitutes a threat to patriarchy.

psychically en flesh and re-dimensionalise woman's patriarchally imposed flatness. The destabilising effect of EXPORT's stare on the (potentially) patriarchal gaze of the participants, particularly the men involved, disrupts an idea of iconicised and flattened image of woman. Hence, in the momentaneous meeting of artist's and viewer's gaze, EXPORT counters the possibility of the men's visual and cinematic objectification of her and, by implication, their objectification of other women. This move demonstrates EXPORT's awareness of how "bodies affect and are affected by things" (ibid., p. 129), and how this affective connectivity between bodies and things enables "bodies' potential for movement or fixity in space" (ibid., p. 129) - that is, how this enables bodies' potential for transformative, rather than patriarchally coerced "becoming" (ibid., p. 126). In this moment of rupturing and destabilising of the normative politics of looking, EXPORT connects to the "life-affirming potentialities in affective assemblages" (ibid., p. 129) to generate new, equal conditions for women and men, insisting upon different futures than those intended by patriarchy.

## **2:1:2 Martha Rosler: Semiotics of The Kitchen (1975)**

EXPORT was not the only female artist to use fragmenting approaches to generate such new conditions. In the work *Semiotics of The Kitchen* (1975) - I will refer here to a video of her performance - Martha Rosler configures her own presence to suggest that she is, simultaneously, a cookery programme

hostess intent on educating her audience and/or a typical housewife operating from a domestic kitchen. Rosler wears a familiar item of clothing - an apron - and physically gestures with kitchen utensils and equipment surrounding her, systematically performing a routine that involves combining her body and kitchen instruments to signal the letters of the alphabet. In so doing, she visually communicates a critical position in regard to the politics surrounding the oppression of women within the domestic environment. This includes a critique of the normalising use of mainstream media - such as television - to manipulate images of women for capitalist and patriarchal reasons (Friedan, 1964a, 1964b).

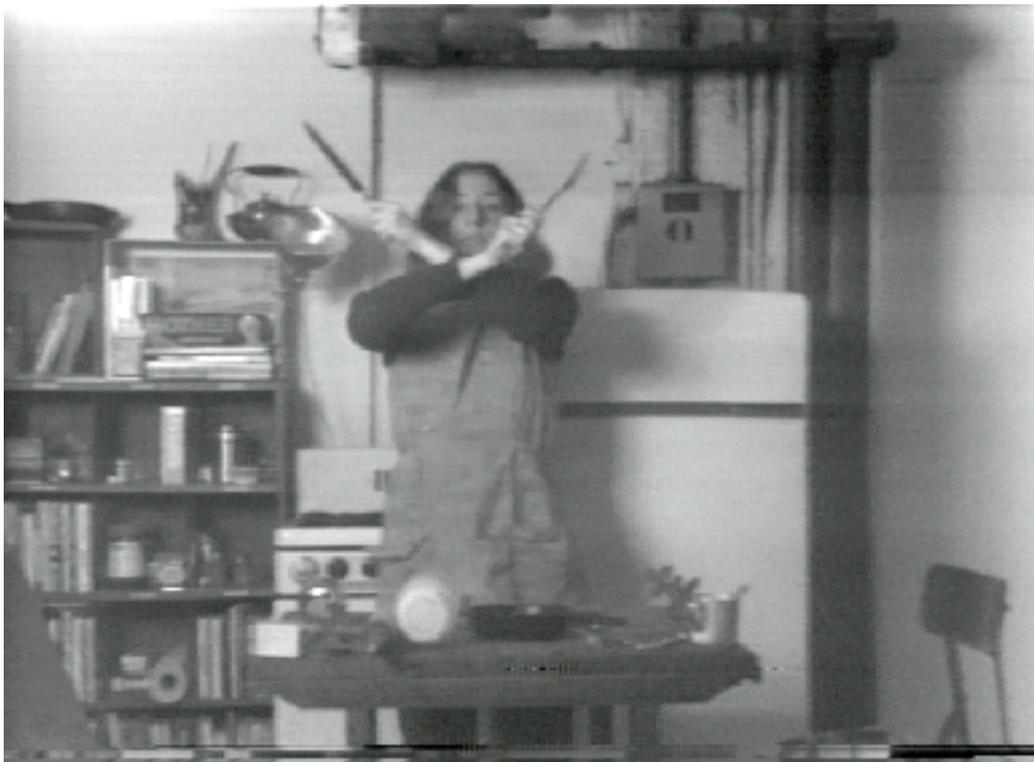


Fig. 16 Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of The Kitchen* (1975)

The commodification of images of women via television frequently involved psychological manipulation of women (Friedan, 1964a, 1964b) into believing that they could gain power - including an ostensibly unlimited form of sexual power - by ruling the domestic sphere, in the role of stereotypically attractive, well groomed and sexualised but obedient and dutiful housewife (Friedan, 1964a, 1964b). This manipulation also involved the coercion of men, signalling to men that they must assert narrowed forms of masculine power to ensure women's subservience. Television was used to reinforce the ideas already being sent out in newspapers and magazines; as Friedan (1963), who had worked in the magazine industry, has argued, these were edited mainly by men who promoted narratives portraying women as contented housewives, so engendering the idea that women were naturally fulfilled by doing housework and by being mothers. As the images (above) demonstrate, messages being circulated by media at the time promoted the idea that these versions of power could be increased through purchasing and using products for the home as well as to enhance women's appearance in ways that emulated iconic images of women vaunted at that time, with the images involved very often being misogynistic.

In *Semiotics of The Kitchen*, Rosler moves her body, including her face, to create vacant facial gestures and unnatural body movements intended to critique the requirement for women to behave subserviently in the domestic kitchen by engaging practices - reproductive and domestic labour - set out according to patriarchal systems and values. Her critique is

that these forms of labour are designed, by capitalism in collusion with patriarchy, to oppress women's desires and sexuality and that this also connects to women's disadvantaged relation to language and the symbolic.

In forming the symbolic basis for language, the alphabet is also implicated as the foundation for this systemic, patriarchal oppression, in which women are expected to obey patriarchal instructions and rules surrounding housekeeping, domesticity and their appearance, primarily for the husband's (narrowed) pleasure and to positively reflect and enhance his status (Friedan, 1963, 1964a, 1964b). Rosler's deadpan demeanour is not so much humorous but, rather, constitutes her studied performance as critique of the role of the oppressed female subject. Her increasingly awkward and forceful signalling of the letters of the alphabet, through recourse to kitchen utensils and equipment, appears to the viewer, on the one hand, as indicative of the negative and weakening effects, on women and their sexuality, of the ongoing attempt to comply with the demands of that role in order to perform it and, on the other hand, as an excessive female's increasingly vigorous attempt to resist the patriarchally imposed constraints inherent in the role of housewife.

When geophilosophically mapped, including in relation to EXPORT's work, Rosler's movement appears structured into her performance in ways that generate multiple, dynamic, "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) between Rosler, art-work, audience *and* EXPORT's and other

artists' works. As with EXPORT's *Tap and Touch Cinema*, Rosler's clothing and bodily movements enable this. Rosler's apron subtly and powerfully visually partitions her body. Wearing this already fragmenting structure, she uses stuttered, bodily movements which could be construed as further fragmenting through which to signal the alphabet. When Rosler includes kitchen utensils in her performance, for example when she holds up two kitchen utensils, she maximises this fragmentation; crossing one utensil over the other, she forms a fragmented version of the letter 'X'. Moreover, as she holds these utensils, they visually and conceptually connect to the apron that she wears, to extend and pervert notions of bodily boundaries and of clothing. Rosler's movements, then, are constituted by and constitutive of fragmental syntaxes, which promise her resistance to - and the possibility of her transgression of - the domestic role. By performing increasingly jarred, jarring and forceful movements, Rosler evidences her experiences of how women have, historically, learned to embody patriarchal oppression and psychically subjugate the spontaneous, sensory realm of their own bodies, repressing their own desires, impulses and pleasures in order to reinforce language and the systematicity of language in ways that support patriarchal systems. However, at the same time, the possibility of women's bodily-led transgression, or transformative "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126), is also orchestrated in direct relation to the voluntary suppression and excessive fracturing of her body's natural, fluid and spontaneous rhythm. Clothing, body, kitchen utensils and movement work together to suggest that

Rosler, and the housewives she represents, are "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125), dynamic "assemblages" (ibid., p. 129).

It is helpful to my thesis to examine how, when mapped in connection with EXPORT's *Tap and Touch Cinema*, Rosler's critique of the patriarchal instrumentalisation of television and advertising indicates her experiential awareness of early commercial fragmentation and flattening of woman beyond the cinema, and within the domestic sphere. Televised images extended the scope of patriarchal oppression of women in terms of audience and context; broadcast images were to be absorbed and internalised by men, women and children in the intimate context of the family home. For this reason, the thesis claims that "machinic relations" (ibid., p. 125) exist between these EXPORT's and Rosler's works, in which Rosler, in prioritising the visual fragmentation of woman's image, develops the idea of bodies as intelligent "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125), able to insist upon "...new ways to see and transform the social" (ibid., p. 127). In so doing, EXPORT's and Rosler's works contribute to a subversive knowledge of women artists' symbolic mediation of their experiences of oppression and overcoming.

**2:1:3 Hannah Wilke: Santo Antonio Rose (1966), S.O.S. Starification Object Series (1974)**



Fig. 17 Hannah Wilke, *Santo Antonio Rose* (1966)

*Santo Antonio Rose* (1966) is an early example of many of Hannah Wilke's sculptures which reference how she has experienced and been affected by invasive, screened and commodified images of women. In this small and prone work, Wilke uses folds of clay to visually and psychically equate female genitalia with organic, flower-like structures. Emerging around the time of EXPORT's critique of the cinema and its effects on women, this work reads as a critique of patriarchal, phallocular commodification of women into sexualised parts, particularly via commercial pornography. Wilke's focus, here, is only on the vulva, in isolation of woman's body as whole. Wilke

positions the fragility and delicacy of the clay medium used in the work to evoke women's sexual vulnerability in having their sense of bodily privacy exteriorised and invaded under patriarchal regimes of looking. However, she also plays into the aesthetic sensuality of the same medium and recruits the dimensionality and visual tactility of sculpture to restore and give bodily presence to an idea of woman. Wilke's critique in this work is that, despite their fragility and vulnerability to patriarchy, women's sensuality and their pleasure in their own sexuality remains powerful and contentious.

A geophilosophical mapping of this work illuminates the ways in which movement is imbued into the work, enabling an idea of women's anti-patriarchal "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126). The emphatic, hand-made quality of work inscribes the spatiality and stillness of sculpture with the delicate movement of the artist's body and hands as she makes it. This idea of movement, in combination with the afore-mentioned material qualities of the clay, subtly but powerfully ruptures an idea of patriarchalised and pornographic images of women's bodies. We can still relate the idea of clothing to this art work, but only by way of its absence. In this work, Wilkes' absencing of any clothing indicates an anti-patriarchal nakedness through which women's own bodily desire might generate new "becoming" (ibid., p. 126).

Wilke subsequently made S.O.S. *Starification Object Series* (1974), a photographic series in which she chews small pieces of chewing gum and

models them into tiny vulva-like sculptures, which she attaches to her naked/semi-naked body to be photographed in quasi-fashion model or quasi-iconic, film-star poses. In this series, Wilke again critiques the patriarchal objectification and commodification of woman's "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and, through the minuscule, vulva-like sculptures, the extreme reduction of women's pleasure, in connection with the commodification of images of them.



Fig. 18 Hannah Wilke, S.O.S. *Starification Object Series* (1974)

The force of Wilke's critical interpretation of patriarchal and capitalist imagery of women hinges around the movement involved in the activity of chewing gum. As with *Santo Antonio Rose*, the visual rhythms generated by Wilke's intimate bodily movements, through mastication and through her hands whilst creating the sculptures, imbue visual rhythm into the materiality and spatiality of the sculptures. This is retained in the final photographs, interrupting the flatness and stillness of the image. I find Wilke's subsequent application of these sculptures of parts of woman's body, to her own body, prior to being photographed, is significant to my own work because, as I explain in section 4:3 of this thesis, my work *Carrier* includes similar syntaxes with a similar message. Wilke herself has suggested that a key reason for making this series was to speak of the injury and historical scarification caused to Jews under the Nazi party.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, the title of the work supports the idea of the chewing gum sculptures being Jewish 'stars', worn at a cost to the women involved. She was also working as an artist at the time of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 60s and 70s and the gender politics of the work, in relation to the patriarchalisation of woman's image via cinema and advertising, incline to read as its primary motivation. The work suggests woman's body as scarred and wounded by patriarchal fragmentation, including through the category of 'Jew', for reasons of sexualisation and commodification and, along with this, the extreme reduction of woman's own bodily pleasure. In this sense, Wilke appears to

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<sup>38</sup> "...as a Jew, during the war, I would have been branded and buried had I not been born in America. Starification-scarification /Jew, black, Christian, Moslem ... Labelling people" (Wilke cited Frueh, 1989, p. 139 and 145).

wear - and bear the burden<sup>39</sup> of - a scarred sexuality, quite literally, on her back, again expanding a notion of clothing and complexifying this through notions of nakedness. A geophilosophical mapping of the work, in connection with EXPORT's and Rosler's, illuminates its potential to engender anti-patriarchal "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) for women. Her application of the tiny sculptures to her body suggests woman's defiant recuperation of and reinvestment into her own libidinality, and pluralised, un-fixed sexuality. However, it is Wilke's own gaze, her decision to look back at the camera and to her audience, that builds "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) between EXPORT's, Rosler's and her own work. All three women invent ways to structure their own looking into their works and to direct this to the audience, forming feminist artworks which insist upon re-forming themselves and their audiences as "desiring machines" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125). In Wilke's work, looking becomes a political disruption of commercial representation of women, opening the possibility of different becomings for women.

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<sup>39</sup> My own work, *Carrier* (see section 4:3) differently materialises and develops this particular idea of the 'burden' of women's sexuality and desire.

**2:1:4 Louise Bourgeois: A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts (1978)**



Fig. 19 Louise Bourgeois, latex costume for the performance *A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts* (1978)

When geophilosophically mapped relative to Wilke's, EXPORT's and Rosler's works, Louise Bourgeois' latex costume for her performance *A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts* (1978) demonstrates a shared, but differently articulated intention to rupture patriarchalised, iconicised imagery of woman. Importantly, this work also indexes Bourgeois' empirical knowledge of the extension of patriarchal looking, via screened and

commodified images, into the fashion industry, including through clothing, the catwalk show and the fashion photograph.

Like EXPORT a decade earlier, Bourgeois (1978) constructs a sculpture in order to wear and perform in it. This materialises her political critique of patriarchal commodification of women's body via looking and via manipulation of images of women. The title of Bourgeois' work is integral to this critique, with its emphasis on "body parts" and their normative display within the fashion industry. It is against this normativity that Bourgeois, like EXPORT before her, visually partitions her body, concealing "parts" - breasts, buttocks and genital area - typically subjected to patriarchal commodification. Instead of a patriarchal display of the iconic, commercially fetishised woman, Bourgeois proposes a three-dimensional alternative. The lumpen and implicitly decaying form Bourgeois wears distorts notions of normatively fashionable clothing and of patriarchally commodified woman. Moreover, her structure plays upon and critiques psychoanalytic film theory, by fusing notions of clothing and body to evoke and play into Freudian analysis of the fetish as powerfully invoking castration fears and disgust in relation to the mother's/woman's 'castrated' state<sup>40</sup>, alongside the experience of pleasure.

When geophilosophically mapped relative to the movement in EXPORT's, Rosler's and Wilke's works, Bourgeois' bodily movement is also

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<sup>40</sup> I say more of this Freudian analysis, and its retention in early psychoanalytic, feminist film theory, in Chapter Two.

implicated in critiquing patriarchal commodification of women via their images and in insisting "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) between herself, her work, her audiences and the works of the other women artists. By visually partitioning her body, through a perverse idea of clothing and fashion, and imbuing this partitioned structure with her own movements, Bourgeois generates an excess within and through it. This excess empowers the work, and an idea of woman, visually rupturing the idea of patriarchally iconicised woman, and overtaking this with an idea of a woman acting on her desire for different, defiant, "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126).

In this chapter, my geophilosophical mapping of each of these works has focused on each artists' different approach to generating fragmented syntaxes. In each case, notions of clothing and body have been merged and perverted, to visually fragment an idea of women and their bodies and to channel the artists' physical movement in ways that evoke woman in excess of patriarchy. Jane Gaines, writing of the use of costume in film to engender cinematic fetishisation of woman, argues that, historically and in regard to the female body: "it has been impossible to imagine the referent as anything other than an unclothed female form" (Gaines, 1990, p. 70) but, with the onset of modernism, this situation changed because women became involved in an ongoing process of "learning, in the age of mechanical reproduction, to carry the mirror's eye within the mind" (Gaines, 1990, p. 4). Hence, the notion of woman's body and clothing were effectively fused under

modernism, with cinema being a key mechanism for this<sup>41</sup>. Significantly, Gaines comments that, if women's bodies are patriarchally fetishised by the use of clothing as film costume, then clothing could, conversely, be

...deployed to turn the body itself into an instrument of disruption.

What better site for disruption of the social order than the seeming scene of women's oppression? (ibid., p. 4)

The women artists I have referred to in this chapter have each differently materialised this idea, variously fusing notions of body and clothing to generate "disruption" (ibid., p. 4) of patriarchal looking. I have demonstrated how these approaches, when mapped across and in connection with each artists' work, activates "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) between them, illuminating a shared intention to materialise the possibility of women's overcoming of the fixing, objectifying effects of patriarchal commodification and to re-form women as "desiring machines" (ibid., p. 125).

Through this mapping, it becomes evident that the works demonstrate each artists' particular experiences of oppressive, patriarchal looking and

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<sup>41</sup> Gaines' ideas, that, with the onset of modernism, women learned to "carry the mirror's eye within the mind" (Gaines, 1990, p. 4) and that clothing can be "deployed to turn the body itself into an instrument of disruption. What better site for disruption of the social order than the seeming scene of women's oppression?" (ibid., p. 4), have been important for developing my project. In reflecting on her ideas, I have developed the idea that the approaches and strategies she describes can be considered as prototypes for the idea of the clothed body (including in art) art as a (proxy) standpoint, through which women might express a desire to contribute to the "disruption" (ibid., p.4) of patriarchy.

their responses to patriarchy. As such, the works form individual standpoints which testify to each woman's empirical knowledge of patriarchal oppression and their response to it, in defiance of patriarchal commodification.

Importantly, this mapping illuminates how these works evoke women's new "becoming" (ibid., p. 126) their rejection of patriarchal "fixing" of their bodies through screened oppression, and their entry into fluid, "unknown spaces of movement" (ibid., p. 130). For this reason, these works index the onset of a long-standing commitment to overcoming patriarchally flattened and fragmented notions of women, and this commitment is evident in their spatial, three-dimensional art practices involving fragmental syntaxes and bodily movement. I therefore claim that, in giving new address to Robinson's claim that "attention will need to be paid to the appropriate syntactical morphology and gestures" (Robinson, 2006, p. 93) for the expression of woman, my mapping of these works expands and updates existing appreciation of the syntaxes Robinson alludes to, and gives new value to these works.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Screen as Capitalist and Patriarchal Power Structure, Integral to Women's Ongoing Negotiation of Their Oppression and Liberation**

#### **3:0 Introduction to Chapter Three**

In Chapter Two, I claimed that women artists in the 60s and 70s responded to commodified images of women in particular ways. In Chapter Five, I discuss how more recent works evidence comparable and complex approaches, which demonstrate women artists' sensitivity to current conditions of women's screened oppression.

By geophilosophically mapping these earlier works, I have illuminated how approaches involving fragmentation engender excessive, "machinic relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) and I have argued these works constitute ways for women artists to symbolically mediate their empirical knowledge of patriarchal oppression and women's overcoming of this.

Over the following chapters, I build my analysis of these ideas, including through discussion of my own practice. In Part One of this chapter, I will argue that today, compared with the 60s and 70s, the situation for women artists who respond to oppressive, patriarchal commodification of

women's images, is complicated by technological developments to the screen, including its division and mediatisation. The screen is now a key, capitalist and patriarchal power structure, integral to women's ongoing negotiation of their oppression. The unprecedented mediatisation of the screen and screened images - their multiplication, digitisation and networking as discussed by Heidi Wasson (2007) and Anne Friedberg (2003) - have enforced normalised patriarchal oppression, in which female subjects are coerced into psychic and bodily identification with the screen and screened images. My practice research has suggested that it is important to acknowledge and debate, including in and through sculptural terms, how the highly coercive nature of the process of normalisation of screen identification, through digital mediatisation, is such that it intends to render contemporary female audiences oblivious to the idea that the screen and screened images are involved in their oppression. To this end, patriarchal capitalism evokes powerful and seductive notions of female emancipation, to obscure its oppressive effects and foreclose women's subjectivities; an abiding, frank and insidious message is that, if women comply with capitalist and patriarchal messages loaded into screened images, they will experience liberation as capitalist subjects (hooks, 2015). This is a limited notion of emancipation, which comes at too great a cost to women's pleasures. If capitalism is, ultimately, inescapable, then women will benefit from developing critical complicity with it; through complying with but also critiquing capitalist imperatives, women might negotiate (even) temporal experiences of unfettered emancipation. The hope - which I think is

necessarily precarious, and which I materialise in my *New Model Army* sculptures - is that such experiences can, in the longer term and through cumulative effect, empower women to re-negotiate the terms under which capitalism operates.

In building on this argument, I draw on Laura Mulvey's analysis (1975) of the effects, on women, of their screened images within cinematic experience. Borrowing from Robinson's (2006) approach to Gebauer and Wulf's (1995) work, which involves her relating their analysis of mimesis to Irigaray's work in ways they did not intend, I relate Mulvey's earlier account (1973) of the male gaze in Allen Jones' sculptures, to more recent discussion (Friedberg 2003), (Wasson 2007) of the ongoing need to update and expand approaches, within film studies, to the cinematic gaze.

In Part One of this chapter I state that formats such as television, fashion and fashion imagery, advertising and billboard posters were already maximising the distribution of the cinematic gaze beyond the architectural framework of cinema. This complicated the notion of the "discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) in ways that were not (then) sufficiently theoretically debated, with the consequence that theories of the gaze, and of looking, remained under-developed.

It is worth noting, here, that this insufficiency is acknowledged by Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman (1995) who claim that:

Primary texts about the gaze...have proved inadequate as a tool for analysing the complex ways in which individuals look at, and identify

with a range of contemporary images, beyond the cinema, from art to ads, fashion mags to pop promos. (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 14)

Evans and Gamman's analysis of this inadequacy is useful to my project, because it provides some explanation as to why the complexities of looking, surrounding the "discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) were previously insufficiently theorised. They argue that theoretical inadequacies occur for several reasons, including the (mis)application of theories of the gaze:

Cinematic theories have been applied to many types of visual representation, from high art to popular culture, even though Laura Mulvey's influential writing on the gaze never claimed to explain more than spectatorship of 'classic narrative cinema'. (ibid., p. 14)<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, this also includes being due to inherent inadequacies in theoretical texts; importantly, in referring to two primary models for theorising the gaze - Foucauldian and psychoanalytic (Evans and Gamman, 1995) - Evans and Gamman also claim that, "Neither model (the Foucauldian or the film theorists') position the gaze as a mutual one" (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 15). According to Evans and Gamman, another cause of this inadequacy is that, generally:

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<sup>42</sup> This is important to consider, because it raises the issue of theoretical application and the delicacy required in applying theories to generate new knowledge; it helps me to understand that my project partly involves my application of specific details of Mulvey's theory to Fine Art, particularly sculpture. In other words, my project examines and builds on the new meanings and implications of the terms Mulvey uses for describing cinematic representations of women and the politics underpinning them - such as "close-ups" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 43), "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "fragmenting" (ibid. p. 40) - by taking these terms beyond the cinematic framework to the register of sculpture.

...most of the theory conceptualises the gaze in relation to representations of people and not inanimate or 'natural' things". Hence it is posited as as constitutive of social or psychic relations" (ibid., 1995, p. 15).

What Evans and Gamman suggest, then, is that theories which do not account for (the possibility of) reciprocal looking - either because they did not intend to (such as Mulvey's) or because they overlook the importance of so doing - cause problems for thinking about the context and distribution of "the complex ways images resonate in contemporary culture" (ibid., p. 15).

Evans and Gamman respond to this problem by creating a discursive space in and through which to address it, beginning by drawing attention to the importance of distinguishing between cinematic viewing and mutual, inter-subjective looking "on the street"<sup>43</sup> (ibid., p. 15), including in order to understand the complex relations between these different modes of looking.

They say:

Of course, the cinematic image is an object and therefore cannot look back, so obviously we need to distinguish some questions of representation from other cultural practices. But in some writing this distinction has been elided. When individuals cruise each other on the street, or in clubs, the mutual exchange of glances is sexualised and

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<sup>43</sup> This phrase has particular resonance for my practice because so many of the objects and materials I use for my sculptures are found in the streets (of London), as a consequence of what I regard as my looking (which often results in seeing objects and materials) and the objects 'looking back' at me - a meeting of different kinds of gazes between artist and object(s).

often reciprocal; of course this mutuality is not the case with cinematic viewing. (ibid., 1995, p. 15)

Evans and Gamman claim (Evans and Gamman, 1995) that, because this distinction has been elided, there is a lack of sophisticated debate of how reciprocal, (un)equal, looking is structured - including by being curtailed - and of the active role that images (as objects) play in this structuring process. Their opening out of otherwise elided issues leads to discussions which are helpful to my project. This includes their interest in how:

More and more images in contemporary culture make many forms of address to more than one audience, and allow the possibility of multiple identifications by the spectator. (ibid., p. 33)

Evans and Gamman's account of the issues of (possibly plural) identification and of desire resonate strongly with my project and its aims when they acknowledge those issues as intertwined and contradictory. One example of this is in their inclusion of Jackie Stacey's account of:

...the rigid distinction between *either* desire *or* identification, so characteristic of psychoanalytic film theory...[and which]...fails to address the construction of desires which involve a specific interplay of both processes. (Stacey cited Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 34)

Stacey's acknowledgement of the "interplay" (ibid, p. 34) of desire and identification relates to her interest in lesbian spectatorship as a " 'contradictory' experience " (Evans and Gamman, 1995., p. 34). Stacey has

been criticised for this account (Evans and Gamman, 1995). Nevertheless, the idea put forward is that such an interplay may not be without contradiction. This resonates with what I have referred to in section 3:2 of this thesis as the difficulty of negotiating the "contradictory position" of (single) mother, worker, artist; the negotiation involved relates to the ongoing paradoxical need for psychological comfort and security of identification and the disruption and precarity entailed in connecting with subjective desires that are outlawed by patriarchal society and, therefore, refuse straightforward, positive identification - or, possibly, any identification at all.

A further example is in Evans and Gamman's inclusion of Kobena Mercer's account of how, as a gay, black man, he "...inhabited two contradictory identifications at one and the same time' " (Mercer cited Evans and Gammer, 1995, p. 26). This is of interest to my project, particularly because Mercer's need for identification is, I suggest, complicated by his own desires. Mercer relates that he experienced "contradictory identifications" (ibid. p. 26) when viewing Richard Mapplethorpe's collection (*Black Males, 1982*) of nude photographs of black men. Mercer describes his identification with the black male subject being photographed as simultaneously doubled, involving him feeling:

...dissected under white eyes. I am fixed...Look, it's a Negro...[but]...I was identified with the author in so far as the objectified black male was also an image of the object chosen by my own fantasies and erotic investments. (Mercer cited Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 26)

Mercer's account has helped me to understand what is entailed in experiencing what I have referred to, in Section 0:4 of this thesis, as the "agonising" look(ing) brought to bear on me as a young, white, single mother; similarly to Mercer, I have experienced feeling "dissected under white eyes" (ibid., p. 26). Like Mercer, I was (and am) still able to connect to my own desires, rather than being unable to do this. But this connection - as Mercer's account indicates - can be delicate and was contradicted - brutally so - by my being (almost) "fixed" (ibid, p. 26) into an unwanted identification with an idea of woman<sup>44</sup>, through others' looking. My experiences differ from Mercer's in that, whilst I had, like him, already experienced my relationship to an idea(l) of 'whiteness' as complex and painful, I was not directly looking at an eroticised image of a young white woman and would not have been attracted to such an image as I did not identify as gay. Instead, I assert that conflicting eroticised and / or idealised images of young, white women were imposed on me through looking, but ultimately gained no easy, psychic traction for the looker intent on looking in alignment with patriarchal values. This is because my presence as a single mother effectively refused the 'stickiness' of such images and such looking. This lack of patriarchal traction resulted in my being devalued in their eyes - that is, due to lack of any visionary value being in place, there was, ultimately, only a negative value asserted according to patriarchal measures connected to practices of looking. This confused and

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<sup>44</sup> Or possibly two patriarchal ideas of women. On Irigaray's analysis (Irigaray, 1985a) of women and their exchange within the patriarchal market, these would be (simultaneously) the prostitute and the mother. From a patriarchal perspective, the former would ultimately supersede the latter but, in so doing, would also be punishable for injuring ideals of patriarchal motherhood.

oppressed my emerging, forming desires, as a young, heterosexual white woman and mother and related processes of identification became complicated; unlike Mercer, I did not doubly identify with an image, but perhaps suffered from the lack of "group identity (even if an illusory one) in order to organise" (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 38) subjective processes of identification.

Considering Mercer's account relative to my lived experience helps me to understand and articulate something that I could not at an earlier time - which was that my desire was to enjoy, share and develop reciprocal, equal looking, which involved not only "the destabilisation of gender as an analytical category" (ibid., p. 41) and, relatedly, the destabilisation of the norm of white "against which everything is measured" (Young cited Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 27), but, most importantly, the positive destabilisation of the patriarchal category and ideal of motherhood, whilst remaining committed as mother, to my daughter.<sup>45</sup>

However, it is the differences *between* experiences such as (but not limited to) Mercer's and my own which are important to my project because they point to the possibility of a shared politics of looking in which

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<sup>45</sup> Evans and Gamman's account of "genderfuck" - practices involving the deliberate confusion of images and perceptions of lesbian women and gay men - states that this "is about play and performance which destabilise subject positions...it moves towards a model for gender as a simulacrum (without an original) (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 41). It may be that what I refer to regarding the destabilisation of the category of motherhood could be pursued, via comparative analysis, as a form of "motherfuck", and the deployment of (my) art practice as integral to this. However, in this thesis I choose not to pursue this term or this argument, not merely due to the proximity of the term "motherfuck" to the derogatory term M.I.L.F. (Mothers I Like Fucking), generally in circulation today, but also because I am actively disinterested in / against the reduction of notions of (mothers') sexuality and sexual expression by applying (what I argue is) ultimately reductive language.

contradictory identifications can become valuable indexes of where, in lived experience, destabilisation (of looking) might be activated as a political approach for living differently. However, as far as my project is concerned, this is a politics and a possibility that is insufficiently accounted for in Evans and Gamman's analysis, which unfortunately does not extend to include reflection on the possibility of 'queer' - and / or the purposeful 'queering' of - heterosexual motherhood, or of any possible, productive "intersection between" (Evans and Gamman, 1995, p. 38) the different experiences of heterosexual single mothers and gay and / or black cultures, including through artistic practice.

For this reason, and whilst Evans and Gamman's analysis is of interest to my project (for at least the reasons given), in this thesis I do not pursue it further. Instead, I draw from Wasson's account, to develop my argument about how the politics of looking affect women and, within that, how they affect and may in turn be affected by the working (single) mother, artist.

In this chapter, this includes developing, with reference to Wasson, the argument that formats for woman's screened image were subsequently developed through technological changes to the screen - a move which suggests that patriarchal distribution of commodified images of women was never really confined to notions of traditional cinema but was actually already situated within "an expanded system of overlapping relations" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). The "discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) has been

unhelpfully retained in early psychoanalytic film theory along with an "ever-elusive idea about cinematic purity" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75), thus blocking the progressive debate of screened experiences within which I now situate my sculptural work and research. This means that, in theoretical terms, details of Laura Mulvey's and Mary Ann Doane's analysis regarding woman's screened image, and important details of their accounts, are yet to fully benefit from being thought beyond their retention within an idea of a "discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75), seeming to bear no relation to sculpture. By contrast, I will argue that my *New Model Army* sculptures respond to and materialise these details, insisting on their re-framing beyond only the psychoanalytic. In so doing, I offer a new synthesis of Mulvey's (1973, 1975) and Doane's (1982) analyses with those of Wasson (2007) and Friedberg (2003).

This argument illuminates a complex, neglected relationship between sculpture, women's image and cinema. Within this, lies Mulvey's idea that the use of the close-up, of women's images, "gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40). Drawing from Doane's analysis (1982), it is helpful for my project to consider that the potential of Mulvey's ideas surrounding "flatness" (*ibid.*, p. 40) and the "fragmented body" (*ibid.*, p. 40), in connection with her analysis of the close-up, has suffered from not being thought beyond the psychoanalytic framework she retains and, in turn, from not being related to sculptural practice. Here, I develop these ideas from concepts of flattening and fragmentation, stating why we need to consider women's screened images in

material, social and cultural terms as well as relative to the psychoanalytic framework Mulvey invokes. Doing this allows a reading of fragmentation and flattening in excess of the "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9)<sup>46</sup> retained in such analyses. Instead, I relate these approaches to an idea of woman's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) as material and social, rather than only psychological. Building on Doane's analysis, I suggest that thinking in this way - and encouraging other women to do so - is a far more empowering move for women, generating possibilities for them to re-negotiate and mediate their subjectivities in symbolic, social and material terms not confined to unhelpful notions of cinematic "purity" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). Art has a role to play in engendering this shift in emphasis, re-distributing knowledges across and between psychoanalytic and material, social and cultural registers. My *New Model Army* sculptures tackle this idea.

To support these claims, in the second part of this chapter, I relate my own practice to Doane's analysis of "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) and of "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428), claiming that my work provides an innovative synthesis of Doane's analysis of these terms and Mulvey's terms "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40), taking them to a material, social and cultural as well as, rather than only (as in both women's analyses), a psychoanalytic register. I further argue that my work addresses the trans-disciplinary context of Wasson's (2007) and Friedberg's (2003)

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<sup>46</sup> Grosz claims "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9) privileges anatomical readings of male genitals (the penis), to produce concepts like "penis envy" (ibid, p. 9) and the castration complex, which position women only as "lack" (Doane, 1982, p. 424). In Chapter Three, I discuss how Robinson aims to overcome the theoretical and symbolic retention of "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9) through her analysis of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26).

arguments, by physically materialising and situating Doane's and Mulvey's analyses away from the notion of "cinematic purity" (Wasson, 2007, p.75) and, instead, re-situate them within (my) sculptural practice. In so doing, I claim Doane's and Mulvey's ideas are transgressively re-situated within my sculptures, in which the screen is invisibly, but very actively, included. My argument is that, in generating and materialising this new synthesis, my sculptural practice contributes to film theories' more recent commitment to: "[u]ntravelling the discrete film object into debates about its relations to urban life, modern leisure, and ascendant consumerism" (ibid., p.75).



Fig. 20

Linda Aloysius

*Sore Model*

(2011)



Fig. 21 Linda Aloysius *Sore Model (reverse view)* (2011)

For example, shortly after I had begun making *Sore Model*, one of the first sculptures in the *New Model Army* series, I was invited to co-curate an exhibition and to include my own work.<sup>47</sup> I was uncertain about what kind of relationship I wanted, as artist, to the (commercial) gallery system. Knowing that I was going to be exhibiting my work brought an increased sensitivity, on my part, to the (potentially commercial) scrutiny<sup>48</sup> (Coleman and Ringrose 2013) I imagined would be brought to my sculpture. I channelled this increased sensitivity by purposely conflating two notions of "model" - that is, a female employed in the modelling industry due to her physical appearance, and a proposed structure for something to be realised in future. I also wanted to interpret the gallery space as one kind of social and economic "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) and to juxtapose this with the idea of women's unequal "place" (ibid, 1982, p.433) with the inequality having been caused through women being degraded, due to having been negatively psychoanalytically framed relative to "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9).

To do this, I suggest, through the title of the work and through the syntaxes I have formed within the sculpture, that the model is *sore* - that is,

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<sup>47</sup> At *Fold* gallery for the exhibition *Model Vs Reality* (2011), with Matt Calderwood, Angela de la Cruz, Alexis Harding, Ana Prada, Paul Harrison and John Wood.

<sup>48</sup> For various reasons, I was uncertain about whether to participate in the exhibition or its curation. Part of this uncertainty was due to not knowing what kind of relationship I wanted, as artist, to the gallery system. I was also aware that many of the artists I would be exhibiting with very often sell their works, and often for very high prices. Hence, part of the "scrutiny" that I anticipated was that of the commercial - patriarchal and capitalist - gaze. I decided to work with this gaze and its implications, through the work itself.

hurt or in distress. To form the syntaxes that support this idea, I have worked into a pre-existing 'scar' in the main body of the sculpture<sup>49</sup>, exposing its (foam) innards and presenting this as something akin to an open wound. Similarly, I have chosen to include the ripped fabric backing on the reverse - back - of the sculpture's body. Both of these gestures are intended to evoke an idea of the model having been subjected to brutality (through looking). Additionally, I have complicated notions of voyeurism by conflating an idea of a net curtain and a ballerina's tutu, both of which are structures associated with different forms of looking. Regarding the association with a net curtain: this move is intended to evoke ideas of routine, habitual voyeurism - for example, the voyeurism associated with 'twitching', suburban net curtains and the idea of them (and the window they sheathe) being screens and / or interfaces with the external world. Regarding the ballerina's tutu: the association I am trying to draw is with spectacularised looking, in connection with which (young) women's bodies are subjected to extremes of control, including on stage<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> This is formed of a discarded, very worn and damaged, taxi-rank seat, found close to my (then) studio, in East London. I felt drawn to working with the implicitly subjugated position of this item of furniture, which had been sat on by countless bodies and had become scarred in so being. This 'working with' included making evident, for the viewer, the difficulty involved of overturning this subjugated position and it also included implicating the viewer in this process, in ways I describe anon.

<sup>50</sup> My approach in this work and, indeed, with all the *New Model Army* works, is similar to the Brechtian approach of removing of the invisible 'fourth wall' in staged productions. I was not aware of Brecht's approach when I made this work, but it is helpful to relate it to this sculpture, although I prefer to think of his idea of the fourth 'wall' not as a wall but a screen, between actor and audience, and of the traditional looking that the audience does as being a form of screened looking. Brecht purposely created instability in traditions of acting by destabilising the normative relationship between actor and audience, in which the actor is obliged to behave as if the audience is not present. Instead, in Brecht's work, the actors often talk directly to the audience during the production and involve them in discussion of the narrative and its content. In *Mother Courage and her Children* (Brecht,

To form this 'hybrid' structure, I have cut a voile fabric fragment / section and have rucked this (by hand) with curtain tape. I have tied the resulting structure onto the sculpture's body, using the strings in the curtain tape, in a manner that suggests the sculpture has made a vain attempt, with the only resources available to it, to hide the extensivity of the wounds to its body, and to deflect further looking, knowing that it is to be subjected to yet further scrutiny. This gesture is supported by another syntax, which is that of the green 'paint' applied to the 'face' of the sculpture. This 'paint' comprises purchased, pre-manufactured cosmetics which I chose specifically for this sculpture, with the idea of conflating notions of 'painting' with women's application of cosmetics.

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1939), for example, the mother figure, in negotiating the return of her kidnapped son, pauses and turns to the audience to ask for their opinion on what she should do. *Sore Model* behaves similarly to this, by exposing the audience to 'wounds' that would normally be kept concealed and private. I aim to maximise this de-stabilising of notions of privacy - and of screened looking - by constructing it relative to syntaxes - the conflated net curtain and the ballerina's tutu - that draw association with different forms of staged and screened looking.



Fig. 22 Karla Black *Forget About Faces* (2008)

I was thinking about Karla Black's work (and the title for the work) *Forget About Faces* (2008) as I made *Sore Model*. I was particularly intrigued by Black's use of moisturising creams in this work and I felt drawn to what seemed like an attempt to articulate an alternative femininity, including by conflating notions of painting, sculpting and housework. For reasons that I relate in later sections of this thesis I had a difficulty in articulating what it was that I wanted, as artist, from this kind of interpretation of painting, but I now understand that this gesture, in *Sore Model*, was an early attempt to

articulate a morphological relation to paint and to painting and the politics of painting, in connection with notions of constructed femininity.

The idea being communicated through my use of these cosmetics is that the sculpture has, again, made a vain attempt to distract the viewer by wearing this cosmetic, which I have deliberately applied<sup>51</sup> in a manner that suggests the sculpture is confused about - but also defiant against - its relation to commercialised femininity and commercial, iconic, images of women, including of female models. The strong implication is that the sculpture embodies and evokes women's suffering, due to being embedded in a longer cultural and social history of their continual subjection to looking.<sup>52</sup> The suggestion being run through this work is that the model, in being distressed - and the implication is that this is due to being subjected to continual looking - *possibly* has a subjectivity and that this possible - or "immanent" (ibid., p. 134) - subjectivity is one which is capable of articulating a preference not to only be looked at, but to be regarded and valued as a whole, emotive subject. In other words, the sculpture is insisting upon

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<sup>51</sup> To do this I crushed a whole 'tablet' of cosmetics, after removing it from its packaging, and applied this to the sculpture with a wet, household sponge (typically used for washing dishes). In so doing, I conflated notions of housework - women's domestic labour - and commercial femininity. Whilst the viewer will not know all the details of this conflation, this approach helped me, as artist, to begin to articulate an idea of my own and the sculpture's confusion in regard to the structural relation between the two.

<sup>52</sup> I acknowledge correspondences between what I describe as the need, as sculptor, to evoke women's suffering under patriarchal looking and Laura Mulvey's account of fetishism. For example, when Mulvey writes: "Fetishisms, like the grain of sand in the oyster that produces the pearl, create social and sexual constructions of things...that trouble the social or sexual psyche" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 3) and "The fetish acknowledges its own traumatic history like a red flag, symptomatically signalling a site of psychic pain" (ibid., p. 15) this resonates. However, in this thesis, I do not focus on / rely on (Freudian) psychoanalytic notions of fetishism. My approach is to argue for a reading of aspects of Mulvey's analysis beyond the psychoanalytic framework.

"affective relations" (ibid., p. 126) with the viewer, in which the possibility of this (women's) new subjectivity is to be re-negotiated, between artist, sculpture and viewer, through looking; this includes the idea that the viewer will search for the possibility of their own, whole, subjectivity, in attempting to discover a subjectivity within / belonging to the art work.

Given the degraded materials used in the sculpture it is perhaps not easy for viewers to perceive the "immanent" (ibid., p. 134) becoming I refer to. However, my approach in making this work - and my other *New Model Army* sculptures - and the idea being expressed through the work, which is of women's degraded "place" (Doane, 1982., p. 433) being open to re-negotiation and, therefore, having potential for change, bear strong correspondence with Abdou Maliq Simone's writing on "place" (Simone, 2012, p. 213), written in relation to his interest in the screen. He writes:

When a place shows all of its wears and tears, its memories, and the impacts of what people have done it, the place then shows that it is always available to deals, small initiatives and renovation. It shows that the relationship among bodies, materials and things need not be the way they are imagined or prescribed by the prevailing policies, norms or administrative procedures. (ibid., p. 213)

Simone's reference to the idea that "the place then shows that it is always available to deals" (ibid., p. 213) - that is, that a place is continually

open to negotiation - inclines to personify notions of place in ways that correspond with my sculptures' suggestion that they have a subjectivity available for "immanent" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) becoming. In Simone's text, women's subjectivities are not the focus, whereas in my sculptures, the idea of women's becoming (fuller subjects) is given more emphasis. Nevertheless, his text is very helpful to my project in terms of his articulation of notions of screen, which I return to anon.

Building on Doane's notion of "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) and applying to this the idea that a place can be available for "deals" (Simone, 2012, p. 213), and also drawing from Carolyn Byerly's analysis (2014) of how the macro-level of the media industry affects women, my project examines the idea that sculpture has a specific role to play in acknowledging neo-liberalist developments to the screen and how this has engendered a cultural transition from film objects to mediated objects, in which women's images have been downgraded to "utility" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347) status. I claim sculpture has a specific role to play in generating affective relations between sculptor, sculpture and viewer, which are key to the subversive moment of undoing - or "unravelling" (Wasson, 2007, p.75) - the idea of a self-contained, "discrete film object" (ibid., p. 75). I demonstrate how my works prioritise this idea by responding to and refusing patriarchal flattening and fragmenting techniques used in connection with screened images to oppress women and to delimit the full spectrum of their pleasures.

Generally, the idea put forward in my art work is that women artists respond to the screen in ways that engender temporal spaces of emancipation; if women are oppressed under the patriarchal gaze enforced by screened images, then women can combat the patriarchal gaze *through* screened images - that is, women can find ways to look back<sup>53</sup> at the screen and screened images in ways that reconstitute the patriarchal gaze and its power. This idea is in tune with Simone's idea that:

...screens concern practices of looking, and often are deployed to constitute a possible differentiation between 'looking out' and 'looking out for'. (ibid., p. 209)

Simone adds that: "to eliminate the 'for' and simply 'look out' opens up potential sight lines" (Simone, 2012, p. 209).

In Simone's analysis, screens enable defensive, guarded looking and non-defensive, " 'looking out' " (Simone, 2012, p. 209) - that is, active looking that encourages new possibilities through identifying and / or forming new ways / paths / routes / structures of looking. Significantly, Simone notes a

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<sup>53</sup> This idea resonates with bell hooks' argument for black women to develop a gaze that is "oppositional" (hooks, 1992) to (white) man's. Her assertions that: "Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality" (hooks, 1992, p. 116) and "Even in the worse (sic) circumstances of domination, the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency" (ibid., 116) strongly resonate with my practice aims. This is especially because, as I have explained earlier in this thesis, I felt subjected to similar experiences of the "white supremacy" (ibid., p. 119) hooks refers to when describing white racism against black people.

"possible differentiation between" (ibid., p. 209) these two modes of looking, rather than a definable one; his speculation towards this differentiation inclines to suggest he is concerned to attend to the idea that subjects' relation to the screen allows them fluidity and continual movement between positions of defensiveness and positions of activity, desire, pleasure.

In my thesis, I pursue these ideas. However, my interest in the screen focuses more (than Simone's) on how screens:

...intrude upon locations and the ability to locate persons and things within any categories and space definable in advance of an engagement that seems to increasingly hedge its bets (ibid., p. 208)

In other words, whilst Simone acknowledges the intrusive and controlling effects of the screen, but inclines to depart from this, I examine the idea that the screen has oppressive effects on women and is economically purposed with this task. This is not to suggest that women cannot respond, positively, to the oppressive effects of the screen, but that I want to pay attention in this thesis to those oppressive effects and how they can be combatted. This examination is made primarily through my sculptural series *New Model Army*, for which the screen is crucial, despite not seeming obviously involved or visibly appearing. The argument materialised in the *New Model Army* sculptures is that the latent effects of the screen are central to neoliberalism's normalisation of the women's embodied oppression and that it is important that art critiques the extremely covert way in which this

embodiment is effectuated. Hence, where Simone writes that the screen's "objectness can be occluded by the predominant role of the screen as either a mechanism of filtering, reflection, absorption, or transmission" (ibid. p., 208) his writing slightly inclines to suggest that this occlusion is coincidental. I take up the idea and political implications of the occlusion of the screen's "objectness" (ibid., p. 208) and develop this through my practice and analysis, pursuing the idea that the screen's occlusion is not coincidental, but strategic.

In developing these thoughts and arguments within my work, I have accounted for the covert normalisation of the screen and screened images by rendering the structures of the screen and screened images as 'invisible' factors within my *New Model Army* sculptures. At the same time, I have made highly visible the screen's oppressive effects on women, which patriarchal capitalism would otherwise render invisible. In so doing, my sculptures develop the idea that: "In a literal sense, the surface no longer 'screens' anything, but registers the body as immersed in the immediacy of experience" (Krupar and Al, 2010 cited Simone, 2012, p. 207); the idea being articulated in my sculptures is that the surface of the screen is, in the current climate, a priori absorbed into the body, under a regime of screened oppression, so rendering women vulnerable to a screened oppression that is difficult for them to recognise as emitting from the screen.

The issue of motherhood is central to this argument. I address this through discussion of women's care-work, which I refer to as reproductive

and domestic labour. It is important for my project to consider that, whilst Doane's analysis indicates the need to consider women's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) in terms of material and social as well as psychological structures, there is scope to expand upon her ideas and consider how women would benefit from analysis of their social obligation to occupy caregiving roles (motherhood) and the ways in which the practical demands of this impact upon their unequal relation to capitalism. Drawing from Federici's analysis (1975, 2010), I discuss women's reproductive and domestic labour relative to the politics of looking (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) exerted by the screen and screened images of women. Generally, the thesis examines how neo-liberalism is predicated on women's unpaid reproductive and domestic labour, and that the screen is a key, capitalist and patriarchal power structure operated to enforce women's oppression in order that patriarchal capitalism can flourish.

On the other hand, the screen is integral to women's ongoing negotiation of their oppression and liberation; if women are oppressed under the patriarchal gaze, as enforced *by* screened images, then women can combat the patriarchal gaze *through* screened images - that is, women can look back at the screen and screened images in ways that reconstitute the patriarchal gaze and its power. Therefore, my sculptures also evoke the possibility of an important political moment of onset, of a defiant, envisaged and critical machinic relation between capitalism and motherhood, in which mothers restructure patriarchal politics loaded into the screen and screened

images via the gaze. This envisaged moment of relational restructuring occurs when mothers find ways to look back through the body, which has been obliged to routinely embody the patriarchal screen and screened images. The argument materialised in the sculptures is that mothers - and women - do not have to always passively accept and embody these power structures in the ways that patriarchal capitalism intends but, instead, and even in the face of seeming impossibility, can reconstitute them according to notions of pleasure and desire drawn from beyond patriarchal frameworks. For this reason, the envisaged moment of the reconstitution of screened experiences is built into my sculptures.

### **3:1 Why Women Need a Balanced Model of Film Theory**

Early film theorists' focus on and prioritisation of the psychoanalytical oppression of women - for example in the work of Mulvey (1973, 1975) and Studlar (1984) - via cinematic experience, directs attention to women's experiences of screened oppression away from their historical and contemporary economic situation. This does not, in itself, help women towards material and psychic liberation because it effectuates a disjuncture between analysis of their economic oppression and of their psychological oppression. If the screen exerts psychological oppression on women through the kind of images it promotes, it is unclear how feminist film theories appropriately counter this issue, or how psychoanalytic theories offer women

a way out of their oppression. As this thesis acknowledges (in section 3:2), Claire Johnston (1975) expressed concern regarding the ahistoricity generated by the use of psychoanalytic approaches within feminist film theory. Indeed, Doane's (1982) analysis indicates the retention of an ahistorical, psychoanalytical bias by feminist film theorists weakens this possibility, to the extent of being detrimental to the formation of more balanced and historically contextualised approaches, in which psychoanalytical effects of screened oppression are given equal weight to women's material and economic subjugation.

In the late 60s and 70s, screened images of women were already far more complexly distributed than psychoanalytical film theories suggest (Wasson, 2007). Yet the focus of psychoanalytical film theories was such that woman's screened image, and experiences of this, remained tethered to and confined by traditional notions of cinematic "purity" (Wasson, 2007, p.75) - that is, notions of cinema which vaguely yet stubbornly adhered to the architecture of the cinema theatre and cinema screen. However, other formats such as television, fashion and fashion imagery, advertising and billboard posters were already maximising the distribution of the cinematic gaze beyond the architectural framework of cinema. These formats and their methods of distribution were subsequently developed through media technologies involving a multiplicity of different screens in different situations. Friedberg (2003) acknowledges this development, referring to the situation of the screen, previously thought of as only one kind of (cinematic) screen, as "divided screens" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 348) - that is, screens which are

united in terms of their ability to affect audiences, but which are situated in - and networked across - multiple, different locations and spaces. Wasson (2007) argues this development is now being taken into account by film theorists and, recently and as this chapter will discuss (in section 3.3), Mulvey (2013) has acknowledged both the technological inroads which have changed viewers' experiences and her previous lack of acknowledgement of this.

However, the effects of early psychoanalytically narrowed and narrowing early film theories had longstanding implications for trans-disciplinary debates of the effects of the screen, with research pathways remaining under-developed between film studies and other disciplines (Wasson, 2007). Indeed, Mulvey has acknowledged that, whilst a relationship existed between European academies and American cinema, this was to prove limited due to being binary and oppositional:

European intellectuals took up American cinema partly in a spirit of political polemics with the traditions and values of their own culture. A Hollywood film, brazenly generic, shamelessly star-struck, not even dignified by the presence of a single creative imagination, came to epitomise a binary opposition to the academic appropriation and fossilisation that overwhelmed the high cultures of literature, music, painting and so on. (Mulvey, 2013, p. 21)

Thus, today, whilst it feels entirely logical for me, as a sculptor, to want to investigate the effects of the screen and screened images on women and on the making of sculpture which represents women, it may seem surprising to some that I choose to refer to film theory to do so, because the ostensible separation of the disciplines of film studies and sculpture pervades. However, as an artist with a particular sensitivity to how screened images affect perceptions of women and mothers and to how looking can be used as a form of oppression, I have a strong interest in the contemporaneity of the sadistic, patriarchal, screened gaze and how women artists contribute to the contestation of this through the production of art, particularly sculpture. Whilst I do not speak to film studies in this thesis, I do expand notions of the screened gaze, with reference to Friedberg (2003), Wasson (2007), and others.

Wasson has argued that new attention is being given to the altered role of film studies, which once assumed a traditional - though as Wasson points out, "ever-elusive" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) - idea of cinema which, she claims, negates the "mobility" (ibid., p. 75) of the contemporaneous, screened, patriarchal gaze. I agree with her claim that: "Cinema is more malleable than previously understood, appearing everywhere, transforming across varied media and sites of consumption" (ibid., p.75) and that film theories (should) now take the effects of this malleability (Wasson, 2007) into account. But I want to draw attention to the fact that Wasson is not only saying that cinema is more malleable than previously. She is saying that

cinema is more malleable than previously "*understood*" (my emphasis) (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). The difference I point out is very important, because it is in this difference that Wasson's argument lies, and which I want to develop, which is that approaches to film studies have been historically limited and are benefitting from ongoing change. I want to draw attention to a passage of Wasson's writing that is significant for my argument, due to its implications for my sculptures. The passage relates to Wasson's claim regarding the benefits of "unravelling the discrete film object" (ibid., p.75). In this passage, Wasson contextualises her argument:

...companion metaphors emphasizing mobility, such as Anne Friedberg's 'mobilized gaze,' have functioned productively to loosen a constraining dependency on medium specificity and to weaken attempts to preserve an ever-elusive idea about cinematic purity and essence. Unravelling the discrete film object into debates about its relations to urban life, modern leisure, and ascendant consumerism has expanded and enriched the field, sending film scholars towards cultural, media, television, and visual studies, as well as sociology and political economy. Collectively such work has necessarily shifted our understanding of cinema away from a sacred and finite text towards an expanded system of overlapping relations. (ibid., p. 75)

My experience of making *New Model Army* suggests that Wasson's proposed "unravelling" (ibid., p. 75) of "the discrete film object into debates

about its relations to urban life, modern leisure and ascendant consumerism" (ibid., p. 75) can - and should - include analysis of the relation - theoretical, material, cultural - between screened, mediated images and sculpture. Wasson's comments suggest that scholars of art and art theory can today expect to approach questions regarding the screen, screened images and film theories with a trans-disciplinary sensibility, forming pathways over and across disciplines where appropriate, and with an eye to changes in "ascendant consumerism" (ibid., p. 75), in which media technologies are ever-advancing. The contemporary proviso she flags up is that this should happen without adherence to traditional notions of "cinematic purity" (ibid., p.75), "medium specificity" (ibid., p. 75) and "discrete film object" (ibid., p. 75). Taken to its logical conclusion, Wasson's approach suggests that sculpture, including my *New Model Army* sculptures, can, under revised and expanded notions of film studies, be considered integral to this "unravelling" (ibid., p. 75) process. In this thesis, I therefore critically position my sculptures, and the women's sculptures discussed in this thesis, as integral to that process. Over the coming chapters, I elaborate this assertion.

For now, I claim that the idea of sculpture being integral to this process suggests that sculpture has a specific role to play in acknowledging and communicating to audiences that developments to the screen have engendered a transition from film objects to mediated objects and that sculpture can evoke how women contend with the seemingly limitless power, including and especially the fiscal might, of media. Byerly's recent analysis

(2014) draws attention to the latter, focusing on the media conglomerates operating at the “macro-level” (Byerly, 2014, p. 106) of media industry which “...includes the policy, financial, and ownership structures that together create the environment within which the major media companies operate” (ibid., p. 105). She argues that media and mediated news reportage problematically represents women by distorting, stereotyping and omitting aspects of their lives (ibid., p. 106) and, in turn, questions the politics underpinning the vast wealth gained from employment within media industries and its disproportionate distribution between genders, with women having “...only the merest presence in the ownership and decision-making levels of these corporations the world over” (ibid., p. 106).

Byerly argues the exclusion of women from financial holdings in media directly relates to their exploitation as media audiences; for women, this exploitation begins in her early childhood - for example, through problematic representations of women in highly subservient roles - and encompasses motherhood, including by restricting mothers' choices regarding positive representations of women and mothers. Byerly's statement expresses the view that women's material and psychological manipulation and subjugation are directly connected, but with the connection being deliberately obscured. Among the strategies for resistance and change Byerly mentions are political activism, alternative media and policy changes (ibid., p. 109). Following Byerly's analysis, I consider how sculpture can and should be regarded as one such “alternative media” (ibid., p. 109) and, in light of her account, I

regard my own sculptures and the women's sculptures discussed in this thesis, as such. This leads me to argue that, by considering how sculpture, including my own, materialises critiques of the psychological and material oppression of women and, in turn, of unhelpful biases within psychoanalytical film theory, new analysis can be drawn regarding women's screened oppression and how art is implicated in their overcoming of it.

### **3:2 Psychoanalytic Film Theory**

In this chapter section I examine early film theory and draw out, insist upon, and build previously neglected affective relations between film, film theory and sculptural practice, in which flatness and fragmentation, in screened images of women, are key to the assertion of patriarchal linearity which subjugates them.

Flatness and fragmentation constitute key technologies for the patriarchal, screened oppression of the desires and pleasures of female subjects. Art making is an important means of empowering subjects to combat this linearised oppression by enabling access to an "outside" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 43) of patriarchal regimes. In responding to these technologies of flatness and fragmentation by making *New Model Army*, I have re-dimensionalised, bricolaged and en fleshed a bodily and ocular gaze intended to subvert patriarchy. I have carried out this making relative to artists' works in which other women artists respond in similar ways. Hence, my sculptures evoke the ongoing combat that women engage in, to stand up

to and overcome the oppression of their desires and pleasures.

When I began making the *New Model Army* sculptures (2011) I was convinced there was an important relation between these works and the mediatised gaze. However, I didn't know how to begin to think or talk about this, especially because the relation didn't seem remotely obvious and because, at that time, I wasn't sure how to name, as 'mediatised', the gaze I was thinking about and which felt thoroughly imbricated within the works. I only understood this form of looking as the *voyeuristic gaze*, but I felt that the term was not quite right.

I knew, without understanding how, that these new sculptures connected to my much earlier MA work, particularly the series *So Make Me Famous*, which I exhibited in my final degree show in 2003. In this earlier series, my fascination with the screen, as a vehicle for female fantasy, was very apparent, as was my interest in text art. When I made these earlier works, I was working (mainly full-time) in roles that involved using a computer and being exposed to the computer screen routinely, including to send and receive emails, and combining this with my part-time MFA studies, fairly extensive care-duties for a family member and bringing up my daughter alone. My position was precarious and I was (then) becoming concerned, but remained hopeful, for my future as an artist; I knew that I was already very challenged by the extent of the work involved in various roles and, additionally, the less obvious but very significant work of juggling / combining them. But I retained a deep-rooted need to make art, and a belief in art's

ability to encourage change. It was from this tenuous, contradictory position, and the (for me new) exposure to the extreme degree of career ambition at play in Goldsmiths College, that I became, through the widespread introduction of email systems into society at that time, interested in the promise and lure of the digitised screen and of fame, as potential and/or (merely) ostensible emancipatory structures. This interest also included relationships as integral to such structures, and as a way for me to share with the audience a way of seeing, and responding to the symbolic world. Having already been exposed, through lived experience, to corporate and business structures and approaches, particularly corporate language and the de-personalisation involved, and the emphasis on constructing interpersonal networks, with a view to advancing one's career goals, I had also become fascinated (and at times repulsed and depressed) by what I perceived as corporate tendencies being operated within an art school; I found the languages and approaches both objectionable - and I now know that this was because I had already had significant exposure to how they facilitate capitalist driven, corporate hierarchies and relations involving market dominance and I had hoped for something other than this within art college - and interesting - and I know now that my experiences of employment had allowed me just enough objective distance from the situation that I was implicated in, at Goldsmiths, to be able to form the beginnings of an institutional critique. I sensed that the screen, found objects, written language and architectural spaces, could be positioned as structures through which a way of seeing could be articulated as an imagined - or fantasised - life,

experienced by an evolving, fluid subjectivity known as Linda. This life stood in stark contrast to that which I was experiencing and it was a life that, it seemed, patriarchal capitalism would otherwise deny me and women in my position.<sup>54</sup> I had also become interested in the idea that art colleges actively foster fantasies of success and fame and that, whilst there seemed to be a silence surrounding my own negative (from a patriarchal perspective) experiences and desires as a working single mother, and the politics relating to this, there was, in stark contrast, avid and institutionalised fascination with (to my mind limited and limiting) notions of artistic success; this impacted, I felt, onto the relationships that people on the programme constructed and valued. Through these earlier works, I intuitively (rather than knowingly) play with silences and 'inarticulacies' surrounding the desires of the working single mother artist, the institutionally normalised desires relating to artistic notions of success and the (im)possibility that the latter could provide a form of protection and enabling of the former. One implication embedded in the work is the possibility of a dynamic meeting point, a space of negotiation, between capitalist structures of fame and otherwise outlawed desires; this is articulated through the idea that the subjectivity of Linda is "available to

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<sup>54</sup> My relation to text art is complex, and was initially unwanted, but necessary. It derives from my early experiences of combining motherhood with office employment, in London and after graduating from my BA Fine Art programme. The employment involved extensive typing, under instruction from a man, and extensive periods of enforced sitting in order to do so. The experience could not have been more opposite to my experiences of making sculptures as an undergraduate student and I found its effects extremely challenging, not merely because the man involved requested, on my first day at work, that I use my "artistic skills" to make a temporary sign saying "toilet". In this kind of context, there was, it seemed no possible way for me to continue to make the kind of sculptures I had been making. The only way forward and out of the oppression I experienced, as I understood and responded to it as artist, was to find a way to make both experiences - of making sculpture, and of typing - positively relate to one another. It is in this 'impossible' space, of an 'impossible', ultimately positive relation, that my interest in text art began.

deals" (Simone, 2012, p. 213) and will, in future, play out fantasies that extend those promoted by art colleges, if the audience responds in ways that will enable Linda - and her way of looking - to do so through the protection of fame systems available via the art world; this is not because I actually wanted fame - in fact, there is a less obvious, but very important, sense in which the title of the works suggests that fame would be, for me, an utterly degrading experience or punishment, or the worst outcome possible - but because fame was the abiding, logical, structural outcome that seemed (un)attainable through art college and which, utilised appropriately, might protect and mobilise the values, desires, sexuality and way of seeing that I wanted to live out and share with others, away from the destructive effects of the contradictory, impossible position I occupied. At that time, I had read very little feminist theory, and, apart from one recommendation<sup>55</sup> to explore Elizabeth Grosz's writing on architecture, I had not been encouraged to do so whilst on the programme; I could not have explained, with recourse to theory, or possibly even to written language, the complex, feminist position I was intuitively articulating. In brief, I had no idea I was articulating what others would consider to be a feminist viewpoint, including because I was struggling to live that position.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Made by Peg Rawes, who was not my personal tutor, but who had some teaching input at Goldsmiths at the time and who attended a group seminar in which I explained I was fascinated by the idea of 'gendered space' but didn't know what it was or how to research it theoretically.

<sup>56</sup> Although I was awarded a distinction for my MFA degree, I was not (made) aware of any appropriate response to the works, although I was told, by two female colleagues who were invigilating the exhibition one day, that a man had seen them and "...was going nuts" about them. I never found out who he was, no contact was made. So, either there were no "deals" (Simone, 2012, p.213) to be had, or I had failed to create a space-time for them. Either way, I resumed full-time employment in the construction industry and combined this

As I thought about these earlier works I wondered how it was that I could still be interested in the screen, when the screen did not appear in any obvious way in my new sculptures. Could it be that, in making these new works, I was still responding to the screen and what had felt to me, at an earlier stage, to be its lure and promise? Was there something remaining of these works that was unresolved? Was a "deal" (Simone, 2012, p.13) still to be done? Could I insist on a new space-time of negotiation? Also, if this previous interest in the screen had involved my use of written language as part of my sculptural practice, why was it that written language had 'disappeared' from my work, and yet I still believed the work to be very much connected to text (writing)? In ways that I couldn't explain, I felt that, though they could not seem more visually opposite than these earlier works, the textures, stance and absorbency of the new works were key to this connection to the screen and to written language. It was as if the highly textural components and absorbent textures within sculptures, such as *Torn*,

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with motherhood and making art. I became, for some time, very lost as an artist, and it was around this time that I first started to experience brief, but debilitating, phases of physical illness.



Fig. 23

Linda Aloysius

*Torn* (2012)



Fig. 24

Linda Aloysius

*Torn detail (1)*

(2012)



Fig. 25

Linda Aloysius

*Torn detail (2)*

(2012)

were ingesting an idea of an all-encompassing screen, bodily reconstituting it, in the moment of interaction with the viewer's gaze, and returning it to the viewer in unrecognisable form, through the body of each sculpture. Each sculpture seemed like an enlarged, porous, bodily organ or merging of soft organs - a mouth, a tongue, an eye, a mind, genitals - male and female - capable of reconstituting things and returning them in reconstituted form. This made some sense. But the question of why there was, suddenly, no text, no writing, remained unanswered and confusing for some time - at least until I understood that the sculptures had embodied the silence surrounding the relationship between motherhood and capitalism and that, as researcher within an institution implicated in compounding and/ or examining that silence<sup>57</sup>, I was not immune to that process, and may even be enabling it.

In ahistorically prioritising psychoanalysis over and above material analysis, rather than aiming to give a more balanced account of the relation between women's psychological and material situation, early psychoanalytical film theories have, ultimately, compounded a long-standing, institutional silence surrounding this relation, effectively generating *lag*, behind the revised approach to film studies that Wasson (2007) calls for and which takes into account the effects, on women, of material developments to the screen.

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<sup>57</sup> It is helpful to note Hilary Wainwright's description of institutions and her feminist interpretation of them, which, she says, requires "an alertness to hidden forms of power evident in silences and absences" (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, 2013, p. 28).

In support of my assertion, here, and prior to this thesis' examination of Mulvey's (1975) analysis, it is worth considering how the ahistorical prioritisation of psychoanalysis, which I refer to above, came to be.

Mandy Merck (2007) very helpfully points out that discussion of the "compositional circumstances" (Merck, 2007, p. 1) of Laura Mulvey's "canonical" (ibid., p. 1) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) is "non existent" (ibid., p.1) and that these circumstances should be taken into consideration. This is not least because they illuminate the conditions inherent within and generated by these circumstances and their impact onto how subsequent feminist attempts to revolutionise film theory were shaped and delimited.

In recounting the circumstances of Mulvey's writing, Merck re-asserts Yvonne Rainer's argument that it is necessary to re-approach Mulvey's "endlessly reiterated" (Merck, 2007, p. 1) work as primary example of "the theoretical text - as well as the filmic one - as a dynamic process" (Rainer cited Merck, 2007, p. 2). Merck's advocacy of a reading of Mulvey's text, then, is not so much as discrete textual object, but as a form of feminist, dynamic and (implicitly ongoing) process, articulated through written text that is constitutive of and constuted by the 'background conditions' affecting Mulvey and her writing.

Indeed, Merck draws attention to the fact that Mulvey wrote the text as:

...a feminist activist, part-time filmmaker, occasional bookshop worker, housewife, and mother who had never attended graduate school or held a teaching post. This author was, to be sure, an Oxford graduate (with a third-class honors BA in history), but her most notable previous writings were two articles in the feminist monthly *Spare Rib* and a short report on the Miss World demonstration for the London Women's Liberation Workshop journal *Shrew*. (Merck, 2007, p. 2)

Merck's analysis (above) extends to providing at least minimal information about Mulvey's lived experiences and the different, contradictory roles - worker, mother, film-maker, activist, writer - that Mulvey was trying to combine, as well as asserting what may, at least initially, seem like Mulvey's 'failed' - or at least non-productive - relation to one of England's most renowned - though arguably patriarchally invested - universities. This casts a different, and interesting, light on Mulvey's text. It encourages new insight into the text's - perhaps surprising - precarity, impacting onto any perception of it as a discrete, fixed object, instead re-positioning the work as a palpable, temporal<sup>58</sup> materialisation of the uncertain, if exciting, conditions within and

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<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that Jane Flax (1990) asserts a similar thought, offered from the kind of positive, feminist perspective I refer to. She says that "psychoanalysis, feminist theories, and postmodern philosophies...are transitional ways of thinking" (Flax, 1985, p. 14). She says this is because "In important ways each mode of thinking also has anticipatory

through which Mulvey initially wrote her seemingly unflinching text. This precarity, read positively and from a feminist perspective, also manifests as a fluidity which is otherwise obscured by the text's commanding stance.

Mulvey's 'failure' to succeed within the terms set out by a leading institution is very interesting for my project, and I return to this point anon. Meanwhile, regarding the sense of precarity I refer to, this is further underscored throughout Merck's analysis, when she describes, with somewhat forensic, feminist analysis, other circumstantial factors and their impact on Mulvey's text. This includes the male dominated editorial board of the journal *Screen* - a journal that, Merck says, was already an "anomaly" (ibid., p. 4) - and the editorial approach taken to the issue of *Screen* that Mulvey's text appeared in, which was such that any notion of feminism was effectively dumbed down; although Mulvey's psychoanalytic approach, and her challenge to "the patriarchal psychological order dominant in our societies" (Brewster cited Merck, 2007, p. 9) was noted, "no further reference is made to feminist criticism" (Merck, 2007, p. 9). The editorial decision not to foreground feminism / feminist criticism as such, relates to the journalistic objectives that predated the edition of *Screen* for which Mulvey's text was re-written in 1975 - after initially being presented, in 1973 in lecture format<sup>59</sup>. As Merck relates (2007) the journal had been influenced, since 1971, by the new, male editor for *Screen*, Sam Rohdie, who had put forward "terse,

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moments that offer glimpses of a future that will not be mere repetition of the past" (ibid, p. 14).

<sup>59</sup> The lecture was "to the French department at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1973" (Merck, 2007, p. 2-3).

declamatory and provocative" (ibid., p. 5) challenges and questions regarding "why the revolutionary hopes expressed for cinema and its critique have not been realized" (ibid., p. 5). Merck notes that Rohdie questions education institutions in ways intended to challenge "the economic and the political roles of education as an institution of cultural consumption and social dominance" (ibid., p. 5); in other words, Rohdie was concerned to disrupt hierarchies within education institutions which cemented, rather than redistributed, class politics. In a move that seems remarkable for its potentially progressive, institutional critique, he asks:

What in fact are the existing relations between criticism and teaching?  
...Is there a kind of film criticism which cannot be taught unless teaching and education are themselves altered? (Rohdie cited Merck, 2007, p. 5)

Rohdie's idea is that a critical approach may exist beyond institutional hierarchies, but that this can have no traction within (then) educational institutions unless they undergo (structural) change. It seems that his aim for *Screen* was to create new, discursive space for a potentially revolutionary approach to film theories, effectively calling for a "complete rethinking of film education" (Merck, 2007, p. 5) to allow for different and new approaches and modes of thought. Notably, however, the possibility that this might include new feminist analyses concerned to address issues such as equality, inclusivity and difference, is not foregrounded. Instead, as Merck relates, *Screen* set about pursuing "transformative theory of film" (ibid., p. 6). This

included analysis of "film movements...[which]...have declared their intentions in manifesto style" (ibid., p. 6). It also included reprinting several of these manifestos in the winter issue of *Screen* in 1971-72, at least one of which, as Merck points out, influenced Mulvey (ibid., p. 6).

It was into this pre-existing context of re-appraisal of manifestos for the revolutionising of film theory, rather than into a declared, innovative feminist space, that Mulvey's text entered. Merck therefore asserts that Mulvey's text deserves to be read as a manifesto, not only for this reason but because it also, she argues, emanates from a long history of feminist texts in which the manifesto has regularly appeared (Merck, 2007) as a recognised and respected form of writing. In support of this assertion, Merck acknowledges that writers such as Linda Kauffman have argued that Mulvey's text has a "lack of objectivity...[that is]...shared with the manifestos of the Futurists and the Surrealists" (Merck, 2007, p. 7) and that its "aim is to incite people to action" (Kauffman cited Merck, 2007, p. 7). In other words, on Merck's reading, "lack of objectivity" (Merck, 2007, p. 7) is positioned, by Kauffman, as feminist and positive. Merck also points out that Lynn Spigel compares Mulvey's text with Valerie Solanas's 1968 "S.C.U.M. Manifesto" and Donna Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" and states that Spigel observes the three women's works each have "a form full of imperatives and injunctions, a call to arms in the rhetoric of battle." (Spigel cited Merck, 2007, p. 7). In this sense, then, Mulvey's text becomes readable as something of a battle cry which, given what we now know of Mulvey's circumstances and her 'failure' at Oxford, seems both in keeping and at odds with the uncertain

conditions she herself was experiencing; 'in keeping', because her text acts as protest about the uncertain, oppressive conditions experienced by women under patriarchy and 'at odds with', because the possibility of such a text arising from those conditions is so unlikely that the fact that it did seems to contradict any claim regarding the detrimental effects of such conditions on women.

Notably, Merck (2007) draws further comparison between Mulvey's work and other leading feminist writers, such as *Hélène Cixous* and Claire Johnston, arguing that Johnston's work should have formed the basis for subsequent comparative analysis with Mulvey's - an outcome that would have led to more varied, feminist debate - but that this did not happen because of journalistic conventions and editorial approaches:

In the convention of the journal, the articles within the issue's "Film Cultures" review section, then edited by Christine Gledhill, are not previewed, so no editorial connection is drawn between the arguments in "Visual Pleasure" and those in Claire Johnston's review of pioneering feminist film studies by Molly Haskell, Marjorie Rosen, and Joan Mellen. (Merck, 2007, p. 9)

Merck argues that the absence of editorial reference to Johnston

...obscures the debate within *Screen* over psychoanalysis at the time, as well as the theoretical differences among its feminist critics in regard to the interpretative determinacy of the film text. (ibid., p. 9)

Importantly, Merck points out that Johnston herself expressed concerns that:

...the application of psychoanalytic theory, may lead to a kind of a-historical voluntarism, in which the particular historical conjuncture in which the film functions is rendered irrelevant. This is particularly important if feminist film critics are to relate their critical practice to the present conjuncture and to make any effective intervention in the Women's Movement." (Johnston cited Merck, 2007, p.10)

Merck also acknowledges that, in addressing Mulvey's text much later (in 2004), Mary Ann Doane "rejects both the ahistorical formalism of its period and contemporary cultural studies' refusal to acknowledge any formal constraint on 'choice' " (Merck, 2007, p. 18). This is interesting to my project and I analyse Doane's work in this chapter, including for how she makes an early attempt to move beyond the limitations of psychoanalytic film theory.

With that said, Bergstrom and Doane have reflected on the limitations of early film theories, including how "subjectivity was theorized as a textual effect fully bound up with processes of looking and hearing which were peculiar to film as a medium" (Bergstrom and Doane, 1985, p. 6). They have pointed out that this limitation would

...inevitably seem to raise questions of sexual difference.

Nevertheless, these issues were markedly absent from the work of Metz and semiotic theoreticians publishing in *Screen* (Colin MacCabe, Stephen Heath, Ben Brewster), at least until 1975 when Stephen

Heath's work opened out in this direction.<sup>60</sup> (ibid., p. 6)

In commenting on this move, by male writers, towards new debate of sexual difference, Bergstrom and Doane note that:

...it is somewhat ironic that it was the introduction of psychoanalysis (itself a bone of contention among feminists) which forced the issue and compellingly demonstrated in its very language and formulations the necessity of an attention to the inscription of sexual difference.

(ibid., p. 6)

In other words, whilst feminists disagreed about the merits of psychoanalysis within film theory, this issue prompted needed change. Bergstrom and Doane note that: "Laura Mulvey's extremely influential essay...appeared, dramatically changing the form of theoretical inquiries made about cinema" (ibid. p. 6). Whilst acknowledging that "it is important, however, to avoid an overly linear account of the development of feminist interest in the female spectator" (ibid, p. 6) Bergstrom and Doane recount various texts which had begun indirectly approaching this issue (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989) adding that "it was Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay which acted as catalyst for considerations of sexual difference and spectatorship" (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989, p. 6). Amongst the effects of this essay, they assert that there was

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<sup>60</sup> Bergstrom and Doane refer, in their own footnote, to Heath's "extremely influential 'Film and System: Terms of Analysis' " (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989, p. 25). They assert that this text "examined the representation of sexual difference as one of the key 'terms of analysis' in his case study of 'Touch of Evil' " (ibid, p. 25).

...desire to account for multiple differences (race, class, age) in relation to spectatorship together with the felt necessity of incorporating some notion of experience within theory (ibid., p. 10)

Theorists had become aware of differences between theorised spectatorship and experiential spectatorship, and wanted to draw upon the latter to understand how this affected a viewer's reading of film and "what these reading strategies were and where the subcultural resistance was located" (ibid., p. 11); if forms of resistance were already available through experiential spectatorship, this raised the potent question of whether film theories were actually needed (Bergstrom and Doane, 1989) - and this is a question that has obvious implications for Mulvey's own analysis. However, Bergstrom and Doane's analysis indicates that theories of female spectatorship were indeed needed. In an interesting move, they write that:

If we insist upon situating Mulvey's essay as the inaugural moment - the condition of possibility - of an extended theorization of the female spectator, it must also be remembered that this "origin" is constituted by an absence. In "Visual Pleasure," there is no trace of the female spectator. Indeed, spectatorship is incontrovertibly masculine.

(Bergstrom and Doane, 1989, p. 7)

The suggestion put forward, in the above, is that Mulvey's deliberate absenting of the female spectator generated the question " ' What about the female spectator? ' " (ibid., p. 7). Significantly, they add that "This question

was addressed both within and outside of a psychoanalytic problematic" (ibid., p. 7). In other words, on Bergstrom and Doane's account, Mulvey's focus on the male spectator was a strategic move to maximise and diversify attention to the question of the female spectator and, relatedly, of sexual difference.

With this in mind, it is interesting for my project to consider Merck's suggestion that we bear in mind Mulvey's own observations about her "painful struggle with writing" (Mulvey cited Merck, 2007, p. 18) and that Merck asks us to reflect on the possibility of a disjuncture, even an incompatibility, between Mulvey's subjective position (including as woman and as avid spectator) and how this impacted on her (ability to assert) choice and to direct the tenor of her text:

How do they accord with the brisk beauty of her prose, its authoritative diagnosis of the psychopathology of the ordinary man in the cinema, and its blasé farewell to the studio film? (Merck, 2007, p. 18)

Merck points out that, in recalling "the urgency of feminism in the 1970s" (ibid., p. 18) Mulvey states: "things had to be said not from choice but from political necessity." (Mulvey cited Merck, p. 18)

Building on Merck's analysis, we might speculate that it was not Mulvey's personal preference to write (quite) as she did. Rather, we might say that Mulvey wrote with an ingrained sense of commitment - possibly altruism - to a greater political cause, and, possibly having already

experienced the psychic effects of 'failure' at Oxford university, was willing and able to take the proverbial 'flak', thereafter, for writing in a way that supported that cause. For all that Mulvey's text seems highly confident and self-assured, there may well be a sense in which Mulvey herself - at least initially - was not, and could not be; as a woman, she was experiencing the negative effects of the patriarchal structures that she was writing in protest about and the personal strength involved in surmounting those circumstances in order to write should not be presumed to be easily formed or maintained. Indeed, Mulvey herself has stated that her text (1975) was "limited and polemical" (Mulvey, 2009, p. xvi) and has also acknowledged her own difficulties in engaging with writing processes:

In spite of my class, family and education (bourgeois intelligentsia, university education and women writers and intellectuals in my background) and a long standing addiction to reading, the idea of putting my own words on a page produced enormous resistance that at times almost amounted to phobia. (Mulvey, 1989, p. xxviii)

Moreover, Mulvey has pointed out that it was "the Women's Movement that made it possible for me to begin to be able to write" (ibid., p. xxviii).<sup>61</sup> The reason Mulvey gives for this is that the Women's Movement "insisted on unsigned, collaborative writing" (ibid., p. xxviii) and this allowed Mulvey "a liberation from the reductive 'I'" (ibid., p. xxvii). Mulvey explains that she still

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<sup>61</sup> Sheila Rowbotham (2013) has also credited the women's movement with encouraging her to write; this was "because the women's movement fostered supportive values of sisterhood" (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, 2013, p. 10).

experienced difficulty in writing in first person until she wrote "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema": "the success of the...article, and the critical debate that developed in its wake...forced me to take stock retrospectively of what I had written" (ibid., p. xxviii); in other words, in finding an audience, Mulvey felt obliged to take up a sense of responsibility for what she had written and to 'step into' the role suggested for her by the success of her writing - that of feminist film theorist.

With these - admittedly partly speculative - thoughts in mind, I find interesting Merck's observation that Mulvey's text obscures the idea - which for Mulvey became a lived experience - that writing - even writing that appears supremely confident - can be founded on subjective struggle not openly disclosed to the reader, but which ultimately structures what the reader then experiences as leading, if not seminal, work; under editorial directives, informed by greater political aims and values, Mulvey attempted to contribute something, despite finding writing difficult. Indeed, as Merck recounts, Mulvey has stated:

The Women's Movement put expression and language on the political agenda; what to say and how to say faced me with the question of the politics of authorship. Suddenly a perspective on the world had unfolded that gave women a position to speak from, and things that had to be said not from choice but from political necessity. (Mulvey cited Merck, 2007, p. 2)

I find this admirable, though not without (feminist) problems, in the sense that Mulvey's subjective alignment with "necessity" (ibid., p. 2) runs very - perhaps too - close to reinforcing the patriarchal and dangerous ideal of the self-sacrificing woman (and mother) and the dominant status her text achieved, through her decisions relating to its construction, have remained problematic for reception and reading of her text; whilst Merck has advocated reading Mulvey's text as process and as manifesto, I suggest it is worth bearing in mind that the editorial approaches she and her text became beholden to situated her text within journalistic frameworks which, in aiming to effectively mimic strategies of market dominance by championing an idea of revolution (of film theory) - rather than share the possibility of such change with feminist theorists - a priori delimited, with very enduring effects, the feminist presence and affect of her text within and beyond that structure.

However, in terms of my project, Merck's reference to the processes and lived experiences that become integral to the construction of a text bear correspondence to what can be involved in the construction of an art work; this helps me to understand how the impulses involved in each process can generate a dynamic convergence of their political aims. Whilst the latter points may be obvious, Merck's analysis helps me to think about them in ways that correspond with the 'bigger picture' for my project which, as I have stated, currently generates sculptures but has a vested - though far from easy or straightforward - interest in written text and writing processes and the relationship between them; this, I now understand, includes (temporarily)

prioritising - or foregrounding - one process in response to, rather than in denial or rejection of, the needs of the other, and strongly inclines me to think that more changes and developments will emerge, in regard to the relationship between writing and sculpture, in my practice.

To return to the issue of film theory: when contemporary feminist film theorists such as Bainbridge (2008) effectively reiterate Mulvey's early aim "to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics and passionate detachment" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 47) and, moreover, claim women's independent films have fulfilled this aim, the argument remains both limited and limiting, due to the ways - which this chapter has just discussed - in which early film theory was shaped, and the longer term effects of this. Bainbridge, in reading women's films in "Irigarayan terms" (Bainbridge, 2008, p. 94), argues that recent independent films made by women have generated the requisite distance Mulvey originally called for, by using camera techniques that disrupt the linear flow of the film's narrative. Bainbridge's analysis appears to affirm the appropriateness of Mulvey's original intention to create change at the site of film itself, via radical cinema. However, Bainbridge's account doesn't extend to include analysis of patriarchal developments in mainstream - that is, not radical or alternative - cinema and mediatisation - or, indeed, to the screen, or the necessity of adapting the role of film studies so as to analyse these changes; as we have seen, the adaptation of film studies was certainly desired, early on, but limitations were imposed on different feminist analyses of film, and impacted on the conditions for change which were in place at the

time of Mulvey's original analysis. In a general sense, this accounts for the lag I refer to.

Nevertheless, this generates space, in this thesis, for further analysis of the more specific effects of this lag. Hence, I ask: how can I be sure that my sculptures critique and overcome this lag, rather than succumb to it? In response to this question, I reflect on early film theory and relate this to my sculptures.

### **3:3 Mulvey's Critique of Allen Jones' Sculptures**

Laura Mulvey has demonstrated sensitivity to correspondences between the construction of patriarchal femininity, capitalism and art practices and inequalities relating to these, and this is helpful, in a general sense, to my project and art practice. For example, Mulvey's book "Visual and Other Pleasures" (1989) comprises a collection of her essays - several of which are co-authored - written since the early 1970s, and which, in being brought together in book format, illuminate a broader perspective than Mulvey's famous essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) indicates.

For example, in an essay entitled "Images of Women, Images of Sexuality: Some Films by J. - L. Godard" and co-written with Colin MacCabe, Mulvey considers the work of Jean Luc-Godard and draws interesting

observations: "The female body has become industrialised; a woman must buy the means to paint on (make-up) and sculpt (underwear/clothes)" (Mulvey, 1989, p. 56). Moreover, an essay (1983) "Frida Kahlo and Tina Modotti", which Mulvey co-authored with Peter Wollen, acknowledges both artists' "politically militant" (ibid, p. 88) stance and, generally, women artists' marginalisation, whilst exploring the "question of how women come to be artists" (ibid, p. 89) and asking "The principal question" (ibid., p. 94) - that is: "What relationship should a new, feminist aesthetic have to the culture of oppression and marginality which has traditionally moulded women's artistic work?" (ibid., p. 94). Within this same essay, there is evidence of Mulvey's sensitivity to Kahlo's artistic "physical fragmentation" (ibid., 1989, p. 108) of woman's body, how Kahlo's work evokes "female suffering, vulnerability and self-doubt" (ibid., 1989, p. 96) and, in discussing Modotti's work, the feminist perspective (Mulvey, 1989) of "emphasis on the body, on woman's body as a particular problem both as the vehicle for childbearing and as an object" (ibid., 1989, p. 89) and Modotti's interest in depicting "peasant and proletariat women marked by the conditions of their life" (ibid., p. 109). Additionally, in Mulvey's essay, first written in 1986, "Impending Time: Mary Kelly's Corpus" (Mulvey, 1989), Mulvey observes that: "Mary Kelly used life's own dimension, the actual growth and development of her own child, to generate the different sections of the work" (ibid., p. 158) and also: "The woman's body is not presented simply as an item of discourse, but lived in time and sexuality and emotion" (ibid., p. 156).

Observations and insights such as these - even if drawn out in collaboration with other authors - add dimensionality to Mulvey's own work and the contribution she makes to critical analysis of art, and encourage similar thoughts and practices already active in my own project. Moreover, in a subsequent essay "Postscript: Changing Objects, Preserving Time" in her book "Fetishism and Curiosity" (Mulvey 2013), Mulvey demonstrates great sensitivity to sculpture in her account the work of male artist, Jimmie Durham. Describing Durham as an artist creating work from the early seventies, Mulvey states:

It is easiest to describe him as a sculptor, but only because so many of his objects are constructions that stand free in space and can be approached from every angle. Even the sculptural constructions break out of formal unity. (ibid., p. 211)

It is helpful to my project to see that, in this essay, Mulvey also shows awareness of the marginalised but defiant political and critical position Durham occupies as artist; whilst his work tackles the issue of America's denial of American Indian culture and my work takes on the issue of the pathologisation and marginalisation of the working single mother artist, there are parallels between the two. For example, Mulvey observes that Durham generates:

...a very deep reflection on the Indian people's losses of culture, art, history and world view. Confrontation supersedes negation. Almost like the witnesses to a disaster that evades articulate expression, Durham's objects 'give evidence' through symptomatic appearance; they fill the vacuum left by a history of denial and misunderstanding. As a native American artist and intellectual, he represents the history that reduced his culture to traces and tatters, not iconically through an imagery of resemblances, but conceptually and aesthetically. (ibid., p. 214)

Mulvey's idea, articulated above, that objects can act to "evidence" (ibid. p. 214) histories and experiences that would otherwise be politically obscured, bears strong correspondence to the idea, articulated through my practice and reflected upon in this thesis (see section 4:3), that the materials and objects I use in my sculptural works materialise women's relationship to capitalism, which would otherwise remain politically obscured.

In a move that is particularly interesting for my project's interest in screened oppression and the effects of this on the production of sculpture, Mulvey also shows - albeit relatively tentative and / or general - awareness of how Durham's sculptures operate relative to the politics underpinning the American film industry and Hollywood in particular. She writes:

As critics have so often commented, the mythology of the United States, while disavowing its colonial heritage, depends on Manichean modes of thought, particularly as represented in its privileged manifestation, Hollywood cinema. In Ronald Regan's political demonologies, the Christian, racial, Hollywood and cold war forms of binary thought flourished to the point of absurdity, most obviously erupting in the Evil Empire rhetoric. Jimmie Durham's work confronts the rhetoric of binarism...(ibid., p. 215)

This analysis, which I read as an important but somewhat fleeting acknowledgement of a relationship between the production of sculpture and the effects of the screen, is helpful for my project. Mulvey's observations encourage me to draw similarities and parallels between Durham's aims and position and my own; even on a simple level, as a consequence of reading Mulvey's account, I feel both more and less marginalised in operating as a working, single mother artist.

However it has to be said that this analysis is drawn much later than Mulvey's most influential text "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) and much later than her early essay (1973), which I examine here, about the work of sculptor Allen Jones. Moreover, whilst Mulvey does show great sensitivity to artists' works, and, in a general sense, to the relationship between three-dimensional forms and the cinema - "The cinema... appropriates objects, turns them into images and wraps them in connotations

and resonances" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 167) - her focus is not on the work of female sculptors, including those who emerged in the late 60s and early 70s. Therefore, whilst Mulvey's later texts do some of the work involved in attending to areas of theoretical neglect, including regarding the relationship between sculpture and film, it has to be said that Mulvey's work does not give priority to analysis of the relation between cinema and sculpture, or to analysis of how the cinematic gaze was, in the early 70s, already being extended through formats other than the cinema; there is a strong sense, then, in which her later works effectively compensate (at least a little) for an area of theoretical neglect which Mulvey's earlier texts initially contributed to effectuating.

With that said, aspects of her famous text "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (Mulvey, 1975) are, therefore, still valuable and worth considering; somewhat perversely, this is more to do with what the text does not address rather than what it does; this text follows but does not develop her earlier, work "You don't know what is happening, do you, Mr Jones?" (1973) in which she references sculpture in relation to the patriarchal gaze. This earlier text establishes extremely important affective relations between sculpture, cinema and secondary formats for the patriarchal gaze and, in so doing, raises the tantalising possibility of such an analysis being further developed either by Mulvey or by other theorists.



Fig. 26 Allen Jones, *Hatstand, Table and Chair* (1969)

Mulvey's text: "You don't know what is happening, do you, Mr Jones?" (1973) begins to illuminate the "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) between cinematic experience and sculpture, whilst also indicating what became neglected, in terms of attention to sculpture and to those relations, when Mulvey subsequently prioritised the psychoanalytic, to focus only on cinematic experience in ways that retained an idea of "cinematic purity" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). In this text, Mulvey takes issue with

the highly controversial works *Hat Stand, Table* and *Chair*, produced in 1969 by male sculptor and painter Allen Jones, for his series *Women as Furniture* - some of which were first shown in 1970 in Tooth's Gallery in London. In a published interview with Jones, who responded to Mulvey's criticism of his work, he assumes the role of victim, and positions Mulvey and other feminists as aggressors. He "...confessed that he feels that he has been unjustly attacked by women's lib over the last two years (and that this sometimes gives him sleepless nights)" (in Rowse and Parker, 1973, p. 16) and says of Mulvey's criticisms that it is:

...unscrupulous to write a manifesto of personal beliefs using someone else as a clothespeg and disguising the whole thing as an exercise on objective psycho analysis. (ibid., p. 6)

Mulvey criticises Jones' sculptures, claiming that: "Man and his phallus is the real subject of Allen Jones's paintings and sculptures, even though they deal exclusively with women on display" (Mulvey, 1973, p. 16). She cross-references Freud's allusion, in connection with his castration theory, to the mythological Medusa's hair of decapitated snakes, with Jones' "harem" (ibid., p.30) of sculptures, to account for his compulsion to produce an abundance of fetishised female figures: "...on a more obvious level, we could say with Freud in 'The Medusa's Head' that a proliferation of phallic symbols must symbolize castration" (ibid., p.30). Significantly, she concludes

her text with a message for women: “The time has come for us to take over the show and exhibit our own fears and desires” (ibid., p. 30).

Mulvey’s call for women to take control of their own pleasures in and through looking and the visual realm, rather than be subjected to and oppressed by only providing visual pleasure for sexist men, expressed the sentiments of feminists at that time, many of whom had protested against the exhibition of Jones’ works<sup>62</sup>.

However, it is helpful to my project to consider how Mulvey’s response to Jones’ work confirms that the cinematic gaze had, by that time, begun to affect the production of sculpture. Significantly, Mulvey refers, in the article, to Jones’ published work *Allen Jones - Figures* (Jones, 1969), as a “scrapbook of cuttings, out of magazines... There are also postcards, publicity material, packaging designs and film stills” (ibid., p. 13). This reference to material formats other than the cinema suggests that Mulvey is either aware of the possibility that the male gaze already existed in formats beyond the cinema itself but does not pursue the fuller implications of this, or that she remained unaware, despite her research coming extremely close opening out those implications. The former seems most likely when we consider that Mulvey has subsequently acknowledged the circulation of woman's image in patriarchal capitalist society:

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<sup>62</sup> The Women’s Liberation protested against the works in the show at Tooth’s Gallery in London and, allegedly, threw smoke bombs at his show at the ICA. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/11vm5Ph7hTxjCBSJ8YdCz68/the-power-of-desire-allen-jones-at-the-ra>. [Accessed: 02.06.15]

The image of woman as spectacle and fetish sets in motion another chain of metonymies, linking together various sites in which femininity is produced in advanced capitalist society: woman as consumed and woman as consumer of commodities, women exchanged in image and women transforming themselves into image through commodity consumption. (Mulvey, 1989, p. xxxii)

Interestingly, Mulvey has pointed out that:

...the feminist emphasis on image, discourse and representation  
...also pre-figures the present power of the image, and its tendency to take off into pure self-referentiality and play, losing touch with historical reality. (ibid., p. xxxii)

Notably, however, although Mulvey's description (above) demonstrates awareness, it assumes a rather abstract quality, which is in keeping with the ahistoricity engendered by her psychoanalytic approach. In other words, Mulvey did not lack awareness of the greater reach of the cinematic gaze, but chose to delimit her analysis; having begun to forge potent connections between sculpture and cinema that, I argue, are needed in order to illuminate the positive, affective relations between them, Mulvey did not pursue them, but instead focused on psychoanalytic enquiry. This decision has generated a problem - and an opportunity - for my own study.

Before proceeding it is worth stating, here, that in her essay "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun*" (1946), in "Visual and Other Pleasures" (1989), Mulvey indicates that she intended the "male third person" (Mulvey, 1989, p. 31) in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) to be portrayed / read "ironically" (ibid., p. 31). She does state that "I still stand by my 'Visual Pleasure' argument" (ibid, p. 31) but she proceeds to investigate "avenues of inquiry that should be followed up" (ibid., p. 31); Mulvey explores overlapping questions of whether the female spectator's "pleasure can be more deeply rooted and complex" (ibid., p. 31) and what happens to film and film theory when the female character is "occupying the centre of the narrative arena" (ibid., p. 31) within Hollywood Melodrama. Regarding the latter, Mulvey asks whether the central female character is able - or not - to experience pleasure that is equal to that of a central male character and how this affects the female spectator; will the female central character (and the spectator) only experience "oscillation" (ibid., p. 32) "between the deep blue sea of passive femininity and the devil of regressive masculinity" (ibid., p. 32)? In exploring these areas, Mulvey examines Freud's conception of femininity and the problems caused to women, their pleasure and the value given to their pleasure, by his perception of femininity as opposite, "in an anatomic sense" (ibid., p. 33), to masculinity, rather than as different to masculinity. Meanwhile, Mulvey does point out that she subsequently opened out the

focus of her enquiry, to accommodate notions of story-telling, rather than only the gaze. She states:

In 'Visual Pleasure' my argument took as its axis a desire to identify a pleasure that was specific to cinema - that is, the eroticism and cultural pleasure surrounding the look. Now, on the contrary, I would emphasise the way that popular cinema inherited traditions of story-telling that are common to other forms of folk and mass culture, with attendant fascinations other than those of the look. (Mulvey, 1989, p. 34)

I explore the issue of Freud's anatomical readings, and the problems caused by this, in Sections 4:2 - 4:4. For now, my thesis attends to problems caused by Mulvey's initial focus, in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). This includes problems caused because the idea that the cinematic gaze already existed in what Wasson later refers to as "an expanded system of overlapping relations" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75), which extended beyond notions of "cinematic purity" (ibid., p. 75), was not sufficiently admitted into discourse, in the 60s and the 70s, when psychoanalytic film theory developed.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, as I demonstrate in the following section, despite

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<sup>63</sup> In the Foreword (written in November 2012) to the Second Edition of *Fetishism and Curiosity* (originally published in 1996 and republished in 2013), Mulvey does acknowledge her previous inattention to redistribution of the cinematic gaze and does also acknowledge how this redistribution has subsequently manifested, albeit with reference to more recent developments and more recent theory, such as Francesco Casetti's (2011) analysis of changes to viewing in response to changes to the screen. Mulvey refers to this as the "diffusion of attention" (Mulvey, 2013, p. xii) amongst viewers. Regarding her previous

having struggled with " 'the politics of authorship' " (Mulvey, 1989, p. xxviii), ultimately the force brought to Mulvey's (1973) analyses (1973), (1975) and which is hinged around her conflation of the male and the patriarchal, sadistic viewer, was such that it diverted film theories away from the idea that the screened gaze was already distributed beyond the architecture of the cinema; in so being, the oppressive effects of the gaze, on women, were already becoming normalised in ways that film theorists did not sufficiently account for. In this sense, although she may have intended to portray the male viewer "ironically" (ibid., p. 31), this intention is obscured; Mulvey effectively - and forcefully<sup>64</sup> - asserts an idea of the male viewer as having an absolutely fixed standpoint, rather than admitting the possibility of his - and women's - standpoints being fluid.

I find it interesting that, in her subsequent paper "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama" (1977), presented as Chapter 5 in "Visual and Other Pleasures" (Mulvey, 1989), Mulvey does acknowledge that director Douglas Sirk uses the tradition of melodrama to offer "an extremely rare epitaph, an insight into men as victims of patriarchal society. He shows castration anxiety...dreadfully and without mediation" (Mulvey, 1989, p. 43). Mulvey

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inattention to this issue, she says that "I was unaware of the 'dematerialising' process that was on the point of overtaking cinema" (ibid., p. xi). Regarding her more recent interest in changes to the cinematic gaze and its distribution, she says "as cinemas have increasingly banished the film projector in favour of digital projection, viewing has also proliferated into multiple viewing platforms" (ibid., p. xi). Mulvey connects these changes to "the question of fetishism within the dematerialised structures of cinema, its spectatorships and femininity" (ibid., p. xiii).

<sup>64</sup> Notably, this included Mulvey's text being shaped by the input of male editor, Ben Brewster; as Merck has pointed out, Mulvey "has stressed the editorial support Brewster offered in the revision of her article and the care she and Brewster took to heighten the impact of a piece" (Merck, 2007, p. 10).

notes that Sirk does this without constructing castration anxiety as "personified by a vengeful woman" (ibid., p. 43). However, the idea of the male as victim of patriarchy, and the complex gender political implications of this, is not and does not quite become the focus for Mulvey's investigations. This is despite that, in her earlier paper "Fassbinder and Sirk", written in 1974 but - perhaps rather confusingly - presented in "Visual and Other Pleasures" (1989) as Chapter 6 (giving the impression it was written after, rather than before, the text presented as Chapter 5 and before "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" was published) - Mulvey discusses of two fascinating films - Douglas Sirk's "All That Heaven Allows" (1955) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "Fear Eats the Soul" (1974). She pays attention to how the male character in each film is structurally implicated, as victim, within patriarchal values which deny the sexuality of the mother. In "Fassbinder and Sirk", Mulvey does examine each director's construction of the male character in plots which involve "the humiliation heaped on a mother (not necessarily, even, an 'older woman') who still publicly asserts her active sexuality" (Mulvey, 1989, p. 50).<sup>65</sup> In the case of the two films, the mother's humiliation is heightened because she falls in love with and (despite the difficulties involved) commits to actively loving - that is, practising loving actions rather than only enjoying the pleasures involved in love - a

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<sup>65</sup> Without wishing to undermine Mulvey's acknowledgement of this point, I want to note that, depending on the circumstances and subjectivities involved - and because it will be conditioned by at least these factors - the public assertion Mulvey refers to can be a more complex undertaking than Mulvey's language (or, indeed, Fassbinder's and Sirk's films) perhaps suggest. Through my artistic practice, and as I explain in this thesis, I explore this complexity, which involves the negotiation of a woman's desire in defiance of patriarchal symbolic terms that otherwise seek to constrain her not merely as woman but also as mother.

controversial / patriarchally prohibited, complex male; in each case, Mulvey observes that the directors do "bring the couple together at the end, as they realise how much they mean to each other, but the man falls victim to the stress of the relationship" (ibid., p. 49). Having examined both films I would propose that, under Fassbinder's directorship, the victimhood of the male character is more pronounced and this difference possibly bears direct correspondence to the fact that, in this film and compared with Sirk's, the female character is both a mother and - again compared with Sirk's - appears more obviously older than the male character; effectively, in Fassbinder's account, the male character is more obviously punished for falling in love with a sexually active, older mother. With that said, by scripting the lead, male character as a black man, Fassbinder does introduce the issue of race and inter-racial relationships, thus complicating and building on Sirk's work by positioning inter-racial relationships as punishable under patriarchy. However, it is also worth noting (because Mulvey does not quite do so) that the female character is also punished; because she loves the male, she experiences his pain as her own. In Sirk's film, male and female characters appear to be of a similar age, and the punishment to the male character - and, so, to the female character - is less severe. Moreover, in the latter, case, as Mulvey notes, the couple eventually

...achieve social independence through economic self-sufficiency,  
outside capitalism...[the male is able]...to control his own labour power

and the widow to find her place as an equal and useful partner in the  
primaevial division of labour. (Mulvey, 2009, p. 50)

Mulvey's interest, here, demonstrates her attentiveness to "the effects  
of capitalism on sexual relations" (ibid., p. 61) and her awareness,  
demonstrated in this and subsequent analysis (Mulvey, 2013) of how  
capitalism shapes intimate relations, including by forming class divides, such  
as that between the working class and the middle class; on Mulvey's  
analysis, cinema plays a role in this process; the middle class is, at least in  
cinematic representation: "atopian, neutral, safe from any possible  
interference from social or economic pressures" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 49).  
Mulvey's subsequent analysis (2013) demonstrates her knowledge of the  
history and inner workings of the Hollywood system as integral to the  
industry of American cinema (Mulvey, 2013). Moreover, Mulvey's analysis  
(2013) at times includes examination of how gendered roles and relations in  
film scripts mirror capitalist outcomes such as class, gender and race.  
Nevertheless, she does not prioritise the kind of investigation I examine  
above, in which male suffering / pleasure under patriarchy / patriarchal  
capitalism is explored as integral to (at least heterosexual) women's  
pleasure. Instead, Mulvey's, ultimately unhelpfully, assertion (1975) of the  
sadism of the male viewer, however ironically intended, overshadows  
subsequent analyses of the role of the male as viewer and within filmic /  
cinematic narratives. Consequently, there was - and is - theoretical neglect to  
how early cinematic experience led to women's current, normalising,

oppressive screen identification with women's commodified images, as "dispersed more generally in our cultural consumption of images" (Walsh, 2013, p. 36). Relatedly, there was - and is - theoretical neglect to how female sculptors responded, and continue to respond, to women's screened oppression.

I am not suggesting that Mulvey should have pursued further arguments about sculpture; Mulvey should not be held accountable for not doing work outside her own research interests. My interest is in overcoming the problem that the tendencies within her analyses cause for my own project. Mulvey's (1973) exclusion<sup>66</sup> of a more balanced approach engenders areas of theoretical neglect, at a cost to more rounded discussion of what was happening in material and sculptural terms at that time.

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<sup>66</sup> For example, in her analysis of Cindy Sherman's work (Mulvey, 2013) which, Mulvey asserts, developed significantly between the late 70s and 80s - a period during which "the Women's Movement claimed the female body as a site for political struggle" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 85) - Mulvey generally acknowledges a connection between "women artists and film-makers" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 86) who, she claims, were "extremely wary about the investment of 'dominant meanings' in images of women" (ibid., p. 86). Mulvey also asserts that "artists turned to theory, juxtaposing images and ideas to negate dominant meanings and, slowly and polemically, to invent different ones" (ibid., p. 86). However, whilst she discusses connections between film-making techniques and Sherman's work, Mulvey does not prioritise further analysis of the relationship between different art forms and film (or artists and film-makers), or women sculptors - such as VALIE EXPORT, Louise Bourgeois, Hannah Wilke and Martha Rosler - and how they responded to women's material oppression in connection with their psychological oppression via screened images.

### **3:4 The Appreciation of Women's Sculpture Today**

In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Mulvey expresses her hope that, through radical cinema, material changes can be made to cinema that will ensure an anti-patriarchal “outside” (Mulvey, 1975, p. 43) of “linear time” (ibid., p. 43) in which a “new language of desire” (ibid., p. 36) will be possible. Mulvey's idea is to establish ways within the material site of film and, relatedly, cinematic experience, to break with norms of pleasure and to promote alternative experiences of sexuality and desire amongst viewers. Mulvey points out that radical film-makers are already attending to film in ways that: “free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics and passionate detachment” (ibid., p. 47) and her hope is to develop this. Whilst these present as good intentions, at least for radical cinema, they cause a problem for sculpture and its theoretical appreciation. If my own and other women's sculptures tackle the problem of how women artists might, through artistic practices, oppose and overcome their screened oppression, and, in so doing, encourage other women to consider their own experiences of screened oppression and how it relates to their patriarchal capitalist subjugation through reproductive and domestic labour, it is important for my research project to argue the necessity of considering Mulvey's ideas in regard to the screen and its positioning of women, beyond the psychoanalytic frame that she prioritises and beyond the (even radical) cinematic format.

To explain this argument, I will now examine *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1975), in which Mulvey constructs her account of “fetishistic scopophilia” (Mulvey, 1975, p. 42), a term she draws from Freud’s *Three Essays on Sexuality* (Freud, 1953), in which he “associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects” (Mulvey, 1975, p. 37) and *Instincts and their Vicissitudes* (Freud, 1957), in which he attaches the objectifying look “initially to pre-genital auto-eroticism, after which, by analogy, the pleasure of the look is transferred to others” (Mulvey, 1975, p. 37).

Drawing from Freudian and Lacanian analyses, Mulvey stresses the psychological imperatives underpinning cinematic looking and how fetishistic scopophilia visually and psychologically forecloses an idea of woman. Mulvey's argument is that women's fragmented and flattened image: “fixates the spectator and prevents him from achieving any distance from the image in front of him” (ibid., p. 47). This reinforces “the function of woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious” (ibid., p. 34). According to Mulvey, in this formation man’s fear of castration is simultaneously allayed and evoked by the fetish, particularly the fetish woman and its role in “concealing as it does castration fear” (ibid., p. 47). In this schema, in order to subdue his own fears of castration, man renders woman as “bearer of guilt” (ibid., p. 35) - and, in so doing, disempowers her by accrediting her with a lower status than himself - only to relieve her of this burden when he wishes to act upon his desire for “maternal plenitude” (ibid., p. 35), at which time he psychically

projects the possibility of his own pleasure onto her. Consequently, man perpetually “oscillates between memory of maternal plenitude and memory of lack” (ibid., p. 35).

Mulvey's argument is that, due to the ways in which cinema represents women, cinematic fetishisation of woman encourages men's unstable response to women and women are, consequently, subjected to ongoing patriarchal oppression, particularly through looking. I will return to the issue of the specific ways in which cinema represents women, as mentioned by Mulvey in her analysis, anon. Before doing so, I want to demonstrate how Mulvey builds a psychoanalytic framework for them and why this causes a problem - and an opportunity for developing understanding of the affective relationships between film and sculpture.

Mulvey is critical of how, under Freudian analysis, only man experiences “erotic rapport” (ibid., p. 43) with the iconic, cinematically fetishised images of woman. Under Freud, woman is positioned in and must stay in her “place” (Doane, 1982, p. 433) only to provide sadistic pleasure for man; her phallographic commodification, via the (allegedly) male gaze and its control and possession of her “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975, p. 46) constitutes “a further layer of ideological significance demanded by the patriarchal order” (ibid., p. 46). Mulvey raises the question of:

...how to fight the unconscious structured like a language (formed critically at the moment of arrival of language) while still caught within the language of patriarchy” (ibid., p. 35).

She suggests that erotic drives, when activated via the fetish woman, in cinematic experience, render patriarchal male subjects so preoccupied that eroticism is, for them and as they look, free from the constraints of linear time. She says: "Fetishistic scopophilia...can exist outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focused on the look alone” (ibid., p. 43).

Although the thesis does not examine time concepts it is helpful, at this juncture, to critique the logic underpinning Mulvey’s claim regarding linear time, and illuminate the problem this causes for an analysis of women's pleasure. In the above passages, Mulvey hinges her analysis of non-linear time, and of eroticism, around a conflated notion of male and patriarch. However, if we do not presume this conflation then, in its absence, the “outside” (ibid., p. 43) of “linear time” (ibid., p. 43) is not, as Mulvey, argues, automatically patriarchally instrumental in constructing his experience of “erotic rapport” (ibid., p. 43). In other words, if there is no guarantee of only a patriarchal, oedipal male to determine the fetish ‘woman’ via his gaze, there is no guarantee of only a patriarchal “erotic rapport” (ibid., p. 43), and there is no guarantee of patriarchal, psychic transportation to a patriarchal, pre-oedipal "outside" of (ibid., p. 43) “linear time” (ibid., p. 43). Instead, such a possibility remains uncertain.

In other words, the framework within which Mulvey positions her notion of the “outside” (ibid., p. 43) of “linear time” (ibid., p. 43) and relative to which, she argues, patriarchal male experiences eroticism, collapses when we refuse to presume conflated notions of man and patriarch. This means that the “outside” (ibid., p. 43) of “linear time” (ibid., p. 43) stands to be newly debated in terms of its meaning and its relation to (gendered) eroticism. Mulvey's description of the “outside” (ibid., p. 43) strongly inclines to suggest that the non-linear, erotic moment is exclusively patriarchal<sup>67</sup>. Whilst we might come to understand, via further scrutiny of her analysis, that this is not the case, there is a sense in which the damage is done: the force of Mulvey's assertion is, ultimately, misleading.

Moreover, it is important to remember - because her writing disinclines us from so doing - that Mulvey only refers to cinematic non-linear time as it occurs relative to the linear narrative construct (diegesis) of film, and that she does so by retaining a notion of "cinematic purity" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) - a notion already brought under critical doubt in this chapter, for its illusory nature, and which has led me to address notions of screened oppression through sculptural practice.

Mulvey's analysis of the “outside” (Mulvey, 1975 p. 43) of cinematic linear time is not reliable because, on Wasson's analysis (2007) there never was such an "outside" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 43) of cinematic, linear time; the

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<sup>67</sup> Mulvey (1975) would use the term *male* to connote patriarch.

affective remit of the cinematic was, in being confined to a pure notion of cinema, misunderstood.

The problem in Mulvey's analysis is the same as in her earlier (1973) work. Mulvey retains an idea of screened experience within a narrowed notion of cinema. This allows her to more forcefully conflate a notion of male and patriarch. It is this conflated idea of man which is the target at stake in her statement that: "The satisfaction and reinforcement of the ego that represent the high point of film history hitherto must be attacked" (Mulvey, 1975 p. 36). Her statement that women's fragmented and flattened image: "fixates the spectator and prevents him from achieving any distance from the image in front of him" (ibid., p. 47) could so obviously read as positioning the male viewer as victim of a process of soft mind control, forced to psychically internalise patriarchal values, that it is remarkable that Mulvey does not acknowledge such a reading and develop it.

Despite that Mulvey's intention is not to liberate man from his patriarchal conditioning, a more balanced approach is still needed, if her aim is to help (heterosexual) women negotiate their sexuality, in connection with their "to-be-looked-at-ness" (ibid., p. 46) within patriarchal society. Relatedly, Mulvey's retention of the psychoanalytic undermines the progressive potential of some details of her account of screened experience - that is, her references to the specific ways in which cinema represents women. In subsequent work, for example, Mulvey explores the cinematic representation

of different women and relates this to capitalism's structural positioning of women and the "invisibility" (Mulvey, 2013, p. 45) of their labour (including what can be unequal relations of labour between women, especially of different class and race). However, in her earlier work the opportunity to open out her analysis is de-prioritised in favour of psychoanalysis: these references still stand to benefit from being thought beyond the psychoanalytic framework and I elaborate this aspect of my argument in the next section.

### **3:5 Flatness and Fragments**

Mulvey's interest in Freudian and Lacanian analyses is deeply rooted within her analysis. It is difficult not to be drawn into her work without realising that, in so doing, one effectively rehearses her privileging of psychoanalysis. Mulvey argues that certain cinematic devices patriarchally and sadistically fetishise woman's body which, she says, is "fragmented by close-ups" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 43). The filmic use of the fragmenting close-up: "gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen" (ibid., p. 40). These ideas are important for my research because I appropriate and newly interpret the idea of fragments - and related techniques of flattening - in my *New Model Army* sculptures.

Mulvey's use of the terms "fragmented" (ibid., p.43) and "flatness" (ibid., p.40), are intriguing. These terms very clearly index key techniques which patriarchal capitalism uses to manipulate woman's screened image, in order to structure oppressive politics into looking. In effectuating screened oppression of women via woman's image, patriarchal capitalism "gives flatness" (ibid., p.40) to images of woman's "fragmented body" (ibid., p.40), in order to exploit the screen's potential for affecting audiences.

I have argued in Part One that women artists, including myself, take fragmenting approaches into their own hands, recruiting art making as an empowering activity through which to form either wholly or partly three-dimensional works which combat the flattening and fragmenting approaches of patriarchy, by re-dimensionalising women's body and, in turn, empowering an idea of woman. In so doing, I respond to Linda Nochlin's (1994) claim that the use of fragmentation in the works of male artists has been apparent since the onset of modernity and relates to:

...the struggle to overcome the disintegrative effects - social, psychic, political - inscribed in modern, particularly modern urban, experience, by hypostasizing them within a higher unity. One might, from this point of view, maintain that modernity is indeed marked by the will toward totalization as much as it is metaphorized by the fragment. (ibid., p. 53)

In the above, Nochlin suggests the broader context for the impulse towards visual and material fragmentation in art is both socio-historical - and, as such, culturally and politically engendered - and psychological. Nochlin speculates that male, unconscious motives underlying the artistic compulsion to fragment the (female) body are driven by modernism, which caused a fracturing of the pre-modern, classical “heroic energy of the past” (ibid., p. 7) and “the will toward totalization” (ibid., p. 53); the male artist’s tendency towards fragmentation, including and especially of woman, is proposed as an expression of “irrevocable loss, poignant regret for lost totality, a vanished wholeness” (ibid., p. 7) and a compulsion to retrieve, regenerate and aggrandise a sense of totalisation.

Given Nochlin's account, we might initially incline to think that male artists' segmentation of the female body<sup>68</sup> is an unconscious, modernist, but relatively *benign* expression of the desire to regain a sense of wholeness

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<sup>68</sup> To give but a very few examples, Nochlin writes of the work of Théodore Géricault and the way in which his paintings often depict severed limbs. I find particularly interesting her reference to the effect of the clothing referent in Géricault's painting *Severed Heads* (1818) in which she notes the “conjoining a male and a female head (a conjunction usually associated with the erotic rather than the mortuary mode and here further ironised by the pretty shawl effect for the woman)” (Nochlin, 1994: 21). Nochlin also refers to many instances in which painters such as Manet, Van Gogh, Degas and others visually segment woman in order to bring about a “making strange of human relatedness” (Nochlin, 1994: 47). Other examples not referenced by Nochlin but selected here from Robert Hughes' text on modernism (Hughes, 1991) include Edvard Munch's *Madonna* (1894-5), Fernand Léger's *Three Women* (Le Grand Déjeuner) (1921), Picasso's *Seated Bather* (early 1930), Alberto Giacometti's *Woman with Her Throat Cut* (1932), Kurt Seligmann's *Ultra-Furniture* (1938), Hans Bellmer's *The Doll* (1935), Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe Diptych* (1962), Roy Lichtenstein's *Drowning Girl* (1963). Hughes does not always draw attention to the fragmentation involved in these works but I do so here.

and, simultaneously, an expression of painful experiences of fractured modern life. However, Nochlin's text has deeper feminist and psychoanalytical undertones. For one thing, phrases such as the "will toward totalization" (ibid., p. 53) show her awareness of how the impulse towards a renewal of "heroic energy" (ibid., p. 7) can become a compulsion to reproduce phallographic and monolithicizing power, including in and through art. Male artists may unconsciously replicate a lamenting, patrilineal gaze that seeks to restore lost, *phallic* totality and reduplicate the fragmentation of a prior whole as an expression of this loss. However, where the fragmentation of a/the woman's body occurs in art made by men, the implication is that women must be incapacitated and subjugated, in order for a sense of "totalization" (ibid., p. 53) to be recuperated. For another, the phrase also signals Nochlin's awareness of the possibility, inherent in Freudian psychoanalysis, that male artists fetishise women due to a paradoxical, unconscious desire for total, rather than compromised, re-mergence with the mother and unconscious terror of precisely the same - that is, of assimilating with her and, in so doing, experiencing castration. The misogyny inherent in works such as that of Jones reads, therefore, as being developed out of a broader and longer historical context of men responding to and shaping modernity. A psychoanalytical reading - which is what Mulvey brings to Jones' work - suggests that it also indexes man's compulsion to fetishise woman so as to disempower, immobilise and fix her, and that this results from his difficulty in dealing with his unconscious longing for and fear of the mother.

Notably, in her account (1975), Mulvey immediately and only situates notions of "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and fragmentation within psychoanalytic framework. For Mulvey, it is the "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40) quality, in "close-ups" (ibid., p. 43) of woman's screened image, which patriarchally fetishise woman's image and which condition the male psyche to do likewise. Whilst Mulvey admits that this experience "fixates the spectator and prevents him from achieving any distance from the image in front of him" (ibid., p. 47) she does not expand upon her reading of the actual techniques or the formal qualities they produce, but, instead, only references them to support her argument that they engender a sadistic, fixating experience (in a patriarchal male) and that this, in turn, causes the ongoing patriarchal fetishism of women via woman's image.

*My New Model Army* works differently respond to and materially critique the ideas and possibilities in Nochlin's and Mulvey's analyses, through approaches involving "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40) notions of woman. Generally, my *New Model Army* sculptures critique Mulvey's approach to these techniques by physicalising, re-dimensionalising and embodying screen techniques of flattening and fragmentation of woman's body. In so doing, my sculptures acknowledge these techniques as key attributes of patriarchal, screened oppression, but also insist upon taking them to a different material, social and cultural register. In this sense, the

sculptures acknowledge Mulvey's psychoanalytic framework, and they do not entirely discount it. However, due to the pose / posture of the sculptures which they re-situate and re-constitute these technologies within, and their operativity within a three-dimensional field, they also move beyond it, and activate new synthesise between Mulvey's, Doane's (1982) and more recent (Wasson, 2007), (Friedberg, 2003) theories.

To explain: the pose / posture of the sculptures in *New Model Army* is upright or erect<sup>69</sup>, rather than recumbent or reclining. As such, it does not indicate that the sculptures have only passively succumbed to and embodied patriarchal flattening and fragmenting technologies and only suffer under them. Instead, the sculptures' poses are upright, combative, and indicate that they are standing up to and contesting these technologies and their psychological, phallicising and objectifying effects. This idea is supported by the appearance of the sculptures, which is, overall, almost thoroughly ravaged by a patriarchal capitalism, which has - almost - rendered them used, degraded and powerless.

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which, under scrutiny, the sculptures, in assume a defiant posture and appear about to step out of, or cast off - like a chrysalis - the very moment of totalising, embodied oppression they materialise and bear the weight of. That they do so at the

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<sup>69</sup> For reasons that should become self-evident to the reader, I deliberately conflate (whilst materially challenging) the (gendered) sexual meaning of the term and the meaning of the term as it used to describe construction and building techniques.

material sites of their bodies indicates my awareness, as their maker, of the importance of making visible the connection between psychological and material oppression and of the need for this to be expressed in ways that prioritise material and cultural, rather than only psychoanalytical terms.

Moreover, in deliberately conferring a phallic, monolithic shape on each sculpture, I aim to evoke the idea of the gaze as a default mode for the extreme phallicisation of whatever is viewed and, in turn, of the viewer doing the (phallic) viewing, and to imply that woman can expect to be rendered, phallically, by looking, unless she find ways to resist, stand up to and contest this eventuality.<sup>70</sup> In materialising these ideas, I play upon Gaylyn Studlar's comments that, within psychoanalytic film theories, it is "an oversimplification to collapse the entire signification of woman to phallic meaning" (Studlar, 1984, p. 210).

The sculptures deliberately take as their starting point the patriarchally collapsed signification and extrematisation that Studlar allude to, by assuming a generally oversimplified phallic shape. This move evokes the

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<sup>70</sup> In fact, the most challenging, and rewarding, aspect of making these works is figuring out/sensing - through physical engagement - how to enable them to stand up and to suggest, through their stance and posture, their sensitivity and vulnerability to, as well as their defiance of, the patriarchal gaze; this is especially tricky because the construction method I use is deliberately openly declared in each work and the task, at times, feels absolutely impossible. By this, I mean that there are no hidden fixtures - no glue, hidden screws or ties or nails - and the works are only held together with the materials that the viewer can see and that comprise the body of the sculpture. The implication is that the assemblage is highly precarious and could quite easily come undone, and that the pose of the sculptures is, therefore, momentaneous, temporal and envisaged.

way in which women routinely bear oppressive, phallic sight, and it visually declares, from the outset, the situation of their bodies within the confining structure of the phallic gaze, which is to be subverted and challenged at the site of the sculptures. This decision evokes the precarity involved, for women, of standing up to the phallicising gaze.

This critique of Mulvey's analysis also synthesises it with Doane's analysis (1982), in which she focuses on ideas of women's psychological sense of proximity and distance to and from the self and, somewhat indirectly, acknowledges the need to balance psychoanalytical enquiry with social, material and cultural analyses of power. In this analysis, Doane also demonstrates some awareness of the problems caused by privileging psychoanalysis in film theory. Doane doesn't actually do the work of overcoming these problems; there are gaps between what she proposes as being necessary and what she actually contributes in her analysis. Nevertheless, her analysis is progressive, in that it indicates a need for the kind of theoretical connections I have argued are necessary, between material and psychological oppression and the screen which regulates them and of the need for new ways to theorise film. I therefore choose to interpret the gaps in Doane's analysis as "creative gaps" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20) and, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, build into them both theoretically and sculpturally.

Doane's analysis of proximity and distance, in connection with women's embodied experiences of looking and being looked at, and in connection with screened images, are important to my project. Through this analysis Doane makes tentative connection between Irigaray's mimesis<sup>71</sup> and the idea of women's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) being more than a psychic situation. That is, she considers "place" (ibid., p. 433) as both an embodied and psychic situation *and* a material and social site, through which women's power can be negotiated. In her analysis, the screen is implicated as a site where these two notions of place may be reconciled. However, in referring to Foucault, Doane also very vaguely indicates the possibility of other material and cultural sites for the negotiation of women's power. Whilst Doane does not reconcile the connections she makes, her analysis very strongly veers towards the issue of psycho-sexual, trans-sex proximity in female transvestism and she does point to the female masquerade as a means for negotiating a new relation between the two kinds of "place" (ibid., p. 433), and with woman's screened image and its oppressive effects. Doane proposes the masquerade as a means for subverting what she claims is the patriarchal imperative for women to partake in "trans-sex identification" (ibid., p. 426). Her interest in trans-sex identification relates to cinematically screened images of women. Her argument is that women's (alleged) "lack" (ibid., p. 424) of objective relation to their own bodies prevents them from structuring their sight in ways that allow them to enjoy, as (she alleges) man does, a fetishistic relation with symbolic systems. Therefore, Doane, argues,

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<sup>71</sup> I discuss Irigaray's mimesis in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, through Robinson's re-framing of it.

women are obliged to passively identify with male pleasure in fetishistic looking, rather than enjoy a gaze of their own, which is as powerful as man's.

Doane argues that, because woman "could not achieve the necessary distance of a second look" (ibid., p. 420), she has not created the visual and psychic distance from the self - necessary for fetishism to occur. The female, cinematic spectator therefore has no identifiable spectatorial position of her own and, in being only the image to be looked at, rather than having her own way of looking, she embodies the screened image rather than enjoy looking at screened images, in her own right. For Doane, patriarchal, cinematic technologies require the viewer to assume a voyeuristic distance from the screen and this distance is, for men, structured and maintained by the architecture of the cinema. Women cannot enjoy this distance, except through trans-sexual identification with men. Hence, for Doane, women and their pleasures and desires are subjugated by screened images of them; via the screen, women are rendered as patriarchal, economic units to be used for exchange.

Doane expresses her concern for women's (alleged) lack of distance from their bodies. For Doane, woman's body "so close, so excessive, prevents woman from assuming a position similar to the man's in relation to signifying systems" (ibid., p. 424). Doane claims that this excessive closeness is because woman "is haunted by the loss of a loss, the lack of a lack so essential for the realisation of the ideals of semiotic systems" (ibid.,

p. 424); in other words, woman has been unable to 'lose' (gain distance from) proximity to her own body and she lacks the ability/has been unable to overcome her lack (of penis); for these reasons, she is disadvantaged.

In making this claim, Doane refers to the Freudian castration complex (Freud, 1940) in which, due to their anatomy, women are designated only as lack. The idea Doane puts forward is that, in being physically formed differently to boys, girls do not gain the "second look" (ibid., p. 420), necessary for establishing objective, fetishising distance from themselves, their bodies and the world. For this reason, they are disadvantaged compared with boys.

Doane's adherence to Freudian oedipality, as evident in this passage, runs throughout her text. She also rehearses Mulvey's conflation of the notions man and patriarch, by saying, for example, that, in terms of the masquerade: "...it is not that a man cannot use his body in this way but that he doesn't have to" (ibid., p. 433) - thus presuming man's alignment with patriarchy. These two tendencies limit the progressive potential of Doane's analysis. This limitation is evident, for example, in the following passage, in which she shows, simultaneously, a relatively progressive awareness of the limitations of (then) current film theory, but also retains the unhelpful notion of "cinematic purity" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). Doane states:

Both the theory of the image and its apparatus, the cinema, produce a position for the female spectator - a position which is ultimately untenable because it lacks that attribute of distance so necessary for an adequate reading of the image. The entire elaboration of femininity as a closeness, a nearness, as present-to-itself is not the definition of an essence but the delineation of a place culturally assigned to woman. (Doane, 1982, p. 433)

In the above, Doane expresses the idea that it is theories of images, in combination with the cinema (which is perceived as housing those images), are responsible for maintaining women's alleged lack of psychological distance from their own bodies, so that they remain unable to symbolically fetishise with the apparent ease that men enjoy. Doane's critique of film theories is very interesting in terms of its potential futurity, as it points to the kind of trans-disciplinary theories subsequently encouraged Wasson (2007) and Friedberg (2003). However, it is not until the end of her text that Doane mentions the possibility of challenging the Freudian and patriarchal premise her account otherwise presupposes. Any discussion of that possibility is then deferred, via brief mention of Foucauldian analysis of power, but without engaging with this. Consequently, Doane's claim is that woman "must find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to assume the position of fetishist" (Doane, 1982, p. 242) and this, she alleges, is because "[t]hat body which is so close continually reminds her of the castration which cannot be 'fetishised away'. (ibid., p. 424)

Doane's claim therefore remains unreconciled with her thought that:

The entire elaboration of femininity as a closeness, a nearness, as present-to-itself is not the definition of an essence but the delineation of a place culturally assigned to woman. (ibid., p. 433)

Despite this lack of reconciliation, it is helpful to my project to consider how Doane's account leaves room for further elaboration of the idea, asserted towards the end of her text, that the "place" (ibid., p. 433) she speaks of is not only a psychic situation of inequality, but also a social and political position of inequality. On the one hand, the screen is heavily implicated in enforcing this inequality but, on the other hand, it is implicated in providing women with a means for re-negotiating their unequal status. My *New Model Army* sculptures elaborate this idea, relative to notions of screened oppression.

Women's lack of reconciliation of the relation between these two kinds of "place" (ibid., p. 433), via the screen, results in women's unequal material relation to the world and to the same kind of experiences and relations that men enjoy.

Doane acknowledges Cixous' argument that men are "coaxed toward social success, toward sublimation, women are body" (Cixous, 1980, p. 257). However, Doane's text only tentatively acknowledges correspondence

between two kinds of “place” (Doane, 1982, p. 433), ultimately focusing on the psychoanalytical. Nevertheless, it is interesting that Doane's text implies awareness, on her part, that Freud, in phallogocratically asserting the oedipal regime (Freud, 1940), violently inscribes worldly inequality into the female body and psyche, effectively trapping women into a psychoanalytical prescription of their situation, with disparaging reference to their anatomy. The danger of Freud's analysis is that he does not actively encourage society to establish ways for women to gain material and financial equality with men. When the psychoanalytic is brought under critical scrutiny, rather than given uncritical priority, woman's “closeness” (Doane, 1982, p. 246) to herself reads as unavoidable, psychic internalisation and apprehension of the constraints of her actual social and economic inequality, in the forcible absence of any realistic or immediate, tangible means for overcoming it and under the determination of “Freudian biologism” (Grosz, 1990, p. 9). Doane understands this, and this is what she wants to argue but is unable to, due to her focus on psychoanalysis. Doane has glimpsed a solution, in the form of the masquerade, and consequently indicates this as a way forward. However, she does so without specifying how the masquerade will work, except to very vaguely allude to the - I think intriguing - idea that the masquerade “doubles representation”<sup>72</sup> (Doane, 1982, p. 433). Doane concedes the limitations of her account and that the female spectator's position can be more fully identified in future. Whilst she doesn't specify how this might happen, she does say: “Femininity is produced very precisely as a

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<sup>72</sup> I pursue this idea in Chapters Four and Five.

position within a network of power relations” (ibid., p. 434) and suggests that, by looking at that position, we may in future be able to “dislocate” (ibid., p. 423) it.

Doane's claim that “Femininity is produced very precisely as a position within a network of power relations” (ibid., p. 434) bears striking correspondence to a later statement by Wasson's. This is that more recent film theories have "necessarily shifted our understanding of cinema away from a sacred and finite text towards an expanded system of overlapping relations" (Wasson, 2007, p.75). The emphasis that both authors place on systematic or networked relations, and the idea that "femininity" (Doane, 1982, p.434) and "cinema" (Wasson, 2007, p.75) exist fluidly within these, is of interest to my project. Doane's text reaches for, but ultimately does not benefit from, the differently structured theoretical context which Wasson, much later, endorses. However, in the following chapter section, I demonstrate how my *New Model Army* works synthesise Doane's and Mulvey's analyses with this recent context.

### **3:6 Not "Mask" but "Pose", Not "Distance" or "Separation" but "Reconstitution"**

In Doane's analysis (1982), the female spectator's position can only be thought as either a passive and therefore negative form of female

narcissism, engendered through her identification with a patriarchally delineated female heroine or as a (for Doane negatively) masochistic identification with a female heroine suffering under patriarchal determinism, or as a (for Doane negatively) masculinised identification with the male spectator's position, in which the female is required to "assume the position of transvestite" (Doane, 1982, p. 433) via trans-sexual identification with the male spectator. Doane admits that the way in which women's "closeness" (ibid., p. 426) to their sense of self is (then) theorised is at the root of the problem of lack of female spectatorship and that this also causes problems for theorising female spectatorship, which she wants to overcome. She says that there is a:

...pervasiveness, in theories of the feminine, of descriptions of such a claustrophobic closeness, a deficiency in relation to structures of seeing and the visible. (ibid., p. 426)

This, she claims "must clearly have consequences for attempts to theorise female spectatorship" (ibid., p. 426).

In the above, Doane argues that, due to a pre-occupation with closeness, theories of female spectatorship are unable to locate a specific spectatorial position for women, instead inclining to read women as only able to continually shift between positions connected to patriarchal looking. Drawing from Mulvey's analysis, she describes this continual shift as "an

oscillation<sup>73</sup> between a feminine position and a masculine position, invoking the metaphor of the transvestite" (ibid., p. 426). Doane says that, because of the "structures of cinematic narrative" (ibid., p. 426) the female spectator "who identifies with a female character" (ibid., p. 426), can have no gaze of her own but, instead, "must adopt a passive or masochistic position" (ibid., p. 426). Doane adds that "identification with the active hero necessarily entails an acceptance of what Laura Mulvey refers to as "a certain 'masculinisation' of spectatorship" (ibid., p. 426). In other words, women watching women in the context of filmic narratives are inclined to identify with them and, consequently, are psychologically conditioned into passively accepting the fetishising gaze and its effects, even when these are self-injurious.

Doane's concern is to theoretically locate and elaborate a specifically female spectatorial position by overcoming women's closeness to themselves. She also shows some (limited) awareness of how Mulvey's conflation of man and patriarch (which she herself nevertheless rehearses) negatively impacts upon this possibility; her argument is that the central problem invoked by Freudian oedipal ordering is that woman, unlike man, does not develop sufficient psychoanalytic distance, from her own anatomy, to enjoy a voyeuristic relation to the world in the way that man does.

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<sup>73</sup> Doane's analysis does not extend to examine the possibility that what she acknowledges as women's ability to continually shift between different viewing positions may index positive possibilities for women - that is, of their occupying fluid standpoints which are able to outmode patriarchal frameworks that aim to integrate and, so, fix, an idea of woman into those structures; as I elaborate in the thesis, this idea of women's fluid standpoints is examined through my sculptural practice.

Doane's solution is to conceive of new methods for invoking the objective distance that women (allegedly) lack and she proposes the female masquerade as a means by which woman might claim a subversive distance "between oneself and one's image" (ibid., p. 433). However, Doane's lack of specificity regarding the masquerade indicates her analytical preoccupation with an idea of psychological closeness and with the psychoanalytic underpinning for this. Ironically, this could also indicate Doane's susceptibility to the oppressive psychological effects of screened images, on women, in combination with the normal (for film theorists) focus on psychoanalytic readings of those images; for critical observers, this 'normal' focus reads as extreme, if not "claustrophobic" (ibid., p. 426) and may, in itself, have subjugating effects.

With that said, whilst Doane's notion of distance needs further analysis, her idea is helpful to my project because it suggests that, by psychologically and materially separating an idea of self and image, women can prevent their uncritical embodiment of patriarchal ideals of woman; distance, invoked by the masquerade, is effectively proposed by Doane as a form of critical awareness of patriarchal politics of oppression and their imbrication within screened images, and as something that can be constructed in material and cultural, rather than only psychoanalytical terms. I return to this issue of psychological and material separation of - or distance between - self and image in my descriptions of my works (for example, of *Carrier*, in section 4:3), arguing that my *New Model Army* sculptures respond

to this requirement, and tackle this in sculptural terms, by reconstituting the screen at the interlinked sites of women's bodies and their representation.

From Doane's reading, we don't know what the masquerade is because it is not specified. Ultimately, Doane is elusive in regard to how she conceives the possibility of women gaining distance via the masquerade. She asks: "What might it mean to masquerade as spectator? To assume the mask in order to see in a different way" (ibid., p. 428). The "mask" (ibid., p. 428) Doane refers to is that of "womanliness...which can be worn or removed" (ibid., p. 427).<sup>74</sup> Doane proceeds to discuss the masquerade but she gives no clear response to the questions she poses, except to say that the masquerade can constitute a form of resistance to the patriarchal gaze, in refusing an idea of femininity as self-reflected image:

The masquerade's resistance to patriarchal positioning would therefore lie in its denial of the production of femininity as closeness, as presence-to-itself, as, precisely, imagistic. (ibid., p. 427)

My *New Model Army* works address Doane's question and statement in regard to the masquerade, not quite by articulating a form of the

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<sup>74</sup> I also acknowledge Mulvey's use of the term 'mask' when describing working class women's labour. Mulvey writes: "Working-class women have generally worked before and after childrearing - and often during it - and play a vital part in the labour force." (Mulvey, 2009, p. 63). It is interesting for my project that Mulvey proceeds to assert that "the labour movement is itself reluctant to recognise women at work in production and services" (ibid., p. 63) and that this "is like yet another level of masking: women visible in relation to man, invisible in the factories, hospitals, offices and so on" (ibid., p. 63).

masquerade<sup>75</sup> as such, but by beginning to materially specify a "resistance to patriarchal positioning" (ibid., p. 427). This specification also connects to / is run through their physically fragmented and flattened structures. The bricolaged bodies of the sculptures behave similarly to a bodily worn mask, which materialises an idea of woman oppressed by screened images, and which they wear sincerely but momentarily, to articulate the extremely oppressive effects of the screen on women. I say: "something like" and "similarly" because I find the term "mask" (ibid., p. 428) problematic in terms of the falseness and game-playing it implies. Whilst it is possible that Doane's use of this term stands to be refined, along with her analysis of the masquerade, as playful, I prefer to say: "The sculptures do not wear a mask but they do adopt a stance, a protesting pose/position, on behalf of women and their oppression under the screen".

The idea that my sculptures do so momentarily, connects to the idea that they are not entirely engulfed by this oppression but have managed to draw subversive strength from outside of patriarchal structures. It also connects to my argument that the sculptures embody (institutional) silence surrounding the relation between capitalism and (single) motherhood and artistic practice; I have said that I have experiences of emancipated sight and that, in earlier works, I have articulated them. But, in these works, these experiences are somewhat withheld in acknowledgement of the ways in which I, and other women, have been required to embody this silence. The act of

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<sup>75</sup> I discuss the difference between notions of masquerade and mimesis in Chapter Three.

withholding is (ultimately) intended as productive / generative, and here coincides with the idea of critically and materially adopting a protesting pose/position, and the idea that this is necessarily temporal and performative as a form of patriarchal combat and encouragement (of others) towards this.

### **3:7 Building the Futurity of Doane's Analysis**

What is the futurity of Doane's work? Is it possible to construct this by reconciling the two kinds of place, of women's oppression, which she shows awareness of but does not sufficiently theorise? Would such a project also involve refining and specifying her idea of the masquerade? Would it involve de-prioritising the psychoanalytic and her retention of Freudian analysis within this, and emphasising the material and social? Might it also involve taking Doane's analysis to the progressive film theories that she points to but seems unable to reach? I claim that my *New Model Army* works materialise a positive and affirmative response to these questions. I further claim that, in so doing, they build on and synthesise Doane's (1982) and Mulvey's (1973), (1975) analyses with Friedberg's (2003) and Wasson's (2007). This material synthesis contributes to the process of: "Unravelling the discrete film object into debates about its relations to urban life, modern leisure, and ascendant consumerism" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75).

In the *New Model Army* works, I bricolage fragmented objects and also dimensionally/ materially compress an idea of woman's body. In so

doing, I insist on situating the filmic "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) that Mulvey refers to, within a new, material, social and cultural register, rather than rehearse her prioritisation of the psychoanalytic framework. At the same time, and as described above, the pose of the sculptures builds on and refines Doane's notion of "mask" (Doane, 1982, p. 428). This means my sculptures physically synthesise aspects of Mulvey's ideas with Doane's. To demonstrate in more detail how my sculptures do this, and how they also synthesise Mulvey's and Doane's analyses with Wasson's (2007) and Friedberg's (2003), I now refer to Friedberg's analysis, and relate aspects of this to my sculpture *Stripped* (2011).

Friedberg argues that an unprecedented proliferation of screens, established media networks, regulated media content/representation and the targeting of media audiences work to oppress women. Friedberg claims: "As screens have multiplied and divided, so has subjectivity" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 348). Generally, Friedberg's analysis is interesting, and my *New Model Army* works meet with it in critiquing various aspects of the flattening and fragmentation of woman's image and the effects of this on subjectivities. However, her description feels slightly vague when I consider it relative to the details of the critical syntaxes materialised in my works - these details carry lived experiences which prompt me to ask: what *exactly* is it about this multiplication and division of screens - and the images on them - that divides or *splits* subjects? If my sculptures evoke this materially, then (how) can this be described theoretically?

Friedberg describes the material and technological multiplication and division of screens, at the end of the twentieth century, as a period of unprecedented technological developments in which "new systems of circulation and transmission" (ibid., p. 338) were generated. These new systems steadily outmoded older technologies, especially in that they "began to replace the projection screen". Additionally, the new systems increased technological interactivity, including between the visual and acoustic realms, because they began "to link the screens of the computer and television with the dialogic interactivity of the telephone (ibid., p. 338).

Friedberg claims these technological advances changed consumers' behaviours surrounding technology, making it normal to multitask (ibid., p. 347) in connection with screened images: "Multitasking makes it possible to combine work with leisure-watching TV while checking e-mail " (ibid., p. 347). This change, she says, had psychic effects on consumers in the sense that it "serves to equate productivity with a fractured subjectivity (ibid., p. 347).

This is important to my research because it connects the idea of a divided subjectivity to notions of speed, which I tackle in my sculpture *Stripped*.

To explain: Friedberg suggests, in line with this exponential screened dissemination of images and its resulting "fractured" (ibid., p. 347) subjectivities, that images have been downgraded, from cultural to functional.

Friedberg claims: "Images have become a utility" (ibid., p. 346). To enable the utilisation of images "each household has a supply that enters the home via broadcast signals, cable wires, satellite reception, or telephone modem hook-ups" (Friedberg, 2003, p.346). In this way, images are supplied, as utility "to the virtual windows that ventilate domestic space" (ibid., p. 346).

Friedberg's claim is that, in combination, a proliferation of screens, normative multi-tasking and advanced consumer appetite for images, means that images are now a utility, implicated in normalising the splitting of subjectivities.<sup>76</sup> Friedberg's analysis helps me to understand the way in which screened oppression involving the flattening and fracturing of images of women works. I find this more detailed analysis helpful to my project because it carries with it the idea that the utility status of mediatised images (including and especially of women) connotes a current climate in which there is "the absence of restraints on consuming" (Crary, 2013, p. 10).

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<sup>76</sup> One interpretation of the idea of the splitting of subjectivities is that this refers to the way in which screens and screened images are not merely coincidental to multitasking, but are structured to promote extremes of multitasking, thus consistently distracting subjects and causing disorientation and confusion, from which states subjects are then rendered more vulnerable to exploitation through patriarchal, capitalist, screened oppression. This thought is in tune with Jonathan Crary's claims (2013) regarding the future of neo-liberalism and his idea that capitalism intends to erode human subjects' need for sleep, in order to generate more profit from their work. In his discussions of how scientific research is developing from nature (for example, research into how certain species of birds which can go without sleep for up to seven days and nights) and practices of torture involving the denial of sleep, Crary refers to the denial of sleep as "the violent dispossession of self by external force, the calculated shattering of an individual" (Crary, 2013, p. 7). Crary links this programme to "recent research" (ibid., p. 13) which has "shown that the number of people who wake themselves up once or more a night to check their messages or data is growing exponentially" (Crary, 2013, p. 13). Crary's idea of the "calculated shattering" of subjects, by capitalism, and his connection of this to increased reliance on screened data, bears strong correspondence to Friedberg's claims that screens generate "fractured" (Friedberg, 2013, p. 347) subjectivities.

Following Crary, I claim this "absence" (ibid., p. 10) requires consumption to be carried out at high speed, if not instantaneously, and this requires that the nature of today's consumption must change from that of previous eras. As Crary writes:

We are long past an era in which mainly things were accumulated. Now our bodies and identities assimilate an ever-expanding surfeit of services, *images*, procedures, chemicals, to a toxic and often fatal threshold. (Crary, 2013, p.10) (my emphasis)

Thus, following Friedberg (2003) and Crary (2013), I claim that Friedberg's idea that images have become a "utility" (Friedberg, 2013, p. 346) also connotes the idea of the immeasurable speed with which images, along with other utilities and the "surfeit of services" (Crary, 2013, p. 10) are supplied and consumed in the Western world. Moreover, the term *utility* conveys the almost immeasurable speed with which media can deliver the "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40) qualities of patriarchally commodified images of women to the eye. Speed, then, is heavily implicated in producing "fractured" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347) subjectivities, especially those of women; the degradation of woman's image and, by association, women, is strongly connected to the notion of instantaneity.

*Stripped* particularly critiques the aggressively rapid delivery of flattened and fragmented images of women and its effects on women who, in



Fig. 27 Linda Aloysius, *Stripped* (2011)



Fig. 28 Linda Aloysius, *Stripped* (reverse view) (2011)

having been routinely exposed to the instantaneity of the screened gaze, learn to anticipate this at all times. In *Stripped*, I critique how these instantaneous flattening effects work on women and their bodies. *Stripped* comprises part of a wooden fence, rusted chrome tubular legs usually used for supporting a worktop, another seat cushion originally from a cafe, the seat of an old wooden stool, string and the plastic trim from a 1950s coffee table. Generally, the work appears highly absorbent, due to being built from (mainly) physically absorbent structures and materials, such as foam, wood, matt (water-based) paint and leather. It is also phallic in shape and fragmented in that it is a bricolage of different objects that each stand in for a woman's body parts. Any notion of head, face and arms is visually subsumed into the trunk (body) of the sculpture, suggesting woman's expressivity is extraneous to patriarchal requirements and, as such, has been accordingly rendered by the patriarchal gaze.

More than any of the other sculptures in this series, *Stripped* materialises the idea that woman is relentlessly subjected to an aggressively high-speed, patriarchal, mediatised gaze that downgrades them and their images to utility status. *Stripped* quite literally assumes a stripped state, by being presented so that the same kind of skin/clothing layer which features *on Bird* appears, in *Stripped*, to have been hastily ripped off and flung to the ground. This move materialises the way in which the viewer's gaze is anticipated, by me as artist and through my decision-making, as being pre-mediatised and, in so being, is capable of reproducing and superimposing,

on the sculpture, today's screened and normalised, aggressive, high-speed delivery of flattened and fragmented images of women. The further idea - or fantasy - being materialised in these works is that *Stripped* has access to a strength - which we might here think of as presenting as an innocence, or naivety - or otherness that exists "outside" (ibid., p. 43) of patriarchal reach and outline and this empowers the sculpture in combatting screened oppression. To explain: the fantasy articulated in this work is that *Stripped* has gained autonomy with which to resist the effects of the oppressive gaze - bodily and in the sculpture's own terms.

These terms are articulated through the formal qualities of the objects and materials comprising the sculpture's body. On the one hand, the resulting, visual awkwardness involved in the bricolaged objects and materials in *Stripped* implies a cluelessness - a naivety that causes the sculpture to undertake extreme and dutiful obedience to a patriarchal rule; in anticipating the oppressive gaze, but being naive in regard to how to respond, *Stripped* has dutifully pre-empted and extended the logic carried in that gaze, by stripping in haste and in obedience to it. On the other hand, precisely the same cluelessness protects *Stripped*, empowering the sculpture with a defiance that negates patriarchal looking; the awkwardness of the sculpture's pose, and the suggestion that her bodily parts - her "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) - such as the seat of a stool, the rubber trim of a coffee table, chrome legs for supporting a worktop - are readily available

for intense, sexualised scrutiny, brings absurdity to the work and, by strong implication, to the patriarchal intentions underpinning the screened gaze.

If I refer the ideas materialised in *Stripped* to Friedberg's analysis, then one implication is that, in being fractured, subjectivities are rendered vulnerable to further, patriarchal and sadistic exploitation. However, my works counter this argument. As *Stripped* shows, I materialise the idea that, although women are prone to this oppression, they can resist it by psychically and bodily reconstituting screened images - particularly by combining "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40) approaches, to form the erect pose - Doane would say "mask" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) - of the work - that would otherwise oppress them, and including by drawing on a shared power.

*Stripped* evokes a particular response to the aggressive speed involved in oppressive, screened "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40). But it is important to note that the nuances in *Stripped* operate relative to the other works in the *Army* that she belongs to, and through which I generally I evoke notions of "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and fragmentation by bricolaging an idea of woman's body and by deliberately compressing the main body of the sculpture. As stated, the kind of skin/clothing material that appears in *Stripped* also appears in *Bird*, but is differently wrought, to different effect; this particular syntax links the two works. Similarly, the part of the wooden stool used in *Stripped* to connote genitals subtly but powerfully connects to

the other parts of the stool used in *Angel*. Indeed, each work independently and particularly combats an aspect of fragmented and flattened screened oppression, but they also draw support from one another, and in some instances this includes by sharing materials. The further argument materialised in the sculptures is that, by drawing from experiences beyond patriarchal outline, women can - either alone or collectively - take pleasure in actively constructing forms of power that are capable of standing up to and subverting patriarchal, screened oppression. In these ways, the sculpture develops specific aspects of Mulvey's (1973, 1975), Doane's (1982) and Friedberg's (2003) analysis, synthesising each of these in ways that contextualise them relative to - and further synthesise them with - the "unravelling" processes supported by Wasson (Wasson, 2007, p. 75).

### **3:8 Between-ness**

In the above, I refer to the way in which *Bird* and *Stripped* (and *Angel*) support one another. To further articulate the significance of the sculptures' independent and shared power in terms of their place in contemporary art, and the research questions they prompt and respond to, I now refer to Judith Butler's account of the problems relating to de-sensitisation incurred by over-exposure to the mediatised image (Butler, 2006). Butler claims that, today, "media's evacuation of the human through the image" (Butler, 2006, p.146) has become normalised and, as such, *inures* us to the suffering and

vulnerability of the other, damaging our ability to empathise and heavily inclining to facilitate patriarchal domination and inequality through "normative schemes of intelligibility" (ibid., p. 146) which "establish what will and will not be human, what will be a liveable life, what will be a grievable death" (ibid., 146). In calling for a reinstatement of empathy between subjects, in contestation of the effects of the mediatised image economy, Butler reminds us of the vulnerability of our own bodies in the public realm, appealing to us to recall our corporeal inter-dependency. She writes:

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency, the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. (ibid., p. 26)

Butler's ideas that "the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own" (ibid., p. 26) and that: "My body is and is not mine" (ibid., p. 26) are interesting to my project. The *New Model Army* sculptures adopt a similar position regarding the vulnerability of the body, its exposure "to the gaze of the others" (ibid., p. 26) and Butler's claim that: "The body has its invariably public dimension" (ibid., p. 26). My works emphasise the

vulnerable body, the social body and the public dimension of the body. In so doing they respond to Butler's idea that bodily boundaries and ownership are shareable in the sense she argues. The sculptures are constructed and installed in ways that generate affective relations between them, including by often being made at the same time as one another and by having a variable installation format. Moreover, the viewer can become physically involved in materialising and activating this relation of between-ness, if he or she chooses to, through the space I have made available for them to physically circulate between works when they are installed as a group; in this sense, the viewer momentarily becomes integral to the work, and activates it. The sculptures are intended to be flexible in terms of their public display; they can either be exhibited individually and viewed 'in the round', or as a group, so allowing the viewer to wander through the spaces in-between the sculptures and view them from every possible angle. When exhibited as a large group, the sculptures incline to operate as a single, fragmental work, in which there are no definitive boundaries or declared edges. Through this variable arrangement, the sculptures' visual, somatic and psychic porosity is maximised. Relatedly, visually and physically absorbent materials such as cotton, voile, raw concrete, matt emulsion paint, wood, leather, string and foam are used, often in states of arrested decay and damage - for example, scratches, rips, rust, stains, dents, holes - in combination with gestures such as tearing, cutting, gashing, stripping, balancing, staining and binding. These combined gestures emphasise the idea of the vulnerability and precariousness of woman's body under a patriarchally fragmenting gaze and

her ability to overcome this. At the same time, there is often a smaller, subtle but potent degree of reflective texture and surface included in each work - chrome, plastic, treated (waxed or polished) wood, nylon cord; this visually attracts and rebuffs the gaze and, in so doing, subtly alludes to the idea of woman's resistance to mediatised, patriarchal oppression, from within and through its material and economic structures, but with recourse to a strength beyond them.

These syntaxes and gestures speak to the idea of women's proneness to the contemporaneously screened and pre-mediatised gaze, and their strength in combatting it both alone and collectively, in response to shared concerns for its oppressive effects and mutual aim to overcome this. Whilst the works suggest the viewer carries the pre-mediatised gaze to their viewing of the work, the viewer's bodily engagement, with them and their between-ness, is encouraged to exceed this possibility. By this I mean that the physical between-ness of the sculptures does not so much implicate - or forcibly instate - the viewer in the combat the sculptures are engaged in; the sculptures are structured to prompt viewers, including myself, through bodily engagement and activity, to understand that they are not alone in a combat by which they, possibly without realising (due to its normativity), may already be exhausted. By offering this space of between-ness, and a sense of shared-ness and inclusivity, the works aim to extend compassion and, in turn, re-newed, positive energy, to viewers for what they are already doing

and are already capable of, rather than extend a punishing, negative message regarding what they have not done and are not doing.

This constructed between-ness is intended to be activated by viewers. The idea being materialised in the installation of the works is that the physical activity of walking between works implicates viewers in sharing and taking pleasure in a bodily inter-connectivity with the sculptures which, in having engaged in bodily combat with the screen and its negating effects on women, extend their combative strength and power to viewers. In this sense, the works utilise the social sphere to empower viewers through pleasure. I want the works, ultimately, to restore bodily and psychic power to all and to do this I install the works in social spaces, which enable but do not impose bodily-led relation to the works. My hope is that, by walking between works, the viewer is encouraged to experience a space-time of re-discovery, of their own and others' shared power in combatting screened, capitalist and patriarchal oppression. The re-discovery I refer to does not involve a turn to past, unconscious experiences; the works do not focus on the psychoanalytical and do not aim to reproduce the kind of regressive experience or, indeed, masochistic power (Studlar, 1984, p. 210), imbricated into cinematic experience. Instead, the works encourage viewers to turn away from - without entirely rejecting - the psychoanalytical, to re-evaluate their inter-connected subjectivities relative to the material present and, in so doing, to re-discover their individual and shared presence as a power for generating material and economic change.

### 3:9 Domestic Labour and Materialising Resistance

The between-ness of the *New Model Army* works is also implicated in negotiating the negating and degrading effects, on women generally and mothers particularly, of the extremely covert ways in which the screen, as a patriarchal and capitalist technology, is predicated on the subjugation of mothers through their unpaid domestic and reproductive labour (Federici, 1975, 2010) that is, their 'slave labour'. Federici argues that:

It is important to recognize that when we speak of housework we are not speaking of a job like other jobs, but we are speaking of the most pervasive manipulation, and the subtlest violence that capitalism has ever perpetrated against any section of the working class. (Federici, 1975, p. 16)

Whilst Federici recognises that "under capitalism every worker is manipulated and exploited and his or her relation to capital is totally mystified" (ibid., p. 16), she argues that "the wage at least recognises that you are a worker" (ibid., p. 16). This is important, she says, because, in being recognised as a worker "Exploited as you may be you are not that work" (ibid., p. 16). In other words, whilst other forms of work do not require a total identification with them, "The difference with housework lies in the fact that not only has it been imposed upon women, but it has been transformed into a natural attribute" (ibid. p. 16). To ensure that women are unlikely to insist upon a fair value being given to their labour in connection with the

home and motherhood "Capital had to convince us that it is natural, unavoidable, and even fulfilling activity to make us accept working without a wage" (ibid., p. 16). In her later text (2010) Federici explains that women's identification with the role of housewife is necessary because their "unpaid domestic work" (Federici, 2010, p. 40) is absolutely vital for the futurity of capitalism:

Capitalist accumulation is structurally dependent on the free appropriation of immense areas of labor and resources that must appear as externalities to the market, like the unpaid domestic work that women have provided, on which employers have relied for the reproduction of the workforce. (ibid., p.40)

Whilst Federici wants new political valuation of this labour form, Eisenstein (1979) has recognised the related need for a new formulation of woman as mother and as worker.

My sculptures materially articulate an idea of these related analyses and carry my empirical knowledge of what it is to embody the currently unformulated, contradictory, undervalued but overlapping roles of working, single mother, artist, researcher. They do this by acknowledging Jeffreys' (1977) argument, that patriarchal forms of control over women adapt according to different historical periods and according to developments in the economic class system, in order to articulate my claim that the unprecedented mediatization of the screen and screened images - their multiplication, digitisation and networking as discussed by Heidi Wasson

(2007, p. 75) and Anne Friedberg (2003, p. 347 - 348) - must be taken into account for how the mediatised screen and screened images of women have been historically adapted and are now used in this current cultural and historical period to precisely and patriarchally control women, including by regulating women's desires.

In articulating this claim, my *New Model Army* sculptures also expand Eisenstein's call for the re-formulation of woman as woman, mother and producer (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 5 - 55); the sculptures carry the idea that this formulation can and must include woman as artist and woman, and as mother and, where applicable, as single mother. In other words, my practice contributes to new formulation of woman as woman, mother and producer, by operating as a feminist standpoint, through which I articulate my experiences of patriarchal oppression as working, single mother artist and researcher.

In so doing my sculptures also synthesise Eisenstein's analysis (1979, p. 5 - 55) with Lerner's (1986, p. 219) claims that symbol systems are instrumental in (and instrumentalised by) class formation, which has historically involved male dominance over women, particularly marginalized women. However, Lerner's analysis is not the focus of my research - indeed, as the thesis relates in the following chapters, it is Robinson's analysis, of productive mimesis as a means for re-structuring the symbolic, that becomes key to my project, encouraging me to understand my *New Model Army* as a symbol (making) system, through which to encourage women's resistance to

patriarchal, marginalising class formation. In the following chapter, I elaborate.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Synthesising Geophilosophy and Robinson's Analysis of Irigaray's Productive Mimesis**

#### **4:0 Introduction to Chapter Four**

In Chapter Three, I discussed how my *New Model Army* sculptures newly synthesise Doane's (1982), Mulvey's (1973), (1975), Friedberg's (2003) and Wasson's (2007) analyses, along with Coleman and Ringrose's (2013), by symbolically re-locating and re-constituting the "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) of woman's screened image. I claimed the sculptures generate this synthesis within their subversive, postured bodies which behave comparably with Doane's "mask" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) - the key referent for her notion of "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428). In so doing, the sculptures, and the screen techniques reconstituted within them, become non-"discrete film objects" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75), purposed with "unravelling" (ibid., p. 75) psychoanalytical film theories in order to engender "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) between artist, audience and practice, and to draw attention to capitalism's structural dependence on women's unpaid domestic labour (Federici, 1975, 2010).

However, having written that chapter, I am left with some reservations. I am not convinced that Doane's use of the term "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) is an adequate fit for my sculptural work or that it accurately

characterises the "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) I claim my sculptures have engendered. In other words, I now wonder whether it is possible that notions of, and relating to, and materialising "geophilosophy" might be further mobilised, both in my practice and in this thesis, by considering them relative to terms other than "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428).

As I have explained in the introduction to this thesis, Coleman and Ringrose describe geophilosophy as a means of speculative mapping which is: "not only a task of investigating what there is, then, but is also concerned with unpacking what might be" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125). In other words, geophilosophy involves pre-empting, anticipating, distinguishing and speculating upon futures that are not necessarily obvious or disclosed, but may be 'packed' or concealed in "what there is" (ibid., p. 125). Importantly, geophilosophy is also proposed as a hopeful, positive methodology, one that illuminates: "life-affirming potentialities in assemblages" (ibid., p. 129) and which provides "...new ways to see and transform the social" (ibid., 2013, p. 127).

Whilst these descriptions are highly appealing and seem generally appropriate for describing what my own works, and that of other women artists, do, they are also rather vague. This means that, when I claim my sculptures perform something similar to a "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) and that, in so doing, they generate "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) I am left feeling slightly uncertain about how this

relates to my research practice. How, more specifically, do my sculptures generate these such relations?

This situation is not helped by the opacity of Doane's notion of "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428). As I have demonstrated, Doane only very obliquely connects notions of "mask" (ibid., p. 428) with "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428). Whilst she also, intriguingly, claims that the "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428) "doubles representation" (ibid., p. 43), she does not explicate this idea. In Chapter Two, I discussed how the term "mask" (ibid., p. 428), though comparable, is not quite appropriate to my sculptures, and I explained why. I claimed that it is the sculptures' bodily stance, posture or pose which adequates them for their task of bodily reconstituting women's screened image, and that the impetus for this stance is founded upon and constituted by a decision - begun involuntarily during sculptural practice and subsequently maintained - to withhold from the audience my own experiences of emancipated looking. This withholding has allowed me to contest, through the sculptures, the silences surrounding women's and mothers' screened oppression and neoliberalism's structural exploitation of their reproductive and domestic labour.

But, again, is this description sufficient as an alternative to the terms "masquerade" (ibid., p. 428) and "mask" (ibid., p. 428), to communicate the work that the sculptures undertake? Does it do enough to support my further claim that the sculptures generate "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126)? I am inclined to think not. I wonder, instead,

whether the term "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) might be more appropriate for describing how my withholding, as a critical stance, became sculpturally and symbolically physicalised as non-"discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75). To pursue these thoughts, I now examine "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26), in connection with geophilosophy, with a view to understanding more about the former and how it might relate to the latter.

#### **4:1 Beginning to Relate Geophilosophy to Productive Mimesis**

I find it interesting that Coleman and Ringrose mention "mimesis" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) in their analysis but leave unresolved the relationship between geophilosophy and "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). In this chapter section, I do not suggest that the relation between the two terms can be resolved entirely, nor do I attempt this. However, I will argue that a material synthesis - which I think of as a space time of generative interaction - of the meaning of the two terms may be made concrete in art, and that, rather than "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428), this is what my *New Model Army* sculptures do.

Leaving aside for now the question of how one - or something - 'does' "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p.26), I refer to a passage in Coleman and Ringrose's descriptions of geophilosophy. They say:

Mapping the micro nuances of what girls do online through a Deleuzian analysis of immanent becomings (*rather than a mimesis* or cultural reproduction) is critical, however, because girls can also disrupt this fixing and bodily capture by using the less-regulated space of social networking sites to experiment with 'digital' slut 'looks'. (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) (my emphasis)

In the above, geophilosophy is described as a "mapping...[of]...immanent becomings" (ibid., 2013, p. 134). This is proposed as preferable to "a mimesis or cultural reproduction" (ibid., p.134), because this practice of geophilosophy allows for subjective - in this case, girls' - fluidity. This fluidity allows subjects to "disrupt this fixing and bodily capture" (ibid., p.134) enforced through patriarchal looking. Immanent becoming is, then, proposed as enabling the disruption of patriarchal looking and geophilosophy maps and enables this by illuminating how immanent becoming works in social terms, for the girls involved.

There is a critique of "mimesis" (ibid., p. 134) embedded in this passage. This is that it does not enable immanent becoming, nor does it allow subjects to disrupt patriarchal looking. For these reasons, geophilosophy is proposed as preferable. However, Coleman and Ringrose mention only one kind of "mimesis" (ibid., p. 134). This is important to note because, on Robinson's analysis, there are two. Robinson distinguishes

between "maintenance mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) and "productive mimesis" (ibid., p.26), proposing the latter as positive for women's symbolic mediation.

Whilst it seems very much that Robinson and Coleman and Ringrose think similarly about ways to enable women's mediation in symbolic terms, there is, it would seem, an interesting disjuncture between their thoughts. I will now take this as one of many "creative gaps" (Robinson, 1994., p. 20) that exist between theories, and between theories and art, and I will build into this, beginning by asking whether "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) helps to specify the vagueness of Coleman and Ringrose's (2013) notions of geophilosophy and immanent becoming, including of the disruption these notions appear to enable.

I will examine Robinson's notion of productive mimesis, arguing that this is structured by a morphological impetus. This impetus engenders a productively mimetic doubling of the symbolic and, in turn, the term *productive mimesis* helps to specify and distinguish this kind of doubling from the doubling (Doane, 1982) that occurs in Doane's notion of "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428). It also brings specificity to Coleman and Ringrose's idea (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) of the disruption involved in geophilosophy. Whilst I do not resolve, in theoretical terms, the relation between geophilosophy and productive mimesis, my sculptural approach - which I name as "between-ing" - and which I elaborate in this chapter -

constitutes a material synthesis of their meanings and brings physical specificity to the space of generative interaction between the two terms. To construct this argument, I now examine Grosz's and Robinson's analyses of Irigaray's practice of mimesis and, relatedly, Robinson's interest in morphology. I pay attention to Robinson's analysis for how she formulates her notion of productive mimesis, how this connects to her interpretations of Irigaray's interest in morphology and Irigaray's endeavours to use a morphological, rather than anatomical approach, with which to forge new, conceptual and practical links between thought structures and material, social outcomes. In so doing, I examine how Robinson's analysis illuminates the way in which notions of morphology and productive mimesis, rather than "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428), connect to my art practice, through the flatness and fragmented qualities of my practice.

#### **4:2 Examining the Morphological Impetus for "Productive Mimesis", in Robinson's Analysis of Irigaray's Work**

Robinson writes that:

While the term 'morphology' is from the Greek *morphe*, meaning 'form', and is used in the field of biology, it does not automatically imply an anatomical reading. In biology it does not refer to deterministic analysis of forms in themselves, but to a method of

discerning patterns of relationships between forms. (Robinson, 2006, p. 97)

I want to know what Robinson means by the above, particularly "a method of discerning patterns of relationships between forms" (ibid., p. 27) and what the implications of this statement are for art practice, including my own. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, my interest is *not* in preserving Irigaray's work - or voice - as such, but in how Robinson filters Irigaray's work, particularly Irigaray's interest in morphology. I have explained why I prefer to examine Robinson's, rather than Irigaray's, analysis and why it is helpful to my project to examine the possibilities Robinson's analysis generates for thinking Irigaray's work relative to sculpture. However, with that said, it is still worth relating how my interest in Robinson's analysis came about.

In coming to her work as a visual artist making bodily-made, very textural, figurative sculptures intended to represent women and their bodies, and as an artist who had, quite abruptly and without quite knowing why, stopped including written language in my work, I found that aspects of Irigaray's ideas resonated. For example, Irigaray states that her new approach to writing: "does not privilege sight" (Irigaray, 2000, p.105 - 106). I wondered what Irigaray meant, why she did not want to "privilege sight" and why she made a point of saying so. Also, Irigaray's certainty, regarding "the gaze" (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 47), was very appealing:

The gaze is at stake from the outset. Don't forget, in fact, what "castration", or the knowledge of castration, owes to the gaze, at least for Freud. The gaze has always been involved. (ibid., p. 47)

Irigaray's development of the idea of the gaze suggested to me that she has a far more complex interest in the visual realm than is immediately apparent in her early writings on language and discourse. In the above, Irigaray alludes to the way in which Freud's (1940) privileging of sight and seeing (the penis) is key to asserting his "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9).

In Freud's analysis, the girl, seeing the penis for the first time "has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it" (Freud, 1963 cited Doane, 1982, p. 424)<sup>77</sup> <sup>78</sup>. She is forever envious of man's penis and the phallic power this represents. Whilst the girl can never, under Freud's analysis, have phallic power, she can compensate for it by procuring phallic objects. For Freud, this includes a husband chosen "for his paternal

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<sup>77</sup> Freud, S., *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes*, in Rieff, P. (Ed.) *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, 1963: 187-88, quoted here in Doane, 1982, p 424.

<sup>78</sup> An obvious problem with Freud's claim is that the possessive tendencies he infers, when presuming the girl's compulsive desire to "have" the penis, too readily presumes *only* the possibility of a patriarchal economy and the girl's submission and negative status within this; consequently, Freud structures her desire towards competitiveness, dominance and ownership, including of 'man', and his penis, rather than towards interdependency and equality. There are no grounds for presuming the girl wants to possess the penis, and I suggest this move on Freud's part demonstrates his own unconscious preoccupation with anatomical readings of it.

characteristics" (ibid., p. 63) and she "will be ready to recognize his authority" (ibid., p. 63).

Her longing to possess a penis, which is in fact unappeasable, may be satisfied if she can succeed in completing her love for the organ by extending it to the man who bears that organ, just as earlier she progressed from her mother's breast to her mother as a whole. (ibid., p. 63)

Irigaray's statement regarding "the gaze" (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 47), indicates her awareness of a complex politics pertaining to Freud's prioritisation of sight, when he construes his notion of penis envy. Irigaray's idea is that, rather than women being envious of the penis because they have seen it, women's exchangeability within a patriarchal "market" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 170) is reinforced through their exposure to continual, oppressive, patriarchal looking in a symbolic which is also structured according to men's gazes. The patriarchal gaze and its conditioning of women's awareness of their appearance, is exerted in order that they will be prepared / pre-conditioned for their subjugated position in society. Irigaray suggests that sight occupies a privileged and dominant position in Western society and culture, that the privilege involved is both patriarchal and normative. Her interest in the visual is, therefore, in de-privileging patriarchal looking.

Whilst I came to understand this, I was initially drawn to Irigaray's work because, in the initial years of my research at Goldsmiths, and despite being interested in almost everything I was reading and encountering, I was finding it almost impossible to forge any deeply meaningful relationship between theory and my practice. This was until I discovered Irigaray's writing about phallographic language<sup>79</sup> in the college library. I instantly felt very drawn to her work. The structures in Irigaray's writing, though confusing, felt...appropriate. I felt immediately connected to her writing, and defended by it, without knowing why or what exactly it was that I needed to be defended against. When I discovered she had lost her job<sup>80</sup> because of what she had written she became, for me, something of a heroine; I found her actions unusually brave and selfless. So, I persisted in trying to understand her work. It was only later that I understood how sight was structured into it and only later that I understood that, in terms of considering her work relative to art, Irigaray herself is limited. Although I tried in early drafts of the thesis, including in experimental ways that involved bricolaging seemingly discordant ideas and unrelated texts, to assemble a democratic space within the thesis itself, the result was simply too confusing for the reader and, ultimately, for me; it limited my understanding of my own practice. However, I didn't know how to usefully build the connections between Irigaray's analysis

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<sup>79</sup> In: *The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine*, in: *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Irigaray, 1985a).

<sup>80</sup> Due to her criticism of Lacan, for example, in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Irigaray, 1985b), she lost her teaching position at the University of Vincennes and was rejected by Lacan's followers.

and art and so I was excited to subsequently find that Robinson had already begun this kind of work.

Irigaray has been mistakenly thought as one of the “antivisual French feminists” (Jay, 1994, p. 27) who bore “hostility to visual primacy” (ibid., p. 14), rather than only to patriarchal looking. Indeed, Irigaray does not claim to work as a visual artist and does not demonstrate any obvious interest in working visually. Initially, I could not quite understand how Irigaray was carrying out a de-privileging of patriarchal sight through writing, but I was intrigued by this possibility. I did not fully understand Irigaray's logic. How did the de-prioritisation of patriarchal sight involve altering written language? At the same time and in ways I could not initially understand, my research process was such that my *New Model Army* sculptures, in seeming to *visually* reject or withhold written language - such as that included in my *Wilderness Works (Clearings)*<sup>81</sup> series (and although I sensed written language was still *in the mix* somehow) - were realising a very similar aim to Irigaray's.

Indeed, around this time, it quite suddenly became impossible to use written language in the work. Now, much later, I understand that this shift away from the system of grammar offered by written language, to the material syntax made possible through sculpture, are connected to the idea, which I referred to in Chapter Two (in connection with my descriptions of

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<sup>81</sup> See section 1:3 of this thesis for images of a work from this series.

*Carrier*), and which Ian Kiaer also acknowledges when he says there are: "kinds of knowlege that are held within an art work which are different [to writing]" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 120).

Earlier in my research, I could not articulate the idea that my sculptures "held" (ibid., p. 120) empirical knowledges of (bodily) oppression - and of oppressive silences - and the effects of this on subjects. In my defence, I think the (im)possibility of my articulation was due to the rather complex and confusing idea that the empirical knowledges included knowledge of historical, patriarchal silence and silencing of women's and my own, desires. On reflection, I can say now that I had found it necessary to embody, in order to work through and more fully observe, the political silence surrounding women's desires and women's subjection to patriarchal looking. This was rather than act upon those desires; at this time, I was unsure of my desires - which I experienced, but which I found it difficult to act upon, including because, having been a mother from a young age and being used to not thinking for/only of myself, I could not be certain that my desires would not cause hurt and damage to others; my "non-white whiteness"<sup>82</sup> shaped and fuelled this uncertainty. I was uncertain of the ethics of my desires, and sensed I had to attend to the silence first, because it seemed connected to the question of women's - and mother's - desires.<sup>83</sup> So, the works can be

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<sup>82</sup> As elaborated in section 0:4.

<sup>83</sup> In her essay "Melodrama Inside and Outside the Home", first published in 1986, Laura Mulvey acknowledges "A whole terrain of the 'unspeakable' " (Mulvey, 2009, p. 77), "The desire for conscious articulation" (ibid., p. 79) and the problems of articulation within patriarchal structures. She writes: "There are two strands of silence at stake here, doubling

read as responding to the need for the silence to be embodied in order to be observed and positively broken<sup>84</sup>. By doing this I hoped, without being able to articulate this in words at the time, to make legible new forms of symbolic speech "in place of" (Grosz, 1989, p. 112) oppressive patriarchal representations of (single) mothers and the lack of protest or challenge surrounding the history of this derogatory, patriarchal representation, the lack of change and overcoming and alternative to this. In other words: in making works that spoke of the sheer, phallic might and patriarchal power involved in embodied, oppressive silences and silencing, I was compelled to de-prioritise (but not reject) my relation, as sculptor, to written language, and to confront the dangerous effects of this on the body<sup>85</sup>; doing so allowed me to insist, from within this silence, and the impossibility it constitutes for women, of differently "becoming" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52). I did not (then) know - and so could not take comfort in knowing - that Robinson refers to this danger, and what happens when one confronts it, bodily. She says: "Words fail. Within a phallogocentric thinking there is no space, no comprehension, no air or water or warmth for a syntax that is appropriate to women" (Robinson, 2006, p. 55). Words did temporarily and necessarily "fail" (ibid., p. 55), in as much

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up and intertwined like a double helix: the mother who represents the silence imposed by censorship and the mother's own containment and constraint within the language of patriarchal domination" (ibid., p. 79). It is possible, then, that, in addition to attempting to overcome patriarchal censorship of my desires, I was also attempting to break with / disavow the patriarchal requirement imposed upon me, as a mother, to act as censor (to others).

<sup>84</sup> It is possible that, in being embodied, the patriarchal silence subsequently became a feminist silence, from which my between-ing approach developed.

<sup>85</sup> At this time, I became seriously physically ill, in ways that doctors were initially unable to diagnose but subsequently related to long-term stress, and which impacted onto my practice and research, but which I choose not to discuss here.

as they suddenly left my sculptures<sup>86</sup>. But I trusted, implicitly, that making - making art - would not<sup>87</sup>. And, so, I made my *New Model Army* works.

This way of making art generated a different relation to writing, an initially confused one, involving confusing theories and confusing relations to them and to the world. This kind of relationship to theory, in amounting to a lack of reflexivity, can, Kiaer says "actually mess one up" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 120). As I have already related, this engendered a semi-experimental thesis draft, which attempted to materialise an idea of democratic space within writing. However, with time and more work, making has ultimately prompted and mobilised a thesis, and a relation to a thesis which, I now feel, critically supports my practice through the process of writing<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Moreover, I could not - verbally or in writing - articulate the ideas materialised in them.

<sup>87</sup> I cannot discount the possibility that this is because making has been, for me, a lifelong activity, and is embedded in my earliest memories; whilst my family - as stated earlier - was highly dysfunctional and I was to become estranged from my original family members, both parents, but especially my mother, encouraged forms of making and creative activity, from the earliest age. There may, then, be the possibility that a connectivity to my mother - and, less obviously, my father, through making, helped me at this stage.

<sup>88</sup> It is helpful to refer, here, to Laura Mulvey's description of the context for her writing of the essays which she subsequently gathered together to form her book, states: "...the form of writing changes alongside changes taking place in my own life" (Mulvey, 2009, p. ix). This is a simple, possibly even obvious, statement. Yet Mulvey's inclusion of it helps me to appreciate that writing processes can and do change - sometimes unexpectedly and seemingly of their own accord - relative to lived experiences of the context that one writes within and / or in response to; I am reminded, by Mulvey's statement, that there is a (feminist) value in acknowledging the positivity and validity of such changes, even when they are initially confusing and seem to constitute "failure" (Mulvey, 2009, p. ix), according to institutional measures. Given Mulvey's statement, I am encouraged in seeing this thesis not as fixed or final, but as integral to a larger process in which my writing has changed and will continue to do so. Relatedly, I am intrigued by the fact that Mulvey does *not* assemble her essays in linear, consecutive sequence according to the date written, possibly indicating a feminist disruption of historical linearity / feminist assertion of the nonlinearity of feminine space-time.

I want to refer, here, to the idea embedded in Simon O'Sullivan's claims in regard to art's "function of transformation" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52), which is that this involves "pushing forward the boundaries of what can be experienced" (ibid., p. 52). I wonder: this process surely has to be not only by and for audiences, but by and for artists who make work for them? O'Sullivan writes:

Art might be understood as the name for a function, a magical and aesthetic function of transformation, less involved in a making sense of the world and more involved in exploring the possibilities of being in - and becoming with - the world. Art is less involved in knowledge and more involved in experience - in pushing forward the boundaries of what can be experienced. (ibid., p. 52)

O'Sullivan's descriptions, seductive and engaging, perhaps seem to suggest to the uninitiated, or to artists in need of positivity, that art is only ever effortlessly epic. Sometimes making art does feel 'epic' in terms of the connections that making can forge between art making and otherwise symbolically illegible desire. At other times, it involves what would be, in any other context, de-sensualised drudgery. Both experiences inter-connect and enable one another. But, beneath the seductive surface of his writing, in his mention of "pushing forward the boundaries", O'Sullivan speaks as an artist who knows what it is to make and recognises making as a future-shaping activity. His words help me to see that the *New Model Army* sculptures have

been committed to this work of "pushing" (ibid., p. 52), in a long process of becoming, that I only glimpsed, but trusted, when they began. My work (just) exceeds the patriarchal boundaries it has pushed. The *New Model Army* works materialise how I and other women and mothers embody the silence surrounding their oppression under the patriarchal gaze but, importantly, how they can draw strength to answer back, construct futurity, begin to shift into new, fluid spaces for "exploring the possibilities of being in - and becoming with - the world" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52).

Although the *New Model Army* have a therapeutic element for me personally, in making them, the works are made very much with the viewer's experience in mind. The works anticipate being viewed by others, who will bring their own meanings to the works - or, more precisely, make and find their own meanings with and through them. In this sense, the works are never 'finished', but remain, through their structures, continually open. I take up O'Sullivan's idea that we pre-empt the viewer's interactivity - visual, bodily, somatic, conceptual - with the work:

Think about the 'finished' art work's encounter with a beholder who again is the envelopment of a potential, a set of capacities to affect and be affected. (ibid., 2006, p. 21)

It is helpful to my research to consider O'Sullivan's related statement that " 'art' might be the name for both of these encounters, a meeting, or

collision, between two fields of force, transitory but ultimately transformative" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 21). The two encounters O' Sullivan refers to are "precisely moments of production" (O' Sullivan, 2006, p. 21) and are each differently productive:

It is through these encounters that " 'Meaning' might then be thought as this productive 'event' " (ibid. 2006, p. 21), which O' Sullivan describes as elusive and fleeting but affective: "this 'moment' of meeting, ungraspable in its moment of occurrence, but real in its effects" (ibid., 2006, p. 21).

For O'Sullivan, meaning is a fleeting, productive event generated between "participant and art work" (ibid., p. 21). O'Sullivan says that this event is "as productive...as that between artist and material" (ibid., p. 21).

It is this kind of meeting that my *New Model Army* sculptures are structured towards.

In being pre-occupied with contesting the screened, mediatised gaze, the *New Model Army* works are intent, through their 'unfinished', " 'finished' " (ibid., p. 21) state, on helping the viewer to relieve themselves of the burden of this conditioning, of de-prioritising patriarchal looking at the site of their own bodies, in connection with the bodies of the sculptures. The sculptures aim to encourage viewers, through a kind of conversation between bodies, to experience a moment in which the force of their gaze is implicated in

constructing a relation with the work. The works and the viewer, together create a temporal event, a "transitory moment" (ibid., p. 21) - and it is in this moment that the works encourage the viewer to construct and experience somatic and conceptual meaning.

However, O'Sullivan's descriptions, though helpful, are rather general. The descriptions help me to understand that it is important to me that my works anticipate and generate the conditions for implicating the viewer in making somatic and conceptual meaning with them. However, the descriptions also help me to think in a more detailed way about an approach in my works that I name as "between-ing". Generally, this approach accounts for the sculptures' unfinished / finished state. Understanding how this approach works, including with the viewer, helps to specify how this more specifically generates the "immanent becomings" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) Coleman and Ringrose refer to.

When I began making the *New Model Army* works, the ideas I now refer to were rather rudimentary, "partial and 'perverse' " (Wylie, 2000, p. 175) in my mind. I was, as I say, confused. In my confusion, I turned to Grosz's and Robinson's analyses to help me to make connections between my art practice and theory. Ultimately, it is Robinson's analysis that has challenged me in developing my thoughts - and practice - forward and in forging connections between them. Robinson engages with Irigaray's interest

in - and work with - the visual realm, but the scope of her analysis extends beyond the limits of Irigaray's.

Robinson's re-framing of Irigaray's aim to engender a systemic level, socio-political shift in approach, from anatomical to morphological, demonstrates the centrality of Irigaray's practice of productive mimesis within this aim, and illuminates Irigaray's idea to extend practices of productive mimesis to women, through writing<sup>89</sup> intended to enable their overcoming of the psychological and material oppressions exerted by patriarchy, including and especially through patriarchal looking.

Most significantly for making art work, Robinson's analysis of Irigaray's work - rather than Irigaray's work in itself - makes it possible to understand how Irigaray's morphological impetus, within productive mimesis, relates to artistic approaches that are evident in my own and other artists' work and which involve the flattening and fragmentation of an idea of woman's body. I propose these approaches of flattening and fragmentation engender an excess of between-ness. Or, more precisely, rather than constituting a retrospective "method of discerning patterns of relationships between forms" (Robinson, 2006, p. 97), they pro-actively and futuristically construct spaces of between-ness, which exceed patriarchal linearity by encouraging an overcoming of mind/body binaries inherent in Freudian and Lacanian analyses (Freud, 1940), (Lacan, 1959 - 60) and in the "economy of

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<sup>89</sup> See, for example, *The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine*. Irigaray refers to this practice as "This 'style,' or 'writing,' of women..." (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 79).

the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132). So, by examining Robinson's analysis of productive mimesis, and relating this to my sculptural practice, I am able to identify my approach, which I name as "between-ing", and I am able to relate this to the idea of disruption (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013) embedded in Coleman and Ringrose's methodology of geophilosophy, in ways that help me to specify it relative to art practices made by other women.

Generally, the excess I refer to is generated and materialised in the detail of the artists' fragmentation of women, as discussed in Chapter One. It is evident in the rough cut marks for the arm holes in the structure resembling a cinema and which partitions VALIE EXPORT'S body in *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968), in the jarring movements of Martha Rosler's body, in *Semiotics of The Kitchen* (1975) as she forms a fragmented alphabet, in the raw stitching of Bourgeois' fabric, patchworked, female torso *Untitled* (1998) and in her rather crude visual partitioning of the body with a lumpen structure in her performance *A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts* (1978). It is evident in the delicate folding and tearing to create the petal-like structure of Hannah Wilkes' *Santo Antonio Rose* (1966) and the indentation and modelling resulting from the mastication involved in her *Starification Object Series* (1974). Each of these works visually partitions, fragments, cuts up, fractures an idea of woman, materialising an excessive, fluid idea of women beyond patriarchal delimitation. In the next chapter, I discuss how contemporary women artists take similar approaches, arguing

that, because they begin from outside patriarchy, they are able to visually and psychically exceed, through approaches of between-ing, patriarchal fragmentation and flattening, generating a new women's syntax.

For now, I examine how details within my *New Model Army* works materialise notions of morphology through a form of productive mimesis - that is, an approach I name as 'between-ing'; I examine how they exceed the doubling Doane (1982) refers to and, in so doing, how they differ from "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428), how this constitutes the approach I refer to as between-ing, and how this supports and materialises the idea of the mind and body not as separate but as inter-connected, in affective relations at play "between a subject's empirical living in the body and in the Symbolic" (Robinson, 2006., p. 98) and "between-subjects" (Whitford, 1991, p. 45).

#### **4:3 Putting Morphology "in place of " Anatomy**

Grosz has conceded that Irigaray's writings are "extremely difficult to write about" (Grosz, 1989, p. 101), due to being "exceptionally elusive, fluid and ambiguous" (ibid., p. 101). Grosz's writing, here, operates similarly to my *New Model Army* works when exhibited together; they publicly admit a difficulty, open it out to the possibility of being shared with others and, as such, render the continued pursuit of the problem *less* difficult for all involved by borrowing from the strength and possibility inherent in sharing. But why

does Grosz find Irigaray's writing so elusive? What might be causing this elusiveness? These questions regarding elusiveness matter to my project because, if elusiveness indexes the idea that Irigaray begins from a position outside of patriarchal orders, then understanding more about this will help me to understand how my own sculptures might articulate a similar position, in response to the censorship of women's desires.

Grosz states that Irigaray:

...attempts to undo psychoanalytic phallogentrism by insinuating the question of sexual specificity into its most central assumptions and propositions (Grosz, 1990, p. 169).

Here, Grosz refers to Irigaray's argument that Freudian and Lacanian analyses are assumptively imbricated into the economy, and into language and discourse, in ways that oppress women and their sexuality. Hence, Irigaray's post-structural approach involves, as Grosz puts it: "insinuating" (ibid., p. 169) women's sexuality directly into the core assumptions - or structures - underpinning and motivating phallogentrism. For Irigaray, this means re-structuring language and discourse, in order to relieve them of their phallic, psychoanalytic coherency. This engenders a systemic shift in emphasis which, for the reader coming 'blind' to Irigaray's work - that is, without prior knowledge of what she is attempting - results in the initially very confusing and elusive form of writing to which Grosz refers.

Grosz explains that Irigaray's emphasis on the morphological is not due to a retention of biological essentialism, but occurs because Irigaray does not conceive bodies as "biologically or anatomically given, inert, brute objects fixed by nature" (Grosz, 1989, p. 112). On Grosz's reading, Irigaray's emphasis on "morphology in place of anatomy" (ibid., p. 112) reflects her idea that bodies are non-fixed, fluid and morphologically doubled, rather than anatomically individuated and fixed structures. Grosz says Irigaray's morphological interpretation of bodies is "in place of" (ibid., p. 112) anatomical readings, thus indicating, in ways that I find helpful for considering how my practice works morphologically, the subtractive and building work involved in Irigaray's project, through which she aims to generate writing approaches that will enable women to have "social signification" (ibid., p. 112) - that is, to have equal social and symbolic structures to that of men, through which to articulate their choices and desires in material and cultural terms.

Her aim seems to be the exploration of a new theoretical space and language which may be able to undermine patriarchal and phallogocentric domination of the sphere of representation and, more positively, to provide a mode of representation for women as women. (ibid., p. 168)

I take Grosz's reference to "representation for women as women" (ibid., p.168) as evidence of Irigaray's sensitivity to women's need to be

represented in ways that reject patriarchal commodification of them through their image - that is, in ways that express women's strengths in excess of patriarchy, without denying their vulnerability to it. This combined strength and vulnerability is materially articulated in my art practice, through the bringing together of brute, though often fragile, fragmented objects into delicate, precariously constructed poses. However, it is Robinson's suggestion that we consider Irigaray's interest in morphology, in order to then interpret material art practices relative to Irigaray's interest, which helps me to make connections between Grosz's ideas and my own work.



Fig. 29 Linda Aloysius

*Carrier*

2011



Fig. 30 Linda Aloysius

*Carrier (Reverse View)*

2011



Fig. 31 Linda Aloysius

*Carrier (Side View)*

2011



Fig. 32 Linda Aloysius

*Carrier (Side View)*

2011



Fig. 33 Linda Aloysius

*Carrier* (detail)

2011

For example, in my work *Carrier*, I express the - doubled - idea that both sculpture and women bodily *carry* empirical knowledge of patriarchal oppression and that, in so doing, they are, simultaneously, strong and vulnerable. *Carrier* is made of objects found in the street - a street sign, plastic bath panel, discarded electrical cable, insulation foam, the lining from a sofa cushion and, as with other sculptures in the series, bought concrete, which I have cast to make the sculpture's feet and which I have also used in liquid form as 'make up' (facial cosmetics) for the sculpture's 'head / face', which is visually subsumed into the main body of the sculpture.

I have structured the sculpture so that its posture indicates a burdened subject engaged in highly precarious, laboured existence, but which is also intent on moving forward and beyond, even if only by shuffling as if in shackles. The structure on the back of the sculpture, which is a bag or sack made from the lining of a sofa cushion, is difficult to distinguish as a structure separate from the sculpture's main body. This is a deliberate move, intended to materialise the idea that the body and the symbolic are not separate and also, importantly, that the mind and body are not separate; hence, the physical labour of carrying is simultaneously evoked as physical and psychic and what is being carried is proposed as ambiguous. This move builds on the idea proposed in Chapter One, in relation to Hannah Wilke's work *Starification Object Series* (1974), that she quite literally bears the burden of a scarred sexuality on her back.

Whilst I am aware that the idea I embed into this syntax is that women's sexuality is, in patriarchal orders, burdensome for them to carry, I have deliberately structured this ambiguity into the work to open out notions, of *carrying*, to the audience's perception, hoping to encourage audiences to question what it may be that we all, universally but variously, carry, physically and psychically.

I have also made 'jewellery' for the sculpture to wear; this is the electrical cable onto which I have threaded lumps of insulation foam and which, like the bag or sack, also acts as separate object *and* as the body of the sculpture. I have wound this 'jewellery' around the sculpture and into the bag being carried. Notably, this also includes winding the 'jewellery' around the feet of the sculpture, indicating that, if the sculpture is to move forward as its posture suggests it is inclined to, it is likely to trip and fall, due to its attempts towards self expression through adornment. The idea being communicated, here, is that capitalism effectively punishes women in advance by giving them unequal rights and rewards within employment situations and regarding their reproductive and domestic labour (Federici, 1975, 2010), making it harder for women to progress in accord with their desires.

The further detail of the 'face/head' of the sculpture physicalises morphological doubling of the idea of women's lips. I say more of this morphological doubling of "the lips" (Robinson, 2006, p. 101) later in this

chapter, with reference to my work *Bird*. However, it is worth admitting now that, to create this gesture, I mixed some concrete powder with water, to form a perverse idea of cosmetics, and to add to the idea that this particular sculpture is making an attempt towards self-adornment in order to claim a form of expressivity - or, as Grosz would say, a "social signification" (Grosz, 1989, p. 112) - with which to brave and engage the world. I use the term 'brave' because the entire structure which the gesture is painted onto is intended to operate as an embodied and reconstituted *screen* and, as such, visually and psychically operates similarly to a *shield*, held in front of the body for reasons of defense against the oppressive effects of the patriarchal screen, prior to its reconstitution as anti-patriarchal shield. However, in this sculpture, the shield is turned outwards - convexly, away from the sculpture's body, rather than inwards, concavely. This gesture is intended to indicate women's ability to reconstitute and reverse the patriarchal requirement to absorb the effects of the objectifying gaze. I 'paint' onto this structure.

When I made *Carrier*, and when I made this gesture through 'painting', I had carried out a significant amount of research into painting, including painting involving text and an idea of woman. For example, Ed Ruscha's painting *Gal Chews Gum* (2008) was of interest, as was Mel Bochner's



Fig. 34 Ed Ruscha *Gal Chews Gum* (2008)



of woman and her body to a 2D format) and fragmentation (of written text).

Since at least my undergraduate studies there have been consistent overlaps between my sculptural practice, writing and painting, particularly through my interest in the screen.

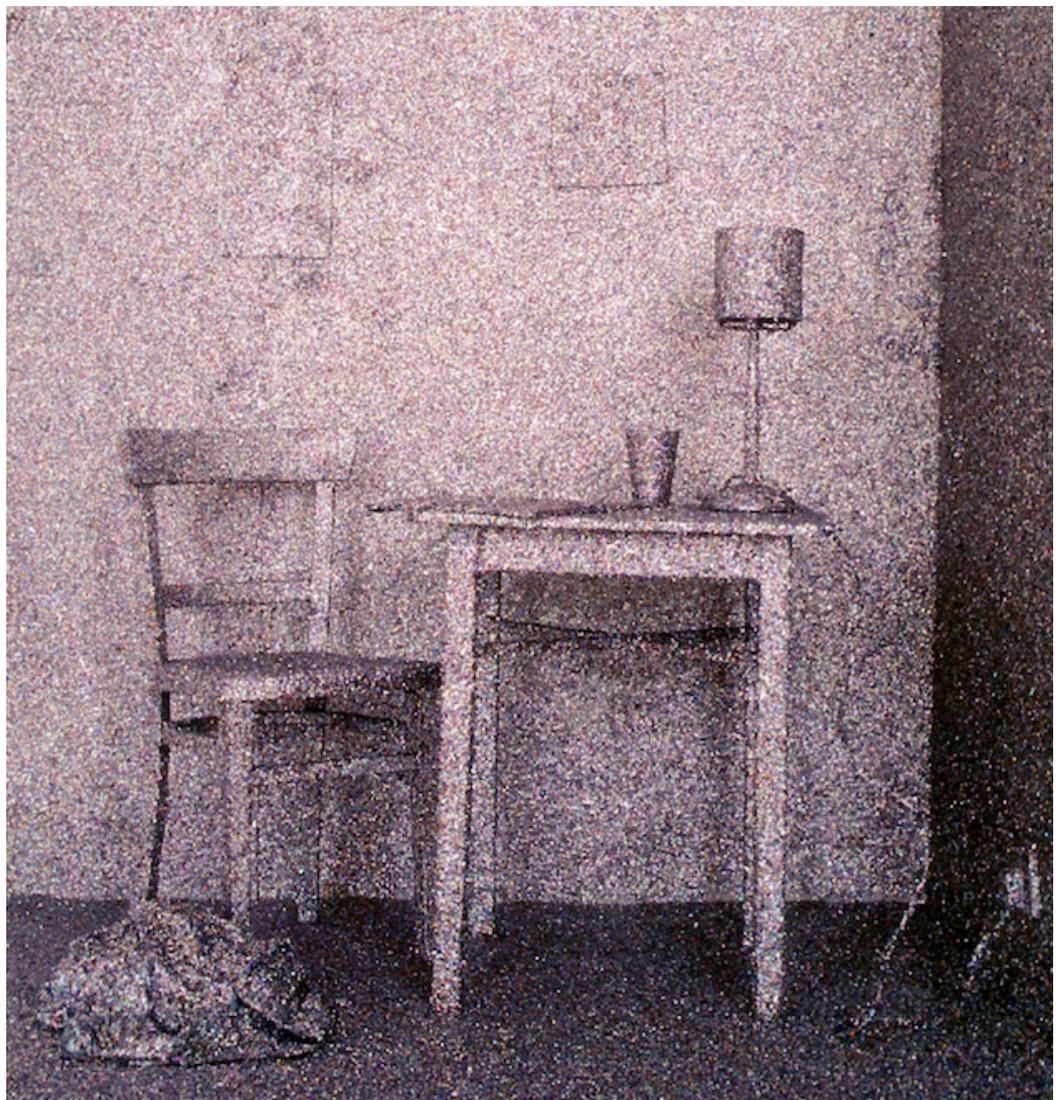


Fig. 36 Linda Aloysius *Interior in which I Searched for Months for the Perfect Glitter* (2006)

For example, regarding notions of painting and just prior to my PhD research, I made an installation entitled *Interior in which I Searched for Months for the Perfect Glitter* (2006), which I photographed and exhibited<sup>90</sup> as a projection. In this work, I use found objects which I have entirely covered with a form of glitter that took several months to source, having rejected many other kinds, and despite now knowing exactly what kind of glitter I was looking for. This process is significant to the development of my *New Model Army* project, as is the outcome. To cover the objects in glitter, I first applied PVA glue to their entire surfaces and then applied the glitter. As I worked, I increasingly felt a sense of suffocation emerge through the work; as if, in covering the objects in this way, I was smothering and suffocating not only the objects, but something other, and at the same time as evoking whatever that 'other' was. I could not articulate this paradoxical idea at the time, but later understood this to relate to an idea of the need to re-negotiate women's sexuality and the patriarchal subjugation of this in the symbolic. In the projection, notions of screen, writing (in the title of the work), painting and sculpture overlap. Within this indeterminate space of overlap, I had attempted to articulate a correspondence between an internal desire to connect to women's (patriarchally obscured) sexuality, pleasure and desire with an external search for a 'perfect glitter', capable of symbolically evoking women's patriarchally suppressed sexuality and the possibility of immanent becoming. This early articulation of women's negotiation of her sexuality, and its subjugation, relative to the symbolic, and via the screen, was to become

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<sup>90</sup> At *Andrew Mummery Gallery*, 2006.

developed in my subsequent works, but in ways that were very difficult to articulate at the time of making.

For example, around the time I made *Carrier*, I kept returning to the idea of "the vaginal capacities of painting" and tried to write about this - a concept that I could not sufficiently explain and which was initially met with some patience but, ultimately, at least a degree of institutional derision. Of course, I retrospectively saw the humour in the way I had tried to express my idea, but I had been sincere in trying to do so. Now, on further reflection, I understand that I had not (then) encountered Robinson's analysis of morphology within painting, and did not know that this was what I was trying to understand through making, but with the added complication of trying to address notions of painting from a sculptural perspective, as well as notions of text, and as a woman and mother, through theories and examples of painting and of sculpture and approaches to them. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which *Carrier* expresses how my 'defiance' (from a patriarchal perspective) in relation to sculptural practice connects to the idea of a far greater 'defiance' that women can and do lay claim to on a larger scale; after experiencing this institutional response, which I found both understandable and potentially flattening, if not deadening, there was a compulsion to nevertheless return to the studio and work it all out through the work itself.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> I still maintain my sculptures have a vested interest in painting but, in this thesis, I do not pursue Robinson's interest in morphology within painting, having come to her work as a sculptor who was, temporarily, influenced away from pursuing, through theoretical investigation but not in my studio, the overlap in disciplines I refer to here.

Lynne Hershman's *Roberta's Construction Chart* (1975)<sup>92</sup> had also become interesting to my project because there are correspondences between her approach to cosmetics and painting and my own in *Carrier*.



Fig. 37 Lynne Hershman *Roberta's Construction Chart* (1975)

<sup>92</sup> Exhibited at Tate Modern, London, in the group show *Making a Bigger Splash: Painting After Performance Art* (14 November 2012 – 1 April 2013).

In this work, Hershman creates a chart relating to how she applies cosmetics to create a social identity - Roberta - as a work of art. The formalism of the chart, and the idiosyncratic but systematic approach to 'painting' that it suggests, in relation to notions of social woman and her subjection to scrutiny as such, became helpful to my practice. Hershman's work suggested that women's sexuality could be negotiated within the overlap(s) between notions of paint and cosmetics.

Moreover, in being part of a larger project involving the social construction of an idea of woman, by a woman artist, the work also suggested an overlap exists between painting and woman's social, embodied performativity. I position my sculptures in these overlaps, through the syntaxes I invent - for example, in *Carrier*. Through the process of applying the 'cosmetics', notions of (artists') paint, construction materials and cosmetics became merged conceptually, through and in the moment of making; the spontaneity of my bodily gestures is loaded into the work, materialising the pluralised idea of lips/ face and the possibility of women's speech.

By this time, I had also become aware of the paintings of Janet Sobel, whose 'story' became fascinating for my project, particularly because no-one seemed to know who she was. It was not Sobel's painting technique, as such, that was interesting to my project, but the idea that the term "housewife" (Karmel, 200, p. 273) had been used to undermine her

contribution to art, in favour of promoting Jackson Pollock as a heroic figure. Sobel, a Ukrainian-American and mother of four, did not begin painting until her early forties, when she began dripping paint onto canvases from above.



Fig. 38 Janet Sobel Untitled (detail) c. 1946 - 48

Peggy Guggenheim included Sobel's work at *The Art of This Century* gallery (1944). Pollock and Clement Greenberg attended and saw Sobel's work.

Greenberg wrote in his essay *'American Type' Painting* (Greenberg, 1955/61) that:

Pollock had seen "one or two curious paintings shown at Peggy Guggenheim's by a 'primitive' painter, Janet Sobel, (who was, and still is, a housewife living in Brooklyn). (Greenberg, 1955/1961, p. 213)

Greenberg adds: "Pollock (and I myself) admired [Sobel's] pictures rather furtively" (ibid, p. 213). Significantly, Greenberg then says:

The effect - and it was the first really 'all over' one that I had ever seen...was strangely pleasing. Later on, Pollock admitted these pictures had made an impression on him. (ibid., p. 213)

Claims made in relation to Greenberg's writing, such as that put forward by Pepe Karmel, became very interesting for my project, particularly for works such as *Carrier*. Karmel's claim is that, after Pollock saw this work, he began developing the drip method and was increasingly - strategically - promoted as a heroic figure. The implication is that Pollock's promotion relied upon Sobel being strategically "discredited" (Karmel, 2000, p. 273):<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> It is possible that this has personal resonance for me. As an undergraduate attending Manchester School of Art, I was initially working across painting and sculpture. I designed and built trough - like structures with a series of holes in them, and a mechanism to release liquid resin through these holes, to form a series of upright, resin 'lines', in grids, on perspex sheets. At that time, a colleague who was from London introduced me to a young man that he had studied on Foundation with, who I explained my ideas to. This young man returned to Goldsmiths College, where he was studying BA Fine Art, and replicated these

Karmel writes:

When Sobel is mentioned at all in accounts of "Pollock's development, however, she is generally described and so discredited as a "housewife", or amateur, a stratagem that preserves Pollock's status as the legitimate and unique progenitor. (ibid., p. 273)

The idea that the term "housewife" (ibid., p. 273) could be used to discredit a woman's inventiveness, and the further ideas that Sobel, rather than Pollock, was the "unique progenitor" (ibid., p. 273) of a particular painting method, and that Greenberg - a key critic at that time - had all but described her as such and yet she had been given little or no recognition for her contribution, and that she subsequently had no voice within painting circles, very strongly resonated. As I made *Carrier*, I wanted to articulate, in sculptural terms, the politics surrounding the idea that not only is it possible to discredit and undervalue a woman's connectivity to paint and painting, in favour of a man's, but that this is made easier due to her status as a - in Federici's analysis (1975, 2010), a priori exploited - housewife and because men are able to 'step into' pre-existing, entrenched patriarchal frameworks

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structures and method, using paint, rather than resin. He received much attention and support in developing this approach whilst studying at Goldsmiths, and this method became and remains key to his practice, which is considered highly original. Although I protested at the time that he had stolen my idea, he laughed, and said this was nonsense. He pursued this method, with guidance from male painters teaching at Goldsmiths. For a long time, his actions, and their reception, confused me and my relationship to painting and to the London art world.

with relative ease and more immediate rewards. It became important to my project to articulate a paradoxical idea of the process, of discrediting, as a political muffling or muting of women's voices and, simultaneously, of women's insistence upon speech regarding this muffling and in contestation of it. It was important to my project to articulate the paradoxical idea of voicing the muting of women's painterly voice, on behalf of all women bound into reproductive and domestic labour, whose inventiveness and creativity provides a basis for male artists to flourish and whose contribution is routinely ignored in favour of promoting the work of men (Robinson, 2006). In *Carrier*, these ideas are articulated through my application of 'paint' to the structure of the sculpture, in ways that deliberately take up and re-position notions of amateurism within painting, in order to evoke the paradoxical idea of giving voice to the political silencing of women.

Returning these ideas of "social signification" (ibid., p. 112) to Robinson's reading of Irigaray: on Robinson's analysis, it is writing and speaking, rather than art and sculpture, which, for Irigaray, are examples of the terms through which women might insist upon such expressivity. However, on Grosz's reading, for Irigaray, the possibility of the power for women, of writing and speaking, is undercut from the outset by "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9), which she claims privileges anatomical readings of male genitals (the penis) to produce concepts like "penis envy" (ibid, p. 9) and the castration complex, which position women only as "lack" (Doane, 1982, p. 424).

Grosz's claim is linked to her further idea that, for Irigaray, Lacan perpetuates Freudian biologism. Lacanian psychoanalysis is very attractive to feminists, because he emphasises Freud's subversiveness "and helps to vindicate psychoanalysis in feminist terms, enabling it to be used as an explanatory model for social and public relations" (ibid., p. 9). However, for Irigaray, Lacan only further *enables* Freud's biologism, particularly through his concept of the mirror stage which, for Irigaray, rehearses and imbricates Freud's anatomical readings within the core structure of written and spoken language. Therefore, Irigaray attacks "Freudian biologism" (ibid., p. 9), and the anatomical readings and structures "of the economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132) stemming from this, and seeks to replace this with *morphological* approaches. For Irigaray, this especially includes writing.

In analysing Irigaray's writing, Robinson's builds on what Grosz refers to as the "difficult" (Grosz, 1989, p. 101) aspects of Irigaray's work, with a visionary approach that Grosz does not, herself, relate to art making. Robinson's visionary approach is evident in the positivity which she brings to her statement that: "...Irigaray leaves plenty of gaps in her writing - creative gaps, full of potential..." (Robinson, 1994., p. 20). Robinson's identification of such creative gaps is already in accord with Irigaray's morphological approach, including and especially to her writing, in which such gaps are purposely structured. Robinson points out that: "Irigaray insisted on the

distinction between anatomy and morphology from an early point" (Robinson, 2006, p. 97), and that Irigaray:

...uses the term 'morphology' precisely to name the site of a discursive and dynamic relationship between a subject's empirical living in the body and in the Symbolic. (ibid., p. 98)

Irigaray's interest directly relates to her suspicion of Freud's recourse to anatomy, in his conception of the oedipal regime, and to her contestation of this, because it positions female sexuality as lack. It is important to point out, therefore, that the first reference given above, of Robinson's explanation of the term *morphology*, refers to Irigaray's interest in morphology as an approach, through which to perceive patterns of and in "*between*" (Robinson, 2006, p. 97) (my emphasis) relationships. The second reference given above, in which Robinson quotes Irigaray, refers to Irigaray's interest in morphology as both the physical form that a structure assumes (but still within a morphological rather than anatomical reading) *and* morphology as an approach - a way of doing and of interpreting. Irigaray is interested in morphology in these two senses.

Robinson recognises Irigaray is interested in how morphology can be, simultaneously, both "the site of a discursive and dynamic relationship between a subject's empirical living in the body and in the Symbolic" (ibid., p. 98) *and* "a method of discerning patterns of relationships between forms"

(ibid., p. 97). This interpretation is extremely helpful to my practice. Through her description, Robinson indicates how, for Irigaray, morphology is, simultaneously, a site (of a relationship between embodied subjects) *and* a method (of identifying relationship patterns between forms). My *New Model Army* works build on Robinson's analysis, not by retrospectively identifying such sites and relationships, but by materially and conceptually constructing sites and relationships and by encouraging further such relations through an approach of *between-ing*; that is, in building my sculptures I build such sites and relationships through the active, and positive *flattening* and *fragmenting* of an idea of excessive, embodied women and their relation to other, excessive embodied women, and with the audience, as excessive, embodied subjects.

How is it possible for something to be a site, and a method and a relation? To explain: I have described in Chapter Two how, when installed as a group, my *New Model Army* sculptures act as a "site of" (ibid., p. 98) a relation of between-ness in which the viewer is encouraged to bodily engage, to form a relation with and between themselves and the works. But my sculptures also act as individual sites for generating this relationship of between-ness - or, more precisely, between-ing; this approach of between-ing extends through each individual sculpture and between artist, art-work and audience. To give an example of how this idea functions, I now refer to *Perforated*.



Fig. 39

Linda Aloysius, *Perforated*

(2015)

As with the other sculptures in the series, *Perforated* is generally - and giantly - phallic in shape, upright, and with any notion of head, face and arms subsumed into the main trunk. To form the trunk of the sculpture I have used what was originally a single piece of found,<sup>94</sup> damaged and weathered pre-perforated board, the edges of which are frayed and vulnerable. I have retained some of the board's found shape and have also adapted and cut into this shape to create *two* phallic shapes, which I've strung together and overlapped, tying them to metal legs formed from an adapted, abandoned street sign. The sculpture is physically supported by concrete feet, which I have modelled from gritty, bought concrete, supplied in sacks which I have used to form a mould for the feet.

Whilst *Stripped* most obviously suggests women's embodiment of the aggressive *speed* of the mediatised gaze, *Perforated* suggests, through the material used for the trunk of the sculpture, that the flesh of the sculpture has been machinically and systematically penetrated by the same, reifying, mediatised and screened gaze. However, *Perforated*, more than any other sculpture in the series, directly addresses the idea, embedded in Irigaray's philosophy, that a morphological, pluralised reading is needed "in place of"

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<sup>94</sup> This object was found in the car park of Atlantis, the art supplies store located in the East end of London. As is often the case, I drove the object to my studio in my car. Notably, this car was bought for me by an employer when I began working for him - through necessity, rather than choice - very soon after completing my MFA at Goldsmiths, so that I could drive between construction sites around London, to carry out my job. The car is now quite battered from transporting a great many found objects, to the extent that I consider it to be an extension of my working studio. I also take pleasure in the idea that, through the ancilliary structure of a car, I have effectively converted a form of unwanted labour - as project and site manager, overseeing in excess of fifty male staff, for a construction and development company operating across London - to a wanted form of labour, as artist.

(Grosz, 1989, p. 112) Freudian biologism, in order to subvert patriarchal looking and to protect women from its effects. It is through the stages within my practice that I articulate and respond to the question of what it is that is put in place of what. In other words, the question is both formed and answered within and through the context of making and in response to the materials I engage with.

To explain: when I start making a work, I have little or no idea of what its final form will be. There is a sense in which things need to be this way, for the work to begin; as artist, I need to 'step into' uncertainty, into a space time that feels, ultimately, illicit. At least in the period of making the *New Model Army* works, the way that a sculpture starts, the way that this uncertainty manifests, *must* involve an initial degree of practical and psychological inconvenience, in which I am effectively taken out of routine ways of thinking and doing. This usually happens when I first see the object, and there is a very strong resonance. The way that I know a work is beginning is that this resonance is almost immediately followed by a moment of rejection or denial, of thinking, and of trying not to think because it might seem to indicate a lack of commitment on my part, something like: "I can't be bothered/ I'm too busy/oh no, not again/why can't I - when will I ever again - work with light/clean/small objects?". But, in the next few moments, something else happens. Immense desire and excitement take over this feeling of reluctance, of being inconvenienced. And it is in this moment that my intention, my artistic commitment, to putting something "in place of" (ibid., p.

112) something else, surreals, and I feel grateful, and the deepest commitment, to whatever it is that has attracted my attention. This intention becomes negotiated and refined in material and practical terms, during the initial processes of collecting the object, putting the object in the studio and doing 'nothing' for a while - only sharing the same physical space, becoming bodily and visually attuned to the object as one would a person - or, more precisely, parts of a person who wants and needs to become whole, but whose language is not quite the same as one's own, and requires imagination and interpretation to become comprehensible. Usually, in practical terms, this will involve me picking up the object in my car or rushing back to where my car is and driving back to collect the object from the street. In the journey to my studio, with the object, there is a kind of very private, bodily conversation that takes place between us, and this carries through to the initial stages of making, and is ongoing even after the sculpture is 'finished', even when I am physically 'far away' from my work<sup>95</sup>.

It is in and through these different stages of making, through this ongoing conversation, that the question, of what becomes replaced with what, is negotiated relative to the physical qualities of the object that I find.

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<sup>95</sup> This can be both distressing and pleasurable. When it is distressing, I imagine it feels similar to having a 'phantom limb', that one senses but cannot touch. There must surely be many sculptors who feel they have 'phantom sculpture syndrome', when their works are, for example, in storage, or dismantled. Recently, in developing the concept for my practice, I am trying to work with, rather than against this and the emphasis, on temporality, that it suggests may be needed and/or possible.

Each case differs, but the period of becoming sensitised to the objects lasts for as long as it takes - it must and can only take its own time, and effectively re-defines time in so doing - to reach a greater level of intimacy with the object. This also depends on how the materials initially present when I find them; some materials present (to me) as highly resistant and almost dead, exhausted, consumed by capitalist driven relations to the symbolic. The objects and materials sometimes need a gentle time between us, before they become ready to build with. Others demand a quicker, brusque transformation. I clean the objects in order to *know* them or, sometimes, after I already feel I've reached a stage of *knowing* them by spending "our time" together and can more clearly sense their potential and how they seem to want and need to build into something in excess of that which they are. Usually, they are 'flat out' during this cleaning and getting-to-know process, laid out on my studio floor, waiting to become ready for verticality and its implications.

Cleaning as an artistic method is very psychoanalytically - but also economically - loaded. Mierle Laderman Ukeles, for example, refers to cleaning practices in her work *Maintenance Art Manifesto 1969! Proposal for an exhibition "CARE"* (Ukeles, 1969). This project formed a proposal to display maintenance work as art. It developed in response to her belief that, following the birth of her first child in 1968, her role as artist became secondary to that of mother. Ukeles begins the manifesto with the statement:

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother. (Random order) I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I 'do' Art. Now I will simply do these everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. (Ukeles, 1969 cited Robinson, 2015, p.88 - 95)

Ukeles' idea that domestic chores will benefit from being brought "to consciousness" (ibid., p. 90), indicates her awareness of women's subjection to psychological manipulation through media, including by being positioned as happy and dutiful housewives (Friedan, 1963). It also indicates her awareness of the lack of value given to domestic work carried out by women, invisibly, within the home. Ukeles' insistence on including cleaning as art practice constitutes a response to the psychoanalytic and economic framing of women, including through early mediatised images of them. Having written her response in her manifesto, Ukeles went on to involve cleaning in her practice. For example, she cleaned the steps of the Wadsworth Atheneum, for her related project *Maintenance Art Tasks* (1973).



Fig. 40 Mierle Laderman Ukeles *Maintenance Art Tasks: Wadsworth Atheneum* (1973)

By involving cleaning in my works, I am developing Ukeles' ideas. In carrying out cleaning processes, I knowingly bring to a halt the degradation of women by patriarchy to instead encourage an idea of woman beyond a patriarchal " 'presence' " (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 72). However, my work differs from that of Ukeles, because, in including cleaning in my practice, I am also, paradoxically, bringing to a halt the sterilising - or neutralising - of women's sexuality within patriarchal orders, by leaving some dirt on the sculptures. In other words, through cleaning, I am not attempting to remove all traces of 'dirt' in the materials. Instead, I aim to bring a new focus and value to notions

of dirt, in connection with women's sexuality. In so doing, I am materialising the processes involved in a transformative becoming of woman, from her patriarchally exploited sense, to the idea of woman in 'dirty' (from a patriarchal perspective) excess of this.

In *Perforated*, this process particularly manifests in the overlapping of the two phallic shapes, which materially constitute, and are constituted by, the fragmentation and flattening approaches I have developed relative to Robinson's analysis. The fragmentation and flattening generates a visual and psychological between-ness, *between* the two phallic shapes. So, I refer to it as between-ing. In *Perforated*, this between-ing of the two phallic shapes subtly suggests movement, either of the figure in the sculpture - from one moment to the next - or of the moment itself. In other words, the moment is subject to between-ness that refers to "différance" (Derrida, 1981), which Derrida describes as:

...a structure and a movement no longer conceivable on the basis of the opposition presence/absence...Differences are the effects of transformations, and from this vantage the theme of différance is incompatible with the static, synchronic, taxonomic, ahistoric motifs in the concept of structure. (Derrida, 1981, p. 27 - 28)

Robinson argues that, when they are only perceived according to phallic orders, women's morphological recourse to play is negated. In such a

situation, women are: "defined as other of the same, women have been denied the play of différance that will give them access to becoming sexuate subjects" (Robinson, 2006, p. 100-101). By this she means that, in patriarchal economies of inequality, where there is only scope for "subject-object relation" (Whitford, 1991, p. 45), rather than subject - subject relation, women have no access to symbolic syntaxes appropriate for their self-expression because patriarchal orders de-value, utterly, women's expressivity or their transformative becoming. As Robinson puts it: "the différance made possible by women's morphology can not be recognised by a phallic economy" (Robinson, 2006, p. 101).

*Perforated* builds on Robinson's reading of Derrida's concept of différance by engaging my need to "play" (ibid., p. 100). This play structurally invokes a sense of movement that contradicts, by visually dislodging, its apparent fixity and stasis as a sculpture. This suggests the possibility, for women, of a *moment of oppositional looking* (hooks, 1992) - away from screened oppression and from the inhibiting, patriarchal structures which found this; through and in the moment of their morphologically doubled, upright postures, the sculptures defy their impending collapse, as engendered by capitalism and evoked through the precarity and decay inherent in their own bodily structures, and they do so in rejection of the possibility of their becoming completely structurally enmeshed and subsumed within the capitalist and patriarchal oppression enforced by the screen.

This moment of turn, in order to look outwards and oppositionally at the gaze that is potentially subjugating, is also run through the material registers within *Perforated*; overall, there is an indication that the perforated material used for the body of the sculpture represents a form of clothing - a patterned or lace shift dress - as well as flesh. In this sense, the sculptures visually acknowledge and inhabit the social and cultural register and the possibility of women's movement within this, and refer to a larger context of women artists' practices which I have described in Chapter One and will further describe in Chapter Four, involving the merging of notions of clothing and body in art. But there is, overall, a very strong sense in which the movement invoked by this doubled trunk, supported by the legs and feet, forms a materialised, doubled, de-unitised and de-unitising - and, as such, morphological - reading of the penis/phallus<sup>96</sup> - so displacing anatomical readings through the fragmentation and flattening processes involved in between-ing.

To extend this morphological approach, I have also formed two voile sacs, intended to be primarily reminiscent of testicles, but also, and at the same time, of breasts and eyes. By encouraging such overlapping

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<sup>96</sup> Berg notes that, whilst Irigaray "criticises the phallogormorphism of discourse, she does not make any claims about which comes first, the penis or the phallus" (Berg, 1991, p. 54). This suggests that, for Irigaray, any distinction between the phallus and the penis is *beside the point* and, on her reading, is ultimately inconsequential. As Berg points out, Irigaray suggests that "focus on the penis in the construction of male sexuality is a consequence of values inscribed in discourse" (ibid., p. 54). In other words, the focus on the penis is a consequence of phallogocratic values within discourse and, relatedly, any attempt to distinguish it from the phallus retains this phallogocratic focus. For Irigaray, what is needed instead is a morphological reading of the penis / phallus; under such a doubling reading, the terms overlap and are liberated of any phallogocratic distinction from one another.

associations between gendered body parts, this particular syntax extends the relations of between-ness invoked by morphological approaches, materialising an idea of woman's entire body as a primary site of between-ness and of between-ing, in which her relation to man, and the possibilities of his morphology, and of this inter-relating with hers, is invoked. To explain: the association with testes is subtly reinforced by the two concrete feet which, to a lesser extent in regard to their shape, but with more visual (and actual) weight, also reference testes. These sacs are suspended in a position that is deliberately slightly ambiguous - that is, not quite in the position of eyes, not quite in the position of breasts and, logically, too high up for testicles. Moreover, they are attached to the sculpture with string, in a similar manner to the 'prosthetic' wooden genitals of *Stripped*, so that notions of body, clothing and wearing are, again, merged and prostheticised. Yet the sacs still strongly reference testicles, despite their position, and because their subtle reiteration in the gravity bound concrete feet inclines to draw the eye downwards, so we sense the voile sacs to be physically lower than they actually are. Hence, these three references - eyes, breasts, testicles - overlap, generating a productive *between-ing*, of the body of the sculpture, in a similar manner to the syntaxes in the other sculptures in the series.<sup>97</sup> In this sense, my sculptures activate and physicalise Robinson's descriptions of how Irigaray hopes to invoke morphology as:

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<sup>97</sup> Although the contents of the voile sacs are deliberately obscured, it is possible for the viewer to perceive that they are filled with an earth-like or dirt(y) substance. This draws association with notions of fertility. However, I have chosen to use commercially produced compost, rather than earth, in these sculptures and I have deliberately obscured this difference (between earth and compost) to denote a fertility that's also commercially and covertly sanitised in accord with patriarchal capitalism.

...a relationship which does not go in one direction, but where the way the subject understands the body is significant in determining an appropriate syntax in the Symbolic; and where in turn the subject understands - or reads the body through that syntax. (Robinson, 2006, p. 98)

My *New Model Army* sculptures refuse the "one direction" (ibid., p. 98) of patriarchally and phallically linearised capitalism and instead, psychically and bodily encourage a reading of bodies through morphological registers and syntaxes. In materialising between-ing at the site of their bodies, they activate, through this between-ing, affective relations with the viewer. However, they do not intend to act upon the bodies, as separate from the minds, of viewers of the work. They intend to act upon and operate in excess of notions of mind / body dualism.

To explain: in all the *New Model Army* sculptures, any notion of head and arms and facial features is subsumed into the main body, or trunk, of the sculpture. This gesture evokes the reifying force of patriarchal sight, subsuming women's expressivity (as associated with their faces and their intelligences) in favour of their commodification for exchange within patriarchal "market" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 170).

However, the upright stance of the sculptures strongly suggests that they do not entirely succumb to this oppression; the same gesture which

seems to negatively merge an idea of woman's body with head, arms and face, also reads, in the context of the sculpture's between-ing body, as woman's anti-patriarchal *refusal* of patriarchal mind and body divisionism, instead proposing each sculpture as an instance of excessively fragmented and newly between-ing subjectivity, in which mind and body enjoy excessive correspondence.

Taken as a set of art works, my *New Model Army* sculptures - *Perforated* in particular - physicalise Robinson's descriptions (Robinson, 2006, p. 98) of men's sexual organs as multiple rather than unitary, by applying a morphological rather than anatomical reading. Robinson demonstrates the phallocentrism already at play in Freud's analysis and, in so doing, argues that male physiognomy is not neutrally viewed through a phallocentric lens, and therefore automatically reduces women only to the binary opposite of this phallocentric structure:

Men's sex organs are seen as singular through phallocentrism - 'the penis'; and women's are seen only as an other which reflects this unit - the nothing-to-see, determined in a negative relationship to the one. (ibid., p. 98)

In this statement, Robinson touches upon the idea that it is Freud's overly-simplistic, under-developed, reductive and anatomical conception of male genitals, as a unitary rather than multiple, complex organ, that

constructs and maintains problematic phallic power, including through man's body. In turn, this engenders phallogocriticism in which very narrowed conceptions of the body impose non-reciprocal relations upon the symbolic, negating the possibility of reciprocal relations between the body and the symbolic. Hence, Robinson argues Irigaray does not want to produce a "determinant, indexical link from the relationship between language and the body" (ibid., p. 99), but that she wants a "morphological or iconic sign" (Berg, 1991, p. 54) - an obviously representational sign that makes no pretence to an authority beyond itself, but which "merely draws attention to formal resemblances" (ibid., p. 54). In other words, by applying a morphological reading to women's bodies *and* to the symbolic, Irigaray intends to generate a powerful and openly associative, rather than prescriptive and covert, relationship between aspects of female physiognomy - the "dynamic" (Robinson, 2006, p. 98) relationship between the two lips, which are construed as "at least two in at least two ways: both in the play between the (not)mouth and (not)vulva, and also in the internal morpho-logic of such (non)references" (ibid., p. 101) - and between this dynamic and the symbolic order.

Significantly, Robinson's interpretation of: "The lips' lack of one-ness" (ibid., p. 101) builds on the recurring - rather than single or isolated - doubling inherent in Derrida's notion of *différance* (Derrida, 1981). This emphasis is interesting to my research project and I build on this in my art

practice. Robinson says that this "lack of one-ness", (Robinson, 2006, p. 101) is such that it:

...means that they do not have a graspable, unitary form; to give this morphology a name would be to revert to phallic practice, to place it in patriarchal limits. (ibid., p. 101)

If I take these thoughts to my sculpture, *Bird*, then this sculpture particularly evokes - without naming - the morphological relation between "the lips" (ibid., p. 101).



Fig. 41 Linda Aloysius *Bird* (2011)



Fig. 42 Linda Aloysius *Bird (reverse)* (2011)

In constructing *Bird*, I have adapted a pre-existing rip in a discarded café seat cushion to form a gash that evokes female genitalia. The gash is positioned towards the top of the trunk of the body, implying that head and body have been forcefully merged under patriarchal looking and that woman's intelligence, and her her own gaze, are surplus to requirements.



Fig. 43 Cathy Wilkes We Are Pro Choice (detail) 2008

This gesture relates to (but differs from) Wilkes' evocation, in *We Are Pro Choice* (2008), of patriarchal violence done to woman's vision, through her use of wire to visually cut across the mannequin's line of sight. Consequently, in *Bird*, the gash occupies the most prominent focal point in

the whole sculpture and acts as the most obvious and powerful symbol of woman. The head and facial features - including the mouth and lips - of woman have ultimately not been denied, in a move that would suggest I have replicated patriarchal modelling. Rather, they are now effectively associated with this powerful symbol, which acts to *positively* represent the idea that woman's vision and voice are, in this instance, *plurally* aligned with her sexuality.



Fig. 44 Linda Aloysius, *Bird* (detail view)

#### 4:4 The Importance of "Productive Mimesis"

Robinson's analysis (2006) of Irigaray's interest in morphology helps me to understand how morphology works in my art practice, engendering "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented" (ibid., p. 40) approaches that work together to form between-ing syntaxes which overcome patriarchal divisionism, and for the symbolic mediation of excessive notions of woman. However, my research project also investigates how "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) is underpinned by morphological approaches, whether this differs from Doane's notion of "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) and how this difference might impact upon my own and other women artists' works. Therefore, I have needed to understand more about how the making in my *New Model Army* has developed to form idiosyncratic 'consistencies', how it might be that I could think of them as such, when I could (and can) not predict in advance how these will manifest.

To examine Robinson's idea of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) I firstly refer to Berg's claim that Irigaray "suggests that the focus on the penis in the construction of male sexuality is a consequence of values inscribed in discourse" (Berg, 1991, p. 54). In Berg's reading, Irigaray's quest is for written and spoken language and discourse to displace the omnipresence of Freudian biologism (Grosz, 1990, p. 9). For Irigaray, this is compounded by Freud's oedipal complex and, in turn, by Lacan's mirror stage (Lacan, 1959 - 1960). Both concepts retain Freudian biologism, thus

maintaining an ongoing play of dominance within written and spoken language and discourse which renders them meaningful according to patriarchal values. This systematicity depends entirely upon a logic of dominance, of one word at any given time, over other possible words, and dominance of one letter of the alphabet over other possible letters, to engender 'meaningful' words. The problem with this is that it reflects the much larger system of dominance which structures the patriarchal economy - or, as Irigaray says, the "economy of sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132) - designed to oppress women.

Following Berg, Robinson claims that Irigaray disrupts this systematicity by deploying a strategy of productive mimesis founded on a morphological impetus in her practice as theorist and writer, to emphasise morphology as an alternative approach through which to displace the omnipresence of the Freudian biologism. In so doing, Irigaray generates an associative and expansive relationship between female morphology - itself a between-ness associated with "the lips" (Robinson, 2006, p. 101) - and the symbolic. She prioritises the between-ness associated with "the lips" (ibid., p. 101), rather than their anatomical structure. Irigaray's mimetic approach consistently involves her attempts to generate relations of between-ness, rather than one-ness, in written language. This is a between-ness that generates new relations between words and, in turn, a new kind of relation between reader and writer, in which reader is strongly implicated in actively mobilising the writing process; put simply, the reader must work (more

actively / differently than is usual) with the writer to make a new sense of a new meaning of the writing. Irigaray writes, for example:

We are luminous. Neither one nor two. I've never really known how to count. Up to you. In their calculations we make two. Really, two? Doesn't that make you laugh? An odd sort of two. (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 207)

In this passage, Irigaray uses rhetorical questions and seemingly cryptic phrases to encourage women readers to adopt a morphological approach to language, one which subtly re-structures it symbolically. Robinson draws from this writing to develop her argument that Irigaray "does not produce a name for this morphologic of women. Instead she works with it in her writing" (Robinson, 2006, p. 101). Whitford has said that we can also think of this writing approach as an attempt to generate an "economy...of the between-subjects, and not that of the subject-object relation." (Whitford, 1991, p. 45).

Why does Irigaray not name what Robinson refers to as "this morphologic of women" (Robinson, 2006, p.101)? It would seem that Irigaray wants to resist fixing an idea of women by naming her interpretation of them; naming this morphologic would too closely mimic patriarchal economies and their structuration of women within them.

I say this because Robinson explains that, for Irigaray, her writing approach involves generating a new syntax:

...a syntax that would make women's 'self-affection' possible. A 'self-affection' that would certainly not be reducible to the economy of the sameness of the One, and for which the syntax and the meaning remain to be found. (Irigaray, 1985 cited Robinson, 2006. p. 53)

The 'self-affection' Robinson refers to can be thought of as both a primary narcissism - a healthy form of self love - and an appreciation of female morphology that, Irigaray argues, Freudian analysis denies women. Irigaray wants language to be re-arranged in ways that create spaces for positive reflection on women's pleasures and choices and which, in turn, reflect women's healthy self-regard, rather than being derived from a patriarchally conditioned self-perception of herself and of other women as lack.

On Robinson's reading, the new syntax that Irigaray wants, and which she constructs through writing, cannot operate on a level of convention - that is, it cannot operate in accord with the system and principles of existing written and spoken language, but must break with convention, including the convention of generating further, future conventions, to rupture the systematicity and principles of conventional language and instead form new language.

Whitford (1991) distinguishes between *langue* as the corpus of language available to a speaker and '*langage*' as the corpus of language as used by a particular person or group and argues that it is *langage* that Irigaray focuses on (Whitford, 1991, p. 42).

It is necessary to my project to understand that what Whitford refers to as *langage* - a different range of syntactical devices used by particular groups - builds on the notion of *parole*, because it is through this idea that I develop the possibility of sculpture providing new syntaxes for the symbolic mediation of women's desires. Irigaray has a linguist's understanding of language and she was interested in the distinction made by Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), between *Langue* (French for "language") - which Saussure defines as the systematic rules and conventions of the signifying system of language - and *parole* (French for "speaking") - instances of connected utterances (Saussure, 1959). 'Utterances' would refer, in the case of Irigaray's own work (but not necessarily her understanding of the *langage* of others) to written or spoken chains of *langage*, or concrete examples of performances of speech, made by individual subjects, and which involve breaking with conventional language structures to generate new forms of *langage*. It is *langage* that Irigaray wants to encourage, for and amongst women. Saussure (1959) argues that the distinction between morphology - the (study of) the form of things, including of language - and syntax - the arrangement of words and phrases to create sentences in language - does not exist and is illusory - and also that lexicology - the study of the form,

meaning and behaviour of words - and morphology and syntax are interwoven (Saussure, 1959). Irigaray positively develops these idea of morphology. Saussure states:

Forms and functions are interdependent and it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate them. Linguistically, morphology has no real, autonomous object. It cannot form a discipline distinct from syntax. (ibid., p. 135)

Irigaray positively builds on Saussure's claim that morphology has no independent intention and / or outcome. Rather than use an idea of morphology to draw reductive, anatomical readings, she looks to the positive and feminist potential of an alleged absence, taking into account that morphology and a morphological approach can include (the study of) relations between things. I have shown how, in my own art practice, this takes the form of sculptural gestures and syntaxes involving the fragmentation and flattening - the between-ing - of an idea of woman's body, to generate affective relations between different materials and their associations, and between art works, artist and audience.

In Robinson's analysis, Irigaray believes that, historically and in the transition from oral to written culture, women's recourse to language and their contribution to its formation and evolution has been negated (Robinson, 2006, p. 27). So, looking to Whitford's reading and taking into account

Saussure's influence, it becomes evident that Irigaray argues for a different range of syntactical devices to be available to women in order that they might perform their own concrete and connected *langage*, in subversion of patriarchal *language*; the implication of Irigaray's position is that, if women can form and have unrestricted access to their own language, through which to connect with, express and communicate their own desires, then they can experience liberation.

Robinson's framing of Irigaray's ideas shows how Irigaray's approach can be thought relative to art practices and why it is important to name Irigaray's practice as "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). In elaborating the meaning of this term and how Irigaray practices it, Robinson says:

Irigaray's project has consistently had at its heart the problematic of woman's access to the Symbolic, and the need to create the conditions wherein a Symbolic syntax appropriate to women can develop, not only in speech but also in visual systems of gesture and representation. (ibid., p. 53)

From the above, it becomes possible to understand that Irigaray does not want to destroy the symbolic but to instead generate "a dually structured Symbolic order: a symbolic that's structured through difference and is productive of - and can accommodate - a 'syntax' " (Robinson, 2006, p. 53)

not based on a Freudian, monolithic interpretation of the penis, but which is, instead “appropriate to women” (ibid., p. 53). In this sense, Irigaray's aim seems coherent with Doane's idea of the "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428) which, she has said, "doubles representation" (ibid., p. 43).

However, Robinson's analysis helps to elaborate the complexity of Irigaray's productive mimesis, as compared with Doane's relatively vague idea of doubling representation. Robinson argues Irigaray does not intend “two Symbolics” (Robinson, 2006, p. 54). Robinson states Irigaray, instead, wants to construct, through a feminine syntax, “a Symbolic which is (at least) two” (ibid., p. 54). Here, Robinson's inclusion of the phrase: "(at least) two" (ibid., p. 54), refers to her reading of Derrida's notion of "différance" (Derrida, 1981), in which there is a recurring doubling of the moment. The project builds on Robinson's analysis by considering the idea that, for Irigaray, such a double Symbolic of (at least) two, will encourage a morphological between-ing, which she believes can be thought relative to the between-ness of female anatomy - that is, the between-ness of "the lips" (Robinson, 2006, p. 101). Moreover, as Robinson writes:

It is important to note that Irigaray does not propose two symbolics, one for men and one for women: such a binary does not appear in her work. Instead, she elaborates a structure which is not one, and cannot be counted in ones (one + one), but which is always plural. (ibid., p. 54)

This is a subtle but important difference to note: in two symbolics there would be a conceptual separation and, hence and relatedly, no possibility of a doubled symbolic, in which relations of between-ness and interdependency are engendered. Relatedly, Grosz claims that, for Irigaray, Freud disavows the possibility of men and women taking equal pleasure in forming inter-subjective relations in which their differences and separateness from one another are respected and negotiated through inter-subjective relation - relation that acknowledges and appreciates a space-time not already dominated by patriarchal value and/or phallographic desire for capture or dominance; "two sexes, two bodies, two forms of desire and two ways of knowing" (Grosz, 1990, p. 169).

Robinson's reading, and her naming of Irigaray's practice as "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) helps me to further distinguish Irigaray's notion of symbolic doubling, from that in Doane's "masquerade" (Doane, 1982, p. 428). On Robinson's analysis, masquerade is, for Irigaray, a limited term. Woman masquerading is "the practice of femininity as constructed by patriarchy" (Robinson, 2006, p. 8) - that is, any and every woman until she learns otherwise; she is, effectively and under Freudian and Lacanian analysis, born into the patriarchal masquerade 'woman', has not experienced femininity beyond patriarchal delimitation and commodification of it. Hence, she has no sense of her own feminine desire but has, instead, internalised patriarchal values that only allow her to act out a version or idea of herself in relation to phallographic desires. Hence, Grosz points out that

Irigaray's work is not based on essential femininity, but begins at the site of patriarchal representation of woman in culture as 'woman', that is: as "masquerade" (Robinson, 2006, p. 8):

...contrary to the objection that she is describing an essential, natural or innate femininity Irigaray's project can be interpreted as a contestation of patriarchal representations at the level of cultural representation itself. (Grosz, 1989, p. 116)

Whilst the possibility of an infinitely doubling "two forms of desire" (Grosz, 1990, p. 169) is repressed for women and for men, women's pleasure in equally and differently establishing the basis - or scene - for beginning and engaging in intimate and sexual relations is negated entirely. Likewise, women's specific feminine imaginary - their ideas, desires and fantasies regarding what inter-subjective relations and society might be, how culture might be shaped, and, in turn, their recourse to a female political voice, are routinely quashed before they've begun, prior to their enunciation. Thus, there can be no possibility of "a world where women and men would, at some level, have to reach some accommodation with each other" (Robinson, 2006, p. 61).

It is in order to counter this negative outcome for women that Robinson makes an important distinction between "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p.26) and "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26). To do this, Robinson, with

reference to Gebauer and Wulf's (1995), and Ricoeur's (1981), different theoretical analyses of mimesis, draws a slightly complex, but logical and convincing, interpretation of Irigaray's mimesis as a form of practice.

Robinson says that Gebauer and Wulf dismiss mimesis as a vague, polysemic concept, with multiple meanings and which has been applied for various reasons (Robinson, 2006, p. 25 - 26). However, (more positively), they state that this vagueness appears to result from "a peculiar intuition" (Gebauer and Wulf, 1995, p. 2) and does not so much indicate a "a lack of conceptual discipline" (ibid., p. 2), but a "resistance to theory building" (ibid., 1995, p. 2). They add that "mimesis betrays a distrust of the instrumentalities and procedures of theory kept 'pure' of the contamination of human practice" (ibid., p. 2). These ideas are interesting to my project; in particular, the idea of theoretical practice being 'dirtied' or purposely de-sanitised in order to challenge its normativity is intriguing, because it immediately begins to connect to my interest, referred to earlier in this thesis, in using cleaning as an approach through which to re-situate (rather than eradicate) notions of dirt within a (sculptural) syntax for the representation of women and their desires. I want to understand how Robinson approaches these ideas and whether it is necessary to build on her approach, in order to account for my practice.

Building on Gebauer and Wulf's thoughts, Robinson positively proposes mimesis as a "fluid concept, resistant to theorisation...an activity where theory and practice are in such proximity as to be virtually

inextricable" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). Robinson overcomes Gebauer's and Wulf's (extreme) theoretical disinterest in women and feminist philosophers concerned with mimesis, insisting that their thoughts can be legitimately applied to Irigaray's practice as writer, to understand why "The practice and theory of mimesis in Irigaray's work are linked, and cannot be independently defined or understood" (ibid., p. 26).

Robinson's persistent approach, here, and her determination to re-purpose Gebauer and Wulf's analysis (1995), is useful to my research and my practice. Robinson's is a valid approach, and I recognise aspects of it in my own work. For example, I similarly insist on bringing aspects of Mulvey's work to contexts which she herself chose not to pursue. I have also found Robinson's approach reassuring, in terms of my art practice, in that I see correspondence between the (still sensitive) insistence she applies theoretically and what I do when I bring found objects and materials together; I similarly insist on materialising new relations between them, and a context for them for which they were originally *not* purposed by their maker, and which they might initially seem to formally and physically resist.

Returning to her analysis: Robinson explains that the onset of the "distrust" (Gebauer and Wulf, 1995, p. 2) which is illuminated by mimesis, of 'clean' theory is, for Irigaray, traceable to her readings of Plato and the: "transitional cultural moment, the moment of shift from oral to literary culture" (Robinson, 2006, p. 27) which involved: a. the separation of written history

from orally transmitted history, b. the partitioning of the body and the mind (and nature from culture) and c: patriarchal imposition onto cultures which previously accommodated female genealogy (Robinson, 2006, p. 27). Building on her reference to Irigaray's analysis of "the Platonic model, and its aim of maintaining a patriarchal ideal through a culture of non-productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 27), and the two kinds of mimesis that Irigaray identifies, Robinson draws her important distinction between patriarchal; "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) and "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) as a means for undoing this sanitising moment in history, and its oppressive, sterilising effects, on women and their sexuality. In other words, Robinson, in distinguishing "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) as such, un-cleans / de-sanitises and returns to the symbolic, women's 'dirty', embodied sexuality. I have found this idea very helpful for understanding my practice involving 'dirty' object fragments and materials.

Robinson asserts that it is through the first kind of mimesis - which she terms "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) - that "a subtle double movement" (ibid., p. 26) occurs, between what already exists and that which is interpreted and which results in "new meanings" (ibid., p. 26). For Robinson, it is also in this process of productive mimesis that Irigaray "locates 'the possibility of a woman's writing' " (ibid., p. 26). Robinson's descriptions, particularly her reference to "'a subtle double movement" (ibid., p. 26), indicate her sensitivity to Irigaray's morphological, rather than an anatomical, approach in which fluid relations of between-ness - in this case

between what already exists and the subject's response to that which already exists - are prioritised over fixed relations of one-ness and sameness.

Robinson's analysis seems, here, to gravitate towards the abstract. But, within this, she takes the reader to a moment in Paul Ricoeur's<sup>98</sup> analysis, in which he mentions the significance of hermeneutics for communicating suffering. I find this generates a complex, though particularly helpful way of understanding aspects of my own and other women's art practices, and how women's lived experiences, including of suffering, can be delegated to feminist standpoints materialised in/through art.

Robinson points out that Irigaray, in keeping with her suspicion of conceptualising, “does not expand upon this Platonic model of mimesis as a model, but she does...expand (upon it) through her practice” (ibid., p. 26). In other words, Robinson notes Irigaray is very sensitive to the possibility of reproducing - or maintaining - by conceptualisation, patriarchal “maintenance mimesis” (ibid, p. 26) in which the Platonic “ideal of sameness” (Irigaray, 1985a cited Robinson, 2006, p. 27) is “almost fatal” (Irigaray, 1990 cited Robinson, 2006, p. 28) for women. In arguing how she believes Irigaray's

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<sup>98</sup> Ricoeur was a French philosopher (1913 - 2005), who is known for combining phenomenological description with hermeneutic approaches. His preoccupations include the idea that, in hermeneutic phenomenology, the emphasis is not on the external meaning, but the meaning or insight of the self which is gained through encountering the external text—or other.

productive mimesis works, Robinson builds on aspects of Ricoeur's analysis of mimesis, arguing that he:

...has developed an analysis of mimesis which can be used to rescue Irigaray's practice of mimesis from any reductive understanding of it as being a methodology (ibid., p. 47).

In her reading of Ricoeur (1981), Robinson develops Ricoeur's distinction between mimesis as *copy* and mimesis as *action*, which he engenders by moving away from Platonic notions of mimesis as copy and towards Aristotle's interpretation of mimesis as occurring through human action. Robinson asserts that Ricoeur states: "mimesis does not seek to maintain something already given" (Ricoeur cited Robinson, 2006, p. 48) but expands meanings through action; for Ricoeur mimesis "is an augmentation of meaning in the field of action" (ibid., p. 48).

Robinson then builds on Ricoeur's distinction between a semiotic and hermeneutic reading of written text, and Ricoeur's argument that semiotic readings prioritise and maintain "the internal laws of the literary work" (ibid., p. 48), whereas hermeneutic readings do not do this, but effectively override distinctions between the internal and external boundaries of a work, so that they "reconstruct the set of operations by means of which a work arises from the opaque depths of living, acting, and suffering" (ibid., p.48). A work is then "to be given by an author to readers who receive it and thereby change their

own action" (ibid., p.48). In other words, hermeneutics allows for "the set of operations by means of which a work arises from the opaque depths of living" (ibid., p. 48) - that is, hermeneutics provides the conditions - or space-time - within and through which actions and impulses (and not only thoughts and words) originally generated by the 'murk' of lived experience - that which is indiscriminate and / or unclear - are valued and foregrounded in ways that situate life's 'muddiness' as productive and generative of new action, thus maximising the possibility of new affective relations between author, work and readers/audiences<sup>99</sup>.

At this juncture, I want to point out that, although Robinson has, rightly, stated that Ricoeur asserts "mimesis does not seek to maintain something already given" (ibid., p. 48), there is a sense in which we can argue that this is, strictly, slightly misleading. In Ricoeur's interpretation of mimesis, what Robinson refers to as "the opaque depths of living" (ibid., p. 48) - or, as I term this, the unclear 'murk' of lived experience - is actively valued and sustained, as a productive space time, in order that a sense of the indiscriminate is carried forward, through a work, and "given" (ibid. p. 48) to an audience to be interpreted in their new actions. This does not mean that whatever is presented is repeated and rehearsed in the same way as before - I do not suggest that this is a practice of patriarchal maintaining - but that there is an impulse to carry forward and to nurture by giving to others the

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<sup>99</sup> I acknowledge, at this juncture, that there may be an incompatibility between hermeneutics and a Deleuzian approach, but I am holding this in suspension for the moment.

possibility of a space time for a generative - and for Robinson feminist - value regarding lived experience; so, on Robinson's and Ricoeur's analyses of mimesis, there is an attempt to sustain the possibility of (unclear) conditions for the development of an anti-maintenance (anti-patriarchal) approach to life. I will return to this point anon, but, for now, I want to suggest that there is a strong correspondence between this impulse to nurture an unclear time space, and its (feminist) potential and Coleman and Ringrose's practice of geophilosophy, in which there are spaces of "transformative becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013).

Developing on from these ideas, Robinson argues that we should, therefore and as readers, "look for continuities *between* the text and that which is exterior to it" (ibid., p. 48) (my emphasis) - that is, be alert to associative - rather than systematic - and even unexpected links between what would normatively be considered as the bounding parameters of a text and that which lies outside of those parameters - such as material syntaxes and actions. Moreover, for those who already incline to think 'between' different kinds of structures, Robinson's statement reads as encouraging, indicating between-ness as having feminist value.

Robinson's analysis, here, is very helpful for my practice, but I feel obliged to extend critical doubt in regard to her claims, in order for it to become more so. I am encouraged to think of Robinson's use of the phrase: "that which is exterior" (ibid., p. 48) to a text, relative to Ricoeur's use of the

term "suffering" (ibid. p. 48), which he uses to describe oppressive experiences as one factor which influences the way in which authors create works and value the "set of operations" (ibid., p. 48) which inform them. In other words, Ricoeur's analysis inclines to suggest that hermeneutic approaches to works can be stimulated and prompted when lived experiences of oppression and suffering are taken into account by those who construct the works *and* by those who read/view them. For Ricoeur, hermeneutic approaches accommodate oppressive experiences by effectively changing the structure of and regulations - the grammar - relating to language, thus expanding and extending notions of language to generate new syntaxes. Drawing from Ricoeur's and Robinson's analyses, I argue that, in my *New Model Army* works I address these issues through my choice of degraded and often dirty materials, which I use partly to communicate women's suffering under screened oppression; my choice of materials and my activities in working with those materials, to generate relations between and through them, prompts hermeneutic structuring and readings which expand ideas of the language for communicating women's oppression and the possibility of their overcoming of it. However, when I consider Ricoeur's notion of hermeneutics in terms of its more specific application to my work, this raises two problematic possibilities. One, that my works are hermeneutic, rather than productively mimetic - and this difference may not matter, but I want to know what that difference is, and if it does impact upon what my work does. Two, that everything - quite literally, everything that symbolically exists, is readable as integral to an expansive hermeneutics. By this I mean

that, if hermeneutics is a form of interpretation that requires an expansion of the "internal laws" (ibid., p. 48) of language, then how does one place limits on this, through which to determine the work that hermeneutic interpretations actually do? If we cannot determine such limits, then hermeneutics, in being applicable to everything, becomes normal, somewhat meaningless, and negatively so, in the sense that it would appear to normalise "what there is" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125), rather than enabling "what might be" (ibid., p. 125).

The question for my research which arises from this is why would one bother to name something as "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) if this only returns one to the problem of a potentially unifying, normalising, all-encompassing vagueness of hermeneutics? In response, it is helpful for this project to consider that it is Robinson's highly subtle framing of hermeneutics relative to the morphological impetus of "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) which helps to resolve this problem, by indicating the symbolic doubling involved in "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) as a more particular form of hermeneutic practice. Robinson's morphological framing helps to specify and place limits, of a kind, on how hermeneutics operates relative to theories and practices of language. Moreover, this is helpful for my project because it allows for the idea - and for me to build on this idea - that this framing also makes "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26), as an interpretation of a hermeneutic approach, available for further interpretation relative to art practice. Therefore, in my studio, when I make gestures and syntaxes such

as "the lips" (ibid., p. 101) in *Carrier*, I carry out a "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) in doubling an idea of "the lips" (ibid., p. 101), but the specificity of this as a form of productive mimesis is drawn from my lived experience and my recognition of other women's suffering, and my relation of my experiences as woman, mother and artist, to other women and women's art practices - as I have shown, in this particular case, this was with women artists such as Hershman and Sobel. In other words, the interpretation of suffering, through sculptural approaches involving between-ing (as a form of productive mimesis), can place limits, of a kind, on hermeneutics, and these limits are physicalised in the sculptural practice.

To support my claim, here, I want to draw attention to how Robinson brings a morphological reading to Ricoeur's account of 'sustasis'. Robinson argues that Ricoeur takes Aristotle's terms:

...poeisis (making/action), sustasis or mythos (the synthesis of incidents into a story) and mimesis (the imitation of an action), which 'thus form a chain within the praxis, where each term must be understood in terms of its relations to the others' (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 16-17). He names these mimesis 1, mimesis 2 and mimesis 3. (Robinson, 2006, p. 48)

Robinson explains that a semiotic reader will habitually "place texts in the category of sustasis" (ibid. p. 48) but that Ricoeur argues for sustasis to

be seen as a space of "mediation between" (ibid. p. 49) the internal laws of language and that which is exterior to those laws.

I suggest that, in this reference, it is Robinson's highly subtle emphasis on "between" (ibid., p. 49) that makes a difference to how we understand and apply hermeneutic readings. On Robinson's morphologically invested reading, of Ricoeur's notion of hermeneutics, *sustasis* becomes readable as the subversive space and agency, generated between "the lips" (ibid., p. 101), and which Irigaray wishes to assert. Robinson's importation of this morphological investment becomes important for understanding Irigaray's practice of mimesis, as she applies it in her writing and as analyst, to generate lateral, inter-subjective relationships of equality, rather than hierarchical structures of dominance and subservience; an "economy...of the between-subjects, and not that of the subject-object relation" (Whitford, 1991, p. 45).

The significance of the above, for my research and my *New Model Army* work, is that Robinson's morphologically applied approach (to what is, arguably, Ricoeur's already morphologically applied approach) suggests that the approach is available for further, morphological interpretation, including within and through art practices, and including my own.

To elaborate this idea, I want to first show how Robinson's morphological approach can be applied to Irigaray's work "I Love To You"

(Irigaray, 2000, p. 105-106), illuminating how Irigaray makes specific, structured, moves to apply her practice of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) to written language.

Irigaray describes her work *I Love to You* thus:

The intentional agrammaticality of the title warns against saying "I love you," which always runs the risk of reducing the other to the object of my love...The indirection of "to you" is a way of handling the existence of two subjects and a space between them which maintains their irreducibility to each other. Saying "I love to you" is bringing love to a way of speaking between us: to love to, like saying to talk to. (Irigaray, 2000, p. 105 - 106)

Irigaray's insertion of a "to" into the conventional phrase "I love you", indicates her idea that the latter is normatively structured according to "Freudian biologism" (Grosz, 1990, p. 9); for Irigaray, the two subjects involved in the relationship suggested by the phrase "I love you" are patriarchally commodified so that the subject "I" is phallically structured and, as such, phallocratically perceives the other subject - "you" - as an unequal object to be possessed. For Irigaray, the conventional phrase "I love you" serves to patriarchally commodify "love", rendering love as a mechanism for facilitating whole-scale, socially enforced, subject-object possession, the "subject - object relation" (Whitford, 1991, p. 45), rather than equality.

Irigaray therefore inserts a “to” which, in structuring a space between two subjects, generates a space-time of between-ness; an “economy...of the between-subjects” (ibid., p. 45) in which the between-ness of this relation incurs the morphology, the recurring doubling, associated with the vaginal lips, rather than the anatomically derived phallic power Freud confers upon the penis. Through these moves, Irigaray operates a practice of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26), underpinned by a morphological impetus, which, to return to my argument made earlier in this chapter section, is intended to sustain and nurture feminist value and anti-patriarchal space time, by drawing on unclear - or untamed - "depths of living" (Robinson, p. 17-18). This then becomes a strategy for effectuating, through written language and at least for women, a social politics of new love, to be interpreted in ways that include new action, and which have powerful implications for envisioning and developing society and social relationships: "...new ways to see and transform the social" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 127).

My *New Model Army* works communicate a decision to act similarly, and socially, in order to effectuate positive changes for women. In doing, the project builds on Robinson's analysis of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) and also recognises the importance of differently naming this approach as "between-ing" rather than "productive mimesis" (ibid., 2006, p. 26). This is because the different name - or term - helps to further specify the different hermeneutic - and morphological, and productively mimetic -

approach taken in my own - and, as I demonstrate in the next chapter - other women's sculptural practices, compared with the approach that, Robinson argues, Irigaray takes in her written practice. Whilst Robinson makes a convincing argument for how productive mimesis can be thought of as a practice involving activity and, on that basis, can be used to describe what takes place in art, and whilst her descriptions are not inappropriate to my practice, they do not, left as they are - that is, if maintained within an order of "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) - do enough to help me to more specifically describe what my sculptures do. In other words, I structure the work in accordance with a morphological impetus, but I do so without bringing to Robinson's work "any reductive understanding of it as being a methodology (ibid., p. 47). Instead, and because I wish to nurture and sustain the feminist value and time space afforded by productive mimesis - which I have stated bears strong correspondence to the space time of "transformative becoming" in geophilosophy - I productively mimeticise Robinson's notion of productive mimesis. This does not mean that I reduce or maintain her notion of productive mimesis, but that I draw from women's experiences of suffering, to form sculptural approaches through which I re-interpret productive mimesis (as a morphological and hermeneutic action) and this results in the formation of physical syntaxes which place a temporal limit on - temporarily locate within and through the sculptural context - notions of productive mimesis. Thus, the term "between-ing"<sup>100</sup> is more appropriate for describing what happens in and through my sculptures.

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<sup>100</sup> I do not intend to fix or delineate this term; the term is necessarily open to and invites interpretation and (fluid) re-definition by others.

Moreover, the physical syntax of my sculptures can be thought as a material synthesis - a space of interaction between - the meanings of the terms geophilosophy and productive mimesis.

Here, I have shown how, in *Carrier*, and in *Bird*, I have materialised and physically and conceptually built on Robinson's morphological reading of the recurring doubling in "the lips" (ibid., p. 101), using flattening and fragmenting approaches to more specifically and sculpturally effectuate a between-ing of an idea of woman in symbolic excess of patriarchy. This between-ing extends beyond materialising an idea of excessive woman, which the viewer is implicated in constructing. The between-ing in my work is also a way of generating a material synthesis, effectuated through artistic approaches involving flattening and fragmentation, of the theories of geophilosophy and the affective relations this methodology yields, of Doane's notion of doubling within an idea of masquerade (Doane, 1982), of Wasson's and Friedberg's progressive and Mulvey's otherwise static (in being psychoanalytically framed) film theories. It is a between-ing which includes sculpture as structures intent on a nurturing a space time that newly contributes to new appreciation of how screened oppression operates and must be contested, including by: "[u]nravelling the discrete film object into debates about its relations to urban life, modern leisure, and ascendant consumerism" (ibid., p. 75), to generate immanent becomings between artist, work and viewers.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Away from Hysteria: For a Moment of Turn, Towards Between-ing**

#### **5:0 Introduction to Chapter Five**

In Chapter Four, I examined Robinson's analysis of Irigaray's "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) and the morphological impetus underpinning this, arguing that, through an approach which I name as "between-ing", my sculptures symbolically re-situate Mulvey's (1975) psychoanalytic notions of "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented body" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and synthesise, without reconciling, various theoretical notions, including Robinson's (2006) productive mimesis, Ricoeur's (1981) hermeneutics, Doane's (1982) masquerade, Coleman and Ringrose's geophilosophy and Wasson's (2007) and Friedberg's (2003) progressive film theories.

In this current chapter, I develop this argument by claiming that the approach of between-ing is structured into other artists' works and that analysing its different, varied articulations within these works draws new

attention to their contribution to the subversive knowledge which, I earlier claimed, my artistic practice is critically related to.

This argument also unpacks an important issue not addressed in the previous chapter. The issue is that of "hysteria" (Robinson, 2006, p. 39) and the necessity of identifying how - and why - a hysterical mode becomes structured, through approaches involving flattening and fragmentation, in art works intended to represent women. In contrast to between-ing works such as Lucas' *Nuds* (2009-10) and Fiona Banner's *Nude Standing* (2006), hysterical works engender what I will refer to as "dis-affective relations"<sup>101</sup> with viewers. In such relations, approaches of between-ing are curtailed, so that the work cannot possibly generate the kind of meeting, or event, described in Chapter Three, in which " 'meaning' " (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 21) is made, between art work and viewer, in ways intended to engender "immanent becomings" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134).

A different artistic intention is played out in hysterical art<sup>102</sup>. Generally, in such works, patriarchal looking is not contested but instead re-duplicated,

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<sup>101</sup> I do not take this term directly from existing theory. I arrived at this term when trying to describe art works which produce the opposite of "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126).

<sup>102</sup> I acknowledge that (what I term) 'hysterical art' is not currently recognised as a genre. However, I use this phrase, here, both playfully and purposely, and I do so as an artist who claims, later in this thesis, that future knowledges are held in artworks; there is a similar, creative sense in which I propose the term 'hysterical art' as a term which, like an art work, contains future knowledges, to be more fully unfolded, including by others. Regarding the playfulness I refer to: I proceed in this thesis to claim that 'hysterical art' does have feminist merit, but to regard it as such requires (somewhat paradoxically) extending a morphologically derived between-ing approach to works that deliberately deny this possibility; the 'play' involved in this approach, which extends to naming the work involved

to the most possible extreme; woman in her patriarchally objectified and negated sense is deliberately exaggerated, so obstructing between-ing as an approach for newly mediating women's relation to the symbolic and, instead, effectively punishing the viewer for maintaining patriarchal looking.

## **5:1 Building on Robinson's Analysis of Hysteria**

Robinson has observed that, for Irigaray: "Hysteria can be understood as a calculated continuum of the masquerade 'femininity' " (Robinson, 2006, p. 36). For the hysteric, there is a deliberated decision to take to its logical end, and at a level of embodiment, patriarchally objectified and imaged/imagistic versioning - or "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) - of woman. In other words, the hysteric bodily and psychically enacts the most extremetised idea of patriarchal masquerade.

On Robinson's reading, rather than engage in "play" (ibid., p. 100) intended to engender social inclusivity and change:

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as 'hysterical art' is, then, a morphological play. Regarding the purpose I refer to in naming 'hysterical art' as such: as may be evident from the explanation just given, there is a purpose to the morphological play, which is to assert the feminist merit of the works involved. However, it may also be that a further purpose emerges, here, of the process of naming 'hysterical art' as such; that is, to provoke/encourage further debate of the possibility of 'hysterical art' becoming recognised as a new genre and/or further debate of the practice, and the politics and ethics of the historical practice, of establishing (artistic) genres.

...the hysteric's strategy, on the other hand, is one of an isolated individual, rather than collectively political (feminist); her stubborn reserve is 'resorbed' into her perfection of her act of mimicry. (ibid., p. 42)

When hysteria is articulated in art, this practice forcibly negates the "play of différence" (ibid., p. 100) discussed in Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, the thesis considered that this "play of différence" (ibid., p. 100) is vital for structuring the between-ing approach in art, and for extending this to viewers, with a view to generating morphological readings and "...new ways to see and transform the social" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 127), and the thesis claimed that this is what my *New Model Army* sculptures do. However, it is worth noting that, to accomplish this, my works necessarily enter into, work through, and turn away from the hysterical mode.

In arguing that it is important to distinguish between hysterical and between-ing art, I do not intend the term "hysterical" in the implicitly misogynistic and derogatory sense suggested by Freud and Breuer (1895)<sup>103</sup>, but I do argue, through my reading of Banner's work, that the term, and the mode it suggests, is imposed on women who threaten to exceed patriarchal limitations. Elaine Showalter has described hysteria as "a

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<sup>103</sup> As with Freud's and Breuer's book *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895). Freud (and Breuer) do not, strictly, state that hysteria is a condition only experienced by woman. However, their 'analyses' are only in regard to their interest in hysteria as a condition which they believe to occur in women patients they have treated.

specifically feminine protolanguage, communicating through the body messages that cannot be verbalized” (Showalter, 1993, p. 286). My argument is that hysterical works, in drawing attention to the patriarchal fragmentation of woman’s body in order to commodify her, including and especially through screened oppression, do - paradoxically - communicate the idea of women's lack of recourse to verbal language with which communicate desires which patriarchy renders illegible. I will argue that hysterical works do have feminist merit, though this is difficult to perceive as such and, moreover, there is a risk in such a perception, of an unhelpful glorification of hysteria. As Robinson has argued in her re-framing of Irigaray's work, whilst she "recognises a revolutionary potential in hysteria, Irigaray has no wish to valorise the hysteric" (Robinson, 2006, p. 39). I return to this issue in the final passages of this chapter. However, for now and generally, it is helpful for my project to consider that hysterical works behave differently, and dominantly, compared with works structured by between-ing. As the thesis will claim with reference to Vanessa Beecroft's VB 35<sup>104</sup> (1998), whilst hysterical works intended to represent women can have a critical investment into the flattening and fragmenting techniques involved in women's screened oppression, these are differently articulated, towards different outcomes which include material and conceptual reference to the

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<sup>104</sup> In terms of contemporary women sculptors and figurative works, I would include works such as Nicole Wermers' *Infrastruktur* (2015), Vanessa Beecroft's *VB Series* and Cathy Wilkes' *We Are Pro-Choice* (2008) in the category of hysterical artworks, though each artist articulates the hysterical mode differently and relative to the possibility of a move through and beyond it. Conversely, I would include works such as Rebecca Warren's *SHE* (2003) and Laure Prouvost's *Wantee and Friends* (2013) (a performance/video of a performance, with sculptural elements) as works that take a between-ing approach.

conditions of patriarchy at the time of the work's construction. Briefly: hysterical works deploy flattening and fragmenting approaches to nihilistically foreclose the symbolic mediation of women in excess of their patriarchal commodification and exploitation and, instead, deliberately exaggerate the latter "to the nth degree in order to attempt to wrest back some control over destiny, identity and sexuality" (ibid., p. 36).

Robinson has claimed that "social and cultural relations are maintained as normative within patriarchy through maintenance and policing of a non-productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 27). Building on this, the thesis claims that hysteria - and hysterical art - deliberately exaggerate "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) - or the "masquerade" (ibid., 36) of woman, with a view to visually underscoring the patriarchal force that ensures "social and cultural relations are maintained as normative" (ibid., p. 27) and how this is exerted through looking, including the looking which the viewer brings to art. This underscoring, or deliberate exaggeration, effectively punishes the viewer, by situating her as patriarch. Regardless of how ultimately unpleasant it may be to experience hysterical works, it is important for my project to consider that this constitutes the basis for their feminist merit; this is a complex possibility, however, and I sum this up in more detail towards the end of this chapter. Broadly, I claim this kind of work does contribute to feminism by generating conditions within which the viewer experiences patriarchal force as their own and this forces the viewer to reflect upon the implications of their looking, by giving no conceptual way out, no cognitive escape from so doing. As I explain towards the end of this chapter, whilst this does not offer a feminist

'solution' it does actively generate a complex, feminist 'problem' regarding the internal and external parameters of feminism and, as such, contributes to "pushing forward the boundaries of what can be experienced" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52).

Nevertheless, this thesis claims that hysterical works differ from between-ing works, in that they extend to the viewer only a problem, a nihilism, a dead end, a deliberated absence of vision for the future and future space times of becoming. This, as I will argue in this chapter, is most notable in the detail of a work's fragmental and flattening syntax. There is a refusal, on the artist's part, to engage in and share with the viewer, the "play" (Robinson, 2006, p. 100) involved in making new meaning of and for the social. Ultimately, hysterical works promote an aggressively isolating gesture, forcing the viewer to decide, alone, how to deal with the problem the work has effectively passed to them at a bodily level, or to suffer under this.

Conversely, between-ing works build upon Coleman and Ringrose's geophilosophical mapping and synthesise this with Robinson's "productive mimesis" (ibid., p. 26). Such works structurally acknowledge the hysterical within and through the notional framework of woman's body, but articulate their difference from hysterical works by exceeding the limitations of the hysterical mode, ultimately rejecting its punishing approach, playfully deploying flattening and fragmenting techniques to extend the "life-affirming potentialities in assemblages" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 129),

symbolically mediating and enabling "...new ways to see and transform the social" (ibid., p. 127) in excess of patriarchy.

## **5:2 A Note on Reading Art Works**

To develop this argument, I will draw from my readings of art works. Following on from my approach, in Chapter Two, to describing women artists' works, I do not - with minor exception - refer to commentators of the works included in the current chapter. In other words, whilst I do refer, where appropriate, to incidental and / or emblematic responses to the artists / the artists' works, or to statements made by the artists, these are not crucial to the formation of my responses.

Given this decision, it seems necessary, therefore, to describe for the reader how I encounter and analyse art works and what kinds of analysis can be expected in this thesis, in regard to my writing about art works.

The first things to say are that, especially given Gilda Williams' claim that: "In 1978 Joseph Beuys proclaimed that everyone is an artist; in 2015 everybody is an art writer" (Williams, 2015, p. 13) I do not, in relating my readings of art works, do so with any idea of my readings or writings being singular. Neither do I quite subscribe to Williams' further idea that there are "those who are inclined voluntarily towards art writing...and those who are conscripted into it" (Williams, 2012, p. 13); I understand women's relation to

written language as more complicated than this division (even when roughly delineated) suggests. But when Williams writes: "As curator and writer Adam Smythe has written, 'text accompanying an exhibition seems designed purely to speed up our experience of art' " (Smythe cited Williams, 2015, p. 14), adding that writing about art can be about trying "deliberately to counter this cult of brevity" (Williams, 2015, p. 14), this inclines me to situate myself as someone who attempts to write about art in order to, as she says: "slow down the art experience" (Williams, 2015, p. 14). However, the idea that writing about art can decelerate the art experience is, I claim, today inextricable from the idea that writing about art can be to reinstate and (paradoxically) communicate notions of privacy - and of peace within that privacy - that seem lost in an era of screened oppression. This idea is perhaps not quite so paradoxical as I have just claimed. To explain: the screen has made possible high-speed access to extensive areas of (art) research. Thus, when Williams notes that successful American art writers today show "well-researched journalism which crosses sociology, current affairs, lifestyle, business-writing, biography and exposé" (Williams, 2012, p. 13) it is possible to also perceive this as evidence of collusion between the voracious appetites (and possible careerism) of art writers and the screen's invasive qualities, if not also that of the patriarchal capitalism substructuring the screen.

However, when I read an artwork, I do not want to be given an information about the work, or about the artist, in advance of looking at the

work itself. This is because I want to reinstate a privacy, and a peace, between myself and the artwork, and which screened oppression erodes. This thought bears correspondence with that of Ian Kiaer, who says:

Instead of always trying to pin things down and make them readable or legible in terms of definition, there should be a peace about approaching a work without knowing what it is. (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123)

Kiaer and I differently express the idea that the primary impulse when reading - coming to a knowing of - an art work should not be about extending dominance, about capitalising on what the work has to offer, or about believing one can explain everything in it and, so, master it. This would only position one's self and the work, and the world along with it, in a subject-object relation, would merely reproduce an "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 19, p. 132).

With that said, I will, for the sake of this thesis' investment into notions of peace, say something of how I read artworks. I do not find this easy because, for me, the experience of looking at an art work is private, and this privacy is somewhat separate from the observations one might subsequently make - and offer to others - about an art work. This stems from the way - which I have described earlier in this thesis - that I tend, as a sculptor, to engage with the world and people in it - that is, somatically, prior to conceptually. It is not quite that one comes after the other, as if somatic

experience stops and then conceptual organisation kicks in. The two interweave, one leading the other. But, overall and generally with me, it is usually always soma, bodily response, that leads first. When I come to a work, I stand and I look. And I move around it, even if it is a very flat work, hung on a wall, with no seeming three-dimensionality. And then I just wait. I wait for the work to begin 'talking to me'. By this I mean I wait for my body to respond to what the work puts out. A kind of somatic map is generated, full of intensifications, flows, currents that 'speak to' and spark energies and cognitive powers. This generates an overall 'gut feeling' about the work, which I then test out, taking time to refine my somatic and cognitive mapping. This process is not as seamless as it may sound. As an " 'embodied' social-natural being " (Wylie, 2000, p. 175) my reading is "partial and 'perverse' " (ibid., p. 175), often with much of my cognitive mapping taking place after the viewing. If I am intrigued by a work it goes without saying I will re-visit it, many times over, if need be.

It is this somatic map which provides the basis for a kind of negotiation to take place between body and mind and which stays with me, pulsing, as it were. I mentally investigate the map, whilst viewing the work and afterwards, carrying out investigation work relative to it, including sometimes researching what others may have written about the work, and asking myself questions. How has the artist engineered and built the work to produce the somatic and sensual effects? What critiques are being carried and communicated in its detail? What can I deduce, from the evidence in

front of me, of the artist's pre-occupations? These kind of cognitions are referred back to the somatic map, and there is a 'to and fro' where what I wonder mentally is "checked out" bodily and vice versa. It is in this process that descriptions start to form.

When describing a work for a reader, I create for them a version of what I have mapped, intellectually and bodily. But I try to do this in ways that are sensitive to what the reader needs, beginning by introducing them to the art work and ensuring that I provide enough information for them to trust that I can lead them on a journey of the artwork and through the description. I firstly give factual information about the work, which I intend to ground the viewer relative to the art work and, also, to act as frame for my interpretation of it. I then re-tread the map I have drawn, aiming to draw out for the reader how the artist has, for example, constructed unusual, new ways of forming connections between sensuality and critique.

This process also impacts onto my original reading of the work, causing me to re-question its detail. This informs and changes my subjectivity by causing me to question my values, any biases I have, any pre-occupations of my own, and by generating new possibilities and thoughts. I become positioned as mediator between what the artist has offered and needs from me to help the work to work, what I offer back to the artist through my description and, in turn, what I offer to the reader. I have to be very certain that the different negotiations this involves, between the artist,

artwork, me, and (imagined) reader, is fair - that I have fairly responded to what is offered and have fairly represented this, rather than imposed my own biases onto things.

With that said, if I sense that part of the "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) that the artist wants to set up involves creating space for me to project some sort of playful fantasy, or vision, onto the work, I will attempt to describe how they do this and, if enough details 'check out' between cognitive and somatic negotiation I describe - if I trust what the work is doing - I will describe something of the kind of fantasy I think they are encouraging me to have. This is the case with the first work and my description of it in this chapter: Sarah Lucas' *Nuds* (2009-10).

### 5:3 Between-ing in Sarah Lucas' *Nuds* (2009-10)



Fig. 45 Sarah Lucas, *Nuds* (2009-10)

The series *Nuds* (2009-10) consists of parts of pairs of tan and flesh coloured tights, stuffed with kapok<sup>105</sup> and intertwined either singly or multiply to form visually writhing structures, approximately 50 - 75 cm in diameter on average. These forms are individually mounted on vertically arranged, breeze-block 'plinths', each being approximately one metre in height and built onto a wooden platform. In *The British Art Show* (2010) the series is arranged so that the viewer can physically wander around and in-between them. The boundaries of the work are, in this sense, visually and physically porous and immediately implicate the viewer, bodily, in the between-ing approach I have described in Chapter Three, in which the art

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<sup>105</sup> Kapok is a cotton based stuffing material typically used in upholstery and toy-making. Lucas' sculptures may or may not use this actual material - although this certainly looks to be the case - but the term is used here for expediency.

work works with viewers' bodies to generate social affectivity and to evoke the possibility of social transformation and "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, p. 126). This between-ing approach is also run through each individual work, through materialised notions of fragmentation and flattening.

It is, perhaps, not so easy to think of the soft, mostly seamless sections of tights that Lucas uses in these works as 'fragments' or to see how flatness operates in this work. However, both techniques are used to create a version of the between-ing approach I have described in Chapter Four and I explain this in the following passages.

*Nuds* develops on from Lucas' earlier figurative works, such as her *Bunny Gets Snookered* sculpture series (1997), particularly by taking the gender references in her earlier works to a more abstract form. An extract from the catalogue for *The British Art Show: In The Days of The Comet* (Le Feuvre and Morton, 2009-10), which features works from the *Nuds* series, reads as follows:

...pairs of nylon tights have been stuffed with fluff and fashioned into ambiguous, bio-morphic forms, which rest on stacks of breeze-blocks set atop simple wooden pedestals. Whilst these sculptures bear some formal resemblance to the artist's 1997 work *Bunny Gets Snookered*, in which sagging hosiery summoned up a woman's splayed legs, they are not so securely gendered. Resembling at once hot flesh and cold

stone, they are not quite male, or female, or even quite human. (Le Feuvre and Morton, 2010, p. 98)



Fig. 46 Sarah Lucas *Bunny Gets Snookered* ( detail) (1997)

The relatively "securely gendered" (ibid., p. 98) work referred to - *Bunny Gets Snookered* - is an installation consisting of eight seated figures arranged on and around a snooker table at Sadie Coles HQ in London, 1997. Each figure is entitled *Bunny Gets Snookered* #1, *Bunny Gets Snookered* #2 and so on, in consecutive numerical order. In the original installation, several individual figures, modelled from kapok stuffed tights, are seated with legs splayed across individual chairs. The figures have stuffed tights for head/ears as well as legs and, on their legs, they wear stockings. Any notion of head and face is subsumed into the body of the sculpture,

suggesting that women's intellect and expressivity are surplus to patriarchal requirements. As I have related in earlier chapters, this same gesture is present in my own works. However, unlike my *New Model Army* works, these works are very differently posed, with their abject, seated and defeated position working with the strong associations tights have with women's bodies, to suggest women as only abject and subjugated, rather than enjoying and benefitting from bodily and psychic connection that defies patriarchal delineation.

In being exceptionally physically porous the works are, by association, physically and psychologically vulnerable to, and thoroughly ravaged by, the patriarchal gaze. Through her inclusion of stockings, 'bunny' ears, and the splayed, passive pose of the figures, Lucas also evokes phallogically sexualised, perversely seductive and perpetually sexually available, commodified women.

A similar approach is evident in *Nuds* but is - I will argue deliberately - made harder to discern. Lucas uses flesh and tan coloured tights to create relatively ambiguous, abstract forms suggestive of multiple, fragmented and intertwined, body parts - naked human limbs and/or intestines, or even human brain structures. Lucas' intertwining of these forms generates a dynamic intimacy, ultimately connected to notions of "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126). An affective between-ing is built into and runs through and beyond the meeting points between the soft, lumpen structures,

working with the viewer's gaze to somatically and conceptually generate a notion of excessive woman. However, the sculptural engineering that Lucas has directed into building this excess is complex and involves her work claiming a position as a non-"discrete film object" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75), in order to battle out and insist upon a cultural position for excessive woman.

Far from being a move away from *Bunny Gets Snookered* and the issue of woman and her commodification under patriarchal sight, the works seem to demonstrate how Lucas has developed increased sensitivity to the mediated gaze, how, as artist, she combats it, and how this might encourage women in so doing. This is evident in the differences in how the fragmentation and flattening approaches are critically directed in each sculptural series. In *Nuds*, and in comparison with *Bunny Gets Snookered*, the fragmented limbs/intestines/brains seem relatively obliquely gendered, but do ultimately connect to notions of gender - and, in so doing, remain effectively gendered - mainly by virtue of the fact that flesh coloured, sheer and semi-sheer tights generally still bear very strong association with women rather than men. Whilst we can, therefore, deduce that Lucas is again using clothing to fragment an idea of woman, in ways that evoke women's patriarchal divisionism and commodification, it is harder to argue that an idea of woman in her commodified sense is present in this work for the simple reason that it is difficult to see any evidence of this.

This difficulty is connected to screened oppression; it makes sense that, in being related to the covert way that screened oppression works, the workings of screened oppression are harder to perceive in the sculpture. Commodified woman is present, but harder to discern as such, because the patriarchal, screened gaze, in being proliferate(d), is also, now, covertly normalised and normalising. For that reason, compared with at the earlier time when Lucas made *Bunny Gets Snookered*, today's viewer must work harder to perceive this now normalised commodification of woman, as such.

The fragmentation and flattening that Lucas deploys in her (re)representation of commodified and non-commodified woman within both *Nuds* and *Bunny Gets Snookered* - and the perverse seduction that directly results from this - is hinged around three factors. These are: one: the tights' perceived ontological status as clothing for the (female) human body. Two: within the context of clothing in general, the status of tights relative to other items of clothing and relative to areas of the human body. Three: the design particulars of the tights as a form of clothing for the body. Each factor draws from notions of merged body and clothing. Aspects of Lucas' work immediately speak to that of the works of other artists described in Chapter Two, so contributing to the subversive knowledge to which my *New Model Army* sculptures relate.

To elaborate how the first factor - that is, the tights' perceived ontological status as clothing for woman's body - plays out in both works: in

*Bunny Gets Snookered*, tights are visually positioned to suggest both clothing and flesh, with the notion of clothing ultimately visually overtaking - albeit only just - the notion of flesh/body; the sculpture wears tights slightly more than it is them. In *Nuds*, the opposite is the case - the fragmented body parts are displayed so that the notion of flesh visually overtakes the notion of clothing; the sculptures *are* tights and do not - or, to be extremely strict, here, barely just - wear them. The perverse nature of both *Bunny Gets Snookered* and *Nuds* has its basis in this ontological power play. Lucas' syntactical techniques for constructing this can be interpreted as follows: Through her fragmental re-modelling of tights, Lucas sets up two competing notions of flesh and clothing which, being in a state of ongoing negotiation for dominance over one another, seem to merge for the viewer. This generates a form of sensational overload which Lucas then recapitulates; in *Bunny Gets Snookered*, this recapitulation is onto a notion of woman in her commodified sense whereas, in *Nuds*, it initially appears to be onto a notion of (almost) androgynous figure. However, given the still very strong association of tights with woman, under scrutiny, the sensational overload in *Nuds* is, ultimately, returned to an idea of non-commodified woman. So, commodified woman, it might seem, is entirely absent from *Nuds*.

However, this is not quite the case. In *Nuds*, Lucas' empirical knowledge of patriarchal, screened images of women, and women's screened oppression, is also carried in the material syntax of the work. Overall, we are again presented with an extremely materially and visually

porous work; tights, kapok, breeze-block and wood are all physically and visually highly absorbent materials. In combination, they begin to evoke the idea already put forward in this thesis, that extremes of material porosity and absorbency can be deployed in sculpture to suggest woman's extreme vulnerability to the insidious, screened gaze. Moreover, Lucas gives a very minimal selection of these materials, suggesting that woman has been forcefully reduced and subjugated by screened oppression.

Additionally, the overall pose of the visually partitioned (into limbs, intestines, brains) and re-assembled figures is, roughly, that of a sphere or ball. This is a ball that is able to be viewed in the round. It is helpful to the project to consider that this reads as a deliberately spotlighted pose, similar to that in *Bunny Gets Snookered* (in which each figure poses on a chair). It immediately refers to and re-situates filmic flatness and fragmentation of woman's body as enforced through patriarchal, screened looking. The spotlighting gaze has been traditionally used for dramatic effect in film, to frame and emphasise an actor's movements - or stillness - for the viewer.

When this spotlighting gaze is directed towards women, it supports the visual fragmentation of their bodies, which is often imbricated into film through the visually segmenting properties of bodily worn clothing. In *Nuds*, this spotlighting gaze is taken from filmic to sculptural register, and is reconstituted as volumetric and dimensionalised. This emphasises the fragmented qualities of the work and expresses Lucas' awareness of

developments in screened oppression. To explain the latter: in *Nuds*, the spotlight is not confined to a single, frontal perspective, as it inclines to be in the theatre or cinema, but instead is constructed to exploit every possible perspectival viewpoint, more so than in *Bunny Gets Snookered*. The spotlighting gaze is constructed in such a way that the viewer effectively carries this, bodily, as they walk around and between each work. This generates an oddly claustrophobic atmosphere, all the more powerful because the sculptures do not appear obviously enclosed. This pose further evokes the contemporaneous inescapability of the screened patriarchal gaze, and subtly renders the forms as commodified women where previously they seemed to represent women only excessively.

This idea is supported by other aspects of the forms Lucas has modelled; they are, overall, lumpen and fleshly but, simultaneously, oddly agile, streamlined and strenuous, as if compelled, slave-like, to perform. At the same time their lumpen-ness is physically and visually reigned in, controlled. In the work, this control is exerted through Lucas' modelling of the tights. But her modelling evokes the way that women internalise and embody the mercilessly contouring gaze of patriarchal looking. In this sense, the fragmented forms suggest women enslaved, bodily, by patriarchal screened looking which is a priori conditioned by post-production techniques involving the visual streamlining of woman's body to commodify her; the "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) Mulvey originally referred to over four decades earlier, as being integral to patriarchal, screened looking, is still present. But the

nature of that "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) has developed exponentially through technological advancements, becoming a "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) that is 'wrap around'. Rather than woman's body being only visually and patriarchally flattened by the screen, this "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) is now, and somewhat paradoxically, capable of three-dimensionality, shrink-wrapping each woman each time, as a patriarchal skin for controlling and homogenising woman's entire body. Whilst the lumpen qualities of the forms more obviously evoke woman in her non-commodified, fleshly state, the latter qualities powerfully evoke normatively commodified and even pornographised woman.

It is through these combined details that Lucas' work opens, to create a space of fantasy. Through the lumpen but contoured fleshly fragments, and the inter-twining of them, an intimacy is formed in and between the soft structures which, in each sculpture, appear to grapple with one another in what could be, at once, a staged, pornographic and screened girl-on-girl sex scene and an embrace of solidarity between non-commodified, excessive women. Lucas offers *both* ideas of women, playing each into and against the other. In so doing, she articulates women's ongoing contention with patriarchal capitalism and its screened oppression of them, at the sites of their bodies and minds.

This idea is further supported when we consider the second factor in the sculptures *Bunny Gets Snookered* and *Nuds*; that is: the exploitation of the status of tights within the context of clothing in general, particularly

relative to the perceived status of other items of clothing as pertaining to areas of the human body. It is helpful, here, to state the obvious - that different items of clothing relate to different parts of the body. Very broadly speaking, because different parts of the body are considered more private than others, different items of clothing generally lay claim to the degrees of privacy of the body part they are associated with. So, for example, a coat will be regarded as less private than a shirt, a shirt less private than a sock, a sock less private than a vest and a vest less private than underpants. Generally, when clothing is referenced in any art work - including by way of its absence - notions of privacy are automatically accessed and exploited. Hence, merely by including tights in her sculptures, Lucas recruits their particular bodily associations, along with their accompanying perceived levels of intimacy, into the work.

Significantly, tights assume a relatively complex status both in relation to the body and in relation to other items of clothing. In prosaic living, parts of tights are often publicly displayed in ways that are considered acceptable - although fashion trends continually negotiate the boundaries of this social acceptability - whereas other parts of tights are usually not shown and are not considered socially acceptable. By displaying all parts of tights in both of these works, Lucas deliberately overrides notions of privacy with which parts of them are usually associated.

Whilst this is the case in both works, in *Nuds*, it is much more overt. As viewers, we are invited to see, at close range, parts of tights and, by implication, corresponding parts of bodies that we do not usually see in public, in poses not usually assumed in public. This forces the viewer to engage with the work, and its fragments, on an extremely voyeuristic, intrusive level. Moreover, in *Bunny Gets Snookered*, whilst Lucas shows all parts of tights, and whilst she does not display the tights according to social norms which dictate that certain items of clothing are worn on certain parts of the body - including the dictum that tights are worn on legs - as viewers we are still presented with something akin to the body parts that tights are usually worn on, even if the tights are, in this case, also unusually worn on (or, more precisely, become) inappropriate body parts. Hence, some sense of familiarity remains, and there is at least some psychological comfort to be taken in this. Conversely, in *Nuds*, we are presented with a 3D, visual wrangling of forms akin to dis-membered legs/entrails/brains and the tights seem to have most thoroughly become mutilated and conglomerated body parts. Barely any sense of familiarity, in regard to tights being worn on certain parts of the body, remains. This move is very subtly, but extremely powerfully, disorientating, evoking sensations of fear and voyeuristic excitement, ramping up the patriarchal fear of and longing for the fetish 'woman'.

Therefore, Lucas exploits how the tights' status operates relative to that of other items of clothing. This happens through Lucas' absenting of

other forms of clothing, so contributing to the nakedness of the sculptures. In *Bunny Gets Snookered*, Lucas includes another form of clothing; the sculpture wears stockings on its legs which are formed out of stuffed tights. Within the cultural context, stockings have, compared with tights, stronger associations with stereotypical notions of sex, fetishism, soft porn, luxury and the sexualised and/or sexually dominant female; compared with stockings, tights generally have stronger associations with function and day-to-day practicality, are slightly more inclined to suggest the working classes, even to the point of being associated with domesticity and female subjugation. By placing stockings on legs formed from tights, Lucas conflates the associations of both items of clothing.

In *Nuds*, this same approach is differently articulated and harder to discern. In *Nuds* the tights are deliberately not visually related to any other item of clothing but instead operate alone. This deliberate isolation effectively denudes the tights of many of their cultural associations, including (almost) those associations with gender, heightening the sense of exposure embedded into the work and seeming to render the sculptures more naked than if Lucas had never made earlier works in which tights and stockings are combined. This sense of exposure is further enhanced by the ambiguous forms the limbs/intestines assume; by creating intertwined, soft and visually porous structures that suggest both limbs and entrails, Lucas' subtly evokes the possibility of their violent dismembering from a once whole and now re-assembled, body. In this move, Lucas merges notions of internality and

externality, private and public whilst also evoking the patriarchal violence, upon women, of screened oppression. This physicalises an idea of the realm of mediatised pornography, in which traditional notions of privacy, and intimacy regarding sexual activity, are thoroughly exploited, commodified, rendered anonymous and publicly distributed as "utility" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347), including within the traditionally intimate realm of the home.

Nevertheless, *Nuds* are humorous. Almost as soon as we are forced to assume the patriarchal gaze and presume ourselves in a dark realm, entranced by a perverse, possibly pornographic scene, the material facticity of the sculptures brings us to our senses. We realise it is ridiculous to be excited by and afraid of parts of pairs of stuffed tights, that it is absurd to be captivated by displays of hosiery. The scene effectively closes, even as we look at it, and we are returned to the relatively comforting idea that we might, after all, be looking at non-commodified women hugging in a sisterly manner. This thought builds on and synthesises Robinson's idea of the necessity of women's "play of différance" (Robinson, 2006, p. 100) through which to outmode patriarchy and O'Sullivan's idea of the "meeting" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 21) between art work and viewer, being "ungraspable in its moment of occurrence, but real in its effects" (ibid., p. 21). This is Lucas' way of constituting between-ing, through approaches involving fragmentation, both within the work itself and between artist, art work and viewer; humour is purposely run through, between and beyond the (3D) "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) of the work, relieving it of

the materialised burden of women's screened oppression and, instead, physicalising an idea of women's "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134).

Lucas' approach of between-ing, to generate a between-subject relation, between viewer and artist is very intricate, with much hanging in the balance for women. Whilst it might seem difficult not to resort to objectifying Lucas' works in an "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 132) because, initially, everything about the sculpture seems geared towards forcing the viewer to patriarchally objectify it, Lucas' playful humour ultimately prevents this outcome. Lucas "play of différance" (Robinson, 2006, p. 100), constructed in connection with the between-ing approach in the work, works with viewers to actively constitute a shift from what would otherwise be an extreme "maintenance mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26) of women - a hysteria - to an idea of women's "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134). The idea I put forward, here, builds on O'Sullivan's idea that art is "the name for a function of transformation" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52). For O'Sullivan, "meaning" (ibid., p. 21) is a "productive 'event' " (ibid., p. 21), a " 'moment' of meeting' " (ibid., p. 21) between "participant and art work" (ibid., p. 21). O'Sullivan claims this is "as productive...as that between artist and material" (ibid., p. 21). However, building on this, I claim it is Lucas' between-ing approach which makes possible such a "productive" (ibid., p. 21) moment between viewer and art work. The between-ing approach in Lucas' work *Nuds* helps to materially nuance this statement, giving detailed

response to the question of how the " 'moment of meeting' " (ibid., p. 21) O'Sullivan refers to is structured into her art; through *Nuds*, viewer and artist work together to make new "meaning" (ibid., p. 21) of the terms "woman" and "women", ultimately arriving at the idea and experience of woman and women in their fleshly, vulnerable and non-commodified sense, having physically and psychologically escaped the screened gaze. The excessive notions of woman and women materialised in this work do not lay claim to an excess that takes us to another dimension; they are not transformative in the transcendental sense. Rather, the excess operates in "an immanent sense, as offering an excess not somehow beyond the world but an excess of the world" (ibid., p. 26).

The third factor contributing to the mimetically productive approach in Lucas' sculptures, but particularly in *Nuds*, is the design of the tights. The fabric, the colour, the cut and the stitching or seaming of the tights each contribute to the between-ing approach in the work. The fabric - elastine - is finely woven but porous and relatively elasticated. As such, it is poetically and physically suggestive of human skin, which has very similar qualities, whilst also, under microscopic scrutiny, evoking the grid and the idea of an all-encompassing, fine mesh, patriarchal grid being exerted to control women.

The colours Lucas has chosen - tan and/or flesh - further support the skin analogy by referencing skin tones. The cut of tights is such that it is

intended to sheathe the body and its natural shape; as I have discussed, Lucas is able to exploit this quality by stuffing her tights to suggest various bodily postures, conditions and forms which, in turn, evoke vulnerable woman and compulsive, sexualised performance by patriarchally commodified women. Finally, the seaming or stitching of the tights is also important; it is, simply, either visible or hidden in the work. However, the ratio of hidden to visible seams makes a difference. In *Bunny Gets Snookered* certain seams visibly reference certain parts of the female lower body, even if used within the sculpture to suggest the torso, head or ears - and this contributes to the sense that Lucas has deliberately overturned notions of female privacy whilst retaining the familiar.

Conversely, in *Nuds*, relatively few, if any, seams are shown. This relative seamlessness enhances the sense of intimacy, between women, in the work; few, if any, seams visually 'protect' the flesh of the work from our gaze or separate the forms from one another. This suggests a hermetically sealed, patriarchal, phallocular and dystopian commodification of women and the possibility of intimacy between them. However, because this is played into the humour structured into the work, it ultimately suggests a utopian intimacy, between excessive women.

It is helpful for my project to examine the possibility that Lucas' empirical knowledge of the patriarchal, screened gaze is imbricated into these works through her bodily engagement and that the works carry her

"knowledges" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123) of this. By this I do not mean that Lucas imposes an idea / her idea onto these works. They are not illustrative. In *Nuds* the limbs/entrails/brains that she forms are lithe, limber and strenuous, reading as simultaneously defenceless and mutually, if momentarily pornographically, satiating. In this sense, they perhaps do come close to illustrating an idea of commodified women. However, I have demonstrated the complex engineering that Lucas carries out in this work and how this involves working with the viewer to generate an idea of excessive women. Lucas' making, her bodily engagement with and connectivity to physical stuff, transfers her lived experiences to the sculptures, which then carry, or bear them. In this sense, Lucas forcefully channels her experiences of the patriarchal gaze to produce and then reject a commodified idea of women, but ultimately contests that idea by directing other "knowledges" (ibid., p. 123) - of bodily and ocular resistance to such looking and of living beyond it - into the material syntaxes of her work. In so doing, Lucas' *Nuds* welcomes but ultimately rejects the mediated gaze. Her between-ing approach, involving physically re-modelling fragmented clothing, produces material syntaxes founded on a morphological impetus. Her syntaxes morphologically double the symbolic and positively represent women; ultimately, in each of the sculptures in *Nuds*, she generates a structure which, is: "not one, and cannot be counted in ones (one + one), but which is always plural" (Robinson, 2006, p. 54).

This bears strong correspondence with the pluralised structures of my *New Model Army* sculptures, which each differently adapt techniques of flatness and fragmentation, to morphologically double the symbolic.

## 5:4 Hysteria in Vanessa Beecroft's *VB 35* (1998)



Fig. 47 Vanessa Beecroft *VB 35* Performance, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1998)

Vanessa Beecroft's *VB35* was performed in 1998 in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Many subsequent, similar performances have followed, including an installation/performance *VB56*, for the opening of a Louis Vuitton's flagship store in Paris, 2005, in which women were arranged on shelves, alongside Louis Vuitton products.



Fig. 48 Vanessa Beecroft, *VB 56* (for Louis Vuitton), Paris (2005)

As with many of her performances, for *VB 35*, Beecroft arranges her collection of live women in a public setting. Each woman's body shape is extremely slim according to standard female body size. The women each assume a blank stare and still, sedated poses, seeming to have accepted a total "paralysis" (Irigaray, 1985a cited Robinson, 2006, p. 26) of their subjective desires. In so doing, the women in her work emulate the studied demeanour of fashion models who, as part of their work, control their facial gestures and bodily movements in accord with the pervasive gaze of the fashion camera, and its patriarchally commodifying gaze (Stankiewicz and Rosselli 2008). Clothing plays a key role in Beecroft's work and is used to visually construct the "fragmented body" (Mulvey, 1975. p. 40) of each woman in connection with the viewer's gaze. Each woman is either naked or

wearing very little clothing but any clothing that is worn is of the kind usually associated with notions of privacy, such as hosiery and underwear, and/or fetishism - for example, chains and parts of uniforms - or commercially sexualised clothing such as stiletto heeled shoes and boots and bikinis. Consequently, the visual fragmentation of the women's bodies is heavily accentuated by these kinds of clothing, particularly because these incline to include and / or suggest visual lines in and through details such as the straps that are integral to bikinis, underwear, shoes and sandals. These lines subtly but very powerfully visually partition the women's bodies. Beecroft also usually ensures the women's hair is highly stylised, or that they wear wigs. These kinds of details emulate those in the images of stylised models used for fashion shoots and who are dressed to accentuate clothing for the purpose of generating commercial profit.

Beecroft films and photographs the performances, selling a selection of prints and photographs for extremely high prices. Selected guests are invited to the private view of the performance, which usually last several hours, during which time the women are on constant display. Often, in contrast to the naked or nearly naked performers, guests are requested to wear formal dinner dress for the duration of their viewing of the work. Beecroft has stated she enjoys the aesthetic contrast (Reserve Channel, 2014) between the two kinds of clothing and in the ratio of clothing worn by guests to that worn by the women. In the days following the private view, timed performances are open to the public.

Critical reception of Beecroft's work suggests there is an intense response to what is perceived as its negative aspects. For example, Luke Harding writes that: "there is plenty about Beecroft's work that is voyeuristic. But the most interesting aspect is its almost calculating cruelty" (Harding, 2005). In a similar vein, Kathryn Hepburn writes: "After some research into her work, I have to say now that I cannot think of a single living artist whom I find more repugnant than Vanessa Beecroft" (Hepburn, n.d.).

It is helpful to my project to reflect on these comments, and on Beecroft's work, relative to Angela McRobbie's and Dave Hickey's writing. Doing so helps me to differentiate how "between-ing" and hysteria are operated in and through art works.

To begin this reflection, I ask: What is the "calculating cruelty" (Harding, 2005) that Harding refers to in Beecroft's work and why might this be the work's "the most interesting aspect" (Harding, 2005)? Moreover, why does Hepburn find Beecroft "repugnant" (Hepburn, n.d.)? In response to these questions, I want to first discuss McRobbie's writing on the contemporary presence of the "phallic girl" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 83) and how this attests to the sexism of mediatised femininity.

Mc Robbie uses the term "phallic girl" (ibid., p. 83) to describe a young woman who "...gives the impression of having won equality with men" (ibid.

p. 83). The young woman does this " by becoming like her male counterparts" (ibid., p. 83). McRobbie describes the young women's emulation - "becoming like" (ibid., p. 83) - as an "adoption of the phallus" (ibid., p. 83). For McRobbie, the problem with this strategy is that "there is no critique of masculine hegemony" (ibid. p. 83). In other words, if young women lack critical awareness of patriarchy and, consequently, cannot demonstrate this awareness in their relationships with men, they experience and give to other people "the impression of" (ibid., p. 83) a sense of enjoying what is actually a false sense of "equality with men" (ibid., p. 83).

McRobbie goes on to discuss how the fashion industry, including fashion imagery, is implicated in structuring women's false sense of freedom. She describes the fashion photography as "a site of normalised pathology, a kind of institutionalised madness" (ibid., p. 110). This "madness" (ibid., p. 110) she says, "accrues from the impossibility of femininity" (ibid., p. 110). This "impossibility (ibid., p. 110) is caused by young women being "positioned in a post-feminist frame where notions of equality are routinely invoked" (ibid., p. 110). However, "at the same time, new terms and conditions are being set" (ibid., p. 110). In other words, fashion imagery is part of a patriarchal framing which suggests that feminism is no longer needed and, at the same time, causes young women ongoing confusion by promoting new ideas regarding how their femininity might be constructed and expressed. Whilst the young women may be " ' gender aware' as a result of previous feminist activity and struggles associated with sexual politics" (ibid.,

p. 110), they are "expected to disregard this awareness" (ibid., p. 110). This is because, McRobbie claims, "No market is more precious to contemporary capitalism and its consumer culture than that of young women" (ibid., p. 121).

McRobbie's claim, here, initially seems to stand somewhat at odds with Federici's claims (1975, 2010) in regard to patriarchal capitalism's structural dependency on women's reproductive and domestic labour. However, logically, it does seem that these forms of labour are structurally connected to what McRobbie describes as the "most precious" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 121) neo-liberalist asset; the "institutionalised madness" (ibid., p. 110) McRobbie refers to can be considered part of a political programming of young women to prepare them for the unrewarded labour that Federici refers to. In other words, what McRobbie describes as "institutionalised madness" reads, relative to Federici's analysis, as integral to a neo-liberalist strategy of asset management.

McRobbie's claim, regarding the "normalised pathology" (ibid., p. 110) of fashion images of women, is appropriate for describing how Beecroft operates hysteria in her work. However, the idea I put forward, in the above, lends further weight to McRobbie's analysis and to Beecroft's art. Beecroft has referred to the women she uses in her performances as "material" (Reserve Channel, 2014). Her term reiterates Mulvey's idea that women are "raw material" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 46) for the patriarchal gaze. However, whereas Mulvey used this term to describe women's vulnerability to the

patriarchal, screened gaze, Beecroft uses a similar term to describe how she herself perceives them, so suggesting that, in forming her works, she extends the screened, patriarchal gaze to the women involved.

At this juncture, it is helpful to reflect on Hickey's analysis of Beecroft's work. He says:

...if there is an argument in these works (and there may not be), it might be construed as demonstrating the subversive consequence of confronting in the present that which we are accustomed to confronting in representation. (Hickey, 2000, p. 7)

In the above, Hickey alludes to a possibility, which he also suggests "may not be" (Hickey, 2000, p. 7) present in the work. Why does Hickey place an uncertainty in regard to this possibility, and what is that uncertainty? In responding to this question, I claim that the possibility Hickey refers to is that Beecroft, in "confronting" (ibid. p. 7) her audience with live, commodified women, rather than presenting the audience only with images - "representation" (ibid., p. 7) of them, brings into sharp, feminist focus, the "subversive consequence" (ibid., p. 7) of the audience's discomfort and, in so doing, extends hysteria through the work and to her audience.

To elaborate this claim I assert that Beecroft's work confronts the audience with the extremes of screened oppression that women are routinely

subjected to. Beecroft creates a situation in which she causes the audience to watch the "women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger, 1972, p. 46)<sup>106</sup>. Building on Hickey's analysis, I claim that, in so doing, Beecroft creates conditions in which the audience might gain new consciousness - and, ideally, a feminist conscience - in regard to how their gaze, their act of looking, has been conditioned by screened oppression and has led them to exert this upon women. Viewers, in being situated in bodily proximity to the bodies of the women, are implicated in flattening - by applying to the women the same contouring, shrink wrap, gaze evident in Lucas' *Nuds* - fragmenting and objectifying them, unitising them as commodities. In this way, viewers are required to embody screened, oppressive looking and direct it at the women.

My further claim in regard to Beecroft's work is that, in contrast to Lucas' *Nuds*, the visual fragmentation invoked by her use of visually partitioning clothing, in connection with flattening (contouring) gaze, does not support a between-ing approach. Instead, her approach blocks all possibility of "between-ing", either within the work itself or between the work and the audience. This is because, rather than being founded on a morphological impetus, in Beecroft's work, "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and the "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) subscribe to and purposely take "to the nth degree in order to attempt to wrest back some control over destiny, identity

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<sup>106</sup> In so doing, she builds on John Berger's early claim that "women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger, 1972, p. 46), by creating conditions for the audience to become aware of their role in enforcing this self-consciousness in women.

and sexuality" (Robinson, 2006., p. 3) the "institutionalised madness" (Mulvey, 2009, p. 110) of patriarchal capitalism, including and especially its screened oppression of women. In so being, Beecroft's work is substructured by the "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132). Ultimately, this generates a dis-affective relation with the viewer. The "calculated cruelty" (Harding, 2005) is not only in its treatment of the women involved, but extends to affect the audience. Beecroft, at least temporarily, traps the viewer into a relationship with the women which, as Harding and Hepburn have noted, generates (at least for some) intense unease. In this way, Beecroft structures the "calculated continuum of the masquerade 'femininity' " (Robinson, 2006, p. 36) into her work. Beecroft has deliberately taken, to its logical end, and at a level of embodiment, patriarchal "maintenance mimesis" (ibid., p. 26) - of woman. I claim this extrematised reproduction of the patriarchal masquerade renders the work hysterical. Rather than engender relationships of between-ness, between the women in the work and between the work and the audience, Beecroft, in working in ways that bear strong correspondence to Robinson's analysis, follows the "hysteric's strategy" (ibid., p. 42) of the "isolated individual" (ibid. p. 42) whose "stubborn reserve is 'resorbed' into her perfection of her act of mimicry" (ibid., p. 42).

However, and importantly, in Beecroft's work, her "act of mimicry" (ibid., p. 42) is delegated to other women in order to extend its dis-affectivity through them and to audiences. This effectively expands Robinson's analysis

to include the idea that hysteria can act as a patriarchal framing, enforced upon others (including women) by others (including women) through looking. This expansion casts some critical doubt on the idea in Robinson's analysis, that the hysteric's "act of mimicry" (ibid., p. 42) is that of an "isolated individual" (ibid., p. 42) and, in turn, a further doubt that Beecroft operates the "hysteric's strategy" (ibid. p. 42) "*rather than*" (ibid., p. 42) (my emphasis) acting in accord with a strategy that is "collectively political (feminist)" (ibid., p. 42). However, I claim that there is feminist merit in Beecroft's hysterical work and, for that reason, it must be considered to have "collectively political (feminist)" (ibid. p. 42) merit. This is a complex claim, requiring further elaboration which I provide in the next chapter, in relation to my analysis of Fiona Banner's *Nude Standing* (2006).

# 5:5 Fiona Banner's Observation of Hysteria: *Nude Standing* (2006)



Fig. 49 Fiona Banner *Nude Standing* (Front) (2006)



Fig. 50 Fiona Banner Nude Standing (Reverse) (2006)

Fiona Banner's *Nude Standing* (2006) comprises a few, simple materials - a rectangular MDF panel framed with aluminium, and aluminium wire. On one side, The MDF panel bears the title *Nude Standing*<sup>107</sup> printed in black. A single sheet of white paper, with black ink text handwritten across its entire

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<sup>107</sup> In the publication *Performance Nude* (Banner 2009), this image is referred to as the 'back view' of the work.

surface, is mounted on the other side. The work, overall, is described as being only 8cm in depth but, at 272cm high and 164cm wide, is otherwise "giant" (Straayer, 1996, p. 80) in relation to the size of the average person and, importantly, is also secured into its upright position by being wired to the ceiling. *Nude Standing* forms a single work, which Banner describes as being integral to a project that "took on various forms between 2006 and 2009" (Banner, 2009, p. 2).<sup>108</sup>

The printed title on one side of *Nude Standing* declares it as a representation of a naked, upright person and, along with the work's physical situation, strongly encourages the viewer to read the work 'in the round'. First time viewers are likely to quickly understand that the nude being represented is a woman; as the eye travels over the work, words like "her face" and "her arm" stand out amongst others that, overall, form a distinct style.

An extract from the handwritten text reads:

...through the tender skin on the soles. Her weight falls a bit onto the left hip, her white bones show through the skin a bit more prominently. Her waist on the other side folds onto itself making a dark shadow between the skin. The seam a dark cleft between her buttocks widens and the crack of light from between her thighs...

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<sup>108</sup> Other works in the project include, for example, *Nude Performance* (2006), performed at Port Eliot Literary Festival - in which Banner 'performs' a written description of a live, naked female model, for an audience - and various other forms of text 'portraits' of naked women.

Although it is possible to read this text in a linear manner, from 'start' to 'finish', and to gain a totalised reading of the woman being depicted, both the visual appearance of the text and its content are subtly but powerfully fragmented; the visual structure of the sentences segments the idea of woman into parts and, simultaneously, appear to represent her as a whole. This confers visual porosity upon the work, symbolically fracturing the woman being represented. In all probability, in response to this fracturing, the viewer's gaze will initially hover over the corpus of the text, taking in visually irregular batches of phrases and sentences, but barely - cognitively - processing their content. In terms of the content of the text: overall, this both unifies - or, more appropriately, unitises - and fragments woman; as we see in the extract above, almost every sentence focuses on body parts such as "soles", "bones", "skin", "waist", "buttocks", "thighs", whilst also formally connecting them, for example by commenting on how gravity and light forge visual relationships between those parts.

Through the combined but different processes of reading and looking at this text, and its situation within a shallow vacuum, sealed by the cold metal and glass frame - or screen, the reader is encouraged to experience moments of alternating (in)sensitivity so as to connect more intensely with the working process, in which flattening and fragmentation are key. However, due to the ratio of insensitive to sensitive moments structured into the work, and their encapsulation within the frame, in reading the text in its entirety, the viewer is implicated in flattening, completing, totalising and objectifying the

woman, unitising her as commodity. The visual fragmentation, in connection with flattening techniques deployed by Banner, and in contrast to Lucas' *Nuds*, does not seem to support a between-ing approach within and through the work. Instead, it would seem that, as with Beecroft's work, Banner's work blocks all possibility of this. It seems that, as with Beecroft, Banner's approach, rather than being founded on a morphological impetus, involves "flatness" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) and the "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) being substructured by the "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132).

However, and drawing from my analysis of Beecroft's work, I want to ask: Does Banner's work really engender what I have referred to as a dis-affective relation with the viewer? Is Banner's a hysterical work? I elaborate this argument over the following passages.

The woman referred to in Banner's work is effectively shaped and modelled by the viewer in two ways. Firstly: via the eye as it surveys the materiality of the work; this process connects the sensorial capacities of the viewer with the work and confers somatic shape upon the latter. In this case, the thin paper, its flattened surface and the application of the text onto this, the shallow encasing and the decision to display this to draw attention to its (lack of) three-dimensionality, all indicate that a compression has occurred and is being rehearsed by the viewer's gaze, as they survey the work; under a compressing gaze, a woman's volumetric body has been and continues to

be severely compacted. Secondly: via the viewer's cognitive appreciation of the fragmented description of the woman; the more the viewer reads the description of the woman, the more the viewer conceives of and imagines her original state and the more they are implicated in the fracturing processes undertaken to form the description. Consequently, the viewer's gaze is implied, through the inter-related acts of looking and reading, to be voyeuristic, intrusive, dominant and patriarchal. Overall, the descriptive capacity of the words encourages an idea of the woman and, at the same time, materially reduces an idea of woman to a few inert materials and batches of sentences and phrases. In operating in this way, Banner very much seems to materially reproduce, exaggerate, and exert upon the woman, a "maintenance mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26), a patriarchal commodification and objectification of woman.

However, the structures underpinning this work are complex; Banner plays into the inherent voyeurism in the viewing situation, problematising its related gender politics, it would seem in the absence of morphological impetus for this play. It is helpful to my project to probe this complexity, to understand if this is really the case, and to examine whether and how Banner's work differs from Beecroft's hysterical work and what the importance of this difference is.

The complexity in Banner's work hinges around the idea that aspects of her approach suggest she may have empathy for and sensitivity to the

woman, and that she may have applied a compassionate, as well as a dis-compassionate gaze to her, simultaneously perceiving her as commodity and as woman in excess of her commodification. This possibility is supported, for the main part, by the grammatical structure or style of the text itself, the base-line of which is somewhat impersonal and relatively devoid of any overt analogous description, but which is occasionally humane. Overall, the tone of the language is formal, and generally appears intent on achieving an observed, fairly detailed and precise visual description of the woman involved. This formality is interesting; it appears to adhere to a regulated process and this, in turn, has parallels with the traditional - even ritualised - sculptural processes of, for example, clay modelling or stone carving or bronze casting. Most importantly, the insensitivity of the language and the raw visual aspect of the text also imply that the woman's body has met with an unflinching, processing and machinic gaze, such as that extended through a surveillance camera, and with the implication being that the woman is being processed by this gaze, being rendered, potentially, as "utility" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347).

Conversely, at times, Banner's written language is also casual, informal and approximate. When Banner says, for example: "Her weight falls a bit onto the left hip", the phrase "a bit" implies momentary relaxation of an otherwise absolutely cold, precise, machinic scrutiny. Her moments of approximate rendering effectively become a subtle, technical device through which the viewer's cognitive powers are keyed into the work, beginning to

equally align artist and viewer through the process of looking. This enriches the work, providing a second or so in which the viewer is inclined to believe they have perceived a moment of human error, on Banner's part, and a moment of excessive woman being described; there is a sense in which the approximate rendering that Banner momentarily lapses into, operates similarly to the fleshly lumps in Lucas' *Nuds* - they are oddly, and fleetingly, endearing, the more-so because they are situated within a similarly merciless screened gaze to that described in Lucas' and Beecroft's work. In Banner's work, through these 'lumpen' moments of approximation, we are inclined to feel an affinity with the difficulties of her task of describing a whole female figure and, relatedly, with that of the woman standing, prone, being described. Hence, we begin to see both Banner and, significantly, the woman involved, as human and vulnerable. This vulnerability is effectively produced through the flattening and fragmenting approaches Banner adopts to form the work, potentially generating an idea of excessive woman.

However, it would seem that this potential for excess is almost immediately reigned in and subsumed within the written text and, in turn, within the overall structure of the work. There is a strong sense in which, rather than supporting an approach of between-ing, and of the possibility of women's transformative "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013. p. 134), these moments of vulnerability instead and under Banner's machinic gaze, evoke notions of filmic/sculptural/literary torture and horror, of a living woman being sealed, if not entombed, under the cold glass and

aluminium frame, leashed upright by the aluminium wire, unable to ever escape Banner's - and, by implication, the audience's - patriarchal gaze. In this way, the work bears strong correspondence to Beecroft's work and the women in it, who are effectively 'locked in', at a bodily level, to relentless scrutiny by the audience, who are also positioned, by Beecroft, to embody the patriarchal, screened and oppressive gaze and to exert this upon the women. In behaving similarly, Banner's work inclines to position as hysterical.

This idea is supported by the fact that, although a few of Banner's words and phrases read as relatively sensitive to the woman, most are profoundly insensitive to her. This (in)sensitivity is pitched relative to the (mainly) impersonal base-line of the language Banner deploys and to common perceptions and values surrounding different areas of the human body.

For example, Banner uses the slang term "crack" to describe the play of light occurring in very close proximity to the part of the female body usually considered most private - her genitalia. In so doing, she uses language as a form of provocation. As the viewer's eye skims across the text and catches on this word, beginning to analyse its meaning, the viewer is uncertain whether Banner is using the slang term to refer to the female's body or the immediate surrounding space. The term has - for some unwanted - strong association with female physiognomy and the psychological weight of that

association pulls very strongly against the viewer's perception of the (real) space that the word may describe. Banner's inclusion of slang reads as grossly insensitive to values surrounding notions of female privacy and, therefore, more forcefully colludes with the patriarchal, pornographic and commodifying gaze of today's mediatised climate. However, importantly, under consideration, it becomes apparent that Banner refers to the play of light surrounding the woman's body. This momentarily inclines the reader to think that Banner feels empathy for the woman and this raises some critical doubt in regard to the idea that Banner is only reproducing the screened, oppressive gaze and is only reproducing hysteria.

Other details in the work operate similarly. For example, Banner includes the word "tender" when referencing the soles of the woman's feet, implying at least a fleeting sensitivity on Banner's part, albeit within a somewhat unremitting, insensitive scrutiny of the woman. In so doing, Banner seems to demonstrate sensitivity to an area of the body that, at least in Western cultures, is commonly disregarded or forgotten. Through her inclusion of the word "tender", the woman's body seems momentarily - if minimally - illuminated, palpable and sensitised under the gaze of another, compassionate woman and a potential alliance forms *between* the two women and - potentially - extends to the audience. In applying attention to this typically undervalued area of the body, through the fragmented and flattened idea of woman, Banner confers new value upon it and potentially generates relations of between-ness, a " 'moment' of meeting' " (O'Sullivan,

2006, p. 21) between "participant and art work" (ibid., p. 21), through which to materialise new "meaning" (ibid., p. 21) of the terms woman and women. In these ways, Banner's work is further inclined to critically position away from being hysterical and towards being between-ing work.

However, ultimately, the critical position of Banner's work is complicated by the idea that such details do not read as a reliable indication of a wholly anti-patriarchal empathy on Banner's part. There is a sense in which, because of the context of Banner's observations, her 'sensitivity' to this part of the woman's body equally reads as predatory interest in a vulnerable site and, especially given the flattening and entombing structure of the work, as evidence of the patriarchal desire to capture, exploit and eternally commodify her under a patriarchal, screened gaze, in a manner that bears strong correspondence with Beecroft's approach. Banner's use of flattening and fragmentation techniques, within the written language, seem to prohibit between-ing, especially due to those techniques being included within a cold, non-porous structure of the frame. In this sense, Banner's work seems to ultimately produce dis-affective, rather than "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) with the viewer, thus rehearsing hysteria as the "calculated continuum of the masquerade 'femininity' " (Robinson, 2006, p. 36).

This hysteria is also structured by the distance Banner creates between herself and the woman, and the complex fragmenting approach that

structures and is structured by it. The distance is interesting and particular. It speaks to, complicates and ultimately denies the distance that Doane (1982) earlier called for, between woman and her image, in order that women might locate and structure their own pleasurable looking. It would be insufficient to merely say that Banner's distance between herself and the woman is objective, although it undoubtedly is that, and allows Banner to operate as an artist intent on conflating notions of film, sculpture and literature, through fragmenting and flattening techniques. It would seem that, rather than constructing a distance that would help to distinguish woman from her image, Banner instead constructs a distance that allows her to forcefully and irrevocably merge the two. The distance allows Banner to rehearse the patriarchal, screened gaze, which objectifies and oppresses women, through extending Banner's critical assessment of pornography, in positioning herself, via the role of transcriber, relative to the "action" (Banner, 2009, p. 5) in pornographic films and, prior to that, war films.

Banner has said: "I always think of porn itself as being part of the tradition of the nude" (Banner, 2009, p. 13). Her statement communicates the relatively straightforward view that, traditionally, there is a voyeurism inherent in the artistic (usually male) depiction of nude (usually female) persons and this equates with the voyeurism inherent in commercial pornography. However, when we learn that Banner's artistic activity previously involved her extensive viewing of porn films and transcribing what she saw, this apparently straightforward statement carries more weight.

Banner's decision to position herself as transcriber is a way of claiming a specific critical position, one that constitutes her critical negotiation of a correlation between:

- a. The activity of watching commercial pornography, including and especially the particularly invasive, infiltrating (de)sensitising effects that the staged intimacy of pornography has on the viewer and his/her gaze. This especially includes porn when supplied, as it currently is, via media technology and as "utility" (Friedberg, 2003, p.347) - that is, as mediated pornography, via a mobile phone, a laptop or home computer, home TV or home cinema screen.

and

- b. Methods of formal observation that artists, particularly male artists, have traditionally engaged for the purpose of producing nude portraits of women.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> This also extends to include the misogynistic way in which female models are described in reviews of those works. *The Art Book* (Butler, Van Cleave and Stirling, 1997) demonstrates examples of this on page 58, in the authors' descriptions of the woman portrayed in Francois Bucher's *Odalisque*, c 1745 (Oil on canvas. H53 x w64 cm Musee du Louvre, Paris) and page 501, in the authors' descriptions of the woman portrayed in Anders Zorn's, *Dagmar* 1911 (Oil on canvas. h88 x w63 cm).

A simpler way of describing Banner's activity as artist would be to state something like the following: "Banner is trying to see what happens to her artist's gaze and her pleasure when she watches porn. This includes wondering what her gaze then does to an idea of woman. She is asking us to wonder with her, and to decide what it is that she sees and what her pleasure constitutes, here".

It is helpful, then, to note that Banner's works are "developed out of the work I made from porn films, which in turn came from my interest in war films" (Banner, 2009, p. 12) and that it is both the "violence in images" (ibid., p. 12) - which she attributes to the "voyeurism" (ibid., p. 12) of the camera and the viewer - and "the intimacy involved" (ibid., p. 12) which, she says "reaches something primitive" (ibid., p. 12). Very interestingly, she says this caused her "to see the films in a kind of sculptural or spatial way" (ibid., p. 12) whilst also describing her works not as sculptures but as "images" (ibid., p. 12) - that is: "images of nudes in words" (ibid., p. 12). Banner's description confirms the idea already materialised in *Nude Standing*, which is that her gaze conflates the registers of the filmic, the sculptural and the literary to produce a patriarchal, violently inscribed, screened 'intimacy'. Despite that she refers to her final works as "images" (Banner, 2009, p. 12), she reads these images sculpturally and filmically (as filmic image). Moreover, in being aware of the combined violence and intimacy inherent in the kind of filmic images she is interested in - war and porn - Banner is alert to the idea that she has now structured both into her work.

In materially conflating the filmic, sculptural and literary registers, Banner has chosen to break with the tradition of sculpture by corrupting traditional ideas of “pure” sculpture via her use of text, effectively rendering the work inadequate as a sculpture in a traditional sense, but, paradoxically, encouraging the work to exceed the category of sculpture.

However, it is helpful for my project to consider that, the approximate moments of Banner's description of the woman evidence Banner's awareness of excessive notions of woman and how Banner herself generates moments of this in the work. These moments suggest that there is a between-ing approach in the work, but this is also restricted - though not fully prohibited or outlawed - by Banner's artistic decision making. This has the consequence that Banner's work, ultimately, purposely 'fails' to forcibly foreclose excessive notions of women and, in so doing, also 'fails' to present as a hysterical work and to transmit and re-duplicate hysteria.

Through this deliberated 'failure', Banner demonstrates her artistic observation of hysteria, rather than her reproduction of it. It is through this observed 'failure' that her work differs from Beecroft's.

In support of this idea the project considers that, whilst Banner's use of written language evidences her ability to sift through copious amounts of the commercialised, spoken or uttered language - or “grunts” (Banner, 2009, p. 12) - intrinsic to porn and war films and to present to the viewer a (written)

language that represents woman, it does not, ultimately, reduce the woman involved to an object and, in does not silence her. In her moments of approximated description, Banner provides a way out of hysterical silencing. Written words are imbricated into a material, three-dimensional work with the aim of objectifying woman via written language, but they observe the violence of screened looking, rather than only reproduce this. Banner's inclusion of written language to stand in for an absented body, in the context of a three-dimensional object, reinvests a notion of sculptural form with the idea that woman's non-commodified, dimensionalised flesh is being violently processed. However, Banner uses written language to observe the idea of patriarchal control of women, through the same, screened gaze responsible for the streamlining of enmeshed kapok lumps, in Lucas' *Nuds* and the women in Beecroft's *VB 35*. Whilst written words are integral to this process of screened flattening of woman, they do not, ultimately, silence the woman herself and she is not, ultimately, subjected to a hysterical framing, by Banner. Instead, the woman's body, in being described by Banner, is recognised as claiming, in its fleshliness and vulnerability, moments of voice, of agency, of language for her mediation.

The fact that Banner's own bodily movement is needed for the act of writing the description supports the idea that the woman's bodily voice has communicated to another woman, and expands this idea to include the possibility of one woman's bodily communication operating in connection with another woman's bodily actions. Typically, bodily gesture in art works,

particularly sculpture, reads on a superficial level as *crude* compared with the more 'refined' gestures produced by controlled hand movements. However, the common distinction between *crude* and *refined* is rather misleading. Works such as Banner's are produced through direct engagement with the body and its movements, with the work in question typically tracing or evidencing the extent and quality of that engagement. But such bodily engagement can be positioned to support gender-political critique. As this thesis has claimed, in response to works such as those made by VALIE EXPORT and Louise Bourgeois, bodily gestures can operate as a critical rejection of the requirement for female obedience and subservience implicit in the practice of traditional skills and crafts in which highly disciplined hand movements, and the relative "fixing" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) of the body as a whole, are necessary during processes of making. Chapter one demonstrated that the roughly cut arm holes in VALIE EXPORT's 'cinema' evoke spontaneous, disobedient - from a patriarchal perspective - bodily movements. Similarly, a later work of Louise Bourgeois', involving her 'crude' stitching, constitutes her defiant rejection of expected notions of neatness - and, by implication, complicity, domesticity and servitude - in women's sewing.

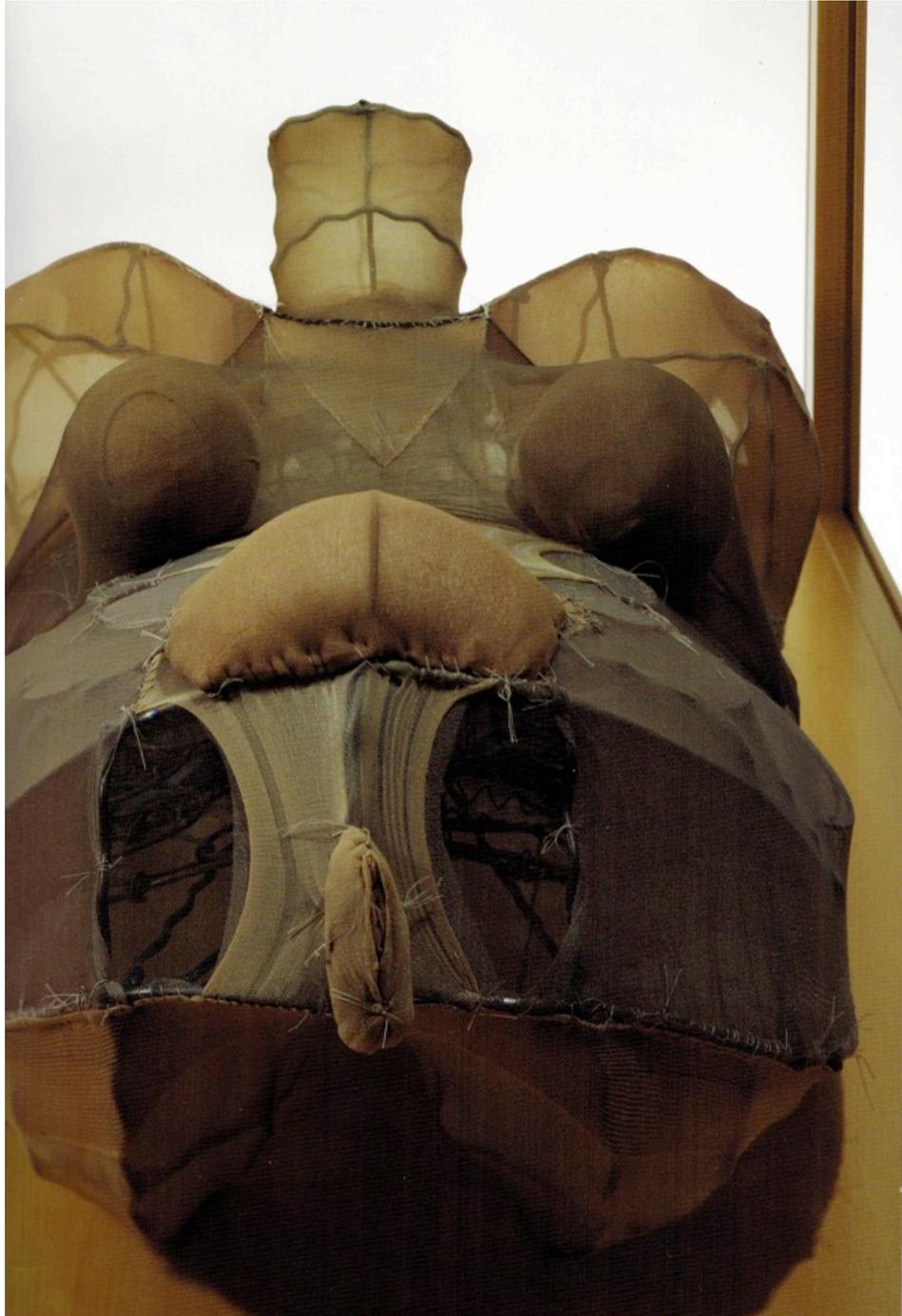


Fig. 51 Louise Bourgeois *Untitled* (1998)

Following her early work, Bourgeois created, over the following decades, many fabric sculptures referencing the female body. Her fabric sculpture *Untitled* (1998) references the same body 'section' that Bourgeois

withholds from sight in her early latex costume. However, in this later work, Bourgeois crudely stitches together sections of elastine type fabric, a material associated with women's hosiery and underwear. In regard to the parts of the sculpture suggesting female genitals, this fabric appears to be actually cut out and appropriated from pre-manufactured underwear. These decisions and gestures powerfully index the intimate realm of the female body and the re-working of existing clothing, as a materially symbolic structure, to symbolically mediate women's experiences of oppressive looking, to instead insist upon new "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) for women. Again, as with EXPORT's, Rosler's and Wilke's work, we see evidence of how an artist has fused an idea of body and clothing in order to carry out this inscription.

In this work, the possibility of women's new "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) is difficult to perceive, due to the particularly heavily fragmented body, de-limbed and headless and its reclining pose, prone and seemingly in stasis, utterly immobilised by the objectifying, patriarchal gaze. However, the quality of Bourgeois' stitching makes a difference, here, and is key to the material structuring, in this work, of her refusal of the patriarchal gaze. Just as EXPORT's early 'cinema' sculpture was crudely cut and assembled, and imbued movement into her work in support of an idea of women's anti-patriarchal "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126), so Bourgeois' method of stitching is similarly, seemingly, spontaneously de-skilled. Robinson claims this stitching has:

...connotations of...make-do-and-mend, of an activity passed from mother to daughter, where rawness tells of skills not yet acquired rather than purely aesthetic choices. (Robinson, 2006, p. 144)

Bourgeois' approach to sewing demonstrates that she is aware of what it means for women to sew 'properly' and to reject this requirement. Her intention, in this work, is not so much to evoke "skills not yet acquired" (ibid., p. 144) but to demonstrate her rejection of an idea of patriarchally imposed skills, such as the sewing skills involved in domesticity and the fashion industry, each of which are differently associated with an idea of patriarchally obedient women. Both of these forms of sewing pertain to patriarchal notions of mastery, intent on coercing women's pleasure in making into the passive production of patriarchally valued objects, including the production of women as objects. Given Bourgeois' experiences of a close relationship with her mother, I accept there is something in Robinson's reference to "an activity passed from mother to daughter" (ibid., p. 144). However, through her 'raw' stitching, Bourgeois evokes women's vulnerability to patriarchal subjugation under oppressive looking. I further argue that, at the same time, Bourgeois materialises her inheritance of a connectivity to her own desires as woman, including as transmitted, through lived example, from mother to daughter, and capable of contesting patriarchal sexualisation of women and the stasis this would impose upon their pleasures. Just as EXPORT's own bodily movement is suggested in the roughly cut edges of the structure placed around her torso, and is particularly evident in the cut of the holes for her

arms, Bourgeois' bodily movement is imbued into the stitching in ways that suggest a fiercely defiant sexuality in "machinic" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 125) connection with untameable desire. In concrete terms, this enhances the "fractured" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 347) state of the body that is referenced, paradoxically suggesting patriarchally devastated and exploited woman, whilst also conferring powerful bodily presence and dimensionality upon her. But, overall, the visual and psychic presence of the movement imbricated into Bourgeois' stitching, in connection with the slightly raised bodily pose, suggests an uprising against patriarchal flatness and an assertion of excessive woman.

The same kind of critique operates in Banner's work. On the one hand, in *Nude Standing* the visual rhythm of the words seems intent on compressing the female and seem to indicate compulsively driven, physical action of Banner's own body. Banner's bodily energy is, therefore, suggested to be channeling, through writing, the machinic, patriarchal gaze. Consequently, the hand-written words form a visual texture or grain similar to that revealed by a cross-section of wood or stone and this enhances the driven, pressured quality of the work; the implication is that Banner has become something akin to a powerful machine intent on processing the woman involved. Moreover, the woman's body - as described in the text - then reads as previously private or secret, but now enduring patriarchal "fixing" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) in exposed stasis, through the implicitly brutal and relentless act of cross - sectioning. Relatedly, the words

Banner uses are predominantly intended to describe the female's appearance, rather than indicate that female as active. Hence, the work strongly inclines to suggest that Banner has thoroughly embodied the relentless, networked and "divided" (Friedberg, 2003, p. 348) screen and, in directing her body to describe the woman, directs the screened gaze in ways that immobilise her.

However, on the other hand, and at the same time, this rhythm suggests spontaneous, raw, and defiant energy, similar to that found in Bourgeois' work. In this sense, Banner's energy, as directed through the writing, and in combination with the approximate moments in Banner's work, enhances the idea of the woman's exposure and vulnerability, her nakedness, and fleshliness, inclining us to imagine the flesh of a woman in excess of her patriarchal commodification.

Because Banner is a woman, her approach has further implications in regard to hysteria. In considering these, I will argue in support of my claim that *Nude Standing* is not hysterical, and that Beecroft's *VB* series is, but I also repeat my claim that hysterical art does have feminist merit.

The idea Banner observes, through making *Nude Standing*, is that women today assess one another according to a phallic economy in which violence and porn are increasingly common-place. In observing this idea, Banner necessarily comes close to totalising a woman, through her

conflation of filmic/sculptural/literary registers. This requires for Banner to seem to embody and enact hysteria and to come close to enforcing a hysterical relation with another woman (the woman being described) who is then and in turn, almost forced to embody hysteria. The viewer's gaze is implicated in this process in ways that potentially extend embodied hysteria to them as viewer; in following Banner's gaze, the viewer becomes increasingly aligned with it. And because Banner comes very close to offering no way out of this gaze, either for herself, or the woman involved, the viewer seems also to have been provided with no escape route, but to have instead become implicated, at a bodily level, in dis-affective, rather than affective relations in which they embody the patriarchal, screened gaze. In other words, the viewer seems to have becomes implicated in "the hysteric's strategy" (Robinson, 2006, p. 42), which is operated in Beecroft's work and which bears strong correspondence to Robinson's claim that this strategy is "one of an isolated individual, rather than collectively political (feminist)" (Robinson, 2006, p. 42).

However, it is important to my project to consider how Banner instrumentalises herself within her work in order to assume a critical position that testifies to her empirical knowledge of patriarchal, screened looking and the ways in which women embody and transmit this socially. In her work, she observes hysteria, but she does not, ultimately, reproduce it because, in her moments of approximate description, in connection with her defiant bodily movements, she also provides escape routes from the "hysteric's strategy"

(ibid., p. 42). In her moments of approximate rendering, Banner forms approaches of between-ing, within the artwork itself, and between audience, artist and the work.

Building on Robinson's claim that the hysteric does not behave in a way that is "collectively political (feminist)" (ibid., p. 42), I propose that Banner's work avoids behaving hysterically and, instead and through making, actively considers and observes the hysterical mode and how this exists socially and culturally, including within art. The latter point is important to note because it supports my further claim that Banner's work makes it possible to argue, in ways that expand Robinson's analysis, that Banner's own work, and Beecroft's - and despite the latter being hysterical - are both "collectively political (feminist)" (ibid., p. 42).

Banner's *Nude Standing* indicates her awareness of the presence of hysteria in art - that is, the kind of hysteria that Beecroft constructs in her work. This awareness means that Banner's work claims different critical position to that of Beecroft's.

To elaborate this claim it is important to consider the possibility that although Beecroft operates her work according to a patriarchal "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132), to reproduce hysteria, she still operates in a feminist sense that *Nude Standing* helps to illuminate.

Banner's *Nude Standing* is not noted as being a live performance, and has not been carried out in front of an audience. Nevertheless, it results from a temporarily embodied, performative mode. As art work, *Nude Standing* inclines to operate as documentation of this temporary mode in which Banner embodies and performs not hysteria as such, but a cultural absence of critical, feminist attention to screened oppression and, importantly, how this allows hysteria to be patriarchally imposed, by already hysterical - or, more precisely, hystericised - subjects, onto others. This means that, as a performance artist, Banner necessarily comes close to, but ultimately (and purposely) fails in, reproducing hysteria and hysterical relations. However, in carrying the "knowledge" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123) of that failure, her work also assumes a feminist stance, through which Banner operate her awareness of the ongoing feminist need to combat the screened gaze.

However, Banner's critique is structurally dependant on the presence of hysteria in other art works, such as Beecroft's *VB* series. When considered relative to Banner's *Nude Standing*, it becomes possible to read Beecroft's hysterical work as a feminist provocation, in regard to an insufficiency in feminist, critical, cultural attention to screened misogyny and its extensive reach, via the metastasising neo-liberalist screen, into society and culture and, importantly, into art. Moreover, it is possible to critically situate Beecroft's work as the catalyst from which Banner is able to construct an ultimately between-ing work, which draws attention to the need to extend

between-ing relations to hysteria, in order to draw attention to its feminist merit.

However, such an analysis requires for the reader to accept the idea that feminism should not only be open to, and accommodating of, criticism of feminism, but that feminism should actively seek out and critically situate hysterical works as having the potential to re-negotiate what might constitute internal and external feminist critique, including within art. Banner's *Nude Standing* supports this idea and points in the direction (and feminist merit) of Beecroft's VB series. In other words, Banner's work insists upon forming "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) with Beecroft's, despite that, in Robinson's analysis, Beecroft's work seem to deny this possibility entirely. This relation raises the question of where the 'inside' and 'outside' of feminist parameters currently lie and, indeed, what kind of feminist approaches are needed for deciding this and the future of the question. The feminist merit of Banner's and Beecroft's work are that, especially when thought in terms of their affective relations they trouble this very question without fully resolving it; instead, the possibility of such a resolution depends on the approach of the interpreter. Banner's *Nude Standing* may speak, to some, of the need for between-ing approaches in art, through which women's symbolic mediation can be materialised. This includes, for some, helping to distinguish hysterical and between-ing approaches, and illuminating the benefits of the latter for women. However, Banner's work, in insisting, through a performative mode, upon observing the

isolation of the hysteric, somewhat paradoxically requires an expansion of the notion of "collectively political" (Robinson, 2006, p. 42) in order for its and Beecroft's contribution to feminism to be acknowledged as such. This is because Banner's work raises the question that is deliberately held dormant in Beecroft's, of whether a multiplicity of isolated, hysterical individuals can be considered to collectively lay claim to feminist, political agency. Such an expansion, in art, depends upon a reader / viewer perceiving and pursuing the (potential) benefits of recruiting the hysterical mode in art, in order to develop and transform its syntaxes, including and especially of flattening and fragmentation, in accord with the morphological impetus that substructures between-ing.

As an artist, I have generated this expansion within and through my *New Model Army* works. Having researched Banner's and Beecroft's work relative to the notion of hysteria put forward by Robinson, I recognise that my own embodiment of patriarchal silence, which I have described earlier in this thesis as an embodiment of Robinson's claim that, in the phallogentric economy, "words fail" (ibid., p. 55) women, and which my *New Model Army* works materialise, stands to be construed as my embodiment of the hysterical mode and the articulation of this through my practice, whilst researching at Goldsmiths College. However, my intention, at the time of 'stepping into' this silence was never to embody silence in any finite sense but was, ultimately, borne out of artistic knowledges that my desire was being patriarchally framed in ways that only offered, to me and to others, the

position of hysteric and my conviction that art would, in ways that I could not foresee, enable a working through and out of this frame. When I began my research, the idea of privileging situated, embodied knowledges "held" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 120) by art works, over hegemonic, patriarchal normalities was attractive (if inarticulable by me, at that time) but not ethically, or philosophically, unproblematic. It returned me to the problem of whether, in creating artworks that seem to speak from the fragmental and partial knowledge of 'my' embodied experience, and creating theory that does the same, I would not escape patriarchal hegemonies, but instead only reproduce them. This fear retained me and my practice and theory, in the hysterical mode.

Through research and practice my work has found a way to pass through and beyond the hysterical mode and to value my own embodied knowledges and those of other women and women artists. This gives me hope in the ability of institutions to engender new, feminist valuation of the hysterical mode in art and the need to consider how, in the contemporary climate, female artists might embody and work through this.

To illuminate the larger context of this thought: in refusing to fairly accommodate the equal right of mothers to work in paid employment whilst also having responsibility for reproductive and domestic labour (Federici 1975, 2010), neoliberalism attempts to frame and foreclose the desires and pleasures of their subjectivities. When this situation remains unchanged for

decades and is complicated by the issue of a working mother also being a single mother, having care duties to others and insisting upon working as an artist, then the subjectivity in question necessarily treads a precarious path through art, but not quite in the way that neo-liberalism dictates. What I mean by this is that the framing and foreclosing technologies of patriarchal neo-liberalism are escalated in response to such a subject's re-newed and expansive desire, but do not reckon on what women, or art, are capable of, or what art institutions are capable of giving and becoming. Building upon the critique, illuminated in Banner's *Nude Standing* and dormant in Beecroft's *VB 35*, in the neo-liberalist economy, the hysterical mode a priori stands to be transferred to and normatively imposed upon subjects by already hysterical, neo-liberalist others. However, my engagement with art practice, and with art institutions, to help me to "work through it, in the realm of the aesthetic" (Robinson, 2006, p. 38), in connection with my research project, has allowed me to engage in battle with, overcome and un-fix an imposed, "fixing" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) position and mode that I could not, at the outset, fully articulate. In my descriptions of my own works, I have shown how I have formed an approach of between-ing which has allowed me, as artist, to work through and out of the possibility of finitely accepting and embodying hysteria and its silencing effect on women.

Forming this between-ing approach as part of artistic research has also required me to not only make art, but to extend this between-ing approach to generate "affective relations" (ibid., 2013, p. 126) between art

and theory, developing relations between art and theory which I could not have anticipated. This has allowed me to reflect upon the critical situation of my art and my intentions within "the realm of the aesthetic" (Robinson, 2006, p. 38) in ways that have enabled my practice and research to pass through the hysterical mode and to begin to work with written language again. It is for this reason I claim that, for some women artists, of which I am one, hysteria does have feminist merit and must be recognised as such. As Irigaray has stated: "Hysteria must not be destroyed but allowed access to the imagination and to creativeness" (Irigaray, 1987 cited Robinson, 2006, p.39).

## **Chapter Six**

### **Future Knowledges**

#### **6:0 On the Impossibility of Concluding Between-ing as Becoming**

In this thesis, I have tackled what I claim is a complex, neglected relationship between sculpture, women's image, cinema and sculpture and I have aimed to bring a new perspective to this. Within this overlooked relationship, Mulvey's idea that the use of the close-up, of women's images, "gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 40) presents a problem and opportunities for sculpture, and I have demonstrated how my sculptures respond. Drawing from Doane's analysis, I have argued that Mulvey's ideas surrounding "flatness" (ibid., p. 40) and "fragmented body" (ibid., p. 40) must now be thought beyond the psychoanalytic framework she retains. Instead, these ideas can - and should - be brought to the practice and theory of sculpture, in order to reconcile the two notions of woman's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433). Doane rather hesitantly, but progressively acknowledges this as being crucial to women's equality and necessary to bring new theoretical and material knowledge to women's art practices.

Borrowing from Robinson's (2006) insistent approach, I have claimed that Mulvey's own analysis of sculptor Allen Jones' work plays host to congealed, rather than synthesised, interactive ideas surrounding "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26). With reference to contemporary women artists' works, I have shown how productive mimesis becomes, and may be in future, materialised in and through art and, in particular, through the dimensionality and between-ness provided by sculpture. These ideas must now undergo further theoretical "unravelling" (Wasson, 2007, p. 75) within and through the context of debates (Wasson, 2007), (Friedberg, 2003) of the neo-liberalist context for the screen and women's screened oppression and my thesis contributes to this process. In developing this research, I have proposed that my own sculptural practice must be considered as a critical response to covert screened oppression, and I have referenced and elaborated details of my sculptural syntax, showing how they build upon and help to nuance this "unravelling" (Wasson, 2007). For example, I have demonstrated how syntaxes within *Angel* evoke the idea that new frameworks are needed for the symbolic mediation of women's experiences and desires. I have demonstrated how, with reference to Crary (2013) and Friedberg (2003), syntaxes in *Stripped* connote the immeasurable speed at which women's screened oppression is now exerted and how women might endeavour to combat this. I have discussed how syntaxes in *Carrier*, such as the convexly curved body shape, rebuff screened oppression, how *Carrier* defends the creativity of women degraded

by the category "housewife" and how both *Carrier* and *Bird* differently articulate an idea of "the lips" (Robinson, 2006, p.101). I have discussed how, with reference to Simone (2012), *Sore Model* insists upon a political re-negotiation an idea of women's "place" (Doane, 1982, p. 433).

Central to this argument has been my claim that it is necessary to apply productive mimesis to Robinson's notion of productive mimesis - or, to put it another way, to extend to her notion of productive mimesis the "play of différance" (ibid., p. 100) which she argues gives women "access to becoming sexuate subjects" (ibid., p. 100). This is necessary to establish a more suitable terminology through which to more efficiently debate how sculptural practices, including my own, construct approaches for the mediation of women's experiences. I have named this approach "between-ing".

This sculptural approach of between-ing symbolically mediates women's experiences of screened oppression and encourages their "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) in ways not previously accounted for. My own, lived experiences of patriarchal looking, and of the process of overcoming this, constitute "knowledges" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123) which are carried in these works; as such, they act as material, feminist standpoints which make a specific contribution to a larger subversive knowledge of women's sculptural practices in which between-ing occurs and which I have identified and discussed through analyses of the works of

Rosler, Wilke, Bourgeois, EXPORT, Lucas and Banner. In this sense, my approach of between-ing, though necessarily not fully reconcilable with theories, and dependent for its futurity on other practices developing different forms of between-ing and being recognised and valued as such, can be considered as a theoretical concept, but an advanced concept in the sense that it embraces, physicalises and develops Deleuzian and standpoint feminisms and productive mimesis; in synthesising geophilosophical notions of "immanent becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 134) with the space times of generativity afforded by Robinson's notion of "productive mimesis" (Robinson, 2006, p. 26), and by discussing analyses of standpoint feminisms - such as those by Beverley Skeggs (1997), Alison Wylie (2000), Donna Haraway (1991), Dorothy Smith (1997), Nancy Harstock (1997) and Linda Alcoff (1991) - I have argued for the importance of newly conceiving and valuing women's standpoints as fluid, and formed in response to multi-faceted, intersectioning patriarchy, including and especially patriarchal, screened oppression. I have also argued for the importance of valuing women artists' ability in delegating their standpoints to art practices and art works and how this valuation enables further recognition and attention to the "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 136) that are possible and which enable the symbolic mediation of women's desires. It is through such valuation that the feminist generativity of art, and the futurity of this generativity, is illuminated.

I have analysed Sarah Lucas' *Nuds* (2009-10), Vanessa Beecroft's *VB 35* (1998) and Fiona Banner's *Nude Standing* (2006) relative to my claims surrounding between-ing and, in turn, relative to notions of hysteria (Robinson, 2006). I have claimed it is important not to reject hysteria and its potential to contribute to feminist art practices and debate, and I have discussed, with reference to Beecroft's and Banner's works, the idea that hysteria constitutes a patriarchal framing that, in the neo-liberalist economy, can be and is imposed on others. I have discussed the dangers of the silencing effects of this on women and the need to observe, in order to avoid fully embodying, hysteria. Referring to my own, embodied observation of patriarchal silence, at the time that I began making the *New Model Army* works, and to the "affective relations" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) between my own, Beecroft's and Banner's work, I have claimed it is possible to bring a generative, morphologically founded approach of between-ing to situations of hysteria, in order to counter the imposition of the hysterical mode (by others upon others) within the neo-liberalist context. With that said, and speaking from experience, I, similarly to Irigaray, have absolutely no desire to "valorise" (ibid., p. 39) hysteria.

My research project's need to bring new attention to this area and, indeed, to address what I have claimed is its theoretical neglect, has been, as I have demonstrated, initially formed through early exposure to "looking as... a one-way gaze" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 129) and coming to the realisation that a far greater political programme was in place, and

designed for the oppression of women, than I could have previously imagined. More than that, it has been informed by a stronger desire and commitment to artistically re-stage this looking as an affective relation between bodies and to put immanent becoming, "in place of" (Grosz, 1989, p. 112) patriarchal "fixing" (ibid., p. 134). This is a desire informed, as I have acknowledged, by life-long experiences of making, and the "peace about approaching a work" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 123); wanting, ultimately, this same "peace"; to live in it, and not only bring it to art.

In the face of patriarchal oppression, creating the conditions for art making can become a battle, and it is sometimes (almost) impossible not to forget this primary desire for peace. But, in this thesis, I have claimed that, in under-valuing and under-representing women's art, the current "economy of the sameness of the One" (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 132) also under-estimates women's strength in engaging combat, in resisting patriarchy and living through and beyond it and in encouraging this amongst others. On reflection, in writing this thesis, I understand that embodying the roles as working, single mother artist and researcher has meant living, in patriarchal terms, an illegible, illegitimate and impossible life. It has also meant living, in feminist terms, a life of ongoing combat. However, in terms of my own "becoming" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 126) as artist and as woman: this thesis has been an attempt to articulate, in writing, a feminist script that only my *New Model Army* sculptures, in being founded on a belief in art, could anticipate. However, it is not only knowledges of past, lived experience which

are "held" (Kiaer, 2013, p. 120) in art works but, also, new knowledges of the future.

The next sculptures, those underway, embody future ideas and experiences I have not yet, or quite, anticipated, but which I trust my work, and making, to help me to work out. Writing this thesis has enabled me, in re-interpreting the effects of patriarchal divisionism by materially developing and arguing the theoretical relevance of the artistic approach of between-ing, to form a way to live and look differently, to expand a practice which insists upon further and different play, far from hysteria, in "unknown spaces of movement" (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013. p. 130), for "exploring the possibilities of being in - and becoming with - the world" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 52).

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### **Conferences**

*Reproductive Labour / Parenting Beyond Patriarchy*

Guest speakers: Nina Power and Sharmila Chauhan

Linda Aloysius - speaker

Miranda Armstrong - speaker

Anna Gonzalez Suero - speaker

Gitanjali Pyndiah - speaker

Goldsmiths College and Women's Art Library, 9 September 2016

*Feminism and Fragility*

Speaker: Sarah Ahmed

Centre for Feminist Research

Goldsmiths College, January 2016

*Taking Up Space: Women Only Shows - A Discussion (full length):* An East London Fawcett Group Talk in partnership with the Contemporary Art Society and the Art Programme, Central Saint Martins.

Curated and chaired by Rose Gibbs.

Speakers: Iwona Blazwick, Sonia Boyce, Caroline Douglas, Ann Gallagher, Professor Hilary Robinson, Vanessa Jackson, Elizabeth Neilson, Jennifer Thatcher.

Central Saint Martins, 30 September 2014

### **Handouts / Leaflets / Pamphlets**

Women's Ad Hoc Committee/Women Artists in Revolution/WSABAL. (1970). *To the Viewing Public for the 1970 Whitney Annual Exhibition*. In: Robinson, H. (2015). *Feminist Art Theory: An Anthology 1968 - 2014*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. 51 - 53.

Sjoo, M. (1980) *Art is a Revolutionary Act* (1980). In: Robinson, H. (2015). *Feminist Art Theory: An Anthology 1968 - 2014*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. 52 - 54.

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### **Conference Papers / Statements / Manifestos**

Rosler, M. (1980). *Well, is the Personal Political?* Statement for the conference 'Questions on Women's Art', Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 15-16 November 1980. In: Robinson, H. (2015). *Feminist Art Theory: An Anthology 1968 - 2014*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. 68 - 69.

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## Exhibition Catalogues

Frazer, A. (2012). There's No Place Like Home. In: *Whitney Biennial 2012*. New York: Whitney Museum of Modern Art. 28 - 30.

Frueh, J. and Kochheiser, T. H. (1989). *Hannah Wilke: A Retrospective*. Gallery 210, University of Missouri-St Louis, Missouri.

## Websites

Enemies of Good Art. (2016) [Online]. Available from:  
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[Accessed 16.07.16]

## Filmography

Armstrong, G., 1979, *My Brilliant Career*, Australia, Peace Arch, 1h 40m.

Campion, J., 1993, *The Piano*, France, IMDb, 2h 1m.

Chytilová V., 1966, *Daisies*, Czechoslovakia, Ustredni Pujcovna Filmu, 1h 19m.

Fassbinder, R. W., 1974, *Fear Eats the Soul*, Munich, IMDb, 1h 34m.

Hawks, H., 1938, *Bringing up Baby*, USA, IMDb, 1h 42m.

Saks, G., 1967, *Barefoot in The Park*, USA, IMDb, 1h 46m.

Sirk, D., 1955, *All That Heaven Allows*, UK, Universal Pictures, 1h 29m.

Sternberg, J. von (dir.), 1930, *Morocco*, United States, Paramount Pictures, 1h 31m.